

the Augustinian

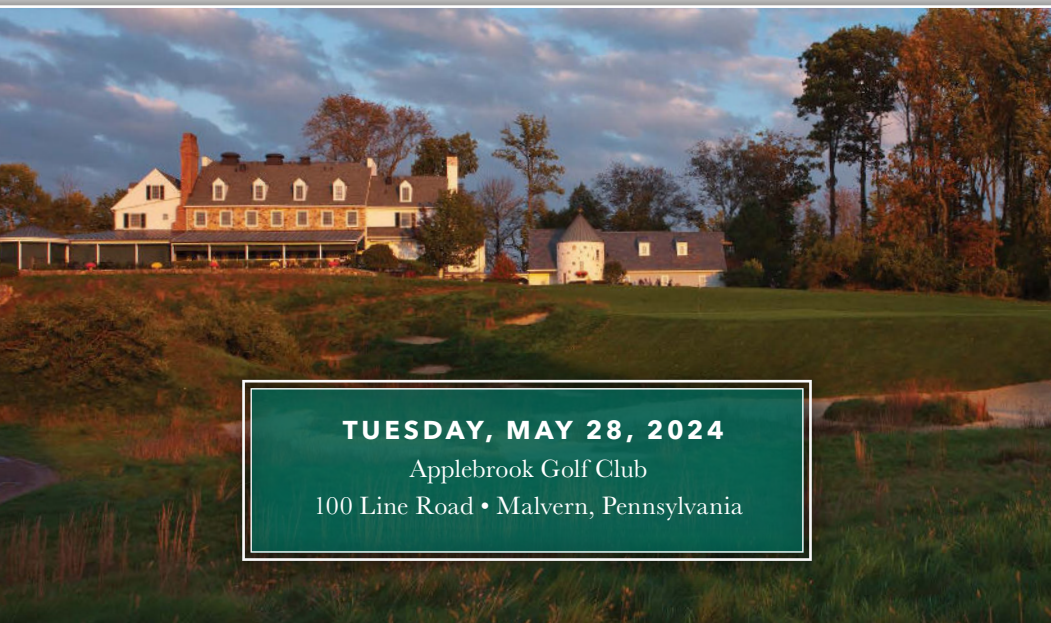
SPRING 2024



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Augustinians
Golf Outing



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HAGAN, O.S.A.,**
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and all of your
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TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024
Applebrook Golf Club
100 Line Road • Malvern, Pennsylvania

*Proceeds to benefit the Fr. George F. Riley, O.S.A. Fund for Augustinian HealthCare
and the M. Louise Fitzpatrick Fund for Formation.*

SCHEDULE

- 7:30 AM | Registration for Morning Tee Times
- 8:00 AM | Shotgun Start
- 11:00 AM | Registration for Afternoon Tee Times
- 11:30 AM | Lunch
- 12:30 PM | Shotgun Start
- 5:30 PM | Cocktails and Hors D'oeuvres
- 6:00 PM | Buffet Dinner and Music

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the
Augustinian

*Publication of the Province of
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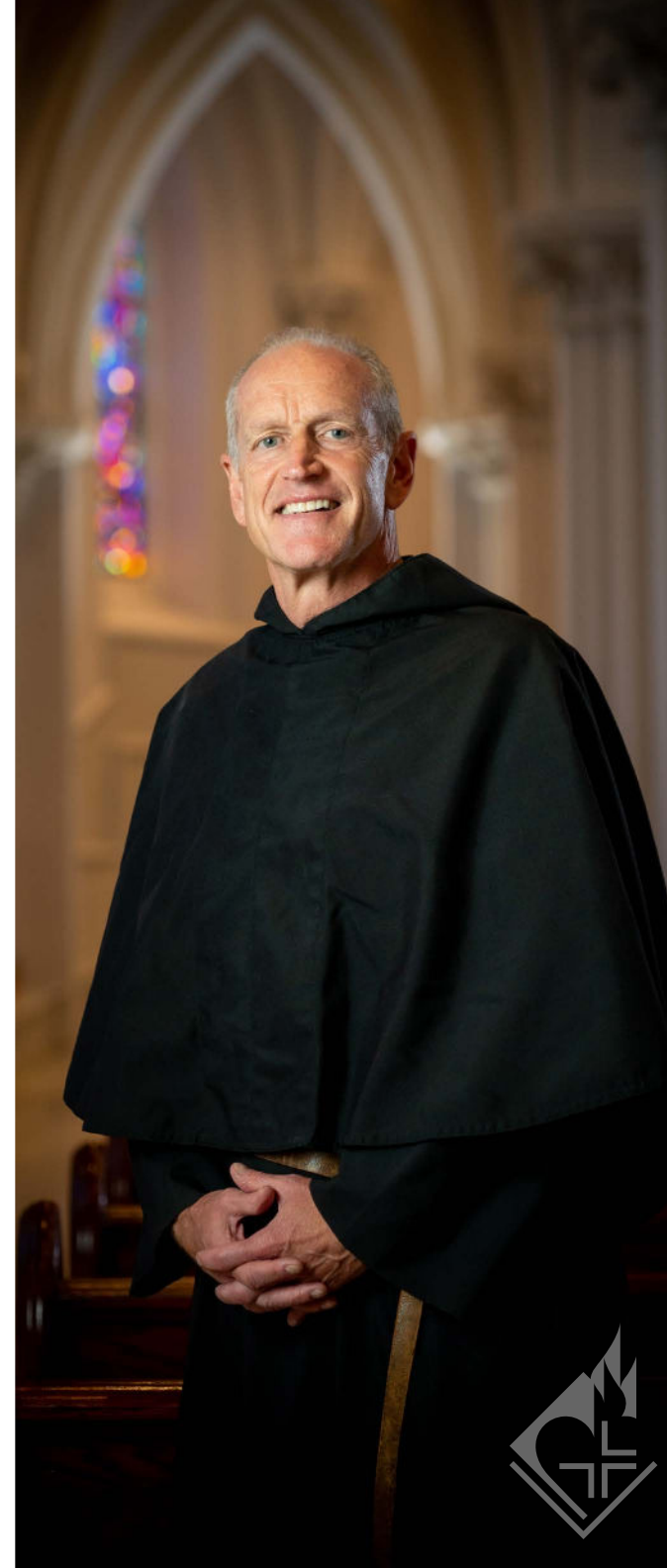
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DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

When you look at the gathering of friars and Provincial staff on the cover of this issue of *The Augustinian*, you see the smiling faces of my colleagues and brother Augustinians, and you also see much more.

See the thousands, even millions, of worshippers our Augustinian parishes have served for over two hundred years. See their many different communities—Italian American, Hispanic, Filipino, and more—and think of how they've made the Augustinian charism their own in different ways.

See the lives of incarcerated citizens, returning citizens, and families who have been healed through their prison ministry programs. See the staff of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor and the team of health professionals and translators helping to bring essential health care to those who need it but can't afford it. See the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia and think of the many pilgrims who leave the Shrine with more hope than they came with, knowing that the patron saint of impossible causes is keeping them in her care.

Our ministries in Philadelphia are exceptional, and I invite you to experience them for yourself over the next few pages (and in person!). You'll hear from the friars and staff about not only what makes their ministries unique, but how they impact Philadelphians' lives every day. I hope, if you find yourself in the city, that you can experience our ministries for yourself one day.

If our Augustinian ministries inspire you, perhaps you will be interested in our story on the revival of our Augustinian lay initiatives. These communities of lay men and women endeavor to be faithful to their Christian vocations under the guidance of Augustinian Spirituality and are official members of our Order. There are different kinds of Lay Augustinian memberships, from informal and introductory to formal promises to live in accordance with the teachings of St. Augustine for life, so maybe there's one that will inspire you to take a couple steps closer to our way of life and ultimately to God.

Speaking of additions to the Augustinian family, we were delighted to welcome Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., president of Merrimack College, and his wife Cheryl M. Lucas as affiliates to the Order of St. Augustine. Affiliation is the highest honor that the Order can bestow on the laity, and we were delighted to celebrate with them, their family, and the community of Merrimack College in November. You can read that story, along with other highlights on Province happenings, in the "News and Notes" section.

It is with a heavy heart that we report that staffing and personnel realities required the Augustinians to withdraw from our two parishes in the Diocese of Albany. The Augustinians have served at St. Mary's in Waterford, NY since 1858 and at St. Augustine's in Troy, NY since 1860, but circumstances are making it impossible for us to maintain all of the ministerial commitments we once had. To our friends in those communities, know that we leave you with heavy spirits, will miss you dearly, and remind you that we will always be united in one Augustinian heart.

Peace always,

Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.
Prior Provincial

“
**EACH OF US
STRENGTHENS
ALL OF US.**
”

— St. Augustine



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Illustrated by Aly Miller

THE Augustinian PHILADELPHIA STORY

With the nickname “The City of Brotherly Love,” it seems fitting that Philadelphia was the first home of the Augustinian Friars in the United States. The country was barely even “the United States” when two Irish Augustinians, Fathers John Rosseter, O.S.A. and Matthew Carr, O.S.A., arrived in Philadelphia in 1794 to put down roots that extend to this day.

