

PRESENZA AGOSTINIANA



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RELIGIOUS VOWS

element of identity
of consecrated life



THEOLOGY

Canonical, Moral and
Cultural perspectives

LITURGY

main parts of the Rite
of Religious Profession

HUMILITY

historical evolution
of the fourth vow

CONSACRATION

in the vision of
Contemporary Society





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EDITORIAL

Religious Vows as an element of identity of Consecrated Life

Dear readers,

in this issue of *Presenza Agostiniana*, dedicated to the meaning and importance of Religious Vows, we delve into the heart of consecrated life, seeking to understand and appreciate the deep significance of a choice that defies the logic of the world.

Poverty, chastity, and obedience are not just solemn promises but instruments of transformation that illuminate the path of the Consecrated and the Ecclesial Community.

In a world that often exalts individualism, religious vows are a countercultural call, an invitation to live for the common good, to seek what is essential, and to be guided by the wisdom of God.

We invite you to explore with us, in this issue, the testimonies and reflections of those who have embraced these vows

with joy and dedication. May these pages be a sign of hope and an invitation for all to rediscover the beauty of a life devoted to the Gospel.

Happy reading, with the hope that the wisdom of Saint Augustine continues to enlighten us.



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IMPORTANCE OF VOWS in Consecrated Life of Today



Abstract: *Consecrated Life today highlights the centrality of the evangelical counsels and their theological development.*

It has shifted from a vision of detachment from the world to one of harmonious integration with it, as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

There are many current challenges,

including globalization, secularization, and the vocational crisis, which have led to a numerical decline and an aging religious population, especially in Europe and North America.

Inculturation in religious life is a gift, as different cultures can enrich the original charism of the institutes, transforming them into spaces of encounter between faith and cultural diversity.

"The life consecrated through the profession of the Evangelical Counsels is a stable form of living by which the faithful, following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God who is loved most of all, so that, having been dedicated by a new and special title to His honor, to the building up of the Church, and to the salva-

tion of the world, they strive for the perfection of charity in the service of the kingdom of God and, having been made an outstanding sign in the Church, foretell the heavenly glory" (Code of Canon Law, can. 573).

Reflection on the evangelical counsels is undoubtedly a key aspect of consecrated life yesterday, today, and



always. The numerous statements of the Second Vatican Council demonstrate how central this theme is

In this article, we aim to explore some aspects of consecrated life that we consider significant from a **theological perspective**, with particular reference to the Post-Conciliar period.

1. The Evangelical Counsels in the Current Theological Vision

The meeting point of multiple reflections and studies on Christian and consecrated life in contemporary times can be found in this statement by Paul VI in his closing speech of the Council: *"There is no alternative between God, Christ, the Church, and the world, but God, Christ, and the Church are realities intimately united with the world."*

This way of understanding the **relationship between God and the world** has influenced the view of the Evangelical Counsels, which have traditionally been shaped by a long tradition of spiritual life teachers.

In the past, religious life was often defined as a "Yes" to God and a "No" to the world, following the principle of *fuga saeculi* (flight from the world). This dominant

perspective emphasized a clear preference for the Kingdom of God over earthly realities. However, it is essential to historically contextualize these studies to avoid an anachronistic approach.

In *Lumen Gentium*, the fundamental principle is expressed in the title of Chapter V of the document: *"The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church."* This principle clarifies what was previously stated: *"The union of Christ and the Church with the world allows Christian holiness to flourish everywhere and in every state of life."*

God can and must be encountered everywhere, and holiness becomes an imperative commitment for all. In this vision, the world is valued rather than rejected, which has had a significant impact on the renewal of religious life.

Gaudium et Spes is the key document that expresses the Church's confidence in the modern world. In this regard, Paul VI stated in the same conciliar closing speech: *"We cannot overlook a fundamental observation when examining the religious significance of this Council: it has been deeply concerned with studying the modern world. Perhaps never before has the Church felt such a*

strong need to recognize, approach, understand, penetrate, serve, and evangelize the surrounding society, embracing it, almost chasing after it in its rapid and continuous transformation."

This appreciation of the world has raised new questions regarding the evangelical counsels, whose practice involves a **limitation** in affirming three fundamental human tendencies: sexuality, the possession of material goods, and the exercise of power.

Today, there is a general consensus in

rejecting any vision of the Evangelical Counsels that implies a Manichean dualism, as if renouncing marriage and wealth were motivated by the rejection of an intrinsic evil. This error has been entirely overcome regarding sexuality and must also be avoided in the justification of the Evangelical Counsels so that they are not based on a flawed anthropological view.

This awareness is fundamental in the process of revising the rules of each religious institute.



2. Some Challenges of Consecrated Life

Among the many challenges that the world and the Church present to consecrated life today, we would like to focus on those that arise, on the one hand, from globalization and, on the other, from the experience of a universal Church.

Globalization has turned the world into a global village, reducing distances

and facilitating connections among peoples. However, alongside its advantages, it also brings a process of exclusion that deepens inequalities between the rich and the poor. Moreover, it is often criticized for its homogenizing approach, which imposes a uniform economic system, philosophical vision, and cultural model. In this context, the relentless pursuit of profit and the disregard for ethical and moral principles reinforce a

secularized way of life. In the globalized world, **secularization** has caused a deep crisis in consecrated life in Western Europe and North America, a crisis that may extend to other parts of the world. Here are some manifestations of this crisis:

a) Decline and Aging of Members

One of the most recent signs of the decline in the number of priests and religious in Europe and North America is the ongoing process of merging parishes and religious institute Provinces (for example, in our case, the merger of the four provinces in Italy into a single one occurred 25 years ago).

The decline and aging of members have led many Religious Congregations to expand their missions to other continents (Africa, Asia, Latin America...). As members grow older, there is an increasing **lack of vitality and creativity**, along with a fear of taking risks and initiating new projects. Consequently, stagnation sets in, and there is great uncertainty about the future relevance of the mission.

b) Perception of Lack of Meaning

The shortage of vocations indicates, among other things, that consecrated life is no longer perceived as a **meaningful choice**. Many young people today struggle to make long-term commitments, and religious life is no longer seen as an option through which they can express idealism and generosity.

c) Inculturation

There is no single way of being Church or being Christian in the world. Instead, there are as many ways as there are cultures. Similarly, in international religious institutes, an awareness has developed that there is no single way of being religious and that the founder's charism can take different expressions in the diverse cultures of peoples. Like the Gospel itself, the original charism of the religious family can not only enrich but also be enriched by the cultures in which it is embodied. This will lead to a perspective in which the religious institute is no longer seen as a group of members from different cultures all learning the lifestyle of the dominant culture, but rather as members from **diverse backgrounds** who share the richness of their cultural diversity. Gradually, the religious family will become not just a place of a single culture but a space of interaction among different cultures, all nourished by the Gospel and the charism.

3. Conclusion

In the context of the Jubilee, in which we are all called to be *pilgrims of hope*, the challenges that the world presents to us are, in fact, opportunities to live and witness to the radical nature of our choice for the Kingdom of God. Christian hope sustains us along life's journey, even when it becomes difficult and demanding, opening us to the light of a radiant future.





Fr. Angelo Grande, oad

THREE COLUMNS

Evangelical Counsels in the Spirituality of the Discalced Augustinians



Abstract: *the meaning of consecrated life is highlighted in the three fundamental documents that guide its discipline and in the three evangelical counsels – chastity, poverty, and obedience – which serve as the pillars of the religious vocation.*

Chastity is seen as the responsible management of sexuality, fostering authentic and deep relationships; poverty as

detachment from material possessions for greater freedom in evangelical service; and obedience as adherence to the will of God, expressed within the community and through superiors.

These vows, lived with fidelity and joy, strengthen fraternal life and serve as an example for the Church and society, contributing to the spiritual renewal hoped for in the Holy Year.

