

VOLUME VI . ISSUE II

THE AUGUSTINIAN

AUGUSTINIAN VOCATIONS:
ANSWERING THE “CALL” IN THE
21ST CENTURY p. 3

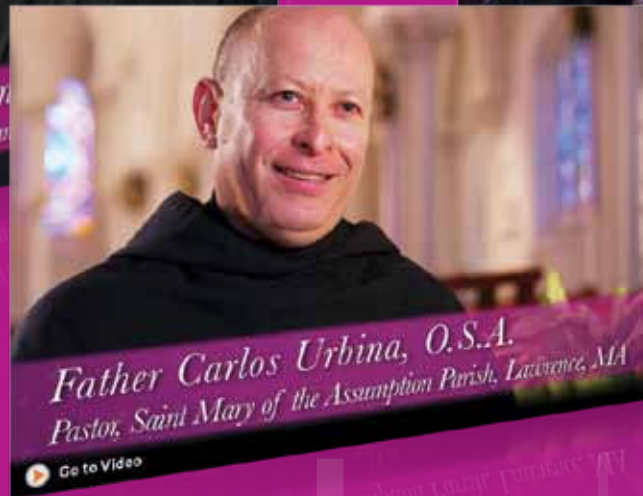
CONVERSATIONS: VOCATION STORIES

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Augustinian Vocations

The spirit to make a difference.



WATCH OUR NEW
VOCATIONS VIDEO "THE CALL"
on the homepage of Augustinian.org.



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ON THE COVER

Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A., Associate Athletic Director and Chaplain of Villanova University's football team, is shown on the sidelines with the Wildcats.

Cover Photo and principal photography by Bryan Smith. Photo of Fr. Rick Piatt, O.S.A., on page 14 is courtesy of Kevin Salemme. Additional photography for feature stories by Teddie Gallagher, Kitty Sheridan, Daniel J. McLaughlin, O.S.A., and Emily Morgan.

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Augustinian Vocations: Answering the "Call" in the 21st Century

Discernment is that ongoing process of prayer, listening with the mind and heart, developing one's relationship with God and following where it leads. The path taken by a candidate discerning the call to the Augustinian way of life is presented, from initial contact with a vocation director to profession of solemn vows. Pictured left are Fr. Jorge L. Cleto, O.S.A., and Fr. Thomas R. McCarthy, O.S.A., the new Interprovincial Vocation Directors who will serve the East Coast and Midwest provinces, effective July 1, 2012. This is the first time the two provinces are joining efforts in this area.

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Conversations: Vocation Stories

Three Augustinian Friars tell their vocation stories and how they heard and answered the call to religious life and priesthood.

FR. ROBERT P. HAGAN, O.S.A. P. 6

Sitting in a garden, Augustine heard the phrase *tolle lege*, "take up and read." After the loss of a family member, Fr. Rob encountered his own *tolle lege* experience, when he found and read *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. This had a lasting impact and eventually opened him to answer the call.

FR. CARLOS E. URBINA, O.S.A. P. 10

Similar to Augustine's experience on hearing the preaching of his bishop, Ambrose, Fr. Carlos was swayed by the eloquent preaching of a bishop, but his journey to the Augustinians was a long and winding path.

FR. RICHARD J. PIATT, O.S.A. P. 14

At a young age, Fr. Rick recognized his call to the priesthood, but as a teen and college student, he didn't pursue it. It was through his graduate studies in theatre at Villanova that he came in contact with the Augustinians and discovered his path to answering that call as a member of a religious community.

THE AUGUSTINIAN

A publication of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova.



LETTER FROM THE

PRIOR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

God moves in exciting and mysterious ways. In this issue of *The Augustinian* we present to you stories of vocations to the religious life and priesthood. So often we get caught up with our daily lives and what might be happening in our local church communities that we do not think much about “How does all of this work?” In just about every diocese that the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova serves, and our Provinces in the Midwest and California, we are facing parish realignments and shortages of ministers.

As a Provincial, my first responsibility is to vocations and formation of men who feel that they have been called. Inside of the front cover you will find the announcement of our new vocation video, “The Call,” which is available for all of you to view on the homepage of Augustinian.org. You might find the site interesting enough to connect to other parts of our website to find out more about us and our mission. Being aware that some may not have access to computers and that the terminology and path to vocations might need clarification, this issue of *The Augustinian* focuses on Augustinian Vocations.

It also introduces our new vocation directors, Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A., and Fr. Jorge Cleto, O.S.A., who forge new ground in bringing together the Midwest Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel and our Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. You will also see the path a friar experiences from discernment to solemn vows.

The stories that follow in these pages are about real friars, all ordained in the 21st century, who tell of their journey that led them to become Augustinian Friars. Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., found his call when his father’s death led him to *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Fr. Carlos E. Urbina, O.S.A., initially found his call when he heard Archbishop Óscar Romero speak, but did not find a good fit until he met the Augustinians and began working with first and second generation immigrants. Fr. Richard J. Piatt, O.S.A., always knew he had a call but found Augustine and the Augustinians when Providence brought him to Villanova’s graduate theatre program.

Every friar has a vocation story. Each heard a “call” and was supported by the community through the journey of discernment, education and formation. Today, the Spirit is alive and more are turning to us to find their path to God through life as an Augustinian. We ask you to help us support Augustinian Vocations through your prayers, and if possible, through donations to a new fund set up for Vocations and Formation in our annual Augustinian Fund.

On behalf of my brothers, to all of you who have contributed to our Province with your *time, talent, and treasure*, I thank you with a most grateful heart for your kindness.

May you all have a safe summer and enjoy many unforgettable moments with your loved ones.

In Augustine,

Very Reverend
Anthony M. “Fr. Mickey” Genovese, O.S.A.
PRIOR PROVINCIAL
PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

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THE AUGUSTINIAN

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AUGUSTINIAN VOCATIONS:

ANSWERING THE “CALL” IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY TEDDIE GALLAGHER

“Why do I live? Only with this intention, that together we may live with Christ. This is my desire, my honor, my joy and my wealth...but I don’t want to be saved without you.”

ST. AUGUSTINE, SERMON 71

The sentiment that St. Augustine expresses in Sermon 71, “I don’t want to be saved without you,” seems to sum up what the Augustinian Order of priests and brothers is all about: a constant search for a union with Christ here and hereafter in the company of friends. It explains why the Augustinians engender such fidelity and why their daily lives are lived in community, in service and in friendship. It helps us understand why so many people say “I remember the first time I met the Augustinians.” It’s *Veritas, Unitas, Caritas*; it’s apostolic ministry; it’s respect for diversity; it’s Catholic Social Teaching; it’s commitment to the poor; it’s concern for social justice and the common good of all; it’s being down-to-earth. If you have met an Augustinian you’ve likely experienced the charisms that define them.

The short video produced this year to promote Augustinian Vocations in the United States entitled “The Call,” features seven priests and a brother, all under the age of 50, who represent the younger generation of Augustinians. They speak about their “call” and about being an Augustinian. They speak about formation as Augustinians and about the future of the Order and Augustinian vocations.

There’s a great deal of positive energy in the video, and that’s reflective of the positive things that are happening in Augustinian vocations in the United States today.

The Order in the United States has twelve brothers in formation at this time and has almost as many in its houses of discernment. Plus, vocation directors report more men are inquiring about the Augustinians and attending weekend retreats.

It’s hard to say why more men are finding their call to God through the Augustinians, but maybe it’s because there’s been a lot going on in the 21st century to support the mission of Augustinian vocations:

1 A major step for the 21st century came in 1995 when the Order created the *Plan of Augustinian Formation*, a tool with a stated purpose to ensure consistency of formation in the new millennium. Also known as the *Ratio Institutionis*, the plan offers elements judged essential to Augustinian formation, elements that form a common Augustinian foundation and identity. It obliges Augustinians to read the signs of the times and to find meaningful directions in their own spirituality in the present moment, making the Augustinian identity continually valid as it takes on modern expression.

2 In 2006, Casa Agustín, a house of discernment and pre-novitiate for Spanish-speaking men from the United States and Latin America was founded. The house, located in Miami Gardens, Florida, provides an introduction to the Order’s *Plan of Augustinian Formation* while men attend St. Thomas University for ESL and enculturation classes.



FR. JORGE L. CLETO, O.S.A., NAMED INTERPROVINCIAL VOCATIONS DIRECTOR FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING MEN FROM THE EAST AND MIDWEST: "I'M SO HAPPY THAT THE COMMUNITY HAS ASKED ME TO HELP IN THIS MINISTRY. I LOVE GIVING MY FULL LIFE TO THIS PROGRAM, TO THIS COMMUNITY AND TO SEE EVERY DAY WITH ENTHUSIASM AND HOPE. I LOVE IT!"