Philadelphia remains a hub of Augustinian ministry, with four vibrant parishes, the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor, and their many additional ministries. We invite you over the next pages to meet the different communities and initiatives that thrive in Philadelphia, and to meet the friars, staff, and friends who make the city a little more Augustinian every day.



Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A. talks to volunteers during one of A.D.R.O.P.'s Unity Clinics.

FROM THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

Fr. Jeremy R. Hiers, O.S.A., Director of the Office of Justice and Peace

I believe the most exciting part of having an Augustinian vocation is the opportunity to witness our 1,600-year Augustinian tradition alive today. When Augustine gathered a community of like-minded people from various socioeconomic, educational, and cultural backgrounds, he invited them to peaceful unity and harmony by “holding all things in common.” This was based on the fundamental truth that we cannot have peace in a community when some members go without their basic needs met while others live with a surplus. Thus, you cannot have peace until you have justice.

The Augustinian vocation is therefore one in which we are called to form communities of justice and peace through genuine Christian love as we live and work for the common good of all.

Our Province is blessed to have numerous ministries that witness in this way. Our parishes create community and provide a ministry to meet the specific needs of their local neighborhoods. Our schools help future leaders of our society learn how to apply our tradition to the justice and peace issues of our day.



Healing and renewal are often prerequisites for justice and peace. The National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia offers this by serving as a place of prayer, pilgrimage, reconciliation, and counseling. The Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor provides services that connect the poorest of the poor with resources needed for them to flourish.

As one friar said, thanks to our many diverse ministries, “nobody is a stranger to an Augustinian.” By working for the common good of all, we ultimately grow closer to God and our neighbor. Thus, all of us who serve in these ministries are also transformed by them and our common life continues to be strengthened. In my nine years of living the Augustinian way of life, I have personally witnessed this effect time and time again.

As the new Director of the Office of Justice and Peace, I follow a long line of great Augustinians (most recently Fr. Jack Deegan, O.S.A.) who have been asked to help ensure this vision remains alive in our Province. We do this primarily by promoting initiatives that connect our ministries and the communities in which we live to the justice and peace issues of our day.

As we look at the many problems facing our society today, we see a world that is suffering from a lack of peace because there is a lack of justice.

This is our time to witness to something so much better, just as Augustine did 1,600 years ago. As we look to the future, we believe there are many opportunities to provide this witness. For

example, we believe that forming partnerships with the laity will help us create new initiatives to serve people we presently do not serve. We are also looking at ways to create partnerships between our ministries that enable us to maximize our witness and the gifts people have given us to support those ministries. Last, we are looking at new and innovative ways to promote education on our spirituality so that even more people will come to see the relevance of Augustine’s vision to the signs of our own time.

We cannot do this without you!

We are so grateful for all who have contributed their time, talent, and treasure to ensure our way of life continues. We ask you to continue to partner with us so that our Augustinian tradition continues for future generations.

I am particularly excited about our presence inside the city of Philadelphia, where we have the Shrine, the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor, and four parishes served by 13 friars and two lay leaders within a two-mile distance from one another. Imagine what God can do as we work together to witness our way of life to the people of the city!

I cannot wait to see what God is going to do in us and then through us and our ministries in the years ahead.

ABOUT FR. JEREMY R. HIERS, O.S.A.

Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A. has served as director of the Office of Justice and Peace since May 2023. In this role, he oversees the strategic coordination and collaboration of current and new Province initiatives in the areas of social justice and evangelization.

Fr. Jeremy was born in Cincinnati, OH, and completed his undergraduate studies in Computer Information Systems and Mathematics at Thomas More College in 2003. He earned a master’s degree in management of information technology from the University of Virginia in 2007. Prior to becoming an Augustinian, he worked for the Army as a program manager for 13 years in Washington, DC, where he oversaw the acquisition and implementation of various IT systems.

While he was raised Lutheran, he entered the Roman Catholic Church in 2010 during his time with the Army. Over his career, he discerned a call to religious life and entered the Augustinians in 2015. In this role, he oversees the strategic coordination and collaboration of current and new Province initiatives in the areas of social justice and evangelization.



Fr. Paul Galetto, O.S.A. (pastor) and Fr. David Cregan, O.S.A. (resident) lead the parishioners of St. Paul’s through South Philadelphia during the parish’s annual Procession of the Saints.

THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. RITA OF CASCIA

1166 SOUTH BROAD STREET

By Jonathan Jerome, Executive Director

In the heart of South Philadelphia, just a mile from City Hall, in an unassuming but historic Catholic church on Broad Street, is a spiritual oasis unlike any other. Founded in 1907, the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia is a powerhouse of Augustinian spirituality that tells the story of St. Rita in a compelling and relatable way to thousands of visitors each year. The Shrine is committed to meeting the needs of the local community, but also reaching into the hearts and minds of devoted patrons and

patrons-to-be from around the country. Every year, pilgrims from every state and countless other countries make their way to South Philadelphia to honor St. Rita and ask for her powerful intercession.

St. Rita, one of the few saints in our Catholic tradition who lived every vocation, is known as the patron saint of impossible cases. She shattered societal expectations when she brokered a peace deal between her family and the family that murdered her husband over 600 years ago. And, for the past 600 years, her example of perseverance and reconciliation has inspired millions of people from throughout the world to know, love, and serve God more fully.

Today, her legacy is most obvious through the Shrine’s robust ministries and pastoral programming. It’s not a parish, but the Shrine offers daily opportunities to attend Mass and participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation. It’s not a community center, but the Shrine offers a safe place for psycho-spiritual counseling and healing. And it’s not a school, but the Shrine offers retreats and pilgrimages for every age of student and adult. No other ministry or church provides access to the sacraments, counseling, and formation like the Shrine—and they do it every day of the year!

Because of its unique identity and mission, the Shrine reimagines what “church” entails, and how it can serve the evolving needs of the nation and the Augustinians. Why not stop by and see for yourself?

At the end of the day, the Shrine is committed to promoting St. Rita and the Augustinian way of life because both inspire hope that builds authentic faith. How important it is for our wounded world to have people, like Rita and the Augustinian Friars, who see what’s possible when life feels most impossible.

St. Rita, keep praying for us!

www.saintritashrine.org



This page: Images of the lower and upper shrines at the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia.

AUGUSTINIAN DEFENDERS OF THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR (A.D.R.O.P.)

2130 SOUTH 21ST STREET

By Lacie A. M. Fischley, M.A., Executive Director

Calm and gratitude radiated from her face in a way that needed no translation, but I offered one to the mammography technician anyway: “Alejandra says she’s incredibly grateful and that she’ll pray for you.” In the last year or so that I have known her, Alejandra has not always “radiated calm” as she did that day at our community mammography event. She came to a community event that A.D.R.O.P. had at the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia where we offered blood pressure checks, information on basic physical therapy stretches that people can do on their own, and flu and COVID vaccinations. Alejandra, along with some other patients, were referred to our primary care clinic, the Unity Clinic, for more consistent care.

The Unity Clinic is a free, primary care clinic for people who are immigrants with no access to health insurance that has been in operation since 2006. Started in partnership with the Villanova University College of Nursing and spearheaded by Fr. Jack Deegan, O.S.A., the clinic has served a population much in need ever since. Three years ago, we were able to expand our services to include physical therapy—a great benefit to our patients.

As Alejandra is a native Spanish speaker, I’m generally the one interpreting for her during her clinic visits, so I have had a first-hand view of her transformation. When she first visited the clinic, she was struggling with a number of health issues related to her age and dealing with depression. Through the careful support of our clinical staff, including the physical therapist, Alejandra’s health and mood have improved drastically in the short time that she has come to the clinic.

In addition to the Unity Clinic, we also serve people who are immigrants through two different English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. One such class follows a traditional classroom setup and takes place during the day so that people who work nights (perhaps in the restaurant industry) or have school-aged children can attend. Our other ESOL class is set up more as a “Language Exchange,” where English learners are paired up with Spanish learners so that that each person is both teacher and student. This platform creates an environment that begins to remove status barriers and enhance community building.

www.rightsofthepoor.org



Service

This page: Images from the A.D.R.O.P. Unity Clinic in January 2024.

BREWIN’ PEACE COFFEE CART

by Lacie A. M. Fischley, M.A., Executive Director of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor

I was surprised to see them speaking so closely and seriously as I walked out of the Cascia Center. Tommy, the Brewin’ Peace Coffee Cart worker, was listening very intently to a woman who regularly gets coffee at the cart. I approached cautiously, not wanting to interrupt their conversation. After she left, I asked Tommy if everything was okay. “Yeah,” he said. “She’s just going through a lot right now, so we always try to catch up a bit when I’m here.” He explained to me that she’s currently experiencing homelessness and she doesn’t have a lot of people in her life with whom she feels she can have a safe conversation. At the cart, however, she feels safe, seen, and heard.

