

**Augustinian
Chapters and Celebrations
of Renewal**



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Editor**

***Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova
Order of Saint Augustine
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Acknowledgements:

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Chapters and Celebrations of Renewal

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**Prior Provincial
Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova**

November 2012

Dear Brothers,

It is with great joy that I present to you *Augustinian Chapters and Celebrations of Renewal*. This publication was developed by Gary McCloskey to aid the Provincial Council in responding to a mandate of the Program of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova 2010-2014:

Community Life

In an effort to create balance between our common life and our ministry, the Provincial Chapter 2010 calls on local communities to celebrate Chapter of Renewal regularly as a means to enhance common life. We call on the Provincial Leadership Team to develop guidelines to assist local communities in utilizing this process.

In the first section of this booklet, *Chapters of Renewal*, Gary has provided the general format for a Chapter of Renewal that is found in the *Ritual of the Order* (2002). Additionally he has created 8 other formats related to themes that we discussed at our Provincial Chapter of 2010. You are invited to use them as found here or to assist your community to create formats to help you to renew your Augustinian life and ministry in ways that fit your particular circumstances.

In the second section, *Celebrations of Renewal*, we have the work of our brothers Art Purcaro and Bob Thornton and our friend Dr. Patricia Kelly. In Art's work on *Praying with the Rule of Saint Augustine*, we have some of the work he has done in Augustinian renewal work in Latin America. In *Foundational Experience* and *Thagaste Experience* we have the work of Bob and Pat and are able to provide the formats of these renewal experiences for your reflection. The great impact they have had on the life of our Province can be seen in the references to them in the mandates of our current Program of the Province.

I hope that providing these materials helps you and your community, as well as the Province, to advance in our ongoing renewal of Augustinian life and ministry.

I am grateful to Gary, Art, Bob and Pat for the work they have done on Augustinian renewal and for their generosity in making these materials available to us.

Fraternally,

Very Rev. Anthony M. Genovese, O.S.A.
Prior Provincial

Section I: Chapters of Renewal

This group of forms of Chapters of Renewal provides variations based on the general format provided in the *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002). They were created in response to the Provincial Chapter of 2010 of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova's request for assistance in conducting Chapters of Renewal. The use of specific Augustinian resources in each form was also a response to the request of the Provincial Chapter to provide Augustinian spirituality resources.

The themes touched on by these forms of Chapters of Renewal are in part the themes of the directives of the *Program of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova 2010-2014* as approved by the Provincial Chapter. The forms entitled *In the Face of Scandal* and *Preferential Option for the Poor* come from references within directives rather than the directives themselves. The request for *Thagaste Experience* materials is addressed in Section II, but the spirit of that renewal program and the follow up *Foundational Experience* are the inspiration for the form entitled *Welcoming a New Community Member*. This form can be used when one friar joins a community, rather than the *Foundational Experience* which addresses a major change in a community.

This section begins with the general format provided in the *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* to convey the hope that local communities will use that format to create their own Chapters of Renewal. The remainder of the forms provides suggestions on how a Chapter of Renewal on a specific theme might proceed as well as Augustinian resources related to a specific theme. Each community is encouraged to reshape the materials in any way they like. In the end, any Chapter of Renewal will only be effective if it is a Chapter that a local community takes as its own.

Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine¹

6.6. CHAPTER OF RENEWAL

Introductory Rites

180. The chapter begins with an appropriate hymn.

181. After the hymn, the superior greets the community and addresses them in these or similar words:

My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. Thus our holy father Augustine, our guide in the paths of freedom and truth, advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."²

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.³ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive his word.

Proclamation of the Word of God

182. A reading from scripture, Saint Augustine, or an author is proclaimed

183. A reflection or exhortation is then given by theme or on our way of life by the superior. He should place emphasis on the value of discussing the common life or the need of asking pardon for our weaknesses. A period of silence may follow the reflection

Fraternal Dialogue

184. A dialogue may take place on a particular theme or on our way of life. At this time a discussion of the concrete life of the community (schedule, coordination of activities, house accounts, various problems) may take place.

¹ Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, 2002.

² *Letter 118*, 22.

³ *Confessions X; The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine

Concluding Prayer

185. After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

Brothers, the mercy of God has no limits. Repenting of our faults and sins, let us ask God's pardon.

For failure to love God and our brothers as the Lord commands and our Rule reminds us to:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For failure to dispel the bitterness and sadness that destroys our joy as Christian and religious:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For the times that our discord, intransigence, and misunderstandings have shattered unity, peace, and love in the community:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For our insensibility to the ills of society, the Church, the Order, and our own community:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

Other petitions may be added.

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

186. † O God,
you created humankind in your own image and likeness.
Open our ears to hear your voice,
cleanse our eyes to see your wonders,
and dispel all our ignorance
that we may recognize you,
the one true God with Jesus Christ your Son
who live and reign forever and ever.⁴

R: Amen.

187. Or

⁴ *Soliloquies* 1, 1, 5.

Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine

Brothers, Christ the man is our way and Christ our God is our homeland. To reach him we must walk with him and in him. Instead we have preferred other pathways. Therefore we humbly pray:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in baptism you gave us a new life and in our profession you renewed it, but we have often forgotten the demands of this life and of our promises:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in the Rule and Constitutions you have given us the norms for fulfilling the demands of the gospel, but we at times have resisted this way without excuse: ⁵

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, the untaught rise up and take heaven by storm, while we with all our learning are still struggling in this world of flesh and blood: ⁶

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have done all things well, and you have revealed that your creation is good; but we, in our poverty, fail to appreciate the signs of your goodness to us and our brothers:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Other petitions may be added.

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

188. † Lord,
you are our only hope;
grant us the grace to seek you,
know you,
and love you,
never more to succumb to discouragement.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

189. *Those present exchange the sign of peace.*

190. *The chapter ends with a hymn of thanksgiving.*

⁵ *Confessions* VIII, 7, 18.

⁶ *Confessions* VIII, 8, 19.

Chapter of Renewal: COLLABORATION IN MINISTRY

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community and addresses them in these or similar words:

My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings in collaborating with others in ministry. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. Thus our holy father Augustine, our guide in the paths of freedom and truth, advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."⁷

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.⁸ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive God's word.

Proclamation of the Word of God

A member of the community proclaims this passage from Scripture

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (12:4-12)

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

⁷ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine*, Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, 2002, Letter 118, 22

⁸ *Confessions X; The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

Collaboration in Ministry

Responsorial Prayer

The superior leads the community in a responsorial prayer in which the community asks pardon for weaknesses and seeks renewal.

Presider: As we seek to renew our zeal for collaboration in ministry, let us listen to Our Holy Father Augustine as we confess faults and seek renewal of “our strong desire for the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers who, in distinct but complementary ways, continue in the Church the saving mission of Christ for the world, his vineyard”⁹

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine in his preaching reminds us that ministry is a service: “My place as your head frightens me, but what I share with you comforts me. I am a bishop set over you, but together with you I am a Christian. The first is the title of the office I have assumed, the second is a grace; the first is a danger, the second is salvation. The office seems like a storm tossing us about in a raging sea. But when we remember who redeemed us by His blood, it seems we enter the safety of a harbor in the stillness of that thought. Even though this office is personally hard work, the common benefit gives us rest.”¹⁰

All: O God forgive us for the times we have forgotten that our salvation comes from our unity with you rather than from our ministry. Renew us in the hard work of ministry to remember that all our work should be for the benefit of our fellow Christians whom you have saved.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine in his preaching reminds us that ministry requires us to: “Walk the path of humility, if you want to arrive at eternity. Christ, as human, is the path we are following. Christ, as God, is the destination towards which we are travelling. It’s to him we are going. It’s by him we are going.”¹¹

All: O God forgive us for the times we have deviated from the path of humility in our ministry with others. Renew in us a spirit of humility so that with our co-workers in your vineyard we may travel the path that leads to you.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine reminded us to prefer mercy over power when he wrote: “In the family of the just person, who lives by faith and still is a pilgrim journeying to the heavenly city, those who rule serve those whom they seem to command. They rule not from a love of power, but from a sense of the

⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, Washington, D.C., 2005, p.6.

¹⁰ Sermon, 340, 1

¹¹ Sermon 123, 3, 3

Collaboration in Ministry

duty they owe to others — not because they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy.”¹²

All: O God forgive us for the times we have sought power over others in our exercise of ministry. Renew in us the love of your mercy so that we can see the duty we owe to others because of the gift of your call to us and our co-workers to serve in ministry.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine reminded us of the respectful conversation required in friendship and community when he wrote: “My soul found all manner of joy when I was in their company — to talk and to laugh and to be kind to each other — to read engaging books together, to go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again — to differ without discord, as I might differ with myself, and when on the rarest occasion disagreement arose, to find it highlights the sweetness of our normal agreement — to teach or to learn from each other — to be impatient for those absent and welcome them with joy when they return — these and similar things, emanating from our hearts as we gave and received affection, shown in our faces, our voices, our eyes, and a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused our very souls together and made the many of us one.”¹³

All: O God forgive us for the times when our conversations with our co-workers in ministry have not respected them as fellow Christians saved by you. Renew in us your spirit of friendship in Christ so that our various ministries may be united together in building your kingdom here on earth.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine encourages us not to fear having partners in our work when he writes: “We say if they rule justly that they are happy. They remember that they are human rather than being lifted up by the praise of those who honor them or the flattery of those showing excessive humility. They fear, love and worship God so that they make their power the handmaid of His majesty by using it for the greatest possible expansion of worship of Him and they love, more than their own rule, that kingdom in which they are not afraid to have partners.”¹⁴

All: O God forgive us for the times we have been afraid to work with partners in our ministry. Encourage us to renew our relationships with our lay co-workers so that we can see them as partners with us and you in building the City of God.

¹² City of God 19, 14

¹³ Confessions, IV, 8, 13

¹⁴ City of God 5,24

Collaboration in Ministry

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine reminded us that our ministry should unite us with the least in this world through the Body of Christ when he preached: "It has evidently escaped you, what he said, What you have done for one of the least of mine, you have done for me (Mt 25:40). The head is in heaven, but he has members on earth; let the member of Christ give to the member of Christ, let the one who has give to the one who lacks. You are a member of Christ, and you have something to give; he's a member of Christ, and he is in need in order that you may give it. You are both walking along the same road, you are companions together. The poor man's shoulders are free, you the rich man are weighed down with packages. Give away some of what you are staggering under, give some of your heavy load to the needy; in this way lighten your own burden, and your companion's lot."¹⁵

All: O God forgive us for the times we have forgotten your call to minister to the least of yours. Renew us as we minister with a passion for serving the poor that we can constantly remember that in serving the least we are serving You.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine reminded us that we are called to unity by mutually honoring God in each other when he wrote: "Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become."¹⁶

All: O God forgive us for the times we have failed to honor you in our co-workers in ministry. Renew us to work with them in oneness of mind and heart recognizing that they your holy temples.

A period of silence may follow the responsorial prayer.

Fraternal Dialogue

The superior may invite the community into a dialogue on the need to ask pardon for our weaknesses and seek renewal with respect to the ways we collaborate with others in ministry.

