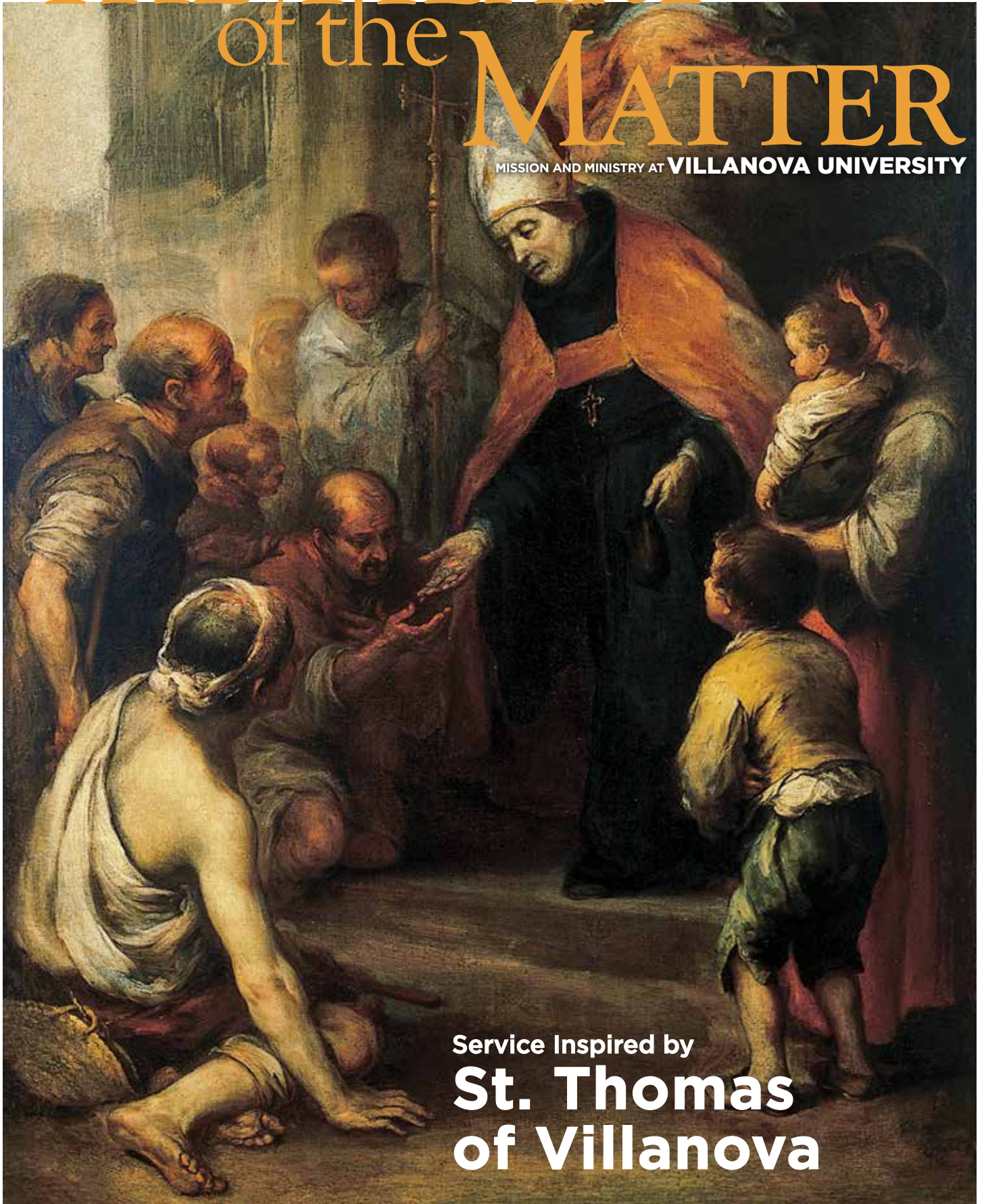


# THE HEART of the MATTER

MISSION AND MINISTRY AT VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY



Service Inspired by  
**St. Thomas  
of Villanova**

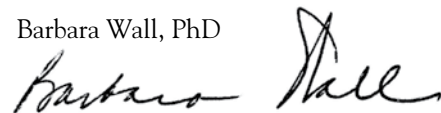


As both Catholic and Augustinian, Villanova University pursues academic excellence, promotes a vision of the common good and celebrates the sacramental character of all creation with respect and reverence. We search for truth with openness to ultimate meaning and value through the lens of Christian faith 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 Sponsorship of Higher Education*, 1995)

*Heart of the Matter* is an annual publication of the Office for Mission & Ministry. It hopes to show the centrality of Villanova’s Augustinian and Catholic identity and its unique contribution to American Catholic higher education. For us, it is a year of anniversaries. Not only will the University soon celebrate the 175th year of its founding, but we have also recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of the publication of Gregor Mendel’s ground breaking paper on plant hybridization and the 40th anniversary of Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week. For all of these reasons, it is especially appropriate to focus on the patron and namesake of the University, St. Thomas of Villanova.

We are especially indebted to collaborators His Excellency, Cardinal Peter Turkson, Fr. James Keenan, SJ, to faculty mentor Dr. Tim Monahan and student scholars Eric Ragone, Mary Frances Roth, Sarah Stankiewicz and to Dr. Chris Janosik who contributed content for this issue. Our hope is that this publication and their efforts will provide insight into the heart of Villanova University and inspire not only personal growth but participation in and fulfillment of our Augustinian mission.

Barbara Wall, PhD



Vice President for Mission and Ministry

“**LOVE** renders everything **precious**.  
If a rich man **GIVES AWAY** the whole of his property  
and **everything he has** yet  
**WITHHOLDS HIS LOVE**, his giving **means nothing**.  
**Every Gift** is to be tested against the  
**TOUCHSTONE OF CHARITY.**”

*Thomas of Villanova, Epiphany, Sermon 2, 7*

## 2 St. Thomas of Villanova: Namesake of the University

It’s Thomas, not Augustine, for whom the University is named. Most of us don’t know much about him.

## 4 St. Thomas’ Ten Rules for Serving the Lord

Thomas was a great preacher and had a special knack for succinctness. Here’s one of the first “top ten” lists.

## 6 Who are the Augustinians? Workers for the Hungry and Homeless

A national movement to address hunger and homelessness is attributed to Fr. Ray Jackson, OSA.

## 8 We Believe: What does the V Mean?

When Villanovans flash the “V” it means more than victory.

## 12 Seeking and Finding Truth: An Augustinian Model

Augustine advises that “nothing is to be preferred to searching for the truth.” How did he and his friends do it?

## 16 Augustine’s Option for the Poor

According to Augustine the main cause of poverty is greed. Justice is the remedy.

## 10 Gregor Mendel: Celebrating His Contributions to Science

Given his meager resources, Mendel’s accomplishments may be even more amazing than Darwin’s.

## 18 Mercy: The Catholic Context for Service

Jesuit James Keenan claims that the Catholic focus on “works” differentiates us from all other denominations.

## 20 Service to God in Solidarity with All Creation

Cardinal Turkson contends that being a “good steward” requires being connected to each other.

## 23 Mentoring for Faith and Learning

Augustine’s method is embodied by Villanova’s Center for Faith and Learning.



**Cover Image:**  
*Saint Thomas of Villanova Giving Alms to the Poor (Detail)*  
Bartolomé-Esteban Murillo  
Spanish, 1617–1682,  
oil on canvas,  
132.4 x 76.2 cm  
© The Norton Simon  
Foundation

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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.



# St. Thomas of Villanova

## NAMESAKE OF THE UNIVERSITY

**In the United States, there are a handful of colleges and universities named for St. Thomas. Universities carrying the moniker are located in Houston, Miami and St. Paul. Thomas Aquinas College can be found in California. Thomas More College is located in Kentucky. Perhaps because we at Villanova focus so intently on the extraordinary legacy of St. Augustine, it's sometimes easy to overlook that Villanova is named not for Augustine, but for St. Thomas of Villanova. Had the Augustinians who founded the school decided otherwise, Villanova could today be just as easily known as St. Thomas University of Pennsylvania.**

Tomás García Martínez was born in Spain in 1486 and grew up in the home of his parents in Villanueva de Los Infantes. It was a time marked by tremendous change and fresh challenges. Spain's conquests and new sources of trade provided great riches and wealth. The gold that poured into the country literally made it a "Golden Age". During this era, many of the higher positions in the Church were obtained through power and political maneuvering, rather than through a life of holiness. Many of the men who occupied these positions spent lavishly and did little to enhance the spiritual lives of the people.

At an early age, Tomás was sent to Alcalá de Henares, near Madrid. He was a brilliant pupil. Upon graduation, he was quickly invited to become part of the teaching faculty of his alma mater. Eventually, his reputation for intellectual prowess spread across Spain to the halls of the

renowned University of Salamanca, whose chancellor offered Tomás a professorship in 1516. To everyone's surprise, he declined the offer. Despite the many material attractions and career advantages available to him in 16th century Spain, Tomás surrendered all that he was and all that he had to God. He entered the Augustinian monastery on November 21, 1516, and professed vows on November 25, 1517. The following year, at the age of 32, he was ordained to the priesthood.

Tomás was a man of the mind, who was comfortable with the power of his intellect. He was also gifted in the governance of men. His fellow Augustinians, recognizing both his gifts and his holiness of life, soon chose him to be local superior or prior, and later, regional superior or provincial. He was a skilled administrator, keeping careful watch over the spiritual and material affairs of the Augustinians in Spain, but he was also an innovator. Concerned about the spiritual state of the people in the far reaches of the Spanish empire, he promoted the organization of a missionary group of Augustinian friars to minister to the people in the New World. It was he who sent Augustinians to what is now modern Mexico and from there, Peru and the Philippines.

marginalized. He established boarding schools and high schools. For young girls he provided dowries, enabling them to be married with dignity. For the hungry, he turned the bishop's palace into a soup kitchen. For the homeless, he provided a place to sleep, offering them the shelter of his own home. It is thus for good reason that his people called him the beggar bishop.