- 3** In 2007, the three U.S. provinces (East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast) formally came together to create the Saint Augustine Friary National Theologate, a National House of Formation in Chicago, Ill. The move gave the formation community opportunities to serve nearby Augustinian parishes, to foster a new generation of Augustinians.
- 4** In 2010, the East Coast and Midwest provinces combined their English-speaking house of discernment and pre-novitiate at Blessed Stephen Bellesini Friary in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, totally remodelling a former convent through the support of major benefactors.

- 5** In February of 2012, the East Coast and Midwest provinces announced an unprecedented merger of the two provinces' Discernment and Pre-Novitiate programs. The plan names Fr. Thomas R. McCarthy, O.S.A., current President of St. Rita of Cascia High School, in Chicago, Ill., as Vocations Director for English-speaking men in both provinces, and Fr. Jorge L. Cleto, O.S.A., currently the Vocations Director for Casa Agustín in Miami Gardens, Florida, to provide leadership in both provinces for Spanish-speaking discerners. The changes are effective July, 1, 2012.
- 6** The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) published a

survey-based report titled: "Recent Vocations to Religious Life: A Report for the National Religious Vocation Conference" (2009). Its findings list a number of "best practices" for attracting and retaining new members. In the end, it found that, although practices can have meaningful impact, it is the example of the members and the charisms of an Order that allow members to live, work, pray and celebrate Eucharist together. If the survey is correct, the charisms lived by the Augustinians are a major factor in the rise of Augustinian vocations.

Below, this issue of *The Augustinian* lays out the 21st century path for discernment and formation in the United States. The main section of this special issue

features the vocation stories of three friars, all ordained in the 21st century. We meet them and we meet some of their colleagues, students and friends who speak to their personal witness of them as priests. It is this witness of all Augustinians, past and present, our witness of their love of the Church and their lives lived by the *Rule* and spiritual heritage of St. Augustine, which continues to draw all of us closer. We are with the Augustinians as family and friends, as students and parishioners, as benefactors. Together, we have become a community of believers who don't want to be saved without each other.



FR. THOMAS R. MCCARTHY, O.S.A., NAMED INTER-PROVINCIAL VOCATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE EAST AND MIDWEST: "I LOVE BEING A FRIAR AND WHAT BETTER THING TO DO THAN TO SHARE WHAT YOU LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE, ESPECIALLY A PROSPECTIVE MEMBER."

THE PATH TO AUGUSTINIAN VOCATIONS AND FORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The entire process of exploring a call to religious life with the Augustinians is one of mutual discernment on the part of the individual who is discerning his call, and that of the Augustinians, who establish a relationship with the individual. This process of discernment is not in isolation, but is ongoing and mutual. At every step of the way the provincial and his counselors, the formation team and professed Augustinians are involved and ready to help candidates discover, discern and understand what Augustinian religious life is.



NATIONAL NOVITIATE



FIRST PROFESSION



HOUSE OF FORMATION



ORDINATION

DISCERNER

A man interested in religious life within the Augustinian Order will meet with a vocation director, who establishes a relationship and meets with the man to listen and discuss his interest in religious life. After evaluation, the vocation director introduces the candidate to the community and recommends that the discerner spend time with members of an Augustinian community.



PRE-NOVITIATE

Interprovincial Pre-Novitiate
East Coast, Midwest

Bl. Stephen Bellesini Friary
Ardmore, PA

Casa Agustín
Miami Gardens, FL

West Coast Province
Pre-Novitiate

St. Rita of Cascia House
San Francisco, CA

In the pre-novitiate, the candidate lives in an Augustinian community and the work of formation begins as the candidate is introduced to the Augustinian *Rule* and the Order's *Constitutions*. As the candidate continues to discern his vocation, he participates and shares in community life; time is set aside for Mass and prayer, as well as other social events. Upon completion of the pre-novitiate requirements, the formation team evaluates the readiness of the candidate to be advanced.

Casa Agustín is the Hispanic House of Discernment. This program for Hispanic/Latino discerners is part of the pre-novitiate program, but is generally extended longer than the English-speaking program. It serves as a way to transition men into the American culture, assisting them with English language and enculturation classes offered through St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida.



NATIONAL NOVITIATE

INTERPROVINCIAL (EAST COAST, MIDWEST, WEST COAST)

Augustinian Novitiate
Community
Racine, WI

As a novice, the candidate receives a white habit. The candidate continues developing his life of prayer and deepening his relationship with God. Formation as an Augustinian continues as he lives according to the *Rule* and integrates the values and mission of the Augustinians.



NATIONAL HOUSE OF FORMATION

INTERPROVINCIAL (EAST COAST, MIDWEST, WEST COAST)

St. Augustine Friary Chicago, IL

Summer After Novitiate
First Profession of Vows

Upon completion of the novitiate year, expressing the call to religious life, and in conjunction with the professed Augustinian community and its formation team's recommendation, the candidate makes his first profession of simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.



Year One Studies Begin at
Catholic Theological Union (CTU)

At first profession, the friar receives the black habit and, as a newly professed religious, is called a "brother" of the Order. He moves to St. Augustine Friary in Chicago, Illinois, where he continues theological studies at Catholic Theological Union in preparation for ministry, while he continues to discern his vocation.



RENEWAL
OF VOWS



Year Two Studies
Continue at Catholic
Theological Union



RENEWAL
OF VOWS



Year Three Start
Pastoral Year

Prior to completion of his studies, each candidate will spend a "pastoral" year, doing work in one of the ministries of his province.



RENEWAL
OF VOWS



Year Four Studies Continue
at Catholic Theological Union

If a friar is found to be suitable and has reached the age of 24, completed his pastoral year and the fourth year of theology, the friar will profess solemn vows.

"Solemn profession is an unconditional commitment to God and the Church, to the Order and to the men and women of our time."

-*Plan of Augustinian Formation*



SOLEMN
VOWS



Year Five Studies for
Master's of Divinity

If called to sacramental ministry in the Church, a solemnly professed friar will usually be ordained as a deacon in the beginning of his fifth year.

Religious Brothers

If a friar is not called to ordained ministry, he will complete his studies and serve the Augustinian community and its apostolates as a religious brother.

ORDINATION

Ordination to Priesthood

The major superior, with consent of his council, will present for reception of Holy Orders only those persons whose knowledge, conduct and other qualities required by canon law have been established.



Ongoing Formation

Major superiors of each province are required to provide friars with a concrete, ongoing formation in which all participate. This serves to revitalize the grace of a friar's Augustinian vocation to religious life, and where applicable, to priestly life.

CONVERSATIONS: VOCATION STORIES

“THE AUGUSTINIAN
WAY OF LIFE IS A
CONSTANT SEARCH
AND DISCOVERY OF
OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD THROUGH
ONE ANOTHER.”

ROBERT P. HAGAN, O.S.A.

WHEN DID YOU HEAR THE CALL TO BECOME AN
AUGUSTINIAN AND HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE
LIFE AS AN AUGUSTINIAN TODAY?

“I was 17 and a senior at Cardinal O’Hara High School when my father passed away suddenly. He went to bed one night and never woke up. He had a brain aneurism at age 47.

So, you’re going through all the processing of that and then the practical stuff that you have to do. My sister and I were cleaning out the trunk of my father’s car and in there was an old library book, with an old, frayed maroon cover. It was *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. It was a book he had checked out from Falvey Library here at Villanova in February and he died in May.

I had never heard of *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. I had never paid attention to who St. Augustine was. I was raised in a Catholic family, but I didn’t consider myself overly spiritual or religious, nor did I consider my father that way. But this was the last book my father was reading, so I took the book and I read the book.

It was unexpected, that on the occasion of something as challenging as my father’s death, I came to meet Augustine, who was a sinner before he was a saint; who struggled with a lot of aspects of life, but never stopped searching. A man who discovered God through the company of friends and good people around him. Who chased a lot of what the world has to offer, whether it be money, women, fame or fortune, only to come to the realization that none of those things completely satisfy us. He prays that line that we all know, that resonates with so many of us: ‘Lord you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless, until they rest in you.’



1



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY'S HEAD BASKETBALL COACH, JAY WRIGHT ON THE SIDELINES: "I THINK EVERY PLAYER ON OUR TEAM AND EVERY MEMBER OF OUR STAFF WILL TELL YOU FR. ROB IS ONE OF THE GREAT MEN ANY OF US HAVE IN OUR LIVES."

That introduction to that philosophy, to that way of life, to that core piece of wisdom, was something that stayed with me at a young age: as I came to Villanova; as I met the Augustinians—people like Fr. Bill McGuire, who just passed away and was a great friend of mine; people like Fr. Peter [Donohue] who was at Villanova when I was a student; and then after Villanova when I was working as a lawyer, when I was experiencing success, when I was making some money, when I was having good relationships.

“WE PREACH IT ALL THE TIME: TO GET THE RAINBOW YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE RAIN; WITH EVERY CROSS, THERE’S A RESURRECTION.”

I found my heart restless and the question came to me: Is there something else? Is there something more? That stayed with me and it led me to the ultimate decision to follow my heart, and join the Order.

As I look back now it’s easier to connect the dots; that “Lord you were with me—even when I was not with you.”

