



the Augustinian

FALL 2025

THE FIRST AUGUSTINIAN POPE:

*Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost, O.S.A.
Becomes Pope Leo XIV*

FRIENDS OF THE Augustinians *Golf Outing*



Join
**FR. ROBERT P.
HAGAN, O.S.A.,
PRIOR PROVINCIAL,**
and all of your
Augustinian friends,
for a day of golf,
friendship, and fun.



TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

Applebrook Golf Club
100 Line Road • Malvern, Pennsylvania

*Proceeds to benefit the Fr. George F. Riley, O.S.A. Fund for Augustinian
HealthCare, the M. Louise Fitzpatrick Fund for Formation, and
our ministries that serve those who live on the margins.*

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

Registration will go live on February 1 at:

WWW.AUGUSTINIAN.ORG/GOLF-OUTING

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the Augustinian

*Publication of the Province of
St. Thomas of Villanova*

Volume 21, Issue 2

AUGUSTINIANS

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DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

This time of year, our thoughts are no doubt turning towards Thanksgiving: Turkey Bowls, pumpkin pie, falling leaves, and sweater weather, but also friends, family, and gratitude. We Augustinians have so much for which to be thankful, especially this year.

On May 8, we saw one of our own brothers become pope—the first Augustinian pope in the history of the papacy, and the first pope from the United States as well. In so many ways, Pope Leo XIV feels like one of our own, as Americans: he speaks English, roots for the Chicago White Sox, plays Wordle with his brothers, and graduated from Villanova University. But he also is one of our own in very Augustinian ways: his calls for unity, his devotion to community, and his dedication to supporting the poor and those on the margins. You'll find reflections from three Augustinians who know Pope Leo on the pages ahead, as well as information about some of the ways he is already incorporating Augustinian spirituality into his papacy.

We are also grateful to have had the opportunity to present Pope Leo with the Saint Augustine Medal, which we celebrated on August 28, the Feast of St. Augustine. While we had originally intended to present the medal to Robert Cardinal Prevost, O.S.A., in person, the Lord had other plans. Yet the event was still a joyful celebration of Pope Leo's election, of the feast of our patron St. Augustine, and of our Augustinian community.

We are grateful for the increased opportunities we have found to share our Augustinian Charism because of Pope Leo's election. We were thrilled to have had the opportunity to reintroduce one of our Augustinian Servants of God, Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., in the Peruvian parish where he served for so long. We are most appreciative for the years of faith-filled service of the outgoing prior general of the Augustinian Order, Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., and grateful for the election of our new prior general, Fr. Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A. We are truly blessed with an abundance of graces, which you will read about on the pages ahead.

May God bless our brother Pope Leo. Know that we remember you and your intentions this holiday season. And please know that among the many things for which we are grateful, we cherish your friendship through the years and your support of our Augustinian way of life.

Peace always,

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

Prior Provincial

“
EACH OF US
STRENGTHENS
ALL OF US.
”

— St. Augustine

A Son of Saint Augustine



ROBERT CARDINAL PREVOST, O.S.A.
BECOMES **POPE LEO XIV**,
THE FIRST AUGUSTINIAN POPE

By Sarah M. Reisert

On May 7, 2025, 133 cardinal electors filed into the Sistine Chapel with a sacred mission to discern who amongst them would become the 267th pope. They swore an oath to secrecy. The tall wooden doors were closed by Archbishop Diego Giovanni Ravelli, master of pontifical liturgical celebrations, at 5:46 PM. “Extra omnes!” the archbishop cried. Everyone out!

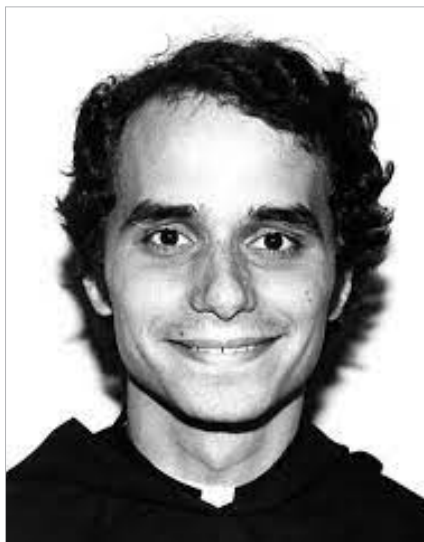
It took only four ballots and barely 24 hours before white smoke emerged. The estimated 150,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square cheered as the sign of a new pope wafted from the chimney, waving flags from their home countries, hoping that the man who would step out on the balcony would be one of their own. “I announce to you a great joy; we have a pope!” said Cardinal Protodeacon Dominique Mamberti, in Latin. “The most eminent and most reverend lord, Lord Robert Francis Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church Prevost, who has taken the name Leo XIV.”

For the first time in the history of the Church, the pope was from the United States—and he was an Augustinian.

WHO IS POPE LEO?

A native of Chicago, Pope Leo was born Robert Francis Prevost on September 14, 1955, to Louis Marius Prevost and Mildred Martínez. He attended the Minor Seminary of the Augustinians in Holland, Mich., and in 1977 earned a degree in mathematics from Villanova University. That same year, he entered the novitiate of the Order of St. Augustine in St. Louis, in the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel headquartered in Chicago. He professed his first vows in 1978 and made his solemn vows in 1981. He completed a master of divinity degree at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and was ordained a priest in 1982 at the Augustinian College of St. Monica in Rome. He remained there to complete a licentiate and doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Following his return to the Americas, he began over a decade of ministry in Peru. He was first assigned to Chulucanas, and later transferred to Trujillo, where he directed Augustinian formation for candidates from three regional vicariates. He served as prior, professor, formation director, judicial vicar



The future Pope Leo XIV (left) with his brothers Louis and John and their mother Mildred Agnes Martínez Prevost standing outside Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago.

of the archdiocese, and pastor in two parishes—one of which he helped establish in a poor neighborhood of Trujillo.

In 1999, he was elected prior provincial of the Midwest Augustinian Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel, and in 2001, prior general of the worldwide Augustinian Order—a role to which he was re-elected in 2007, reflecting the tremendous trust his brothers had in his ability to lead them.

After completing his second term as prior general, he returned to Chicago in 2013, serving in leadership and formation. In 2014, Pope Francis named him apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, and Prevost was ordained a bishop at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Chiclayo that December on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He served as bishop of Chiclayo from 2015 to 2023, while also leading and

advising within the Peruvian Episcopal Conference. In 2019, he was appointed to the Congregation for the Clergy, and a year later to the Congregation for Bishops.

His experiences in Peru no doubt helped prepare him for global leadership. Living alongside the poor and Indigenous people of the country made social justice a key aspect of his pastoral approach. He became a strong advocate for vulnerable populations, including migrant groups, and worked to hold authorities accountable during a period of great violence and political turmoil. The Peruvians so cherish him that they granted him citizenship in 2015.

In January 2023, then-Bishop Robert Prevost, O.S.A., returned to Rome and was named prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. He was created cardinal on September 30, 2023, receiving the Deaconry of Santa Monica (a fitting choice for an Augustinian), and in February 2024 was elevated to the Order of Bishops and assigned the Suburbicarian Church of Albano.

Shortly afterward on May 8, 2025, he was elected pope, taking the name Leo XIV.

FROM CARDINAL TO POPE: INSIDE THE CONCLAVE

If you were looking at lists of potential papal candidates before the conclave, you may not have seen the name Robert Prevost among the frontrunners. But there are the lists that the media puts out, and then there are the lists that the cardinals keep in their own hearts. The two lists may be very different, and Leo's varied and extensive experience did not go unnoticed by his brother cardinals.

"The cardinals who elected Pope Leo XIV weren't looking for a carbon copy of Francis—or for someone who would depart dramatically from Francis in tone and style," reported *America Media*. "They wanted a pastor: a missionary, humble and credible, and a man of deep listening."

Wilton Cardinal Gregory, the retired archbishop of Washington, recalls, "What the cardinals were concerned about primarily, at least from my conversations with them, was, 'Who among us can bring us together; who among us can strengthen the faith and bring the faith to places where it has grown weak, bring the faith to places where there seems to be less enthusiasm or appreciation of the common things that draw us together?'"

Even though Cardinal Prevost's experience fit the bill and his name was being discussed by the cardinal electors, his elevation was hardly a sure thing. According to some reports, Pietro Cardinal Parolin received more than 40 votes on the first ballot, while the rest of the field was considerably split between other candidates. According to other reports, Cardinal Prevost was the most voted candidate in the first ballot, slightly above Parolin. Either way, there was no candidate with the 89 votes needed to



be elected pope. Black smoke.

During the second and third ballots the next morning, according to several reports, Cardinal Parolin received 40 to 50 votes but failed to gain support from African and Asian cardinals, some of whom started to support Cardinal Prevost. Black smoke.

It was over lunch after the morning's votes that support for Cardinal Prevost began to coalesce. "There was a great movement on the second day—a great movement within the body that was there, and it could be nothing other than the grace of God moving us toward this consensus that I thought it would take a lot more time to get to," Robert Cardinal McElroy remembered. It took only one more ballot for Cardinal Prevost to receive more than the two-thirds majority, with more than 100 votes reported on the ballot that would turn a humble Augustinian Friar into Pope Leo XIV.

White smoke! Habemus papam!

AUGUSTINIANS AT THE VATICAN

Popes from religious orders have always been a rarity, with only 34 of the previous 266 popes having been part of an order. Almost all of them served before the sixteenth century. Pope Francis, a Jesuit, was the first pope from a religious order since Gregory XVI was elected in 1831. To have two popes from a religious order elected back-to-back, in this day and age, is highly unusual. To have an Augustinian pope is unprecedented.

That's not to say that Augustinians aren't found in the ranks of the Vatican, though admittedly they are rare: only fourteen cardinals



The first Augustinian cardinal was Bonaventura Badoer de Peraga (1332-1385), one of the founders of the University of Bologna, prior general, and papal legate. Created cardinal in 1378, he was called "blessed" during his life and after his death on account of his reputation for holiness.



Scenes from Pope Leo's time in Peru, including (center) ministering during the March 2023 flooding in northwestern Peru.



Scan here to learn more about the fourteen Augustinians who were created cardinals.

since the foundation of the Order. Augustinian cardinals from outside of Italy are even rarer. “Ten out of 14 names are of Italian origin. Spain,

Portugal, Malta and the United States each lay claim to one each of the remaining four,” says the official website of the Augustinian Order. “However, this in no way limits the varied experience and rich cultural and spiritual diversity that this modest number of cardinals the Order has been able to offer to the Church. Each, in his own way, has made a valuable contribution in a number of areas—governance, diplomacy, learning, pastoral care, or theological research, to name a few. Augustinian cardinals, after years of service to the Order, were either Curia cardinals, serving in the various congregations and structures of the Holy See, or bishops immersed in the lives of their dioceses.”

It is worth noting that Pope Francis, a member of a religious order himself, seemed to deliberately create cardinals from religious orders. Of the 133 electors in the 2025 conclave, 33 (roughly a quarter) were members of religious congregations, and all of them were appointed by Francis.

“All this is not mere statistical noise. It reflects a deeper vision that Francis brought to the papacy as the first religious-order pope in almost two centuries,” reported *America Media* before the conclave. “In his apostolic letter for the Year of Consecrated Life in 2014, he wrote not only as pope but ‘as a brother who, like yourselves, is consecrated to God.’ He described religious life as a sign of ‘the holiness and vitality present in so many of those called to follow Jesus’ and urged religious women and men to ‘embrace the future with hope.’”

And today, here we stand with an Augustinian Pope.

AN AUGUSTINIAN FOR THE WORLD

As part of his *Urbi et Orbi* address from the Central Loggia of St Peter's Basilica, the newly elected Pope Leo XIV honored the religious order that shaped him. “I am an Augustinian, a son of St. Augustine, who once said, ‘With you I am a Christian, and for you I am a bishop.’ In this sense, all of us can journey together toward the homeland that God has prepared for us.”

This sent off a wave of internet searches around the world: who were the Augustinians? Despite the Order being around

for over 800 years, it seemed we were a well-kept secret. But as Pope Leo's papacy grows day by day, we will continue to see the Augustinian Charism reflected in his leadership. Already his papal crest and motto, chosen when he first became a bishop, have great meaning to the Augustinian Order. As he stepped out onto the Central Loggia, his pectoral cross carried relics of five Augustinian saints and blessed.

“To see him emerge on that balcony, it was like seeing a family member—our brother!” remembers Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A. “We were speechless: so proud and yet so humbled at the same time. Pope Leo is an unassuming man. He is incredibly gifted and spent his whole life in the service of God's people. He has devoted his ministry to serving the poor, building bridges, and bringing people together. He consistently keeps in mind those living on the margins. I am excited to watch him continue this important work as our Holy Father.”