Tomás died in Valencia on September 8, 1555. His life is remembered for his ardent charity, zeal for the promotion of studies and the missions of the Order, as well as wholehearted service to the Church. Already called in his lifetime the "almsgiver" and the "father of the poor," he was canonized in 1658. His earthly remains continue to be venerated in the Cathedral Church in Valencia.

Four centuries later, a score of churches, schools and universities bear his name. A congregation of sisters is also named after him. San Tomás is still remembered, still honored—not so much for his acute intellect nor for his strong administrative skills, nor even for his elaborate and inspiring sermons about the mystical life and the love of God, but for his simple caring for the marginalized. He once said, "One

### WHO IS ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA AND WHY IS HE SO IMPORTANT TO AUGUSTINIANS, THE WORLD OVER?

On October 10, 1544, after first declining the invitation of King Charles V to become the bishop of Granada, he was appointed Archbishop of Valencia by Pope Paul III. Contrary to the prevailing norm, he became well known for his personal austerity and for his continual and untiring charitable efforts, especially towards orphans, poor women and the sick. He possessed an especially wise notion of charity, so that while he, himself was very charitable, he sought to obtain definitive, structural solutions to the systemic problem of poverty. He created work opportunities for the poor, thereby making his charity bear fruit.

Tomás visited each of his parishes to see for himself the needs of his people. He used the income of his affluent archdiocese to set up social programs on behalf of the poor and the

thing alone I can call my own—the obligation to distribute to my brethren the possessions with which God has entrusted me." He lived this belief as fully as he could. Saint Thomas of Villanova was indeed, a true follower of Christ.

At Villanova University, the church that bears his name stands as a lasting tribute to a brilliant scholar, inspiring preacher and tireless servant. The large stained glass window of Thomas, found in between the spires of the church, is a daily reminder of our obligation to use our own skills and resources to the benefit of the poor and in service of the wider church. The Augustinian monastery on campus and the Catholic parish in Rosemont, PA are also named in his honor. His feast day is October 10th. ♥

Adapted from several short biographies published by Augustinian Press.



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Window located in St. Thomas of Villanova Church on the Villanova University campus.

# Ten Rules

## FOR SERVING OUR LORD

“The chief requirement is a heart that is fully determined to serve God, one that is ready to break with whatever impedes it ... bearing in mind what our Lord, Jesus Christ says in the Gospel: ‘They who put their hand to the plow and look back are not fit for the kingdom of God’ (Lk 9:62).” And “because this goes contrary to the world and its devotees, we must be ready to break with the [earthly city] and pay no heed to it, ... out of love for God and for the sake of our salvation. For ‘in the end the truth will come to light, when the shadowy dream of this life passes away and the light of the true day dawns that will last forever.’”

### first Love God and Neighbor

“It is important above all else to love God and neighbor and carry out His commandments, because to do so is to live fully and to put an end to our sinning.” We must endeavor “to practice all the virtues and to persevere in love of Him in such a way that we love Him alone” and through Him, love our neighbors as ourselves.

### second Examine Your Conscience

“The second rule is that we must ... very carefully examine our conscience, offering satisfaction to the Lord.” ... thinking “of our past blindness and recalling our wastefulness.” ... In order to make “satisfaction for it, let us undertake some form of penance ... making reparation for past pleasures.” Let us “practice abstinence, solitude, silence, prayer and some occupation” that focuses us on the hope of our own salvation.

### third Seek Like-Minded Relationships

“Flee conversations with worldlings, for these smother the spirit and the good desires of a devout soul; flee visits with seculars and seek conversation with a truly spiritual person in whom God dwells. For just as a fiery coal sets another coal on fire, so a heart that is burning and on fire in the Spirit will set another heart on fire.”

### fourth Avoid Temptations of the Present Age

“Scorn all the pleasures of the past, as well as the worldly and empty delights of the present age, and endeavor to discover the other, much greater and more perfect interior delights of the spirit and mind. These give greater abundance to the soul and make those worldly delights seem trivial.” Do likewise “to all the riches, pomps, honors, and favors of this world. Make a great effort to keep the heart clean of all temporal affections and free of all impassioned love of creatures, in order that the Lord may fill it with Himself and His Holy Spirit.”

### fifth Rely on the Sacraments

“We must cleanse our consciences frequently, by confessing our sins and receiving Communion with great devotion.” By doing so “we will obtain the grace of perseverance, remain firm and courageous in continuing the work so well begun.”

### sixth Pray Regularly

Create a space “that fosters devotion and invites us to stay in it in order to converse with God, for it is here that we must immerse ourselves as in a crucible, in order to come forth on fire with the Holy Spirit. Here we obtain every blessing.” Meditate with devotion ... Thank God for the blessings of Creation, ... the redemption of the human race, and for particular blessings, not given to others.” Engage “in other similar spiritual exercises, which include reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. It is here that we will obtain **grace, purity, devotion**—the gift of tears; **light**—knowledge of the truth; **spirit**—all the virtues and spiritual riches.”

### seventh Avoid Judgmental Behavior

Let us “keep watch over our tongue and our heart and keep a very careful account of our thoughts and desires and words, quickly chasing from our heart all vain and harmful thoughts. Listen much and speak little, and then only what has been thought out. Flee all gossiping and adverse judgments on others, not being offended by anything. Let us not concern ourselves with ... the doings of others ... but rather only ourselves, living always within ourselves.”

### eighth Avoid Procrastination

“We must be careful not to waste time but always to bear in mind that on the present moment of our lives depends everlasting glory in the future. We should regard as a major loss of an hour in which so great and everlasting a good might be gained. We must fix this thought firmly in our memory.”

### ninth Do Good and Avoid Harm

“Do good to all and evil to none, either in judgment, word, or action. Put up with the weaknesses of others, not indicting them for their sins but, moved by charity, praying to God for those who go astray.”

### tenth Improve Daily

“Take to heart all that has been said here, exhorting, rebuking and encouraging ourselves to improve daily and make progress without ever being forgetful of ourselves, because it is by doing so that we make certain of the glory for which we hope, and sow in this life the everlasting fruit that we shall reap in the next.” ... “Ask persistently for salvation, help, for the light to know the good, for the grace to love it, and for the strength to pursue and persevere in it.”

“Keep always in your minds a ‘verse of Psalm 115:7-8.’ It is as if the Psalmist is saying “turn your eyes and heart to God, for in Him alone will you find your rest; nothing that is created will satisfy you, but only your Creator Himself.” This turning ... “to God, who is its rest, means turning to Him in reflection and love; fastening one’s eyes on Him means gazing on Him, conversing with Him, embracing Him through prayer, meditation, and reading, so that one is united and joined to Him by desire.” ♥

Adapted from “Treatise I: A Short Method in Ten Rules for Serving Our Lord” in *The Works of Saint Thomas of Villanova: Sermons and Various Writings – Part VIII*, J. Rottelle, OSA (ed.) Matthew J. O’Connell and Lawrence Lockwood (trans.). Augustinian Press, 2001. 170-176.



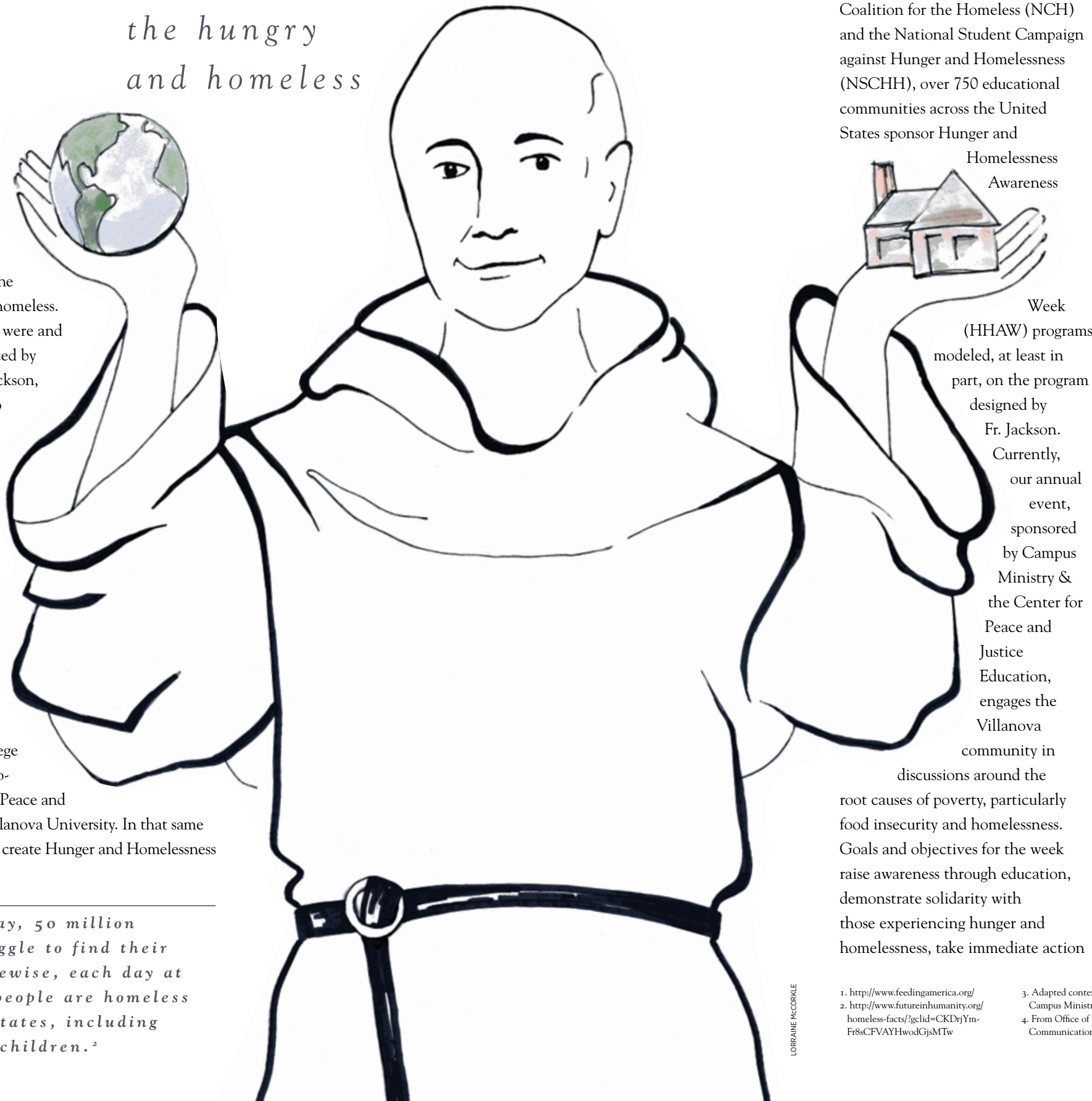
# WHO are THE AUGUSTINIANS?

