

PRESENZA AGOSTINIANA

Digital Edition

March / April 2025 - no 2



APOSTOLATE

Integral Part of the Life
of the Order

MISSION

Apostolate in the Parishes
of Bafut and Araucária

SCHOOL

Apostolate among
the Youth

PRISON

Hope and Mercy
to those who want to start again

INTERNET

New Field
of Apostolate





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Editor-in-Chief

Calogero Ferlisi (P. Gabriele, oad)

Editorial and Administrative Office

Curia generale dell'Ordine degli Agostiniani Scalzi

Piazza Ottavilla, 1 - 00152 - Roma

e-mail: curiagen@oadnet.org, pec: curiagen@pec.it

Phone: +39 06 589 6345, WhatsApp: +39 324 089 3400

Cover, layout and publication

Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, oad

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EDITORIAL

Apostolate as an Integral Part of the Life of our Order

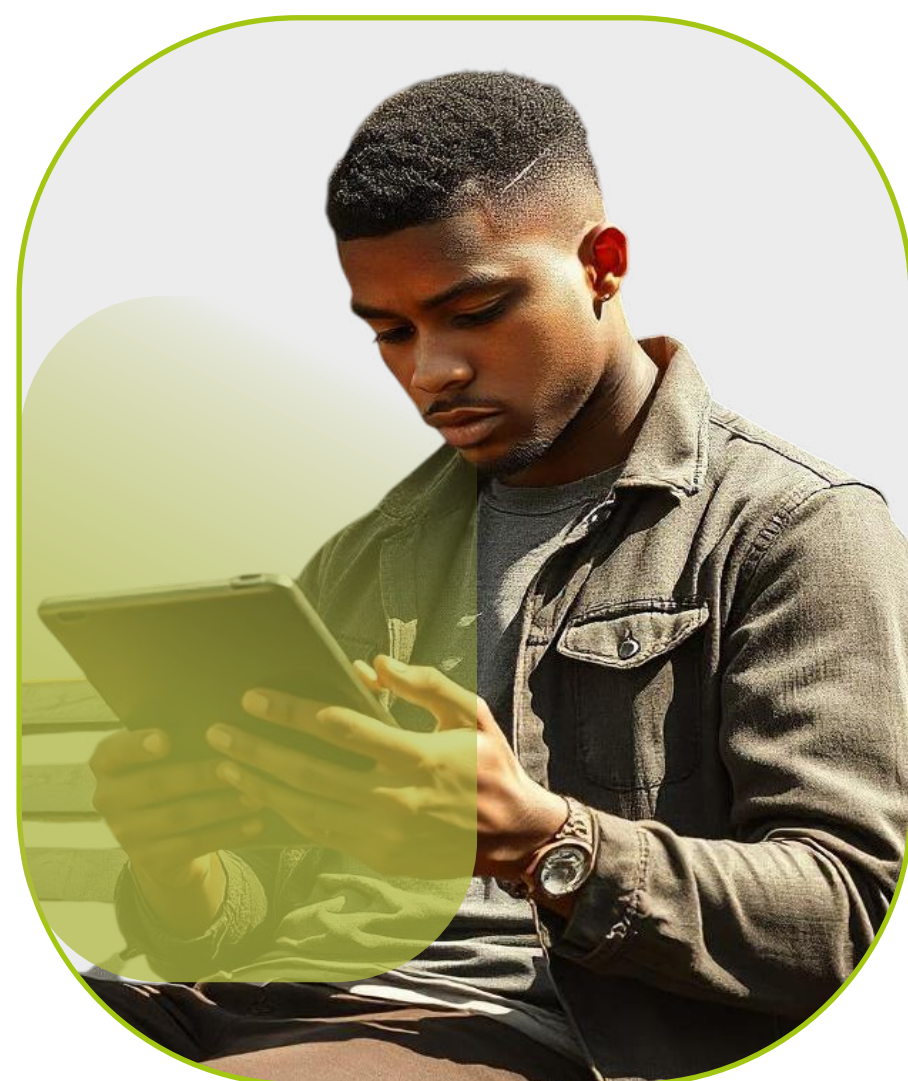
Dear readers,

the Apostolate holds a central place in the life of our Order. It is not just one of the many activities we carry out, but a concrete manifestation of our charism.

In this issue of *Presenza Agostiniana*, the articles highlight how our charism is expressed today in many different ways: within the religious community, we cultivate fraternity as the first field of Apostolate; in the Parish, we accompany the growth of faith and Christian life; in missions, we bring the light of the Gospel to those living in difficult circumstances; in schools, we serve the new generations through education; in prisons, we offer hope and mercy to those in need of a fresh start; through social media, we strive to communicate with as many people as possible, wherever they may be.

Apostolate and religious life are not in opposition, but rather they complement each other. Apostolic commitment renews our vocation and calls us to walk each day in fidelity to the Gospel and to the Discalced Augustinian spirituality.

Happy reading.



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Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, oad
@freidiones

PASTORAL LIFE OF THE DISCALCED AUGUSTINIANS

Fundamental Element of our Charism



Abstract: *the Apostolate is a fundamental aspect of the mission of the Discalced Augustinians and represents a natural expression of their charism and community life.*

The Apostolate is born within the religious community itself, where fraternal witness, shared prayer, and spiritual formation form the foundation for a credible proclamation of the Gospel.

From this communal root, the Apostolate extends into many different areas: in dioceses and parishes, in schools, hospitals, and prisons, in missions, and even on social media.

In every setting, the Apostolate aims to be a living, discreet, and profound presence of Christ's charity, following the example of the Apostles.

The Discalced Augustinians lead an intense pastoral life, inspired by the spirituality of Saint Augustine and the mission of the Church.

For our religious, proclaiming the Gospel and serving others is not merely a matter of practical or organizational activity, but flows from a deep and personal relationship with God.

This spiritual bond is the foundation of every action. Our Constitutions affirm that the true sacrifice lies in performing good works to unite oneself with God in holy communion (Const. 53).

This belief guides every moment of our lives, compelling us to sincerely love God and our neighbor, and gives meaning to all our apostolic commitment,

which is expressed in many areas: in parishes, hospitals, schools and universities, missions, in welcoming foreigners, in spiritual retreats, in the publication of texts, in social media, and in numerous social initiatives. In every field, our service is animated by a deep spiritual dedication according to our charism: *Joyfully to serve the Most High in spirit of humility.*

1. Witnessing Jesus through Our Lives

The term “**Apostolate**” holds a deeply theological meaning: it refers to participating in the very mission of Christ, sent by the Father, and passed on to the Apostles and, through them, to the whole Church. The Apostolate is a work of evangelization and charity that arises from communion with God and translates into concrete service to others.

The way we live our mission as Discalced Augustinians fits fully into this vision: we draw direct inspiration from Jesus and the Apostles.

Our Apostolate is not merely an external activity, but above all it is born from a profound and continuous dialogue with God in prayer.

Our Constitutions invite us to live every form of service as Jesus did: with a

spirit of prayer, fraternity, and love (Const. 54). This makes our actions genuine and meaningful, the fruit of an inner life rooted in God. Even the simplest and most ordinary gestures, when lived in this spirit, become tools to build the “temple of God,” a community founded on love and communion.

For us, evangelizing does not mean only proclaiming with words, but above all bearing witness with our lives to what we believe in. And this is not easy. Living every day in coherence with the Gospel, amid the challenges and demands of our apostolic work, requires faithfulness, patience, and humility. We are called to be close to the people of God and to distinguish ourselves not by outward appearance, but by the virtues we sincerely cultivate: kindness, justice, gentleness.

