THE HEART
of the MATTER
MISSION AND MINISTRY AT VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

Building the Earthly City
The social well-being of humankind in the light of Christian faith
As both Catholic and Augustinian, the university pursues academic excellence, promotes a vision of the common good, and celebrates the sacramental character of all creation with respect and reverence. We search for truth with openness to ultimate meaning and value through the lens of Christian faith and engagement with all disciplines in the liberal arts tradition. Through innovative academic course work and pastoral ministry, we express a “special concern for the poor, compassion for the suffering, regard for the value of life, and dedication to social justice and human rights” (Augustinian Ministry of Higher Education, 1996).

*Heart of the Matter* is a new annual publication by the Office for Mission and Ministry at Villanova University. Its purpose is to demonstrate that our distinctively Augustinian commitment to higher education is central to every facet of university life. Through the stories told here, we hope to show that the integration of the Catholic intellectual tradition, faith, learning, service and the legacy of St. Augustine is not only fundamental to who we are, but essential for truly living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are especially indebted to The Rev. Joseph Farrell, OSA; Dr. Beth Hassel, PBVM; Dr. Christopher Janosik; The Rev. Joseph, Mostardi, OSA; Greg Soltis, Dr. Suzanne Toton and Dr. Jonathan Yates who contributed content for this issue. My hope is that their efforts and this magazine will provide insight into the heart of Villanova University, encourage reflection on the University’s mission and inspire not only personal growth but participation in and fulfillment of our Augustinian mission.

Barbara Wall, PhD

Vice President for Mission and Ministry

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Augustinian and lay faculty at Villanova College, 1912. (Photograph signed by The Reverend Edward G. Dohan, OSA, LL.D, who was President from 1910 to 1917.)
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Since 1842, Villanova University’s Augustinian Catholic intellectual tradition has been the cornerstone of an academic community in which students learn to think critically, act compassionately and succeed while serving others. As students grow intellectually, Villanova prepares them to become ethical leaders who create positive change everywhere life takes them.
Building the Earthly City

The concern for the social well-being of humanity is not new to the Church. Various responses of the faithful to the condition of man and his social order in the light of Christian faith first found formal expressions in the social teachings of the Popes, beginning with the social encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum (1891).

Throughout the years, the social order to which the Church’s social teaching refers and the teaching itself has evolved, addressing the misery of workers during the industrial revolution and the emergence of Marxism (Leo XIII), the economic crisis of 1929 (Pius XI), decolonization and appearance of “third worldism” (John XXIII, Paul VI), the fall of the Berlin Wall and political changes in Eastern Europe (John Paul II) and later globalization, under-development, financial, economic, ecological, moral and the anthropological crisis.¹

More recently, Pope Benedict XVI has suggested that a true understanding of Church and its ministry starts with the faith experience of the ecclesial community. Responding to God’s revelation of His love and truth in Jesus, people are transformed by the power of God’s word and resocialized by His love in the Holy Spirit. This new social reality, the ecclesial community, proclaims the love and truth of the Trinitarian life which surrounds it.²

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¹ Cfr. Caritas in veritate, § 75.
² Caritas in veritate, § 54. In the light of the revealed mystery of the Trinity, we understand that true openness does not mean loss of individual identity but profound interpenetration.
Globalization reduces distance and brings us into closer proximity, but it does not change us into brothers and sisters.

In order to confront the problems of our world we must first study them, see them clearly and recognize what constitutes injustice. “Seeing” demands more than a glance based on presumptions of ideology or prejudice, or even political affiliation. Besides rigorous empirical analysis, we make use of biblical insight, the tradition of our Church’s social teachings and theological reflection to “judge” the situation. Out of this effort emerges a way of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. Globalization reduces distance and brings us into closer proximity, but it does not change us into brothers and sisters. True fraternity only originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is."

Those who promote peaceful transformation of the world in a convincing way have usually worked to transform oppressive and violent tendencies within themselves, and thus become credible advocates for those who are suffering the violent consequences of unjust structures.

Third, with confidence rather than resignation, let us take up the new responsibilities which go with a new vocation and mission.