Pope Francis bestows a red biretta upon the man who would become his successor during the ceremony when Bishop Robert Prevost, O.S.A., was created a cardinal.



Reflections

The Time of the Cross: The Vision and Ministry of Fr. Bob Prevost, O.S.A. in Peru

*By Fr. John J. Lydon, O.S.A.
Director of Formation, Augustinian Theologate*

Peru in the 1990s was a time of great suffering and upheaval. It was during those years that the future Pope Leo XIV served in Trujillo, Peru. After spending one year in Chulucanas (1985) helping Bishop John McNabb, O.S.A., establish and put in orderly form the chancery offices with the plan to convert the prelature into a diocese, Fr. Bob Prevost, O.S.A., responded to the request of the superior of the Augustinians in northern Peru (then Fr. Dan Turley, O.S.A., now a bishop) to return to Peru and head to Trujillo to begin the first house for Augustinian formation. A year earlier the missionaries in Peru had decided to open our own formation community to prepare Peruvian Augustinians for service in our mission of Chulucanas. It was because of that decision that Fr. Bob was asked to return to Peru, and in 1988 the formation community was established with Fr. Bob, Servant of God Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., and Fr. Gerry Theis, O.S.A., along with the first five Peruvian candidates.





Peru was in steep economic and political decline during the twelve years that Pope Leo served in Trujillo. Three factors led to this. Primary were the two terrorist movements that began in the early 1980s: the Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). Both groups extended their actions throughout the country until in late 1992 when the head of the Shining Path was captured, and in 1997 MRTA was also overcome. The years of terrorism caused great economic instability with almost no foreign investment in the country. It also produced a heavy psychological burden in not knowing when the next bomb might go off, and where the target would be. Bombs were indeed placed at the door of the bishop's house in Chulucanas and at the corner of our parish of San José Obrero where it meets the local market, besides in many other places around the country. A terrorist armed column also entered Pacaipampa, our parish in the mountains.

During these dark years, we were asked by our superiors in the United States to come up with an exit plan to leave the mission, and to also determine what to do with our Peruvian seminarians. We responded that we thought that rather than an exit plan, we should have a plan to accompany the people during the time of the cross which they were living. This plan was our response as missionaries to not leave the Peruvian people in the time of greatest need, but to walk with them and show solidarity with them in a time of great suffering. Fr. Bob was an important promoter of this plan, which was embraced by almost all the Augustinians living in Peru at this time.

A second factor emerged as the terrorist movements were waning, when the government of Alberto Fujimori started to accumulate absolute power over both the congress and judiciary, and so there was an increase in the lack of human rights and the basic structures of

democratic society. This was the political context in Peru until 2000 when the Fujimori government fell amid popular uprisings.

The third cause of general decline was the economic crisis. By the end of the 1980s, inflation in Peru was running at 7,000% a year. The government had to reissue currency, taking nine zeros off the former currency. As the economy was in free fall, the new government of Alberto Fujimori in 1990 put into place an economic shock that raised prices manyfold overnight. Hunger became a constant concern of the poor.

Considering the general context described above, there are several important points to be made about the ministry and service of Fr. Bob.

1) TEAM MINISTRY. He was the first formation director of our missions in Trujillo and ensured that it was a community



of dialogue and respect so that Peruvians could learn about the life of community, structured around prayer and ministerial service that is at the heart of Augustinian identity. The community met each week to evaluate and plan for the upcoming weeks and thus created a co-responsibility model among all the community members. His model was one of dialogue with everyone, of working as a team within the community, of everyone having a part to play. There were no lone rangers in the Trujillo formation house.



2) PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY.

Fr. Bob was the link between the Augustinian community and the two parishes to which we ministered in Trujillo. Because we were forming Augustinians for service mostly in Chulucanas, we decided to organize our two parishes with the pastoral plan already in place in Chulucanas. This plan provided for the division of parishes into pastoral zones, each having a team of lay people attending to parish life in their respective zones. This meant that lay people were considered the primary protagonists of our evangelization efforts. Fr. Bob helped organize and direct the two parishes along this model, underscoring his commitment to lay ministry and the process of listening and dialoguing that in our present time is called the synodal church.

3) THE OPTION FOR THE POOR. In the Latin American church, the preferential option for the poor has a long history and was at the heart of our missionary activity in Peru. One of the things that stood out in Trujillo was Fr. Bob's outreach to the poor areas of the parish. In these years in Peru, the poor were not treated with dignity by government officials. However, in his visits to the poorer parish zones, ensuring their presence and participation in parish life, and hearing their voices and concerns, he showed by his actions that they were to be treated with great dignity.



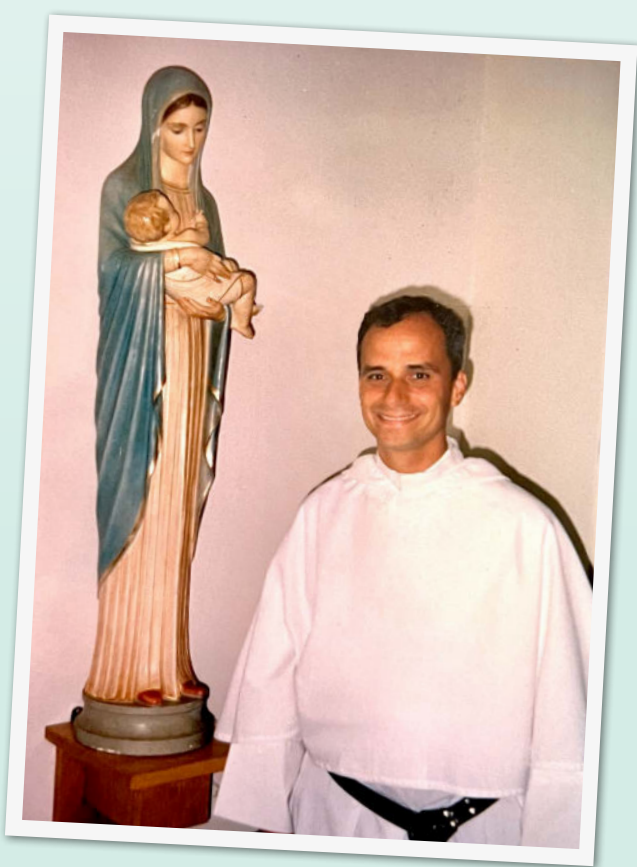


Also, in light of the general economic collapse, Fr. Bob promoted the establishment of several parish soup kitchens in the poorest sectors of the parish. This allowed for at least one decent meal each day, especially for children. These soup kitchens continue to function to this day.

In both of these ways, the preferential option for the poor found concrete expression in the ministry outreach of Fr. Bob.

4) DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. Part of the Church's mission is the promotion of human dignity and to overcome all that goes against it. This includes being a voice in the promotion and defense of human rights. In 1998, during the dark days of the authoritarian government of Alberto Fujimori, there was a national campaign to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Fr. Bob coordinated these efforts in our parishes, and we gathered more signatures than any other entity in Peru. It was one way to voice our solidarity with those whose human rights were systematically abused by an all-powerful government. As part of this concern for what Pope Paul VI had termed "integral evangelization," the community also participated in protest marches calling for the reestablishment of true democratic structures.

In these four ways we see a pastoral vision of our ministry in Peru during the difficult years that our now-Pope Leo lived and worked in Trujillo. Fourteen years after leaving the country in 1999 to take on the role of prior provincial and then prior general of the Augustinian Order, he would be called back to Peru by Pope Francis when he was named the bishop of Chiclayo. Although Peru had changed in many ways during those two different time spans, these four perspectives continued to guide his ministry as bishop of Chiclayo, and thus will probably be indicative of how he will serve as pope of the universal Church.





Reflections

And We Shall Sing For Joy!

By Fr. Bernard Scianna, O.S.A., Ph.D.

*Provincial Emeritus - Augustinian Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel
Senior Associate Dean of Students, Villanova University*

L eading up to the conclave after the death of Pope Francis, I exchanged a few emails with Cardinal Bob Prevost, O.S.A. They were brief and friendly; I told him that I was honored and proud to have an Augustinian and a friend in “the room where it happened” (i.e., choosing the next pope) and that I was praying for him and all the cardinal electors. He answered with a simple, “Keep praying!”

And we all know what happened after that: Pope Leo XIV was elected and walked out on the balcony of St. Peter’s on May 8, the Augustinian feast of Mary, Our Lady of Grace! And St. Augustine is known as the Doctor of Grace! All the positions within the Order (missionary, provincial, prior general, bishop, head of the dicastery, cardinal) that Bob Prevost held were all done with wonderful grace!

Since he was created a cardinal in September 2023, I truly felt that Bob could be elected pope. He has an amazing résumé; knows many languages; is mild-mannered, calm, and calculated; and is a wonderful listener and people-person. I have known him for 40 years but feel we have truly been friends since 1999, when he was the prior provincial of the Midwest Province and I was the headmaster of Cascia Hall in Tulsa, Okla. We worked together on many projects over the years, and he installed me in office as provincial in 2010 when he was in office as prior general. After he completed his two terms as prior general, he

was then under my jurisdiction for a change, and I assigned him as director of formation in Chicago. He served as my vicar and first counselor for about a year until Pope Francis appointed him bishop of Chiclayo.

When the protodeacon of the College of Cardinals announced the name Robertum Franciscum, I said, “It’s Bob!” I cannot tell you what joy I experienced at that moment! And within seconds, my cell phone had over 400 texts, and many phone calls. I answered only the call from my parents. We had a Villanova campaign event in Chicago that night and the buzz of the room was the election of our fellow Villanovan (class of 1977), Chicagoan, and Augustinian Friar. I knew I had to go to Rome, so I emailed the new pope and asked him when the installation Mass would be. I





received a response saying it would be May 18, and that he hoped I would be there! I went to Chiclayo, Peru, when he was ordained a bishop; I went to Rome when he was elevated to cardinal; I had to go for the trifecta to see my friend installed as pope!

I flew over on Friday, May 16 with Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A., and Fr. Aldo Potencio, O.S.A. We arrived on Saturday morning and were hit by a barrage of reporters looking for interviews. We had a wonderful Villanova gathering at a local restaurant that afternoon for about 70 people, and—of course—more reporters. The energy, enthusiasm, and pure joy was palpable, celebrating our most famous alumnus!

The next morning, we made our way over to St. Peter's Square early to get our seats in the Augustinian section. It is reported that there was a quarter of a million people there on this beautiful sunny day. That evening, I met a group from the Midwest Augustinians for dinner near the Trevi Fountain. Later that night, I received a call from our then-vicar general, Fr. Joe Farrell, O.S.A., informing me of the invitation to see the pope the following morning! I couldn't fall asleep after that wonderful news!

Before the audience, I went to get some of the official photos at the Vatican Media Shop as well as some rosaries to have the Holy Father bless. I also ordered some papal blessings for a few special occasions this summer. Then we made our way through the Bronze Door and up to the papal offices. We were waiting in a room with an awkward silence, until Fr. Joe encouraged us to pray the rosary together—the Joyful Mysteries! And then, he walked into the room. We stood and applauded! Here was my friend, now pope! He spoke to us for several minutes about our connectedness as Augustinians and encouraged us to share our gift of community with the Church and the world—promoting peace and unity.

And then he gave the blessing, and said he would meet each one of us and then take a group picture.

I have had the privilege to personally meet two other popes (John Paul II in 1999 and Francis in 2013) and while those were

certainly an honor and privilege, this one was different. When it was my turn to greet Pope Leo, I didn't have to introduce myself—he called me by my name. He opened his arms in welcome for a fraternal embrace instead of the protocol handshake. It was so emotional—mostly joy, but a touch of sadness, as I know we just can't go out for a pizza or a drink as in the past. His personal life has been sacrificed, and all he says and does is public. This must be a heavy cross to carry, but he will do it as he has all his other ministries: with great aplomb, dignity, and class.

While with him for the couple of minutes we had together, I brought him greetings of family and friends. He specifically asked about my parents and remembered that it was the first anniversary of my brother's death. I then introduced him to Br. David Relstab, O.S.A., who was with me and brought along a special gift: a framed copy of the pope's first vows as an Augustinian from 1978, in his own handwriting. He seemed genuinely surprised and pleased with the unique gift, which was the idea of Fr. Jack Tierney, O.S.A., who was there for the Mass but unfortunately not for this private meeting. Br. David even took a moment to mention the pope's beloved Chicago White Sox, and while Leo knew they were not doing very well, he quickly said that Bernie must be happy with the success of his Cubs! It was just like old times, but only for a couple of minutes. After that it was a quick group shot and then he was gone.



Br. David Relstab, O.S.A. (left) and Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A. (right) present Pope Leo XIV with the pope's handwritten first vows as an Augustinian.