JAY WRIGHT

“Fr. Rob has been a very integral part of the program and also of my life. He’s just the perfect source of spiritual strength and grounding. We travel with the team and work closely together. We count him as a part of our staff and I also count him as one of my dear friends.

“Our whole team and entire staff attend a prayer service before every game. It starts with Fr. Rob doing a reading from the Bible and then he does a homily. He’s never talking about the game. He’s talking about life. And what kind of men we are and what kind of Christians we are. I always joke with Fr. Rob, ‘Don’t make us cry before the game.’ He’s so good he gets us so emotional. I had friends of our program at a recent game and I looked over and they had tears in their eyes.

“He’s one of the most Christ-like people I know, if not the most. And everybody in our program and in my family feels that way. Everyone feels he’s so real and so committed to this life of serving Christ. It’s inspirational. He’s an amazing man, he really is.”

Whether it was in the death of my father; finding *The Confessions of St. Augustine* in the trunk of my father’s car upon his death; bartending through law school, I was learning who St. Augustine was: taking some of those truths and incorporating them into my own life, which led me to hear the call, to know that God had been calling me for a while. It all allowed me to hear it more clearly.

I’ve often reflected on how God used difficulties in my life as a means to speak

2



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY'S HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, ANDY TALLEY AT THE PRE-GAME MASS: "NOT ALL OF THE PLAYERS ARE CATHOLIC, BUT THEY COME TO MASS BEFORE THE GAME BECAUSE IT'S OUR TRADITION. IT'S AN HONOR TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ AT THE MASS AND BE INVOLVED THIS WAY."

to me. We preach it all the time: to get the rainbow you have to have the rain; with every cross, there’s a resurrection. They are core Christian, Augustinian truths that we profess and that I discovered in my own life. Out of difficult situations, out of suffering loss, can come real gifts and insights and truth—and I think that was the Spirit working through that cross.

And that’s really what *The Confessions of St. Augustine* is. A lot of people think it’s a confession of sin—like all of the bad stuff that Augustine ever did. And on some level it is. But it’s really a confession of praise. It’s Augustine reflecting on his life. And looking back on all of the experiences of his life and pointing out and saying, “But you were there.” You were there to help me. You were there to forgive me. You were there to lead me. And so it’s a confession of praise: thank you God for all the ways you’ve been present to me in my life, in my weakness, in forgiveness, in my joys, in my sorrows. You were there through it all. We all have that ability to reflect on our own lives and see where God was present. And that’s a very Augustinian way to pray.

St. Augustine introduced a way of praying that was to reflect on your own life, on your own story and ask: Where was God in the story? And through the eyes of faith to really see where he was

ANDY TALLEY

“Fr. Rob is a very motivational and inspirational priest and he is a great friend to everyone here. He says Mass for our team at home and when we travel, so we always go to Mass the day of the game. He’s also the guy who says the prayer prior to us going out to play and after the game is over. Win or lose, he always has a prayer and something to say that is unifying and helpful.

“On our run to the National Championship he gave a sermon about the stone cutter. The stone cutter’s hammer explodes on the rock many times and he never knows which blow is going to break the rock. The whole concept is that you’ve got to keep tapping the rock. Eventually, it’s going to break.

“So we, as a team, put this motto together called “Tap the Rock” and we have this rock in our locker room. Every day as players go in and out of the locker room they tap the rock. It’s our slogan. It was inscribed on our rings when we won the National Championship. So the guys will always remember that, in life, you’ve got to keep tapping the rock.”

3



LYNN TIGHE, SR. ASSOCIATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR FOR VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY: "I LIKE THE IDEA THAT WHEN FR. ROB IS ON THE SIDELINE AT A FOOTBALL GAME OR A BASKETBALL GAME THAT IT'S VERY VISIBLE TO EVERYONE WATCHING, THAT WE HAVE A PRIEST ON OUR SIDELINE. IT SPEAKS TO THE CORE VALUES OF VILLANOVA THAT WE'RE CATHOLIC AND AUGUSTINIAN."

present, where he helped, where he led, guided and gave strength. I like to look at life that way and I was introduced to that whole notion of prayer through *The Confessions*.

In terms of Augustinian values, the one that really resonates with me is friendship.

Augustine found the presence of God through friendship. And I have found that particular value to be most important in my work. My job isn’t to convert people. My job isn’t to first and foremost preach to people or to tell them how to live their lives, but to approach every situation through the idea that this is an opportunity to build a friendship. There are different levels of friendship. We have students here at Villanova and my job isn’t to hang out and go to parties with them—but to respect them, understand them, to give them some feeling that there’s someone who wants to listen to them. I think that whole notion of friendship, whatever that means for you—respect, understanding, sharing of ideas in good times and in bad times—that’s the main goal. Then the other things just happen: the presence of God, closeness, learning. But if that friendship and trust isn’t there, if the relationship isn’t built first, then it’s hard for all the other things to happen.

I’m at work, but so many of the people here are friends of mine. It’s not that the priest is up here and everybody else

LYNN TIGHE

“There’s a level of respect that is given to a priest, that I think these young student athletes who, maybe are not Catholic and have never been around clergy, wouldn’t necessarily know to do it. But I watch that and I see it: they give him respect. They give it because he’s earned it. He is a confidant for a lot of the athletes. They know that when they have a problem or they need to bounce something off someone, that he’s a good listener and a wise man and can offer some good advice to them. They have a really good feeling about him. You can just see it. I can see it when we’re in Bartley Hall. The student athletes walk by with big bright smiles and say, ‘How are you doing Fr. Rob?’ They love having him at the University.

“Do the women ‘tap the rock?’ They don’t physically tap the rock that the football players tap, but I think they tap the rock in that they ‘tap’ on Fr. Rob for advice and for counsel. I like to think that he is the rock.”

is down there. We are journeying down the path of life together. I learn from my friends and hopefully, they learn from me. And we pick each other up along the way. And that’s very Augustine and very Augustinian.

4



FR. ROB HAGAN AND RUSSELL WOOTON, A STUDENT ASSISTANT FOR VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL, ON THE SIDELINES. "FR. ROB IS A GUY WHO I CAN GO TO AND NOT ONLY GET WISDOM, BUT ALSO GET A CREATIVE POINT OF VIEW."

ROBERT PAUL HAGAN, O.S.A., WAS BORN IN WESTWOOD, N.J. HE WAS ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2003, AT SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA CHURCH, VILLANOVA, PA. FR. ROB IS IN HIS EIGHTH YEAR SERVING AS AN ASSOCIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR AT VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, VILLANOVA, PA. HE SERVES AS THE CHAPLAIN FOR THE VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS. FR. ROB VOLUNTEERS AS A PRISON CHAPLAIN AT THE STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION, CHESTER, PA AND HELPS WITH WEEKEND MASSES AT ST. PAUL'S PARISH IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA. HE IS PART OF THE FORMATION TEAM THAT WORKS WITH PRE-NOVIATE CANDIDATES.



FOR ADDITIONAL PHOTOS OF FR. ROB WITH THE VILLANOVA FOOTBALL AND MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAMS, VISIT OUR PHOTO GALLERIES AT WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG

RUSSELL WOOTON

“Throughout my playing career and my time as a student I just got to know Fr. Rob more and more. What makes him very special to the Villanova family is that, when it comes to game time, everyone is ready to compete. And Fr. Rob, with his prayer service, he says, ‘Hey, the game is important and you guys have worked hard, but let’s take a step back and let’s focus on what really matters.’ And once he gets our attention to step back and we realize that, you know what, I want to win and I love to compete, but my relationship with God, my relationship with my teammates, my relationship with my coaches and the alum, they are very important. Fr. Rob allows us to see things in a bigger scope. Yes, we’re here to play and compete, but we’re also here to learn about God. We’re here to have a relationship with God, and with each other. Recognizing it and then finally appreciating it within each other, seeing God in each other. That’s where Unity comes in. The *Veritas, Unitas, Caritas* comes in. It helps us compete better because we have clearer minds. Our bond is stronger.”



**CONVERSATIONS:
VOCATION STORIES**

**“THIS IS THE GREATEST
MIRACLE OF RELIGIOUS
LIFE: THAT WE ARE
ABLE TO CARE AND
LOVE FOR EACH OTHER,
NOT NECESSARILY TO
THINK AND TO LOOK
EXACTLY THE SAME.”**

CARLOS E. URBINA, O.S.A.

**WHEN DID YOU HEAR THE CALL TO BECOME AN
AUGUSTINIAN AND HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE
LIFE AS AN AUGUSTINIAN TODAY?**

“My vocation started with my grandmother. She was the one who inspired me because of her devotion and her prayer. And then my mom was such a great influence for me.

Nevertheless, from the age of twelve to the age of 18, I did not want to do anything with vocations or even work at the church. It was Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was assassinated in El Salvador, who influenced me, not because he was a great speaker or a big man, but because of the conviction with which he was preaching and speaking. I was 17 when he visited my hometown of San Matías, El Salvador, on February 24, 1980, exactly one month before he was assassinated.