The industrial and scientific revolution irreversibly changed western humanity’s picture of the world and man’s place in it. The earth was reduced to a collection of material objects, structured like a machine and treated as such, rather than recognizing the intrinsic worth of every human creature and the sense of common good. But "the more we strive to secure a common good, corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields 'in society.'"

“The first step is to face the difficulties of the present time, not with ready-made answers or simplistic, oversimplifying ideologies, but with a realistic attitude and with discernment.

The Church and its people have a duty to scrutinize the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel.

forward and proposals of what to do and how to “act.”

A second step is to ground the work in fundamental values, a new vision for the future, which can only begin with oneself, rightly called conversion, metanoia. This attitude must be accompanied by a willingness to change, to work on oneself.

“Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and...
Fourth, the Holy Father would have us be open to profound cultural renewal and show confidence and hope. Resignation to fatalism can have drastic consequences for our wellbeing and that of others. On the contrary, economic resources do exist that could help wipe the tears from the eyes of those who suffer injustice, who lack the basics of a dignified life, and who are in danger from any deterioration in climate. And the poor do benefit from champions in solidarity who believe that injustice can be reduced, that harmonious relationships can be fostered, that planetary ecology can be made sustainable, that a world of greater communion is possible.

Finally, gathering the wisdom of the previous four steps, Pope Benedict would have us commit to new rules, new forms of engagement, with coherence and consistency. Appreciating God’s plan and our place in it, “is what gives rise to the duty of believers to unite their efforts with those of all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers, so that this world may effectively correspond to the divine plan: living as a family under the Creator’s watchful eye.”

This fifth competence for building a society of greater peace and justice, therefore, is cooperation, collaboration, networking and solidarity. Groups, organizations, institutions and movements of different persuasions—whether Catholic, Christian, interreligious or nonconfessional—need to respect one another’s identities and differences, and not see one another as threatening or competing with one another.

We must cooperate, coordinate and make our efforts converge toward the very same goals: greater justice, greater security, greater transparency and greater peace.

The Church is an expert in humanity, it often has been affirmed, and the Church’s expertise is rooted in its active engagement in human affairs, ceaselessly looking toward the “new heavens” and “new earth” (2 Peter 3:13), which she points out in order to help people live their lives in the dimension of authentic meaning. Gloria Dei vivens homo: The glory of God is man and woman alive! This conviction, first expressed by St. Irenaeus of Lyons in 185 AD, is the reason why the Church teaches not only Catholics but everyone of good will about the things that truly matter in life. “Testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person. In the context of faith, the social doctrine of the Church is “an instrument of evangelization—of ministry—because it places the human person and society in relationship with the light of the Gospel.”

Conclusion
In his 2011 Message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI said that “in an increasingly globalized world, Christians are called, not only through their responsible involvement in civic, economic and political life but also through the witness of their charity and faith, to offer a valuable contribution to the laborious and stimulating pursuit of justice, integral human development and the right ordering of human affairs.”

This baptismal experience of life of the ecclesial community does not close in on itself, but interacts at every level with the world. It is in living in Jesus, the Supreme Truth and Good, that the faithful discover anew an appropriate order of goods and an authentic scale of values to live by and witness, to minister and serve in. Let us pray that God, who has truly begun the ministry of human flourishing within and among us, may bring it to great fruitfulness.

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3. In Redemptoris Missio, Pope John Paul II speaks of the need to live the Beatitudes and to have the spirituality of missionaries in today’s world.
Who Are the Augustinians?
The answer to the question, “Who are the Augustinians?” is not a simple one to answer since we have been many things to and for the Church more than 750 years. To say that there was no evolutionary development within the Augustinians would be to deny our very history which dates back several hundred years to both 1244 and 1256. Both dates are significant for the unification of the various hermits’ communities that sprang up throughout Europe. Defining what an Augustinian was back in 1244 can only give us a hint to what we have become.