The next day was a rainy day in Rome. I went to the other major basilicas and through the Holy Doors for the Jubilee Year of Hope—St. Mary Major (where the simple tomb of Pope Francis is located) and St. John Lateran. In the evening, I went to St. Paul Outside the Walls, where there was a prayer service led by Pope Leo. It was amazing to hear so many people cheering and calling out “Papa!” and then running to get a better view or get a picture as he processed to the altar. I thought, “Look at all these people running after Bob! Just a week ago he could have walked across the square or gone for a pizza in the piazza and no one would have noticed. Now that is impossible for him to do.” Then I realized, they are not running after Bob, they are running after Leo and what and who he represents: the Church and Jesus Christ!

Our Augustinian Brother, Chicagoan, Villanovan, and friend is now the Vicar of Christ on Earth as the Successor of St. Peter, and our hearts are filled with joy! “That your joy may be complete” is what we hear in the Gospel of John. Pope Francis, in *The Joy of The Gospel*, constantly reminded us that joy is the confident assurance of the presence of God! And I am reminded of the final words of the homily at my ordination 32 years ago by Bishop John McNabb, O.S.A., who said, “Above all, live a joyful life!” While life has its ups and downs, we know that the Lord is with us, we have nothing to fear, and we can indeed be joyful and promote unity and peace!

Top (l-r): Fr. Tom McCarthy, O.S.A., Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A., then-Cardinal Robert Prevost, O.S.A., Fr. Anthony Pizzo, O.S.A., and Fr. Jack Tierney, O.S.A.

Right: Fr. Bernie Scianna, O.S.A. (left) greets Pope Francis, with the future Pope Leo XIV looking on from the back.



THE Pope Leo Effect

INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF AUGUSTINIANS

By Fr. Jeremy R. Hiers
Director, Office of Vocations

We will all remember the moment we heard an Augustinian would become the next pope. I was gathered with several others around the television in the Provincial Office. As the name Robert Francis Prevost was announced, we erupted in joyful cheer. Shortly after the cheering began, our prior provincial, Fr. Rob, turned to me and

said, “This will have a significant impact on vocations.” A few moments later, other friars began texting me with messages such as, “You are about to get very busy.”



Fr. Jim McBurney, O.S.A. (center), director of novices, with the four novices currently in residence at the Our Mother of Good Counsel Novitiate.

In that moment, I knew they were right. Twelve years earlier I had embarked on my own journey of discernment just after Pope Francis was elected in 2013. His election prompted me to reach out to the Jesuit Vocation Office and ask, “Am I called to be a Jesuit?” Now, I am incredibly grateful to serve as an *Augustinian* vocation director and walk with those who Pope Leo XIV has inspired to ask, “Am I called to be an Augustinian?”

Not surprisingly, within days of Pope Leo XIV’s election we began receiving numerous inquiries from people discerning religious life. Some had reached out to us before, and Pope Leo XIV inspired them to take another step. Still others were discerning with another religious order and had never heard of the Augustinians, but Pope Leo XIV made us known to them. Still others are just beginning their discernment. Learning that the new pope has origins in religious life and was a missionary inspired them to want to learn more about our Augustinian Order.

I am happy to report the inquiries continue to come in. Since Pope Leo XIV’s election we have received well over 400 inquiries from young men throughout the United States. Meeting them and walking with them on their journey of discernment has been a real blessing as they share their faith and how God has led them to this point.

What is your next step? Have you ever wondered if God is calling you to religious life? Perhaps God is inviting you to set up a conversation with us to discuss. Is God instead calling you to help us pray for and promote vocations? God may be calling you to become an Augustinian Vocation Promoter.

As Pope Leo said just after his election on the World Day of Prayer for Vocations: “We need to be courageous in the witness we give, with the world and above all with life.”

You can take the next step today by emailing us at vocations@augustinian.org.





Reflections

Incredible!

The Election of Pope Leo XIV from the Augustinian Curia in Rome

*By Fr. Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A.
Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine*

“Incredible!” That is a word that was repeated many times around the Augustinian General Curia and Collegio Santa Monica in Rome in the hours and days after the election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, O.S.A., to lead the universal Catholic Church as the 267th bishop of Rome. In the late afternoon of May 8, 2025, from the windows of the Curia, we could see the white smoke rising from the chimney above the roof of the Sistine Chapel, and we quickly went outside and into the long security line to enter St. Peter’s Square. We all wanted to be there when the historic announcement, “Habemus papam,” was made by the Protodeacon Cardinal Dominique Mamberti. It was only the second day of the conclave, and we were a bit surprised that someone was elected so quickly. Who that someone was became an even bigger surprise.



The piazza and surrounding streets filled up quickly with an estimated 150,000 people, gathered to hear the result of the election of the next pope. As I went through the security and entered into St. Peter's Square, I got separated from the rest of my Augustinian Brothers and found myself "alone" in the midst of over a hundred thousand people. It was an odd feeling of being surrounded by so many and yet experiencing a very personal moment. When the hour finally came for the joyous announcement to be made, a hush came over the large crowd. Only the sound of the water from the two fountains in the piazza broke through the silence. When the name Robert Francis Prevost was eventually proclaimed from the center balcony of the sixteenth-century basilica, a deafening cheer erupted in the piazza, accompanied by the repeated question: "But who is he?" The name Robert Prevost is well known in the Augustinian world, but it was still relatively new in the Roman world and beyond.

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, O.S.A., arrived in Rome in early 2023 to assume the role of prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. He was certainly known and trusted by Pope Francis and those with whom he began to collaborate and work in the Roman Curia. But for many in Rome and in the world, he was not well known, and his name was not one that was regularly seen in the newspapers as *papabile*. For those of us who knew him there was certainly the hope-filled dream that our former prior general could be elected pope. It always lightened our hearts and brought smiles to our faces and joy to our conversations when we could entertain the possibility of one of our brothers being elected Bishop of Rome.

Our brother Robert lived in the General Curia in Rome for 12 years as he served the Augustinian Order as prior general (2001-2013). When, in 2023, Pope Francis asked him to return to Rome as prefect of the Dicastery of Bishops, Prevost was not able to live with us in the Curia community but made sure to come each morning to pray morning prayer and celebrate Mass with us. He would then



Pope Leo XIV visits the Curia to celebrate the 70th birthday of then-Prior General Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón.

go to the office in the dicastery, about a five-minute walk from here, and return to the Curia to share the midday meal, called *pranzo*. The possibility of an Augustinian pope allowed us to joke with him after lunch on the day before the conclave.

On May 6, Prior General Alejandro Moral Antón, on behalf of the community, offered a blessing invoking the Holy Spirit to come upon our brother Robert and the cardinal electors as they were about to enter this historic moment. After the blessing, we let our brother Robert know that he was always welcome back to the Curia to continue to share in prayer and meals with us, no matter what color he may be wearing.

Pope Leo greeted the world with the words of the risen Christ, "Peace be with you," and shared with the world that he was a Son of Augustine, after which he offered his first apostolic blessing. The large crowd, still rejoicing in the piazza, began to dissipate, and people made their way back to their homes—but at the Curia we found a swarm of reporters and well-wishers wanting to share in the joy. For the next few hours and into the wee hours of the next morning, the members of Collegio Santa Monica, the General Curia, and so many of our Augustinian communities



of men and women around the world found ourselves answering questions and reliving the moment when the announcement was made. The echo of "Incredible!!!" in all languages was the most common denominator of the interviews and conversations.

We are most grateful that Pope Leo XIV has returned a few times—this time wearing white—to share in prayer, Mass, and meals with the Curia community and with the community of Collegio Santa Monica. He has made a conscious effort to maintain his Augustinian roots with a visit to the Basilica of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano and to the Papal Sacristy community in the Apostolic Palace. It is evident in his homilies, messages, and speeches that Pope Leo XIV will rely upon the wisdom of the fifth-century bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine, to assist him in his role as teacher and pastor. We assure Pope Leo XIV of our prayers and fraternal love and support as he assumes this new role as our leader, teacher, pastor, and pope. May we maintain the "incredible" joy we felt on May 8, 2025, and may that joy be the gift we continue to share with the world and especially with our brother Robert Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV.





Clockwise from top left: Guests attend Mass at historic St. Augustine Church; tables set in the Union League of Philadelphia; emcee Keith Jones addresses the crowd; guests take photos with a cardboard cutout of Pope Leo XIV.





HONORING A POPE

THE JOURNEY TO THE 2025

Saint Augustine Medal

By Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement & Communications

In July 2024, our prior provincial, Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A., asked Robert Cardinal Prevost, O.S.A., to accept the Saint Augustine Medal, our Province's highest honor. The cardinal graciously accepted and agreed to come to Philadelphia to accept the medal in person—except the only month he could guarantee his presence would be August, since it was the only month of the year when he wouldn't have his

weekly meetings with Pope Francis. My first thought was, "August? No one will come—everyone will be on vacation!" We decided that it was more important for us to guarantee the cardinal's presence, and we began to explore dates. Cardinal Prevost suggested August 28, 2025, the Feast of St. Augustine, where he could preside at a Eucharistic celebration on the Solemnity of St. Augustine and be present to receive the Saint Augustine Medal. Perfect!



But God had a different plan, and on May 8, 2025, Cardinal Prevost was elected the first Augustinian and first American pope. After the initial shock, we asked ourselves: would we cancel the Medal Dinner? Were we now honoring a *pope*? On May 8, we received over 100 registrations for the Saint Augustine Medal Dinner. In the days following Pope Leo's election it became clear that our honoree hadn't changed; he had simply assumed a new role—albeit the Successor to St. Peter and leader of the global Catholic Church!

After several days of responding to the media, I decided to send Pope Leo an email to congratulate him and to let him know he was in our prayers. I was stunned when I woke up the following day to find an email from Robert Prevost, but this time it was signed Pope Leo XIV. He thanked me for my good wishes and



apologized that he would not be able to attend the Medal Dinner, but offered a video message instead. Our team switched gears and began to plan an evening to honor Pope Leo XIV.



And what a night it was! The evening began with the celebration of the Eucharist on the Solemnity of St. Augustine, a significant feast day for the Order, at St. Augustine Church in Philadelphia—the Augustinians' first community in the United States. Guests enjoyed a prelude of Peruvian music performed by the Chuica family, friends of Pope Leo from when he served in Peru. Prior Provincial Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A., presided with concelebrants Fr. Anthony Pizzo, O.S.A., Prior Provincial of Our Mother of Good Counsel Province in the Midwest; Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A., who served in Peru with the pope; and Bishop Daniel Turley, O.S.A., bishop emeritus of Chulucanas, Peru. The St. Augustine Parish choir and the Villanova University Pastoral Musicians provided a beautiful repertoire of music on this special feast day. Over 60 Augustinian Friars and nearly 550 guests were present as Fr. Paul Galetto, O.S.A., parochial administrator at St. Augustine's, welcomed them to this historic church.



Guests hopped onto trolleys to return to the Union League of Philadelphia for a celebratory dinner to honor Pope Leo. Keith Jones, NBC10's award-winning news anchor, served as master of ceremonies for the evening. Keith introduced Bishop Daniel Turley, O.S.A., who provided a beautiful invocation before the meal, and Fr. Rob Hagan, O.S.A., who offered opening remarks before nearly 700 guests. I had the opportunity to express our gratitude for our guests' generosity and explain why their support is so important to us. I was happy to report that, because of their



kindness, we raised over one million dollars for the Augustinian way of life and ministries. It was only fitting that we recognized almost 65 friars in attendance, and I asked them to stand so that I could appropriately thank them for the impact they have on our lives. As they stood, they received a standing ovation.

The highlight of the evening came after dinner as Fr. Rob introduced our Saint Augustine Medal Dinner recipient, Pope Leo XIV, who delivered a beautiful video message. It was genuine, authentic, and from the heart. If you haven't had a chance to view the video, you can find it on our Augustinian YouTube channel.

The Saint Augustine Medal Dinner was a spectacular and fitting tribute to Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV. Although not physically present, his message resounded in the rooms of the Union League of Philadelphia and brought many to tears. In my 45 years in the business of fundraising and relationship-building, this event was by far the highlight of my career. After all, how many times in your life do you plan an event to honor a pope—and not just any pope, an Augustinian Friar and the first American pope ever! It was an honor and a privilege, and an amazing memory I will cherish.



Clockwise from top left: Chesley Turner and Margaret Lafferty lead the congregation in song at St. Augustine Church. The Chuica family, friends of Pope Leo during his time in Peru, plays traditional Peruvian music before Mass. Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., with emcee Keith Jones and Holly Jones. Left to right: Eustace Wolfington, Fr. Stephen Curry, O.S.A., and Fr. Bob Terranova, O.S.A. The Province's Advancement & Communications team poses with Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A. (and Pope Leo) at the end of an exceptional evening.