*tireless workers for  
the hungry  
and homeless*

Many in the Villanova University community are aware of the life and legacy of St. Thomas of Villanova, who gave away much of his personal wealth to feed the hungry and house the homeless. In our own time, many were and continue to be influenced by Augustinian Fr. Ray Jackson, OSA (1933-1997) who did likewise.

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Ray joined the Augustinian Order at Villanova University. He graduated in 1961 and was ordained in 1965. Thereafter, he dedicated his life teaching and inspiring young people as a high school teacher and college professor. In 1975, he co-founded the Center for Peace and Justice Education at Villanova University. In that same year, Fr. Jackson helped create Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

*On any given day, 50 million Americans struggle to find their next meal.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, each day at least 800,000 people are homeless in the United States, including about 200,000 children.<sup>2</sup>*



Now in its 40th year at Villanova, this observance sparked a national movement in higher education. In association with the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) and the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness (NSCHH), over 750 educational communities across the United States sponsor Hunger and



Homelessness Awareness Week (HHAW) programs modeled, at least in part, on the program designed by Fr. Jackson. Currently, our annual event, sponsored by Campus Ministry & the Center for Peace and Justice Education, engages the Villanova community in discussions around the

root causes of poverty, particularly food insecurity and homelessness. Goals and objectives for the week raise awareness through education, demonstrate solidarity with those experiencing hunger and homelessness, take immediate action

and advocate for broader, long-term solutions that address underlying systemic causes of hunger and homelessness.<sup>3</sup> This event is grounded in Catholic social teaching—**Solidarity**, recognizing the **Life and Dignity** of the Human Person, and the **Preferential Option for the Poor** and Vulnerable. The week at Villanova includes:

- Hunger Run 5K
- Food Fast Day educational fundraiser
- On and off-campus food drives
- Fair Trade Craft Sale
- Solidarity Sleep-Out
- “Faces of Homelessness” Seminar
- Bread for the World and Habitat for Humanity letter writing campaigns

*“This year represents not only the 40th anniversary of Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week’s inception but also that it has been 40 years too many that these issues have plagued society, both locally and globally. It’s both very humbling and encouraging to see how something that started at Villanova has spread to and been embraced by hundreds of communities around the country.”<sup>4</sup>*

—William Stehl, Associate Director of Campus Ministry

**jackson’s legacy**  
Fr. Jackson defined peace and justice education as “a process that enables students to broaden their appreciation for people in other circumstances and cultures, to develop a new vision for life based on humanitarian values and to participate actively in creating a better world.”<sup>5</sup> Throughout his life, his goal was “to equip students with the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to live a life worthy of the highest aspirations of humankind.”<sup>6</sup> He was insistent that “if we cherish the values of human worth and social solidarity; if we build character by meeting the challenges and conflicts of life with firm conviction that justice is right; if we decide to hold this vision before ourselves each day, ... we [will be living] a truly human life.”<sup>7</sup>



## ray jackson memorial fund

So influential was Fr. Jackson, that a memorial fund has been established by many of Fr. Ray’s supporters. The fund offers financial grants to assist Villanova students to engage in providing direct service to people who are impoverished and marginalized in the United States and abroad. A residence hall on the West Campus is named in his honor. For more information about the Fund, contact the Center for Service and Social Justice at Campus Ministry. ♥

1. <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>  
2. <http://www.futureinhumanity.org/homeless-facts/?gclid=CKDjYm-Fr8sCFVAYHwodGjsMTw>

3. Adapted content from Villanova’s Campus Ministry web site.  
4. From Office of University Communication Press Release, 2014.

5. Owen R. Jackson, *Dignity and Solidarity*, (Chicago: Loyola Press), Forward.  
6. *Ibid.*  
7. *Ibid.*, 315.



# WE BELIEVE:

## WHAT DOES THE MEAN?

Of all the great signs held by Villanova fans during March Madness a favorite was the one that read, **WE BELIEVE**. The design incorporates our Villanova “V” into the word “believe.” The implication is that Villanovans BELIEVE in a special way. Certainly, the team that won the 2016 NCAA Basketball Championship does.

First, **WE BELIEVE** in God. You know what Catholics believe ... We “believe in the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth” ... and so on. We’re not all Catholics at Villanova. We are Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and plenty of other kinds of believers. A great thing about Villanova is that here, we all can live our faith and give thanks to God. We thank Him for our talent and skills, for our family and friends, teachers and coaches. We THANK HIM for all that we are and all that we have ... because **WE BELIEVE** that without God, we can accomplish nothing.

Second, at Villanova **WE BELIEVE** in the wisdom of Saint Augustine. He wrote, “Never be satisfied with what you already are, if you want to be what you are not yet. For where you have become pleased with yourself, there you will remain. Always do more,” he said. “Always keep moving. Always forge ahead.”<sup>1</sup>

Jay Wright says, “**BE HUNGRY.**”

Augustine claims that the greatest obstacle to success is pride. He preached that “unless humility precedes, accompanies and follows whatever we do, we will find that we have done little good, in which to rejoice. Pride will rob us of everything.”<sup>2</sup>

Wright tells his team, “**STAY HUMBLE.**”

Augustine was an expert in building teams and encouraging his followers to be single-minded toward each other. He told the guys who wanted to be on

his side, “The degree to which you are concerned for the common good rather than for your own is the criterion by which you can judge how much progress you have made.”<sup>3</sup>

Jay calls that “**ATTITUDE.**”

Whether in practice or during a game, whether on the court or off ... everything is for the good of the TEAM—even deciding who takes the final shot.

So at Villanova, when we put our “Vs” up, it’s not a smug taunt from the Main Line. It doesn’t mean “V” for victory. It really means more than “V” for Villanova. The “V” stands for who we ARE—what **WE BELIEVE**. CMJ ♥

Content for this article was inspired by Jay Wright, the William B. Finneran Head Basketball Coach at Villanova University.

1. *Sermon* 169, 18.

2. *Letter* 188, 22.

3. *Rule of St. Augustine*, 7.2.



Photo by Scott Hallinan/Getty Images

© Villanova Athletics



© Jamie Schwaberow/NCAA Photos

Top: Jay Wright with Phil Booth.  
Bottom: Ryan Arcidiacono passes to Kris Jenkins for the winning shot in the 2016 NCAA Basketball Championship.



# Gregor Mendel: Celebrating his Contribution to Science

**G**regor Mendel was the second child of Anton and Rosine Mendel, farmers in Brunn, Moravia. As a young child, Mendel was a brilliant student and his parents were encouraged to support his pursuit of higher education. Their financial resources were limited, so Mendel entered an Augustinian monastery to continue his education and start his teaching career.

While abbot of the Augustinian Monastery, Brunn, Austria, (now Brno, Czech Republic), Mendel discovered the celebrated laws of heredity which now bear his name—the law of segregation and the law of independent assortment that prove the existence of paired elementary units of heredity (factors)—and establish the statistical laws governing them.



## What Did He Discover?

Father Mendel planted pea pods in a small laboratory. It was here that “he noticed that some of the plants were tall and some were dwarfs. Some had round seeds, some had wrinkled seeds. Some had yellow seeds, some had green seeds. Over the course of the next seven years, before his duties as abbot severely curtailed his work, he bred and cross-bred almost 30,000 pea plants, logging the traits of each, carefully breeding and cross-breeding, and noting the results.

Darwin’s theory of evolution suggested that traits would average out, that the next generation of pea plants would be neither tall nor dwarf, but in between and that the traits of the parents would “disappear” into the children. Because of Mendel’s work, we know now that while averaging can occur over time, individuality does not average out.