If there was a common thread that existed then and now it would be the basic principle of Augustine himself. He writes in his Rule—“The principal reason for your coming together is that you live in harmony in your house and have one mind and one heart on the way to God.” (Rule of Augustine, I)

Eight centuries passed between the death of Augustine and the unification of the various religious groups of men who claimed to be followers of Augustine. During that time, many disparate groups claiming to be either Augustinian or followers of Augustine emerged in various parts of Europe. In December of 1243 Pope Innocent IV promulgated the bull, Incumbit Nobis, in which he invited every hermit settlement to unite and establish a new religious order with the Rule and the monastic style of the life of St. Augustine. In March of the following year these hermits celebrated a founding chapter, and a new order. Thus, the Hermits of the Order of St. Augustine of Tuscany, was born.

The spirit of the new order was mostly contemplative, attempting to continue the hermit life style from which this new order was formed. This lifestyle was guided by prayer and penance with a new dimension using the Rule of Augustine, which added the qualities of common life and fraternal love.

St. Augustine, himself, was the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa in the fifth century. He was a prolific writer and Christian preacher who continues to be a voice of reason even in our own generation. Augustine’s theology and philosophy can be found in a variety of disciplines, such as psychology, political science, history, linguistics, modern philosophy and theology. His very human spirit of friendship and inquiry through respect for God’s creation. Augustinian spirituality keeps Jesus Christ as the focus of community life and ministry. Members strive to extend themselves by using their gifts and talents in service of the Church and the People of God. Through hospitality and ministry, Augustinians attempt to model their lives after that of Augustine in both a combination of prayer and action. But the charisms of seeking God together and through each other are open to many possibilities as evidenced in the past and are recognized in our present ministries.

For you I am a bishop, but with you I am a Christian.

St. Augustine, Sermon 340

In the final analysis, Augustinians are men and women intent upon serving God so that all might be in union with God through prayer and action as they live in community supporting one another, challenging one another, and praying for one another as they seek this spiritual unity. This has been reflected in our past and is an essential part of our present while remaining the vision upon which they build their future.
There’s a wonderful line in Mountains Beyond Mountains, where Paul Farmer, MD, co-founder of Partners in Health (PIH), turns to his biographer, Tracy Kidder and says, “Why would I be satisfied with curing one person when it’s possible to cure zillions!” Most people think of Paul Farmer as a great humanitarian, a Mother Teresa type with a stethoscope. While Farmer is certainly a humanitarian, he’s much more. As one of the world’s top Tuberculosis specialists and winner of the MacArthur Genius Award, Farmer is a savvy advocate for the poor who knows how to use his social capital, keen intellect, experience, professional relationships and prominence to affect systematic change. In short, Farmer and PIH do not stop at setting up clinics in some of the poorest countries of the world; they are out to prove that state-of-the-art health care can be delivered at a reasonable cost in these regions, that tuberculosis (TB) and especially multiresistant strains of TB can be cured, that the price of drugs can be driven down and made affordable, and that poor communities can become self-reliant and solve their own problems.

In his book, The Cruel Choice, development ethicist Denis Goulet wrote that all change is incremental. Incremental change, however, can be palliative or creative. The challenge is to take the good will and good works and turn them, as Paul Farmer and company do, into creative change: Placing the situation in context; seeing the bigger picture; refusing to accept established answers; coalition building; and smart, creative, skillful and persistent leveraging using all the social capital one can muster are key elements of creative change. Why be satisfied volunteering at a clinic, tutoring one or two children, building a few houses, feeding one person or hundreds, when we have the capacity to provide good health care, and end illiteracy, homelessness, hunger, and more in the 21st century? That’s exactly what our government committed itself to in 1996: To put an end to U.S. hunger and poverty.
Top: Ambassador Tony Hall speaks to the Villanova community during “Stand in Solidarity.”
Bottom: “Lost Boys of Sudan:” Malual DengDuot, (M.A. ’11) with Peter Ngor Chol and Garange Kawach tell of their experiences in Sudan at a gathering in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church.

