

## SPIRITUALITY OF THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER

(taken from website of the Order of St. Augustine <https://augustinians.net/index.php?page=our-spirituality>)

### SPIRITUALITY

The spirituality of the Order, whose principal features are presented here, proceeds from the following of Christ according to the teachings of the Gospel and the action of the Holy Spirit. Its principal point of reference is the teaching and example of Saint Augustine, complemented by the tradition of the Order. The principal document of our spirituality is the *Rule*, which must direct our lives and action. Augustinian spirituality, developed over time, and enriched by the example and teachings of our forebears, ought to be lived according to the circumstances of time, place, and culture and in harmony with our charism.

### EVANGELICAL AND ECCLESIAL ASPECTS

The fundamental norm of religious life is the following of Christ, set out in the Gospel that motivates us to live in love according to our particular consecration. So above all, we must have love for God and for our neighbor (Mt 22, 40), as the supreme norm of the Gospel and the mandate of Jesus to his disciples, after the model of the early community of the Church in Jerusalem, established under the holy apostles (see Acts 2:42-47).

To love Christ means to love the Church which is his Body, mother of Christians and depository of the revealed truth. In the Church, "we have been made into Christ. If he is the Head, we are his members," for "the whole Christ is the Head and the Body." Let us be, therefore, witnesses of intimate union with God and a leaven of unity for the whole human race.

The Christian life will be renewed daily in us and will flourish in the Order if each of us will "assiduously read, devoutly listen to, and earnestly learn" the Sacred Scriptures, especially the New Testament, because "almost every page resounds of nothing but Christ and the Church." Moreover, the friars should remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Scripture so that there may be a dialogue between God and man.

The Eucharist is the daily sacrifice of the Church, the Body of Christ, which offers itself to God in him. Therefore, all of us who have consecrated ourselves to Christ, who is loved above all things, should experience the same love for that great mystery that set the heart of Saint Augustine on fire. For the Eucharist is the sign and cause of the Church's unity in the bond of love, and inspires apostolic activity and involvement in the world and in history.

We are all members of the Whole Christ together with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is the sign of the Church: "she gave corporal birth to the Head of this Body. The Church gave spiritual birth to the members of this Head. Because of her authentic faith, firm hope and sincere love Mary accompanies us while we journey in this life and sustains our apostolic activity.

### THE SEARCH FOR GOD AND INTERIORITY

We tend towards God continually and insatiably, consciously and unconsciously, in order to enjoy the infinite good that fulfils our desire for happiness, because God has made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in him." For that reason, our common dedication is to seek without limits Him who should be loved without limits. But we cannot seek God together, except in Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh for us. He is for us the way, the truth and the life, such that starting from the visible flesh we arrive at the invisible God. For this reason, personal and community prayer, study and the cultivation of knowledge, reflection on the realities of our time and apostolic activity, are indispensable factors in our search, which lead us to the things which are the concerns of society. For nothing human is foreign to us, but rather involves us more in the world, the ambit of God's love (see Jn 3:16) and of encounter with him.

### COMMUNION OF LIFE

Love comes from God and unites us with God, and through this unifying process it transforms us, so that overcoming

all divisions, we are made one, until finally God is all in all (see 1Cor 15,28). This communion of life which Augustine proposes to us in imitation of the primitive apostolic community (see Acts 2:42-47), is an anticipation of complete and definitive union in God and the way to achieve it. While it is true that this "holy sharing of life" among the brothers is a gift of God, still each one of us must make an intense effort at perfecting it until unity in love is achieved. This unity in love, composed of many souls, will continue to exist in the heavenly city, which "will be the perfection of our unity after life's pilgrimage." Our communities ought to strive on earth to be signs of this unity, keeping the example of the perfect community of the undivided Trinity before our eyes.

#### SERVICE TO THE CHURCH AND EVANGELIZATION

Following the example of Saint Augustine, love for the Church brings us to a total availability for its needs, by accepting the tasks which the Church asks of us, according to the charism of the Order. Friars should remember that this availability for service to the Church constitutes one of the essential characteristics of Augustinian spirituality. In addition, when we are open to the world we feel ourselves in solidarity with the human family and involved in its concerns, especially through an openness to the needs of the poor and the suffering, in the knowledge that the more we are united to Christ the more fruitful will our apostolate be.

Finally, in order that our Order may always go forward in keeping with its true spirituality, the friars should strive to offer "free service to God," not forced by necessity, but moved by love. Without seeking their own righteousness (see Rom 3:10-20; Gal 2:16) let them do all things for the glory of God, who works all things in all (see 1 Cor 12,6). Let them live in the assurance that: "It is a grace of God that the brothers live in community; it is not the result of their own doing or their own merits; rather it is his gift." This is to fulfill the saying of the Rule that we should observe all our obligations in a spirit of charity" as lovers of spiritual beauty ... not as slaves living under the law but as men living in freedom under grace." We who have been freely created and redeemed, freely called and justified, should render thanks to God and carry out our mission in peace and humility, rejoicing in hope and in the expectation of the crown of life (Rev 2:10), by which God, in rewarding our good deeds, will in fact be doing nothing more than crowning his own gifts.