The Brewin’ Peace Coffee Cart is A.D.R.O.P.’s newest ministry. Three days a week, we wheel a coffee cart out onto Broad Street, right outside the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia. Anyone passing by, running to SEPTA, visiting the Shrine, or trying to find a safe spot to stay for a few hours is welcome to a free cup of coffee. The cart is staffed by a person formerly incarcerated who simultaneously receives job training and mentorship with the intent to get them employed elsewhere doing something that they really care about.

When this project was first conceived, the hope was to create an opportunity to help reduce recidivism and to empower a returning citizen to be the best version of him or herself possible. I have been pleasantly surprised, however, by the richness of conversation and the opportunities for a conversion of the heart that have occurred over a steaming cup of hot coffee. Philadelphia is a big city, but the community that we are building outside the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, right there on Broad Street, has made it just a little bit smaller.



Opportunity

This page: Winter doesn’t stop the hot coffee and camaraderie at the Brewin’ Peace Coffee Cart.



ADEODATUS PRISON MINISTRY

By Fr. Jeremy R. Hiers, O.S.A., Director of the Office of Justice and Peace

Nobody is a stranger to an Augustinian.

Every week for the past sixteen years, the Augustinians have provided a space in the city of Philadelphia for people of all backgrounds searching for hope in the midst of numerous challenges. Through the Adeodatus Bible Study, laypersons and Augustinian Friars alike find inspiration and strength by reflecting together on the scriptures and providing mutual support to one another.

This ministry is presently led by Mr. George Munyan, an Affiliate of the Order. The founder was Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A., who originally intended this ministry to support those returning to society after incarceration. However, he was also looking for the group to support him as he faced the challenges of serving as a prison chaplain. This is why the ministry was named after St. Augustine's son, Adeodatus, which means "Gift of God." All who attend, friars and laypersons alike, become gifts of hope to one another.

It was not long before word spread about the love and hope found in the group. Soon after, people suffering other afflictions—such as addiction, loneliness, and grief—began to join.

Almost 850 meetings later, people are still finding hope through a simple 90-minute reflection on the readings for the upcoming Sunday and the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through the people who attend.

The ministry seeks to spread this gift of hope nationwide through a quarterly journal titled *Voices from Prison and the Edge*. It captures many of the stories of those who attend as well as the stories of those persons that Fr. Paul and other chaplains encounter when serving inside the prison walls. Through this journal, our Augustinian witness is spread as it is sent to prisons and prison ministries throughout the country.

While the ministry falls under the auspices of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor, it is presently hosted at another Augustinian ministry, the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia. The Shrine promotes the story and witness of St. Rita of Cascia. As the patroness of impossible cases, her life witness of faith and hope in the face of despair gives inspiration to the

group. It also provides a witness to the power of bringing multiple Augustinian ministries together for the common good of all we serve.

We may come to each meeting with different challenges, but we all belong to and look to the same God. Adeodatus therefore witnesses to the power of Augustine's original vision of creating a diverse community with one mind and heart looking to God for hope.

This page: Friars and laypeople attend the January 2024 Adeodatus meeting at the Cascia Center of the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia.



ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH

243 N. LAWRENCE STREET

By Fr. William F. Waters, O.S.A., Pastor

It's impossible to talk about the Augustinians in Philadelphia without talking about St. Augustine Parish in Old City. Founded in 1796, St. Augustine's was the first permanent establishment of the Augustinian Order in the United States. President George Washington, Commodore John Barry, and merchant Stephen Girard contributed to the building funds of the original church, which was completed in 1801. The church even housed the sister bell of the Liberty Bell, which was hanging in the bell tower when the church was destroyed by anti-Catholic riots in 1844, which after 175 years of travel was returned its original home.

A new church—the one that still stands today—was completed in 1847. Its beautiful ceiling frescoes are the oldest in any religious building in America, and the walls are decorated with eight large paintings depicting the life of St. Augustine. To add to this beauty, the parish currently has two choirs and is renowned for its music program, in addition to its stirring homilies.

In 1992, the Shrine of Santo Niño de Cebú was installed. The Santo Niño, an image of the Christ Child produced by Flemish artists in the early 16th century and brought to the Philippines by the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, is the sacred object most revered by Filipino Catholics and is widely reproduced; countless miracles have been attributed to it. Since the shrine was installed, St. Augustine's has become a center for Filipino activities in the tri-state area. Each August, the parish celebrates a Feast of Simulog, consisting of a nine-day novena followed by Mass on the third Sunday of August and a procession through Old City. Over a thousand people typically attend; it is the largest Simulog celebration outside of the Philippines. St. Augustine's has a vibrant young adult community as well, which gathers on the first Saturday of every month.

Approximately 50-60 weddings are celebrated here each year, and close to 30 men and women have experienced the process of Christian Initiation to become Catholic in the past nine years. The parish was noted by the *National Catholic Reporter* in 2017 to be integrating many of the initiatives of Pope Francis. Among other ministries, the parish serves dinner twice a month to the guests at Gift of Life Family House, a non-profit organization that coordinates lifesaving and life-enhancing transplants for



those waiting, while supporting the generous donors and their families who have chosen to give others a second chance through organ donation. The parish also rents some of its space to three deserving tenants: the Women of Hope shelter, which serves women experiencing chronic mental illness who were previously homeless; Vagabond, which equips young adults to serve as Catholic missionaries; and a Veterans Multi-Service Center for women veterans.

Even if you don't live in the area, you may have already seen St. Augustine's in three Hollywood blockbusters! The next time you're watching *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan's 1999 classic), *Shooter* (2007, featuring Mark Wahlberg), or *21 Bridges* (2019, featuring Chadwick Boseman), keep an eye out for this Augustinian landmark – and next time you're in the city, be sure to experience this historic gem for yourself.

Scan here to watch pastor Fr. Bill Waters, O.S.A. share more about the magnificent paintings at St. Augustine's and the life of St. Augustine depicted in them.

www.st-augustinechurch.com



Top photo: Image courtesy of The Faith and Liberty Trail.

Bottom photos: The Filipino community of St. Augustine Parish celebrates the Summer Simulog in 2019 (left) and 2021 (right).

ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE PARISH

1718 9TH STREET

By Fr. Nicholas F. Martorano, O.S.A., Pastor

Faith, Family and Tradition: these were the words chosen by our parishioners to reflect our community when St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2012. Seven hundred people gathered to remember and cherish their years as a part of this parish family in South Philadelphia: people whose Catholic faith was passed on to them from their great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents; families that thrived on the faith traditions that knit them together as one; families that were shepherded for over 100 years by the Augustinian family of priests and brothers who came from the same cultural background as the community they served.

Cherished and celebrated traditions make St. Nicholas unique as an Italian National Parish. St. Nicholas was founded to continue the care of the Italian immigrants in South Philadelphia that was begun by the Italian Augustinians who arrived in the late 1800s, who established the parish of Our Mother of Good Counsel to meet the many needs of immigrants from Southern Italy. As the Italian community grew and started to move further south in the city, it was necessary to create a mission church for the people to worship and receive the sacraments. In early 1912, the Augustinians purchased a small Protestant church on the corner of 9th and Watkins Streets, and the church was dedicated on the same day that the Titanic sank. A school was soon built to educate the hundreds of children who spoke a different language and had different traditions from the “American children” of the same area and time.

Like all immigrant peoples, the Italians brought with them their culture, language, foods, traditions, memories, and their strong faith. Being able to have their own church gave them security, comfort, and unity. They could continue to celebrate their traditions with the other immigrant families as well as the Augustinians who knew them well. The Mass, religious services, the celebration of the sacraments, social activities, festivals, processions in honor of their patron saints and much more – all in their familiar language – kept them strong and united. That which energized the people then is still active in many ways today.



REV. A. BALDASSARRE, RECTOR. N. SERRACINO, ARCHITECT. 1170 BROADWAY, N. Y. C.

Mass was still celebrated in Italian at St. Nicholas up until the COVID epidemic.

Many new immigrants from around the world have come to the church and school, bringing with them their cultures and traditions. These new members are welcomed as we strive to meet the spiritual, educational, and religious needs in our South Philadelphia community. Our parish family is centered on the Eucharist putting into practice the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. The youth, middle aged and elderly; the new and established parishioners; people of different languages and backgrounds are a part of the Body of Christ which, locally, is the parish community of St. Nick's.

Personally, most of my life experiences, religious background, and education have been in South Philadelphia, and St. Nicholas Parish in particular. I have been blessed by receiving all my sacraments (baptism to ordination) in this church where I have now served as pastor for the last 39 years. I have experienced firsthand and work to keep alive the reality and importance of this Parish that impacted me with the Faith, Families, Traditions, and Augustinians here at the parish community of St. Nicholas of Tolentine!

www.stnicksphila.com



Top photo: Vintage postcard of the church building circa 1920.

Bottom photo: Pastor Fr. Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A. (right) celebrates Mass from a balcony in South Philadelphia during the parish's annual Italian Festival.