At Villanova
In April, former congressman and Ambassador Tony Hall spoke at Villanova. Hall; David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; Jim Wallis, president and CEO of Sojourners; and Ritu Sharma, president of Women Thrive Worldwide, were on the 16th day of a water-only fast. Their purpose was to call the attention of the leaders of this nation and the public to the deep and disproportionate cuts Congress was making to our nation’s vital domestic and global anti-poverty programs, and the devastating impact those cuts would have on the lives of the vulnerable—all in the name of deficit reduction. While the poor did not cause the financial crisis, they were the ones now required to pay the highest price for it in terms of less food, fewer vaccinations, less AIDS medication, cuts to the Head Start program, less health care services from community health centers, and so on. Hall and those who joined in the fast mounted a massive organizing effort by churches, including the Catholic Church, mosques, synagogues, agencies and individuals who met with, phoned and emailed their legislators to tell them that their constituents knew exactly what was being pulled off, that they would not stand for balancing the budget on the backs of the poor. It was morally reprehensible.

“Why would I be satisfied with curing one person...
In December, St. Thomas of Villanova Church was packed for a Vigil for Peace in Sudan that included political advocacy. At the end of the speeches, prayer and candle-lighting, the assembled took out cellphones to leave messages on the White House comment line, asking President Obama to continue to use his influence, working with the international community, to press for peace in Sudan as the January 9 referendum approached. The Vigil came together not only because of the effort of the CRS Partnership, but because weeks before the Vigil, a powerful coalition of the CRS Ambassadors, the Villanova chapter of STAND, campus ministry graduate interns, academic classes and others were doing the hard work of raising consciousness, building momentum and ensuring turnout. The exceptional work of Villanova’s Office of Media Relations amplified their work using the power of the press. And the effect did not stay in the U.S. Digital photos and YouTube videos were sent to the CRS office in Sudan with a message of solidarity from the Villanova community. The impact was immediate and worldwide.

Advocacy, in short, is using one’s social capital to effect change—one’s citizenship, one’s purchasing power, one’s profession, ones investments and one’s life choices to effect systematic change. It requires skill and dedication: active engagement in an organization, education training, practice and persistence.

Today, most any organization or agency worth its salt is actively engaged in advocacy. They maintain excellent web sites with key background information to keep you up-to-date and recommend specific action to take. You have only to visit www.bread.org for hunger-related policy, www.amnestyusa.org for human rights, www.networklobby.org for domestic and global social justice policy issues before Congress, or visit www.crs.org and register to participate in the Catholics Confront Global Poverty campaign. Jump in; you will get an incredible education; find a voice and discover skills you never thought you had; keep good company; and best of all, have the opportunity to make a difference not in one life, but zillions! Don’t settle for anything less; It’s what Villanova is about—taking charity to the next level!

The goals of “Stand in Solidarity for Peace in Sudan” were to raise awareness, advocate for justice and pray for the victims of violence in the Sudan. A prayer vigil was held in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church.

when it’s possible to cure zillions!”

Paul Farmer, MD
As Catholic and Augustinian, Villanova University understands faith to be a significant component of its institutional identity and practice. Our commitment to the importance of faith and learning stems from an understanding of “vocation” in the broadest sense. “Vocation” from the Latin root, vocare, means “to call” in the Christian tradition, and can be thought of as the call to participate in the creative work of God through teaching, learning, research and service.

Likewise, faith and learning is rooted in our Judeo-Christian tradition, with particular emphasis on the charisms of St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Villanova: The rigorous search for truth and commitment to the common good in a dialogue with others. While Augustine does not provide us with a detailed methodology for teaching and learning (pedagogy), he does provide us with guidance, which informs the concept of faith and learning in the Augustinian tradition.¹

In Confessions, Augustine describes his experiences as transformational, often termed conversions (philosophical, intellectual, moral, religious conversions). As Augustine forms communities of like-minded friends throughout his life, he illustrates for us the notion that faith and learning require critical thinking, with others, to be able to embrace...
the restless journey to understand the truth.  

The integration of faith and learning challenges reality. It is not content with the WHAT of things; it wrestles with the WHY of things; not content with knowing HOW, it asks for WHAT purpose?