Concluding Prayer

After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

¹⁵ Sermon 53A, 6

¹⁶ Rule 1.8

Collaboration in Ministry

† Turning to the Lord,
God the Father almighty,
with pure hearts let us give him
sincere and abundant thanks,
as much as we can in our littleness;
beseeching him in his singular kindness
with our whole soul,
graciously to hearken to our prayers
in his good pleasure;
also by his power to drive out the enemy
from our actions and thoughts,
to increase our faith,
to guide our minds,
to grant us spiritual thoughts, and
to lead us finally to his bliss;
through Jesus Christ his Son.¹⁷

R: Amen.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

¹⁷ A prayer that Saint Augustine used to conclude his sermons

Chapter of Renewal: COMMON PRAYER

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community addressing them in these or similar words:

My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. For journey to proceed, our holy father Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."¹⁸

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.¹⁹ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive words of Augustine on prayer.

Proclamation from the Rule of Saint Augustine

A member of the community proclaims these passages.

A reading of passages from the Rule of Our Holy Father Saint Augustine²⁰ on prayer and dispositions for prayer:

Chapter I: The Purpose and Basis of Common Life

8. Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honoring God in yourselves, whose temples you have become.

Chapter II: On Prayer

1. *Be assiduous in prayer* (Col 4:2), at the hours and times appointed.
2. In the Oratory no one should do anything other than that for which was intended and from which it also takes its name. Consequently, if there are some who might wish to pray there during their free time, even outside the hours appointed, they should not be hindered by those who think something else must be done there.
3. When you pray to God in Psalms and hymns, think over in your hearts the words that come from your lips.
4. Chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is so prescribed.

¹⁸ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) - Letter 118, 22

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, *Confessions X; The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

²⁰ This translation by Robert Russell, O.S.A., is based on the critical text of Luc Verheijen, O.S.A., Copyright 1976, Brothers of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine, Inc. All rights reserved.

Common Prayer

Chapter III: On Moderation and Self-Denial

2. When you come to table, listen until you leave to what is the custom to read, without disturbance or strife. Let not your mouths alone take nourishment but let your hearts too hunger for the words of God.

Responsorial Prayer

The superior leads the community in a responsorial prayer in which the community asks pardon for weaknesses and seeks renewal.

Presider: Our Holy Father Augustine shared with us what he learned from the Lord about common prayer, let us hear and respond: "There shall peace be made perfect in the children of God all loving one another, seeing one another possessed of God, since God shall be all in all. We shall have God as our common vision, God as our common possession, God as our common peace. Whatever he gives us here and now, he himself will be in place in all his gifts. He will be our full and perfect peace... Our peace, our rest, our joy, the end of all troubles, is none but God."²¹

All: O God forgive us for the times we have not seen each other united in you in our common prayer. Renew us so that in our community prayer we may find you unifying us in peace, rest and joy.

Presider: "Christ wills his own to be one, but in himself ... that they may be one in him, not only through the same nature in which all from being mortal men are made equal to the angels, but also through the same nature will be harmoniously conspiring to the same happiness, and fused in some way by the fire of love into one spirit."²²

All: Lord Jesus, forgive us for the times we have not seen each other united in you in our common prayer. Renew us so that in our community prayer we are fused into one spirit by the fire of your love.

Presider: "The members of the Church, many though they be, are bound to one another by the ties of love and of peace under the one head, who is our Savior himself, and they form one man. The voice of the many is frequently heard in the Psalms as the voice of one man; the cry of one is the cry of all, because we are all one."²³

All: O God forgive us for the times we have not felt the praying of the Psalms together as one voice crying out to you. Renew us so that our community prayer may bind us together more deeply with you in love and peace.

²¹ *Expositions of the Psalms* 84, 10

²² *Trinity*, IV, 9, 12

²³ *Expositions of the Psalms* 69, 1

Common Prayer

Presider: "Let us congratulate ourselves then and give thanks, not only for having been made into Christians but into Christ. Do you understand, brothers and sisters, the grace of God upon us; do you grasp that? Be filled with wonder, rejoice and be glad; we have been made into Christ. For, if he is the head, and we the members, then he and we are the whole man.... It would be pride, in fact, to claim this for ourselves, unless he had seen fit to promise it; he says through the same apostle, *Now you are the body of Christ and the members* (1 Cor 12:27)."²⁴

All: Lord Jesus Christ forgive us for our pride which has blocked us from rejoicing during our common prayer that together we are part of your body here on earth. Renew us so that in our community prayer we may congratulate ourselves in not only becoming better Christians, but also in being a part of you.

Presider: "Mary mothered our leader. The Church mothered you, because she also is mother and virgin. She is mother through the womb of her charity; virgin in the integrity of her faith and of her piety. She issues to the world entire peoples, but they are all members of a single Christ, of which she is the body and the spouse. One can say of her as of Mary: She is the mother of unity in multiplicity."²⁵

All: O God forgive us for the times we have not appreciated in our common prayer the multiplicity of our roles within your Church. Renew us so that in our community prayer we may follow Mary's faith and piety so that we being many may be one in Christ's body.

Presider: "The body that belongs to this head is the Church. This is not the Church of this place, but she that is to be found over the whole earth; this is not the Church of this time, but she that, from Abel himself, embraces all those who will be born and believe in Jesus Christ until the end of time, the entire people of saints who belong to the one city. That city is the body of Christ. The body whose head is Christ Himself.... Let us then recognise the total Christ, integral with the Church. Let us recognise He who was born of the Virgin Mary, He who is the head of the Church, in other words, the mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ."²⁶

All: O God forgive us for the times in our common prayer we have been too focused on the troubles of our time and place to recognize the needs of the body of Christ. Renew us so that in our community prayer we may find ourselves more deeply united with one another in the one city of love that is the body of Christ.

A period of silence may follow the responsorial prayer.

Fraternal Dialogue

The superior may invite the community into a dialogue on the need to ask pardon for weaknesses and seek renewal in Common Prayer.

²⁴ *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 21, 8

²⁵ *Sermon* 192, 2

²⁶ *Expositions of the Psalms* 90, 2, 1

Common Prayer

A period of silence may follow the dialogue

Concluding Prayer

After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

† Turning to the Lord,
God the Father almighty,
with pure hearts let us give him
sincere and abundant thanks,
as much as we can in our littleness;
beseeching him in his singular kindness
with our whole soul,
graciously to hearken to our prayers
in his good pleasure;
also by his power to drive out the enemy
from our actions and thoughts,
to increase our faith,
to guide our minds,
to grant us spiritual thoughts, and
to lead us finally to his bliss;
through Jesus Christ his Son.²⁷

R: Amen.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

²⁷ A prayer that Saint Augustine used to conclude his sermons

Chapter of Renewal: COMMUNAL POVERTY

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community and addresses them in these or similar words:

My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. For journey to proceed, our holy father Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."²⁸

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.²⁹ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive his word.

Proclamation from Saint Augustine

A member of the community proclaims the following:

A reading from Sermon 60 of our Holy Father Saint Augustine

All who are in any trouble and unable to cope with their affairs, look for some level-headed person to get advice from, someone who will know what to do. So let's imagine for a moment the whole of humankind is a single person. This person wants to avoid evil, but can't be bothered to do good. As a result his troubles multiply and he is unable to cope. Can he hope to find anyone to give him more level-headed advice than Christ? By all means let him find someone better, and then do what he likes. But if in fact a better is nowhere to be found, let him come to this adviser who is to be found everywhere and consult him and get really good advice...

So let's put our heads together. You are disturbed, you are storing up, you're wracking your brains, you're toiling away and you're losing sleep. In the daytime you are plagued with business, at night you are haunted by fear. As your pocket fills up with coin, your soul grows feverish with care. I observe it, I feel very sorry for you. You are disturbed, and as the one says who cannot be mistaken, you are disturbed in vain.

You are storing up, you see, accumulating wealth. Assuming that whatever you are about turns out well, and keeping quiet about losses, and leaving aside all those dangers, and the particular death that accompanies every gain (I don't mean the death of bodies, but of evil thoughts, Gold comes in at the door. Faith flies out at

²⁸ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) Letter 118, 22

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Confessions X; The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

Communal Poverty

the window. You are splendidly dressed outwardly, stripped to the buff inwardly).... If riches abound, do not set your heart on them.

Let's look for an answer together, let's seek advice together. We have ready at hand, not just a wise adviser, but Wisdom itself. Let's both listen to Christ, for the Jews a scandal, for the Gentiles foolishness; but for those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Why plan a strong-room for your wealth? Listen to the power of God; there is nothing stronger than that. Why think up arguments in justification of your wealth? Listen to the wisdom of God; there is nothing more judicious than that. Perhaps you will be scandalized when I tell you what he says: you will be a Jew, because Christ is a scandal for the Jews. Perhaps it will strike you as foolish when I tell you what he says: you will be a Gentile, because Christ is foolishness for the Gentiles. You are a Christian, you have been called; but for those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Don't be depressed when I tell you, don't be scandalized, don't turn up your nose and sneer at my apparent unwisdom. Let's listen. You see, what I am going to say is what Christ has said. Are you contemptuous of the spokesman? Have a healthy respect for the judge....

Listen to [Christ's] advice as he warns you.... Heaven and earth will pass away (Mt 24:35). Here's his voice advising you: Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth....

You see, the one who gave this sort of advice didn't want you to lose what you have, but was in fact giving you timely warning to save you from losing it. Why not listen to him about moving it all on to heaven?...Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. The heavens proclaim the glory of God (Ps 19:1). Perhaps when you give something to a just person, you are giving it to heaven. If you give it to an unjust person...even in that case you are not going wrong. In fact you are obeying the one who made heaven and earth....You have got just what's required to provide plenty for Christ's poor.

I have spoken, and you have listened—or rather he has spoken and we have all listened together. May he who has given us this advice on how to mend our ways also grant us the assistance we need in order to do so.

A short period of silence follows the reading

Fraternal Dialogue

The superior invites the community, in light of this reading and the pertinent parts of the *Rule* (see appendix to this form of Chapter of Renewal), to dialogue about how the community can renew its living of poverty, both personally and collectively.

Communal Poverty

Concluding Prayer

After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

Brothers, Christ the man is our way and Christ our God is our homeland. To reach him we must walk with him and in him. Instead we have preferred other pathways. Therefore we humbly pray:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in baptism you gave us a new life and in our profession you renewed it, but we have often forgotten the demands of this life and of our promises:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in the Rule and Constitutions you have given us the norms for fulfilling the demands of the gospel, but we at times have resisted this way without excuse:³⁰

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, the untaught rise up and take heaven by storm, while we with all our learning are still struggling in this world of flesh and blood:³¹

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to live in poverty with you, but we fail to join you in sharing what we have with the least of our brothers and sisters:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Other petitions may be added.