Wearing a religious habit or reciting prayers is not enough, we must become, day by day, true witnesses of the Gospel.



Through Jesus Christ
we have received grace
and Apostolate
to bring about the obedience of faith
among all the Gentiles,
for the glory of his name
(Rom. 1:5).



2. Characteristics of Our Apostolate

a) Internal Apostolate within the Religious Community

A very important aspect of Discalced Augustinian spirituality is the value of community. According to our Constitutions, the first place where a brother is called to live out his Apostolate is within his own religious community (Const. 57).

This is because witness begins with fraternal life, through the ability to pray together, to share joys and difficulties, to forgive one another, and to walk in unity. A community that lives in peace, prayer, and harmony is the first proclamation of the Gospel, a concrete example for the world.

b) Local Apostolate within the Diocese

Discalced Augustinians are called to live fully inserted into the local Church (Diocese), with respect for and obedience to the diocesan Bishop: “love this Church, be in this Church, be this Church” (Const. 58).

At the same time, their pastoral horizon is not limited to the local reality but extends to the universal Church: “if you want to love Christ, extend your charity to the whole world” (Const. 59).



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c) Universal Apostolate in Communion with the Church

Proclaiming the Gospel is a fundamental part of our mission as Discalced Augustinians, and this is carried out in various ways. **Evangelizing** does not simply mean speaking about God, but also communicating His love through preaching, the celebration of the sacraments, and the use of modern means of communication.

Our Constitutions remind us that it is important to use every tool at our disposal to bring the message of the Gospel to people's hearts. For this reason, we are called to value what is known as **good press**: books, magazines, pam-



phlets, and materials that help form the Christian conscience, while also learning to make good use of new technologies such as the internet, social media, and other digital channels (Const. 60). All of this serves to reach the people of God wherever they may be, especially in places where the physical presence of the Church is weaker or more difficult.

In particular, priests have a special responsibility: to celebrate the sacraments with great care, respect, and attention, that is, with passion and dedication, but also with prudence, meaning with balance and wisdom.

The sacraments are not just rituals to perform; they are significant moments in which God draws near to people.

For this reason, it is essential that they are celebrated with depth and preparation, so they may truly bear fruit in the lives of the faithful (Const. 61).

3. Some Examples of Apostolate

a) Parish

The Parish is a privileged setting for our Apostolate, where faith is lived concretely, the Christian life is celebrated, and moments of fraternity are built.

The Parish is not only a place where religious activities are carried out, but a true school of communion, where people learn to live according to the Gospel, day by day.

Our Constitutions emphasize that the Parish is an integral part of the mission of the Diocese and of the universal Church (Const. 62). Therefore, our involvement in it is not merely organizational, but spiritual and missionary: it is a concrete way to serve the people of God and accompany them on their journey of faith.

b) Secular Fraternities

The Secular Fraternities are groups of laypeople who, while living in the world,

are inspired by the spirituality of the Discalced Augustinians and strive to embody it in their daily lives, in their families, work, and society.

They are like a "leaven of Christian perfection" (Const. 63), because through their quiet yet effective witness, they bring the Gospel into places where religious members often cannot reach. Accompanying and supporting these fraternities is a valuable task for us, as they represent a bridge between consecrated life and the daily reality of society. Together, religious and lay, we walk toward salvation, each according to their own vocation, yet united by the same love for the Kingdom of God.

c) Missions

The Church is missionary by its very nature, and we Discalced Augustinians participate in this vocation by bringing the Gospel to various parts of the world.

Our Constitutions call us to form religious ready for mission, especially in places where the Church is more fragile or where pastoral needs are more urgent (Const. 64-65).

Being a missionary today means knowing how to read the signs of the times and finding new, creative, and courageous ways to proclaim the Gospel, speaking to people's hearts with languages and methods suited to contemporary reality. Our friars are present in many missions around the world, facing cultural, social, and spiritual challenges. In Thailand, Paraguay, Cameroon, Indonesia, Vietnam, and India, they carry out evangelization efforts intertwined with commitments to justice, education, and solidarity.

Our presence goes beyond preaching; it becomes a concrete witness of fraternity and closeness. For us, living the

mission is not just performing a service, it is embodying a lifestyle founded on faith, humility, and love for all peoples.

d) Affiliation

Affiliation is an official and deeply meaningful gesture of **recognition**, through which the Order welcomes one or more individuals who share a strong spiritual bond with our communities and walk with us in faith, spirituality, and charism.

Through affiliation, these individuals participate in the **spiritual benefits** of the Order and, in a certain way, are included in our religious family, even if they do not live the consecrated life. It is a sign of gratitude and communion toward those who support us with affection, cooperation, and closeness (Dir. 67).

e) Teaching

Teaching in schools, colleges, and universities is a valuable and concrete form of Apostolate. It is not only about transmitting knowledge, but about educating in the faith and in human and Christian values.

Our confreres who are involved in teaching must be well-prepared (academically and spiritually) and able to live in harmony between culture and faith, progress and tradition.

Their presence is a living witness of the Gospel and can awaken in young

people a desire for a fully Christian life and, in some cases, even a vocation to religious life (Dir. 69–70).

4. Conclusion

Apostolate is an integral part of the life and charism of the Discalced Augustinians. Prayer, community life, and listening to the Word of God are the foundation of everything we do.

It is not just a matter of “doing” many things, but of sincerely living a life of service to others, driven by the desire to respond to God’s love.

Our Apostolate is important because it allows us to bring the Gospel into everyday life, across many **different settings**: parishes, schools, mission territories, social media, and many others.

Every opportunity is a chance to be close to people, to support them on their journey of faith, and to help them feel God’s love. We do this with a spirit of humility, fraternity, and joy, following the teachings of Saint Augustine.

Today, Apostolate faces **many challenges**: the decline of faith, social issues, indifference, loneliness, and more. This is why it must be creative, courageous, and capable of using new tools and languages to reach people’s hearts, always remaining faithful to the message of the Gospel.





Fr. Serge Mpanga, OAD

COMMUNITY AT THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION

Apostolate in the Saint Joseph Parish



Abstract: Saint Joseph Parish was founded in 1938 in a remote rural area, with eight mission stations and Christian communities, often lacking catechists and facing limited economic resources.

The Parish is very active: daily Masses are celebrated, the sick are visited, and religious celebrations are organized in all the mission stations. The priests par-

ticipate with dedication in these activities, even in the most remote areas.

Pastoral work is inspired by the spirituality of the Discalced Augustinians, centered on fraternal love, community life, and the search for God, with a strong focus on prayer, the sacraments, and moments of spiritual reflection, following in the footsteps of Saint Augustine.

1. The Origins of the Mission and the Reality of the Parish

The Catholic Mission/ Church entered the grassfield in 1912 when two priests from the society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from Netherlands arrived. Their work was interrupted by World War I and Babadji was abandoned in 1915.

By then, Bafut had not yet embraced the Catholic faith. When Bafut men returned from the Coast and Fernando Po in 1919 they spread the Catholic faith which they had embraced there.

In 1938, St Joseph Parish was erected with Rev. Fr. Francis Kelly as pioneer Parish Priest.

The visible Church is concretized in local communities, among which the Parish has a prominent place. In fact, it offers a shining example of a communitarian Apostolate; a cell of the Diocese, it joins forces with diocesan initiatives; sensitive to the needs of the people of God on earth, it contributes to the good of the missionary Church in the world (Const. 62).

The Parish ministry is a permanent mission. The religious, assigned to this ministry, should strive to form and develop a Community of faith, worship and charity. They should be committed in knowing the population entrusted, not forgetting any category of persons. They should arouse and animate Apostolate of the lay people, for the Community is truly perfect when the hierarchy is flanked and collaborated with an authentic laity; the evangelization of all human realities is to be taken care of (Dir. 63, §1).