It was four years later that I announced I was joining a community and in January of 1984, I entered the seminary. During my years of discernment with the Carmelites, I was the principal at San Matías Parochial School in El Salvador; worked with “charismatic” groups in Costa Rica; and worked as a missionary in Honduras and Guatemala. In 1991 I came to the United States to take classes in New Orleans, Louisiana, and went through a whole process to continue discernment, but finally found I didn’t fit into the religious life.

In 1992, I won a scholarship to St. John’s University in New York, where I received an M.A. in Moral Theology. I was away from the Church for almost seven years. It was during this time that I felt a desire to work with immigrants and to do this, I worked through St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in Jamaica, Queens, N.Y. It was here that I met the Augustinians, Fr. Jorge Reyes [O.S.A.] and Fr. Bill Waters [O.S.A.], and other Augustinians who worked at the parish.

1



NILSA VEGA IS THE PARISH SECRETARY FOR ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, LAWRENCE, MASS. SHE VOLUNTEERS AS A COORDINATOR FOR THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RCIA PROGRAMS. "THE PLANNING FOR THE INSTALLATION MASS WAS DONE BY THE PARISH-IONERS. THERE'S A LOT OF TALENT HERE AT THE PARISH. EACH MASS HAS ITS OWN CULTURE THROUGH THE MUSIC AND EACH MUSIC GROUP ADDS ITS OWN FLAVOR TO THE PARISH. EVERYONE CAME TOGETHER FOR FR. CARLOS' INSTALLATION MASS AND IT WAS VERY SPIRITUAL AND AWESOME!"

When I graduated from St. John's, I was recommended to work in campus ministry at the University of Massachusetts. I had stayed in touch with the Augustinians and after one year at the University of Massachusetts the Augustinians offered me a job to direct Religious Education at St. Mary's in Lawrence, Mass.

I was not planning to go back to religious life, but the people in the parish inspired me to join. I had not told parishioners that I had been discerning for a vocation with the Carmelites. No one knew my past. But one day I was asked to fill-in and give a reflection when the priest was sick. Right after that, one of the older members of the parish, Victoria Ortega, followed me and said, "When will you stop fighting against God? Let me tell you my son, in the end, God always wins" and she just walked away. I was not really happy with her. Six months later I went to Fr. Art Johnson [O.S.A.], who was one of the greatest influences for me, and asked to join the Augustinians.

I was ordained here at St. Mary's in Lawrence, Mass. and worked here for a year before I was sent to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish on Staten Island in N.Y.

This was the most multi-cultural place for me. There are so many different countries and cultures in that parish. There are not only Latinos, but people from the Philippines, from Korea, from

NILSA VEGA

"Fr. Carlos is so charismatic with everyone, old and young. My family is Puerto Rican, but we were born and raised here in the States. I know Spanish but my son only speaks English. I saw the impression that Fr. Carlos made on my son the day he met him. I will never forget, after that first meeting, my son said to me "I want the joy that he has." A few years later, when my son made his Confirmation, he asked Fr. Carlos to be his sponsor. Fr. Carlos can speak to young people. He gets their attention and gets them to talk to him. I don't know how he gets the kids to relate to him, but he does. *Es la carisma.*"

"Lawrence isn't an easy city to live in. You have different nationalities. Yes, we all speak Spanish but we're all from different parts of Latin America, like Central and South America and Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Now we're getting a lot of Central Americans who are from El Salvador and Guatemala. I think he's going to do great here."

Japan, from France, and from every country in Latin America and the Caribbean.

After four-and-a-half years of working in Staten Island, Fr. Donald [Reilly, O.S.A.] asked me to go to Chicago, because they needed someone there to work in St. Rita of Cascia Parish. They needed a person who spoke Spanish, but could also work with the English-speaking part of the community.

In the Southside of Chicago we are very well known for the actions we are taking with social justice, especially for people who are losing their homes because of the

2



ROSA MUÑOZ IS A PARISHIONER OF ST. MARY'S AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE CCD AND CONFIRMATION PROGRAMS FOR MANY YEARS. "WHEN FR. CARLOS CAME 16 YEARS AGO, AS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, THERE WAS AN INSTANT CONNECTION IN WHAT WE WANTED FOR THE CHURCH: TO PROMOTE THE CHURCH TO THE YOUTH AND KEEP THEM HERE TO GET INVOLVED WITH DIFFERENT MINISTRIES. "

recession; people who are persecuted for their immigration status; people who are being taken advantage of because of their papers. We work together with all of the faith traditions and help people who need guidance regardless of their faith denominations. It is very unique. I was the one who worked with the people.

I like to be with the people.

St. Rita's Parish is diverse, in the way that you have people from Mexico and other countries in Latin America, but also the immigrant population they have is still very strong coming in from other countries. Part of the challenge is to help them adapt to a new reality. The English-speaking part of the community at St. Rita's is also diverse, because they are second or third generation Latinos or Filipinos or people from other countries. They have not only been born in the United States, but they are trying to keep the traditions of their own ancestors.

I will say St. Mary's, in Lawrence, Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Staten Island, as well as St. Rita's in Chicago are all extremely diverse. More than it is in my own country. It's different. Sometimes people make a mistake in thinking all Spanish-speaking people have the same cultural background, but each area has its own culture and expressions.

This time, coming back to St. Mary's is a very different experience because I am not coming as an associate; I am coming as a pastor. This has been the scary part,

ROSA MUNOZ

"Lawrence is known as the 'immigrant city' and so we are an immigrant city parish. Fr. Carlos is a great complement to the city and the parish because he values diversity. He's also bilingual, which is fantastic. He's young and he can relate to the youth. He's visited my Confirmation class and the attention that you can see in the students' faces - he knows how to communicate with the different audiences. He's also very patient and, at least in my opinion, he's not afraid to listen to criticism. He's very open-minded. The community has gone through tough times in the past six months, from a grade school closing to a pastor leaving. Both have long histories and deep roots in the community and parish. Fr. Carlos also has roots here and there's an army of people that are supporting him in bringing the community together. Healing takes time. It will also take someone like Fr. Carlos, who has the character, passion and perseverance to persuade people that this is not going to be that bad. He will, he will."

3



CLAUDIA OCON, WHO COOKS FOR THE PRIESTS AT ST. RITA OF CASCIA PARISH, CHICAGO, ILL., MET FR. CARLOS WHEN HE SERVED THERE (2009-2011). "HE TRULY LIVES BY HIS VOCATION, WORKING AND SERVING AND JUST BEING THERE. HE RESPECTS PEOPLE FOR WHO THEY ARE; EVERYONE IS EQUAL, EQUAL TO HIM."

to become their pastor. The beauty is the experience that I have in the previous assignments is helping me to value, recognize and to celebrate the diversity. This is the greatest lesson in my life: to celebrate the differences. To know we are invited to work for unity, not uniformity. "One mind and one heart intent upon God" is what Augustine says. I believe this is to recognize the diversity of God's love manifested through people of different shapes, colors, languages; this is the beauty in this parish.

If you want to be a pastor to all, this is a challenge, but it's just such a great experience.

At my installation Mass in November, I said to the people, "Teach me how to be your pastor. I am your companion on this journey. Help me. Teach me how to serve you better."

I need to be open to learn. Every single day is an opportunity for me to learn. More than just telling anyone what to do, I want to ask, "How can I work with you? How can we accomplish this mission together?" People in the parishes will be my prophet. To know, to learn, to be with them is one of the most powerful experiences that I have ever had.

One of the beautiful charisms of the Order is that the Augustinians are teaching me how to work together. First we are brothers. Our vocation is to be a brother; our priesthood is a service.

CLAUDIA OCON

"Fr. Carlos is truly a warrior for social justice. He sees injustice and it inflames him. He has to do something about it. He can't be quiet. The parish has support groups for people who are fighting for immigration reform. He would listen to people's stories and go to marches organized for the Dream Act. It's something he stands for. He went to the detention centers where people are held before they are deported and where families are being torn apart. He was active in hearing people's cries and he was compassionate. He shared stories as an immigrant coming to this country and you can connect with a person who has this experience.

"There were so many cases of teens, confused and having an identity crisis or problems. Fr. Carlos gave his advice—to learn from the experiences and move on. Don't stay stuck. He taught us beautiful things about self-respect, human dignity."

Augustine was not afraid to know his limitations. Despite them, he let the beauty of God shine through him. Community is the center for us; we are able to live together and respect each other. Far away from being perfect, but this is the beauty: that we can work with each other. One of the most wonderful blessings is to learn how to work together.

4



CRISTINO YNFANTE, PICTURED (CENTER) WITH THE CHOIR DURING FR. CARLOS' INSTALLATION MASS. CRISTINO IS A PARISHIONER AT ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH AND A VOLUNTEER WITH THE CATECHISM PROGRAM AND THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR. "IT WAS FR. CARLOS WHO INSPIRED ME TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE CATECHISM PROGRAM, WHEN HE WAS AT ST. MARY'S IN CHARGE OF THE PROGRAM."