Some friends, upon learning about my recent change of residence (or rather, of Religious House) asked me about the role or duty that awaited me! After a moment of hesitation, I found the answer that convinces me and that I strive to fulfill: *"At my age, it is time to dedicate myself, with greater generosity, to being a friar."*

1. Three Fundamental Documents

There are three official documents that must guide friars and nuns, who are called consecrated persons (not to place them on a privileged pedestal) but to call them **to share**, with the Church and consequently with the entire community, the gift they have received.

I invite to this reflection those who have noticed and followed the change-renewal that has transformed the lifestyle of Religious Communities and their members, especially of the Discalced Augustinians.

I also invite those who still ask what the difference is between a Priest and a Friar. I likewise invite my confreres who, rightly concerned with following the signs of the times, have not hesitated not only to open but even to tear down doors and windows, forgetting that solidarity is not guaranteed by resemblance at all costs.

The **three fundamental documents** in question are:

- ***Perfectae Caritatis***: decree on the renewal of the life of religious, approved by the Second Vatican Council (1965);
- ***Evangelica Testificatio***: encyclical with practical indications of the above decree, published by Saint Paul VI (1971);
- ***Vita Consecrata***: letter of Saint John Paul II as a fruit of the synod of bishops on the subject (1994).

"The Council has already shown in the *Lumen Gentium* Constitution that the attainment of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels originates from the doctrine and examples of the Divine Master and appears as an excellent sign of the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, the same Council intends to address the life and discipline of those Institutes whose members profess chastity, poverty, and obedience, and to provide for their needs according to present-day requirements."

Thus begins *Perfectae Caritatis*.

2. Three Evangelical Counsels

As previously mentioned, all documents place the roots of consecrated life **in the Gospel, in the example of Jesus, and in that of the first Christian community**. The doctrine and practice of religious life are founded on the evangelical counsels, which are chosen, presented, and recognized through a solemn and public commitment ritual called **Profession**.

Those who make the profession declare their desire to live and bear witness to the beauty and the resulting serenity that arise from a life motivated and structured by the practice of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.



3. Chastity

The virtue of chastity promotes a **responsible and mindful approach to sexuality**, guiding us to embrace it in a way that not only respects our own dignity but also nurtures deep, fulfilling relationships that bridge the emotional gaps and address the inner deficiencies, ultimately alleviating the loneliness and distress that often stem from unrestrained desires and superficial connections.

Chastity combats selfishness and self-exaltation, tendencies that can lead to oppression and exploitation, violence, etc. Any form of libertinism mortifies the person and increases loneliness and frustration. Chastity, on the other hand, generates (without giving space to ambiguous or self-interested bonds) encounter, closeness, subsidiarity, and support.

To make the exercise of chastity more fruitful and fertile, its vow also requires celibacy. But the celibate and chaste person is not left alone and abandoned if they allow the Trinitarian God (relationship and love par excellence) to dwell in a heart freed from boundaries or barriers. It has been said that the chaste person should not resemble a white refrigerator on the outside and cold on the inside!

4. Poverty

One single quotation from the teaching of Jesus would be enough to glimpse its excellence: *"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you possess, give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me!"* (Mt 19:21).

A **detachment and renunciation** that make the choice perfect and motivated only with: *"give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me!"*

This also applies to religious individuals, with the Italian saying confirmed by experience: *"money can be a good worker, but it is a terrible boss!"*

It is not worth conditioning the evangelical service by keeping alive achievements that are, and appear to be, outdated and burdensome. To exalt or denigrate obedience, rivers of writings and words have been used.

No one can or should demand obedience who considers their own statements and decisions to be reasonable, just, and convenient, avoiding any confrontation or consultation.

In almost all religious communities, both male and female, important decisions are made together! The dominant



absolutism of other times and religious, political, and social contexts: "because I say it, I decide it, I want it..." has faded or, at least, remains harmless! However, it is equally harmful to reject any point of reference in the name of a misunderstood personal freedom: the freedom sought by Adam in the earthly paradise!

5. Obedience

Obedience aligns with the will of God: as we ask in the Our Father and find fully and willingly carried out in every word and gesture of Jesus, who always leaves to the Father, even in the face of death, the final word.

An authoritative, clarifying, useful, and relevant intervention on the subject is the document from the Dicastery for Religious: *The Service of Authority and Obedience* (2008).

6. Conclusion

The three vows, indispensable cornerstones of the structure, are accompanied, in various Institutes, by particular "vows" that highlight the charism: education of the young, care for the sick, missionary activity, etc.

Among the Order of Augustinian Recollects, for example, the **vow of humility** is taken, which, to defend the related virtue, bans (in any context) any overt or subtle form of ambition and competition.

The faithful and joyful observance of religious vows is undoubtedly the most effective activity for **vocation promotion**, but it also serves as an inexhaustible source of oxygen for individual religious and for the communities: it transforms **communal life** (not always easy and rewarding) into fraternal life in community. A change of air and climate that is keenly felt. Not only in the cloisters, but inside!





Fr. Annacletus Nzewuihe, oad

THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS VOWS

Canonical, Moral and Cultural Perspectives



Abstract: *the theology of religious vows can be seen from different perspectives.*

From a canonical point of view, vows are regulated by the Code of Canon Law and represent a public act of consecration and service to the Church.

Morally, they are instruments of Christian perfection: chastity expresses an undivided love for God, poverty is a voluntary choice of simplicity and detachment from material goods, while obedience reflects humility and

submission to the divine will.

Culturally, the practice of these vows varies in different contexts: in Africa, chastity challenges traditions that value marriage, while poverty is experienced as solidarity with the poor; in Asia, obedience is facilitated by respect for authority, while chastity can be more complex in cultures where the family is central; in Europe, secularization makes these vows countercurrent, but they remain a testimony to the Gospel.

In this article we will explore the theology of the evangelical vows, with reference to their canonical, moral, as well as the different cultural perceptions of these vows across Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The evangelical vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience stand at the **heart of Christian religious life**. These vows are not only personal commitments but are seen as ways of following Christ's



example more closely, giving witness to the values of the Kingdom of God. The vows represent a radical choice to live differently from the world, pointing toward a future eschatological reality.

Furthermore, it will examine how religious can **freely live** them today, considering contemporary challenges and the vitality of these vows in a rapidly changing world.

1. The Canonical provisions of Religious Vows

The canonical understanding of the evangelical vows is firmly rooted in the legal and spiritual framework provided by the Catholic Church, particularly in the **Code of Canon Law** (1983), which governs religious life.

The profession of the *"evangelical counsels or counsels of perfection"* of chastity, poverty, obedience (can. 599–601) and humility for the Order of the Discalced Augustinians serves as a form of consecration and total dedication to God.

The *Code of Canon Law* defines Vow as *"a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good, must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of*