The Parish is not in an Urban Area and has mostly only the local indigens. The Parish has a very difficult terrain and most of the out stations can only be accessible by trekking. In the rainy season, it is worst.

The Parish has virtually eight mission stations and eight small Christian com-

munities as well. Among all these, six are with catechists and rest none. Among the six catechists, only one is full Time. Given that the Parish is not in an Urban Area, the financially situations is very poor. The majority of Christians are peasant farmers with very meagre income.

2. Pastoral activities in daily life

The **main activities** we have here celebrating Mass everyday even out of your schedule, visiting the sick once a month and giving sacraments, celebrating Parish feast and other feasts.

As the main activities we have, daily Masses in the Main Mission, the Convent, and in one Chapel for the disabled for the sisters of St Francis of Assisi. We have visiting of the sick every last Monday of the month and last Thursday of the Month and giving sacraments, we have Masses in all the Small Christian Communities.

Sundays we have Masses in all the Mission Stations around the Parish (Namely: Main Mission, Mbebili, Asong, Mankanikong and Mankwi). Concerning the Mission Station far away, Once a while we have Mass Also. All the activities not only us in the Parish. But all the priests are involved.





A meaningful example is found in the photo above, where the Parish Priest, Fr. Serge Mpanga, is walking toward the Mundum area, accompanied by Linus, a catechist from the main church, a powerful sign of a rich and great experience.

3. The Contribution of Augustinian Spirituality to the Apostolate

We try to love of neighbour's and Community. We teach that the Church itself is a Community, and the family as Community, to be the Church also as we

are living in the Community. And in this Apostolate.

We rest and leave everything in God's hands. Also to show that Augustine's spirituality is based on desire and longing for prayer, scripture, love, friendship, the Eucharist and in finding God in creation. It is spirituality for all People (1Jonh 4:6).

We also organizes recollections, confessions, baptism once a month for new born babies etc. These, help Christians to grow in their spiritual life.





Fr. Moacir Chiodi, oad
@chiodimoacir

DYNAMIC AND ACTIVE EVANGELIZATION

Apostolate in the Senhor Bom Jesus Parish



Abstract: *Senhor Bom Jesus Parish has a dynamic pastoral life, with intense participation from movements, pastoral teams, and committed lays who promote solidarity and evangelization.*

The Augustinian Apostolate is expressed through the celebration of the sacraments, spiritual direction, and close accompaniment of the faithful.

Despite the challenges, the Parish is a welcoming and missionary home, where every member is invited to live their faith with commitment and fraternity.

The collaboration between the Friars and pastoral workers continues to sow hope, serving with love and keeping the light of the Gospel alive in this community on Brazilian soil.

1. Parish Community

The Senhor Bom Jesus Parish was established on August 4, **2009**, by decree of the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais (PR), Msgr. Ladislau Biernaski.

The Vincentian Fathers led this flock until the Discalced Augustinian took over

the pastoral activities on January 30, **2016**. Currently, the Parish consists of the main church and eight chapels, encompassing communities of large, medium, and small sizes.

The Parish community, through its movements and ministries, brings prayer and evangelization to life.



Catechesis for children, adolescents, young people, and adults, as well as baptismal and matrimonial catechesis, helps our people feel they are part of the people called to belong to the Lord.

The **Social Ministry** and the Vincentians are generous hands that, in addition to proclaiming the Lord, offer merciful support, helping with food needs and other emergencies.

The various **lay leaders**, becoming aware of the value of living in community, of witness, and of perseverance in following the Word of God and the teachings of the Church, help rekindle evangelization among those who, for various reasons, have distanced themselves from the faith. They also welcome those who request baptism or wish to attend catechism to get to know the person of Jesus Christ and receive the Easter sacraments.

2. Augustinian Apostolate

The pastoral care of the faithful, the administration of the sacraments, and spiritual direction increasingly inspire a constant search to care for oneself, for

others, and for one's family, as we read in Acts 20:28.

Many people come to the community for the Eucharistic celebration and say: *"We are edified by the way the Discalced Augustinians celebrate the Eucharist and the other sacraments"*.

For this reason, as Parish Priest of this community, as well as a religious and a presbyter, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to glorify Him in every celebration of the Mass.

Like a small tree that grows and reveals its beauty, so it is with the **Mothers Monica**: there are already 50 prayer groups who, every day, pray for their children and sow hope within the community.

The **messengers of the small chapels**, praying for vocations, help the Parish turn to the Lord, who calls each of His children to grow in love.

The **Family Ministry** has been a living flame in awakening zeal, love, and care for this gift of God that is the family, offering support to engaged couples and those in new unions.

The **prayer groups** rekindle a continuous call to be Church; the **altar servers** contribute to liturgical service and help parents recognize the beauty of community life; the **Reinitiation Project** inspires leaders ready to care for the richness of our Catholic Church; the various choirs support Eucharistic celebrations, the sacraments of marriage and baptism, formation meetings, retreats, and evangelization activities.

3. Conclusion

The spiritual challenges within the Parish are numerous, and that is why every confrere feels like a channel of grace to heal the wounds and scars caused by various reasons.

In this way, the Parish reveals itself as a true **home with open doors**, where every faithful is called to live their faith in an active, committed, and fraternal way.

The joint action of the leaders, pastoral groups, and movements transforms the community into a space of welcome,



formation, and mission, making the Gospel of Christ resonate in daily life. May we, guided by the Holy Spirit, continue to be instruments of God's love, awakening new disciples and keeping the flame of faith alive among us.

The Discalced Augustinians, in our Parish, have transformed our experience of the liturgy, the importance of the formation of movements and pastoral groups, as well as the missionary action in our communities. They have also taught us to seek intimacy with God through a life of prayer. The Friars are daily educating us in faith, with advice and spiritual guidance. I can only thank and praise God for all that we are experiencing in this time.

Marilia de Fatima Cordeiro

The presence of the Discalced Augustinian in our Parish is a sign of transformation through prayer, daily Mass, and intensity in the sacramental life. Thanks to the presence of the Discalced Augustinians and the true example of faith, dedication, and charity shown by our friars, we feel guided and led toward eternity, in unity with the Church and with our brothers. Following the example of Saint Augustine, we too will remain restless until we rest in God.

Cleverson Padilha



Fr. Jose Conson Jr., oad

WHERE GOD CALLED ME TO FOLLOW HIM

Educational Apostolate at Tabor Hill College



Abstract: *Tabor Hill College (THC) was founded as a training center for those aspiring to religious life.*

Its educational mission has expanded to welcome students from kindergarten through high school.

The author shares that, after the initial difficulty in balancing his religious and priestly vocation with administrative and school duties, he discovered a new

form of mission through direct contact with students and staff.

In this educational experience, teaching and service became tools to form and accompany young lives.

TCH promotes Augustinian values that guide not only learning but also the spiritual growth of the entire school community, becoming a daily opportunity to live and share God's love with future generations.

1. The Beginnings of THC

Nestled in the peaceful surroundings of Tabor Hill, Cebu City, **Tabor Hill College** - OAD Inc. (THC) is more than just an academic institution, it is a home for formation, a place of mission, and a seedbed for the future.

Founded in **2012** by the Order of the Discalced Augustinians (OAD), the school was initially established to address the growing educational needs of our seminarians who, at the time, were enrolled in partner institutions such as the Rogationist Seminary and the University of San Jose–Recoletos,



which were located approximately ten kilometers from our formation house.