ANNUNCIATION B.V.M. PARISH

1511 SOUTH 10TH STREET

By Fr. Elizandro A. Contreras, O.S.A., Parochial Vicar

Just three blocks from Pat's and Geno's (South Philadelphia's iconic dueling cheesesteak restaurants) is my parish, Annunciation B.V.M. Founded in 1860, it was a Vincentian and diocesan parish before it merged with the parish community of the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia in 2016, becoming an Augustinian parish under the experienced eye of Fr. Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A., who serves as pastor here as well as at St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

While St. Augustine's in Old City has its large Filipino community, and St. Nick's and St. Paul's have their Italian American communities, Annunciation B.V.M. is home to a vibrant and growing community of immigrants from Central and South America, particularly Mexico and Honduras. While fourteen years ago this was only a small group of Spanish-speaking parishioners, today it has grown into something unique among our Augustinian parishes in Philadelphia.

We have three to four Spanish-language Masses a week, where the singing, preaching, and relaxed atmosphere encourage attendees to linger for longer than an hour. Our Monday night Mass was created to serve parishioners in the restaurant business, since Monday is typically when restaurants are closed. Our young adult choir sings at this Mass, and if you get there early, you'll hear them sing the Chaplet of Divine Mercy before the service begins. Our steadily growing Thursday evening Mass begins with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament an hour before the service, encouraging the congregation to spend a beautiful moment with Jesus.

The parish has two committees dedicated to celebrating the Blessed Mother under her titles Our Lady of Guadalupe (very popular with our Mexican parishioners) and Our Lady of Suyapa (venerated in Honduras). Both celebrations include a weeklong novena and a procession through the neighborhood. We process on Palm Sunday and have a living Stations of the Cross on Good Friday—we do love our processions! We find it spiritually enriching and it impacts the neighborhood around us. For the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe we walk praying the rosary in both English and Spanish. We want to make sure that everyone who hears the rosary hears it in their own language, delivering a message from the Lord that we are one in faith, no matter the language we speak.

Last year we had a Hispanic Festival completely funded by donations. The festival had a dunk tank, and the congregation had been hoping to see me in the tank. I considered their suggestion and replied that I would—if they could raise \$100 for the parish.

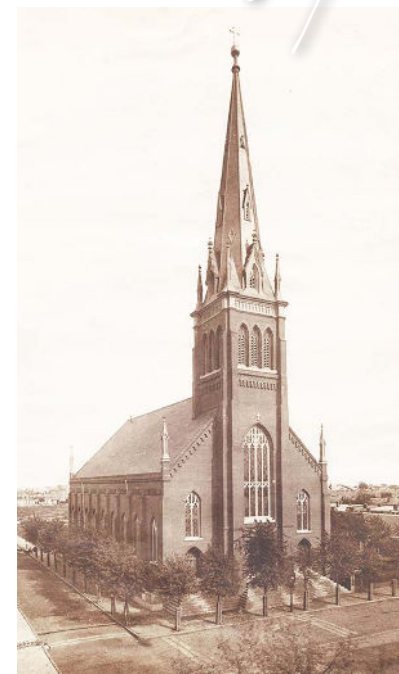


They collected four times that amount, so I was true to my word, and soon very wet!

One of the most fulfilling—but hardest—parts of my job is my office hours. I receive individuals and couples experiencing difficulties, looking for spiritual direction, or wanting to experience the sacrament of reconciliation. Many are dealing with very difficult situations. We are currently looking for a Spanish-speaking Christian psychologist to help with this endeavor. There is also joy in my office hours, helping couples prepare for marriage—last year, we celebrated the marriages of eleven couples. To accompany someone else as an instrument of the Holy Spirit is beautiful.

I am so grateful to be here at Annunciation B.V.M., to have this experience and to serve with my brothers.

annunciationbvmchurch.org



Top photo: Dancers in traditional dress entertain attendees of the 2023 Hispanic Festival.

Middle photo: A photograph of Annunciation B.V.M. circa 1863. The church looks much the same today except for the loss of the pointed tower.

Bottom photo: Prior Provincial Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A. and Fr. Elizandro Contreras, O.S.A. enjoy some cold beverages during the summertime Hispanic Festival.

ST. PAUL PARISH

808 S. HUTCHINSON STREET

By Fr. Paul W. Galetto, O.S.A., Pastor

St. Paul Parish calls itself the “Soul in the Heart of the Italian Market.” Founded in 1843 barely a block from the famous market on 9th Street, it was one of three churches serving the Italian American community of South Philadelphia. The two others—Our Mother of Good Counsel and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi—were combined into St. Paul’s in 1933 and 2000, respectively. Interestingly, Our Mother of Good Counsel had been an Augustinian parish, but the new combined parish didn’t see an Augustinian again until I was appointed to serve as pastor in 2022.

The parishioners welcomed the Augustinians back with open arms. This past November, St. Paul’s honored Prior Provincial Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A. and his twenty years of service to the people of both St. Paul and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi with an event at the beautiful Ballroom at the Ben. The parishioners made a tribute video, and one of the most interesting moments of the night was when an interviewee thanked Fr. Rob for making St. Paul an Augustinian Parish. The parishioners in attendance broke into sustained applause expressing their gratitude for the presence of the friars that serve the parish.

Our parish has been growing steadily. Nearly every month we have a Welcome Weekend, and each weekend has a different food theme. Parishioners bake and cook so that they can break bread with each other and celebrate the parish family. The average age is roughly 35 years old, and this young group has inspired an endeavor we call The Mix, which seeks to bring young professionals and recent college graduates together to celebrate their faith and to help us direct the future of the Church. These are people committed to their faith.

In November, the parish had a Mass to honor Black Catholics and their contribution to our church and to our community. Our parish is located in the Gayborhood and we had a celebration of prayer to welcome the recent announcement regarding people in same-sex relationships, as well as divorced and separated Catholics. Fr. David Cregan, O.S.A. has brought academic panel discussions that focus on topics current in the life of the Church into the life of our parish.



Four times a year we have concerts to honor one of our most famous parishioners, Mario Lanza. Mario had been a member (and choir member) of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Church. On his return to the city at the height of his fame, he would sing from the choir loft for his family and friends. The concerts this year have focused on opera and jazz; the next two will feature a local artist, Felicia Punzo, and an Italian Mandolin Band. These events bring our community together to celebrate the arts.

The parishioners love the Augustinian spiritual life, especially St. Rita. “Rita” is one of the most common names amongst our women parishioners. Our community raised money to purchase a statue to honor St. Rita, in honor of Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A. that will be carried in our annual Procession of the Saints, which takes place the Sunday before Memorial Day weekend. This past year, according to police estimates, over 100,000 people attended the procession. It was part faith, part kitsch and part Italian heritage. Come and see! Two other events that are highlights of the parish social calendar are the Feast of St. Augustine and the breakfast that takes place that weekend, as well as the pasta dinner that celebrates the anniversary of our becoming an Augustinian parish. (We can’t have an event without having food—hey, we’re Italian!)

www.stpaulphilly.org

Below left: Excitement in the Italian Market during the annual Procession of the Saints.

Below right: Pastor Fr. Paul Galetto, O.S.A. welcomes parishioners to St. Paul’s.



Justice & Peace



Lacie A. M. Fischley, M.A. (Executive Director of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor), Prior Provincial Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., and Fr. Jeremy R. Hiers, O.S.A. (Director of the Office of Justice and Peace) present a certificate of appreciation to Fr. Jack E. Deegan, O.S.A. upon the renaming of the Deegan Fund in his honor.

THE JOHN E. DEEGAN, O.S.A. FUND FOR JUSTICE & PEACE

In March 2023, the Province’s Fund for Justice & Peace was named in honor of Fr. John E. Deegan, O.S.A. in recognition of his many years of service and leadership, his never-ending response to those in greatest need, and for keeping justice and peace at the forefront of our Augustinian mission.

Fr. Jack founded the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor in 2003 to serve the needs of a low-income immigrant population of South Philadelphia. In his own words, “The face of poverty is diverse, and it’s of the utmost importance never to stigmatize and always to recognize the dignity of everyone and the beauty of ever creation of God.”

The Fr. Deegan Fund aims to support special projects and initiatives sponsored by the Province’s Office of Justice & Peace, particularly those that promote opportunities for encounter, education, and action within and across Augustinian ministries.

It is only fitting that the Fr. Deegan Fund will continue to carry out the legacy of Fr. Jack’s dedicated work to promote justice and peace for all.

**To make a gift to the Fr. Deegan Fund, please visit:
www.augustinian.org/donate**

Responding TO THE NEEDS OF our People

By Fr. Michael F. Di Gregorio, O.S.A.

People who are familiar with the work of the Augustinians in the United States ordinarily come to know us through our ministry in parishes and schools. Our original foundation in Philadelphia, initiated shortly after the arrival of our first friars in the late 1700s, quickly embraced both ministries with the establishment of St. Augustine Parish and St. Augustine Academy in Olde City. From there, growth in the number of individuals drawn to our way of life led to the founding or staffing of schools and parishes from coast to coast over the following two centuries, in a rich variety of cultures, ethnicities and locations. While many of our friars elsewhere in the world are similarly engaged in these fields of work, educational and parochial activity are not the exclusive focus of Augustinian ministry.