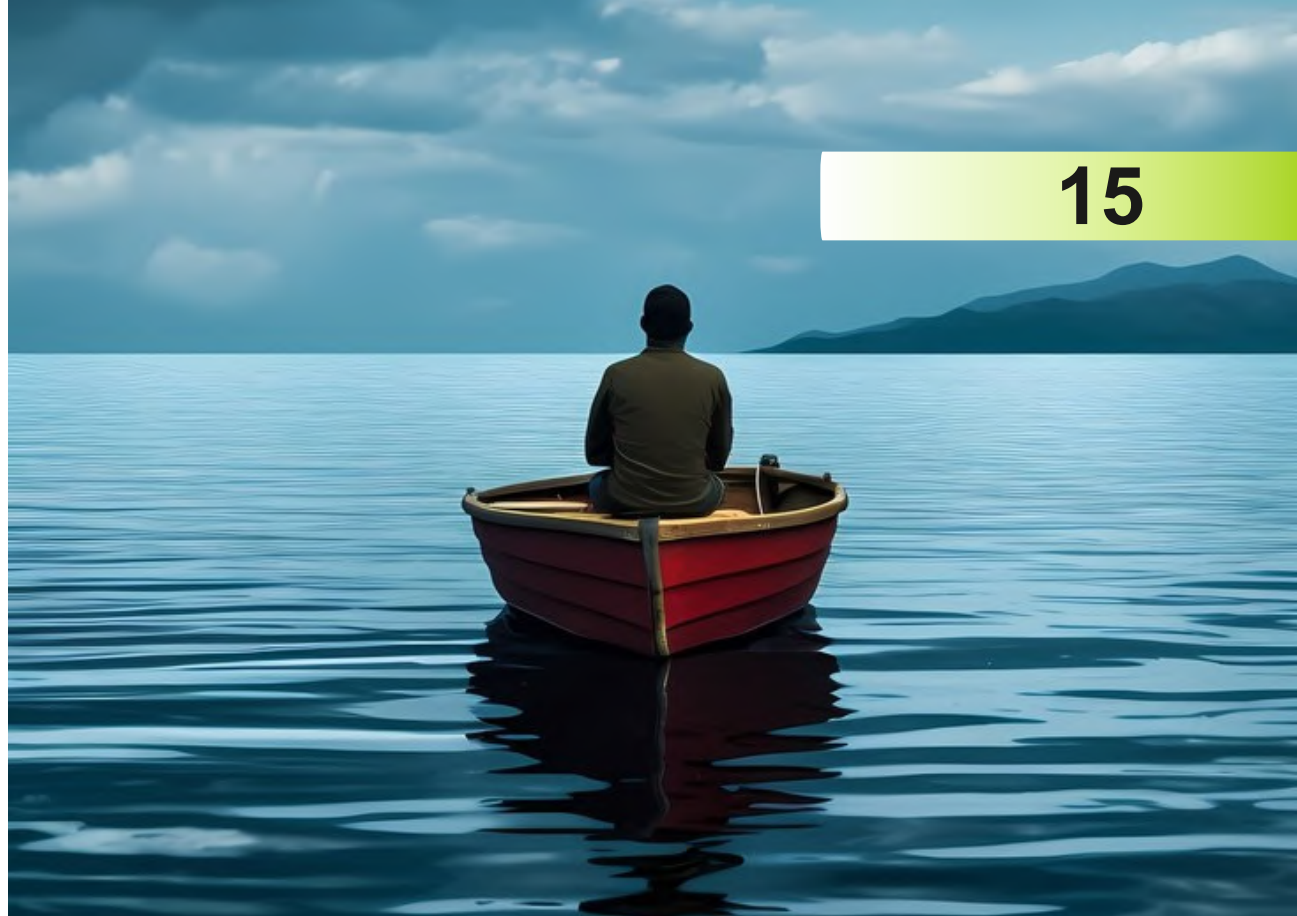
religion" (can. 1191, §1). The vows therefore are not only personal commitments but also a public act of service to the Church and the world.

Hence: *"A religious institute is a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows, either perpetual or temporary which are to be renewed, however, when the period of time has elapsed, and lead a life of brothers or sisters in common"* (can. 607, §2).

Canon 599 of the Code of Canon Law states again that religious life is characterized by the public profession of the evangelical counsels, which requires the individual's free decision to live these vows in response to the call of God.

The canonical structure of religious life ensures that these vows are lived not in isolation but within the context of a community that provides support, guidance, and accountability.

In the same way, the canon 1194 makes it clear that the religious vows can cease to be either by time or by dispensation or commutation: *"A vow ceases by the lapse of the time designated to fulfil the obligation, by a substantial change of the matter promised, by the absence*



of a condition on which the vow depends, by the absence of the purpose of the vow, by dispensation, or by commutation".

Religious vows are not taken out of mere personal piety; they are a form of covenant. As Saint Augustine writes in *The Confessions*, religious life is a "vow of fidelity" made to God.

The vows are a form of common spirituality, where personal sanctity is intertwined with the **sanctity of the Church**. The Catholic Church thus sees these vows as a way to embody the prophetic witness of the Gospel in the world.

Indeed, *"the religious state reveals the transcendence of the Kingdom of God and its requirements over all earthly things. To all people it shows wonderfully at work within the Church the surpassing greatness of the force of Christ the King and the boundless power of the Holy Spirit"* (*Lumen Gentium* 44).

2. The Moral perspectives of the Evangelical Counsels

The evangelical counsels are means of attaining Christian perfection through the practice of virtue. The profession of the

vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and humility are not as repressive or punitive measures, but as means of radical freedom that help religious live according to the highest moral ideals set out by Christ.

Through the vows the religious set out to follow Christ with greater liberty and to imitate him more closely, by practicing the evangelical counsels (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 918).

a) Chastity

The vow of chastity is not simply an abstention from sexual relations, but a radical choice **to direct all one's affections toward God**.

Chastity therefore is seen by those who profess it, as a positive virtue that frees a person from the distractions of worldly desires, temperance which leads to the integration of inner union of man's



body and soul.

By following Christ's celibacy through the vow of chastity, symbolizes an undivided heart, wholly committed to God's service. St. Thomas Aquinas would say in his *Summa Theologica*, that chastity is "*the virtue which moderates and corrects the disorder of desires*" (ST, II-II, Q. 151).

By being a chaste person he or she maintains the integrity of his or her sexual powers and insure a unity of the person. This does not allow him or her live a double life.

b) Poverty

This vow is understood as a **voluntary renunciation of personal ownership of material goods**, enabling the religious to live in total dependence on God.

Poverty is not simply about material deprivation; it is a moral choice to live a life of simplicity, rejecting the distractions and entanglements of material wealth.

The moral value of poverty lies in its ability to free the individual from greed and the attachment to worldly things. As John Paul II emphasized that poverty is a

witness to the "*primacy of God*" and "*the freedom of the heart*" (*Vita Consecrata* 19).

c) Obedience

The word obedience originates from the word *ob-audire*, meaning to hear. It refers to willingness to hear others and to respond. In other words, it is to hear **God's words** as well as obeying the divine will through the persons in authority.

The vow of obedience is a choice to submit one's will to the will of God, as manifested through legitimate authority in the religious community. Obedience is seen as an active expression of humility and trust, allowing the religious to live not for self but for others.

The vow of obedience follows the example of Christ's obedience to the Father, even unto death (Phil. 2:8).

3. Socio-cultural Contexts of the Evangelical Counsels

The understanding and practice of the evangelical vows can vary greatly depending on cultural contexts. In differ-



ent parts of the world, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Europe, the evangelical counsels are not lived in a vacuum but are shaped by local customs, socio-economic realities, and spiritual traditions.

a) Africa

In many African cultures, family and communal ties are central. The evangelical vow of chastity, which calls for a commitment to celibacy, can be particularly challenging in societies where marriage and procreation are seen as essential parts of adulthood. Yet, African religious communities embrace chastity as a radical form of witness to God's call, signifying a commitment to love that transcends familial bonds.

The vow of poverty in Africa often resonates with the lived experience of many people who already face material deprivation. In this case, vow of poverty becomes a powerful symbol of solidarity within African religious, with the poor and marginalized.

It then becomes a practical example of what Pope Francis said, emphasizing

that the vow of poverty is not simply about the renunciation of wealth but about living in solidarity with the poor and seeking justice for them. He says:

"For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor "his first mercy". This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind... which was in Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness" (Evangelii Gaudium 198).

Obedience is deeply ingrained in many African cultures, where respect for elders and authority figures is a fundamental value. This cultural respect makes it easier for religious to live out the vow of obedience in African societies.



Obedience in the African context is not merely a submission to authority but it is understood as a way of contributing to the common good, fostering unity, and promoting communal harmony.

b) Asia

In Asia, where religious diversity and secularism often prevail, the evangelical vows are lived in diverse ways.

In countries like India and the Philippines, where Catholicism has deep roots, the vows are often integrated into

religious life in meaningful ways.