In **2019**, responding to the needs of the local community and in the spirit of our mission to evangelize through education, THC opened its doors to the Basic Education Department. We began catering to Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High School Senior High School and eventually Sped learners. In addition, the school also offers a Bachelor of Arts in Music.

2. Personal testimony

I, Fr. Jose Conson Jr., was assigned to Tabor Hill College since 2020 to assist in its administration. I was asked **to help wherever there was a need**, whether in the registrar's office, the administrative office, or even in teaching opportunities.

Eventually, while serving as the school principal, I was appointed as the active school nurse, utilizing my nursing license to serve the health and well-being of our students.

At first, I struggled, primarily because I longed to become a missionary, second because my initial background is in the

medical sciences but as I began to be personally involved and immerse more closely with the students and staff, I slowly realized that this Apostolate is not just about delivering lessons or managing files, it is about forming young lives.

Working closely with children made me understand the weight of responsibility entrusted to us: we are not just educa-



tors or administrators; we are mentors, guides, and co-creators of hope. We do not merely prepare children for exams, we prepare them for life. **I said to myself his is my mission.**

3. Broadening horizons

Our school is an active member and collaborator of the **Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines** (CEAP) since 2022, and this affiliation continually helps us grow in excellence, both spiritually and professionally.

What gives meaning to our daily routine is the deeper purpose behind it: our commitment to live out the Augustinian ideals and values that breathe life into everything we do.

In every lesson shared, every act of service offered, and every smile exchanged in the hallway, we are discovering what it truly means to walk in ***unitas*** (unity), seek ***veritas*** (truth), practice ***caritas*** (charity), and embrace ***humilitas*** (humility).



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These values are not just part of our tradition, they are the foundation of who we are becoming, together.

Each day that I spent in the school is a discernment, a continuous invitation to see this mission not merely as service to others, but as a **path of personal conversion**. It's not just the students who are being formed; I am, too. Every encounter with a child becomes a gentle call to listen more deeply, to love more unconditionally.



4. Conclusion

As I continue my journey here in Tabor Hill College, I am grateful for the privilege of being part of these young souls' formation. Though I began this assignment feeling disconnected, I now see it as a sacred calling.

Our school is still small but we are growing, because we are accompanied by people who has the same aspiration and mission. Each day is an opportunity to serve, to teach, and to love in the spirit of St. Augustine, with one heart and one soul on the way to God.





Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, oad

HAPPY TO SERVE YOUNG PEOPLE

Apostolate at the University of Cebu City



Abstract: *the University of Cebu City is located today where once there was a rice field: a symbolic transformation, from an agricultural to an educational harvest.*

Its proximity to our Augustinian mission has made possible a constant and fruitful pastoral commitment that has lasted for over 25 years.

The university pastoral ministry is active

on all campuses, accompanying students and faculty in their journey of spiritual, moral, and emotional growth.

Activities include Eucharistic celebrations, confessions, retreats, prayer moments, and formation, promotion of vocations, social inclusion, and solidarity, with particular emphasis on retreats, volunteer programs, and work-study scholarships.

1. From a rice field to a training center

Where the campus of the University of Cebu now stands, there was once a rice field. The harvest was always abundant. However, in just a few years, the landscape changed dramatically. In place of the rice paddies now rises a ten-story

building, with an inner cloister, a chapel, offices, and hundreds of classrooms. And even now, the harvest continues to be abundant, though in a different way.

It all began with the inspiration of Atty. Augusto Go, Doctor of Laws honoris causa, who 60 years ago founded a humble private school. Today, that inspiration



Nursing Course, Mass and Hippocratic Promise

has become the **University of Cebu**, the largest private university in the Philippines, with over 58,000 students across five campuses, all located in Cebu City.

Just five kilometers from our religious community at Tabor Hill, this reality has proven to be a providential opportunity for Apostolate and evangelization, one we did not let pass us by.

For 25 years, we have been engaged in **University Pastoral Ministry** at this institution, a mission that fully aligns with our charism and Constitutions, which call us to serve the Church and society according to the needs of the time.

2. University Pastoral Ministry: education, faith and community

The **Banilad campus** of the University of Cebu (UC-B) has chosen Saint Augustine as its patron. During a recent Lenten retreat for faculty members, I emphasized the importance of becoming familiar with his key works: *The Confessions*, *The City of God*, and *The Teacher*. In these writings, we find authentically Christian and Augustinian values that should be passed on to students with passion and consistency.

In our desire to educate in faith and community, I highlighted the Augustinian



Daily Mass at the University



exhortation *Tolle lege* (“Take and read”), suggesting that the Bible always be kept close at hand, even on a smartphone.

University Pastoral Ministry is truly “**universal**”: it spans from daycare to postgraduate courses. It offers spiritual, emotional, and social support to students during a delicate phase of transition and personal growth. It helps them develop a deeper faith, encourages reflection and discernment, strengthens personal identity, and builds a sense of community. While 95% of the students are Catholic, there are also Protestants and Muslims who find in the Campus Ministry a place of listening and respect.

The **Lapu Mandaue campus** (UCLM) is also under the spiritual guidance of our confreres, with Fr. Joel Sumooc serving as chaplain. All pastoral activities are coordinated by a team made up of a chaplain, a coordinator, and various leaders responsible for Liturgy, Choir, Formation, Sports, and other areas.

The **Daily celebration of Mass** always includes the participation of one or more student sections, so that each student has the opportunity to experience the Eucharist at least once during the academic year.

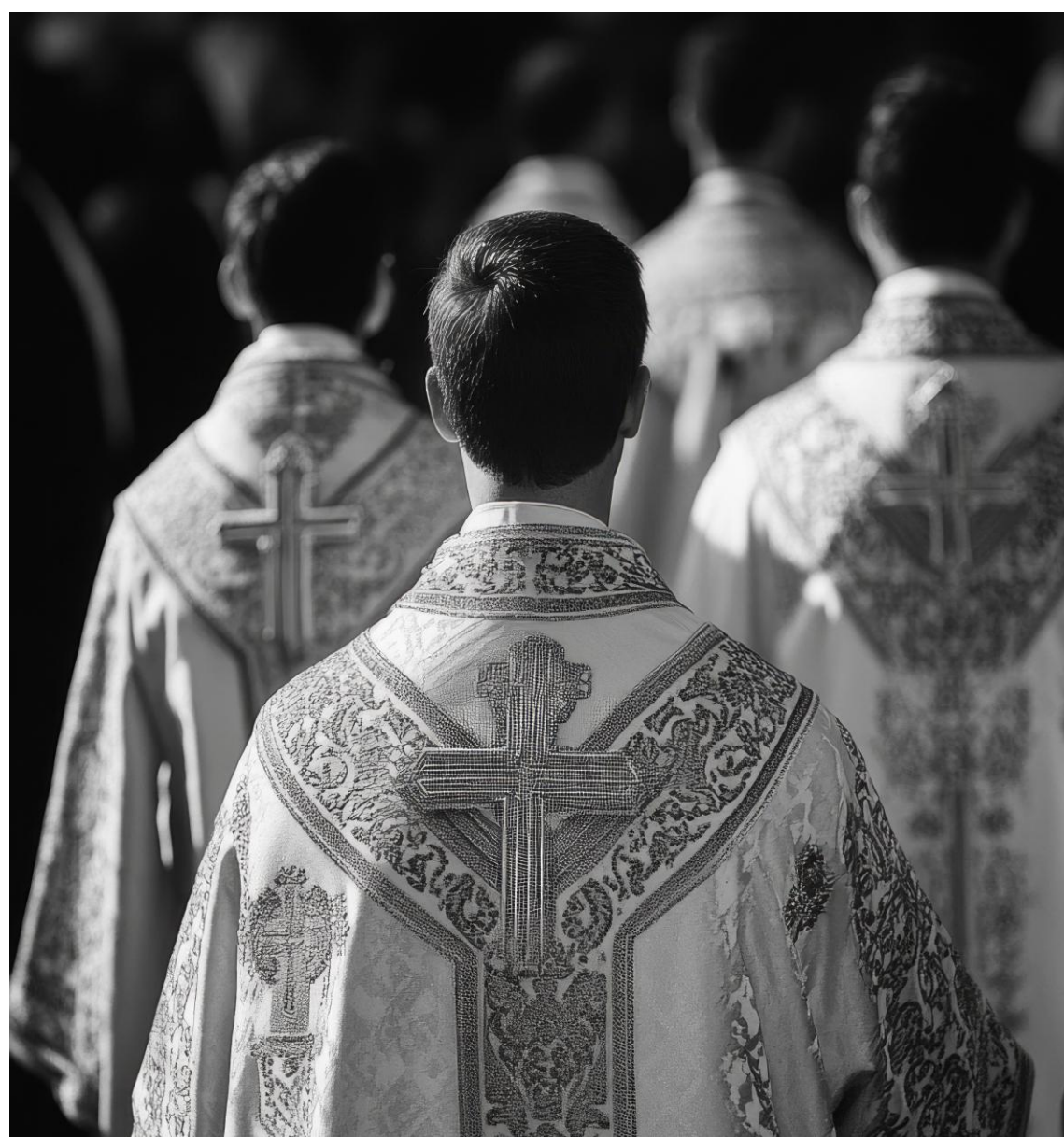
3. Ministry of proximity, vocation and hope