FR. CARLOS E. URBINA, O.S.A., WAS BORN IN SAN MATIAS, EL SALVADOR. HE WAS ORDAINED ON AUGUST 12, 2004, AT ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH, LAWRENCE, MASS. HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT WAS AT ST. MARY'S. IN 2005 HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, STATEN ISLAND, NY. IN 2009 FR. CARLOS WAS TRANSFERRED TO ST. RITA OF CASCIA PARISH, CHICAGO, ILL., IN THE MIDWEST PROVINCE OF OUR MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL. IN 2011, FR. CARLOS RETURNED TO THE PROVINCE OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA WHERE HE WAS ASSIGNED TO ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION AS PASTOR.



PHOTOS OF FR. CARLOS AT HIS NOVEMBER 13, 2011 INSTALLATION AS PASTOR OF ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH CAN BE SEEN IN THE PHOTO GALLERIES AT WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG

CRISTINO YNFANTE

"Five days before his installation as pastor, I was talking to Fr. Carlos and he said, 'You know the installation is Sunday and I don't know what's going on.' He didn't know what was going on because the people put it together for him. They came together for it and for him. We have five or six choirs who sing at our Masses; no two Masses are alike. The choirs here have some issues to get together, but this time members from each choir came to his Installation Mass. We don't usually see that. It doesn't happen.

"Fr. Carlos went personally to the choirs and said, 'I need you there. I want you to be there.' So for his installation, they came. That's because he respects everyone. Fr. Carlos has an understanding of people. No matter who the people are. We are so different, being from different nations and countries; we need someone like Fr. Carlos. He has a gift from God."

**CONVERSATIONS:
VOCATION STORIES**

“WE DON’T SACRIFICE
OUR PERSONALITIES
IN ORDER TO SERVE.
WE ALLOW GOD TO
WORK THROUGH US.”

RICHARD J. PIATT, O.S.A.

**WHEN DID YOU HEAR THE CALL TO BECOME AN
AUGUSTINIAN AND HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE
LIFE AS AN AUGUSTINIAN TODAY?**

“ I first thought about being a priest when I was still a kid. We were a church-going family and my parents raised us to be observant Catholics. Becoming a priest was always something in the back of my head. It just was there. It didn’t consume me. I didn’t spend a whole lot of time thinking about it—but it was there.

It wasn’t until the end of my college career that I really started thinking seriously about it. I went through a period in high school and college where I wasn’t all that interested in the faith anymore. I never stopped being interested in God and I never felt like I stopped having a relationship with God, but I did question my role and my relationship with the Church. And frankly, I didn’t go to church in college. I went when I was home because my parents expected me to go, but I didn’t go when I was at school. It was nothing against the priest who was in charge of Catholic campus ministry there; it just didn’t feel right for me at the time and I made the conscious decision not to do it.

But no matter, that knock was still there. That tap on the shoulder was always there—getting stronger and stronger. And eventually in my senior year in college, I started going back to church. And I started contemplating the idea about being a priest. What if? Is this a possibility?

FR. RICK PIATT, O.S.A., IS PICTURED ON THE STAGE OF THE ROGERS CENTER FOR THE ARTS, LOCATED ON THE CAMPUS OF MERRIMACK COLLEGE, WHERE HE DIRECTS PRODUCTIONS FOR MERRIMACK’S ONSTAGERS DRAMATIC SOCIETY. (PHOTO IS COURTESY OF KEVIN SALEMME.)



1



DIANE SHAW, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY: "WHEN YOU SEE RICK'S WORK AS A DIRECTOR, IT'S NEVER 'WOW, LOOK AT WHAT RICK DID.' IT'S 'LOOK AT WHAT RICK GOT EVERYBODY TO DO AND TO FEEL.'"

At the same time, I got into Villanova for a Master's Degree in Theatre. Frankly, I didn't even realize Villanova was a Roman Catholic Augustinian school. They offered me the best package and that's where I went. And that's where I discovered the Augustinians.

I happened to be living a block or two away from the Rosemont Chapel of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish and so that's where I went to church. For the first time in a long time, I thought, hmm, I'm seeing priests where "what you see is what you get." Maybe I'll start looking into this a little more. My second year at graduate school at Villanova, I met [Fr.] Peter Donohue [O.S.A.] and David Cregan [O.S.A., ordained to the priesthood on September 25, 1999.] Peter came in as the Chair of the Theatre Department and David was a graduate of Villanova, coming off of a tour as an equity actor-performer and getting ready to go into the seminary with the Augustinians, into formation. I started having conversations with them. David put me on to *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. And I thought OK, I'll give it a shot. And as I was reading *The Confessions*, I began to identify more and more with Augustine. And I thought if I'm going to do this, this might be the group. But that was a two-year period of getting-to-know-the-Augustinians before I put my foot

DIANE SHAW

"My husband and I are very big fans of the Merrimack College OnStagers (Merrimack's student-run Dramatic Society) and have seen the last two musicals they did under Rick's direction, *Rent* and *Into the Woods*. We also saw *The 9/11 Effect*, the play Rick co-created and directed for the tenth anniversary of 9/11. It was created with the words of local people who Rick and the cast interviewed about their experiences on 9/11 and how they felt ten years after 9/11. The play left us stunned and speechless. The way they ended it—left a palpable silence; everybody just looked around at each other and you could hear sniffles here and there. It prompted a standing ovation. Rick chose to not do a curtain call because he hoped that the dialogue would continue into the lobby. It was meant to make people react and think and feel.

"Rick is a very serious about social justice; he just lives that way. You can't fake cool. You can't fake kind. Not without people seeing through it at some point. You know decency and goodness when you see it. And you know the joy when you meet someone who is doing what he wants to do with his life."

into that water. I graduated, worked as a freelance actor and started getting more and more interested in the Augustinians.

Long story short, I applied to become an Associate, which I did. And I spent some time discerning. And when push came to shove, it was pick the career or pick the Augustinians. And I decided that God was telling me that I could do the career, why not try this? So I said, OK. And I did.

It was tough, because one of the shows I was asked to be a part of would have

2



ASHLEY SKEFFINGTON, ENGLISH AND SECONDARY EDUCATION MAJOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE ONSTAGERS DRAMATIC SOCIETY, A SENIOR AT MERRIMACK COLLEGE: "I WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE WHEN 9/11 HAPPENED. WHAT I APPRECIATED ABOUT *THE 9/11 EFFECT*, AND WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE TOLD ME THEY APPRECIATED ABOUT IT, WAS THAT IT WAS A WAY TO STEP BACK AND SAY THIS WAS A NATIONAL TRAGEDY, AND IS NOT SOMETHING WE SHOULD STOP THINKING ABOUT."

made my career. So that first year in formation was a lot of second guessing. Did I choose the right thing? But that feeling from God saying, "Give me a shot, give it more time," was very present. And so I gave it more time and it turned out to be the right decision.

"BUT THAT FEELING FROM GOD SAYING 'GIVE ME A SHOT, GIVE IT MORE TIME,' WAS VERY PRESENT. AND SO I GAVE IT MORE TIME AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE THE RIGHT DECISION"

I was ordained on July 21, 2001. My first assignment was to Saint Augustine Parish in Andover, Mass. Within six months of my ordination, New York was attacked on September 11th and then the Boston priest scandal exploded in January 2002. I remember taking a trip in January with students down to a March for Life rally, at the airport in Manchester, N.H. I'm in my collar, people are looking at their newspapers and looking at me, looking at their newspapers, looking at me.

ASHLEY SKEFFINGTON

"I really haven't had all that much interaction with Augustinian priests, or anybody who holds a position in the Catholic Church—or anything like that. For me one of the big things that I've gotten out of my relationship with Rick—just knowing him and having the chance to get to meet him—is that I wasn't religious or connected to God in any way. I had this set image of what priests were like in my head before coming to Merrimack, having not really interacted with them all that much, and I just remember talking to him for the first time. He's one of those people who just gets it. He understands our generation so well. You can sit down with him and you can have a conversation with him about anything. You can be very, very open with him. He's personally helped me with a lot of things in my years here. I would see that as one of the ways God works through him. That kind of support or that kind of solace—I would never have thought to seek that out in a religious person or a priest. He's just so easy to talk to and really understanding. He makes you think about things. And actually he's made me rethink a lot of things."

3



FR. RICK WITH KEVIN SALEMME, DIRECTOR OF MEDIA INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES AT MERRIMACK COLLEGE: "RICK COMES OVER AND WE HAVE COFFEE AND WE TALK ABOUT 'HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS? HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THROUGH THAT?' WE FIGURE IT OUT AND WE FIND A WAY. WE CONFIDE IN EACH OTHER AND WE HELP EACH OTHER."

And I'm thinking, they think I'm one of them! Great. Is this what I signed up for?