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

† Lord,
you are our only hope;
grant us the grace to seek you,
know you,
and love you,
never more to succumb to discouragement.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

³⁰ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) *Confessions* VIII, 7, 18

³¹ *Ibid.*, *Confessions* VIII, 8, 19

Communal Poverty

Appendix:

To be read individually prior to the celebration of the Chapter of Renewal
Excerpts from the Rule of Saint Augustine³²:
On Poverty

Chapter I | Purpose and Basis of Common Life

9. Call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that *they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one's need* (4: 32,35).
10. Those who owned something in the world should be careful in wanting to share it in common once they have entered the monastery.
11. But they who owned nothing should not look for those things in the monastery that they were unable to have in the world. Nevertheless, they are to be given all that their health requires even if, during their time in the world, poverty made it impossible for them to find the very necessities of life. And those should not consider themselves fortunate because they have found the kind of food and clothing which they were unable to find in the world.
12. And let them not hold their heads high, because they associate with people whom they did not dare to approach in the world, but let them rather lift up their hearts and not seek after what is vain and earthly. Otherwise, monasteries will come to serve a useful purpose for the rich and not the poor, if the rich are made humble there and the poor are puffed up with pride.
13. The rich, for their part, who seemed important in the world, must not look down upon their brothers who have come into this holy brotherhood from a condition of poverty. They should seek to glory in the fellowship of poor brothers rather than in the reputation of rich relatives. They should neither be elated if they have contributed a part of their wealth to the common life, nor take more pride in sharing their riches with the monastery than if they were to enjoy them in the world. Indeed, every other kind of sin has to do with the commission of evil deeds, whereas pride lurks even in good works in order to destroy them. And what good is it to scatter one's wealth abroad by giving to the poor, even to become poor oneself, when the unhappy soul is thereby more given to pride in despising riches than it had been in possessing them?

Chapter III | Moderation and Self-Denial

3. Subdue the flesh, so far as your health permits, by fasting and abstinence from food and drink. However, when someone is unable to fast, he should still take no food outside mealtimes unless he is ill.
4. When you come to table, listen until you leave to what is the custom to read, without disturbance or strife. Let not your mouths alone take nourishment but let your hearts too hunger for the words of God.

³² This translation by Robert Russell, O.S.A., is based on the critical text of Luc Verheijen, O.S.A., Copyright 1976, Brothers of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with Permission.

Communal Poverty

5. If those in more delicate health from their former way of life are treated differently in the matter of food, this should not be a source of annoyance to the others or appear unjust in the eyes of those who owe their stronger health to different habits of life. Nor should the healthier brothers deem them more fortunate for having food which they do not have, but rather consider themselves fortunate for having the good health which the others do not enjoy.
6. And if something in the way of food, clothing, and bedding is given to those coming to the monastery from a more genteel way of life, which is not given to those who are stronger, and therefore happier, then these latter ought to consider how far these others have come in passing from their life in the world down to this life of ours, though they have been unable to reach the level of frugality common to the stronger brothers. Nor should all want to receive what they see given in larger measure to the few, not as a token of honor, but as a help to support them in their weakness. This would give rise to a deplorable disorder - that in the monastery, where the rich are coming to bear as much hardship as they can, the poor are turning to a more genteel way of life.
7. And just as the sick must take less food to avoid discomfort, so too, after their illness, they are to receive the kind of treatment that will quickly restore their strength, even though they come from a life of extreme poverty. Their more recent illness has, as it were, afforded them what accrued to the rich as part of their former way of life. But when they have recovered their former strength, they should go back to their happier way of life which, because their needs are fewer, is all the more in keeping with God's servants. Once in good health, they must not become slaves to the enjoyment of food which was necessary to sustain them in their illness. For it is better to suffer a little want than to have too much.

Chapter V | The Care of Community Goods and Treatment of the Sick

1. Keep your clothing in one place in charge of one or two, or of as many as are needed to care for them and to prevent damage from moths. And just as you have your food from the one pantry, so, too, you are to receive your clothing from a single wardrobe. If possible, do not be concerned about what you are given to wear at the change of seasons, whether each of you gets back what he had put away or something different, providing no one is denied what he needs. If, however, disputes and murmuring arise on this account because someone complains that he received poorer clothing than he had before, and thinks it is beneath him to wear the kind of clothing worn by another, you may judge from this how lacking you are in that holy and inner garment of the heart when you quarrel over garments for the body. But if allowance is made for your weakness and you do receive the same clothing you had put away, you must still keep it in one place under the common charge.
2. In this way, no one shall perform any task for his own benefit but all your work shall be done for the common good, with greater zeal and more dispatch than if each one of you were to work for yourself alone. For charity, as it is written, *is not self-seeking* (1 Cor 13:5) meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that you are

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growing in charity. Thus, let the abiding virtue of charity prevail in all things that minister to the fleeting necessities of life.

3. It follows, therefore, that if anyone brings something for their sons or other relatives living in the monastery, whether a garment or anything else they think is needed, this must not be accepted secretly as one's own but must be placed at the disposal of the superior so that, as common property, it can be given to whoever needs it. But if someone secretly keeps something given to him, he shall be judged guilty of theft.
4. Your clothing should be cleaned either by yourselves or by those who perform this service, as the superior shall determine, so that too great a desire for clean clothing may not be the source of interior stains on the soul.
5. As for bodily cleanliness too, a brother must never deny himself the use of the bath when his health requires it. But this should be done on medical advice, without complaining, so that even though unwilling, he shall do what has to be done for his health when the superior orders it. However, if the brother wishes it, when it might not be good for him, you must not comply with his desire, for sometimes we think something is beneficial for the pleasure it gives, even though it may prove harmful.
6. Finally, if the cause of a brother's bodily pain is not apparent, you must take the word of God's servant when he indicates what is giving him pain. But if it remains uncertain whether the remedy he likes is good for him, a doctor should be consulted.
7. When there is need to frequent the public baths or any other place, no fewer than two or three should go together, and whoever has to go somewhere must not go with those of his own choice but with those designated by the superior.
8. The care of the sick, whether those in convalescence or others suffering from some indisposition, even though free of fever, shall be assigned to a brother who can personally obtain from the pantry whatever he sees is necessary for each one. Those in charge of the pantry, or of clothing and books, should render cheerful service to their brothers.
9. Books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day, and anyone coming outside that hour is not to receive them.
10. But as for clothing and shoes, those in charge shall not delay the giving of them whenever they are required by those in need of them.

Chapter of Renewal: THE EUCHARIST IN OUR LIVES TOGETHER

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community members and addresses them in these or similar words:

My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. For journey to proceed, our holy father Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."³³

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.³⁴ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive his word.

Proclamation of the Word of God

A member of the community proclaims this passage from Scripture

A reading from the Gospel according to John. (John 6:41-66)

The Jews murmured about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: 'They shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us (his) flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my

³³ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) – Letter 118, 22

³⁴ *Ibid.* - *Confessions X; The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

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flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

These things he said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?"

Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe."

Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

As a result of this, many (of) his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Responsorial Prayer

The superior leads the community in a responsorial prayer in which the community asks pardon for weaknesses and seeks renewal.

Presider: In preaching on this Gospel passage Our Holy Father shared with us what he had learned from the Lord, let us hear and respond.

Presider: "Before you approach the altar, pay attention to what you say: *Forgive us our debts, just as we too forgive our debtors* (Mt 6:12). You forgive, you are forgiven; approach without a qualm, it is bread, not poison. But be sure that you really do forgive; because if you do not forgive, you are lying, and you are lying to one whom you should not deceive. You can lie to God, but you cannot deceive God."³⁵

All: O God forgive us for the times we have tried to deceive you by failing to forgive before we approached your altar. May the Body and Blood of Christ renew us and help us become a forgiving community so that we may all receive your forgiveness.

Presider: "My flesh, he says, is for the life of the world. If they do not neglect to be the body of Christ, the faithful know the body of Christ. Let them become the body of Christ, if they wish to live by the Spirit of Christ. Only the body of Christ lives by the Spirit of Christ."³⁶

³⁵ *Homilies on the Gospel of John 26, 11*

³⁶ *Homilies on the Gospel of John 26, 13*

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All: O God forgive us for the times we have failed to be the Body of Christ in the world. May the Body and Blood of Christ renew us and help us become the Body of Christ so that we may live by the Spirit of Christ.

Presider: "When the apostle Paul is explaining this bread to us he says, *We being many are one bread, one body* (1 Cor 10:17). O sacrament of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of love! The one who wants to live has somewhere to live, has something to live on. Let him approach. Let him believe. Let him belong to the body so as to be given life. Let him not shudder at the make-up of its members. Let him not be a festering member which needs to be amputated, nor a crooked member of which it would be ashamed. Let him be beautiful, well suited, healthy; let him cling to the body, live for God and by God."³⁷

All: O God forgive us for the times we have been festering or crooked members of your body failing to build unity. May the Body and Blood of Christ renew us and help us to be beautiful, well-suited and healthy members of Christ's Body so that we may find in Christ life.

Presider: "[This Scripture passage] is about the Lord's body, which he said he was giving them to eat for the sake of eternal life. He has just explained what it meant for him to hand over this gift, how he would give his flesh to be eaten, saying, *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him* (Jn 6:56). The sign that someone has really eaten and drunk is that he abides in Christ and Christ in him, that he dwells in Christ and Christ in him and that he sticks to Christ so as not to be left behind."³⁸

All: O God forgive us for the times we have not dwelled with you, did not let you dwell with us and found ourselves left behind. May we truly eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ by renewing our willingness to abide with you so you can abide with us.

Presider: "I have just said that what the Lord has impressed upon us in the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood is that its whole purpose is for us to abide in him and him in us. Now we abide in him when we are his members, while he abides in us when we are his temple. But for us to be his members, we have to be bonded together by unity."³⁹

All: O God forgive us for the times we have broking our bonds of unity with You and with our fellow members of the Body of Christ. May the Body and Blood of Christ renew us and help us become better members of Christ's Body by being more deeply united with him and one another.

Presider: "So then, all this, my dearest friends, is of value to us so that we not feed on the body of Christ and the blood of Christ in a merely sacramental way

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 27, 1.

³⁹ Ibid., 6.

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(which many bad people do), but that we should eat and drink to the extent of a participation in the Spirit, staying in the Lord's body as members, and being energized by his Spirit, not scandalized even in this time, if many who will end up in eternal torment eat and drink the sacraments with us now."⁴⁰

All: O God forgive us for the times we have received the Body and Blood of Christ unworthily because we have failed to participate in the Spirit as faithful members of Christ's Body. May the Body and Blood of Christ renew us and help us to be energized the Christ's Spirit to deepen our valuing of the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ in our lives.

A period of silence may follow the responsorial prayer.

Fraternal Dialogue

The superior may invite the community into a dialogue on the need to ask pardon for our weaknesses and seek renewal with respect to the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives.

Concluding Prayer

After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

† United in one mind and heart we pray:
* Our Father ...

† Lord,
you are our only hope;
grant us the grace to seek you,
know you,
and love you,
never more to succumb to discouragement.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.⁴¹
R: Amen.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

⁴⁰ *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 27, 11.

⁴¹ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002)

Chapter of Renewal: IN THE FACE OF SCANDAL

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

Presider: My brothers, we meet in community at a difficult time for our Church. We experience deep disappointment and shame for our failures and those of others. Our greatest obstacle in facing truth and turning back to God is pride. To confront our disappointment, shame and pride our holy father Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."⁴²

Like Augustine, we must open ourselves to the challenge of facing truth that is essential for spiritual healing. In humility let us not delude ourselves that we can easily bring healing to others. Let us We call out to God who brings us to reconciliation and peace as we enter into this celebration.