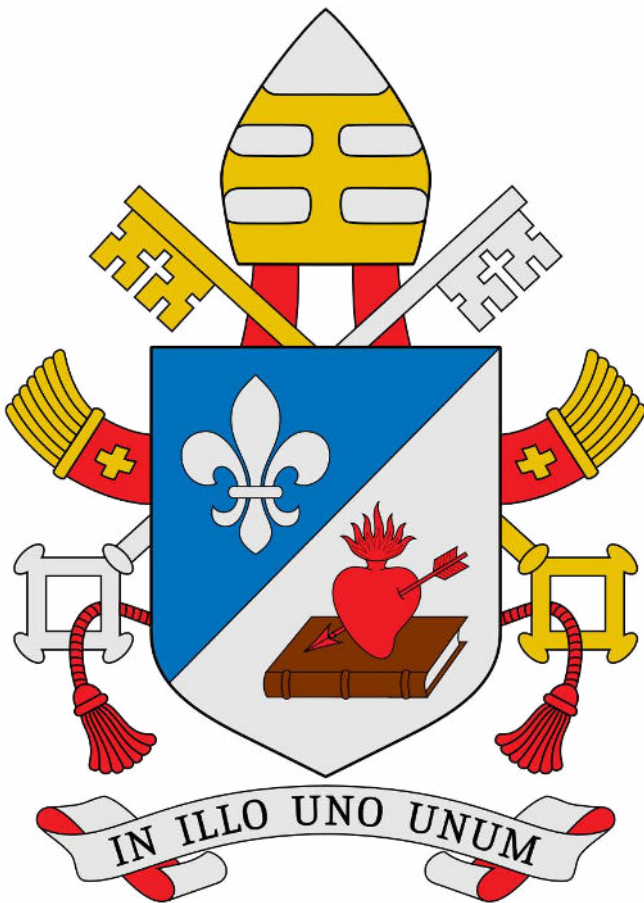


Watch the pope's acceptance video, A Son of Augustine.

Symbols of the Office, Symbols of St. Augustine:

POPE LEO XIV'S PAPAL CREST, MOTTO, *and* FISHERMAN'S RING

By Sarah M. Reisert



When a new pope is elected, one of the first things he does is share his coat of arms. A coat of arms may seem like an archaic tradition today, but while papal heraldry has long roots, it also serves a modern purpose.

The history of papal heraldry stretches back centuries. A pope's crest often appeared on his principal works: churches, fountains, and official documents. "It is not known which pope was the first [to have a coat of arms]," says Michael McCarthy, an expert on ecclesiastical heraldry, in an interview with EWTN. "Heraldry emerged in the twelfth century as a means of identifying people in battle. From there it was a short step for ecclesiastics to do the same." Most early popes had a family coat of arms that they would use during their papacy. It wasn't until the election of Pope Nicholas V in 1447 that a pope designed his own coat of arms. Nicholas also added the crossed keys of St. Peter, which have been on every crest since: the gold key representing spiritual power and divine guidance, and the silver representing worldly power and responsibility. Soon after the keys were added, the papal tiara appeared above the shield, later replaced in the 1960s by the simpler bishop's mitre.

A modern pope's coat of arms is more than just a logo—it's a window into his mission, his values, and his inspiration. It often incorporates elements related to his family history, personal motto, or spiritual aspirations, and Leo's is no different. The design dates to his time as a bishop, and its central symbols remain unchanged. On the lower right is the Augustinian emblem: a flaming heart pierced by an arrow, resting on a book. The heart burns with love for God and neighbor; the book represents Scripture and the search for truth; the arrow recalls Augustine's words, "You have pierced my heart with your Word." It is a symbol used by Augustinians the world over, and now it decorates a papal coat of arms!

The upper half bears a white fleur-de-lis against blue—a traditional emblem and colors of the Virgin Mary. The blue recalls the heavens; the lily speaks of purity. For Leo, it signals a deep Marian love and devotion. It may also be a nod to Pope Leo's French heritage.

Beneath the shield is his motto, *In Illo Uno Unum*—"In the One, we are one." Drawn from St. Augustine's *Exposition on Psalm 127*, it reflects the unity of all Christians in Christ:

When I speak of Christians in the plural, I understand one in the One Christ. You are therefore many, and you are one; we are many, and we are one. How are we many, and yet one? Because we cling unto Him whose members we are; and since our Head is in heaven, that His members may follow.

Just like his crest, Leo chose his motto to adorn his episcopal coat of arms, and it has followed him to his papacy. In a 2023 interview with *Vatican News*' Tiziana Campisi,



Pope Leo's Fisherman's Ring. The inside bears his name along with his crest.

then-Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost said: "As can be seen from my episcopal motto, unity and communion are truly part of the charism of the Order of St. Augustine, and also of my way of acting and thinking," he said. "I believe it is very important to promote communion in the Church, and we know well that communion, participation, and mission are the three key words of the Synod. So, as an Augustinian, for me promoting unity and communion is fundamental."

The crest appears again on the inside of his Fisherman's Ring, named for St. Peter, the first pope. Once used to seal papal correspondence, the ring now serves as a symbol of continuity and service. Each pope receives a new ring engraved with Peter's image, his own name, and often a personal emblem. Leo's bears his shield on the inside of the ring—a quiet reminder of the values that guide his hand. Upon a pope's death, the ring is defaced to mark the close of his service.

In each of these symbols—the shield, the motto, and the ring—Pope Leo carries the heart of St. Augustine into the heart of the Church, letting centuries of tradition speak in ways both timeless and deeply his own.



A botanical reproduction of Pope Leo's crest in the Vatican Gardens.



AUGUSTINIAN SAINTS AND BLESSEDS: **FIDELITY, REFORM, SERVICE, MARTYRDOM**

THE AUGUSTINIAN RELICS IN POPE LEO'S PECTORAL CROSS

By Sarah M. Reisert

When Pope Leo XIV stepped out onto the balcony for the first time, around his neck was a gold pectoral cross. While bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and popes often have several pectoral crosses in rotation, this one was quite special: a gift from the Augustinian Curia upon his elevation to cardinal in 2023.

Not only was it a way for him to carry the love and respect of his Augustinian Brothers with him as he greeted the world for the first time as the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, but also the special protection of the five Augustinian saints and blesseds whose relics adorn the cross.

The relics were chosen by Fr. Josef Sciberras, O.S.A., then-postulator general of the Augustinian Order. “The day before the conclave,” Fr. Sciberras shared, “I sent him a message, encouraging him to wear the cross we had given him, for the protection of Sts. Augustine and Monica. I don’t know whether it was because of my message or not, but when I saw he was wearing it when taking the oath—and again when he stepped out onto the balcony of the basilica—I was deeply moved.”

The five relics chosen by Fr. Sciberras and prepared by relic artisan Antonino Cottone were those of St. Augustine, St. Monica, St. Thomas of Villanova, Blessed Anselmo Polanco, and Venerable Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio. No doubt the first three names are familiar to anyone who knows the Augustinians, but who are the other two?

BLESSED ANSELM POLANCO

Anselm Polanco (1881-1939) was born April 16, 1881, in Buenavista de Valdavia, Palencia, Spain. He joined the Augustinian Order as a young man and studied in Germany before returning to Spain to teach at Valladolid and La Vid.

He was named prior provincial of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of the Philippines in 1932 and gave particular importance to visitation of all the Augustinians in his province. This required difficult journeys to China, the Philippines, the United States, Peru, and Colombia, since many of the Spanish Augustinians were engaged in missionary activity.

In 1935, Blessed Anselm was named bishop of the Diocese of Teruel and Albarracin. When civil war broke out in Spain in 1936, he voluntarily remained in his diocese despite the strong anti-Catholic persecutions brought by the war. In deciding to remain with his people, he followed the same advice that St. Augustine had given to Bishop Honoratus centuries earlier:

When all are threatened by the same danger, that is, bishops, clergy and laity, those who need the others must not be abandoned by those of whom they have need. (Possidius, Life of Augustine 30, 11)

The war hit especially close to home with the Battle of Teruel, which took place within Bishop Polanco's ecclesiastical jurisdiction from December 1937-February 1938, claiming the lives of nearly 40,000 soldiers from both sides. A month before the end of the battle, welcoming in the new year on January 1, 1938, Bishop Polanco celebrated his last Mass at the Teruel seminary. Only eight days later, he was arrested by anti-Catholic forces.

During the thirteen months he was kept prisoner, he organized an intense life of prayer along with the other prisoners. On February 7, 1939, only a few days before the end of the war, he was taken outside the prison and was executed by a firing squad. His mortal remains rest at the Cathedral of Teruel, where he once served as bishop, and he was beatified October 1, 1995, by Pope John Paul II.

In 2003, the International Meeting of Augustinian Youth took place at the Friar Luis de León Convention Center in Guadarrama, a town in the mountains northwest of Madrid and very close to the Valley of the Fallen, which was built after the Spanish Civil War as a place to pray for peace and reconciliation among Spaniards. The Order's prior general—then Fr. Robert F. Prevost, O.S.A., now now Pope Leo XIV—participated in the event.



Blessed Anselm Polanco, O.S.A.

VENERABLE GIUSEPPE BARTOLOMEO MENOCHIO

Venerable Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio (1741-1823) is another Augustinian bishop—this one with experience at the Vatican. Born in Carmagnola, Turin, Italy in 1741, he entered the Augustinian Order at the convent of St. Augustine in Fermo, taking his solemn vows in 1761 and being ordained a priest in 1764.

At first, he was a professor of theology, but later, responding to pastoral needs, dedicated himself to ministry—especially preaching. He was given the name “the holy preacher” by the people to whom he ministered, and he did many acts of penance to bring about the conversion of sinners.

In 1796, Venerable Giuseppe was named coadjutor bishop of Reggio Emilia, which at that time was occupied by the French. City officials soon forced him to leave the diocese because, ironically, they identified the native Italian as a foreigner in the French-occupied territory. For the next four years, he ministered across the Marche region of Italy, where there were few priests to care for the spiritual needs of the people.

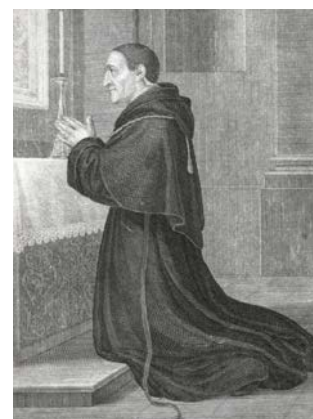
Following the election of Pope Pius VII, Venerable Giuseppe was named papal sacristan and confessor to the Supreme Pontiff. Faced with antagonism from anti-Church civil authorities, he was constant in his faith and his service to the Church.

When the pope was deported to France in 1809, Venerable Giuseppe stayed in Rome. He refused to take the oath of fidelity to the Emperor Napoleon, despite great pressure to do so. He gave spiritual direction to Augustinian novices and many convents of religious sisters and worked diligently to restore the Augustinian houses which Napoleon had suppressed.

Once described by Pope Pius VII as “a bishop without fear,” Venerable Giuseppe died in 1823, and his body now rests at St. Augustine Church in Rome. A decree attesting to his heroic practice of virtue was issued in 1991.

May Pope Leo be inspired by the examples of Blessed Anselm, Venerable Giuseppe, and the other Augustinian saints that then-Postulator General Fr. Josef Sciberras, O.S.A., chose for the pectoral cross.

“This cross isn’t just a decorative object,” says Fr. Sciberras. “It’s a visible sign of faith and a clear reflection of pastoral commitment. The relics it contains are all linked to the Augustinian tradition, and each one represents fidelity, reform, service, or martyrdom—virtues that now guide and sustain the ministry of the new Pope.”

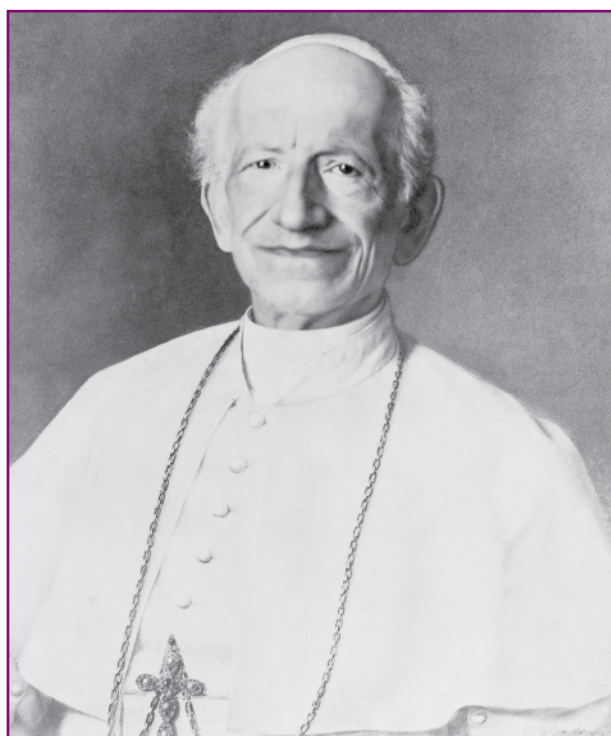


Venerable Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio, O.S.A.