An active integration of faith and learning does much more than provide a solid grounding in truth, enabling one to resist the culture’s inevitable move toward extremes. While faith informs learning and provides the basis of truth by which all knowledge can be assessed, learning itself can contribute mightily to faith. One can strengthen their faith by strengthening their mind. Learning in the various disciplines allows one to elaborate and extend their faith by expanding their understandings of the world. Understanding of God and God’s world can be improved, clarified and enhanced by learning more about the world.”

The unity of knowledge, shaped by love, is foundational for scholarship, teaching and learning in the Augustinian tradition. Learning shaped and formed by faith results in living that is shaped and formed by faith. Moreover, the integration of faith and learning forms the foundation of Christian higher education and shapes its purpose and goals. Some argue that faith and learning are contradictions that cannot exist together. Others suggest that they are two separate spheres that do not connect. On the other hand, Villanova maintains that faith and learning MUST be held together.

Igniting the Heart. Inspiring the Mind. Illuminating the Spirit.

Villanova’s 2010 Strategic Plan firmly commits the University to values and structures that will foster our distinctive mission through the next decade. A primary “Strategic Imperative” of the plan requires Villanova to “ensure that our Catholic and Augustinian identity is maintained and strengthened and more effectively communicated. Evidence of this distinctive attribute will be demonstrated through the creation of...an Institute for Faith and Learning.”

Our newly established Center for Faith and Learning offers opportunities to cultivate reflection, scholarship and vital practices, which unite the life of the mind and the faith of scholars within the context of a circle of learners, in the tradition of Augustine. Faculty and students are encouraged to develop ways to connect faith to contemporary academic research. The Center provides opportunities for faculty and students to explore the vocation to which God has called them. It hopes to nurture servant leaders who integrate faith and learning, to promote agents of change in our world, who will empower others into “Igniting the Heart. Inspiring the Mind. Illuminating the Spirit.” For more information, visit our website at: www.villanova.edu/mission/faith_learning/
In collaboration with the Center for Peace and Justice Education and the Ethics Program, the Office for Mission and Ministry has designed a two-year, 12-part lecture series on the intersection of virtue and ethics dedicated to reflection on the many facets of the Catholic intellectual tradition and to stimulate discussion among students, faculty and staff on contemporary issues of the day. A variety of ethical philosophies and systems were highlighted by talented faculty from across the United States. Virtue Ethics is one such system summarized here.

Many ethical systems with which we are familiar are designed to help answer difficult questions. Some are “rule-based” and advocate adherence to a set of obligations and duties. “Do No Harm,” in medical ethics is an example of such a rule-based system. The Ten Commandments are another. Most rule based systems discourage subjective judgments and consequences of behavior are unimportant. These rule-based systems are commonly called deontological systems.

Other systems are framed by the consequences that result from behavior. In such a system, ethical behavior is determined by the anticipated outcome. The most ethical choice is most likely the one that creates the most good for the greatest number. Allowing torture to save the lives of many is justifiable behavior using consequentialist ethics or teleological systems.

Virtue ethics, advanced by James Keenan, SJ, among others, is not interested primarily in particular actions or consequences, but in the development of persons. This system is less interested in “What should I do?” but in “Who should I become?” Virtue ethics finds foundation in Thomas Aquinas who proposed that every moral question can be reduced to consideration of the cardinal virtues—prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude.\(^1\) It was Aquinas who argued that virtues perfect our individual dispositions. Justice perfects the will. Prudence perfects reasoning. Temperance and courage perfect emotions.\(^2\)

Advocates of virtue ethics suggest that honest self-appraisal is essential, that establishing a vision of the person one wants to become and striving to attain this
goal is the way to ethical behavior. The act of examining our lives, seeking ways to improve ourselves for our own benefit and other’s is doing virtue ethics. In this way, virtue ethics is a pro-active system, “which invites people to see themselves as they really are and to see who they can actually become.” It uses familiar language to empower people of all ages, deals with ordinary life, is more encompassing than rule-based systems, is learned through the use of heroic narratives and gospel parables and focuses on personal growth.