University pastoral care also takes shape through the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**.

At the Banilad campus, which has over 13,000 students, 120 sections/classes were selected during Advent to offer the opportunity for confession. Each day, for ten days, four to six priests were available, and thousands of young people were able to experience this encounter with grace.

Another important moment is the **end-of-term retreats**: a time for reflection, sharing, confession, and Mass, along with good resolutions for the future. This year, over a span of fifteen days on weekends, we accompanied more than 2,000 students as they concluded their university journey.

Vocations Ministry holds a special place: in Cebu, the month of February is



dedicated to vocations. It is an opportunity to present the beauty of the Christian, religious, priestly, and missionary vocation.

Social Ministry is also present: more than 500 students work within the university (in the library, reception, offices) in exchange for free education. This too is a formative service.

Each semester begins with the **Mass of the Holy Spirit**, and in many classes, lessons start with the Prayer to the Holy

Spirit by Saint Augustine.

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Our charism is fulfilled in a simple yet profound way: bringing God closer to the students and guiding the students toward God. In this way, university pastoral care becomes a rich and transformative experience, sowing lasting values in the hearts of young people and guiding their journey toward a mature and consistent faith: good Christians, good citizens.



My college path wasn't straight, as I had to stop to help my family before returning and finding the Campus Ministry. This supportive church group helped me realize my calling to be a priest. As I served in different ways – from the altar to

reading scripture and playing music – I grew in understanding God's kindness. This journey led to my joyful ordination, allowing me to serve God and the Church. It was truly through the Campus Ministry that God called me. I'm deeply thankful to the University of Cebu Campus Ministry and to Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, the chaplain, whose guidance and care were crucial in my spiritual growth and understanding of my vocation.

Fr. Anthony Booc, oad,
former student of the University of Cebu



Campus Ministry endeavors to foster the integral growth of the entire academic community, with a particular focus on its students' personal, spiritual, and moral development. In doing so, it complements the efforts of other departments and divisions to fulfill the University's overall mission. This collective dedication, rooted in faith, service, and unity, transforms Campus Ministry into a vital student lifeline, fostering their well-being and inspiring lasting compassion.

Dave Anthoun Lungcob,
Campus Ministry Coordinator



Rubens School (1600-1650),
The Mystery of the Trinity: Augustine and the Child on the Beach (Painting on Wood),
Madrid, Museo del Prado



Fr. Marcelino Rapayla Jr., oad
@frmarcelin_oad

INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA New Field of Apostolate



Abstract: *the author embarked on a journey of sharing through photography, using images and texts to tell his experiences.*

A spiritual turning point led him to leave his job to follow a religious vocation, continuing his formation with the Discalced Augustinians, focusing on social issues and using photography and

writing to raise awareness and promote change.

During the pandemic, the potential of the internet and social media proved essential for spreading spiritual content, using communication tools with responsibility and faith, transforming them into instruments of evangelization and inspiration for a wide audience.

1. The beginning of a journey between photography and online sharing

In the ever-evolving landscape of technology and connectivity, 2008 marked a pivotal year for me—both personally and professionally. As an aspiring photographer, I embraced the digital era, harnessing the power of the internet and social media to share my vision with the

world. It was then that **Notion & Shoot: Sharing with you the captured moments in my journey** was born, a web page dedicated to showcasing my passion for photography. Through this platform, I began posting write-ups and images, capturing the essence of my experiences.

However, my journey took a transformative turn in **2009** when I chose

to enter the diocesan seminary, a decision that led me to pen an article titled **Experience Life**. In it, I reflected:

“ This selfless and lifetime sacrifice, thus, is a call and inspiration that everyone could be God's instrument to let someone 'experience life.' I feel grateful and thankful to God for these opportunities that come my way. With all of these experiences, I optimistically find meaning and purpose in self-giving. My sacrifices, and the way I dealt with them, are among the many gifts that shape my life. ”

That same year, I left my job to fully embrace my vocation, a choice driven by faith and an eagerness to serve.