Mendel theorized that each plant carried two markers for opposed traits (e.g., tallness and shortness), one from each of the parent plants. These

markers are now called genes. One gene dominates over the other, so when a gene for brown eyes and one for blue eyes are present, the resulting eyes of the child will be brown, not blue or some muddy color combination. Even so, the “recessive” gene, the one that is not dominant, survives, so that in successive generations, blue-eyed offspring can still occur.”<sup>1</sup>

## On Par with Darwin and Crick

Gregor Mendel’s short monograph, *Experiments with Plant Hybrids* (1865) describing how traits are inherited, has become one of the most enduring and influential publications in the history of science. The paper passed entirely unnoticed in the scientific community although, according to many science scholars, it is one of the three most significant and famous papers in the history of biology. The other two are the Darwin-Wallace paper on evolution by means of natural selection (1858) and the Crick-Watson letter to the journal *Nature*, which suggested a structure of DNA (1953). Unlike the latter two papers, both of which achieved acclaim almost immediately, Mendel’s contributions were viewed with such skepticism by scientific and philosophical circles of the time that his work became largely forgotten, only to be “rediscovered” some 34 years later.

The accomplishments of this 19th century Augustinian friar, teacher, scientist and mathematician have helped shape the world’s collective understanding of genes, crossbreeding and heredity.

As an Augustinian institution of higher education, Villanova University is one of the custodians of Gregor Mendel’s legacy. To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the publication of his paper and to celebrate Villanova University’s connections to the field of genetics, from Mendel to modern day, Villanova hosted the inaugural Mendel Symposium. The occasion brought together several of the world’s leading minds to discuss the lasting impact of Mendel’s work across many disciplines. ♥

1. Adapted from Anthony Esolen. “How the Church has changed the world: The Abbot and the Peas.” *Magnificat* (August, 2015): 206-211.



## The Mendel Medal

In 1928 the Board of Trustees of Villanova University established the Mendel Medal to recognize outstanding scientists who have done much by their painstaking work to advance the cause of science, and, by their lives and their standing before the world as scientists, have demonstrated that there is no intrinsic conflict between science and religion.

Past recipients have included Nobel Laureates, outstanding medical researchers and pioneers in physics, astrophysics and chemistry, as well as noted scientist-theologians.





SEEKING AND FINDING

# TRUTH:

AN AUGUSTINIAN MODEL

Villanova University achieves academic excellence through a unique learning paradigm that is “rooted in the collaborative pursuit of knowledge—through which professors and students are partners in the learning process.” Villanova University “promises its students a caring educational experience, with professors and students working together within a personal learning environment”—one that encourages “active engagement, critical thinking and moral reflection” and will provide “a lifelong framework for ... the use of one’s unique talents for the benefit of humankind.”<sup>1</sup>

Saint Augustine himself, advised that “nothing is to be preferred to the search for truth.”<sup>2</sup> How did he and his followers do this? What of their ancient experience is relevant to a search for knowledge, meaning, truth on any contemporary college campus, and especially to an Augustinian university?

SEARCH WITH OTHERS

Augustine advised that “[o]n earth we are wayfarers, always on the go,” and he admonished his followers to “be always unhappy with what you are if you want to reach what you are not. ... Always keep moving forward, trying for your goal,”<sup>3</sup> “Search in ways by which we can make discoveries, and discover in ways by which we can keep on searching.”<sup>4</sup>

Those familiar with Augustine’s life know that he spent his search “in community,” surrounded by others with whom he shared his journey and from whom he drew inspiration. It was there that he “found all manner of joy,” where in the company of friends, he talked and laughed “read engaging books together” went “from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again,” where they could “differ without discord,” could “teach and learn from each other.” It was while working on their common task that [they] “gave and received affection ... and in a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused [their] very souls together and made the many of us one.”<sup>5</sup> How does one build an intentional learning community such as this?



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# HUMILITY

Augustine was insistent that “[t]he first step in the search for truth is humility” He didn’t claim that it was the only virtue necessary for authentic pursuit of truth, but it was his contention that “unless humility precede, accompany, and follow every good action we perform, pride will wrest wholly from our hand any good we accomplish.”<sup>6</sup> As proof he offered his own assessment of those with whom he worked. “The more they think they are learned, the more unteachable they become. They have become ashamed to learn, because that means admitting ignorance.”<sup>7</sup> He asked fellow teachers to “[c]onsider this great puzzle. The sounds of my words strike the ears but the Teacher is within. Do not think that any human teaches another. The sound of our voices can admonish, but the one Who teaches is inside.”<sup>8</sup> And to those that aspire to grand accomplishments, he advised, “[t]o reach a high spot you need a ladder. To get to the height of greatness, use the ladder of humility.”<sup>9</sup>

“Unless humility precedes, accompany, and follow every good action we perform, pride will wrest wholly from our hand any good we accomplish”

# COLLABORATION

Augustine is clear that teachers should provide guidance to students, much beyond narrow disciplinary interests. He says, “[i]nspire them with a serious interest in the truth, instill in them a habit of diligence and application, clear their minds from worldly interests, and fix their thoughts on what is of real profit.”<sup>10</sup> But Augustine is equally insistent on reciprocity in learning. “I speak not as a master but as a minister, not to pupils but to fellow pupils, not to servants but to fellow servants.”<sup>11</sup> For Augustine, teaching and learning are inseparable. He says, “[a]s long as I am a good teacher, I will continue being a student.”<sup>12</sup>

“The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours precisely because it must be both yours and mine, so that all who come to it may use it and be enlightened”

Humility and reciprocity promote openness—an ability to see and appreciate the truth in others. “If the truth is the object of the aspirations of all human beings, it cannot be the exclusive personal property of any person. The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours precisely because it must be both yours and mine,”<sup>13</sup> so that “all who come to it may use it and be enlightened. It is equally distant and equally close to everyone.”<sup>14</sup> In Augustine’s method, knowledge is not possessed by one and given to another. Teachers and students learn together.

# LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Augustine wrote extensively about love—of God and neighbor, of well-ordered and disordered love. He says that “[l]ove empowers us to support one another in carrying our burdens.” Augustine illustrates his point with this observation. “When deer need to cross a river, each one carries on its rear the head of the one behind it, while it rests its head on the rear of the one in front of it. Supporting and helping each other, they are thus able to cross wide rivers safely, until they reach the firmness of the land together.”<sup>15</sup>

“Those who listen are luckier than those who speak. The learner is humble, but the teacher must work hard at not being proud”

So central is love to Augustine’s philosophy of teaching that he advises teachers to “[s]et love as the criterion for all that you say. Whatever you teach, teach in such a way that the person to whom you speak, by hearing may believe, by believing, hope and by hoping, love.”<sup>16</sup> For Augustine, however, love is more than an attitude. “Although we owe the same love to all, we should not treat all with the same remedy. And so for its part ... love is pain to some, makes itself weak with others, devotes itself to edifying some, greatly fears giving offense to others, bends down to some, raises itself up before others. To some it is gentle, to others stern, to no one hostile, to everyone a mother.”<sup>17</sup> Creating an Augustinian learning environment requires discovering the differing needs of others and responding in an intimate, caring way.

# DIALOGUE AND DOING

Though Augustine was acknowledged as a skilled orator and inspiring preacher, he claimed that “[t]hose who listen are luckier than those who speak. The learner is humble, but the teacher must work hard at not being proud.”<sup>18</sup> He promoted dialogue as the preferred way of learning. “There is no better way of seeking truth than through the method of question and answer. But rare is the person who is not ashamed of being proved wrong. As a result, a good discussion is often spoiled by some hard-headed outburst with its frayed tempers, generally hidden but sometimes evident. We planned to proceed peaceably and agreeably in our search for truth. I would ask the questions and you would answer. If you find yourself in difficulties, do not be afraid to go back and try again.”<sup>19</sup> Serving as an example, showing learners how to learn is always preferable to more passive methods of teaching. “Through watching and listening to us when we are actually engaged in working, you will learn better than by reading what we write.”<sup>20</sup>

# REFLECTION

Augustine well understands that only through silence and contemplation is real understanding achieved.<sup>21</sup> “Let us leave something for people’s reflection, a generous margin for silence. Go within yourself—leave the noise and the confusion behind. Look inside yourself and see if you can find that hidden corner of the soul, free of noises and arguments ... disputes or pig-headed quarrels.”<sup>22</sup>

“Go within yourself—leave the noise and the confusion behind. Look inside yourself and see if you can find that hidden corner of the soul, free of noises and arguments”

“Do not go outside yourself, but turn within. Truth dwells in the interior self. And if you find your nature, given to frequent change, go beyond yourself. Do not forget that

when you climb above yourself, you are lifting yourself above your soul, which has the gift of reason. Step, therefore, to where the light of reason receives its light.”<sup>23</sup> An Augustinian education requires time for thoughtful reflection, analysis and integration.

# LIFELONG COMMITMENTS

Augustine’s restless search for truth led him to acknowledge that he would remain restless until he rested in God.<sup>24</sup> He recognized that God knew him better than he knew himself and prayed fervently, “Let me know myself. Let me know You,”<sup>25</sup> and he concluded that knowledge was incomplete without faith. “Do you wish to understand? Believe,” wrote St. Augustine, “Do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe that you may understand.”<sup>26</sup>

An Augustinian education does not separate itself from the world, but engages it. “It is of no use ‘to know’ the truth unless you also embrace it with your life. It is necessary to build on a sure foundation of ‘hearing’ and ‘doing.’ Those who hear, and do not do, build on sand. Those who neither hear nor do, build nothing. Those who hear and do, build on stone.” Our knowledge must be used “as a kind of scaffolding to help build the structure of love and understanding, which will last forever even after knowledge destroys itself. Knowledge is useful when it is used to promote love. But it becomes useless, even harmful in itself, if separated from such an end.”<sup>27</sup>

Villanova University believes that, in all things, the Augustinian principles of *Veritas*, *Unitas*, and *Caritas*—truth, unity and love—“serve as intellectual and spiritual guideposts” for our work and for lives.<sup>28</sup> It is in this context that “[t]he love of knowledge and truth should invite us to continue learning. The love of others should compel us to teach.”<sup>29</sup> CMJ ♥

The editor is indebted to the work of Fr. Alan Fitzgerald, OSA, Dr. John Immerwhar and in particular Fr. Gary McCloskey, OSA, on which this article is based.