I know guys that I graduated seminary with in other Orders who left. They said, "No, this isn't what I signed up for. Bye-bye." If I weren't an Augustinian I don't know if I would have stayed. I had a fantastic community then and I live in one now too. I signed the letter asking to have Cardinal Law resign. And the provincial backed us on our rights to have our opinions. It's not about the institution at that point, it's about those children. And you can't dismiss it. Ten years later, I still feel that my entire priesthood has been defined by priest scandal and 9/11. And, if my priesthood has been defined by this and current Merrimack students were nine, ten or eleven when this happened, their lives in the Church have been defined by this too. It makes me angry to no end. To no end.

Consequently, I think a lot of Catholic youth are growing up without a strong basis in religion. I do think there are vocations out there, but I think the problem is the faith itself. The Boston Archdiocese is an extremely damaged area. Cardinal Seán [O'Malley, OFM, Cap.] is doing a great job, but it's going to take generations to fix the damage that has been done. Yes, there are young families in church and yes, there are good things happening. But I think people highly underestimate the damage that the sex abuse scandal caused.

KEVIN SALEMME

"We're similar because I'm an artist and I know he's an artist too. He's an Augustinian Friar and wants to be able to express his creativity. This is why he went to get his doctorate in theater. It's not just theater—his specialty is Theatre of the Oppressed. It's Social Justice theater—so he's got what every artist needs and that is a message.

"He brings that message to Merrimack and creates a new awareness in the students. He is an earnest artist who is not the radio station but more of a receiver-relay station, channeling, finding that energy and moving it in a particular direction. It's his personality. It's who he is.

"I think *The 9/11 Effect* was really about how 9/11 affected the community here at Merrimack. Rick had alumni and current students all working together to come up with a play. Bringing people together in a way that is very Augustinian: if we are a community and there's something that's hard to deal with in life, something that none of us knows how to deal with—at least we can be together and not deal with it."

It's not necessarily that people don't believe in God, although there's a lot of that out there too. They don't see the relevance of the Church. They don't see the need for a Church. I work with a lot of really, really good men, women and kids who have no interest in God or the Church.

They are interested in having a conversation with me about why I believe in God. And you know what, that might be planting a seed for down the line.

So, if all I can do is have a conversation—I'll take it.

”

PHOTOS FROM THE STAGE PRODUCTION OF *THE 9/11 EFFECT* CAN BE VIEWED AT [HTTP://MERRIMACK.SMUGMUG.COM/PEOPLE](http://merrimack.smugmug.com/people)

4



FR. RICK PRESIDES AT THE 2009 WEDDING OF JENNA AND CHRIS WOOD. CHRIS: "I'VE SEEN ONSTAGERS' PERFORMANCES FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS, FOUR AS A STUDENT AND TWO AS A MEMBER OF THE PIT ORCHESTRA. YOU GET TO SIT IN THE PIT AND WATCH WHAT HAPPENS. THE SENSE OF COHESION THAT THE GROUP HAS NOW, I BELIEVE CAN BE SOLELY ATTRIBUTED TO FR. RICK AND HIS LEADERSHIP."

JENNA AND CHRIS WOOD

Jenna: "I attended our freshman orientation Mass and was completely drawn in by the music. I went up to Fr. Rick, who directed the choir, after Mass and joined right then. I had a really hard time adjusting to college—the whole living away from home, the whole new experience. Fr. Rick was always my go-to person when I was struggling, so he helped me through everything pretty much through all four years. Singing at Mass and rehearsals was the one time I felt like I was in the right place. He always had a knack of making everyone feel included. He had a huge impact on me."

Chris: "When I came to Merrimack, I wasn't Catholic; I was a Protestant. Fr. Rick was still the director of the choir. I joined it and met Jenna there. During our courtship and when I decided I was going to make this major faith-change in my life, Fr. Rick was my sounding board. He was in London, England at this time, but through the wonder of instant messaging and e-mail he became my faith counselor from afar."

"He is not what you would think of when you say Catholic priest. I want to say he's himself first and a priest second. It's not a separate space. He uses what he has to do what he does best. Fr. Rick brings a lot of life to the priestly presence at Merrimack with his big gifts and talents."

RICHARD JAY PIATT, O.S.A., WAS BORN IN EASTON, PA. HE WAS ORDAINED ON JULY 21, 2001, AT THE ROSEMONT CHAPEL, PARISH OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, ROSEMONT, PA. FR. RICK WAS FIRST ASSIGNED TO ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH, ANDOVER, MASS. FROM 2001 TO 2002. HE WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY ASSIGNED TO MERRIMACK COLLEGE AS CAMPUS MINISTER FOR MUSIC AND MINISTRY (2001-2003) AND THEN BECAME DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY AT MERRIMACK (2003-2006). IN 2006 HE WENT TO LONDON TO PURSUE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY AND A PH.D IN DRAMA AT GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. FR. RICK RETURNED TO MERRIMACK IN 2010 TO TAKE THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS. HE HAS DIRECTED MERRIMACK'S MUSICAL THEATRE PRODUCTIONS FOR THE PAST TWO SEASONS AND RECENTLY, WITH CLAIRE KINTON AND THE GENESIOUS PROJECT, CREATED AND DIRECTED AN ORIGINAL PLAY, *THE 9/11 EFFECT*, BASED ON REAL INTERVIEWS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO DISCUSSED THEIR FEELINGS TEN YEARS AFTER THE 9/11 ATTACKS. HIS PASSION AND HIS THEATRE STUDIES ARE FOCUSED ON THE THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED, USING THEATRE TO RAISE ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. FR. RICK HELPS WITH WEEKEND MASSES AT INCARNATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST PARISH IN MELROSE, MASS.

NEWS AND NOTES

FROM THE PROVINCE OF SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA AND THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER



NEWLY CREATED CARDINAL, AUGUSTINIAN FRIAR PROSPERO GRECH (LEFT), IS EMBRACED BY POPE BENEDICT XVI (RIGHT), DURING THE CONSISTORY OF FEBRUARY 18, 2012, AT SAINT PETER'S BASILICA IN ROME. NAMED TO THE RANK OF CARDINAL-DEACON, HE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TITULAR CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA GORETTI IN ROME.

Augustinian Friar Named a Cardinal

On the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI announced the creation of 22 new Cardinals of the Church. Among them was Father Prospero Grech, O.S.A., of the Maltese Province. Fr. Grech is the first Augustinian since the nomination of Sebastiano Cardinal Martinelli in 1901, to be received into the College of Cardinals. Martinelli was nominated while he was serving as Apostolic Delegate in the United States of America. A highly respected scripture scholar, Fr. Grech is the co-founder and first president of the Order's Patristic Institute, the Augustinianum. He has taught at various institutions in Rome including the Biblicum and the Lateran and Gregorian Universities. He is a member of the

community of Collegio Santa Monica, Rome. Fr. Robert F. Prevost, O.S.A., Prior General of the Augustinian Order in Rome, commenting on the great joy and honor that accompanies the elevation of Fr. Grech to Cardinal, noted that "There is also a call to all of us, an invitation to all of us to renew our spirit of sacrifice, of giving, of generous service, of truly wanting to pour out our lives in service of others."

Prior to his elevation to Cardinal, Fr. Grech was consecrated a bishop, a ceremony which took place on February 8, 2012, at St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, Malta. The Consistory, during which Fr. Grech was made a Cardinal, was held on Saturday, February 18, 2012, in Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome.



FR. JAMES SPENARD WELCOMES MARIE HARE AS AN AUGUSTINIAN SECULAR.

New Augustinian Secular in Troy, New York

On October 15, 2011, Fr. James T. Spenard, O.S.A., Pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Troy, New York, welcomed Marie Hare at Mass, to be a permanent member of St. Rita's Chapter of the Augustinian Seculars.

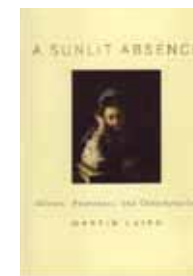


CARDINAL SEÁN O'MALLEY, O.F.M. CAP., CONGRATULATES BR. JOHN J. DELCASALE, O.S.A., AS HE AWARDS THE CHEVERUS MEDAL

Br. John J. DelCasale, O.S.A., Awarded Cheverus Medal

In 2008, Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., instituted the Cheverus Medal, awarded in recognition of service to the Church. The vast majority of recipients are laypeople, nominated by their parishes. However, Cardinal O'Malley himself nominates some recipients, as was the case with Brother John J. DelCasale, O.S.A. In notifying Br. John of the nomination, Cardinal O'Malley wrote: "In consultation with the Auxiliary Bishops and with Pastors throughout the Archdiocese, I have learned of your selfless dedication and commitment and your many contributions to advancing Christ's mission. We are blessed by your service and are privileged to name you for this honor." Medals were awarded by Cardinal O'Malley

on November 20, 2011 at a solemn Vesper Service at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston.