In the Philippines, for example, the vow of poverty is often tied to the commitment to social justice, with religious engaging in outreach programs for the poor and marginalized.

In India, however, the evangelical vow of chastity can be particularly difficult to embrace, given the importance of family life and marriage in Hindu and Muslim traditions. For many Indian religious,



chastity is seen as a call to transcend cultural and familial expectations and to live fully for God.

As Fr. Thomas Merton reflects in *The Seven Storey Mountain*, "The vow of celibacy is the surrender of the right to direct one's own life...a form of total freedom for God".

Obedience in Asian context and in societies that often emphasize respect for authority, obedience may be easier to live out than in more individualistic cultures. The vow of obedience is seen as

an extension of the virtue of respect for authority, deeply embedded in the social fabric of many Asian cultures.

c) Europa

In Europe, where secularism has made significant inroads, religious vows are often viewed with suspicion. The evangelical vow of chastity is sometimes seen as a rejection of natural human desires, while the vow of poverty may be misunderstood as irrelevant in a society that values material wealth and personal success.

However, for religious in Europe, the vows are still a powerful witness to the values of the Gospel.

Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes that the evangelical vows are not merely outward signs of renunciation but are signs of the "hope of eternal life" (*Verbum Domini* 83). Religious in Europe, like the Augustinian, Benedictine and Franciscan Orders, continue to live these vows with a deep sense of mission, seeking to offer an alternative to the pervasive individualism and materialism of modern society.

Obedience in Europe can be particularly challenging in a culture that places high value on personal autonomy and freedom. Yet, for many European religious, the vow of obedience is seen not as a restriction but as a path to greater freedom in Christ. In the words of St. Teresa of Ávila in *The Interior Castle*: "In obedience, I find my greatest freedom".

4. Conclusion

The evangelical vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience remain central to the life of religious communities around the world. While the cultural, social, and moral contexts may differ, the core theological value of these vows remains the

same: they are a radical commitment to follow Christ in a way that transforms the individual and bears witness to the Kingdom of God.

Religious today can freely live these vows, but it requires a deep commitment to spiritual growth, a willingness to embrace personal sacrifice, and a constant reliance on God's grace. The evangelical vows are not only acts of renunciation but are also **acts of love, freedom, and profound joy**, leading the religious closer to the heart of God.

As Pope John Paul II wrote "*The evangelical counsels represent the most profound expression of a love that is radical, faithful, and pure*" (*Vita Consecrata* 16).





Fr. Gabriele Ferlisi, oad

FOURTH VOW

Historical Evolution of the Vow of Humility in the Discalced Augustinians



Abstract: *In the 16th century, in the context of the Catholic Reformation, walking barefoot was a symbol of poverty, mortification, and humility, but the vow of humility was not commonly adopted among religious.*

The Discalced Augustinians introduced it in 1599 and then formalized it in the Constitutions of 1620 as a "vow of non-

ambition," which prohibited seeking positions or prelates without authorization. In 1931, the Constitutions expanded its meaning, defining it as an essential part of the Order's identity.

The vow of humility has matured in the conscience of religious and is considered a divine gift, not a human choice, and is inspired by the example of Christ, the supreme model of humility.

1. Discalceation and Humility in the 16th Century

In the spirit of Church Reform promoted by the Council of Trent, the adjective "discalced" was commonly recognized as an authentic sign of true evangelical radicalism and a synthesis of ascetic and penitential values capable of opposing

the widespread doctrinal, moral, and disciplinary decline. Walking discalced symbolized a **public profession of conversion**, poverty, mortification, and humility. For this reason, almost all religious members of the various Reform Congregations chose to go discalced, that is, wearing sandals with bare feet,

both in summer and winter. Some Congregations even adopted the term "Discalced" in their official name, such as the Discalced Carmelites, Discalced Trinitarians, Discalced Mercedarians, and Discalced Augustinians.

As for humility, it was also considered by all as a highly valuable **ascetic element** to counteract the spirit of vanity and worldliness that had entered the convents. However, with the exception of some Reform Congregations like the Discalced Carmelites, humility was not chosen as a specific vow to be added to the three common vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity.

It is therefore no surprise that the Discalced Augustinians did not adopt it as a vow either, as evidenced by their first text of *Constitutions*, approved at the General Chapter of 1598, where there is no reference to it.

2. Introduction of the Vow of Humility in the Reform of the Discalced Augustinians

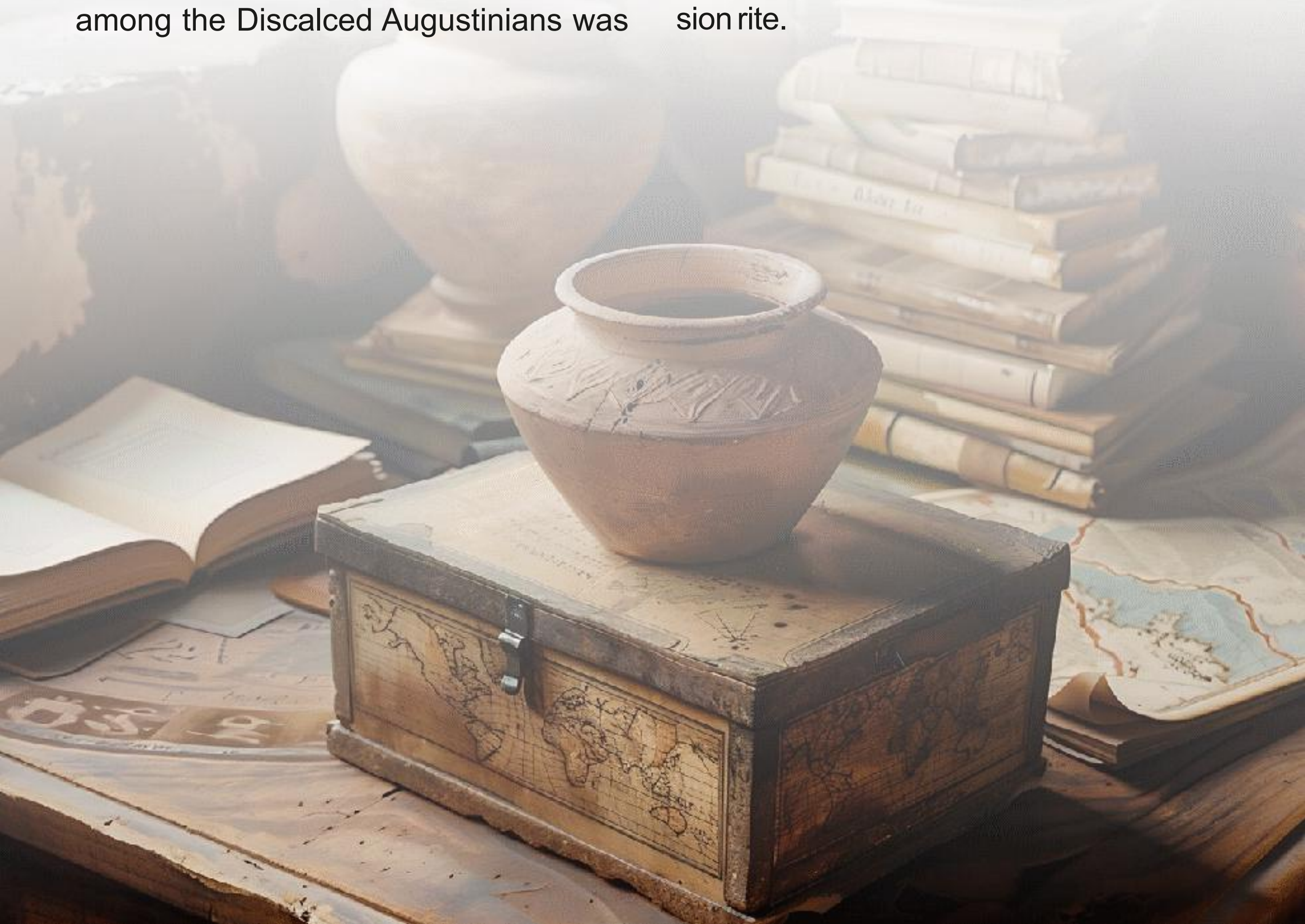
The introduction of the vow of humility among the Discalced Augustinians was

due to the decision of the Apostolic Superintendent, the Discalced Carmelite Fr. Pietro Villagrassa of the Mother of God, whom Pope Clement VIII had appointed to lead our nascent Congregation.