2. Religious Life and Social Commitment

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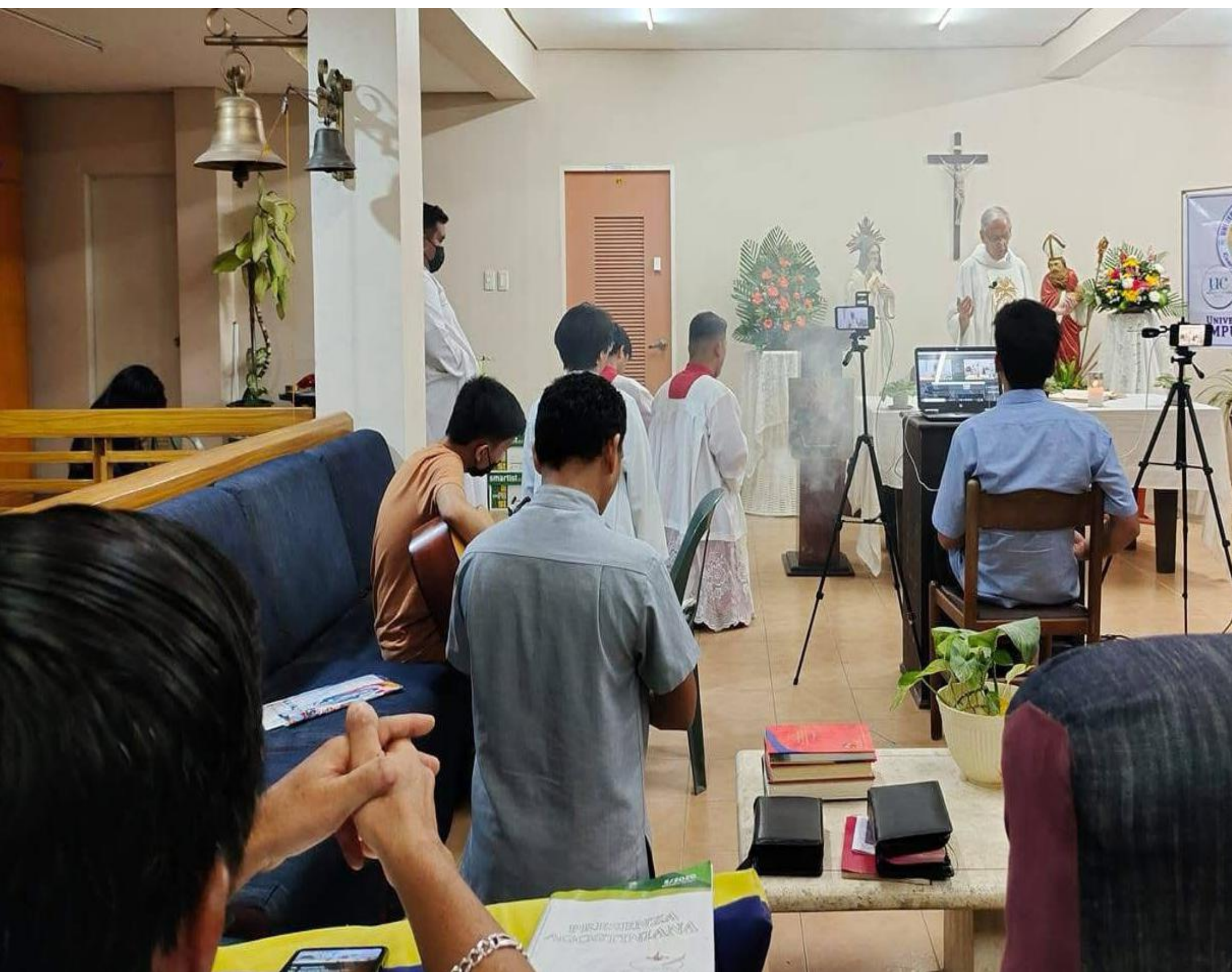
In **2012**, I was accepted into religious life as I continued my journey in the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

I began addressing community issues in a local newspaper, using my words and photographs to shed light on matters that needed attention. I recall my first story about a water leak along the road, when I took pictures and wrote captions, the issue was swiftly resolved.

This taught me the power of media to effect change and led to my registration on Facebook, where my advocacy could reach a **broader audience**.

3. Faith and Responsibility in the Digital World

The year the pandemic struck was a testament to the indispensability of the internet and social media. With global lockdowns, the digital realm became a vital conduit for connection and worship.





During this time, I proposed live streaming the Seven Last Words of Jesus for Holy Week.

Recognizing the need for ongoing spiritual nourishment, I also began shooting a series called ***One Minute Catechism***,

which was posted on the OAD Asia page, illustrating the transformative potential of these platforms.

The internet and social media, products of human innovation and relentless curiosity, undoubtedly make information and connection accessible at our fingertips. Yet, if misused, they can also become vessels for misinformation and fake news.

As followers of Christ and stewards of truth, it is imperative that we wield these tools responsibly, ensuring they serve as mediums of light and truth.

In this age of digital communication, our task is clear: to use the internet and social media as **channels for the Good News** and instruments of redemption. By approaching these platforms with integrity and creativity, we can continue to share stories and insights that uplift, empower, and bring about positive change. It is a mission that extends beyond today, shaping the future through a lens of hope and faith.





Fr. Jay Amamangpang, oad
@amamangpangjay

JUSTICE, PRESENCE, AND HOPE

Apostolate among Prisoners



Abstract: *the Bible provides a solid foundation for prison ministry, with Jesus inviting us to visit prisoners as an act of mercy and justice (Mt 25:36), through the call to forgiveness and care for the weak and marginalized.*

In today's context, marked by injustice and marginalization, especially within prison systems, the biblical values of dig-

nity, compassion, and justice remain as relevant as ever, offering not only spiritual support but also human closeness and real assistance.

The author shares his pastoral experience among inmates, encountering faces marked by suffering and celebrating the sacraments, offering listening and presence, because no one is excluded from God's mercy.

1. Biblical Foundation

Sacred Scripture provides a rich theological foundation for understanding the care of prisoners as a work of justice and mercy.

In the **New Testament**, Jesus performs a revolutionary act by including prisoners among those who must be vis-

ited: “*I was in prison and you came to visit me*” (Matt. 25:36). This invitation carries even more weight considering that Christ Himself was imprisoned before His Passion.

In the **Old Testament**, although visiting prisoners is not explicitly mentioned as an act of justice, the prophets strongly

emphasize the importance of treating others with fairness and mercy.

The prophet **Amos** proclaims:

*Let justice roll down
like waters,
and righteousness
like an ever-flowing stream.*
(Amos 5:24)

The Hebrew terms *mishpat* (justice) and *tzedakah* (righteousness) express an ideal of justice that must be flowing, continuous, and holistic. Furthermore, God reveals Himself as *rachum* (compassionate) and *chanun* (gracious), manifesting a love that is an essential part of His covenant with humanity (Ex 34:6).

The commandment “*You shall not kill*” (Dt 5:17) reaffirms the value of life even for those who have erred, and the New Testament further expands this message, placing at its center forgiveness, care for the weak (*asthenēs*), and attention toward the marginalized in prison (*en phylakē*), who are deprived of freedom and, often, of human dignity.

2. Current significance 29

Today, the biblical principles of justice, compassion, and mercy speak to us deeply, especially in the context of prisons. **Modern penal systems**, though more structured, do not always reflect the fairness and human dignity required by Sacred Scripture.

Injustice, arbitrary sentencing, and the inhumane conditions in which many prisoners live reveal how much still needs to be done to embody the Gospel ideal.

As Discalced Augustinians must be important to understand that the scriptures legal and social context differs significantly from modern penal systems.

Therefore, "treating prisoners" isn't a single, uniform concept. However, we can glean principles insight justice and righteous; compassion and mercy were high light in the scripture directly to address this present time to call our attention to them.



3. Personal Experience

In my personal experience, I have had the opportunity to meet poor prisoners, often innocent, victims of serious injustices and abuses of power. In those faces marked by suffering, I recognized the very face of **Christ as a prisoner**.