A variety of virtue ethicists have suggested that traditional cardinal virtues are necessary but insufficient to address the relational nature of persons, specifically the needs of friends, family and community. Keenan proposes that while justice requires that we treat all equally, with impartiality and universality, fidelity acknowledges partiality and particularity, and is the virtue that nurtures relationships between and among those closest to us. Others have argued that there is “a primary obligation to take care of ourselves—affectionately, mentally, physically and spiritually” for the common good of all. Keenan names this virtue self-care and suggests that prudence “determines what constitutes the just, faithful and self-caring way of life for each individual.”

Virtue ethics is “attractive because it enables conversation beyond the vocabulary of right and wrong. It sets the stage for discussion of what counts as just or unjust, loving or cruel, wise or foolish across cultures and communities. Virtue ethics acknowledges that life is complex and changeable over time. It rejects theory in favor of engagement with the present.”

1. Summa Theologica, Prologue, BL: Sicut igitur tota materia moralis ad considerationem virtutum reducata.
8. 350076/Virtue_Ethics_and_International_Relations.

In the depiction of the seven virtues—Prudence, Justice, Faith, Charity, Hope, Fortitude and Temperance—the female personifications appear seated in triumph like secular rulers, with their male exemplars below. Workshop of Francesco di Stefano Pesellino, circa 1460. Located in the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama, USA.
Augustine on Jesus the Jew

For more than 30 years, Professor Fredriksen, PhD, has published some of the English-speaking academy’s finest work on early Christians’—with special emphasis on Paul’s and Jesus’—relationship to Judaism, on Augustine, and most particularly, on Augustine’s reading and understanding of Paul.

As an organizing principle, Professor Fredriksen’s lecture drew some parallels between two very different discussions. On the one hand was the longrunning discussion among contemporary scholars of Biblical Studies, Theology and (Comparative) Religion known as the “Quest for the Historical Jesus.” On the other was the 1600-year-old corpus of Augustine and, more particularly, those works composed during the years he spent as a Christian bishop writing to and debating with the Manichaeans. Professor Fredriksen’s lecture demonstrated that “a common interpretive point of principle has emerged” that actually unites the conclusions of the Quest with the thoughts of Augustine, namely the point of principle that “Jesus was a Jew of his own time.”

While few would be surprised at hearing that the Quest assumed and applied such a sentiment, those unfamiliar with Augustine’s anti-Manichaean debates—and particularly his long work against Faustus the Manichaean—are very likely to have their curiosity piqued at precisely this point because it comes so close to revolutionizing how we moderns have been conditioned to think about premodern Christians’ anti-Semitism in general and Augustine’s anti-Semitism in particular.

As Professor Fredriksen progressed into a detailed explanation of several of the metaphysical and cosmological presuppositions that so clearly differentiated the world of Augustine from our own, she was equally at pains to highlight a fundamental difference between the use to which Augustine put this insight and the goals and interests of scholars of the modern Quest.

Beyond this, in a move that would equally surprise the modern intent on clearly delineating disciplines such as history from others such as theology, Professor Fredriksen then observed that Augustine willingly and consciously allowed his doctrinal conclusions to guide his historical thinking; that is, that Augustine often “did history” by thinking with the doctrines of his church while reading the Bible.
When seen in context, these ideas go a great distance to explain how Augustine—especially when compared to other prominent and influential Christians of his own era—was far from being an anti-Semitic tout court. In Fredriksen’s writings, she consistently warns against painting Augustine with broad anti-Semitic strokes. All readers and students of Augustine would benefit from always reading particular works of Augustine within the broader scope of the larger corpus.

Professor Fredriksen did offer the necessary caveats (a) that Augustine was no pluralist and (b) that Augustine’s employment of certain features of Late Antique rhetoric often were misconstrued by later readers. She also summarized her lecture by noting that “Augustine’s Jewish Jesus, a theological construct, reinforced how Augustine regarded and re-imagined the past as he saw it narrated in the texts of the gospels. [For him] theology effected history. [By contrast] modernity’s Jewish Jesus, an historical construct, is established through very different criteria. But perhaps, we may hope, in this instance, (doing) history will effect a new, non-anti-Judaic, theology” for all of us who want to believe that both Augustine and the scholars who continue to pursue the Quest have things to teach us.