It was precisely on December 10, 1599, in Rome, at the Church of Santo Stefano Rotondo, on the occasion of the renewal of vows, that the Apostolic Superintendent ordered the profession of the fourth vow of humility. The reaction of the religious to this imposition, though it may seem surprising, was neither favorable nor unanimous.

The historian Fr. Giambartolomeo of Santa Claudia wrote in *Lustri Storiali*: "*Many refused to ratify or renew their professions, already made among the Conventuals or in other Congregations of the Hermit Order,*" and they returned to their previous convents.

However, the exodus of so many religious did not change the opinion of the Apostolic Superintendent, who, in agreement with those who professed the vow, immediately introduced it into the profession rite.





A decade later, in the General Chapter of 1609, the vow was codified in the newly revised text of the *Constitutions*, which was approved in a general form by Pope Paul V.

3. The Codification of the Vow of Humility in the 1620 *Constitutions*

Subsequently, in 1620, this revised text of the *Constitutions* was approved in a specific form by Pope Paul V through the papal brief *Sacri Apostolatus*.

Regarding the vow of humility, the text simply stated: *"In addition to the three solemn vows, (the religious) shall lastly profess a fourth vow against ambition, by which they pledge, within the Congregation, not to seek, either directly or indirectly, for themselves or for another person, any position of preeminence or offi-*

ce forbidden by the Constitutions; likewise, outside the Congregation, they shall not seek to obtain, directly or indirectly, for themselves or for another person, any position of preeminence, nor accept it if offered, without the authorization of the one who has the authority to command it."

Some observations on this provision in the *Constitutions*:

1. the vow of humility is referred to as the vow of "non-ambition";
2. there is no dedicated chapter on humility, unlike the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity;
3. the specific offices covered under the vow of non-ambition are not explicitly mentioned.

This omission would later be addressed by subsequent General Chapters.





4. A Leap to the 1931 *Constitutions*

The 1620 *Constitutions* remained in force for over three centuries until 1931, when they had to be revised to align with the new *Code of Canon Law* of 1917.

Considering the initial resistance to the vow of humility, one might naturally wonder what place it would have in the new *Constitutions*. With pleasant surprise, we see that it was embraced in all its **depth of meaning**. Notably, the vow was no longer referred to as the "vow of non-ambition" but explicitly as the "vow of humility". Moreover, in the section discussing the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, a chapter on humility was added, where humility was clearly defined as the "*hallmark of our life,*" our very identity (*tamquam tesseram vitae diligere*).

The same approach was followed in the updated 1984 *Constitutions*, which were revised in light of the Second Vatican Council. They define humility as the "*distinctive characteristic of our Order.*" Furthermore, in the most recent

definition of the Discalced Augustinians' **charism**, included in the current *Constitutions*, it is stated: "*Joyfully serving the Most High in spirit of humility*".

5. Internalization of the Value of the Vow of Humility

All of this indicates that, over the centuries, there has been a deep internalization of the vow of humility among the religious, making it a living part of their spiritual life.

In this regard, it is interesting to recall what Fr. Eustachio Cacciatore of Sant'Ubaldo wrote in response to an author who accused the Discalced Augustinians of distorting the Reform by introducing the vow of humility: he stated that the vow of humility "*not only does not distort but rather honors the Augustinian Order*".

Fr. Prospero Staurengi of Saint Joseph, in his ***Claustral Discourses*** commenting on the *Rule* (book that was reprinted multiple times) compared the Discalced Augustinian convents to "*schools of humility, schools of the Crucified, and refuges of humility*".

But above all, it is important to reflect on **Saint Augustine**, a witness and herald of humility. For him, humility is:

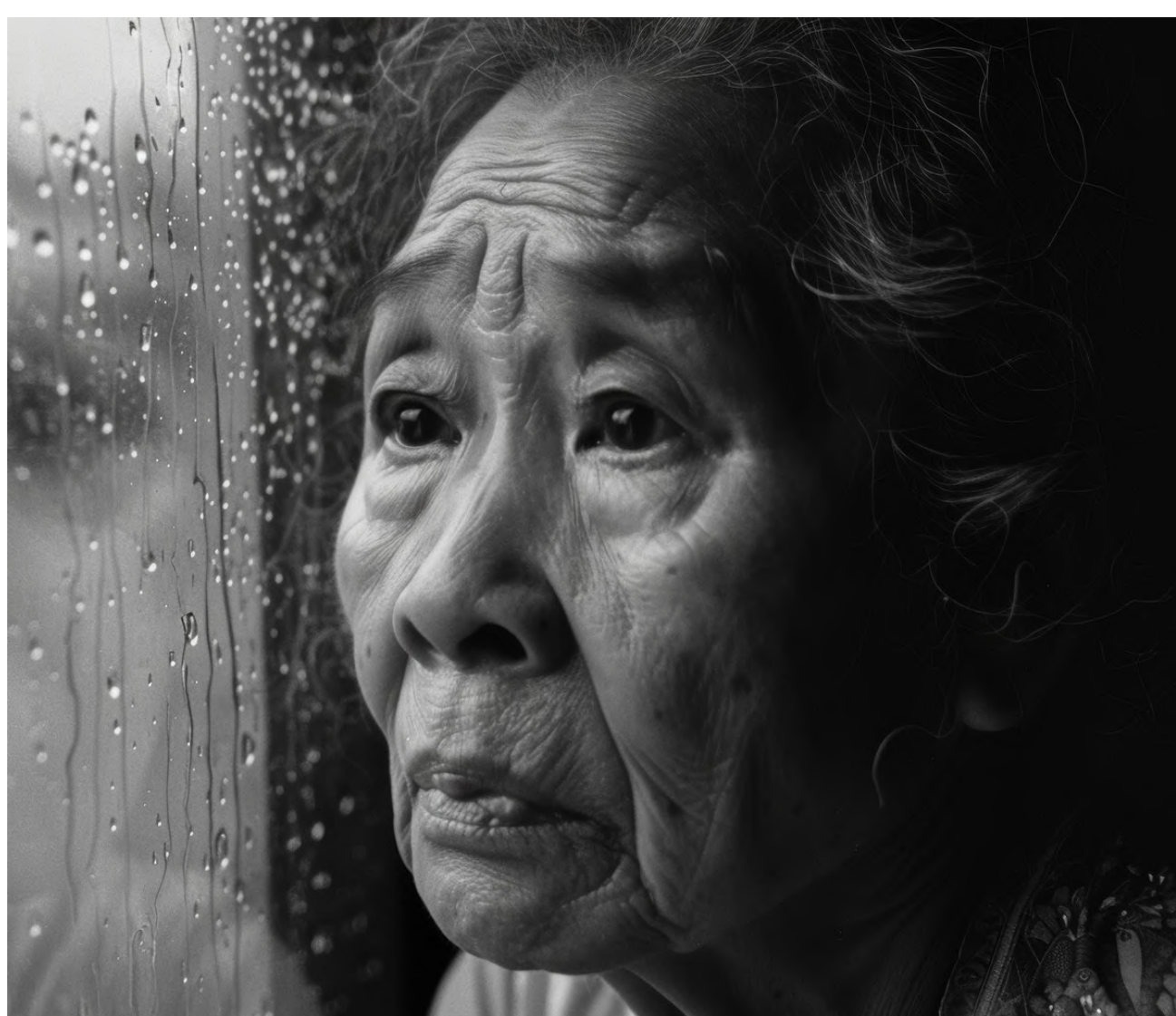
1. an ascetic virtue, and as such, an act of purification and penance;
2. an existential virtue, and as such, an act of truth and intellectual honesty;
3. a uniquely Christian virtue, and as such, an act of redemption, an act of charity, the mark of a Christian, our perfection here on earth.