1. Villanova University, “The Villanova Promise” in *Igniting the Heart. Inspiring the Mind. Illuminating the Spirit: The Villanova University Strategic Plan*, 2009, 6-7.

2. Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 3.11.

3. Augustine, *Sermon 169*, 18.

4. Augustine, *The Trinity*, IX, 1, 1.

5. Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 8, 13.

6. Augustine, *Letter 118*, 3, 22.

7. Augustine, *Sermon 198*, 13.

8. Augustine, *Tractate on 1 John III*, 12.

9. Augustine, *Sermon 96*, 3.

10. Augustine, *Sermon 47*, 10.

11. Augustine, *Sermon 242*, 1.

12. Augustine, *Sermon 244*, 2.

13. Augustine, *Explanations of the Psalms*, 103, 2.

14. Augustine, *Explanations*, 75, 17.

15. Augustine, *Eighty-three Diverse Questions*, 71, 1.

16. Augustine, *Letter 4*, 8.

17. Augustine, *Instructing the Beginners*, 15, 23.

18. Augustine, *Explanations*, 50, 13.

19. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, II, 7, 14.

20. Augustine, *Beginners*, 15, 23.

21. Augustine, *Sermon 56*, 22.

22. Augustine, *Sermon 52*, 19, 22.

23. Augustine, *On True Religion*, 39, 72.

24. Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1, 1.

25. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, II, 1.1.

26. Augustine, *Tractate on the Gospel of John*, 29, 6.

27. Augustine, *Letter 55*, 33.

28. Villanova University, *Strategic Plan*, 16.

29. Augustine, *Answers to the Eight Questions of Dulcitius*, 3.



# Augustine's Thought on Poverty and the Poor

Augustine's theological reflections are based on four principles:

- 1) God created the world for everyone,  
2) we are born equal,
- 3) greed is the main cause of poverty and  
4) helping the poor is a matter of justice.

## Creation Belongs to All

The earth belongs equally to all as Augustine writes, “We ourselves brought nothing into the world (1 Tim. 6: 7). You have come into the world, and you have found there a well-filled table. But the earth is the Lord’s and its fullness also (Ps. 24, 1)...God gave the world to the poor as well as to the rich.”<sup>1</sup> It follows then, that all that we have, we have ‘on loan’ from God. We are only stewards. Consequently, “A human person has never complete power over that which he possesses.”<sup>2</sup>



## Birthed as Equals

The difference between rich and poor is only a question of external things. The equality of all human beings finds its strongest expression when we look at the manner in which we have been born: “When children are born, let parents, servants, retainers depart and see if you can recognize the rich children as they cry. Let a rich and a poor woman give birth. Let nobody attend the ones giving birth ... and see whether you can recognize a difference.”<sup>3</sup> Augustine concludes that nobody is born rich or poor. By nature, then, we are all equals.

## Greed as the Main Cause

avarice or greed is a vicious disposition that refuses to share or to hold resources in common. As such, it is the root of all evils. Many people are possessed by material goods rather than possessors of them.<sup>4</sup> In the *City of God* Augustine writes: “Pride hates a fellowship of equality under God, and, as though a human being were God, the proud person loves to impose his own dominion on fellow human beings.”<sup>5</sup> Augustine protests strongly against the motto of the misers and the oppressors: “The more you have, the greater you are, that is your device, and this means the more money and property you have, the more powerful you are.”<sup>6</sup> Such depravity resembles a dangerous sea wherein big fish prey voraciously upon weaker, vulnerable victims. Augustine cautions: “Do attend, when a fish has devoured a smaller one, it is in turn devoured by a greater than itself.”<sup>7</sup> In private goods there lurks always the danger of discord, division and drifting apart: “It is those private things which we possess as individuals that give rise to lawsuits, social strife, scandals, sins, wickedness and murders. ... Do we ever go to law for the sake of things which we possess in common?”<sup>8</sup>

## Relief is a Matter of Justice

In Augustine’s words: “The superfluous goods of the rich are the necessary goods for the poor. The rich possess things which belong to others (*res alienae*).”<sup>9</sup> He considers the refusal of help as a violation of justice, the virtue which preeminently enshrines respect for rights and dues. In *Confessions*, we read that we have to be like fruit-yielding trees, that is, “Rescuing the person who is the victim of injustice from the hand of the powerful, and giving him or her shelter and protection by the power and force of just judgment.”<sup>10</sup> To give help is nothing more than to repay a debt: “If you were giving something that was your own, then it would be pure largesse, but since you give what is God’s, you are repaying a debt.”<sup>11</sup> According to Augustine, justice is one of the many aspects of love, and “the beginning of love is to give material goods to your brother and sister.”<sup>12</sup>

## Christ in the Poor

Augustine’s effort to link Christ with the poor reflects his theological insight, based upon Mt. 25, that Christ is still present in this world and how He is to be grasped by the faithful. The suffering and poverty of Jesus Christ is continually reflected in the life and history of suffering, oppressed human beings. Here in this pilgrimage on earth, the hungry Christ is fed, the thirsty Christ is given to drink, the naked Christ is clothed, Christ is welcomed in the stranger, Christ is visited in the sick. When human persons are in want, it is Christ who is in want.<sup>13</sup> Christ is present in the poor; when we give to the poor, it is Christ’s hand which accepts.<sup>14</sup> This is the reason why Sacred Scripture attributes so much to almsgiving—where the Lord announces that the fruit of this alone will be imputed as meritorious to those on His right hand.<sup>15</sup>

## Proper Motive

It is true that Augustine declares: “God made the poor to test the rich,” but this is not to proclaim the goodness of poverty, but to exhort the faithful to perform works of mercy.<sup>16</sup> Augustine writes, “It is better that no one should be impoverished than that you should perform a work of mercy. For a person who wishes others to be miserable, so that he or she can be merciful, is possessed by a cruel mercy, just as a doctor who would wish others to be sick, so that he might practice his art, would be a cruel healer.”<sup>17</sup>

Augustine stresses the equality of all human beings. “A true Christian should never set himself up over other human beings... Therefore, you ought to wish all equal to yourself.”<sup>18</sup> If the poor were simply means, then they would be no more than useful things, an idea rejected decidedly by Augustine: “Human persons are never to be loved as things to be consumed, but after the manner of friendship and goodwill, leading us to give to those we love. And if there is nothing we can give, goodwill alone is enough for the lover.”<sup>19</sup>

Content for this article is adapted from Tarcisius J. van Bavel, OSA, *Augustine's Option for the Poor: Preaching and Praxis*, (Rome, Augustinian Cruia, 1992). Used with permission.  
1. S. 39, 1, 2 - 2, 4.  
2. S. on ps. 49, 18.  
3. S. 61, 8, 9.

4. S. on ps. 48, 1, 2.  
5. *City of God*, XIX, 12.  
6. En. on ps. 51, 14.  
7. S. on ps. 64, 9.  
8. S. on ps. 131, 5-6.  
9. S. on ps. 147, 12.  
10. *Conf. XIII*, 17, 21.  
11. S. on ps. 95, 15.

12. *Comm. on the first Letter of John* 5, 12.  
13. S. 236, 3.  
14. S. 86, 3, 3.  
15. *Enchir.* 18, 69.  
16. S. 39, 4, 6.  
17. S. on ps. 125, 14; *Conf. III*, 2, 3.  
18. *Comm. on the first Letter of John* 8, 8.  
19. ib. 8, 5.



# mercy

1.a: compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one's power; also: lenient or compassionate treatment b: imprisonment rather than death imposed as penalty for first-degree murder 2. a: a blessing that is an act of divine favor or compassion; b: a fortunate circumstance 3. compassionate treatment of those in distress *merriam webster*



James Keenan, SJ delivered a public lecture and an advent retreat during a 2015 visit to villanova university. these programs were sponsored by campus ministry.

In announcing the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis proclaimed it was his “burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy” as a way “to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty.” He asked that we “enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel, where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy.” And he reminded us that “Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy ... so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples.”<sup>1</sup> **Mercy is fundamental to imitating Christ.**

During his recent lecture at Villanova University, Fr. James Keenan, SJ, acknowledged “the extraordinary importance of mercy” in the Christian tradition and suggested that “if there is

one dimension” of the moral tradition “that differentiates Protestant from Catholic Christians, it is [the Catholic emphasis on] works.”<sup>2</sup> **Mercy is a condition for salvation.**<sup>3</sup>

## pity as imitation mercy

According to Friedrich Nietzsche, mercy is nothing more than “feeling sorry” for another person, that Christianity is the “religion of pity”<sup>4</sup> and that nothing is more “unhealthy and morally dangerous”<sup>5</sup> than Christian pity. In simplest terms, his assumptions were that pity slows the natural order of things, bestows to the giver an illusion of power and encourages the receiver to remain dependent, rather than to become self-sufficient.<sup>6</sup>

Pity costs its practitioners very little. Pity is distant, uninvolved and judgmental. Pity appears merciful.