Thanks to the sponsorship and coordination of the Augustinian Institute, the Saint Augustine Lecture offered the communities of Villanova University and wider Augustinian Scholarship an opportunity to discover, in a united journey of exploration, the thoughts of St. Augustine specifically as it related to Jesus as a Jew.
In his book The Catholic Imagination, Father Andrew Greeley popularized “imagination” as a distinctive dimension of the Catholic faith. Building on the work of theologian David Tracy, Fr. Greeley suggests that like no other religion, Catholicism accentuates “the nearness of God to His creation and the presence of God in the world.” It’s his contention that a Catholic Imagination emphasizes “the metaphorical nature of creation”—that for Catholics, “objects, events and persons of ordinary existence hint at the nature of God and indeed make God in some fashion present to us.”\(^1\) Likewise, historian Richard Janet notes that Catholic artists as diverse as Giovanni Bellini, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Gerard Manley Hopkins have been inspired by a distinctive Catholic sensibility—a particular “understanding of the human condition based in an awe-filled appreciation of the beauty, meaning and mystery of created things.”\(^2\)
But what of the present day? Can contemporary exemplars be found? Villanova’s Catholic Imagination in the Arts series is designed to demonstrate how religious faith informs and inspires the work of artists, writers, poets, playwrights, musicians, film makers and culture in the broadest sense. It was with this purpose that Greg Garrett, author of The Gospel According to U2, visited campus this past spring.

Garrett, professor of English at Baylor University and author of more than a dozen books of fiction, translation and criticism, suggests that “U2’s music revolves around deep spiritual questions that point the listener to large realities, desires and concerns. Their music is about spiritual search, conscience and commitment.”

While the group has lived its faith “largely outside of church walls,” Garrett claims that Bono’s “theology,” expressed in the music of U2, may well be “Augustinian” in its inspiration.

He contends that songs such as “Rejoice,” “Gloria,” “40,” “Yahweh” and “Elevation” represent the “pure praise” and prayerful “jubilation” that Augustine spoke of in his Exposition of the Psalms. Professor Garrett describes the history of the group as a restless search for God, and points to “Mysterious Ways,” “Sometimes You Can’t Make It on Your Own” and “Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For” as emblematic of the members’ understanding of and deep commitment to the power of community—friends and companions united on the journey toward God.

Among U2’s most notable distinctions is an unyielding commitment to social justice. The lyrics in “Miracle Drug,” “Crumbs from the Table” and many others call us to compassionate, useful lives devoted to peace and the betterment of the world, not simply ones focused on otherworldly salvation. To summarize U2’s mission, Bono offers, “Music is all well and good...It can change your life. But in the end, you’ve got to become the change you want to see in the world,” words not unlike Augustine’s exhortation concerning Eucharist, heard during campus liturgies at Villanova, “See who you are and become what you see.”

An example of Catholic imagination? We think so.
As part of a month-long exploration of Villanova’s Augustinian Heritage, a day-long public reading of St. Augustine’s seminal work, Confessions, was presented in Falvey Memorial Library.

In recognition of the contributions of The Rev. Thomas O’Hara, CSC, President, King’s College (left) and The Rev. Scott Pilarz SJ, President, University of Scranton (right), the Office for Mission and Ministry hosted a panel discussion on the future of Catholic higher education, moderated by The Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD (center).
**FEB.** Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot was presented by the Villanova Student Theatre in conjunction with a lecture by Dr. James M. Wilson of the Humanities Department as part of the Catholic Imagination in the Arts series.

**APR.** Cappella Caeciliana, Northern Ireland’s premier choral ensemble, performed in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church as part of the Catholic Imagination in the Arts series.
Set LOVE as the CRITERION for all that you say, and WHATEVER you TEACH, teach in such a way that the person to whom you speak, by HEARING may BELIEVE, by BELIEVING, and by HopING, HOPE LOVE.

Saint Augustine
The Instruction of Beginners 8