He said: *"When I pronounce the name of Christ, my brothers, humility is especially recommended to us. He has opened the way for us through humility" (Enarr. in Ps. 33, d.1,4). "Our salvation in Christ is the humility of Christ" (Serm. 285,4).* But Saint Augustine's most beautiful and profound insight was his realization that humility is not just a virtue, it is a person: *"the humble Jesus" (Confess. 7,18,24).*

For this reason, the current *Constitutions* state: *"Through the practice of humility, we strive to have the same sentiments as Jesus, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. In this way, we fulfill the desire of the Church, which rejoices in finding within itself many faithful who closely follow this self-emptying of the Savior" (Cost. 43).*

6. The Vow of Humility: Not a Human Choice, but a Gift from God

At this point, it becomes clear that the vow of humility was not a choice born from the virtue and fervor of holiness of the first Discalced Augustinians, but rather something far greater: a **proposal and a gift from the Lord**. It is God who chooses and defines the essential elements of a charism, not human beings. And it is God who protects them from obstacles that, paradoxically, may even arise from the very consecrated persons directly involved in the mission.





Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510),
Saint Augustine in his Study (Fresco-Painting),
Florence, Uffizi Gallery



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JOURNEY TO RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Becoming One with Christ



Abstract: *the journey towards religious profession is a process of consecration to God that begins in the Novitiate and manifests itself in the First Profession (simple), a first “yes” that allows one to experience community life and confirm one’s vocation.*

The Solemn Profession, on the other hand, is the definitive “yes”, a spousal alliance with God that is expressed in the vows of

chastity, poverty, obedience and humility, making consecrated life a tangible sign of divine love and total belonging to God and the Church.

The rite of religious Profession, experienced in the Eucharist, affirms the bond with Christ and the community, testifying to a full and lasting dedication to the service of the Gospel.

The journey as disciples of Christ that the Discalced Augustinian religious undertake during the Novitiate leads to the First Profession, in which the decision to live the charism is formally manifested: "to serve the Most High in spirit of humility" and to serve the Church according to its needs.

1. Simple Profession: Our First “Yes”

First Profession allows us to test our ability to live out our spirituality in the life of the community.

At the same time, the community desires to see the authenticity of our vocation as well as our readiness to per-

severe in daily communal life. Therefore, the spiritual dimension of the formation journey must go hand in hand with community life, because it is in the community that one's spirituality will show its true authenticity.

The first Profession consists of **three main dimensions**:

- **spiritual**: “joyfully serving the Most High in spirit of humility”;
- **missionary**: bringing people closer to God and God closer to people;
- **ecclesial and community**: committing oneself more fully to the service of Christ and the Church.

The spiritual dimension, emphasized as humility, is a form of imitation of the humble Christ. It has its roots in consecration in Baptism, finds its most radical expression in evangelical vows, and finally leads to total commitment to God.

The special journey of following Christ, which began in the Postulancy, officially began in the Novitiate, and was publicly confirmed in the First Profession, is now **definitively affirmed in the Solemn Profession**.

At this stage, one experiences total union with the Paschal Mystery, supported by unwavering fidelity and manifested in the ability to live with peace and constancy in the Order, in joy and in sorrow, in light and in darkness, in success and in failure, *“I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my body, I complete what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for his body, the Church”* (Col 1:24).

The Solemn Profession is a gift because it is a complete response to God who is Love. Through this grace, life becomes a divine event, a permanent initiative of God's love.

In this sense, those who have made the Profession belong entirely to God, who calls and sends them, as well as belonging to the brothers and sisters they serve. Therefore, this consecration is **exclusive, definitive, and not temporary**.

The Solemn Profession is also a sign of unbroken communion, a spousal covenant of love between man and God. It is a loving response to His free and unconditional call, which invites everyone He chooses to take part in His mission for His Father's Kingdom.

This consecration is realized in four vows: This consecration to the Lord is lived out experientially through the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and humility. There are four of them, but they make up one single commitment: the professed let themselves be taken into the





mystery of Christ, so that in our concrete human life Christ may continue to be the humble, chaste, poor, and obedient Son, consecrated and sent by the Father.

The uniqueness of this Solemn Profession is reflected in its solemn celebration, which according to the liturgical rubrics should be observed separately from the other rites of profession and, wherever possible, celebrated in the presence of many faithful.

This Profession has **three main characteristics**:

- it has its origin in divine grace freely given;
- it lasts for life, as a form of fidelity and constancy in vocation;
- it demands deep spiritual dedication, as a form of love that is completely Christ-oriented.

Through this grace, life becomes a divine event, a permanent initiative of God's love. In this sense, those who have made the Solemn Profession belong entirely to God, who calls and sends them, as well as to the brothers and sisters they serve.

Solemn Profession, then, is not just a human event, but a divine event—a moment in which those who make it are fully consecrated to God, united to Christ forever, and fully given to the Church.

In this lifelong commitment, the religious becomes a sign of God's enduring love, a tangible witness of His presence in a world that longs for the light of truth, true love, and the peace, joy, and hope found in Him.



3. The Rite of Religious Profession: a Sacred Moment

The celebration of the Eucharist called the “sacrament of love”, perfects our configuration with the Paschal Mystery, leading us to the full offering of ourselves to God.

Religious profession creates a **special new bond**, to the extent that it expresses our intention to devote ourselves more and more to Christ and His Church. The rite also sacramentally affirms the ecclesial-community dimension of the grace of the religious profession.

We ask not only for the mercy of Christ and His cross but also the support of the Church, represented by the community that celebrates this profession. The community is not only the guarantor of the vowed commitment, but also the witness to our ability to live this vocation within the Church and the Order.

The **main symbol** that summarizes the meaning of this rite is the presentation of the *Rule and Constitutions*, which

states that a religious profession is not only an individual vocation, but also a shared journey together in a community to follow Christ and grow in faith, brotherhood and charity.





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RELIGIOUS VOWS in the Vision of Contemporary Society



Abstract: *Consecrated life is a response of radical love to God, expressed through the profession of vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and, in our Order, also of humility.*

It makes visible the features of Christ and becomes memory and conscience for all the baptized. Today, in a world marked by individualism and superficiality, reli-

gious life maintains a prophetic, mystical and contemplative value.

Despite the surprise it arouses in contemporary society, it continues to be a light that illuminates and transforms, helping to overcome selfishness and indifference, especially in this Jubilee Year when we are called to renew our trust in the Lord and to live our vocation in the gift of self.

The term "**contemporary**" refers to the present time, the current era in which we find ourselves.

A few years ago, I made my First Profession, which took place on January 12, 2008, at the Church of Saint Anthony in the city of Ourinhos, Brazil. On that occasion, together with the confreres who were completing the Novitiate

period, we chose as our motto the words of Saint Augustine from the book Soliloquies: "*I love only You, I follow only You, I seek only You*" (Sol. I, 1, 5).

With these words, we wanted to express our **desire to respond**, on that day, with love to God, who loved us first, using the vows of Profession as the essential means for this response.

1. Theological Meaning

Looking back at that day today, I think that, despite the generosity with which we offered our lives, we did not yet have a full awareness that, according to the teaching of the Church, we become a **visible and permanent sign** of the traits of Jesus chaste, poor, and obedient, a true gift to His Church.