## a catholic context for service

Practitioners may well feel satisfaction from “doing good” and expect gratitude from recipients. But this is “**imitation mercy.**”<sup>7</sup>

## the merciful samaritan

James Keenan defines mercy as “the willingness to enter into the chaos of others.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Kerry Walters contends that rather than an emotion, “mercy is an attitude, a comportment that creatively reflects the loving kindness of God, and suggests that by acting mercifully, we participate in the ongoing mystery” of salvation.<sup>9</sup>

Mercy requires **recognition** of the human dignity of each person. Mercy requires **compassion**. The bond created through recognition allows us to relate to a victim’s suffering as our own, to endure his burden as our burden. Unlike pity, compassion moves us to genuine

engagement in the plight of another.<sup>10</sup> Mercy requires **action**. Compassion motivates us to displace our own interests and needs. It encourages self-sacrifice for the needs of another.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*,<sup>12</sup> neither the priest nor the Levite responds to the injured man. Perhaps fear or disdain motivated their behaviors. Perhaps one or the other of them “pitied” the victim. They may have wished that the road was safer. They may have hoped for the victim’s recovery. Still, each failed to show mercy. Each failed to act.

The Samaritan does indeed “take pity”<sup>13</sup> on the roadside victim. But he does so much more. He “enters into the chaos” of the victim. His recognition of the victim’s personal dignity motivates physiological sacrifice of self-interest. Compassion moves the Samaritan to genuine engagement. He sacrifices his own time, energy and resources to attend to the victim. The Samaritan remains steadfastly committed to the victim’s well being, by providing for extended care of the victim and has not the slightest expectation of gratitude or reward.<sup>14</sup>

Through his works, the Merciful Samaritan reflects the loving kindness of God and participates in the ongoing mystery of salvation. As the Villanova community continues its long tradition of service, may it do likewise. CMJ ♥

## the corporal and spritual works of mercy motivate service at villanova university

### CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Shelter the homeless
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

### SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

- Correct the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubting
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive offenses willing
- Pray for the living and the dead

1. Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, (Bull of Indiction) n. 15.  
2. James Keenan, *The Works of Mercy: The Heart of Catholicism* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2009), 1-3.  
3. *Ibid.*, 3; Mt 25: 34-46.  
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Gods* (New York: Penguin, 1972), 118.  
5. *Ibid.*, 118-119.  
6. Kerry Walters, *Merciful Meekness: Becoming a Spiritually Integrated Person* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 58-59.  
7. J. B. Phillips, *New Testament Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 68. The Anglican theologian suggests that “it is perfectly possible for us to behave kindly, justly and correctly toward another and yet withhold giving of self.” He calls this “imitation spirituality.”  
8. Keenan, 3.  
9. Walters, 75.  
10. *Ibid.*, 80-86.  
11. *Ibid.*, 88.  
12. Lk 10: 30-37.  
13. Unfortunately, many translations of the Bible use the word “pity” in this passage.  
14. Walters, 89-90.  
15. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2447. Cf. Matthew 25:34-40; Galatians 6:1; Colossians 3:16; Jude 23; Isaiah 66:13; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12 and Ephesians 6:18.



# SERVICE to GOD in SOLIDARITY with all CREATION

During a two day visit to Villanova University, Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace met with local religious leaders for interfaith dialogue, with inmates at Graterford SCI and with students and faculty in the College of Engineering to discuss service learning initiatives. His Eminence participated in Vespers, presided at Mass, delivered a public lecture and received an honorary degree from the University. A summary of his remarks follow.

## Integral Ecology

“In Judeo-Christian tradition, the human story begins in an orderly fashion, within the story of the beginning of everything. God creates nature, inanimate and then animate, in the first five days, and humanity on the sixth. So, the human story is not apart from that of all of nature—humanity and nature are integrated.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the biblical narrative teaches us that “human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself.”<sup>2</sup> When one of these relationships is broken, the others are broken too, and our insertion in the universe is no longer integral—it is fractured and partial. In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis articulates the “tremendous responsibility” of humankind for creation.<sup>3</sup> He asserts

that “the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.”<sup>4</sup> This collective good and responsibility of it all underpin the Pope’s insistent message about the moral dimension of how we treat nature and the rest of creation. “Creation is the order of love,” he says. “God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected.”<sup>5</sup>

The story of creation is central for reflecting on the relationship between human beings and other creatures. And that story is not static—but continues today. Unfortunately, the present story is that our human engagement in it has failed to cooperate with God’s design: “*The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.*” This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; ‘she groans in travail’ (Rom 8:22).”<sup>6</sup>

## More than Good Stewards

We are often told to be ‘good stewards’ of creation. “Good stewards take responsibility and fulfill their obligations to manage and to render an account. But one can be a good steward without feeling connected. Beyond jobs and accountability, **care**

is a more intimate relationship. To care is to allow oneself to be affected by another, so much so that one’s path and priorities change.”<sup>7</sup>

At the inaugural Mass of his Petrine Ministry, Pope Francis put the protection of creation to the very forefront of his own ministry and the vocation of every Christian. Here, Francis offered Saint Joseph as a model for protecting Christ in our own lives, “so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation,” and “[he] explained that the vocation of being a protector...is very broad in scope...It means respecting each of God’s creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives...who protect one another, and then, as parents, care for their children, and children themselves, in time protecting their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness.”<sup>8</sup>

“Pope Francis proposes that we think of our relationship with the world and with all people in terms of caring. As Jesus does when he calls himself the Good Shepherd who does not flee when the wolf threatens the flock (Jn 10:11-15). Caring for our common

home requires not just an economic and technological revolution, but also a cultural and spiritual revolution—a profoundly different way of living the relationship between people and the environment, a new way of ordering the global economy.”<sup>9</sup>

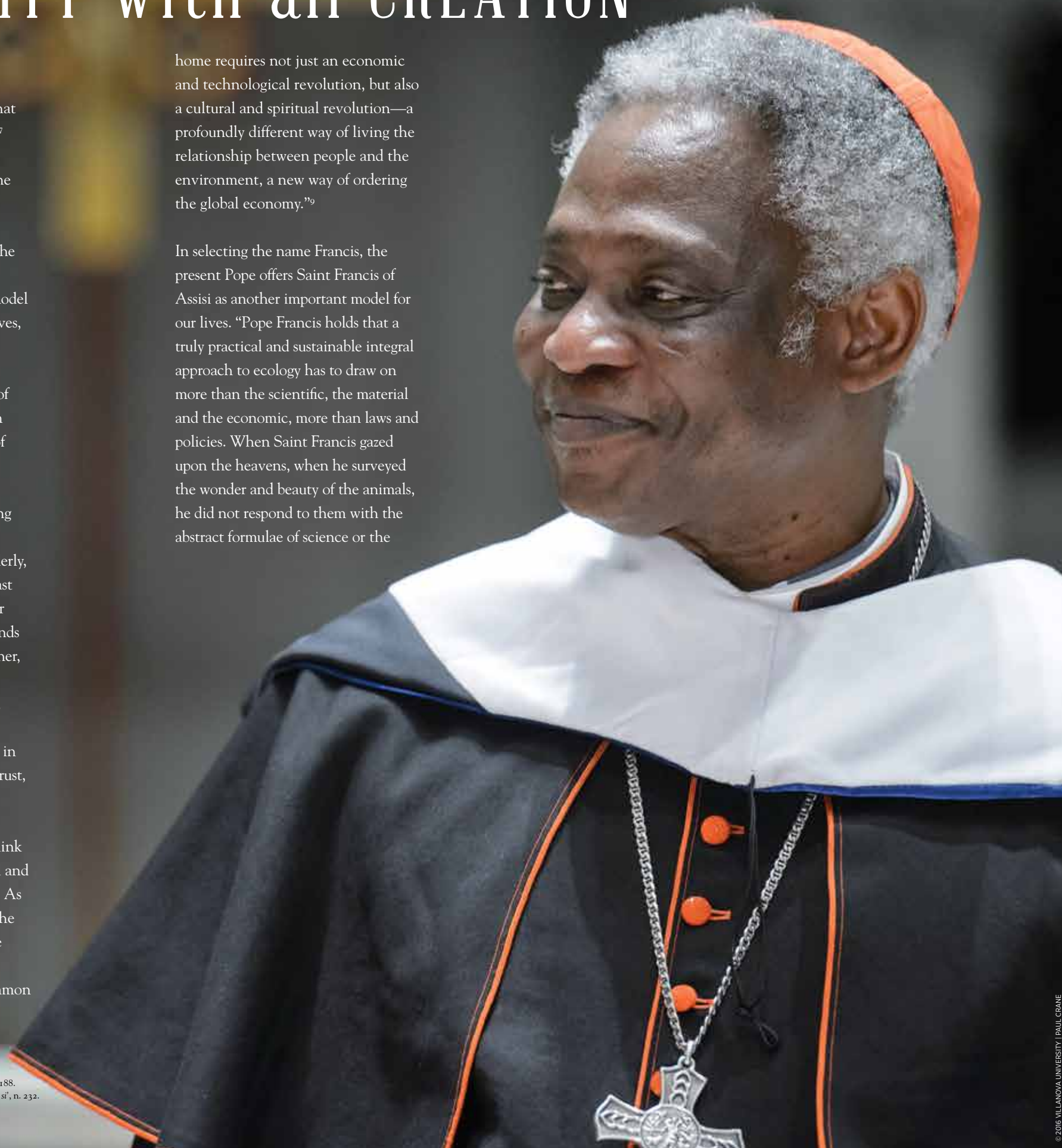
In selecting the name Francis, the present Pope offers Saint Francis of Assisi as another important model for our lives. “Pope Francis holds that a truly practical and sustainable integral approach to ecology has to draw on more than the scientific, the material and the economic, more than laws and policies. When Saint Francis gazed upon the heavens, when he surveyed the wonder and beauty of the animals, he did not respond to them with the abstract formulae of science or the

1. The text presented here is adapted from the remarks of Cardinal Turkson made while visiting with us and others. Used with permission. Cardinal Peter Turkson, “Care of Creation as a Work of Mercy” delivered at Villanova University on February 25, 2016. Used with permission.