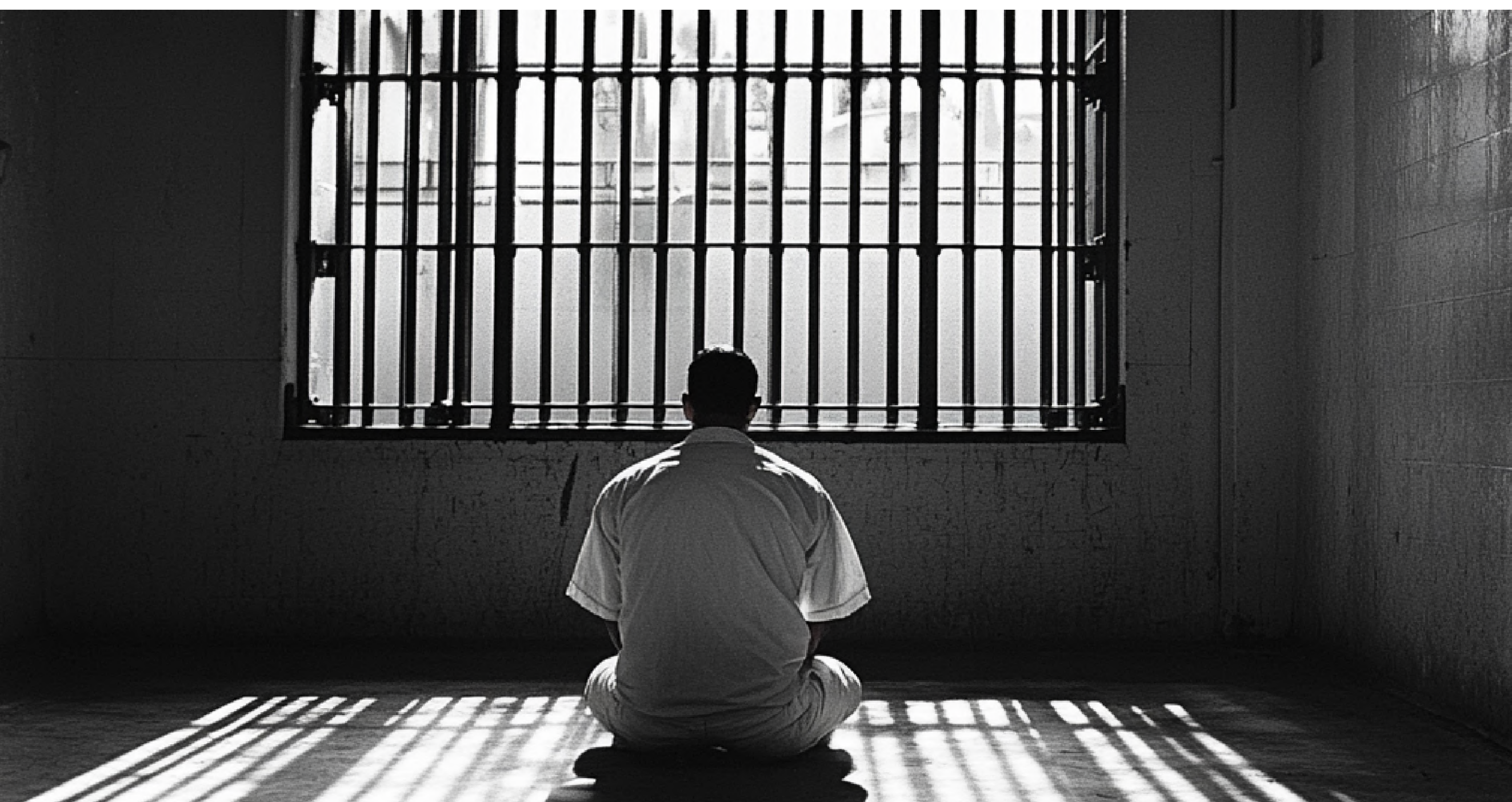
This Apostolate is not limited to the celebration of the sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Confession) or the study of the Word of God, but extends to the offering of time, listening, closeness, and concrete support.

Visiting prisoners has become for me a true **school of humanity and faith**. Each encounter has been an opportunity for transformation, not only for those who receive, but also for me, the one who

gives. Augustine's answers from the Jews on Psalm 68:16, *"for those things that he will be change,"* emphasize the transformative power of God's grace to change lives.

This provides hope for those in prison, who may be seeking a new path. Calling for Acts of Mercy: His emphasis on loving one's neighbor inspires practical acts of mercy, such as providing support, companionship, and advocacy for those in prison.

Our commitment as community organization is involved in jail ministry and aims to meet the spiritual needs of inmates to continue spiritual support and offering spiritual guidance, counseling, and religious services is a central focus.





SUNDAY LITURGY WITH SAINT AUGUSTINE

May / June 2025

May 4

3rd Sunday of Easter

John 21:1-19 – Jesus Appears by the Lake

It is often asked, regarding this fishing scene with the disciples, why Peter and the sons of Zebedee returned to the occupation they had before the Lord said to them: Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men (Serm. 122,2,2).

May 11

4th Sunday of Easter

John 10:27-30 – Jesus Gives Eternal Life to His Sheep

By way of analogy, many things are attributed to Christ that He is not literally. By



analogy, Christ is the rock, the door, the cornerstone, the shepherd, the lamb, and also the lion, and many other things which would take long to list (Serm. 47,6).

May 18

5th Sunday of Easter

John 13:31-35 – The Commandment to Love One Another

It is this love that renews us, making us new men, heirs of the New Testament, singers of the new song. This love also renewed the righteous of old, the patriarchs and prophets, as it did the blessed Apostles. It is this love that even now renews the nations and gathers all humanity, scattered across the earth, to form one new people (In Io. Ev. tr. 65,1).

May 25

6th Sunday of Easter

John 14:23-29 – The Holy Spirit Will

Remind You of All Jesus Has Said

But what did He leave us, as He departed from us, if not Himself, who will never leave us? Indeed, He Himself is our peace—He who made of two peoples one. He is our peace, both when we believe He exists and when we shall see Him as He is (In Io. Ev. tr. 77,3).

June 1

Ascension of the Lord

Luke 24:46-53 – Jesus Is Taken Up to Heaven

Now Christ has ascended into heaven and will return only at the end to judge the living and the dead [...]. The Lord traversed the entire Old Testament; it seemed as though He embraced it. For in the Scriptures, every passage sings of Christ, provided there are ears capable of hearing the sound (In Io. Ep. tr. 2,1).

June 8

Pentecoste

John 14:15-16, 23b-26 – The Holy Spirit Will Teach You All Things

Seven times seven makes forty-nine; and by adding one, we signify unity and thus return to the beginning. Unity gives cohesion to the whole multitude; and while a multitude not bound by unity is just a noisy and quarrelsome crowd, if it is in harmony, it becomes of one soul (Serm. 272/B,2).

June 15

Holy Trinity

John 16:12-15 – All That the Father Has Is Mine

wish to tell you one more thing, about which I sincerely ask not only your most diligent attention but also your prayers to God. Only bodies can be contained and enclosed in material spaces. God exists

beyond material locations;

32

no one should seek Him as

if He were in a place. He is present everywhere, invisible and inseparable—not more in one place and less in another, but entirely everywhere, divided nowhere (Serm. 52,5,15).

June 22

The Body and Blood of Christ

Luke 9:11-17 – All Ate and Were Satisfied

The proof that one has truly eaten and drunk His body and blood is this: that He remains in us and we in Him, that He dwells in us and we in Him, that we are united to Him with no fear of being abandoned. With language rich in mystery, He taught and exhorted us to be in His body, united to His members under the same Head, nourished by His flesh without ever being separated from His communion (Serm. 27,1).

June 29

Saints Peter and Paul

Matt. 16:13-19 – The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

We celebrate this festive day made sacred for us by the blood of the Apostles. Let us love their faith, their lives, their labors, their sufferings, their witness, their preaching. For we make progress through love, not by celebrating such deeds for mere material satisfaction (Serm. 295,8,8).





SOME PICTURES

Sharing a bit of our Life



Priestly Ordination in Butuan City



On **March 1**, at 8:00 a.m., at the Parish of the Holy Cross in Ampayon, Butuan City, the solemn priestly ordination of Fr. Joseph Hoang Minh Tuat, Fr. Joseph Pham Van An, Fr. Richard Tun Thaung, Fr. Peter Tran Van Nam, and Fr. John the Baptist Tran Kim Hung took place. The celebration was presided over by Bishop Cosme Damian Almedilla, Bishop of Butuan City, in an atmosphere of deep spirituality and joy. Faithful, confreres, and family members gathered to give thanks to God and to accompany the new priests on their journey of service to the Church.



Augustinian Spirituality in Toledo



On **March 1**, Santa Monica Seminary hosted a morning of Augustinian spirituality with the Mother Monica and Ritian Women, led by Fr. Joacir Chiodi. The gathering was a moment of prayer, meditation, and sharing, focused on deepening the spirituality of Saint Augustine and Saint Monica. The participants reflected on the importance of faith, perseverance in prayer, and the role of mothers in passing on Christian values, strengthening their spiritual journey in an atmosphere of fraternity and devotion, following our charism.

