

# **TOLLE LEGE STUDY GUIDE**

## **INTRODUCTION (vii-xi)**

*Reflection: What does “tolle lege” mean? What is the value of the phrase today?*

## **PART I: WHO ARE WE? (1-57)**

*Reflection: Why did you choose Villanova over other schools? What set it apart?*

The search for truth (*gaudium de veritate*) is not an uncommon goal of educational institutions. But being Catholic and Augustinian, Villanova goes further.

### **Catholic University (2)**

- Free search for whole truth about nature, each person and God
- Relationship between faith and reason
- Christian presence and awareness of living in a sacramental world
- Commitment to service as a way of being in the world
- Integration of knowledge, ethical concerns and theological perspectives

### **Catholic Intellectual Tradition (2-6)**

- The interplay of faith and reason throughout the history of the Church
  - Examples of historical figures who “all sought to understand and express the active presence of God’s Word in the Church, human mind, nature and in their own lives”
  - Examples of contemporary writers, thinkers, artists and others in whom the tradition lives on

*Reflection: The lists include people who perhaps wouldn’t immediately come to mind as expressing God’s Word. How do we express God’s Word?*

- A distinctive way of thinking and living: sacramental worldview
  - Reliance on search for God in all things
  - Thought and action in concert with the will of God
  - Active engagement with the world
  - Solidarity with the poor
  - Commitment to and collaboration for the common good

*Reflection: “Today, more than ever, there is an urgent need for educated men and women who can fuse religious conviction and professional competence in the face of the most*

*profound inversions of human values Western society has ever faced” (3–4). Why has this inversion happened? How does this call to action make you feel? And what can we/you do about it?*

### **Augustinian (6–9)**

- *Veritas*, or pursuit of truth: *Intellege ut credas; crede ut intellegas* (understand in order to believe; believe in order to understand)
- *Unitas*, or common sense of purpose and unity: building community, service learning and volunteering
- *Caritas*, or heart ablaze with God’s love: “The root of love must be within; nothing but good can come forth from this root”

*Reflection: Augustine’s understanding is that “faith is not just belief in truths. More than that, it is a way of seeing, a unique lens through which to view the world that comes from a discerning heart” (6–7). How are these approaches to faith different?*

### **Our Inspiration (11–36)**

- St. Augustine
- St. Thomas of Villanova
- St. Monica
- St. Rita of Cascia
- St. Nicholas of Tolentino
- St. Clare of Montefalco
- Gregor Mendel, OSA

*Reflection: Read the descriptions of these inspirational people. Highlight the anecdotes and specifics that strike you as significant, that you admire or that give you pause. Whose story speaks loudest to you and why? What about their lives and situations might be relevant for you?*

### **Augustinians in the United States and the Beginnings of Villanova (40–57)**

*Note.* Visit the lobby of St. Mary Hall on West Campus to see mosaics depicting the arrival of the Augustinians in Philadelphia.

*Reflection: “Out of this tragedy was born the second Augustinian foundation, Villanova College” (41). Explain this statement, and consider the significance that, out of the ashes of religious hatred and intolerance, Villanova was born.*

## PART II: HOW DO WE DO IT?

### Augustinian Spirituality (59–153)

“Augustinian spirituality is rooted in the life of the mind and grows by the love of the heart. It is interior and social, involving the individual and society.”—Mary Clark, RSCJ

The conclusion to the section “What Is Spirituality?” states, “Augustine’s vast, complex and sometimes contradictory writing make summarizing his spiritual vision difficult. Through this brief sketch, several distinguishing features of his spirituality emerge” (65).

*Reflection: With an artful eye, read over the distinguishing features of Augustinian spirituality (61–65). Focus on words, sentiments and images meaningful to you, and create your own “depiction” (poetry, prose, visual art, etc.) of Augustinian spirituality.*

### The Rule of Saint Augustine: For Life at Villanova University (66–82)

*Reflection: What is a Rule? Why do we need Rules? Do we?*

- **Four Great Rules of the Church**

- Rule of St. Basil
- Rule of St. Benedict
- Rule of St. Augustine\*
- Rule of St. Francis

\*Known for its simplicity, moderation and care for those in need

- **About the Rule**

- In year 397, Augustine wrote a rule of common life for lay Christians about living in an intentional religious community.
- At its core is “being of one mind and heart on the way to God.” Its fundamental message is love.
- Message is still relevant today and works perfectly for a university community.
  - Principle One: Humility and Harmony
  - Principle Two: Prayer and Interiority
  - Principle Three: Moderation and Self Denial
  - Principle Four: Fraternal Correction and Mutual Responsibility
  - Principle Five: The Common Good and Care of the Individual
  - Principle Six: Asking for Pardon and Extending Forgiveness
  - Principle Seven: Leadership and Obedience

*Reflection: Think about principles you may embody and how you can strive to embody others. What would our university be like if every person lived Augustine’s Rule every day?*

### **Teaching and Learning at Villanova (83–89)**

*Reflection: Learning is the pursuit of wisdom, not solely the pursuit of academic excellence. What is the difference? What does wisdom mean? Do you know wise people? What makes them wise?*

*Reflection: What role do your parents/guardians play (or have they played) in your education?*

*Reflection: How do you see the relationship between teacher and student? Who is the ideal student? Who is the ideal instructor? How do you learn best?*

*Reflection: Do you earn a grade or receive a grade? Is it all about the grade? Do you feel pressure for a good grade? How would you differentiate between information and understanding?*

*Reflection: How do you apply Veritas, Unitas, Caritas to what you experience in the classroom?*

### **PART III: WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE? (155–60)**

*Final reflection: Whether or not Villanova's mission is what initially drew you to Villanova, consider how it might help you live a better life.*