When our religious community came into being as part of the Mendicant Movement during the first half of the 13th century, the charge that was given us was to share in the work of evangelization, bringing the Good News to the whole world while exercising apostolic activity according to the needs of the Church and of society (Constitutions of the Order, I, 9, 13, 14). Nothing more specific by way of ministry was entrusted to us and so, in each province or region of the Order, friars sought to respond to needs according to the circumstances of place and time, and in conformity with the character of Augustinian life in common. Since the focus of our identity is to be found in the sharing of a life of faith together, rather than in any specific activity, friars throughout the world are engaged in such diverse fields, in addition to parishes and schools, as ecumenical work, foreign missions, chaplaincies, art and cultural activity, the preaching ministry, scientific research, youth movements, spiritual direction, counseling and hospitality initiatives, to name just a few.

VOCATION MINISTRY IN A DIGITAL AGE

By Rory Dayton, Digital Media Specialist, Augustinian Vocations of North America

In an era dominated by digital communication, the Augustinians have embraced analytics-based marketing strategies to connect with individuals discerning a call to religious life.

Whether it's creating long-form content for our vocation website, short-form content for our social media, or bite-sized videos for our TikTok account, the vocation teams from all three North American Provinces have

combined forces to maximize reach and increase awareness of Augustinian vocations.

And it's working.

Since November of 2022—when we launched our revised vocation website (www.beafriar.org) and started tracking our analytics performance—we've had over 400,000 digital encounters with our Augustinian messages of community, hope, and opportunities to #beafriar and pursue discernment with our Order. And, even more importantly, we've been contacted by over 180 men who are interested in exploring their vocation.

HERE'S WHAT OUR DIGITAL
VOCATION MINISTRY LOOKS LIKE.

1. AWARENESS STAGE:

CAPTURING ATTENTION AND BUILDING INTEREST

The first step in our digital marketing strategy is creating awareness of the Augustinian Order. And, to create this awareness, we need to be where people spend a significant (and increasing) amount of time: online.

Understanding that many potential vocation discerners—especially young adults—spend time online, we strategically create content for social media platforms, our website, and digital advertisements to introduce the Augustinian way of life to the world and to capitalize on a growing interest in the Order's spiritual father, St. Augustine.

Engaging and visually appealing content, such as videos showcasing the stories and the daily life of Augustinian friars, is spread across our Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram accounts.

This content helps to capture attention and build interest among men who may be in the early stages of discernment, as well as evangelizing to the general public.

2. CONSIDERATION STAGE: PROVIDING IN-DEPTH INSIGHTS AND GUIDANCE

As individuals progress through the awareness stage, we transition to the consideration stage of the marketing funnel. Here our focus shifts from providing general “edu-tainment” content about the Order to more in-depth insights into Augustinian spirituality and religious life, as well as ministries in which the Order is engaged.

We leverage our search engine-optimized website as a hub for detailed content, offering articles, testimonials, and opportunities for connection and events on our site.

People find our website either organically (via Google searches about St. Augustine or about the steps required to become a friar, for example), or because we've placed advertisements online for relevant search keywords, to ensure we're at the top of search results (online ads are funded by a Google for Nonprofits grant).

Webinars and contact opportunities with current vocation directors provide a personalized touch, allowing potential discerners to engage directly with members of the Order, asking questions, and gaining a deeper understanding of their potential call to become an Augustinian.

3. DECISION STAGE: FACILITATING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND ENCOURAGING COMMITMENT

In the decision stage, we aim to facilitate further personal connections between potential discerners and the Order. After getting in touch with us via our website, we pair individuals with experienced vocation directors to help guide them through their discernment journey and application process to the Augustinians.

Additionally, targeted email campaigns and newsletters (sent to over 1,500 subscribers) keep potential discerners informed about ways to explore and experience the Augustinian way of life firsthand.

These efforts are designed to encourage commitment and help individuals make informed decisions about their vocational call. Even in a digital age, nothing is more important than this personal connection and interaction.

4. ACTION STAGE: STREAMLINING THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

The culmination of the vocation journey is the action stage, where, through mutual discernment with the vocation director, individuals decide to formally apply to join the Augustinians. The Order ensures a seamless application process through user-friendly digital-enabled applications that can be filled out on a computer rather than with pen and paper.

Regular communication with applicants, both online and offline, creates a sense of belonging and support. The Augustinians also use digital mediums (like video calls, texting, and emails) to connect applicants with their future brothers in faith.

This final stage is crucial, as it marks the transition toward initial formation in the Order, and, again, takes significant prayer, consideration, and collaboration between the discerner and the vocation director.

THE DIGITAL VOCATION JOURNEY



If God is calling you—or if you know someone whom God is calling to be an Augustinian—contact vocations@augustinian.org or visit www.beafriar.org to learn more.

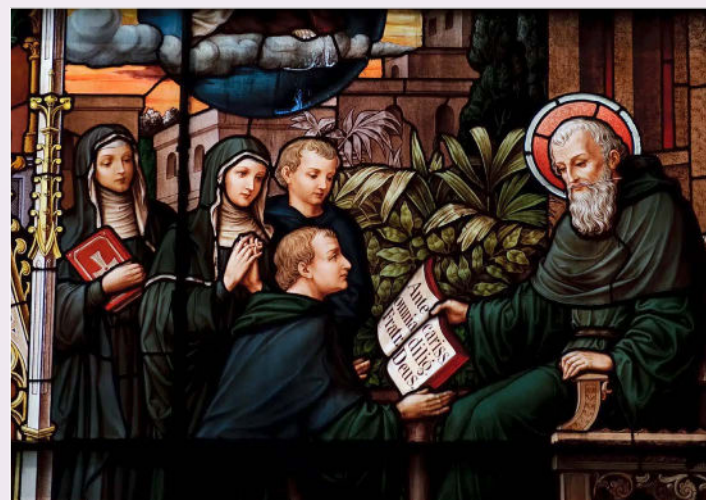
2024:

A Year of Renewal for the Province's Laity

By Jim Burke, Director, Lay Augustinians

Lay Augustinians, alternatively referred to as Augustinian Secular Fraternities and Third Order Augustinians, consist of men and women who, as members of the laity, endeavor to be faithful to their Christian vocations under the inspiration of Augustinian Spirituality. Founded in 1400, lay Augustinians enjoy a long tradition in the Order and are considered members of the Augustinian family, along with Augustinian Friars and Nuns.

There are four pillars that provide the foundation for life as a lay Augustinian. The first is **prayer** and the sacraments. Lay Augustinians are assiduous in prayer and participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church. The second is **study**. Lay Augustinians receive a solid theological, ethical, and social formation, completed with knowledge of the Rule of St. Augustine and Augustinian Spirituality. The third is **mission**. Apostolic activity, as a service of charity, is the necessary outward expression of Augustinian Spirituality. The fourth is **community**. The axis for Augustinian life is the ongoing pursuit of holiness in community. Given this focus on interiority through prayer and study, and evangelization through apostolic



A leadlight of St. Augustine giving his Rule to male and female members of the Order.

activity and community, Augustinians, including the laity, may be thought of as Contemplatives in Action.

The Province has recently launched a renewed effort to support the lay members of the Order. A new website, www.layaugustinians.com, is the hub of this effort. The site provides resources to help guide lay Augustinians in their individual pursuits of holiness, and to help unite and strengthen them in community.

Several of the Province's friars have teamed up to produce formation videos, which will be available on the website and promoted through social media. The first tranche of these videos is focused on the basics of catechesis and is expected to be available this spring. Subsequent videos will focus on higher level catechetical topics, as well as Augustinian Spirituality, Grace, and living according to the Rule of St. Augustine.



St. Augustine in His Study by Caravaggio, circa 1600.

Recognizing the importance of our youth, the Province is inviting students at Augustinian high schools and universities to consider the lay Augustinians, as well as parishioners in Augustinian parishes. Events structured around prayer, study, mission, and community will be offered beginning in the spring.

Lay Augustinian membership may range from informal and introductory to making formal promises to live in accordance with the teachings of St. Augustine for life. In either case, membership requires only effort and humility, and results in great freedom and joy. For more information, visit the website or email james.burke@augustinian.org.

“Jim Burke’s work here is a most impactful gift to our Province. He is both sharing his faith and helping others strengthen theirs by engaging them in our Augustinian way of life.”

– Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A.