Proclamation and Reflection on the Word of God and Saint Augustine

Presider: Let us join in the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 51

All: Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness;
in your abundant compassion blot out my offense.
Wash away all my guilt;
from my sin cleanse me.

For I know my offense;
my sin is always before me.
Against you alone have I sinned;
I have done such evil in your sight
That you are just in your sentence,
blameless when you condemn.

True, I was born guilty,
a sinner, even as my mother conceived me.
Still, you insist on sincerity of heart;
in my inmost being teach me wisdom.

Reader: Our Holy Father Augustine tells us: *Expositions of the Psalm 50, 6*
Listen, then, and say with David, *Have mercy on me, God, according to your great mercy.* A person who is driven to beg for great mercy is confessing great misery. Those who have sinned unwittingly may beg for only slight mercy; but David says. *Have mercy on me according to your great mercy.* Treat a grave wound with your mighty medicine. Grave indeed is my condition, but I take refuge with the Almighty.

⁴² *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) Letter 118, 22.

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I would despair of so fatal a wound if I could not find such powerful medicine. *Have mercy on me, God, according to your great mercy, and in your manifold pity blot out my iniquity.* His words, *blot out my iniquity*, echo the preceding *have mercy on me, God*; and the phrase, *in your manifold pity*, means the same as *according to your great mercy*. Because your mercy is great, many are your acts of mercy, and from your great mercy springs your manifold pity.

Reflection: The presider invites the community to spend time in silent reflection on the words of the Psalm and Saint Augustine with the following invitation:

Presider: The scandal of sexual abuse has caused great pain, sorrow and harm. We and the victims of abuse are in need of God's great mercy. Let us take time in quiet reflection on the words of the Psalmist and Saint Augustine, pondering this question: *In our feelings of guilt and shame in the face of grave wounds how can we listen to and learn from the wisdom of God's mercy?*

After a sufficient time of reflection the presider invites the community to continue in prayer.

Presider: Let us join again in the words of the Psalmist:

All: Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure;
wash me, make me whiter than snow.
Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Turn away your face from my sins;
blot out all my guilt.

A clean heart create for me, God;
renew in me a steadfast spirit.

Do not drive me from your presence,
nor take from me your holy spirit.

Restore my joy in your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.

Reader: Our Holy Father Augustine tells us: [Expositions of the Psalms 50, 13](#)

"So the speaker has been sprinkled with hyssop; where is his humility? Listen to the next verse: *As I listen you will give me delight and gladness, and my humbled bones will dance for joy.* "I will find my joy in listening to you, not in speaking against you." ... *As I listen you will give me delight and gladness.* May God himself enable me to say what I feel about this. Those who hear are more fortunate than those who speak. The learner is humble, but the teacher has to work hard not to be proud, in case a dishonorable desire to curry favor insinuates itself, and in wishing to curry favor with men and women he loses favor with God. Great peril is to be feared in teaching, my brothers and sisters, and I am sorely afraid as I speak to you. Believe what my heart is telling you, though you cannot see it. God knows how great is the fear that oppresses me as I talk to you--God who will, I hope, be gentle with me and ready to show mercy. But when we listen inside ourselves as he makes some suggestion and teaches us, we are safe, and being safe we rejoice, for we are subject to our teacher; we seek his glory and praise him as he schools us. His truth delights us deep within, where nobody makes a din or has to listen to it. There,

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within, the psalmist testifies that he found his delight and gladness: *As I listen you will give me delight and gladness*, he says. And the reason why he listens is that he is humble. Anyone who hears, who truly hears and hears correctly, hears humbly, for all the honor belongs to the one from whom he hears whatever it is. After saying, *As I listen you will give me delight and gladness*, the psalmist immediately indicated the effect this listening had upon him: *My humbled bones will dance for joy*. His bones had been humbled. The bones of a listener keep no trace of haughtiness in them, no self-importance, though the speaker finds it hard to overcome these faults in himself."

Reflection: The presider invites the community to spend time in silent reflection on the words of the Psalm and Saint Augustine with the following invitation:

Presider: The scandal of sexual abuse is a very humiliating and humbling experience that calls for healing. We need to listen humbly to the healing message of the Lord our Teacher Within. Let us take time in quiet reflection on the words of the Psalmist and Saint Augustine, pondering these questions: *How can I humbly accept God's healing with hyssop in the midst of guilt and shame? How can we help victims to receive God's healing?*

After a sufficient time of reflection the presider invites the community to continue in prayer.

Presider: Let us join again in the words of the Psalmist:

All: I will teach the wicked your ways,
that sinners may return to you.
Rescue me from death, God, my saving God,
that my tongue may praise your healing power.

Lord, open my lips;
my mouth will proclaim your praise.
For you do not desire sacrifice;
a burnt offering you would not accept.
My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit;
God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart.

Make Zion prosper in your good pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifice,
burnt offerings and holocausts;
then bullocks will be offered on your altar.

Reader: Our Holy Father Augustine tells us: *Expositions of the Psalms 50, 24*
"In Christ's name this psalm has now been fully dealt with, as best I could, even though not as well as I would have liked. It remains for me to say a few words to you, brothers and sisters, in view of the rampant evils among which we live. As long as we must live in these human circumstances, there is no escaping from them. We must live tolerantly among bad people, because when we were bad ourselves,

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good people lived tolerantly among us. If we remember what we were, we shall not despair of those who are now what we were then.

All the same, dearest friends, at a time when there is so much variation in moral standards and such appalling decadence, keep strict control over your homes. Rule your children, rule your households. Just as it is our responsibility to talk to you in church, so it is yours to dispose matters in your homes in such a way that you may give a good account of those under you. God loves discipline. It is a perverse and misguided innocence that loosens the reins in favor of sins. It is very unhelpful, indeed extremely harmful, for a son to take advantage of an easy-going father, only to find God's severity later; and he will not be alone when he finds it, but will have his dissolute father for company. Why? If the father does not commit the sins, and does not behave like his son, does that mean he has no duty to restrain his son from that wicked conduct?"

Reflection: The presider invites the community to spend time in silent reflection on the words of the Psalm and Saint Augustine with the following invitation:

Presider: The scandal of sexual abuse will not disappear quickly. Despite feelings of helplessness, we need to join the Lord in rebuilding walls of Jerusalem by rebuilding our community and the Church as best we can. Let us take time in quiet reflection on the words of the Psalmist and Saint Augustine, pondering these questions: *What do we need to rebuild ourselves? What can we do with God's help to rebuild the Church?*

Fraternal Dialogue

After a sufficient time of reflection the presider invites the community to join in a fraternal dialogue about rebuilding trust.

Concluding Prayer

After the fraternal dialogue the presider invites the community to join in the concluding prayer.

Brothers, the mercy of God has no limits. Repenting of our faults and sins, let us ask God's pardon.

For the times we have misused our power and harmed others:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For failure to love God and our brothers as the Lord commands and our Rule reminds us to:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For failure to dispel the bitterness and sadness that destroys the joy of Christians:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

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For the times that our discord, intransigence, and misunderstandings have shattered unity, peace, and love in the community and the Church:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

For our insensibility to the ills of society, the Church, the Order, and our own community:

R: We ask your pardon, Lord.

Other petitions may be added.

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

Presider: † O God,
you created humankind in your own image and likeness.
Open our ears to hear your voice,
cleanse our eyes to see your wonders,
and dispel all our ignorance
that we may recognize you,
the one true God with Jesus Christ your Son
who live and reign forever and ever.⁴³

R: Amen.

Presider: Let us be a sign of our readiness to receive the mercy of God by sharing with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Those present exchange a sign of peace.

Presider: Let us go forth in peace.

The chapter may end with an appropriate hymn.

⁴³ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) *Soliloquies* I, 1, 5.

Chapter of Renewal **PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR**

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community and addresses them in these or similar words:

My brothers, in our Constitutions we commit ourselves to a preferential option for the poor. In his understanding of the Gospel of Matthew, our holy father Augustine goes further by teaching that how we serve not only the poor but any of the least in this world is the crucial measure of our love of God. We gather as a community to accept the mercy of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings in sharing God's mercy with his least. The greatest obstacle in turning back to God is pride. For this journey to proceed, Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."⁴⁴

Like Augustine, we feel that the humble confession and declaration of our faults is praise of God's creation and celebration of his grace.⁴⁵ With these sentiments, let us enter into this celebration and receive the Scripture that Augustine felt made the deepest impression on him.⁴⁶

Proclamation of the Word of God

A member of the community proclaims the following:

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (25: 31-46)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome,

⁴⁴ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) – Letter 118, 22.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, *Confessions* X; *The Gift of Perseverance* 20, 51-53

⁴⁶ *Sermon* 389, 5

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naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

A short period of silence follows the reading

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 34

A member of the community proclaims readings from Saint Augustine and the community responds:

Reader: Our holy father Augustine reminded his followers that in the least of this world Christ is suffering in his members and calls us in faith to perform the works of mercy when he preached:

"Has it escaped you what he will be saying, when he gives out a kingdom? 'When you did it to one of the least of mine, you did it to me' (Mt 25:40)? That rich man (Christ) is in dire need until the end of the world. Without the slightest doubt he's in dire need, not in the head, but in his members. Where is he in need? In those in whom he suffered pain, when he said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (Acts 9:4). So let us take care of Christ. He's with us in those who are his, he's with us in ourselves; nor was it to no purpose that he said, 'Behold, I am with you until the consummation of the world' (Mt 28:20). By doing this sort of thing, we recognize Christ in good works, with the heart, not the body; not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of faith."⁴⁷

Recognizing our failings, we ask for the mercy of God as we join in the words of the Psalmist:

ALL: I will bless the LORD at all times;
praise shall be always in my mouth.
My soul will glory in the LORD
that the poor may hear and be glad.
Magnify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, who answered me,
delivered me from all my fears.

Reader:

With all the sinful acts in the world Augustine recognized how the final judgment that Matthew describes is troubling and surprising when he preached these words:

"[Christ] does not say to them, 'Come, take possession of the kingdom; because you have lived chastely, you have not cheated anybody, you have not oppressed any poor person, you have not encroached on anyone's boundaries, you have not

⁴⁷ Sermon 239, 7

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sworn false oaths to anyone.' He didn't say that, but 'Take possession of the kingdom.' Why? 'For I was hungry and you gave me to eat.' How supremely excellent this must be, when the Lord kept quiet about all the rest, and only mentioned this! Again, to those others he said: 'Go into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.' How many things he could have said against the godless, if they had asked, 'Why are we going into the eternal fire?' 'Why do you ask, you adulterer you, you murderer, you cheat, you sacrilegious so-and-so, blasphemer, unbeliever?' [He said] none of that, but simply, 'because I was hungry, and you did not give me anything to eat.' I notice that you too are puzzled and surprised. Indeed it is a very surprising thing. Now I have put together an explanation of this surprising thing as best I could, which I won't hide from you."⁴⁸

Recognizing our failures to accept the hard sayings and preferences of Christ, we ask for the mercy of God as we join in the words of the Psalmist:

ALL: Look to God that you may be radiant with joy
and your faces may not blush for shame.

In my misfortune I called,
the LORD heard and saved me from all distress.
The angel of the LORD, who encamps with them,
delivers all who fear God.
Learn to savor how good the LORD is;
happy are those who take refuge in him.