POPE LEO XIII

and the Augustinians

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



Why did our new Holy Father choose the name **Leo XIV**?

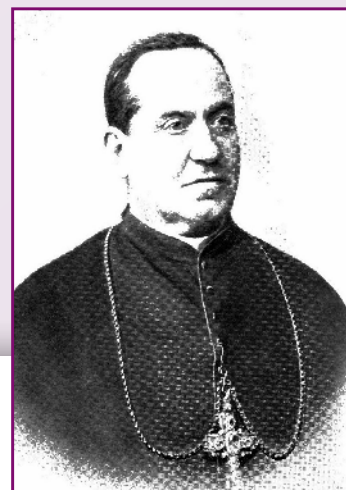
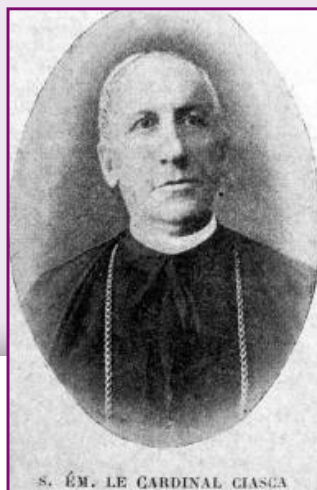
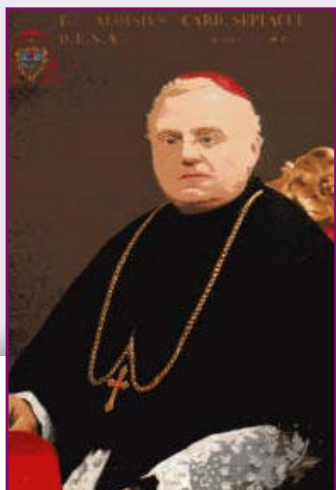
Many journalists and reporters immediately assumed it had to do with the last pope who bore that name—Giacchino Pecci, or Leo XIII—because of his great contribution to the Church’s social doctrine. The present Holy Father’s long experience as a missionary would certainly suggest such a conclusion. In fact, in a post-election interview he said as much. But there may be other aspects of Pope Leo XIII’s story that were influential in the present Holy Father’s choice as well, for Pope Leo XIII had a long and familiar relationship with the Augustinians.



A souvenir from the double canonization of St. Rita of Cascia (noted Agostiniana) and St. Jean-Baptiste de la Salle by Pope Leo XIII on May 24, 1900.

Giacchino Pecci was born in Carpineto Romano, not far from Rome, on March 2, 1810. In that town there stood a prominent Augustinian church and friary dedicated to St. Augustine, which in fact gave rise to the town’s adoption of St. Augustine as its patron. Several years before Pecci’s birth, however, the friars had been expelled from the friary during the government suppressions of religious communities. It was Leo XIII who, out of appreciation for the history of his land of birth and affection for the Augustinians, restored the church and friary in 1888 and entrusted them once again to the friars.

As archbishop of Perugia from 1846 to 1877, Monsignor Pecci became well acquainted with the Augustinians of the region, especially through his friend, Fr. Luigi Sepiacci, O.S.A. It was later Fr. Sepiacci, a consultor for Propaganda Fidei, together with two other members of the Order (Fr. Agostino Ciasca, O.S.A., and Fr. Vincenzo



L-R: Luigi Cardinal Sepiacci, O.S.A., Agostino Cardinal Ciasca, O.S.A.; Sebastiano Cardinal Martinelli, O.S.A.; Bishop Guglielmo Pifferi, O.S.A.

Semenza, O.S.A.) who in 1880 approached Pope Leo asking him to intervene in the Order's life to stem the downward spiral that was slowly leading the Order to exhaustion, following the loss of many religious houses and the dispersion of many friars as a result of the laws of suppression. Pope Leo accordingly summoned the North American prior provincial, Fr. Pacifico Neno, O.S.A., a native Italian, from Villanova, Pa., and appointed him commissary general of the Order. Neno arrived in Rome on February 18, 1881, and immediately took up the task of re-organization and renewal, re-opening friaries and calling for the acceptance of new vocations. With the Holy Father's encouragement and consent, Fr. Neno purchased the Palazzo Cesi and established there the Order's new curia and the Collegio Santa Monica.

Through the influence of the Spanish monarch, for almost 100 years beginning in 1804 the Spanish provinces of the Order (as well as the jurisdictions under the agency of the Spanish Empire) had existed practically in total separation from the rest of the Order. They even had their own superior, who had the same authority for the Spaniards as the prior general did for the rest of the Order. Pope Leo XIII, in 1893, successfully called for the unification of the two branches during the term of office of Fr. Sebastiano Martinelli, O.S.A.

A further sign of Pope Leo's affection and support for the Order was the brief of September 1900, authorizing the return of the relics of St. Augustine to the guardianship of the Order. Once again, it was during the Napoleonic suppression that the remains had been transferred from the Church of St. Peter in Ciel d'Oro to the Cathedral of Pavia. With the return of the friars to Pavia at the suppression's end, the sons were reunited with their father. The pope himself wrote a poem for the occasion.

For centuries, the office of the Papal Sacristy had been entrusted to the Augustinians, with the papal sacristan himself a friar who held the rank of bishop. Often this friar was also the confessor of the pope. Such was the case during the pontificate of Leo XIII when Bishop Guglielmo Pifferi, O.S.A., occupied the office. It may have been through this friar, who was a great promoter of devotion to Our Mother of Good Counsel, that Pope Leo also became enamored of

Our Lady under this title. In 1884 he approved a new Office with a Mass for her annual feast, and in 1893 he instituted the White Scapular in her honor. Finally, in 1903 he placed the invocation to Our Mother of Good Counsel in the Litany of Loreto and raised the Shrine to Our Lady in Genazzano to the rank of Minor Basilica, at the same time enlarging the guest house there at his own expense.

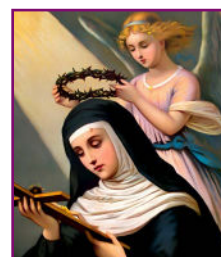
Leo XIII also called a number of the Order's members to positions of responsibility and leadership, including three cardinals: Agostino Ciasca, O.S.A., an outstanding orientalist, Scripture scholar, and linguist whom he named prefect of the Vatican Archives; Luigi Sepiacci, O.S.A., ordained to the priesthood by Leo when he was archbishop of Perugia, who was appointed president of the Roman Academy for Noble Ecclesiastics and secretary for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars; and lastly, Sebastiano Martinelli, O.S.A., named apostolic delegate to the United States while still prior general of the Order, and who thereafter became prefect of the Congregation of Rites. In addition, the same Holy Father named many friars to the episcopate, including Thomas Martinelli, O.S.A., who would also later be created a cardinal by Pope Pius IX.

Finally, but by no means least in significance, was Pope Leo's role in the canonization of two of our most renowned saints (Clare of the Cross of Montefalco and Rita of Cascia) and the beatification of nine others: Alonso de Orozco and John Stone, both later canonized saints, as well as Angelo of Furci, James of Cerqueto, Sante of Cori, William of Toulouse, Gratia of Cattaro, Angelo of Foligno, and Josephine Mary of St. Agnes.

Pope Leo XIII's long pontificate was a blessing for the Order of St. Augustine as it was for the Church and society. May that blessing continue now through the Augustinian who carries his name and who himself benefited from his goodness to us.



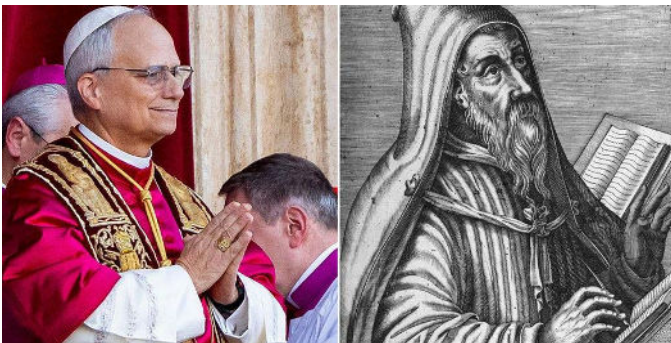
St. Clare of the Cross of Montefalco



St. Rita of Cascia

AUGUSTINE AND *LEADERSHIP:* THEN AND NOW

Fr. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Director of Special Events of the Augustinian Institute and Professor of Theology, Villanova University



In this time of turmoil and significant divisions in our world, the Church has elected a member of the Augustinian Order as Bishop of Rome: Pope Leo XIV. As an Augustinian, one cannot help but wonder what kind of leader he will be. That question may make it all the more interesting to offer some ideas on the leadership of St. Augustine in his time. Even if it is too soon to predict or even evaluate the connections between these two figures, it is not too soon for each reader of this article to delve further into our own understanding and practice of leadership.

Augustine lived in a time of great division among the Christians of North Africa. Even though the Catholics were in the minority, he consistently acted in the interest of the common good. He did not have a “theory of leadership,” but his words and actions can give us valuable examples of what it means to be a leader—especially at a time of significant divisions in society and in the world.

HAVING THE OTHER’S BACK

When he was forced into priesthood by the people of Hippo in 391, he was shocked by what he discovered in that seaport city. Catholics were held in contempt and even subject to violence. He then wrote a letter to Valerius, his bishop, saying, “Nothing in this life, and especially at this time, is more difficult, more laborious, and more dangerous than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon.” Having no background for what he was facing, he asked to study the Scriptures. It was not just for personal enrichment. He realized that he needed to learn how to act “for the salvation of others, not seeking what is beneficial for me, but for many, that they may be saved.”

Caring for others was an important beginning to his acceptance of his new role in the church of Hippo. Asking, therefore, to have a chance to be “grounded” in the “counsels recorded in the holy books” was crucial. He wanted to be able to “minister to the more ordinary affairs of the Church or at least to live with a sounder conscience among the bands of the wicked.” It did not take long for him to be in touch with Aurelius, the bishop of Carthage, who was an experienced and able administrator. His close friend, Alypius, would become the bishop of Thagaste and was the right person to bring legal and political experience into the conversation. Hence, Augustine’s role was to provide the theological leadership. They all worked together for about 30 years, doing whatever they could to strengthen the Christian community from within. That meant that they had to work to



St. Augustine preaching before Valere, Bishop of Hippo,
Carle van Loo

develop a vision of Church that was inclusive, not combative. Diversity was a necessary and significant dimension of what it meant—and means—to be Catholic.

Leadership, for Augustine and his contemporaries, had a communal dimension. His outreach and respectful dialogue with the Donatist bishop Fortunius, was an invitation to search together for truth. His efforts within the Catholic communities (both in Hippo and in the other cities to which he was called to travel) was all about shared service, not about his ministry. One aspect of leadership, in other words, was a willingness to sacrifice for another—a kind of “I’ve got your back” statement in action.

Augustine’s approach to leadership, in other words, was that of a fellow servant rather than what some call servant leadership. That description aligns thoughtfully with his appreciation of others as fellow members of the Body of Christ. His appeal to union in Christ was an application of Paul’s words: “What do you have that you have not received?” (1 Cor 4:7). Since everything is a gift from God, the emphasis on equality and mutuality was a good fit with his vision of how the Church was supposed to work. Those qualities were also expressive of what leadership was for him and a healthy description of the kind and quality of leadership that is needed in the Church today.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Another quality of Augustine’s life and work was an insistence on humility. Although humility is often seen as focusing on one’s limits and frailty, Augustine saw it as a robust acceptance of one’s humanity in a down-to-earth (*humus*) way. Because of his newfound appreciation of the humility of Christ, he could confess his sins in a book-long description of how God had treated him. But he recognized that he had to treat others as he had been treated. That meant that he had to lead by extending himself in friendship to his adversaries. Instead of

trying to exercise authority, he acted with compassion, engaging in conversation rather than merely criticizing.

Therefore, Augustine described humility not as a way of thinking little of self, but as a true knowledge of oneself. His acceptance and even proclamation of his sinful life allowed him to take a leading role in the healing of the division between Catholic and Donatist North African Christians. Leading others to accept their humanity was not a matter of preaching ideals but a process of becoming more truly human—together.