Saying Farewell

By Sarah Reisert, Associate Director of Engagement & Communications, Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova

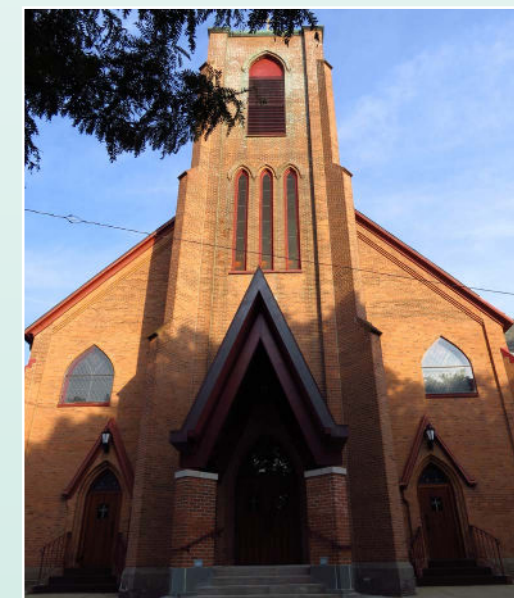
Since the mid-1800s, when the Augustinians were invited by the Most Reverend John McCloskey to the Diocese of Albany, the communities at St. Mary of the Assumption in Waterford and St. Augustine in Troy have been big parts of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. And so it is with heavy hearts that, after careful discernment, we will withdraw from the Diocese of Albany on June 1, 2024. The aging population of our friars, infirmity, and the serious decline of new members to religious life make it impossible for us to maintain all our ministerial commitments.



ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION
WATERFORD, NEW YORK



ST. AUGUSTINE
TROY, NEW YORK



“It has truly been my pleasure to work with all of you in these two parish communities. My first assignment at St. Augustine’s ran for 12 years, between 1976-1988, and of course I returned to this area with my assignment as pastor of St. Mary’s in 2002. For the past 22 years, I’ve grown to know and to love all of you, and I will miss each of you upon our departure.”

– Fr. David J. Kelley, O.S.A.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF St. Mary Parish, Waterford, NY

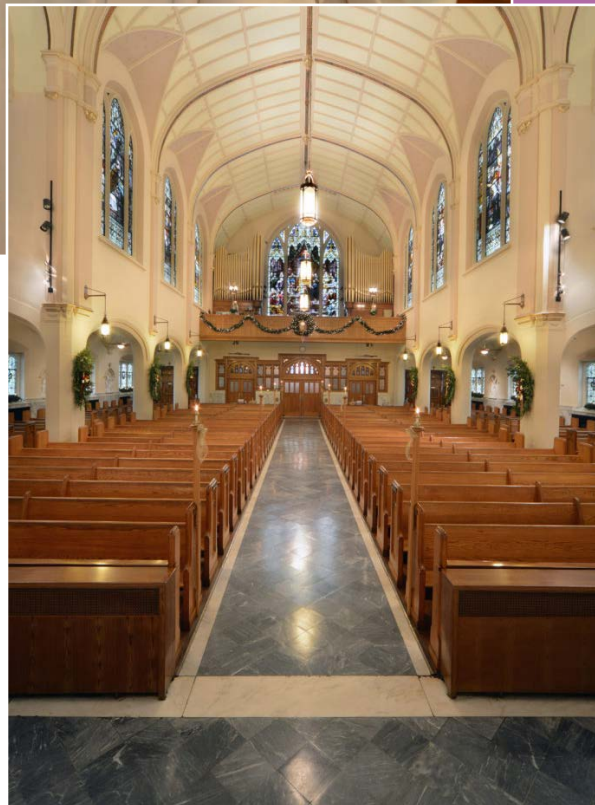
The first Mass said in Waterford was in 1843. Only 15 years later, the Augustinians were invited to assume charge of the growing parish, with Rev. George Meagher, O.S.A. appointed the first pastor. From 1862 to 1865, the first improvements to the church were made under the direction of the Rev. Michael Collins, O.S.A. In addition to erecting a bell tower, a basement and a sacristy were added.

The present St. Mary's Church was completed in 1913, under Rev. Alfred H. Valiquette, O.S.A., pastor. The new St. Mary's was created in modern English Gothic style and was called the "little cathedral of the North."

The V. Rev. Francis A. Diehl, O.S.A. was appointed pastor in 1951. In just a few short years, the need for a parish school was evident. In the fall of 1953, St. Mary's School opened its doors with an enrollment of 230 students in grades K-5. Today, the school has 173 students from pre-K to eighth grade.

Beginning in 2005, a series of improvements were initiated in the parish under the direction of pastor Fr. David J. Kelley, O.S.A. A capital campaign enabled a complete renovation of the interior of the church and repairs to the roof. By the summer of 2013 the work was finished, and the parish was ready to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the beautiful church building.

"My family has been receiving the sacraments, spiritual guidance, friendship, and support from the Augustinians for our whole lives," says parishioner Liz Callaghan. "It had never occurred to me that a day might come when that would cease to happen. Therefore, when I heard that our Augustinians would be leaving my parish community, I was devastated. How could this happen! I am grateful for all the years that they have devoted to serving St. Mary of the Assumption but struggle with 'what happens now?' I will, however, maintain my faith in God and continue to pray for our parishioners, our priests/friars, our school and our entire community."



Top: Frs. David Kelley, O.S.A., Michael Stanley, O.S.A., Jim Spenard, O.S.A., and former provincial Mickey Genovese O.S.A., among others.

Bottom: Photo courtesy of St. Mary's Catholic School of Waterford.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF St. Augustine Parish, Troy, NY

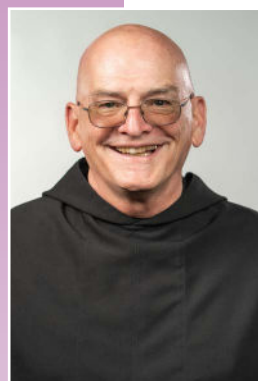
In 1858, the first Bishop of Albany invited several religious orders to help the diocese grow. The Augustinians were chosen to pastor St. John the Baptist Church, but when the second pastor, Most Rev. Thomas Galberry, O.S.A., arrived in 1860 he realized the church building was being outgrown and in need of repair. Fr. Galberry set about obtaining a plot of land down the street, and St. Augustine's Church was erected near the corner of 115th Street and Fourth Avenue. The first Mass was held at midnight, December 25, 1864.

When Rev. John T. Emmett, O.S.A. came in 1894, many changes occurred rapidly. The growing church needed some renovating: the two sacristies crowding the altar were replaced, a chapel was built on the side of the church to match the architecture, and a new sacristy was put in between the church and chapel. New murals were added, specifically those of the twelve apostles near the ceiling of the main body of the church. Many parishioners were asked to model for the faces of the apostles.

The small school at the previous church's site was being outgrown rapidly, and Fr. Emmett went to work building an official school building and an adjoining convent. St. Augustine's Academy was chartered by the Board of Regents on July 1, 1901, and the school ran until 2006.

The most important and defining tradition that St. Augustine's has is that of Perpetual Adoration. St. Paul the Apostle Church in Troy started this 24-hour adoration on September 8, 1983, and in May of 2009, Fr. James Spenard, O.S.A., escorted the Blessed Sacrament from St. Paul's to St. Augustine's. A few years later the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel was renovated and beautified for the devotion of 24-hour adoration.

"I was baptized at St. Augustine's 74 years ago and remain a parishioner here to this day," says Cathy Conroy. "The teaching, guidance and influence of the Augustinians on my life has been profound. It's very difficult to believe they will no longer be with us. We are blessed to have had them as part of our world for the past 160 years and we will miss them beyond measure."



“ St. Augustine's in Lansingburgh, Troy, was my first assignment when I was ordained 48 years ago in 1976. I am proud of the long tradition of dedication and service that we have provided to the people of this area. I am thankful to the parishioners, clergy, lay ministers, and religious who have worked with us, supported us, and become our friends. ”

— Fr. Liam O'Doherty, O.S.A.
Parochial Vicar, St. Mary's
and St. Augustine's

You can read full biographies of deceased Augustinians online at augustinian.org/necrology



FR. MARTIN LAWRENCE SMITH, O.S.A.

Father Marty Smith, O.S.A., a member of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova for fifty years, passed away on Friday morning, January 19, 2024 in the health care facility of St. Thomas Monastery.

Martin Lawrence Smith was born on July 6, 1945, in New York City, one of two sons of James A. and Agnes R. Kollenz Smith. He attended Sacred Heart Parish School and Samuel Gompers Vocational and Technical High School, both in Bronx, NY, and then Biscayne College, Miami, FL, where he received his BA degree. He was received into the Order as a novice on August 29, 1972 and following his initial year of formation at Good Counsel Novitiate, New Hamburg, NY, he professed simple vows on August 28, 1973. He was assigned to Augustinian College, Washington, DC, from 1973 to 1977, where he studied at the Washington Theological Union, and received his MDiv in Theology in 1977. Profession of solemn vows took place on September 11, 1976 and ordination to the priesthood on October 15, 1977 in his home parish of St. Ann Church, Freeland, PA.

Father Marty's first assignment following ordination was to Merrimack College, North Andover, MA, where he served in a variety of capacities in direct ministry to students until 1980. He was then assigned to Biscayne College, his alma mater, where he was Assistant to the President, Director of Maintenance, Director of Student Activities, Dean of Student Life, Campus Minister, Resident Hall Minister and Instructor in the Theology Department and where he received several awards for his work with students.

In 1987, Father Marty was transferred to Villanova University where he served as Assistant Director of Resident Life and the Assistant Director of Athletics. His duties included responsibility for 20 residence halls and the care of athletic facilities and fields, as well as coordination of security details at athletic events.