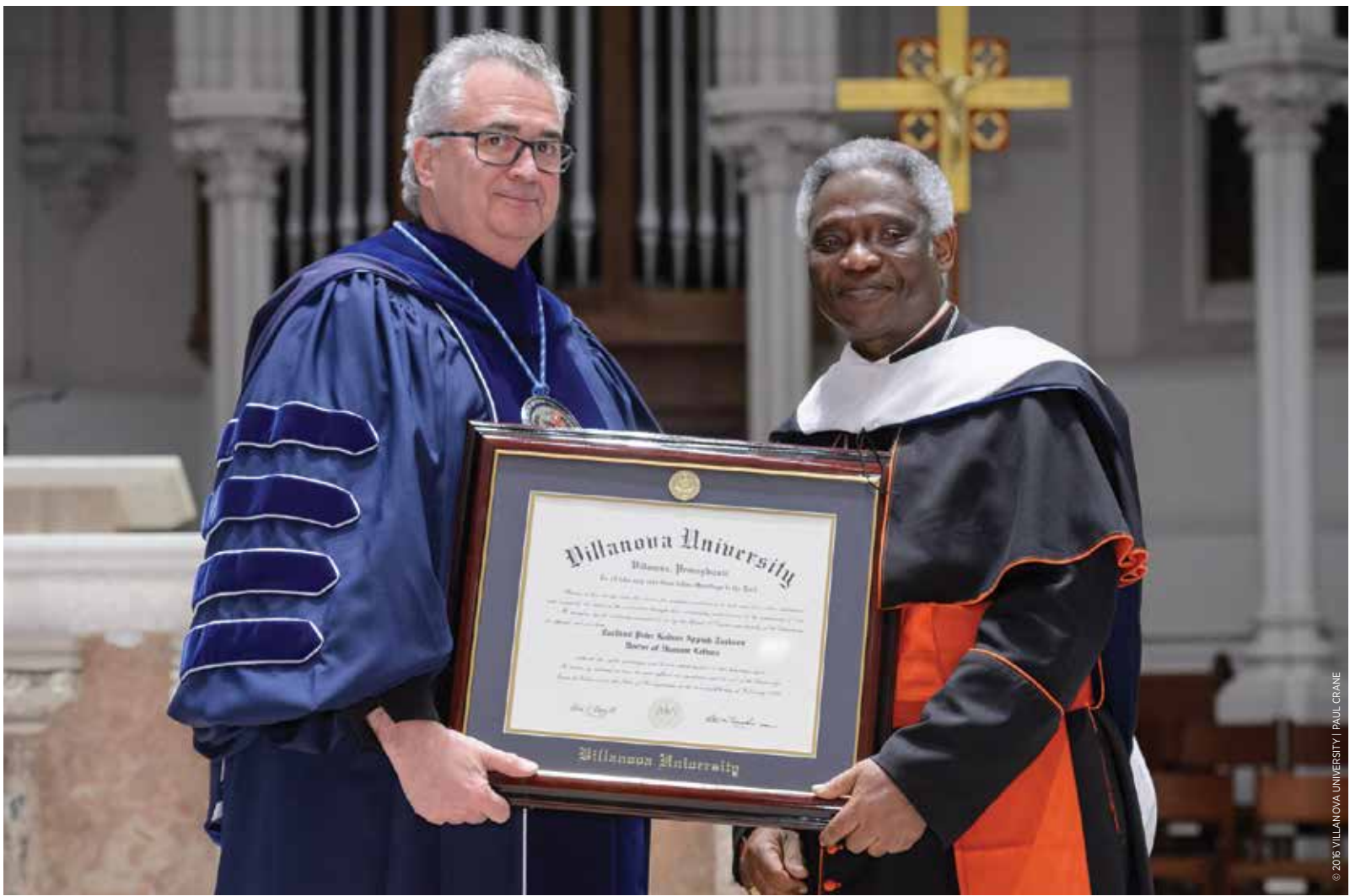
2. Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 66.  
3. *Ibid.*, n. 90.  
4. *Ibid.*, n. 95.  
5. *Ibid.*, n. 73.  
6. *Ibid.*, n. 2.  
7. Turkson, 2016.

8. Cardinal Peter Turkson, *Trócaire 2015 Lenten Lecture* delivered at Saint Patrick’s Pontifical University, Maynooth, Ireland on March 5, 2015, quoting from the homily given at the Inaugural Mass of Pope Francis, St. Peter’s Basilica on March 19, 2013. Used with permission.

9. Turkson, 2016.  
10. Turkson, 2015.  
11. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 188.  
12. Turkson, 2016, quoting from *Laudato si'*, n. 232.







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utilitarian eye of the economist. His response was one of awe, wonder and fraternity. He sang of ‘Brother Sun’ and ‘Sister Moon.’ ...In other words, his response was that of reverence—of a deep and relational respect based on kinship and fraternity, the kinship with God, our neighbor and the land spoken of in the book of *Genesis* and praised throughout the wisdom literature and the psalms.”<sup>10</sup>

The cumulative thrust of these exhortations is that true service to God requires more than being a good steward. It demands a **new solidarity**, “the creation of a new mind-set which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.”<sup>11</sup>

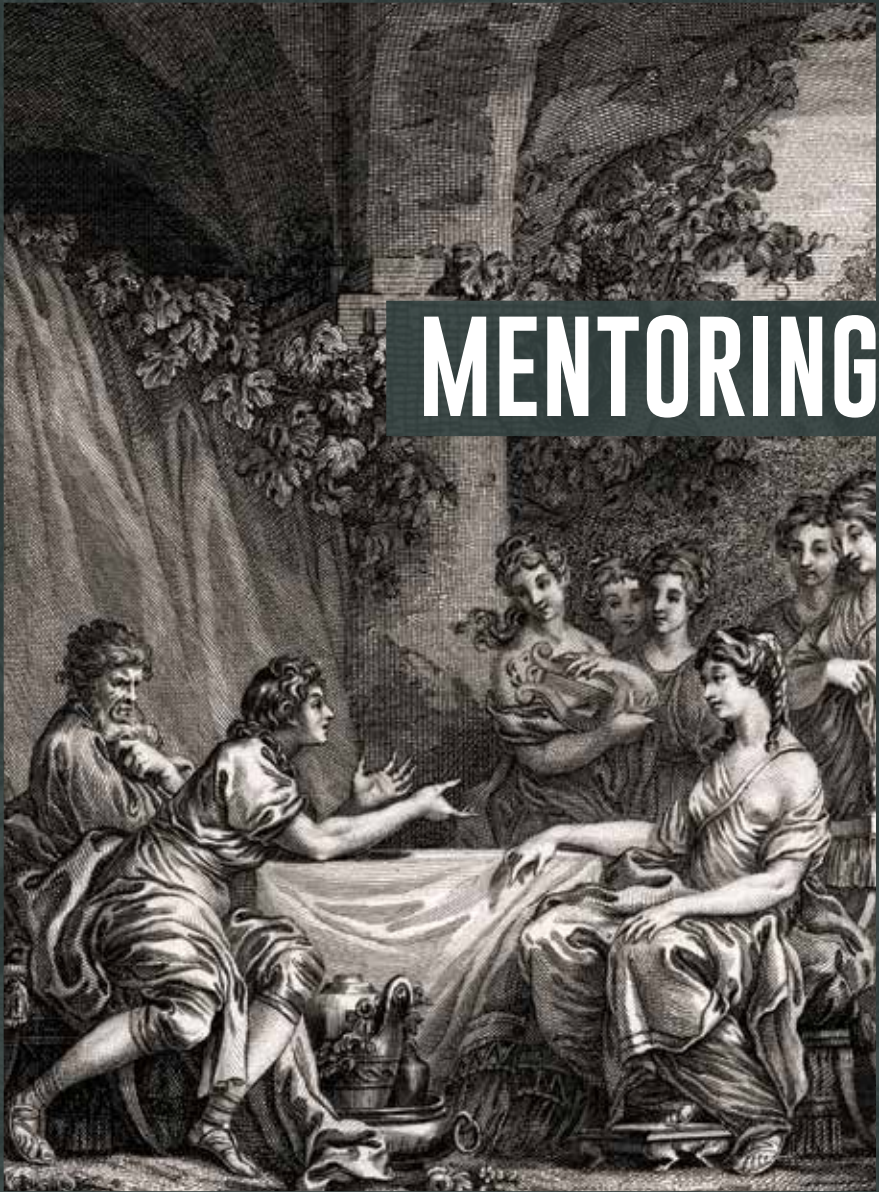
### Caring Enough to Change the World

Service learning is a cornerstone of Villanova’s curriculum across all colleges and schools. Perhaps positioned best to address environmental concerns is the College of Engineering, where students apply the engineering skills they learn in the classroom to benefit communities around the world. The College has established strong collaborative relationships and ongoing projects in many countries. Among them are:

- Burundi, providing open source cell phone and light chargers
- Cambodia, using robots to visualize and remove unexploded ordnance

- Honduras, building schools, dormitories and other educational facilities
- Madagascar, developing sustainable, safe water supplies
- Nicaragua, providing cellular communication to health service providers
- Panama, implementing solar technologies to address energy needs.

As Villanovans construct, connect and clean, “relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges... In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to all of us.”<sup>12</sup> ❤️



*Telemachus Accompanied by Mentor Speaking with Calypso*  
The Copper-Plate Magazine, London, 1774. Artist: J. Colly.

## MENTORING

## FOR FAITH & LEARNING

Common outcomes of mentoring appear to be 1) transfer of knowledge skills, 2) assimilation of organizational and/or professional values and 3) increased confidence and self-esteem.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, the most familiar mentoring model may be the apprentice. In its early form, a young laborer who showed promise was taken on by a master craftsman, who taught the apprentice over the course of months, even years until the apprentice developed sufficient skills and abilities to stand on his own.

