PREPARATION MEETING - 1

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Pellegrinaggio Agostiniano in Italia is a prayerful journey designed to assist participating pilgrims with their understanding of Villanova University’s Catholic identity and Augustinian heritage.

The structure of this collaborative effort provides pilgrims with opportunities to experience the three primary values that provide the framework for the mission of an Augustinian institution.

Veritas – engaging in a restless search for Truth and Meaning.

Unitas – striving to be One in Mind and Heart on the way to God.

Caritas – building up The City of God through love of neighbor.
The World of St. Augustine: Roman North Africa and Italy: 395 - 430 A.D.

The Geographical Origins of the Augustinian Friars: Tuscany, Italy 1244/1256 A.D.
The Legacy of St. Augustine and the Life of Augustinian Friars

Places, Themes and Concepts

Cassago Brianza          Friendship and Happiness
Milano                   Conversion and Baptism
Pavia                    Legacy and Heritage
San Gimignano            Community and Hospitality
Toscana                  Interiority and Humility
Roma                     Relationship with the Universal Church
Ostia Antica             Life and Influence of St. Monica
Genazzano                Devotion to Mary and the Saints
FROM SCRIPTURE

ACTS 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common, they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to the breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

ACTS 4:32-34

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

FROM THE RULE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Before all else, dear brothers, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.

1. The following are the precepts we order you living in the monastery to observe.

2. The main purpose for you having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart.

3. Call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one’s need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that they had all things in common and distribution was made to each one according to each one’s need (4:32, 35).
FROM THE SERMONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

WE ARE PILGRIMS (SERMON 169.15,18)

You can see that we are travelers.

You ask, “What does traveling mean?” I'll tell you very briefly; it means forging ahead, in case you should possibly not understand, and start walking sluggishly. Forge ahead, my brothers and sisters; always examine yourselves without self-deception, without flattery, without buttering yourselves up. After all, there's nobody inside you before whom you need feel ashamed, or whom you need to impress. There is someone there, but one who is pleased with humility; let him test you. And you, too, test yourself. Always be dissatisfied with what you are, if you want to arrive at what you are not yet. Because wherever you are satisfied with yourself, there you have stuck. If, though, you say, “That's enough, that's the lot,” then you've even perished. Always add some more, always keep on walking, always forge ahead.

FROM CONFESSIONS

CASSAGO BRIANZA/ CASSICIA CUM

3, 5. Verecundus was racked with anxiety over this good thing that had befallen us, because he saw himself being distanced from our fellowship by the bonds that unbreakably held him. He was not yet a Christian, and though his wife was a believer, it was precisely she who trammeled him most rigidly and restrained him from the path on which we had set out; for he declared that he was unwilling to be a Christian in any way other than that from which he was debarred. In spite of this he kindly suggested that as long as we were there we should stay on his estate. At the resurrection of the just you will surely reward him, Lord, since you have granted him already his allotted place among the just; for later on, when we had gone to Rome, he was overtaken by an illness, in the course of which he became a believing Christian in our absence, and in that state departed this life. So it was that you showed mercy not only to him but to us as well, sparing us the unbearable grief of being forced to recall his outstanding kindliness toward us while at the same time regarding him as an outsider to your flock. Thanks be to you, our God! We belong to you. You prove it by the exhortations and consolations you provide for us. Because you are faithful to your promises you are even now rewarding Verecundus for that country house of his at Cassiciacum, where we found rest in you from the hurly-burly of the world. In exchange for his estate you now endow him with the delights of your verdant paradise for ever, since you pardoned him for his earthly sins by setting him on the mountain of rich pasture, your mountain, the mount of plenty.
To Cassiciacum with his mother, son, and friends

4, 7. At last the day arrived which was to set me free in fact from the profession of rhetor, as I was free already in spirit. And so it was done; you detached my tongue from that bond whence you had already delivered my heart, and I blessed you as I joyfully set out for the villa with all my company. The evidence of what I did there in the way of literary work is to be found in the books that record disputations held between those there present, and deliberations alone with myself in your sight; it was work unquestionably devoted by now to your service, but still with a whiff of scholastic pride about it, like combatants still panting in the interval. What I wrote to Nebridius, who was absent, my letters to him testify.

When could I ever find time enough to record all your generous favours to us during that period—especially now that I am hurrying on to greater matters still? My memory harks back to our sojourn there, and it is my delight, Lord, to acknowledge before you what inward goads you employed to tame me, how you laid low the mountains and hills of my proud intellect and made of me an even plain, how you straightened my winding ways and smoothed my rugged patches, and how you also brought my heart's brother, Alypius, to submit to the name of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

FROM DE BEATA VITA (ON THE HAPPY LIFE)

On the Ides of November fell my birthday. After a light breakfast enough not to impede our powers of thinking, I asked all those of us who, not only on that day but every day, were living together to have a congenial session in the bathing quarters, a quiet place for the season. Assembled there— for without hesitation I present them to your kindness, though only by name—were first, our mother, to whose merit, in my opinion, I owe everything that I have; my brother Navigius; Trygetius and Licentius, fellow citizens and my pupils; Lastidianus and Rusticus, relatives of mine, ...also my son, Adeodatus, the youngest of all, was with us, who promises great success, unless my love deceives me.

(De Beata Vita 1:6)
SISTERS AND BROTHERS,
as we set out, may we remind ourselves
of the reasons for our resolve to go on this pilgrimage.
The places we intend to visit
are monuments to the person of St. Augustine of Hippo
and to the countless Augustinians nuns and friars
who were inspired by his love of God and neighbor.
The early Jerusalem community's example
of sharing all things in common
and of striving to be of one mind and heart, intent upon God,
inspired and motivated Augustine
to write his Rule of life
which in turn is intended to inspire those who follow it
to walk the way of Augustine.
May he be our companion on this journey.
Let us bring the gift of our friendship
to those whom we will meet along the way in Italy.
May we see in them our sisters and brothers
as they share their hospitality with us.

And so, let us pray:
GRACIOUS AND LOVING GOD,
You are never far away from those who seek You.
You are the God of Abraham and Sarah
for You led them on a journey to a new life.
You are the God of Moses and Miriam
for you guided them
to lead Your chosen people to the promised land.
You are the God of Jesus
Who proclaimed that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life.
You are the God of Augustine and Monica
for You gently guided them to seek You above all.

You have given each one of us hearts that want to be happy
and You have placed within us
the desire to search for You as we live our daily lives.
Quiet the fears and distractions of our hearts each day
so that we may listen to the movement of Your Spirit
and may listen to Your guidance.

Remain with us, good God, during this Augustinian pilgrimage:
shelter us with Your protection by day,
give us the light of Your grace by night,
and as our Companion on this journey,
bring us to our destinations in safety.

With Augustine we pray: "Lord, You know me. Let me know You." Amen.
The Confessions, X, 1