In 1992, Father Marty became prior and treasurer of Augustinian College, Washington, DC, and served on the formation team at the college as well the Formation and Vocation Commission of the Province. In 1999, after a year of sabbatical studies, he was assigned to St. Augustine College Preparatory School, Richland, NJ, where he served as the Director of College Guidance, Registrar, and taught in the Theology Department.

In 2005, he was assigned to St. Thomas Monastery, Villanova, PA, where he served as facilities manager of the monastery until 2008, and treasurer of the community from 2006 to 2010. He designed and built the Heritage Room for the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova in 2006 and served as its curator. At the Provincial Chapter of 2010, he was elected treasurer of the Province and served in that position until June of 2014.

Following this last term of office, he served as unofficial technical advisor to the friars of the monastery and refurbished old computers which he donated to families and students in need of them, especially during the time of the pandemic. Faced with illness in the fall of 2023, he went into hospice care with faith, and passed away peacefully on January 19, 2024.

News and Notes



Prior Provincial Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A. Receives Jake Nevin Award

Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A. was presented with the Jake Nevin Award during the Villanova University Varsity Club Hall of Fame Dinner on January 19, 2024. The award is named after Villanova's legendary athletic trainer who spent fifty years at Villanova. Each year the award is presented to someone who exemplifies what it means to be a great teammate. Fr. Rob continues to serve as the longtime chaplain for the Villanova football and men's basketball programs and previously served as Senior Associate Athletic Director with Villanova Athletics until his appointment as Prior Provincial.

Congratulations, Fr. Rob!



Formators and Vocation Promoters Meet at the Province

During November 27-December 1, 2023, the Province was delighted to host a week of workshops for formators and vocation promoters. The face-to-face workshops were part of a nine-month online formation program organized by the Institute of Augustinian Spirituality and the International Commission for Formation and Vocation Promotion.

The meeting was co-chaired by Fr. Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., Vicar General for the worldwide Augustinian Order, and Fr. Alex Lam, O.S.A., Assistant General for Latin America. Fr. Lam commented that "the face-to-face week is designed for all continental areas, emphasizing that Augustinian pedagogy can be used to serve in accompaniment, formation, vocation promotion, and the exercise of Augustinian type leadership." These issues were presented in addresses given by Fr. Gary McCloskey, O.S.A. from the Villanova Province and Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A. of the Midwest Province.

The fourteen participants traveled here from all over the world, the farthest from Rome. They have since met again in January in Abuja, Nigeria, and there are plans for additional meetings in March in Bogota, Colombia and in May in Iloilo, the Philippines.



Celebrating Our Newest Augustinian Affiliates

On Thursday, November 30, 2023, the Augustinian and Merrimack College communities gathered in St. Augustine Church in Andover, MA, to celebrate the affiliation of Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., president of Merrimack College, and his wife Cheryl M. Lucas to the Order of St. Augustine, Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. Augustinian Affiliates formally become part of the Augustinian Order. It is the highest honor that the Order can bestow on the laity.

Dr. Hopey and Ms. Lucas joined the Merrimack community almost 14 years ago. Under Dr. Hopey's leadership and with the support of Ms. Lucas, Merrimack has achieved significant milestones including growth in admissions, enrollment rankings, facilities, curricular development, nursing, school research, athletics, and working with its neighbors in the cities of Lawrence. But, most importantly, Dr. Hopey has brought about a renewal and a reinvigoration to the Catholic and Augustinian mission and identity of the College by making it more visibly explicit, incorporating it into Merrimack's planning processes, and undertaking a host of initiatives for their students, staff, and community.

Congratulations, Dr. Hopey and Ms. Lucas!

News and Notes

Augustinian High School Alumni Gather at Villanova University

On November 12, Villanova students who attended Augustinian high schools across the country gathered for fellowship during Augustinian Vocations Awareness Week.

This tradition, now in its fifth year, is over 25 years in the making, explains Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A.: “After our graduations from Villanova in 1987, Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A. and I would try to make an annual visit back to Villanova and would contact students from St. Rita High School, our alma mater, to have Mass and dinner with them. In the late 1990s, when I was Headmaster of Cascia Hall School in Tulsa, the gathering expanded to include these two schools. Soon afterwards it expanded to Providence Catholic High School and Villanova College, which are under the Midwest Augustinians. It continued in this fashion, occasionally inviting some students that we knew from our California schools, St. Augustine and Villanova Prep.

“It was once I was on staff here at Villanova (2019) that I was approached by Fr. Michael DiGregorio, O.S.A., then Prior Provincial, and Fr. Kevin DePrinzio, O.S.A. to include the Villanova Province Schools, Malvern Prep and St. Augustine Prep. We also invited Austin Prep from Reading, MA, and Bonner and Prendie, both formerly served by the Augustinians, who wish to reconnect with their Augustinian heritage. Friars who minister at Villanova University and leaders/friars from our high schools are also invited to attend.

“We are now all united and invited to gather around the Table of The Lord and the Dinner Table by our gracious host Fr. Peter Donohue, O.S.A., President of Villanova University.”



Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A. Attends Secretaries' Conference in Rome

From January 9-12, 2024, Province Secretary-Treasurer Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A. attended a conference in Rome for secretaries of the various circumscriptions of the Order (provinces, vicariates, and delegations). There were 28 secretaries in attendance from every continent except Antarctica! Classes were held at the Augustinian Pontifical Patristic Institute, just steps from St. Peter's Basilica, and the secretaries stayed at St. Monica's College next door. The secretaries were given presentations about the tasks that they perform, met the various members of the Curia, and learned how the Curia operates. Special highlights included a trip to the General Audience with Pope Francis and a visit from Cardinal Robert Prevost, O.S.A.



Merrimack College Joins Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference



Merrimack College, an Augustinian college in North Andover, MA, has accepted an invitation to join the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), which will provide the opportunity for Merrimack student-athletes to continue pursuing excellence at the highest levels nationally, both in the classroom and in competition, a core priority for the college.

“Merrimack College's strategic plan, the Agenda for Future, guides our institution's ambition as a nationally recognized Catholic research university and calls for excellence in academics, research and athletics,” said Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. “We are pleased that our record of achievement and growth has resulted in this invitation to compete in the MAAC and partner with its outstanding member institutions whose values of academic integrity, athletic achievement, inclusive excellence, and community engagement align with our Catholic Augustinian mission. I want to thank the MAAC Council of Presidents for its support and confidence in Merrimack.”

Merrimack will join the MAAC beginning with the 2024-25 season.



Special Mass Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Servant of God Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A.

On February 2, well over 200 people filled the St. Thomas of Villanova Church in Villanova, PA for a Mass celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Servant of God Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A. Fr. Bill was ordained (after receiving special dispensation by Pope Paul VI) on February 2, 1974, becoming the first quadriplegic priest. Prior Provincial Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A., presided, and delivered a stirring homily on the wonderful things that can happen when our plans change.

Attendees included members of the Atkinson family, former students of Fr. Bill's from Msgr. Bonner High School (as well as some current students in uniform), several Augustinians who helped care for Fr. Bill during his life, and two people who associate their miraculous healings to the intercession of Fr. Bill. Hymns written by Augustinian Friars were sung by all in attendance, and they left with bookmarks featuring Fr. Bill's well-known poem “The Strength of Others.” The event was made even more special by a bright yellow line of caution tape blocking off the church's Our Mother of Good Counsel chapel, where a marble sarcophagus was being built to house Fr. Bill's earthly remains.

Joan Mullen, sister of Fr. Bill, was among those in attendance. She remarked: “It was as if 50 years was just 50 minutes ago! I was at Bill's ordination in 1974 and felt blessed to be among my family 50 years later to celebrate his golden jubilee anniversary of priestly ordination on Villanova University's campus where he celebrated his first Mass.”

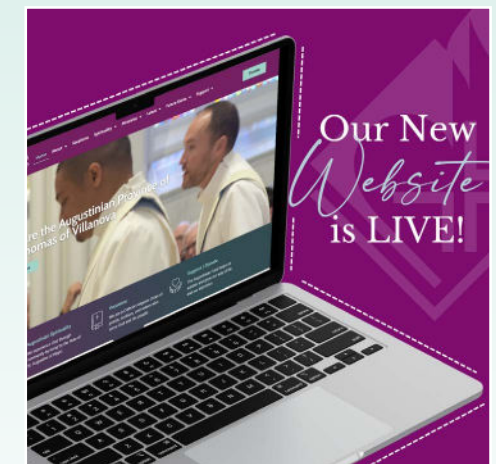
Servant of God Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., pray for us!



Check Out Our New Website

The Province of St. Thomas of Villanova is pleased announce its newly-designed website! You'll still find us at the augustinian.org address you're familiar with, but once you're there you'll see a refreshed design and color palette.

We hope the new website is easier to navigate, more visually appealing, and a better expression of the Province and all it does.



Members of the Atkinson family with Prior Provincial Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A. after the Mass.

SHRINE HOSTS AUGUSTINIAN ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL MEETING



The National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia hosted Augustinian Advancement Council members for their January meeting that began with the celebration of Mass followed by a tour and a luncheon meeting. Thank you to the members of the Advancement Council for their continued service to the Augustinians and to the staff of the Shrine for their hospitality and a memorable visit.