As Saint John Paul II reminded us in the encyclical *Vita Consecrata*:

“The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus — the chaste, poor and obedient one — are made constantly "visible" in the midst of the world and the eyes of the faithful are directed towards the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven. (VC 1).”

In our Rite, before making the profession, the candidates are asked about their willingness to consecrate their lives to God and to unite *"more closely with Him with the new and special title of religious profession"* (Rit. 350), thus recalling the meaning of the response through the evangelical vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, to which in our Order the vow of humility is added.

To become consecrated means that, through a free act, the persons give themselves in radical love: what they are, do,

and possess belongs to God.¹ Through this closer union with Christ, taking on the baptismal commitments more radically, religious become a memory and a conscience for the baptized.

As Fr. Lourenço Kearns says: *"We remind everyone that we are consecrated beings in baptism and that we have promised, through the baptismal covenant, to love God and our neighbor."*²

2. Contemporary Impact

Regarding the contemporary impact of religious profession, the document *Contemplate* from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (2016) highlights the importance of consecrated life and its prophetic, mystical, and contemplative role in today's society, stating:

“Consecrated persons are called (perhaps today more than ever) to be prophets, mystics and contemplatives, to discover the signs of God's presence in daily life, becoming wise interlocutors, capable of recognizing the questions that God and humanity pose in the paths of our history. The challenge is the ability to "continue to see" God with the eyes of faith, in a world that ignores his presence (Contemplate n. 6).”

Almost ten years after the publication of this document, we can affirm that the religious vows continue **to evoke surprise** and often remain incomprehensible in the eyes of our contemporary society.

Pope Francis, in his homily for the first Vespers of the XXIX World Day for Consecrated Life, reiterated how the public profession of the evangelical counsels makes religious **bearers of light for our time**.

On the occasion of this World Day for Consecrated Life in the Jubilee Year 2025, the Holy Father demonstrated that: *"The practice of **poverty** makes the consecrated person a bearer of blessings, manifesting goodness and rejecting negative attitudes such as selfishness and greed."*

Chastity illuminates a *"world often marked by distorted forms of affection, in which the principle 'what pleases me above all' prevails... This generates, in relationships, attitudes of superficiality and precariousness, egocentrism, immaturity, and moral irresponsibility."*

And regarding the light that is **obedience**, the Pope stated: *"Consecrated obedience is an antidote to this solitary individualism, promoting as an alternative a model of relationship marked by active listening, where the 'speaking' and the 'listening' are followed by the concreteness of the 'acting,' even at the cost of renouncing one's tastes, plans, and preferences. Only in this way, in fact, can the person deeply experience the joy of giving, overcoming loneliness and finding*

the meaning of their existence in God's great plan."

3. Pilgrims of Hope

In light of these words, let us not forget, in this year marked by the "hope that does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5), to manifest our trust in the Lord of the harvest, so that He may multiply *"like young olive shoots around your table, the children who desire to consecrate themselves to the service of your Kingdom, to follow you more closely in chastity, poverty, and obedience"* (Liturgy of the Hours). In this way, consecrated life will continue to be a **light** that illuminates our society, helping it to overcome individualism, selfishness, and indifference, with the enthusiasm and vitality that has always distinguished it.

Consecrated persons can thus face the **challenges of the contemporary world** without losing courage and increasingly understand their lives as a response to the call to prophetic life.

The words of Saint Augustine, taken from the same work *Soliloquies* cited at the beginning, help us pray for all consecrated life, that it may preserve in its hearts the essential virtues to respond to Christ: *"Increase in me faith, increase hope, increase love. O admirable and singular is your goodness!"* (Sol. I, 1, 5).

1. KEARNS, Lourenço. *Teologia da vida consagrada*. Aparecida: Santuário, 1999. p. 23.
2. *Ibidem*, p. 27.



SUNDAY LITURGY WITH SAINT AUGUSTINE

March/April 2025

March 3

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 6:39-45: The Speck in the Eye

The Lord said: Can a blind man lead another blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? The Lord perhaps added this phrase so that they would not hope that what had been said before (namely, They will pour into your lap a full measure) was meant in the sense that they would receive this from the Levites. For it was the people who gave tithes to them, and they were called blind because they did not accept the Gospel. The reward, therefore, that is spoken of, the people would begin to expect from the disciples of the Lord, who were to become imitators of the Master. He presented them in this way by adding: There is no disciple who surpasses the master (De quaest. Evang. 2,9).

March 9

1st Sunday of Lent

Luke 4:1-13: Jesus in the Desert

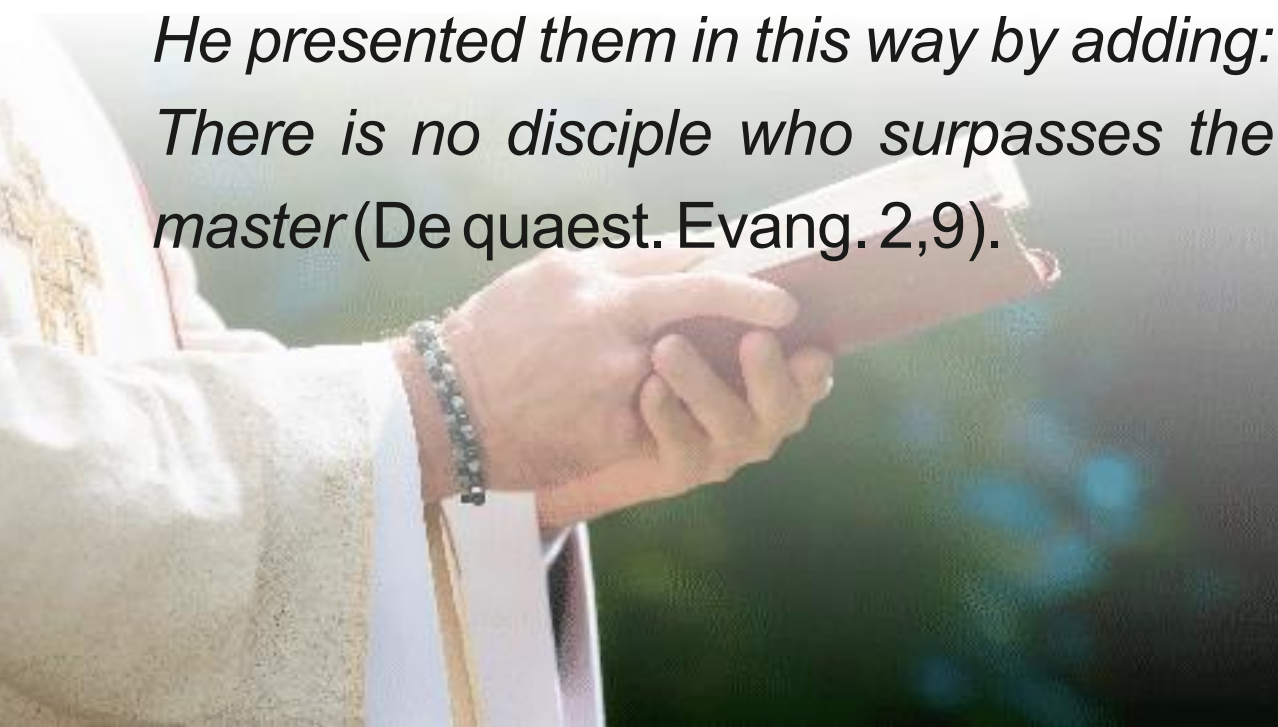
If you imitate Christ, do not be afraid! Even when the devil tempted the Lord, there was no one else in the desert—he tempted Him in secret, yet he was still defeated. Just as he was defeated when he sought to attack openly (Enarr. in Ps. 90,2).