**I**n the *Odyssey* by Homer, Mentor, friend to Odysseus, is charged with the education, training and personal development of the king’s son Telemachus. The relationship that develops between Mentor and Telemachus helps the young boy “meet the challenges he faced through life.”<sup>1</sup> Many claim that it is from this story that Mentor became the inspiration for the contemporary concept of “mentoring.”

The value of mentoring has been the object of much discussion and research in the academy. Defined most concisely, a mentor is “a person who achieves a one-to-one developmental relationship with a learner, and is one who the learner identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place.”<sup>2</sup>

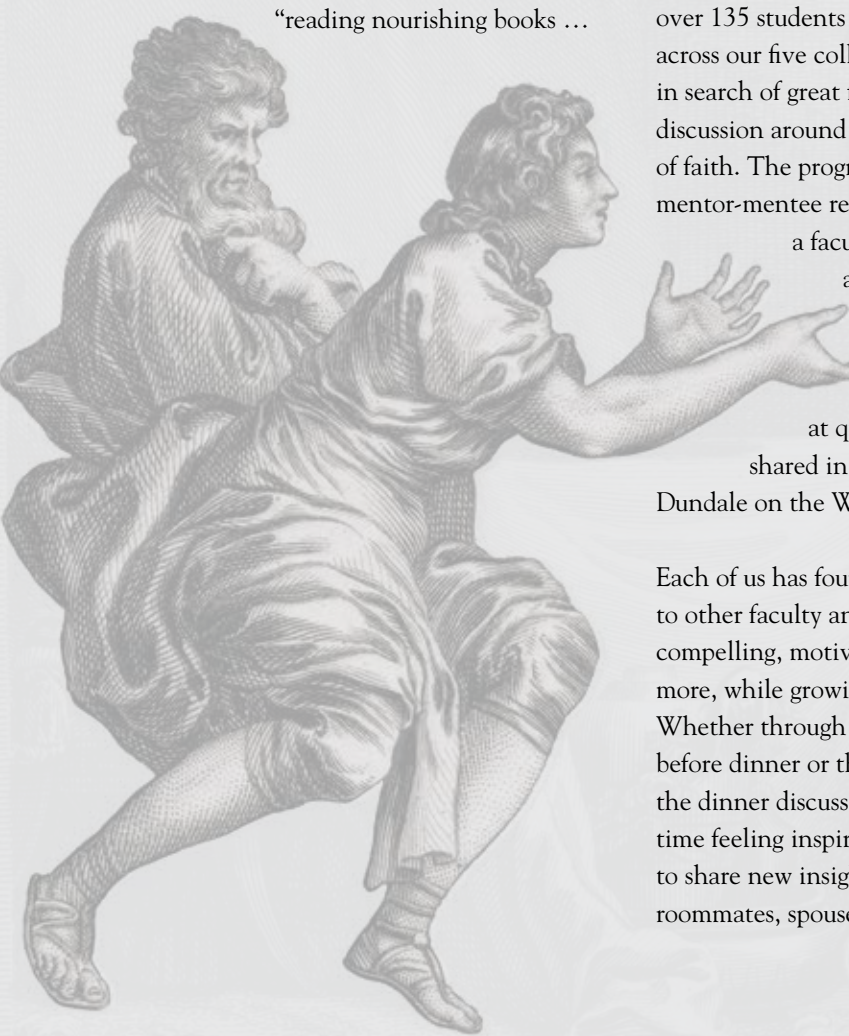
More recently, a variety of mentoring models have been quantified and studied. Among them are the “cloning” model, coaching, nurturing, and friendship models.<sup>4</sup> Each references differing degrees of knowledge transfer and personal closeness.<sup>5</sup>



AUGUSTINE ON MENTORING

Edward Smither contends that while Augustine left behind no “manual” for mentoring spiritual leaders, he was nonetheless an exemplary mentor, who prepared future leaders for the Church. Further, Smither claims that “many aspects of [Augustine’s] mentoring are instructive for modern mentors.”<sup>6</sup> He lists seven elements in Augustine’s mentoring strategy: 1) focus on continuous study, 2) practice in questioning, answering and dialogue, 3) training for debate, 4) frequent and easy access to him and his resources, 5) accountability, 6) delegation and 7) collaboration.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, Smither cites Possidius in recalling that Augustine used the two common meals of the day to institute a form of “table talk.”<sup>8</sup>

These mealtime discussions included “reading nourishing books ...



addressing philosophical or theological questions ... discussing the events of their day ... sharing victories and failures, finding renewed courage and vision to carry on.”<sup>9</sup>

MODELING  
AUGUSTINE’S TABLE TALK

Eric Ragone (Finance, ’16) Mary Frances Roth (Classics/Humanities, ’16) Sarah Stankiewicz (Nursing, ’16) and Tim Monahan (VSB, Faculty) are participants in the Faith and Learning Scholars Program at Villanova. Here is their story.

A few years ago, the four of us became new members of the Faith and Learning Scholars Program at Mission and Ministry’s Center for Faith and Learning. We learned that this program gathers a community of over 135 students and faculty from across our five colleges and schools in search of great fellowship and discussion around living out a life of faith. The program establishes a mentor-mentee relationship between a faculty member and assigned students. The required task is to discuss selected readings at quarterly dinners, shared in the mansion at Dundale on the West Campus.

Each of us has found being exposed to other faculty and student ideas compelling, motivating us to learn more, while growing our faith. Whether through the article we read before dinner or through aspects of the dinner discussion, we leave each time feeling inspired and motivated to share new insights with our roommates, spouses and friends.

“COMMUNITY IS A PLACE WHERE THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH TAKES PLACE IN A CLIMATE OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP, WHERE ONE CAN EXPERIENCE THAT TRUTH IS NEITHER YOURS NOR MINE, SO THAT IT CAN BELONG TO BOTH OF US.”<sup>10</sup>

While faculty members are formally assigned as the “mentor” to student scholars, we’ve found that the mentor-mentee relationship is very equal—reciprocal really—in terms of contribution to one another’s quest for integration of faith and learning. Students find that faculty have unique perspectives, resulting primarily from their age and experience as an academic or professional. Likewise, faculty find that student participants enhance discussion by bringing modern and youthful insights to the table. We especially value the opportunity to foster relationships among students and faculty, who do not share the same academic discipline. The resulting dynamic is truly something special.

Students and faculty marvel at the openness of each group to new ideas, passion for learning, and commitment to integrating faith based principles into their everyday lives. It’s really thrilling to be part of a learning experience built around openness, trust and a commitment to faith based learning, tied to principles established by St. Augustine many centuries ago. Our “table talk” gives both students and faculty an appreciation of the struggles each faces in balancing career ambitions with faith and learning, especially when dealing with the pressures of the modern world. We feel that this program really gives us

the tools to maintain what we learn on faith and learning wherever life may lead us in the future.

“ALL KINDS OF THINGS REJOICED MY SOUL IN THEIR COMPANY, TO TALK AND LAUGH, TO DO OTHER KINDNESSES, TO READ PLEASANT BOOKS TOGETHER, TO PASS FROM LIGHTEST JESTING, TO TALK OF DEEPEST THINGS AND BACK AGAIN, TO DIFFER WITHOUT RANCOR, TO TEACH EACH OTHER, AND TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. THESE AND SUCH THINGS KINDLED A FLAME THAT FUSED OUR VERY SOULS TOGETHER AND MADE US ONE OUT OF MANY.”<sup>11</sup>

A recent reading that seemed to have a significant impact on both students and faculty was one that addressed what it means to pursue a *scholarly vocation*.<sup>12</sup> This article focused readers on the importance of living life as “an unending search for meaning and a deep coherence to life, a consistency in one’s commitments, as well as receptivity to God’s presence.” By looking specifically at stories from four Villanova professors, we learned from people that we know and admire that it is possible to add a spiritual dimension to work and experience more personal enjoyment as a result. Their stories helped us understand that viewing work as a vocation strengthens one’s personal connection to any task. Each person at the table was able to relate to the stories and approach the topic from his or her



Left to Right: Senior scholars Eric Ragone, Sarah Stankiewicz and Mary Frances Roth with mentor Dr. Tim Monahan at the Spring Dinner Dialogue sponsored by the Center for Faith and Learning.

distinct, individual background. It was so valuable to listen to a variety of perspectives and personal stories, all emerging from this common reading. The article provoked thoughtful discussion and self-reflection, while challenging us to consider something we had not imagined before. Ultimately, we left energized to live more meaningfully in all aspects of our lives—a lesson that will stay with us far beyond the dining room tables at Dundale.

“WHEN DEER CROSS A RIVER, EACH ONE CARRIES ON THEIR BACKS THE HEAD OF THE ONE BEHIND IT, WHILE IT RESTS ITS HEAD ON THE BACK OF THE ONE IN FRONT. IN THIS WAY, SUPPORTING AND HELPING ONE ANOTHER, THEY ARE THUS ABLE TO NAVIGATE WIDE RIVERS SAFELY, UNTIL THEY REACH THE FIRMNESS OF LAND TOGETHER.”<sup>13</sup>

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“Oh what **great profit** you gain  
when you are **GENEROUS TO THE POOR.**  
Give a coin and **receive a kingdom.**  
Give bread of wheat and **receive the bread of life.**  
Give an earthly good  
and **receive an everlasting one.**

**FOR CHRIST HIMSELF**  
**comes to you in the poor man**  
and receives what you give in  
**HIS OWN PERSON.”**

*Thomas of Villanova, Ash Wednesday, Sermon 2, 28-29*