Reader:

Augustine challenges us to overcome our pride and humbly be a doer of good in performing the works of mercy in the body of Christ in these words:

"The reason why God often makes his servants beggars of food, though he is perfectly capable of feeding them, is in order to find doers of good. Don't ever be proud because you give something to the poor; Christ was poor. Don't ever be proud because you welcome a stranger; Christ was a stranger. The one welcomed is better than the one providing the welcome; the one receiving is richer than the one handing out. The one who was receiving was the owner of everything; the one who was giving had received what he was giving from the one he was giving it to. So don't ever be proud, my brothers and sisters, when you give something to a poor person. Don't ever say in your heart, 'I'm giving, he's receiving; I'm giving him a welcome, he's in need of shelter.' Perhaps what you're in need of is rather more than that. Perhaps the one you are giving a welcome to is a just man; he's in need of bread, you of truth; he's in need of shelter, you of heaven; he's in need of money, you of justice."⁴⁹

Recognizing our pride stands in the way of salvation through humbly performing the works of mercy, we ask for the mercy of God as we join in the words of the Psalmist:

⁴⁸ *Sermon 389, 5*

⁴⁹ *Sermon 239, 4*

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ALL: Fear the LORD, you holy ones;
nothing is lacking to those who fear him.
The powerful grow poor and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
Who among you loves life,
takes delight in prosperous days?

Reader:

Augustine challenges us as “announcers” of the Word of God to keep our eyes and ears open for the Good News, no matter who is announcing it to us, be it the poor, the least or the women at the tomb when he proclaimed:

“When the Lord had been crucified and was dead... they too gave up hope, and among those who lost hope was Peter too; after the resurrection, as the evangelist Mark says, he appeared to the women; he said, Go tell my disciples, and Peter, that I have risen from the dead (Mk 16:7). Because the Lord had already appeared to the faithful women; and they went back and brought the good news to the disciples, that they had seen a vision of angels, who told them, ‘Why seek the one who lives with the dead? He is not here, he has risen again’ (Lk 24:5-6); and that they had not found his body in the tomb. That’s what the women said, and the men didn’t believe them. They announced these things to the apostles—announced to the announcers who he really was.”⁵⁰

Recognizing our failure to keep our eyes and ears open to Christ calling to us in whoever is the least of his, we ask for the mercy of God as we join in the words of the Psalmist:

ALL: Keep your tongue from evil,
your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
The LORD has eyes for the just
and ears for their cry.
The LORD’S face is against evildoers
to wipe out their memory from the earth.
When the just cry out, the LORD hears
and rescues them from all distress.

Reader:

Augustine admonishes us that failure to perform the works of mercy is a crime when he declared:

“I said to the Lord: My God are you, because you have no need of my goods’ (Ps 16:2). So while he is the Lord, and the real Lord, and has no need of our goods, all the same, in order that we might do something for him, he was ready to be hungry

⁵⁰ *Sermon 236A, 4*

Preferential Option for the Poor

in his poor. 'I was hungry,' he said, 'and you gave me to eat. Lord, when did we see you hungry? Whenever you did it for one of these least of mine, you did it for me.' Again, to the others, 'When you failed to do it for one of the least of mine, you failed to do it for me' (Mt 25:35.37.40.45). In a word, therefore, let us all listen, and seriously reflect what great merit there is in having fed Christ when he was hungry—and what sort of a crime it is to have ignored Christ when he was hungry."

Recognizing our failure to perform the works of mercy is more than a fault or failure; it is a crime, we ask for the mercy of God as join in the words of the Psalmist:

ALL: The LORD is close to the brokenhearted,
saves those whose spirit is crushed.
Many are the troubles of the just,
but the LORD delivers from them all.
God watches over all their bones;
not a one shall be broken.
Evil will slay the wicked;
those who hate the just are condemned.
The LORD redeems loyal servants;
no one is condemned whose refuge is God.

Fraternal Dialogue

The superior may invite the community, in light of the Gospel and the Responsorial Psalm to dialogue about how the community can renew its adherence to a preferential option for the poor and performing the works of mercy.

Concluding Prayer

Brothers, Christ is in our world in the disguise of the poor and the least among us. To be ready for Christ's judgment we must perform the works of mercy even when we find it difficult and troubling. Therefore we humbly pray:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in baptism you joined us to you as members of your body. Renew in us a passion for sharing with you in the works of mercy:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, in the Rule and Constitutions you have given us the norms for fulfilling the demands of the gospel, particularly in having a preferential option for the poor and least among us, but we at times have resisted this way without excuse: ⁵¹

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

⁵¹ *Confessions* VIII, 7, 18

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Lord Jesus Christ, the untaught rise up and take heaven by storm, while we with all our learning are still struggling in this world of flesh and blood.⁵² Remove pride from our hearts and renew in us the humility to perform the works of mercy:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us for our failure to see you suffering and calling out to us in the poor and least among us. Renew our hearts and minds so that so we can be one with you as we perform the works of mercy:

R: Show us your mercy, Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Other petitions may be added.

† United in one mind and heart we pray:

* Our Father ...

† Lord,
you are our only hope.
Grant us the grace to seek you,
know you,
and love you,
in the poor and the least among us.
Give us the courage to perform
your works of mercy.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

⁵² *Confessions* VIII, 8, 19

Chapter of Renewal: FOR SUCCESS OF THE FEDERATION OF AUGUSTINIANS OF NORTH AMERICA

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

Leader: My brothers, we meet in community as the praying Church. Let us ask for the grace to accept the goodness of God while at the same time we acknowledge our faults and failings. The greatest obstacle in turning to God is pride. For this journey to proceed, our holy father Augustine advises us: "The first step is humility; the second is humility; the third, humility; and as many times as you ask me, I will give you the same answer."⁵³

Our purpose in becoming participants in our Federation of Augustinians of North America is to strengthen the ministry of our Order in North America by helping the participants to overcome provincial and other barriers in the undertaking of common tasks, to foster the universal dimension of our Order in service to the Gospel, and to enable us to have a wider impact on the whole of North America.

Seeking the Augustinian virtue of humility as we share in the tasks of federation, let us enter into this celebration by receiving insights that our holy father Augustine gained from Scripture.

Readings from Our Holy Father Augustine

Reader 1: Saint Augustine reminded us that we are called to work at becoming the Body of Christ when he observed:

Homilies on the Gospel of John 26, 13

So then, do you also wish to draw life from the Spirit of Christ? Be in the body of Christ. Does my body, after all, draw life from your spirit? Mine draws life from my spirit, and yours from yours. That is why it is that when the apostle Paul is explaining this bread to us, *We being many, he says, are one bread, one body* (1 Cor 10:17). O sacrament of piety, O sign of unity, O bond of charity! The one who wants to live has somewhere to live, has something to live on. Let him approach, let him believe, let him belong to the body so as to be given life. Let him not shudder at the make-up of its members, let him not be a festering member which needs to be amputated, nor a crooked member of which it would be ashamed; let him be beautiful, well suited, healthy; let him cling to the body, live for God and by God. Let him work now on earth so as to reign later on in heaven.

Leader: How good it is, how pleasant, where brothers dwell as one!

Psalm 133

All: Like precious ointment on the head,

⁵³ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) Letter 118, 22.

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running down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.
Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.
There the LORD has lavished blessings,
life everlasting.

Reader 2: Saint Augustine reminded us that we who are many grains of wheat are called to become one bread in the Body of Christ when he observed:

Homilies on the Gospel of John 26, 17

My flesh, you see, he says, is really food, and my blood is really drink (Jn 6:55). What people desire when it comes to food and drink is to stop being hungry or thirsty, but that is only truly provided for by the food and drink which makes those who take it immortal and imperishable, by this fellowship of the saints, in which there will be peace and full and perfect unity. That is the reason, as men of God before our time understood perfectly well, why our Lord Jesus Christ presented us with his body and blood in those things which are made one out of many. Thus one bread is brought together as one from many grains, the other flows together from many grapes.

Leader: How good it is, how pleasant, where brothers dwell as one!

All: Like precious ointment on the head,
running down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.
Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.
There the LORD has lavished blessings,
life everlasting.

Reader 3: Saint Augustine reminded us that Charity - the Love of God - is what unites us in our working with one another:

Homilies on the Gospel of John 27, 6

The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life (Jn 6:63). After all, brothers and sisters, I have just said that what the Lord has impressed upon us in the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood is that its whole purpose is for us to abide in him and him in us. Now we abide in him when we are his members, while he abides in us when we are his temple. But for us to be his members, we have to be bonded together by unity. What makes unity bond us together? What else but charity? And where does the charity of God come from? Question the apostle. *The charity of God, he says, has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom 5:5).* So then, *the Spirit gives life;* it is the Spirit after all who makes sure the members are alive. Nor does the Spirit make

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sure any members are alive, unless they are in the body which the Spirit itself animates.

Leader: How good it is, how pleasant, where brothers dwell as one!

All: Like precious ointment on the head,
running down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.
Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.
There the LORD has lavished blessings,
life everlasting

Fraternal Dialogue

Leader: Let us encourage one another in the humility we need to be united in widening the impact of God's love in our lives as we share in our federation.

A dialogue should take place on the humility we need to break down barriers as we work on federation-wide tasks

Concluding Prayer

Brothers, the love of God has no limits. God's love calls us in humility to renew our Augustinian life by participating in federation. Let us place before the Lord the areas of responsibility of our federation:

In our fostering of the vocations of those called to follow in the footsteps of Augustine, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our ministry of the formation of those who have responded to the call to live Augustinian life, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our missionary endeavors to spread the Gospel as the Lord calls us, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our use of the means of social communication to spread the Gospel, the message of Saint Augustine and Augustinian life, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our federation work to increase resources in support of common ministries, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our efforts to advance God's peace and justice in our world, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

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In our ministerial endeavors among Latino/Hispanic people, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In our research and planning for the future of Augustinian life in North America, we pray -

R: Unite us in Your love, O Lord.

In any new initiatives that may arise through our participation in federation, we pray -

R: United us in Your love, O Lord.

Other petitions may be added.

Leader: United in one mind and heart we pray:

All Our Father ...

Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Those present exchange the sign of peace.

Leader: †O God,
you created humankind in your own image and likeness.
Open our ears to hear your voice,
cleanse our eyes to see your wonders,
and dispel all our ignorance
that we may recognize you,
the one true God with Jesus Christ your Son
who live and reign forever and ever.⁵⁴

R: Amen.

Leader: Our chapter is complete. Let us go forth to live good lives and so change our times.⁵⁵

All: Thanks be to God

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

⁵⁴ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) *Soliloquies* I, 1, 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, *Sermon 311*, 8.

Chapter of Renewal: WELCOMING A NEW COMMUNITY MEMBER

Introductory Rites

The chapter may begin with an appropriate hymn.

The superior greets the community in these words:

With grateful hearts we gather to welcome N. to our community. We pray that God will bless him as he continues to respond to his call to our Augustinian life in this his new community.