Fr. Martin S. Laird, O.S.A., Featured on PBS Program

Fr. Martin S. Laird, O.S.A., an associate professor of theology at Villanova University, has written two books on contemplative prayer: *A Sunlit Absence - Silence, Awareness and Contemplation* (2011) and *Into the Silent Land - A Guide*

to the Christian Practice of Contemplation (2006). Fr. Laird, who teaches classes on Christian meditation at Villanova, was featured on the December 16, 2011 episode of the PBS television program *Religion & ETHICS Newsweekly*. Fr. Laird was recorded at a workshop in Maine as well as in his class at Villanova. A video of the segment that aired, as well as the transcript of the segment, can be viewed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/december-16-2011/father-martin-laird/10017/>

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ABSTRACT WINDOW DEPICTS THE BLESSED MOTHER EMBRACING THE CONGREGATION AT ST. AUGUSTINE FUKUOKA.

New Church Dedicated in Fukuoka, Japan

On September 3, 2011, Bishop Dominic Ryoji Miyahara, a long-time friend of the Augustinians, consecrated our new church complex in Fukuoka, Japan. The wide, stained-glass window covering the back of the church is an abstract picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary with her arms encircling the congregation. It’s symbolic of the long Japanese Catholic tradition of respect and love for Our Lady. The church seats 280 people and sliding doors allow the church to be extended to seat 320. There is a small chapel for daily Mass and quiet prayer. The Monastery is adjacent to the church and offers comfortable bedrooms, a modern kitchen, a bright dining room, beautiful bathrooms, showers and a special room for the Japanese *ofuro* (hot bath) which is delightful during the winter. In Japan, cremation is almost universal and most Japanese place the ashes of their family in a columbarium. Prices for such units run over \$20,000. Our architect proposed a



COLUMBARIUM AT ST. AUGUSTINE, FUKUOKA.

columbarium within the budget of even poor families. The Japanese venerate their ancestors, and an artistic columbarium adds a traditional Japanese flavor to the church. The process of building the new church started ten years ago when the people of the parish began to raise funds. It was a long, tough journey for the 300 participating families. They deserve so much credit. The contribution of the Augustinian Order was very great, as well. It is an amazing accomplishment.



BISHOP DANIEL TURLEY, O.S.A., SPOKE AT A GATHERING AS THE GOVERNMENT’S WATER PROJECT WAS STARTED. BISHOP TURLEY HAS LONG ADVOCATED FOR PROVIDING WATER TO THE PEOPLE.

Peruvian Water Project Brings Bishop Daniel Turley, O.S.A., and Peruvian President Ollanta Humala Together

Water can be a scarce resource in our mission sites of northern Peru. For many years, Bishop Daniel Turley, O.S.A., has been a leading advocate for the government project, “Proyecto Alto Piura,” a project to bring water through desert and mountains to many thousands that need it. This past December, the project finally exploded into action as Peruvian President Ollanta Humala blew the first hole into a mountain with dynamite. He, as well as the Governor of Piura, explained that the program is not only incredibly important for improved irrigation, but also for the promise of hydro-powered energy. Bishop Dan met the President at this historic event and prayed for the project’s success.



BISHOP DANIEL TURLEY, O.S.A. AND OLLANTA HUMALA, PRESIDENT OF PERU, GREET EACH OTHER AS THE GOVERNMENT’S PROJECT WAS INITIATED.



FR. ALLAN D. FITZGERALD, O.S.A.

Fr. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Profiled in New Book

Fr. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Director of the Augustinian Institute at Villanova University, is among men profiled by author Cynthia Hurst in a new book, *The Platinum Project: Men in the 21st Century*. Stories of men from different countries and different walks of life - business executives, sports enthusiasts, musicians, as well as “an Augustinian Friar” - are profiled in this collection. The author explores men in the 21st century, and how they find laughter, adventure, meaning and inspiration in life.



TOP ROW (L-TO-R): DAMIAN LONG, TYLER CRAVEN AND ANTONETTE AMATO. BOTTOM ROW (L-TO-R): TARA BECKER, ERIKA ESPOSITO, DANI VAZIRI AND CAITLIN RISK.

2011 International Augustinian Volunteers Return

The 2011 International Augustinian Volunteers attended a re-entry retreat after returning home in December from their year of service abroad. Four volunteers served in Peru (Antonette Amato, Tara Becker, Dani Vaziri, Caitlin Risk) and three in South Africa (Damian Long, Erika Esposito, Tyler Craven). The re-entry retreat provided an opportunity for the volunteers to share, reflect on and process their experiences, as they look towards life after their volunteer year. On Saturday, December 17, 2011, families and friends, former volunteers and friars in the local area were invited to a Mass at St. Thomas of Villanova Chapel in Rosemont, Pa. After Mass, a dinner was held in the church hall.

Stay on top of news and events from the Augustinian world – sign up for Augustinian eNews at www.augustinian.org.

LOOKING AHEAD

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Summer Solstice Festival

JUNE 17, 2012 - 2:00 PM

The musical ensemble Sanctuary will present a Summer Solstice prayer service. Directed by Dan Mason, Augustinian Affiliate, with founder, Fr. Shawn Tracy, O.S.A., the ensemble will bring their music to St. Raphaela Retreat Center in Haverford, Pa. The program will celebrate the season with a musical presentation of psalms, sacred poetry and Augustinian Spirituality.

St. Raphaela Retreat Center
616 Coopertown Road
Haverford, PA 19041
PHONE 800-834-6250
WEB www.sanctuary.villanova.edu



Prayer for Augustinian Vocations

Please join the Augustinians in praying for vocations to the Augustinian way of life.

Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, who calls men and women to loving service.

All glory and praise are yours, God of truth, light of our hearts, For you guide your people in the ways of holiness.

Help those who follow in the footsteps of Augustine To seek you through mutual love and worship And to be servants of your Church as examples that others may follow.

Enlighten men and women to see the beauty of common life In the spirit of Saint Augustine and strengthen them in your service, so that the work you have begun in them may be brought to fulfillment.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord Amen.

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To receive the Augustinian by mail, please e-mail your address to us at communications@augustinian.org or write to:

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KEEPING TRACK

Following the vow of obedience, friars find themselves called to where they are needed. Each issue of The Augustinian hopes to connect you with some familiar faces as we provide brief updates on friars serving throughout the Province. Watch here to track down that old classmate, pastor, chemistry teacher, chaplain, philosophy professor, co-worker or friend.

Alfred J. Ellis, O.S.A.



Fr. Alfred Ellis, O.S.A., from Carthage, N.Y., has served at many parishes in upstate New York and in Massachusetts. He also served as Director

of Novices for the province in New Hamburg, N.Y. Fr. Ellis volunteered and served at the Mission in South Africa for three years. Most recently he served as Associate Pastor at St. Augustine Parish in Troy, N.Y. While at Troy, he also served as a regional contact for the Augustinian Seculars. Fr. Ellis currently resides at St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery in Villanova, Pa.

James D. Paradis, O.S.A.



Fr. James Paradis, O.S.A., from Flint, Mich., served in parish ministry at St. Denis in Havertown, Pa. He worked with individuals, couples and

groups in an interfaith center for pastoral counseling while teaching, and doing

retreat work and part-time campus ministry at Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass. He served as Personnel Director for the province as well as a Province Counselor under the previous administration. Holding a D.Min. in Clinical Pastoral Psychology, Fr. Jim currently serves as Director of the Cascia Center Ministries, located at the Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia in South Philadelphia. Fr. Jim also continues to serve as a Province Counselor for the current administration. He resides at St. Augustine Parish in Philadelphia.

Joseph A. Spinelli, O.S.A.



Fr. Joseph Spinelli, O.S.A., from Vineland, N.J., received his first assignment after ordination to Monsignor Bonner High School in Drexel Hill, Pa.,

where he taught for 26 years. He then moved into parish ministry for the next 25 years, where he served as an associate pastor and as a pastor in various parishes on the east and west coasts of Florida, including Resurrection Parish in Dania Beach and St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Golden Gate. Fr. Joe currently resides at St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery in Villanova, Pa.

Luis A. Vera, O.S.A.



Fr. Luis Vera, O.S.A., was born in Salinas, Puerto Rico. He joined the Augustinians in Massachusetts and spent his novitiate year in Racine, Wis.

Fr. Vera's parochial ministry included an assignment at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Staten Island, N.Y. He has also served in formation work for the province at Augustinian College in Washington, D.C., where he was Prior. Currently, Fr. Luis is the Director of Formation and the Regent

of Studies, at St. Augustine Friary in Chicago, where he oversees the formation process of those who, having made simple profession of vows, are continuing their post-novitiate studies at Catholic Theological Union.

TO CONTACT FR. AL:

St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery
800 E. Lancaster Avenue
Villanova, PA 19085

TO CONTACT FR. JIM:

St. Augustine Rectory
243 North Lawrence Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

TO CONTACT FR. JOE:

St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery
800 E. Lancaster Avenue
Villanova, PA 19085

TO CONTACT FR. LUIS:

St. Augustine Friary
5413 S. Cornell Avenue
Chicago, IL 60615

IN PARADISUM

The following friars were called home to God. You can read full biographies of these Augustinians, and post your own reflections or favorite memory, online at www.augustinian.org



Bernard J. O'Dowd, O.S.A.