Rangers and Millemani Groups in Rome



On **March 9**, some members of the Rangers and Millemani groups from Genoa visited our community of Jesus and Mary in Rome, experiencing a moment of sharing and fraternity as they took part in the Jubilee of Volunteering. During this special day, the group had the opportunity to meet our confreres, strengthening their commitment to serving others and living out the spirit of the Jubilee that the Church is celebrating in this Holy Year.



Fr. Joseph Naoki Parish Priest at Villa Elisa



On **March 9**, at 7:00 p.m., the Community of the Santos Arcángeles Parish in Villa Elisa gathered in a moment of faith and communion for the installation ceremony of the new pastor, Fr. Jhosep Naoki Ochi Sanchez. The Mass was presided over by Mons. Virgilio Rodi Alonso, representative of the Archbishop of Asunción. Several priests from Deanery 6 (where the Parish is located) and confreres from the Order, including the Provincial Prior, Fr. José Valnir da Silva, took part in the celebration. The ceremony was marked by a spirit of welcome and joy, with the community expressing

gratitude and trust in the new pastor, wishing him a fruitful ministry in leading the Parish.



Economists Meeting in Rio de Janeiro



On **March 12 and 13**, the Economos’ Meeting took place at the provincial headquarters in Ramos, Rio de Janeiro. The meeting aimed to share experiences and reflect on the financial management of the Communities. On the first day, participants focused on the statute of the Associação Social Agostiniana; on the second day, they concentrated on economic challenges, financial strategies, and ways to ensure responsible resource management. The meeting also included a discussion with the association’s accountant, Helen Mansur, who provided practical guidance on the responsibilities of the economies, offering a valuable training opportunity to improve administration.

Blessing of the new house in Ho Chi Minh City



On **March 19**, the new religious house of the community was inaugurated with a solemn blessing and in the presence of several confreres from the Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province. The house is dedicated to Mons. Ilario Costa, in gratitude for his tireless pastoral and humanitarian commitment to our missions in Asia during the 18th century. This significant project was made possible thanks to the generous support of numerous benefactors and the ongoing efforts of the religious community, which united its strengths to enhance our presence in a space devoted to formation, prayer, and community life.





Meeting of the Brothers of the Communities of Northern Italy



On **March 17**, the confreres from the northern communities gathered at the religious community in Collegno for a Lenten preparation meeting, experienced in a spirit of fraternity and spirituality. Among the participants were also confreres from Genoa. Following an opening moment of prayer, a reflection on the theme "*How to Educate Ourselves in Brotherhood*" was led by Fr. Gregorio Cibwabwa, who invited everyone to rediscover the value of living together as brothers, in the light of the Gospel and Augustinian spirituality. This was followed by a fraternal exchange of ideas, then adoration and the midday prayer. A shared lunch offered a meaningful moment of communion.



Meeting of the Brothers of the Communities of Central Italy



On **March 24**, the confreres from the Communities of the Center gathered at the San Lorenzo Martire Community for a day of retreat and fraternity to deepen their faith journey and strengthen fraternal bonds. The day was guided by Fr. Angelo Grande, who offered a reflection on the theme of awakening faith and community life. After the reflection, the confreres gathered in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and the day concluded with a fraternal lunch.



Meeting of Formators in Yguazú



On **March 26 and 27**, the San Ezequiel Moreno Community in Yguazú hosted the Meeting of Formators of the Province, providing a space for reflection, sharing, and fraternity on the vocational reality of the Order in Brazil and Paraguay. The formators discussed the challenges of religious formation in a context marked by the crisis of values and family, with the online participation of the Prior Provincial, Fr. José Valnir da Silva. In addition to the discussions, the event included moments of integration with the local community, such as the celebration of Mass and a soccer match. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to discern and form young people called to religious life, trusting in God's grace.



Meeting of the Brothers of the Communities of Southern Italy



On **March 31**, the religious from the southern communities gathered in Marsala for a day of retreat and fraternity, with the intention of deepening their Lenten spiritual journey. The meeting was led by the Prior General, Fr. Nei Marcio Simon, who offered a meditation on the parable of the Final Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46), interpreted as a final exam of life, in a manner similar to that proposed in the examen *De universa*, inviting the confreres to consider their faith journey as a constant preparation for the encounter with the Lord. After the meditation, the religious gathered for a community prayer time, and the day concluded with a fraternal lunch.



Visit of the Prior General to the Communities of Vietnam



From **April 21 to 26**, the General Prior made a significant visit to the religious communities in Vietnam, stopping in the cities of Ho Chi Minh and Da Nang. This moment of fraternity and sharing strengthened the sense of belonging to the Order, offering encouragement and support to the religious engaged in the mission in the Asian country.



Annual Continuing Education Meeting in Cebu City



After Easter, on **April 21 and 22**, the confreres from the Cebu City communities gathered for their annual ongoing formation meeting, dedicating themselves to prayer and sharing fraternal life. During these days, it was emphasized how essential it is in religious life not only to pray and live together but also to continue studying, reflecting, and growing in knowledge in order to better serve others and live one's vocation with greater awareness.

Fr. Airton at Pope Francis' Funeral



On **April 26**, the General Procurator, Father Airton Mainardi, concelebrated the funeral Mass for Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City. Amidst over 250,000 people gathered to pay tribute to the Holy Father, Fr. Airton officially represented our Order, participating in this historic moment of prayer and farewell, which brought together people from all over the world, before the body was taken to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore for burial.



Valverde's Adolescents in the Jubilee



From **April 24 to 27**, the Parish Priest (Fr. Leandro Xavier Rodrigues), the Vicar (Fr. Michael Womela Tukov), some catechists, and a group of adolescents from the Santa Maria di Valverde Parish and Sanctuary traveled to Rome to participate in the Jubilee of Adolescents. They also had the opportunity to attend the funeral of Pope Francis, experiencing the universal Church in a moment of great historical significance.

Visit of the Prior General to the Indonesian Community



From **April 26 to 29**, the Prior General visited the religious community in the city of Bandung. Accompanied by the Vicar General, he spent several days of meeting, listening, and fraternity with the confreres engaged in the local mission. Through moments of prayer, dialogue, and fraternal sharing, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon renewed the support of the entire religious family for the Bandung community, emphasizing the importance of the barefoot Augustinian witness in such a dynamic and challenging context as Indonesia.





Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad
@freineisimon

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIOR GENERAL

Entering in order to go out

Dear confreres, affiliates, and friends...

Jesus, with great clarity, tells the apostles after His resurrection: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk 16:15).

Every baptized person receives the grace of God as a gift and is sent to share that gift with everyone, without exception. The consecrated and priests, with their "yes" to the call, have made themselves available to the Lord and are at the forefront of this joyful and demanding sharing.

It is beautiful to see the diversity of apostolates, carried out with zeal by our confreres in the different parts of the world where they are located.

A point I would like to highlight is found in our *Constitutions* at n. 57: *"The first field of Apostolate for the Discalced Augustinians must be considered the Community."* Yes,

true Apostolate begins in our homes, with those who share the same roof. It is the testimony of fraternal love, lived among the members of the Houses, that sustains and makes every Apostolate credible.

In this context, I cannot forget the most beautiful legacy left to us by Pope Francis: his desire for *"a Church that goes out,"* summarized in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. *"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security"* (EG 49). Only those who, first, have felt welcomed and loved as members of God's family can go out.

I wish each one of you to remember that before going out, it is necessary to enter.

Happy Apostolate to all!