WELCOME THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE AUGUSTINIAN ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL



Paula Bedi has been a member of Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish for 20 years. Bedi was educated in Bombay before graduating from St. Xaviers College with a Bachelors in Sociology. She completed her Masters in Sociology and Human Development at the Asian Social Institute, Manila, and was then recruited by Temple University for her Doctorate in Media and Development.

Bedi was recruited to join Andersen Consulting's (now Accenture) Change Management Practice and in the 90s and later went in-house at SmithKline Beecham (GSK) R&D, leading organization and executive leadership development for their Discovery Organization Worldwide.

Bedi has served numerous local community-based charitable organizations including Philadelphia's Gesu School, Bryn Mawr's Our Mother of Good Counsel Church, the Agnes Irwin School, Presbyterian Children's Village, the Wilma Theater and Bucknell University. Bedi lives in Bryn Mawr with her husband Arjun and their two daughters.



John Cellucci is an accomplished 32-year professional who has held several leadership positions specializing in large and mid-sized employer-sponsored group health insurance offerings. As a graduate of Drexel University's LeBow College of Business, and a recipient of several executive course designations from the Wharton School/University of Pennsylvania Executive education and West Point Academy Executive leadership designation, he has dedicated his practice to lowering health care cost and mitigating high-cost claimants, while improving overall employee healthcare outcomes. Cellucci was recognized as the CEO of the month in the Philadelphia Business Journal and has been an expert guest on several television and print media news programs.

Cellucci, his wife Melissa, and their two children are members of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish.



Maria Luby joined the Catholic Leadership institute in 2023 as a Leadership Consultant. She worked as the Director of Family Life and Youth Ministry at St. Thomas of Villanova Parish from 2015-2023. In that role, she developed and implemented programming for families, middle school and high school youth and young adults. Luby is a longtime volunteer in her parish and is committed to making others feel welcome and building a strong Church community.

Luby's corporate experience includes a background in pharmaceutical marketing and market research in her years at Merck. She is also the coordinator for her parish chapter of Walking with Purpose. Luby holds a Bachelor of Arts in Life Sciences from Rice University and a master's in business from Columbia University. She and her husband, Mike, with their four sons and a dachshund, live in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. They are members of St. Thomas of Villanova Parish.



Rev. Donald F. Reilly, O.S.A., D.Min. is Prior of the Augustinian Community at Our Mother of Good Counsel Novitiate in Radnor, PA. Previously, Fr. Reilly served as Malvern Prep's 14th Head of School from 2017-2022. He was also a member of Malvern Prep's Board of Trustees and Chair of the School's Augustinian Mission Committee. He served as Head of School at St. Augustine Preparatory School from 2011-2017 and as Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova from June 2002 to June 2010. Fr. Reilly is a member of the Board of Trustees at Villanova University and Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School.



YOUR SUPPORT ASSISTS US IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Established in 2006, the Augustinian Fund builds a reliable source of annual revenue to assist the Province in meeting its financial responsibilities. Years ago, the friars' earned salaries were sufficient to cover all our expenses. Today, however, with fewer friars in active ministry and salaried we must rely on the generosity of friends and benefactors to help us sustain and grow our way of life and the ministries we perform.



Fr. George F. Riley, O.S.A. Fund for Augustinian HealthCare

Named in honor of Fr. George F. Riley, O.S.A., this fund supports the care of our elderly and infirm friars who live in St. Thomas Monastery. Because of you, friars who have devoted their lives to Augustinian ministry are well cared for and can live comfortably in community with their brothers.



M. Louise Fitzpatrick Fund for Formation

Named in memory of M. Louise Fitzpatrick, longtime Dean of the M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing at Villanova University, this fund supports the education and training of future members to our Order as well as the promotion of Augustinian vocations to religious life.



Fr. Richard D. Appicci, O.S.A. Fund for Foreign Missions

Named in memory of Fr. Richard D. Appicci, O.S.A. who spent most of his life helping the people of Peru in our foreign missions to acquire the basic needs of running water, food, and healthcare, this fund continues to support Fr. Appicci's life's mission to provide resources to those in need of our help.



Fr. John E. Deegan, O.S.A. Fund for Justice & Peace

Named in honor of Fr. John E. "Jack" Deegan, O.S.A., former president of Merrimack College and founder of the Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor (A.D.R.O.P.), this fund is used specifically for projects and initiatives of the Office of Justice & Peace that promote specific and concrete opportunities for evangelization, encounter, education, and action within and across existing Augustinian ministries.

WAYS TO GIVE:

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Office of Advancement & Communications
214 Ashwood Road
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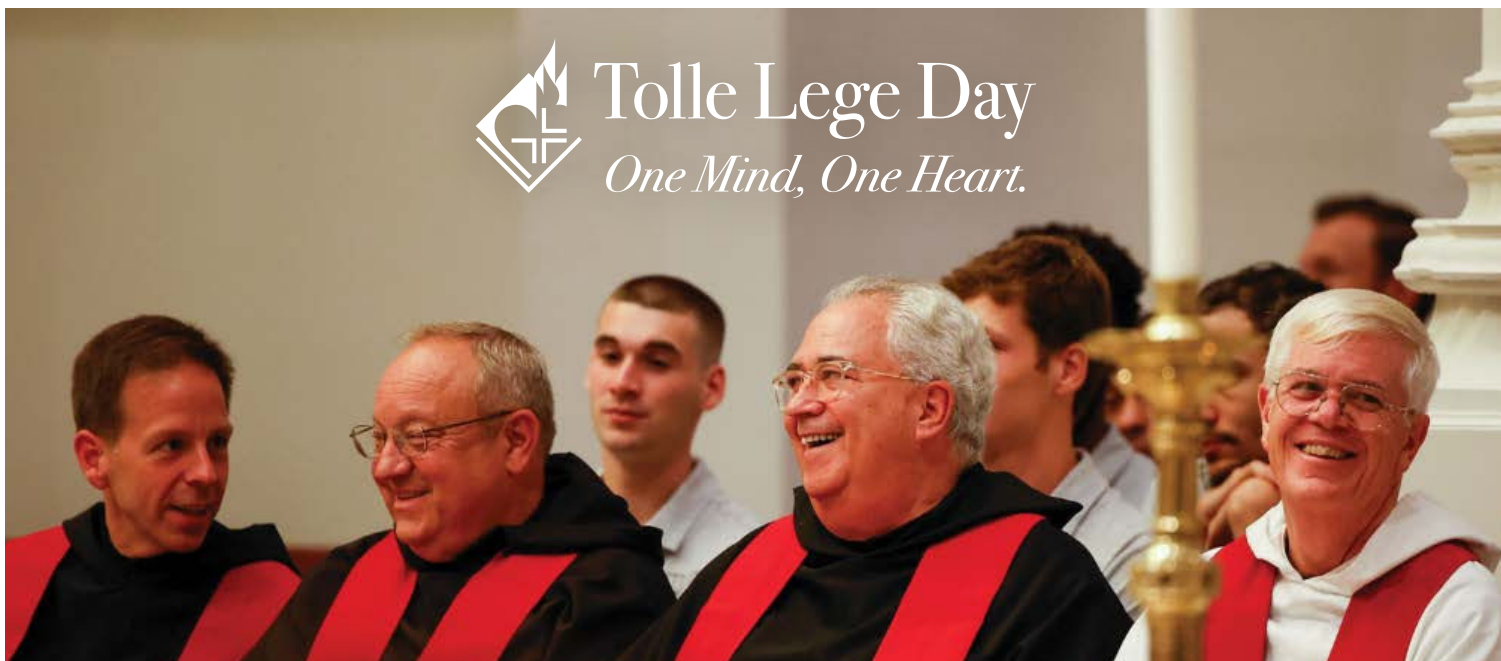
WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG

Cover photo: Seated left to right: Fr. Elizandro Contreras, O.S.A. and Fr. Jeremy Hiers, O.S.A. Standing left to right: Fr. Bob Terranova, O.S.A., Fr. Paul Galetto, O.S.A. Jonathan Jerome, Fr. Bob Guessetto, O.S.A., Lacie A. M. Fischley, M.A., Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A., Fr. Jim Paradis, O.S.A., Fr. Nick Martorano, O.S.A., and Fr. Dan McLaughlin, O.S.A.



Tolle Lege Day

One Mind, One Heart.



24 HOURS OF GIVING ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024



Make your **TOLLE LEGE DAY GIFT**
online on April 24th at
TOLLEGEDAY.ORG
or scan this QR code with your smart phone

The Augustinian Friars will launch their fourth annual giving day on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Augustine. Please join us as we come together as a community with one mind and one heart, for 24 hours of giving to support the Augustinian way of life and the friars' ministries.

JOIN US ON 4.24.24 TO CELEBRATE THE AUGUSTINIANS!
Every gift, no matter the size, will make a difference.

#TOLLEGEDAY #ONEMINDONEHEART

Questions: contact Madonna Sutter at madonna.sutter@augustinian.org or (267) 272-3048.