In fact, Augustine often defended those “accused or convicted of crimes.” His letters show “a constant exhortation to *humanitas*, which he associates with the recollection of our own humanity and the humanity of others.”¹ Augustine exercised leadership not simply as a placid application of a plan but as a passionate activity of building community wherever that was possible. Having accepted his humanity, he used his experience to guide others to do the same.

Therefore, the *Rule* that he wrote for his religious community could say, “The superior, for his part, must not think himself fortunate in his exercise of authority but in his role as one serving you in love. In your eyes he shall hold the first place among you by the dignity of his office, but in fear before God he shall be as the least among you. He must show himself as an example of good works toward all.”

Such is also the way to understand and appreciate the proclaimed desire of Pope Leo XIV for peace and bridge-building in these troubled times. At a time when people are much too easily given to separation from and criticism of others, it is certainly special to have someone as pope who is a genuine and approachable human being and who wants to build up the community. As a “son of Augustine,” he, like Augustine himself, will be truly dependent upon the grace of the Holy Spirit and the good will and prayers of any and every person who has learned the value and necessity of compassion—especially for those who live on the margins of society. In this time of great need and division, it is truly a sign of God’s care for us all that someone like Pope Leo XIV has been chosen to lead the



St. Augustine teaching rhetoric in Carthage,
Ottaviano Nelli

Church and the world. May we find in his words and actions “reasons to live and to hope” (*Gaudium et Spes* 31) and do our best to pass them on!

¹ See Robert Dodaro, “Between Two Cities: Political Action in Augustine of Hippo,” in *Augustine and Politics*, John Doody, Kevin Hughes, and Kim Paffenroth, eds. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 99–116, 100.



Thank You,

FR. ALEJANDRO MORAL ANTÓN, O.S.A.

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

As we officially welcome our new prior general, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova to offer our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to Fr. Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A. Fr. Alejandro completed twelve years of service (two consecutive terms of six years) to our Order and to the people we serve all over the world. Countless lives—certainly my brother friars, but many more besides—have been positively impacted by Fr. Alejandro’s humble, prudent, faith-filled service as prior general of the Order of St. Augustine.



Fr. Alejandro’s guidance, wisdom and prayerful example have resulted in the strengthening of our Order and our community. Throughout his terms as prior general and in the many other roles he has obediently accepted all throughout his life as an Augustinian, Fr. Alejandro has consistently shared Christ’s light and love with everyone God puts in his path. His leadership has been felt in such areas as international commissions, lay collaboration, formation, and Augustinian spirituality. Fr. Alejandro embodies the Augustinian objective: to be a community of believers one in mind and heart intent upon God.

I am personally grateful for the support and counsel Fr. Alejandro has provided me in my role as prior provincial. As one community, we stand in solidarity offering Fr. Alejandro our prayers and gratitude for all the many ways he has served as our Good Shepherd, and may the grace of God and the peace of the Holy Spirit continue to lead him in this next chapter of his life with us.

FR. JOSEPH L. FARRELL, O.S.A., ELECTED

Prior General OF THE WORLDWIDE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER

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



After much prayer and reflection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Augustinian General Chapter have elected our brother Fr. Joseph L. Farrell, O.S.A., as the next prior general of the Order. We are grateful for the humility, experience and willingness of our brother to serve in this critical position of leadership for our Order.



Fr. Joe has served the Order in so many ways for so many years, and now he leads us all as the Augustinian Good Shepherd, helping us to stay one in mind and heart intent upon God.

Fr. Joseph Lawrence Farrell, O.S.A., was born on July 11, 1963, at Drexel Hill, Pa., the son of Francis A. and Patricia S. (Shields) Farrell. He has four brothers and one sister. He was baptized on July 28, 1963, in St. Andrew Catholic Church, Drexel Hill, Pa. He attended St. Andrew Parochial School from 1969 to 1977, and then Msgr. Bonner High School, Drexel Hill, Pa., from 1977 to 1981. From 1981 to 1985, he attended Villanova University and received a B.S. in business administration. He then

entered the Province's pre-novitiate program at St. Augustine Friary, Villanova, Pa., in 1985 and went to Blessed Stephen Bellesini Novitiate, the first year of the national novitiate in Racine, Wisc., on August 15, 1986. He professed first vows on August 8, 1987, and solemn vows on May 19, 1990. Following the novitiate, he went to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., and pursued his theological studies at the Washington Theological Union from 1987 to 1991, where he received an M.A. in theology. He was ordained to the priesthood on June

29, 1991, at Our Mother of Good Counsel Church, Bryn Mawr, Pa., by Bishop Francis Murphy.

Fr. Joe was first assigned to St. Augustine Parish, Lawrence, Mass., from 1991 to 1994. He was then appointed chaplain at Msgr. Bonner High School, and a member of the St. Joseph Friary community, Drexel Hill, Pa., from 1994 to 1996. From 1996 to 2003, he was assigned as campus minister at Merrimack College and a member of the St. Ambrose Friary community. In 2003, he went to Rome, was a member of the Collegio Santa Monica community, and pursued studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he received a licentiate in sacred theology (S.T.L.) in 2005 and a doctorate of sacred theology (S.T.D.) in 2007. He returned to the United States and was assigned to St. Thomas Monastery and was appointed the director of programming and outreach in the Office for Mission Effectiveness at Villanova University, where he also taught. At the Provincial Chapter of 2010, he was elected a counselor of the Province and was assigned as prior to Blessed Stephen Bellesini Friary in Ardmore, Pa., the pre-novitiate house of formation, from 2008-2010. During the General Chapter of 2013, he was elected vicar general and assistant general for North America.

At this time we give thanks to God for our dedicated and committed servant leader, and offer prayers for wisdom, strength, and grace as he exercises this important responsibility on behalf of our Order and the Church.



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Priors General

OF THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER FROM THE UNITED STATES

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

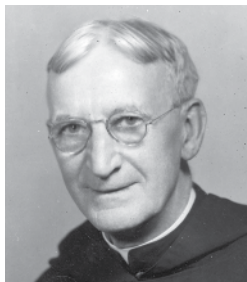
The election of **Fr. Joseph Farrell, O.S.A.**, as the 98th prior general of the Augustinian Order brings to five the number of friars from the United States who have held this office.



The very first was Fr. Pacifico Neno, O.S.A., an Italian-born friar who ministered at Villanova College from 1865 until 1881, when he was called to Rome by Pope Leo XIII to serve as commissary general under Fr. Giovanni Belluomini, O.S.A., and then to succeed him as prior general in 1887. Fr. Neno had become a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1870 and was the second friar elected

prior provincial of the Villanova Province in 1878, an office he continued to hold until called to Rome. He passed away after less than two years in office in Rome in 1889.

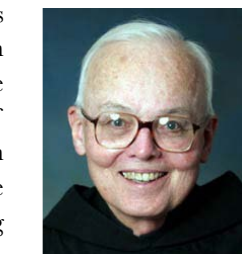
The first native-born North American elected as prior general was Fr. Joseph Hickey, O.S.A., a native of Chicago who entered the novitiate of the Villanova Province in 1902. He held various positions in the Province before being appointed president of Villanova College in 1925. That same year he was named assistant general of the Order and was elected prior general in 1947. It was during his term of office that the current Augustinian Curia building was erected in Rome. Following his term of six years, he retired to the Villanova Monastery. He died in 1955 and is buried in the community cemetery on Villanova's campus.



Fr. Theodore Tack, O.S.A., was the 93rd prior general of the Order, serving in this position from 1972 until 1983. He was a native of Tulsa, Okla., and entered the Midwest Province of the Order as a novice in 1946. He served the

province as an associate pastor, as well as a teacher and formator both in the United States and in Rome before his election to leadership of the Order, which he exercised in the period of renewal following the Second Vatican Council. Following two six-year terms as prior general, he returned to his home province where he was again engaged in formation work, retreat ministry, teaching, and later became headmaster of Cascia Hall in Tulsa. He passed away in 2013.

The 96th prior general was Chicago native Fr. Robert Prevost, O.S.A., who was elected to the office in 2001 and served until 2013. Before being chosen for this leadership position, he had served as a missionary in Peru and as prior provincial of the Chicago Province. In 2013, he returned to Chicago where he was engaged in formation ministry until appointed apostolic administrator and then bishop of Chiclayo, Peru. In 2023, he was named prefect for the Dicastery for Bishops and soon after created cardinal. On May 8, 2025, he was elected Roman Pontiff and is now known as Leo XIV.



Fr. Joseph Farrell, O.S.A., since 2013 has served as vicar general of the Order and now assumes the office of prior general by will of the 2025 General Chapter. As a member of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova, he has been engaged in parochial ministry, teaching on the high school



and university levels, formation ministry, and higher studies. He follows in the line of qualified and gifted Augustinians who have generously accepted the call from their brothers to serve the Order and the Church in the spirit of St. Augustine, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

KEEPING TRACK

Following the vow of obedience, friars find themselves called to where they are needed. Each summer, as friars receive new assignments, *The Augustinian* provides brief updates on friars serving throughout the Province. Read here to track down that old classmate, pastor, chemistry teacher, chaplain, philosophy professor, co-worker, or friend.



◀ Br. Nicholas Anderson, O.S.A.

Br. Nick returns to the Theologate in Chicago to continue his studies at the Catholic Theological Union after spending his summer in Peru teaching English classes at Colegio Señor de los Milagros in Pacasmayo. "It was a blast," Br. Nick says, "because it gave me a taste of high school teaching and how involvement in other aspects of school life can actually help in the classroom."



◀ Br. Francis Connor, O.S.A.

Br. Frank is serving his pastoral year at Merrimack College, Andover, Mass., where he will teach and serve in the Office of Mission and Ministry. During a pastoral year, friars in formation enter into one of the active ministries of their province in order to gain practical, hands-on knowledge of pastoral service.



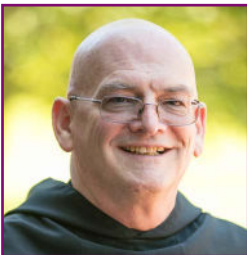
◀ Fr. David Cregan, O.S.A.

Congratulations to Fr. David, who has been appointed dean of the College of Professional Studies at Villanova University. He has moved from St. Thomas Monastery down the street to Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish in Bryn Mawr.



◀ Fr. Stephen Curry, O.S.A.

Fr. Steve has moved from Allegrini Friary at St. Augustine Preparatory School to St. Thomas Monastery on Villanova's campus, where he is engaged in professional development and theological studies.



◀ Fr. Liam O'Doherty, O.S.A.

After three years in the Diocese of Albany and a year at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in the Bronx, N.Y., Fr. Liam has returned to Japan, where he served from 1977–1995. He is currently the pastor at St. Augustine Sasaoka Church in Fukuoka, the only one of our four Japanese parishes where he had not yet been assigned.



◀ Fr. Thomas Pohto, O.S.A.

After seven years in residence at Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish in Bryn Mawr, Pa., Fr. Pohto has retired to St. Thomas Monastery.

Welcome Home, Padre Juan

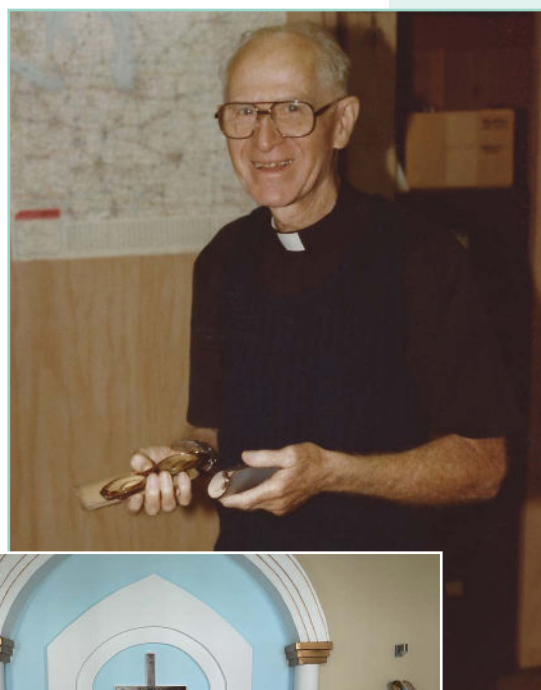
Servant of God Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., Reinterred in Peru

By Sarah M. Reisert

On June 22, 2025, the streets of Chulucanas, Peru, came alive with song and prayer as people welcomed home the earthly remains of Servant of God Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A. His casket was carried in a spontaneous procession through the city to Iglesia San José Obrero, where the beloved friar had served for decades. After a Mass of Thanksgiving, he was reinterred in a marble sarcophagus in the church's side chapel. The joy and devotion of the people were a powerful reminder that Fr. John's presence and ministry continue to live on.

Top center: Servant of God Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A. (left) while serving in Peru. You may also notice a young Pope Leo XIV on the right!