All: Great are you, O Lord, and worthy of praise!
How limitless is your power!
How immeasurable your wisdom!
You have made us that we long for you
And our hearts are restless until they rest in you.⁵⁶

Opening Prayer

Prior: Let us pray: Give us, O Lord,
A heart intent on you,
A soul that delights in you,
A mind that contemplates you,
An intellect intent on you,
And a will that is ever faithful to you.
Be with us as we welcome our brother, N., so that we may foster the common good of our community, Order, Church and world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.⁵⁷

All: Amen

Proclamation of the Word of God and Fraternal Dialogue

The community will share their reflections on Scripture passages that inspired Saint Augustine in composing *The Rule*. In preparation for this Chapter of Renewal, the Prior and the new community member should choose 2 or 3 passages from those included in the Appendix to this format for a Chapter of Renewal.

One of the community friars should read a scripture passage followed by the community members sharing their reflections on the relation of the scripture passage to their lives.

⁵⁶ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) – Confessions I, 1, 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* – *Book of the Soliloquies with God*, 1.

Welcoming a New Community Member

Concluding Prayer

After the dialogue, the superior may end with the following prayer:

Prior: Brothers, let us pray to God Our Father from whom all good things come, as N. joins our community, may our sacred commitments be sealed by the One who was first to inspire us. Our response is: Lord unite us.

By our self-offering and our apostolic work, make the life of your Church ever more fruitful. We pray...

Unite us, who profess the evangelical counsels, more closely with the saving work of Your Son. We pray...

By the life and labor of all religious promote the welfare of all people. We pray...

Help us as Augustinians to search for you and proclaim you by our life in common. We pray...

For what else shall we pray...

Other petitions may be added.

Prior: United in mind and heart we pray:

All: Our Father ...

All: †O God,
you created humankind in your own image and likeness.
Open our ears to hear your voice,
cleanse our eyes to see your wonders,
and dispel all our ignorance
that we may recognize you,
the one true God with Jesus Christ your Son
who live and reign forever and ever.⁵⁸
Amen.

Prior: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

Those present exchange a sign of peace.

FINAL BLESSING:

Prior: May the name of the Lord be praised.

All: Now and for ever.

Prior: May the blessing of Almighty God.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Come upon you and remain with you for ever.

All: Amen

The chapter may end with a hymn of thanksgiving.

⁵⁸ *Ritual of the Order of Saint Augustine* (2002) – *Soliloquies*, I, 1,5.

Welcoming a New Community Member

Appendix: Scripture⁵⁹ Passages Related to the Rule of Saint Augustine

Chapter 1 (Paragraphs 1-9): Communion (Paragraphs 1-9)

Acts 4:32-35:

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Chapter 2 (Paragraphs 10-13): Prayer

Colossians 4:2-6

Persevere in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; at the same time, pray for us, too, that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak of the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, that I may make it clear, as I must speak. Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you know how you should respond to each one.

Chapter 3 (Paragraphs 14-18): Detachment

Matthew 6: 16-21

When you fast do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Chapter 4 (Paragraphs 19-29): Fraternal Correction

Matthew 18:12-20

What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost. If your brother sins (against you), go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you

⁵⁹ New American Bible Used with Permission

Welcoming a New Community Member

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, (amen,) I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Chapter 5 (Paragraphs 30-40): Care for Community

I Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Chapter 6 (Paragraphs 41-43): Forgiveness

Matthew 6:7-15

In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one. If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

Chapter 7 (Paragraphs 44-47): Obedience

I Thessalonians 5:9-18

God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good (both) for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

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Chapter 8 (Paragraphs 48-49): Grace and Freedom

Romans 6:11-23

Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as (being) dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, sin must not reign over your mortal bodies so that you obey their desires. And do not present the parts of your bodies to sin as weapons for wickedness, but present yourselves to God as raised from the dead to life and the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness. For sin is not to have any power over you, since you are not under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Of course not! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted. Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your nature. For just as you presented the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present them as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. But what profit did you get then from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit that you have leads to sanctification, and its end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Section II: Celebrations of Renewal

The three forms of Celebrations of Renewal are provided in response to the *Program of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova 2010-2014's* request for Augustinian Spirituality resources for local communities similar to the Province's Thagaste Experience program.

The celebration *Praying with the Rule of Saint Augustine* is a format that could be used as a Day of Recollection by a local community. Parts of the format could be used by a community to focus on specific sections of the *Rule* rather than celebrating a full Day of Recollection. A fraternal dialogue or other group reflection process could be included within Morning Prayer. Also, in small communities, breaking into groups may not be possible so another format for dialogue may need to be substituted. Art Purcaro has graciously given permission for the use of the current format which was originally published in his book, *Growing in Communion: Materials to Promote Growth in Communal Holiness*. That book contains other materials for facilitating community exercises.

The celebration *Foundational Experience* is a series of sessions to be experienced over 2 ½ to 3 days. It was designed by Bob Thornton and Dr. Patricia Kelly to assist in building community togetherness when a new Augustinian community is formed or a community experiences major changes. They also have graciously given permission for the inclusion of this work. The *Foundational Experience* was designed as a Province-sponsored support to local communities. While it is possible that this experience can be led by a member of a community as a facilitator-participant, it is highly recommended that the community invite a facilitator with Augustinian experience to guide them through the exercises so that each member of the community can fully participate in the experience.

The Province's *Thagaste Experience* was a cross community province-wide program.

Celebration of Renewal PRAYING WITH THE RULE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE⁶⁰

This exercise suggests several possible ways of deepening our grasp of the Rule and of using it in prayer. It can be used, in whole or in part, on a single day (Morning Prayer, Eucharist, and Evening Prayer) or on several occasions.

I. Morning Prayer

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.

All: O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory to the Father...

Opening Reading:

Before all else, dear brothers. love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us. The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe

Persevere faithfully in prayers at the appointed hours and times. In the oratory no one should do anything that conflicts with the purpose of the building, which is implied by its name, so that if those who happen to be free wish to pray there outside the fixed hours they would not be hindered by anyone who might think of doing something else there.

When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, meditate in the heart on what is expressed with the voice. And sing only what is set down for you to sing. What is not written to be sung is not to be sung.

Chapter 1: Purpose and Basis of Common Life (prayed in two choirs)

Antiphon: All the believers lived united and shared all they had In the first place

- and this is the very reason for your being gathered together in one -
you should live in the house in unity of spirit
and you should have one soul and one heart
entirely centered upon God.

And, then, you should not call anything your own,
but rather you should have everything in common.
Food and clothing should be allotted to each of you by your prior,
not equally to all because you are not all equally strong,
but to each one according to his need.

For thus you read in the Acts of the Apostles:
*They had everything in common
and distribution was made to each as any had need.*

At the moment of entering the monastery
those who had any property in the world

⁶⁰ Arthur P. Purcaro, O.S.A., Exercise 6,5: Praying with the Rule of St. Augustine. In Arthur P. Purcaro, O.S.A., *Growing in Communion: Materials to Promote Growth in Communal Holiness*, Privately Printed, 2011.

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should hand it over willingly so that it becomes common property.

As regards those who had no possessions,
they should not seek to have in the monastery
things which they could not have had outside.

All the same if, because of illness,
they are in need they should be given whatever is necessary,
even though their poverty before entering was such
that they could not even obtain necessities.

Only they should not congratulate themselves on their good luck
in finding food and clothing of a sort
that they could not have found outside.

Nor should they give themselves airs
because they find themselves in the company of people
whom outside they would not have ventured to approach;
but they should lift up their heart on high
and not be seeking vain earthly things.

Otherwise, monasteries will become profitable
to the rich and not to the poor,
if the rich become humble there
and the poor become puffed up.

On the other hand,
those who were regarded in the world
as persons of consequence should
not look down on their brothers who have entered
the religious community from humble circumstances.

They should try to glory in the companionship
of their less privileged brothers
rather than in the rank of their wealthy parents.

They should not be conceited if they have contributed anything
to the common life from their private means;
nor should they take more pride in their riches
because they are sharing them in the monastery
than they would if they were enjoying them in the world.

For every other vice prompts people to do evil deeds;
but pride lies in ambush even for good deeds,
to destroy them.

What advantage is it to scatter abroad
and become poor oneself,
if the mind in its misery becomes prouder in despising riches
than it was in possessing them?

Therefore all should live united in mind and heart and should in one
another honor God whose temples you have become.

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Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Antiphon: All the believers lived united and shared whatever they had.

Psalm 133 with Chapter 4 on Fraternal Correction

Antiphon: It is an honor for me, not a motive for sorrow, that I deserved to be
admonished [Letter 151.1](#)

All: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

Reader: If you should notice in anyone of you such indiscreet looks as I am
speaking of, you should warn him at once so that what has begun may go
no further and may be immediately corrected.

All: It is like the precious oil on the head, running down into the beard.

Reader: However, if after this warning you should see him do the same thing again,
then or on another day, he who has noticed it should report him as one
who is hurt and in need of healing.

All: Into the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

Reader: First, however, it should be pointed out to a second or a third person, so
that he can be proved wrong by the mouth of two or three witnesses and
can be restrained with whatever firmness seems suitable.

All: It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

Reader: Do not think that you are being a mischief-maker when you draw
attention to this. On the contrary, you would be no more innocent
yourselves if by silence you let your brothers be lost, when by reporting
the matter you could have corrected them.

All: For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Reader: If your brother had a wound in his body which he wished to keep secret
for fear of medical treatment, would it not be cruel to keep silent and
compassionate to make it known? How much more, then, ought you to
report him so that he shall not suffer from a more terrible festering, that
of the heart.

All: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

Reader: And what I have said about not staring unbecomingly should be applied
carefully and faithfully to the discovery, warning, reporting, proving and

Praying with the Rule of Saint Augustine

punishing in the field of other sins too, and that with love of the persons and hatred of the offenses.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Antiphon: It is an honor for me, not a motive for sorrow, that I deserved to be admonished [Letter 151.1](#)

Scripture Reading: [Acts 4:31-35](#)

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Reflection

Canticle of Zechariah

Antiphon: As God he is our creator, he became man to recreate us. He is God to make us, but man to make us anew. [Expositions of the Psalms 90, 2, 1](#)

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
Born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old
That he would save us from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holiness and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

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In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us;
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Antiphon: As God he is our creator, he became man to recreate us. He is God to make us, but man to make us anew. *Expositions of the Psalms 90, 2, 1*

Petitions:

Leader: God calls us to live together in unity and in this way to show the world the authentic love of the gospel. To him we offer our petitions:

R: All: Lord, hear us and make us faithful to your word.

Our Father...

Final Prayer *(all together)*

Late have I loved you,
Beauty so ancient and so new,
late have I loved you!
Lo, you were within,
but I outside, seeking there for you,
and upon the shapely things you have made
I rushed headlong,
I, misshapened.
You were with me, but I was not with you.
They held me back far from you,
these things which would have no being were they not in you.
You called, shouted, broke through my deafness;
you flared, blazed, banished my blindness;
you lavished your fragrance, I gasped,
and now I pant for you;
I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst;
you touched me, and I burn for your peace. Amen. *Confessions X, 27, 38*

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II. Evening Prayer

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.

All: O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory to the Father...

First part:

The participants divide into groups, with each group being assigned a different chapter of the Rule. The appointed chapter is read in the group. Then there is a short conversation in which each member gives his opinion on which of the teachings in the Chapter under consideration is most important for the community. The members of the group develop a petition based on the dialogue they have just held; this prayer will become part of evening prayer.