BORN: 8/23/1931
FIRST PROFESSION: 9/10/1950
ORDAINED: 2/8/1958
DIED: 11/27/2011

Fr. O'Dowd's assignments included parish ministry in several states and the education apostolate at Monsignor Bonner (Pa.) and Archbishop Carroll (D.C.) High Schools. He also served as hospital chaplain while in Massachusetts and, from 1968-1971, he served as a Military Chaplain in the United States Army in Vietnam.

"Fr. Bernie's service in the various apostolates of the province, teaching, preaching and parochial ministry, is an example of a true follower of St. Augustine."



James L. Galligan, O.S.A.

BORN: 8/8/1922
FIRST PROFESSION: 9/10/1944
ORDAINED: 6/6/1950
DIED: 12/3/2011

Fr. Galligan's parochial ministry spanned parishes in Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. He worked in shrine ministry at St. Rita of Cascia National Shrine in Philadelphia. While he was stationed in Massachusetts, he also worked with Cambodian refugees.

"Fr. Jim followed Jesus in the Augustinian spirit by his dedicated service to God's people and life in community. He sought to serve the Church and the community with love and dedication wherever he was stationed."



William A. McGuire, O.S.A.

BORN: 1/2/1939
FIRST PROFESSION: 9/10/1958
ORDAINED: 10/29/1965
DIED: 1/17/2012

Fr. McGuire served his entire priestly ministry in the education apostolate. His first assignment was as a teacher at Monsignor Bonner High School, Drexel Hill, Pa., where he later served in administrative positions. In 1979, he was assigned to Villanova University where he served in various departments' administrative positions as assistant dean, dean, assistant athletic director and as senior vice president for administration. Appointed Province Treasurer in 2007, he resigned in 2009 due to failing health.

"Fr. Bill was known for his ready smile, friendly manner and sense of humor. He lived his life in the spirit of St. Augustine, the teacher, counselor and administrator, and will be missed by many whose lives he touched."

DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Province’s Development Council works tirelessly to advise and assist the Augustinians in raising awareness and funds to support the many good works of the friars. The Province is indebted to all who serve on the Development Council:

- Anthony M. Genovese, O.S.A., Prior Provincial
- Charles P. Connolly, Jr., Chairman
- Mario R. Dickerson, Director of Development
- Anthony Dellomo, Co-Chair, Augustinian Fund
- James O’Connor, Co-Chair, Augustinian Fund
- James Delaney
- Basil DiSipio
- Raymond Falzone
- Peter Federico
- Bradley MacDonald
- Anthony Madrigale
- Mary Ellen Maggitti
- William Mahoney
- James J. McCartney, O.S.A.
- William “Tip” O’Neill, Jr.
- Claudia Piccirilli
- Michael Picotte
- Eric Quisenberry
- Robert Saldutti
- James H. Stewart
- Susan Wojtas

HONORARY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

- William Hallissey
- Gary Holloway, Sr.

The spirit to make a difference.

“Bad times, hard times - this is what people keep saying; but let us live well, and times shall be good. We are the times: Such as we are, such are the times.”

St. Augustine, Sermon 80.8

- There are many difficulties in the world today. In spite of these challenges, and even in defiance, there are those who rise up and offer a message of hope, reconciliation, compassion and justice. Who are these courageous individuals?
- Young women and men of the Augustinian Volunteers who give a year in service to the poor and needy across the United States, South Africa and Peru.
- Men who are currently discerning the call from God to live a life of service as an Augustinian Friar.
- Sick and elderly friars who continue the ministry of prayer for those in active ministry and for all people.
- Advocates of the justice and peace initiatives of the province, who work to right the wrong of many of the social injustices of our time.
- You! The prayers and financial support you offer to the Augustinians help countless people in material and spiritual need witness the loving God who is real and present in our world.

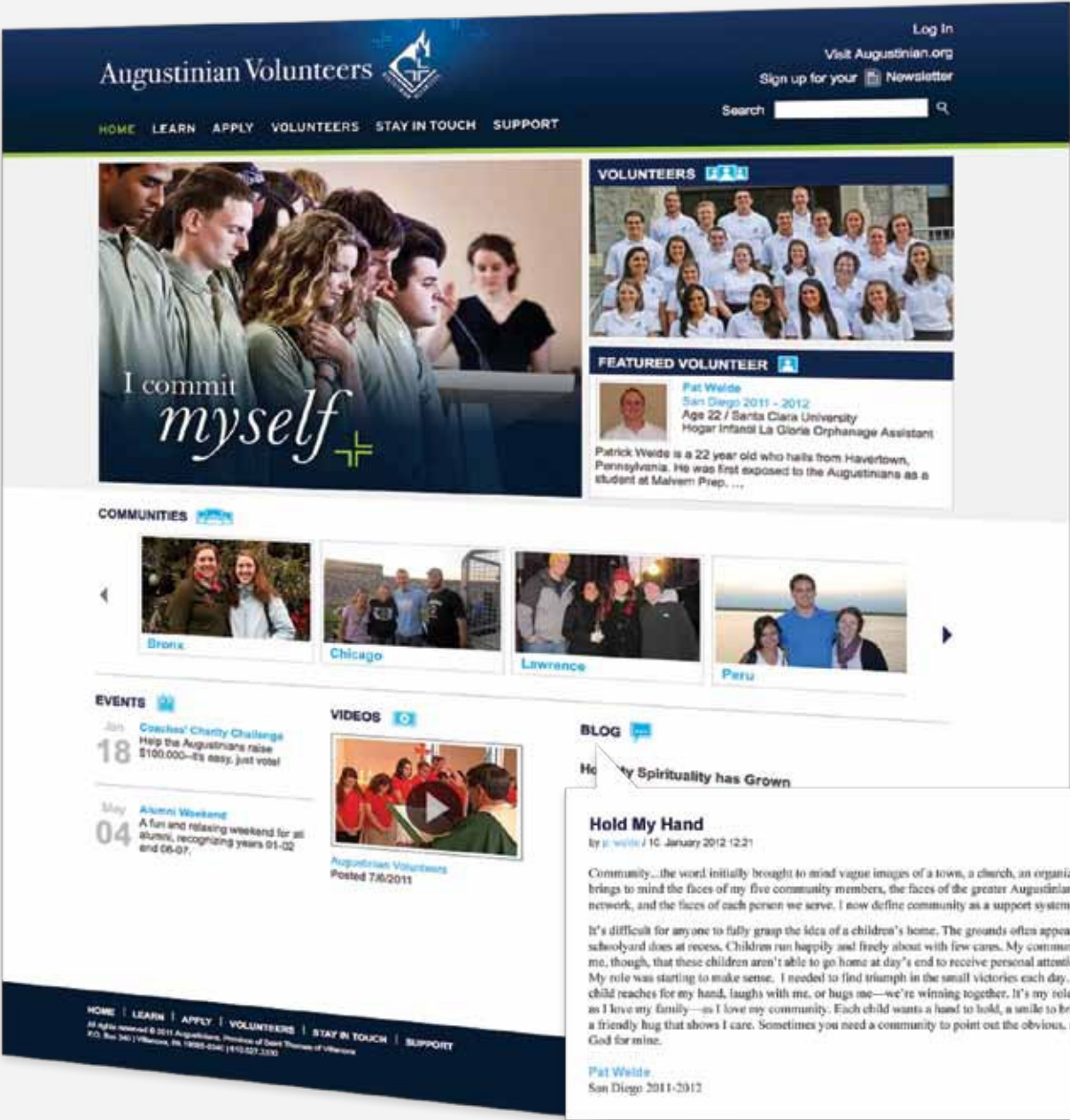
Thank you for your courageous spirit to make a difference. Thank you for your support.



FR. ANTHONY M. GENOVESE, O.S.A., DEBUTS THE NEW AUGUSTINIAN VOCATION VIDEO ENTITLED “THE CALL” AT BLESSED STEPHEN BELLESINI FRIARY, THE NEW DISCERNMENT AND PRE-NOVIATE HOUSE IN ARDMORE, PA. THE VIDEO DEBUT WAS ATTENDED BY LEADING DONORS TO THE AUGUSTINIAN FUND FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA AND INCLUDED A DINNER, TOUR, AND CHANCE TO MEET AND SOCIALIZE WITH MEN IN DISCERNMENT AT BELLESINI FRIARY. THE EVENING WAS GRACIOUSLY HOSTED BY MR. & MRS. CHARLES P. CONNOLLY, JR., AND MS. MARY ELLEN MAGGITI.

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The spirit to make a difference.



CARE OF THE SICK AND ELDERLY



FOREIGN MISSIONS IN JAPAN, PERU AND SOUTH AFRICA



JUSTICE AND PEACE



AUGUSTINIAN VOLUNTEERS



VOCATIONS/FORMATION

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