Immediate right: The new sarcophagus of Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., in Iglesia San José Obrero, Chulucanas, Peru.





Media Priest Recalled From Parish in Havana

Rev. John J. McKniff Jr., a Media native who was among Roman Catholic priests taken into custody by the Castro government during the recent invasion of Cuba, is expected to return to the United States soon.

Father McKniff is among 18 Augustinians recalled to this country by the Very Rev. James A. Donnellon, provincial of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova.

The entire Augustinian contingent in Cuba was recalled as a result of Premier Fidel Castro's May Day edict that all foreign-born priests should leave the country.

Father Donnellon said the priests are to return from Cuba at once.

But, he added, they will return "as soon as Cuba becomes an independent nation."

Father McKniff, 56, has been in Cuba since 1941 as pastor of St. Augustine's Church in Havana.

He was born in Media and attended the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish School there. He graduated from Roman Catholic High School, Philadelphia, and Villanova University.

He was ordained in Rome in 1930 and said his first mass at the Church of the Nativity in Media.

Father McKniff has a number of cousins living in Delaware County including Mrs. Robert Watts, 1212 E. 9th St., Eddystone; Mrs. Mary Long, 1424 Edgmont Ave., Chester; William McKniff, 2600 block W. 10th Street, Chester; Mrs. Vernon Powers, 300 block Hinkson Street, Chester; John Mc-

Kniff, who lives with Mrs. Watts; Alexander McKniff, 215 Concord Ave., Eddystone.



Born in Media, Pa., in 1905, Fr. John was ordained in 1930 and soon set out as a missionary. He first served in the Philippines, then in Cuba, where for nearly three decades he taught, opened schools and clinics, and supported the poor through difficult times. Twice jailed for his ministry, he remained steadfast, offering comfort and peace even under an oppressive regime. In 1972, he arrived in Chulucanas, Peru, where he assisted parishes and trained seminarians, but most of all lived in solidarity with the poor, sharing their struggles as a brother and friend.

Though he died in Miami at age 88, the people of Peru never stopped honoring his memory. Fr. John's body had rested in Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery in Doral, Fla., since his death in 1994, but on June 19, 2025, his remains were exhumed and carefully prepared for the trip back to Peru. Great reverence was shown throughout the process by all participants and witnesses, and even the weather seemed symbolic: after hours of rain, the skies suddenly cleared. "It was much like how Fr. John walked with people through their storms and helped bring sunshine back into their

lives," remembers Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., who traveled to Florida and Peru for this extraordinary occasion.

Fr. John's reinterment was not simply the transfer of remains, but the fulfillment of a deep longing and a renewed witness to his holiness. Now, the faithful have a place to pray, seek his intercession, and draw inspiration from his example as the cause for his canonization continues.

"Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., and his selfless spirit of service will be remembered at the altar of the Lord," says Fr. Rob. "Fr. John, like all of us, is body, soul, and spirit, and offers us a tangible presence and witness to the power of God's grace and our call to love each other without limits. For generations, people will be inspired and encouraged to offer their gifts to assist others on their journey through life, especially with the poor."

Servant of God Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., pray for us!

Top right: A mural of Fr. John McKniff, O.S.A., created by an artist from Chulucanas, Peru, in the Augustinian Curia in Rome.

Above: A news article from 1961, when Fr. McKniff and the other Augustinians in Cuba were recalled to the United States.



America Media and EWTN Visit Province to Highlight Servant of God Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A.



The Augustinians were pleased to welcome a delegation from America Media on March 24 and 25. Known best for *America* magazine, America Media is a Catholic media ministry sponsored by the Jesuits of Canada and the United States.

While in town, America Media held an in-person recording of their popular podcast, *Jesuitical*, at the 6ABC-TV studio in Philadelphia. In front of a live audience, podcast hosts Ashley McKinless and Zac Davis spoke with Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., about Fr. Bill Atkinson, O.S.A., and Fr. Bill's Cause for Beatification and Canonization. A reflection was also offered by Fr. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., president of Villanova University, about how the Augustinians cared for Fr. Bill after his accident. The fifty invited guests were moved by Fr. Bill's incredible story and Fr. Rob's retelling of his time with the Servant of God. You can watch a video recording of the full event by scanning this QR code.



That evening, the America Media team headed to the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia in Philadelphia for a second, public event. The evening began with an hourlong Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, complete with music, a reflection by Fr. Bill Gabriel, O.S.A., and confessions heard by Augustinian Friars. After some time for the attendees to mingle over a buffet dinner, they enjoyed a panel discussion with McKinless, Davis, Fr. Bill, and Sebastian Gomes (America Media's executive editor of audio and video) about how to talk to your friends about your faith.

EWTN also visited the Province in May to film an episode of their popular show, *They Might Be Saints*. The series' host, Michael O'Neill, examines the lives of men and women of faith on the path to sainthood and the search for canonization miracles. From miracle workers to martyrs and ordinary people living extraordinary lives of heroic virtue, the series presents those exemplary people who make us wonder if someday they might be saints.

The crew filmed interviews with people who knew Fr. Bill in life and have been impacted by his intercession after death, locations that were special to Fr. Bill, and even scenes with actors depicting different times in Fr. Bill's life. An airdate for the episode has not yet been determined, but stay tuned!

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS OF OUR MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL PARISH

By Fr. Joseph S. Mostardi, Pastor



July 26, 1885, marks 140 years since the founding of Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish in Bryn Mawr, Pa., coinciding with the feast of St. Anne. The first Mass was celebrated by Fr. Joseph Coleman, O.S.A., an Augustinian Friar, in a small wooden schoolhouse near what is now Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. Thanks to Fr. Coleman's leadership and support from both Catholics and non-Catholics, the first church was built within a year under the protection of Our Mother of Good Counsel. Three years later, the chapel was relocated across the railroad bridge to its current site.

The parish faced several early challenges. The Augustinians' first attempt to establish a chapel in Bryn Mawr was rejected by Philadelphia's bishop, and efforts to build a permanent stone church faltered. Yet parishioners and pastors persisted, inspired by Jesus' teaching: "Ask and you shall receive, knock and the door will be opened." Their prayers were answered, and the doors of Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish opened wide to all. This year, we honor those who came before us as we gather in prayer and hope to celebrate the 140th anniversary of our parish community.

The parish name connects us to Genazzano, Italy, where a church dedicated to St. Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, was built in the 14th century. The Augustinians were entrusted with restoring the ruined church at Genazzano. Despite poverty, a widow named Petruccia funded the work, which began on April 25, 1467. That day, a fresco of Mary and the Christ Child was discovered on the church wall. Thought to be part of a larger artwork from the school of Gentile da Fabriano, the image became known as the Mother of Good Counsel and drew pilgrims from far and wide. This devotion, promoted by the Augustinians, continues worldwide today.



Here in Bryn Mawr, the community flourished under Augustinian guidance. The property on Pennswood Road was purchased, and in 1896 a cornerstone was placed for a new church that has remained a sacred place of worship for 129 years. Renovations and the construction of a friary, school, and convent followed. The Sisters of Mercy educated parish children for decades, while parishioners shared their gifts of time, talent, and treasure in service to the wider community.

Anniversaries are opportunities to reflect on God's call to grow in grace as we meet the challenges of a changing world and Church. Over 140 years, Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish has welcomed families from across the globe. Today it remains a place of worship, learning, and ministry, rooted in the Augustinian tradition and dedicated to stewardship. We celebrate this milestone with gratitude for the past, commitment to the present, and hope for the future. We entrust our future to the Lord with confidence, praying that many will return to the practice of the faith and join us in continuing the ministry begun 140 years ago.

Read a complete history of Our Mother of Good Parish by scanning the QR code.



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

FR. STEPHEN JOSEPH BAKER, O.S.A.



Fr. Stephen Baker, O.S.A., a member of the Monastery community at Villanova, passed away on August 1, 2025.

Stephen Joseph Baker was born on June 9, 1963, in Springfield, Pa., one of three sons and two daughters of Kenneth Baker and Patricia Miller. He was baptized on June 23, 1963, at Good Shepherd Church, Philadelphia, and attended St. George Parish School, Glenolden, and Msgr. Bonner High School, Drexel Hill. He entered the Province's pre-novitiate program and began his studies at Villanova University in 1981. Steve was received into the Order as a novice on August 15, 1984, and following his year at Good Counsel Novitiate, Lawrence, Mass., professed simple vows on August 10, 1985. He moved to St. Augustine Friary and completed his studies at Villanova University, where he obtained a B.A. in English in 1986. He then went to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., from 1986 to 1990, and pursued his theological studies at the Washington Theological Union, obtaining his M.A. in 1990. He professed solemn vows on May 15, 1988 and was ordained to the priesthood on August 18, 1990, at Our Mother of Good Counsel Church, Bryn Mawr, Pa., by Msgr. Howard Hubbard, bishop of Albany, N.Y.

Fr. Steve was first assigned to Assumption/St. Paul Parish, Mechanicville, N.Y., as associate pastor from 1990 to 1994. He then served as associate pastor at St. Augustine Parish, Andover, Mass., from 1994 to 1996. In 1996 he was assigned to St. Joseph Friary and served at his alma mater, Msgr. Bonner High School in Drexel Hill, Pa., as teacher and campus minister until 1999. He then was named pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Staten Island, N.Y., after which he returned to Bonner High School in 2001, as teacher and campus minister. In 2005 he was assigned to Malvern Preparatory School, Malvern, Pa., where he taught theology and English and served as the chair of the school's theology department. At the same time, he pursued graduate studies in education at St. Joseph's University and obtained an M.S. and Ed.D.

In August of 2010, he moved to Saxony Hall, Rosemont, Pa., and taught at Villanova University until the spring of 2025. In 2014, he was assigned to St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery, Villanova, where he served as treasurer of the community while continuing to teach at Villanova University. As a treasurer and teacher, Fr. Steve was warm and welcoming in addressing the needs of the friars and his many students. In the spring of 2025, he became ill, and passed away at Kindred Hospital on August 1, 2025. Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A. celebrated his Funeral Mass on August 6, 2025, with Fr. Francis Caponi, O.S.A., as homilist. Burial took place at Calvary Cemetery, West Conshohocken, Pa.

FR. KEVIN FRANCIS DWYER, O.S.A.

Fr. Kevin Dwyer, O.S.A., a longtime presence at Merrimack College, passed away at the age of 89 on August 23, 2025, in Lawrence, Mass.

Kevin Francis Dwyer was born on April 18, 1936, in Boston, the son of Francis L. Dwyer and Helen R. Donovan. He had two sisters, Margaret and Mary. Kevin was baptized on May 3, 1936, at St. Augustine Church, Lawrence, Mass., and attended St. Augustine Parish School. In 1949 he entered St. John's Preparatory School, Danvers, Mass., and upon graduation in 1953 he enrolled at Merrimack College, North Andover, Mass. At the end of his freshman year, he applied for admittance to the Order and was received as a novice on September 9, 1954. He professed simple vows on September 10, 1955, and then pursued studies



at Villanova University where he received his B.A. in philosophy in 1958. From 1958 until 1962, he was a member of Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., where he undertook theological studies and received an M.A. in religious education. He also attended The Catholic University of America for graduate courses in American history. He professed solemn vows on September 10, 1958, and received an M.A. in modern

European history from Villanova University. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 3, 1962, in the Christ the Teacher Chapel, Merrimack College, by Richard Cardinal Cushing.

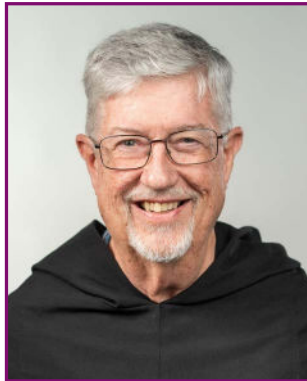
Fr. Kevin's first assignment was to St. Thomas Monastery, where he taught at Villanova University for one year. In 1963, he was assigned to Merrimack College, where he was to spend his remaining years of active ministry for the Province. He was a member of Our Mother of Good Counsel Monastery there from 1963 to 1994, and again from 2002 to 2004. In intervening years, he was a member of several communities of the Province in the region, and in 2016 moved finally to St. Augustine Friary, Andover. During his time at Merrimack College, he headed the Department of Religious and Theological Studies for a number of years and was the archivist of the college from 1968 to 2002, in addition to teaching hundreds of students for over forty years. On receiving an honorary doctorate from Merrimack College in 2007, he said, "Helping our students to mature as educated people of faith has been my passion, my goal, and my vocation during my forty-four years of teaching at Merrimack. It is thrilling to be given this wonderful honor by the college that I love so much."