Second part:

Chapter 4: Safeguarding Chastity (prayed in two choirs)

Antiphon: Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love. Eph 5:1

You should not try to please by your clothes
but by your behavior.

When you go out, walk together,
and when you come to your destination,
stay together.

In walking, in standing
and in all your movements
nothing should be done that might give offense
to anyone who sees you;
everything should be in keeping with your holy state.

Even if your gaze chances to fall on a woman
you should not stare at her.
There is no rule forbidding you to see women
when you go out,
but to attract or encourage their attention is blameworthy.
It is not only touch and the heart's movement
but also glances that excite and express desire for women.

You cannot claim to have pure minds
if you have impure eyes,
for an impure eye
is the messenger of an impure heart.

When impure hearts exchange messages by their glances,
even though the tongue remains silent,
and when through wrong desire
they take pleasure in each other's ardor,
then chastity takes flight from their behavior
even though there has been no despoiling of the body.

Whoever lets his eye rest on a woman
and takes pleasure in having hers rest on him
should not imagine that he is not seen

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by others when he does so.
He is bound to be noticed,
and that by those he does not think have seen him.
But even supposing that he does conceal it
and is seen by no human eye,
what will he do about him who looks down from heaven
and from whom nothing can be concealed?

Or are we to think that he does not see,
because his patience is as great as his wisdom?
A man consecrated to holiness, then,
should fear to displease him;
and then he will not want to please a woman in a wrong way.
He should ponder the fact that God sees all things,
and then he will not want to look at a woman in a wrong way.
For it is fear of God that is commended to us
in this connection when it is written:
He who stares fixedly is an abomination to the Lord.

Therefore when you are in company together
in church or elsewhere where women are also present,
you should protect one another's modesty,
for in this way God who dwells within you
will protect you from within yourself.

Antiphon: Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love. [Eph 5:1](#)

Reading: Chapter 7. Governance and Obedience

You should obey your prior as you would a father, with respect for his office, lest you offend God who is in him. This applies still more to the priest who has responsibility for you all.

It is chiefly the responsibility of the prior to see that all these instructions are complied with. If anything is not complied with he should not let it lapse through negligence but should take care that the matter is corrected and put right. It is taken for granted that he will refer to the priest who has the greater authority among you anything that exceeds his own province or powers.

All the same, he should consider himself lucky not in having power over you but in being able to care for you with love. Before you, he has to be at the head in honor; before God, he should be prostrate at your feet in fear: He should restrain the restless, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward all. He himself should keep these instructions gladly and so give them their due weight. And, although both are necessary, he should seek rather your love than your fear, always having in mind the account that he will have to render to God for you.

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This is why by being the more obedient you show compassion not only to yourselves but also to him, for the higher the position held among you the greater is the peril of him who holds it.

Reflection

The presider asks each group to read aloud the prayer developed on the basis of the chapter of the Rule on which it had meditated.

Canticle of Mary

Antiphon: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim [his] mighty acts. [1 Pet 2:9](#)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Antiphon: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim [his] mighty acts. [1 Pet 2:9](#)

Our Father...

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Final Blessing: Chapter 8: Observance of the Rule

Leader: May the Lord grant that you may observe all these things with love, as lovers of spiritual beauty, radiating by your good life the sweet odor of Christ, not like slaves under the law but as free persons established in grace.

All: Amen.

Leader: And so that you may be able to look at yourselves in this little book as in a mirror, it should be read to you once a week lest you neglect anything through forgetfulness.

All: Amen.

Leader: When you find that you are doing the things that are written, give thanks to the Lord, the giver of all good things. But when anyone of you sees that he has failed in some way, he should be sorry for the past and be on his guard for the future, praying that his sin may be forgiven and that he may not be led into temptation.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit come down upon you and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Praying with the Rule of Saint Augustine

III. The Eucharist

Penitential Rite (based on Chapter 6: Asking Pardon and Forgiving Offenses)

Presider: Do not have quarrels, or at least bring them to an end as quickly as possible, lest anger should grow into hatred, straw into a plank – and produce a murderous heart. You have read the words: *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.*

All: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

Presider: If anyone hurts another by abuse or foul-speaking or by serious accusations, he should be careful to heal the wound he has made by apologizing as soon as possible; and the one who was hurt should himself forgive without further discussion. But if both have been hurtful they should forgive each other's offense, remembering the prayers which, because you repeat them so often, ought to be made with entire sincerity. Nevertheless, it is better to be one who is often tempted to give way to anger but is quick to ask forgiveness of the person he admits that he has injured, than to be one who is more slowly roused to anger but finds more difficulty in asking pardon. Anyone who is never willing to ask pardon, or who does not ask it from his heart, is in the monastery without good reason even if he is not expelled. You should take care, then, not to use harsh words; but if they should have escaped your mouth then do not be ashamed to let that mouth which caused the wound provide the cure.

All: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us

Presider: But if the necessity of good order compels you to speak forcibly in order to put in their place those who are younger than you are yourself, even if you yourself feel that you have gone too far it is not demanded of you that you should apologize to them. For it is their duty to defer to you; and your power to act should not be weakened by a display of excessive humility. All the same, you should ask pardon of the one who is Lord of all and who knows with what real concern even those whom you may have reproved with more than justice are loved by you. Moreover, even love among you must not be based on the standards of the world but on the standards of the Holy Spirit.

All: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us

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Responsorial Psalm Chapter 3: Frugality and Mortification

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

Discipline your flesh by fasting and abstinence from food as far as your health allows. When anyone is unable to remain fasting until the afternoon he should nevertheless not have any food until midday unless he is ill.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

When you are at table, and until you rise, you should listen without interruption or discussion to what is read according to your custom. Your throats alone should not receive food but ears, too, should hunger for the word of God.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

If special treatment in the way of diet is given to those who are not strong as a result of their former way of life, others who are stronger because they have had a different manner of life must not be aggrieved or think it unfair. Nor should they think the former luckier in getting something that they themselves do not get. Rather, they should be thankful that they are strong enough to do what others cannot.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

When those who have entered the monastery from a more luxurious way of life are given any food, clothing, bedding or covering that is not given to others who are stronger and so more fortunate, these last (to whom it is not given) should consider how far the former have come down from their previous way of life in the world even though they cannot reach the simplicity of living which is possible for those who are stronger in body.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

All should not desire to receive the extra things which they see are given to a few - such things are a concession not an honor. Otherwise a detestable disorder would arise in the monastery if the rich work are coming to as much hardship as they can while the poor who have greater strength become weakened.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

Praying with the Rule of Saint Augustine

As for the sick, they need to eat little so that they do not become worse. Thus after illness they must certainly be given special care to help them to get strong as soon as possible, even if they came from conditions of extreme poverty in the world. In fact, recent illness has made necessary for them what a former way of life has made necessary for the rich. But when they have recovered their strength they should resume their own more fortunate way of life, since the less God's servants need the more fitting it is.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

In other words, when they are stirring again they should not desire to linger in the state of luxury to which necessity has brought them when they were ill. They should esteem themselves the richer who are stronger in enduring privations. It is better to need less than to have more.

Response: No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, everything was held in common.

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Prayer of the Faithful (based on Chapter 5: The use of necessities and the care to be taken of them)

This prayer can be prayed between two brothers, one who presents the motive for petition, the other reads the response.

Brother 1: Our Father St. Augustine tells us:

You should keep your clothes in one place under the care of one or two persons, or as many are needed to keep them shaken out and free from moths. Just as you are fed from a single storeroom so you should be clothed from a single wardrobe. As far as possible, it should be a matter of indifference to you what is supplied for clothing according to the season - whether you receive what you left off or another garment which someone else has had before so long as no one is denied what he needs. But if quarrels and murmurings arise among you on this account, and someone complains that he has received something that is not as good as what he had before, and he considers that it is beneath his dignity to wear what another brother has worn, this shows how far you are lacking in holiness in the interior clothing of the heart since you dispute about the clothing of the body.

Brother 2: And so we pray: Lord, help us to clothe our hearts with love and respect for the dignity of each person. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer

Brother 1: Our Father St. Augustine tells us:

So, then, no one should work at anything for himself. All your work should be shared together, with greater care and more ready eagerness than if you were doing things for yourself alone. For when it is written of love that *it does not seek its own* it means that it puts the common good before its own and not personal advantage before the common good. Thus the more you are concerned about the common good rather than your own, the more progress you will know that you have made. And thus the love which abides for ever will reign in all matters of passing necessity.

Brother 2: And so we pray: Lord, help us to discover the value of dialogue in attaining unity of minds and heart, Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer

Brother 1: Our Father St. Augustine tells us:

It follows that should anyone bring anything to his sons who are in the monastery or to others there with whom he has a particular link, whatever the gift - be it clothing or any other article that is considered a necessity - it should not be received secretly but should be given to the prior for him to put into the common stock so as to give it to anyone who needs it.

Brother 2: And so we pray: Lord, help us to be consistent and open. Let us pray to the Lord.

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All: Lord hear our prayer

Brother 1: Our Father St. Augustine tells us:

The care of the sick - whether they are convalescent or suffering from any bodily weakness even if there is no fever - should be entrusted to a particular person so that he may obtain from the storeroom what he sees each one needs.

Brother 2: And so we pray: Lord, let us always be attentive to your presence in the sick. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer

Brother 1: Our Father St. Augustine tells us:

Those who have charge of the storeroom, or the clothes, or the library, should serve their brothers without murmuring. Books should be asked for at a definite time and anyone who asks for them outside the time should not be given them. However, those who have charge of clothes and shoes should give them without delay to those who have need of them.

Brother 2: And so we pray: Lord, help us to be conscious of the value of taking care of the common possessions and, above all else, of your temple which is our own body. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer

Celebration of Renewal: FOUNDATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Session I - Individual Reflection and Group Discussion

REFLECTION:

Throughout the ages wise men and women have reminded us that human experience is shaped and interpreted by desire. In other words, what we desire motivates our behavior and creates a frame or lens through which we interpret and value events. As professed religious our proclaimed desire is to search for God; as Augustinians we desire to search for God in and with our community.

Yet, we also live on more than one level. We live in public and the public witnesses our behavior and reveal a part of ourselves to the various public groups with whom we interact. We also live private lives and reveal another layer of ourselves to a select group of associates who may be close friends, community members, and family. Finally, we have a secret self as part of our lives (beliefs, attitudes, opinions, hopes and dreams) that is not openly spoken about but we reveal only to ourselves. It is easy to see that to a large degree the level of convergence among our public, private, and secret selves will impact our sense of well being. Even more importantly is the degree to which these three aspects of our experience reflect desire.

The environment that each of us creates – the social, emotional, spiritual, behavior field – impacts those with whom we live, pray, and work. Each of us creates an environment and each of us responds to the environments that others generate. Now, what kind of environment will be created if an individual is experiencing little, if any, congruence in his public, private and secret self? For example, the public self says, “Yes, I am an Augustinian. As an Augustinian I live in community. It is what we do and who we are.” At the same time, the private self is saying, “Community is important and I need a community.” And the secret self is saying, “I don’t want to invest the energy, the time, or the emotional risk that community requires. I want to be with Augustinians because that is what I am and I wish no one any harm but I need to keep the walls up right now.”

Whenever there is a lack of convergence, the level with the greatest potential impact will be the secret self. Despite what is said in public or private, the secret self has the most power because it is reserved in a “risk free zone” and not brought to the light. It is not presented in a forum that allows feedback, challenge or even compassion. In the example provided, there certainly may be a desire to seek God but the desire is not to seek God through community. It is quite possible, that a discussion with this person on what he wants from community may yield responses that will not be matched with behavior as the days ensue. The environment that this person generates will be confusing at best and at worst disabling and disheartening.

In your private reflections and in your dialogue as a group, try to be aware of the consistencies and inconsistencies among your public, private and secret selves. Ask yourself, “What is my heart’s deepest desire?” “How willing am I to allow others access to this very personal part of who I am?”

DISCUSSION:

Each person is asked to respond to these sentence stems privately before the larger group meets for dialogue. At least 15 minutes are suggested for private time.

My hopes for this experience are...

My fears for this experience are...

Foundational Experience

Session II - Individual Reflection and Group Discussion

REFLECTION:

The comfort I found in other friends, the pleasure I had with them in things of the earth did much to repair and remake me.

All kinds of things rejoiced my soul in their company; To talk, and laugh, and do each other kindnesses; To read pleasant books together; To pass from lightest jesting to talk of deepest things and back again; To differ as one might differ with one's self and when, most rarely, dissention arose, find our normal agreement all the sweeter for it; teach each other to learn from each other; be impatient for the return of the absent, and welcome them with joy on their homecoming. These and such things, proceeding from our hearts as we gave love and received it back, and shown by face, by voice, by the eyes, and a thousand other pleasing ways, kindled a flame which fused our souls and, of many, made us one.

This is what we value in our friends, and so highly do we value it that our conscience feels guilt if we fail to love someone who responds to us with love, or do not return the love of one who offers love to us, and this without seeking any bodily gratification from the other save signs of his goodwill.

Confessions, IV, 8

DISCUSSION:

Each person is asked to respond to these sentence stems privately before the larger group meets for dialogue. At least one half hour is suggested for private time.

My greatest desire is ...

The role community plays in moving toward this desire is ...

I need from you my brothers ...

Foundational Experience

Foundational Experience

Session III - Mapping Your Apostolic/Professional Future⁶¹

DIRECTIONS:

Take a big sheet of paper (the back of a roll of wrapping paper or butcher's paper can work well.) Starting at the present, draw a "road map" of your preferred apostolic, ministerial, professional future? What would you like for yourself in terms of future ministries or apostolic endeavor? What might you need to do to achieve these dreams? (education, training etc.) Where and who would you like to be as far into the future as you can imagine? Allow yourself to have all kinds of dreams and fantasies without negatively critical judgments or editing. In other words, try to avoid "yes, but..." thinking.

Be as non-verbally creative as possible: use crayons, paints, pencils, stickers, colors, anything at all that would be representational or even abstract, rather than putting down too many words. Try to tap into your non-verbal creativity. The task is to draw your apostolic future on a road map, rather than write your future. Have fun!

Allow about 45 minutes for individual work on this task. Then tape the road maps up on the walls around you. Each individual may then present his map to the group, "walking" the group through his apostolic road map. Leave the maps in place during the remainder of the time together.

⁶¹ Adapted from Road Maps: Past to Present, Ann Webster, Ph.D. [Mind Body Institute, Harvard Medical School]

Foundational Experience

Foundational Experience

Session IV - Individual Reflection and Group Discussion

REFLECTION:

Each person is asked to respond to the following items privately before the larger group meets for dialogue. Allow sufficient time e.g., one hour or more, for private time.

1. I think I help to create community in the following ways ...
2. The limitations I bring to community are ...
3. My fear or reservations in coming to this community are ...
4. For me to find God and to grow as a person in community, I need (please describe your needs in the following areas and add as many as you wish)
 - a. common prayer
 - b. order and cleanliness
 - c. access to resources
 - d. privacy
 - e. companionship
 - f. quiet
 - g. society (going out to dinner, movies, company in the house, etc.)
 - h. intellectual stimulation
 - i. private prayer
 - j. opportunities to share our spiritual journey
 - k. emotional safety
 - l. accountability and open dialogue
 - m. interest and support of my fellow Augustinians
 - n. adherence to an Augustinian way of life as
 - o. professional development
 - p. advanced studies
 - q. ministry satisfaction
 - r. Please list any additional needs you may have ...
5. I am willing to _____ to help create community.
6. I need from you my brothers ...

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Participants share their responses to the reflection items.

Foundational Experience

Foundational Experience

Session V - Individual Reflection and Group Discussion

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Based on what we have revealed to ourselves and what we have shared with each other, what do we need to do to continue developing as a community? What do we need from each other to continue to develop community?

THAGASTE EXPERIENCE

My soul found all manner of joy when I was in their company — to talk and to laugh and to be kind to each other — to read engaging books together, to go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again — to differ without discord, as I might differ with myself, and when on the rarest occasion disagreement arose, to find it highlights the sweetness of our normal agreement — to teach or to learn from each other — to be impatient for those absent and welcome them with joy when they return — these and similar things, emanating from our hearts as we gave and received affection, shown in our faces, our voices, our eyes, and a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused our very souls together and made the many of us one. (Confessions, IV, 8, 13)

Day 1: Evening

Each of the *Thagaste Experiences* began with Dinner emphasizing the fraternal nature of the renewal process.

Following dinner the participants gathered as a Large Group. After introductions and review of the schedule for meals and prayer, an overview of the *Thagaste Experience* was presented based on the friendship theme from Augustine as found in Confessions, IV, 8, 13 including the inherent tensions in Augustine's friendship experience.

Following the presentation and clarifying questions the group was given time for Individual Reflection. To assist in the reflection each individual was asked to ponder on 2 things:

- 1) What energizes ME about the Gospel?
- 2) I NEED from my brothers _____

The evening ended with Night Prayer

Day 2 began with Morning Prayer.

Following Morning Prayer the participants gathered in Large Group to share observations about the previous night's presentation about tensions in Augustinian living and ministry. Participants were also free in the discussions to share reflections on the 2 individual reflections items of the previous night.

Following the Large Group discussion there was time for a break.

When the gathering resumed the participants gathered in for Small Group discussion in groups that were randomly assigned. The Small Groups were asked to discuss:

Thagaste Experience

What do WE (this small group gathered for this experience) NEED to be a community? What do we NEED to repair ourselves "in the company of others, to talk and laugh and be kind to each other ..."?

Each individual was also asked to ponder and to share if he felt he wished to the prompt:

I NEED from my BROTHERS _____

Following the Small Group discussion the participants gathered as a Large Group for reporting and discussion of what was discussed in the small groups.

After Lunch the participants gathered in a Consultative Session where leaders of the Province and the *Thagaste Experience* shared with participants the tensions that they had heard friars say they experienced in "Attempting to live a CONSISTENT ETHIC IN OUR WAY OF LIFE." They invited the participants to join in a dialogue on those tensions and others that the participants named.

This Session involved 2 parts of 45 minutes each with a break in between them.

I. Knowing, naming and focusing on the goal ...

WHAT AM I DOING AND WHO AM I DOING IT FOR?

- Why am I a religious?
- What keeps ME at the door at times rather than entering fully into Augustinian life?

II. Threats to remaining focused on the goal ...

- Becoming a bystander
- Opting for CONTRACTS OF COMPROMISE
- Substituting Work for prayer
- Buying into the HOTEL CULTURE
- Hoarding energy and other resources
- Using smoke-screens and mirrors
- Maintaining a ROTTEN ROOM

The remainder of the afternoon included Quiet Time, Eucharist and Evening Prayer.

During the evening of Day 2 the participants gathered in the Small Groups they were a part of to discuss the question:

What ANIMATES me TO CONTINUE TO BE an Augustinian?

As well as to complete the prompt:

I NEED from you my BROTHERS _____

Thagaste Experience

Following the Small Group meetings the participants gathered as a Large Group for reporting and discussion of the small group conversations.

The evening ended with Night Prayer.

The morning of Day 3 began with Eucharist

After Eucharist, the participants gathered in the Small Groups they were a part of to discuss the question:

Where are we now as a group (this small group gathered for this experience)? What do we NEED to "go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again?"

As well as to complete the prompt:

I NEED from YOU my brothers _____

After the small group discussions and a break, the participants gathered as a Large Group for reporting and discussion of the small group conversations.

After Lunch the participants gathered in a Consultative Session where leaders of the Province and the *Thagaste Experience* discussed with participants the tensions of venturing forth and creating community. Participants were invited to discuss their own ideas about these tensions they would encounter after the completion of the *Thagaste Experience*.

This Session involved 2 parts of 45 minutes each with a break in between them.

The tensions of venturing forth and creating community that were discussed included:

1. Biology vs. a commitment to community
 - Implication: living in the tension of contradiction
2. Attempting to respond to the needs of the People of God
 - Implication: living the tension of witness
3. Attempting to live a consistent ethic of life.
 - Implication: living the tension of every day
4. Accepting a cosmic view of time.
 - Implication: living the tension of ambiguity
5. Living with limitation
 - Implication: living a reconciliative way of life
6. Seeking stability in the midst of change
 - Implication: focusing on the essence of Augustinian life

The Tensions identified by participants at the time included:

- Celibacy vs. living in an exclusive relationship (also a point of poverty)

Thagaste Experience

- Staying with the long view (the Kingdom) vs. a culture of immediate gratification
- Generativity in remote biological ways
- Loving simply vs. a culture of acquisition
- The responsibility of adult development in the absence of obvious family milestones
- Personal stewardship vs. a desire to meet the needs of others
- Self-care vs. self-doubt
- Maintaining the rules of religious life in the midst of an intergenerational community
- Pre-Vatican II vs. Vatican II approaches
- Creating a balance between religious life -- work vs. interiority/prayer
- Determining value from work vs. value from who I am/what I am
- Sponsorship (source of value/intentionality) re: work
- Personal authority vs. legitimate authority
- One choice vs. lifetime of choices
- Living truth vs. living in a truth challenged culture
- Living commitment vs. Living in a commitment challenged culture
- Living in an incarnational and mystical reality in the context of chastity

The remainder of the afternoon was Quiet Time followed by Evening Prayer

During the evening the participants gathered in the Small Groups they were a part of to discuss the question:

What EVOKES a COMMITMENT TO APOSTLESHIP for ME?

As well as to complete the prompt:

I NEED FROM YOU my BROTHERS _____

Following the Small Group meetings the participants gathered as a Large Group for reporting and discussion of the small group conversations.

The evening ended with Night Prayer.

Day 4 began with Morning Prayer

After Morning Prayer, the participants gathered in the Small Groups they continued to be a part of to discuss the question:

Where are we now (this small group gathered for this experience) NEED to be a community? What do we NEED to "to teach or learn from each other?"

Thagaste Experience

As well as to complete the prompt:

I NEED FROM YOU my BROTHERS _____

After the small group discussions and a break, the participants gathered as a Large Group for reporting and discussion of the small group conversations.

In the Large Group each participant was encouraged to request a specific other participant to call him to accountability in living with a personal tension identified during the *Thagaste Experience*.

The *Thagaste Experience* closed with a Eucharist celebrating the time together and praying for each participant as he returned to his community and ministry.