In 2012, Fr. Kevin retired from teaching but continued doing research and writing. As his health failed, he entered Mary Immaculate Nursing Home, Lawrence, Mass., where he passed away on August 23, 2025. Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A., was the celebrant and homilist at his Funeral Mass on Wednesday, August 23, 2025, at St. Augustine Church, Andover, and Fr. Kevin was buried in the Augustinian plot of St. Mary's Cemetery, Lawrence.

FR. EDWARD JOSEPH ENRIGHT, JR., O.S.A.

Fr. Edward J. Enright, Jr., O.S.A., most recently a member of the St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery community, passed away on Saturday, May 10, 2025.

Fr. Ed was born on May 16, 1947, in Medford, Mass. He was the son of Edward Enright and Doris Hill and had one brother and two sisters. The Church of St. Agnes in Arlington, Mass., was to be the repeated scene of significant events in his life, beginning with his baptism on June 22, 1947. He attended John A. Bishop Elementary School from 1953 to 1959, Arlington Junior High School East from 1959 to 1961, and Arlington Catholic High School from 1961 to 1965. Ed entered the Order as a novice on September 9, 1965, at Good Counsel Novitiate, New Hamburg, N.Y., and professed simple vows on September 10, 1966. He then attended Villanova University where he received his B.A. in philosophy. While a member of Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., during the years 1970 to 1974, he pursued theological studies at The Catholic University of America and received his bachelor's degree in sacred theology (S.T.B.) in 1972 and his licentiate in sacred theology (S.T.L.) in 1974. He professed solemn vows on January 15, 1972, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 2, 1973, at St. Agnes Church by Jeremiah F. Minihan, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston.



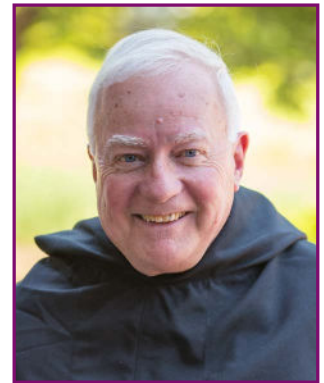
Fr. Ed was assigned to teach at St. Nicholas of Tolentine High School, the Bronx, N.Y., from 1974 to 1976, and then at Msgr. Bonner High School, Drexel Hill, Pa., from 1976 to 1978. From 1978 to 1980 he taught at Villanova University in the religious studies department. From 1980 to 1984 he resided at St. John of Sahagun Friary, Washington, D.C., while pursuing full time doctoral studies at The Catholic University of America. From 1984 to 1992, he taught at Merrimack College, North Andover, Mass., as a member of the monastery community there. He received his doctorate in sacred theology in 1991 from The Catholic University of America. In 1992, he resumed teaching at Villanova University where, at various times, he lived at St. Augustine Friary and Fray Luis de León Friary, and at St. Joseph Friary, Drexel Hill. In November 2008, he joined the Austin House community in North Andover, Mass., while teaching again at Merrimack College. Five years later he was assigned to St. Augustine Friary, Andover, while he continued in his position at Merrimack. In November 2023, as his health began to fail, he returned to St. Thomas Monastery, Villanova, Pa., and entered into hospice care just several weeks before his death.

Fr. Ed was a friendly and sociable person who enjoyed classical music and good books. He was particularly fond of American history and a great admirer and disciple of John Henry Cardinal Newman. His viewing and Funeral Mass were held at St. Agnes Church, Arlington, Mass., on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, with Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., as principal celebrant and Fr. Bryan Kerns, O.S.A., as homilist. Burial followed in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Arlington, Mass..

FR. JAMES ROBERT FLYNN, O.S.A.

Fr. Jim Flynn, O.S.A., former teacher, president and head of school at Malvern Preparatory School, passed over to the Lord on July 21, 2025.

James Robert Flynn was born on August 30, 1946, in Philadelphia, Pa., the son of Leo J. Flynn and Jeanette V. Daly. He had one sister, Jean. Jim was baptized on September 14, 1946, at Most Blessed Sacrament Church, Philadelphia, where he later attended the parish school. In 1960 he began four years of study as a postulant at Augustinian Academy, Staten Island, N.Y., after which he was received as a novice on September 9, 1964. After his year at Good Counsel Novitiate, New Hamburg, N.Y., he was simply professed on September 10, 1965 and attended Villanova University, where he received a B.A. in philosophy in 1969. He was assigned then to Augustinian College, Washington, D.C., and pursued studies at the Washington Theological Coalition, receiving his M.A. in theological studies. He professed solemn vows on September 10, 1968, and was ordained to the priesthood on August 12, 1972, by Walter Sullivan, bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, Va., at St. Denis Church, Havertown, Pa.



Fr. Jim's first assignment was to Malvern Preparatory School, Malvern, Pa., from 1973 to 1980, where he taught mathematics and religion. During this time, he pursued an M.A. degree from Villanova University, which he received in 1976. From 1980 to 1982, he was prior of Good Counsel Novitiate, Lawrence, Mass., and taught part time at Austin Preparatory School, Reading, Mass. From 1982 to 1988, he served as prior at Austin Prep, while he continued to teach there. In 1988, he returned to Malvern Prep, where he again taught mathematics and theology. He served as assistant head of school from 1997 to 2006, and dean of the middle school from 2002 to 2005. In 2006 he was named head of school at Malvern. In 1999, he received an M.A. in educational leadership from Villanova University.

Though Fr. Jim served as a pillar in the Malvern community for 50 years as teacher, president, head of school, and chaplain, he will be remembered most of all as a friend, friar brother, mentor, teacher, and confidant to hundreds of students, as well as to colleagues and families. One of his greatest contributions and happiest personal endeavors was through MECO (Malvernians Encountering God in Others), a senior retreat experience that impacted the lives of countless Malvern students.

In December 2022, due to declining health, Fr. Jim was assigned to St. Thomas Monastery, Villanova, where he died on July 21, 2025. His Funeral Mass was celebrated with an overflow congregation at St. Thomas of Villanova Church, Villanova, on July 30, 2025 by Prior Provincial Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A. Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, O.S.A., was homilist. Burial followed in Calvary Cemetery, West Conshohocken, Pa.

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

News *and* Notes



Austin Preparatory School Hosted Augustinian Values Institute

Austin Prep was honored to host the 21st annual Augustinian Values Institute on campus from April 11-13. The Institute, sponsored and conducted by the Augustinian Secondary Education Association of the North American Provinces of the Order of St. Augustine, is a directed three-day retreat-like experience based on the Augustinian core values of Truth, Unity, Love. Groups of faculty, staff, board members, and other stakeholders representing each of the 11 Augustinian high schools of North America, and guests from around the world, converged on campus to pray together, share reflections with other school communities, participate in

activities that promote the formation of community among the high schools, and develop particular strategies to implement the values at the participants' home schools.

Fr. Luis A. Vera, O.S.A., Received Human Dignity Award

On May 9, Fr. Luis Vera, O.S.A., pastor of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in the Bronx, N.Y., received the Human Dignity Award from Brilla Schools, which has co-located two of their schools at the parish for the past five years. "Your partnership has been nothing short of transformative, and this award is a tribute to your dedication to uplifting, empowering, and advocating for the dignity of every individual," said Brilla in their announcement. "Your commitment to ensuring that every Brilla and community stakeholder, regardless of background or circumstance, is seen, valued, and supported has left an indelible mark on our community."

Congratulations, Fr. Luis!



Fr. Luis Vera, O.S.A., receives the award from Yeyme Valle, executive director of Brilla Charter Schools.



Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A. Awarded Bonner-Prendie's Saint Augustine Medal

On June 4, Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A., received the Saint Augustine Medal from Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School. Presented annually to both a graduating senior boy and a Bonner alumnus who exemplifies the Christian way of life in today's world, the award recognizes individuals whose lives reflect the same commitment to Christ that St. Augustine demonstrated in the 4th and 5th centuries. "Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A., '57 has spent his life serving those on the margins with compassion, humility, and unwavering faith," said the school. "In every endeavor, he remains dedicated to honoring the sacred worth of every person and reminding us all what it means to walk humbly with God."

John E. Cooke, Ph.D., president of Msgr. Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast High School, presents the award to Fr. Paul Morrissey, O.S.A.



North American Augustinians Gathered for Convocation, June 9–12

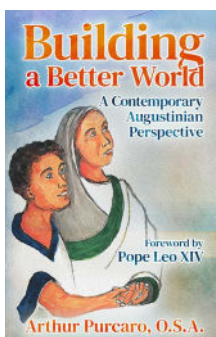
The 2025 Convocation of the Federation of Augustinians of North America (FANA) was held in our Province from June 9-12. All three North American provinces converged to share in and celebrate their brotherhood. From novices to bishops, Augustinians of all walks gathered to participate in prayer, seminars, Masses, social time, and more!

Augustinian All-Novitiate Class Reunion, June 13

Following the convocation a reunion luncheon was held of past and present Augustinians, the first all-class reunion since Fr. Dick Appicci, O.S.A., ran an event in the 1980s. Most guests attended the Novitiate in New Hamburg, N.Y. from 1955 through 1972. The group welcomed Prior Provincial Fr. Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., who discussed Pope Leo XIV and the state of the Province. The group will be sending a donation to St. Augustine Church in Philadelphia to support its work and construction.



Fr. Art Purcaro, O.S.A., Published New Book with Foreword by Pope Leo XIV

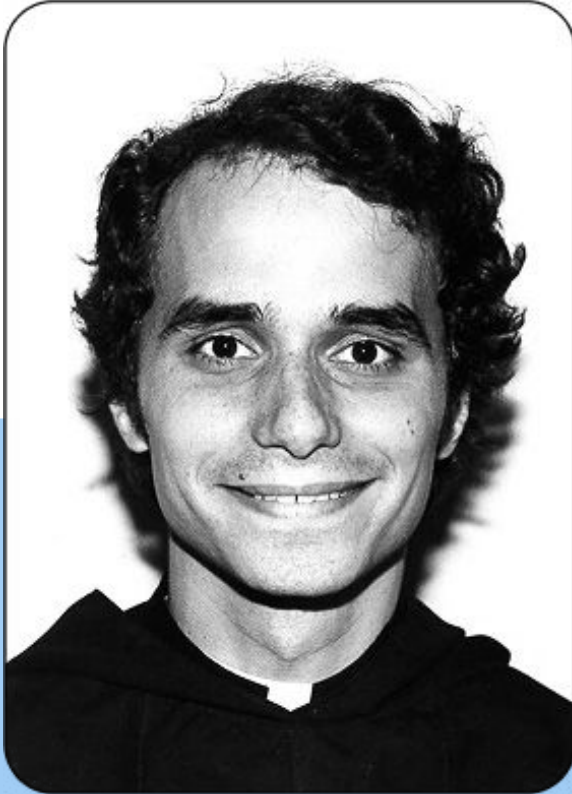


On October 15, Fr. Art Purcaro, O.S.A., published a new book, *Building a Better World: A Contemporary Perspective*. Drawing from St. Augustine's Rule and the revolutionary concept of integral ecology, this book weaves together spiritual formation, social justice, and environmental stewardship into a coherent vision for authentic Christian living. The foreword is by Pope Leo XIV, who worked closely with Fr. Art in both Peru and Rome. Congratulations, Fr. Art!



**Know someone who might
be a great Augustinian?
Encourage him to discern with us.**

Just like Pope Leo XIV did.



The Augustinians of North America are religious priests, brothers, sisters, and lay collaborators following in the footsteps of Christ and Saint Augustine since 1796. We are "Active Contemplatives." Walk with us and join in our Restless Journey at www.beafriar.org



THE Augustinian Fund

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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.

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Please consider including the Augustinians in your estate plan. By doing so, you assist the Augustinians in strengthening our mission, our presence in our ministries, and securing our future.

Learn more: AUGUSTINIAN.MYLEGACYGIFT.ORG

Please consult your tax and/or financial advisory for new tax law changes that go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Contact madonna.sutter@augustinian.org or (267) 272-3048 with questions.



Cover: Vatican Media

Celebrating Pope Leo XIV, A Proud Son of Augustine at Merrimack College!

Prior Provincial Robert P. Hagan, O.S.A., and the Augustinian Friars cordially invite you for cocktail reception and an evening of hospitality, community, and friendship as a panel of Augustinians explore how Pope Leo's Augustinian foundation will impact his papacy.



FEATURED SPEAKER:
JOSEPH T. KELLEY, PH.D.

Professor Emeritus of Religious
and Theological Studies

Author of *A Primer in
Augustinian Spirituality*



MASTER OF CEREMONIES:
KRISTINA REX

St. Augustine School alumna
and Andover native

Reporter for WBZ-TV
in Boston



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026

6:00–8:30 PM

Merrimack College

Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher

– INVITATION TO FOLLOW –

*Questions, contact Madonna Sutter, Director of Advancement
& Communications at (610) 527-3330, ext. 265
or madonna.sutter@augustinian.org*