March 16

2nd Sunday of Lent

Luke 9:28b-36: The Transfiguration of Jesus

The Lord Himself became radiant like the sun, His garments became dazzling white like snow, and Moses and Elijah spoke with Him. Yes, it was truly Jesus Himself who shone like the sun, symbolically showing that He is the light that enlightens every person who comes into



this world. Just as the sun we see is light for the eyes of the body, so He is light for the eyes of the heart; what the sun is for the body, He is for the soul. His garments represent His Church. If garments were not held tightly by the one who wears them, they would fall (Serm. 78,2).

March 19

Saint Joseph

Matt. 1:16.18-21.24: Joseph did as the angel commanded

As a husband, it is true that Joseph was troubled, but as a just man, he did not act cruelly. His justice was so great that he neither wished to keep an adulteress nor dared to punish her by exposing her to public disgrace. Scripture says he decided to divorce her in secret, for he not only did not want to punish her, but he did not even want to denounce her. Consider how true his justice was! He did not wish to spare her because he wanted to keep her with him. Many forgive adulterous wives out of carnal love, wanting to keep them, even though they are adulteresses, in order to enjoy them and satisfy their own carnal passion. But this just husband did not want to keep her; his affection, therefore, had nothing carnal about it. And yet, he did not wish to punish her either. His forgiveness, then, was inspired solely by mercy (Serm. 51,6,9).

March 23

3rd Sunday of Lent

Luke 13:1-9: The Parable of the Fig Tree that bore no fruit

Regarding the fig tree, which had been there for three years without bearing fruit, and the woman who had been ill for eighteen years, listen to what the Lord has given us to understand. The fig tree

symbolizes humankind, while the three years represent three different ages: the first before the Law, the second under the Law, and the third under Grace. It is not inappropriate to see in the fig tree a symbol of humanity. In fact, the first man, when he sinned, covered his shameful parts with fig leaves (Serm. 110,1).

March 25

The Annunciation of the Lord

Luke 1:26-38: The Annunciation of the Angel to Mary

It was necessary that our Head, by a great miracle, take flesh from a virgin to signify that, in the supernatural order, His members would also be born of a virgin, that is, from the Church. Thus, Mary alone was both mother and virgin, in spirit and in body: mother of Christ, virgin of Christ. In the spiritual order, the Church, through the saints who are destined to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, is entirely both mother of Christ and virgin of Christ (De Santa Verg. 6,6).

March 30

4th Sunday of Lent

Luke 15:1-3.11-32: The Parable of the Merciful Father

The man who has two sons represents God, who has two peoples: the elder son symbolizes the Jewish people, while the younger represents the Gentiles. The inheritance received from the Father consists of the soul, intelligence, memory, talent, and all the faculties that God has given us to know and worship Him. Having received this inheritance, the younger son departed for a distant land, meaning he reached the point of forgetting his Creator. He squandered all his wealth by living recklessly: paying without gaining, spending

what he had without receiving what he lacked. In other words, he exhausted all his gifts in debauchery, idolatry, and every kind of dishonorable passion, what Truth itself calls harlots (Serm. 112/A,2).

April 6

5th Sunday of Lent

John 8:1-11: The Forgiven Sinner

Let us listen to the judgment of the One who is both gentle and just: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." This is the voice of justice: let the sinner be punished, but not by sinners; let the law be fulfilled, but not by those who violate it. Indeed, this is true justice. And they, struck by these words as if by a mighty arrow, looked at themselves, recognized their own guilt, and one by one, they all withdrew. Only the two remained: the wretched woman and Mercy itself. And the Lord, after striking them with the arrow of justice, did not linger to watch them fall. Instead, turning His gaze away from them, He bent down again and continued writing on the ground with His finger (In Io. Ev. tr. 33,5).

April 13

Palm Sunday

Luke 22:14–23:56: The Passion of the Lord

The passion of our Lord was necessary for us; indeed, through the passion of the Lord, the world was redeemed. How many goods has the passion of the Lord brought us! Yet, the passion of this just one would not have been completed if there had not been the wicked ones who killed the Lord. And then? Should we perhaps attribute the good that has come to us from the passion of the Lord to the ungodly who killed Christ? Absolutely not. They wanted to kill, and God allowed

it. They would have been guilty even if they had only intended it; as for God, however, He would not have allowed the crime unless it had been just (Enarr. in Ps. 61,22).

April 20

Sunday of Easter

John 20:1-9: The Disciples and the Empty Tomb

It is not a great thing to believe in the death of Christ. Even the pagans, the Jews, and all the wicked believe it. That He died is believed by all; the Christian faith is in the resurrection of Christ. This is our fundamental distinction: to believe that Christ has risen. That was the hour in which He wanted to be seen passing through: when He rose. It was then, during that passage, that He wanted people to believe in Him, since, having been delivered to suffering for our sins, He rose for our justification (Enarr. in Ps. 120,6).

April 27

2nd Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31: The Appearance of the Risen Christ to the Disciples Ggathered together

They thought they were seeing a spirit. The Manichees also believe this, that Christ was a spirit, that He was not flesh. If it were true that Christ wanted His disciples to have this level of understanding, then you may remain in this belief as well; if you believe that Christ was only a spirit and appeared as a ghost, that is, that there was no true flesh in Christ, well, even the disciples had believed this at first. You have been wounded in your faith as the disciples were, now, together with them, be healed (Serm. 375/C,3).



SOME PICTURES

Sharing a bit of our Life



Meeting of the Confreres of Brazil and Paraguay



From **January 6 to 10**, the confreres from Brazil and Paraguay gathered in Toledo, Brazil, for the 43rd Meeting of Religious at the Santa Monica Community, with the aim of reflecting on current themes and strengthening community bonds.

The Prior Provincial, Fr. José Valnir da Silva, received the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity from the local Priors, making official the designation of Religious Communities and the formation of Houses. The meeting included moments of formation, prayer, and planning of activities for 2025.



Meeting of the Confreres of Asia



From **January 7 to 9**, the confreres from Asia gathered in Cebu City, Philippines, for their Annual Meeting. The event provided moments of formation on innovative topics, including artificial intelligence and its ethical and pastoral implications, as well as spaces dedicated to community dialogue. There were also moments of prayer, reflection, and recreation, further strengthening fraternal bonds.



Fr. César: Parish Priest in Ramos



On **February 2**, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, Msgr. Antonio Catelan, presided over the Mass for the canonical installation of the new pastor of the Parish of Santa Rita dos Impossíveis in Ramos, Rio de Janeiro: Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves. He officially

assumed the mission of leading the parish community, receiving the support of the religious community and the faithful present. The ceremony was marked by moments of prayer and welcome, strengthening the pastoral and spiritual commitment of the new Parish Priest.

Fr. Evandro: Parish Priest in Colíder



On **February 2**, the Bishop of Sinop, Mons. Canísio Klaus, presided over the Mass for the installation of the new Parish Priest of the Parish of Pope Saint John XXIII in Colíder, Fr. Evandro Favero. He was welcomed alongside Fr. Alexandre Gregorek, the new Vicar, and Deacon Fr. Milciades Gauto Armoa, who will support the parish's pastoral activities.

The ceremony was celebrated with great participation and a spirit of communion from the faithful and collaborators with best wishes for good pastoral work, giving continuity to the pastoral and vocational work that the community carries out in the vast territory of the Mato Grosso state.





Day of Consecrated Life in Rome



On **February 2**, the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, participated in the gathering of consecrated persons in Rome, held at the Papal Basilica of St. John Lateran on the occasion of the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The meeting of prayer and reflection brought together numerous consecrated people, celebrating the gift of consecration and renewing the commitment to service in the Church..



Retreat day in Bafut



On **February 6**, the confreres of the Bafut Community in Cameroon welcomed several diocesan priests from Bamenda to our religious house for a day of retreat. The gathering included moments of prayer, reflection, and fraternity, strengthening the bond between religious and clergy in their journey of faith and service to the Church in this special time of the Jubilee year.

Fr. Getulio: Parish Priest in Nova Londrina



On **February 7**, Fr. Getulio Freire Pereira assumed the role of Parish Priest of São Pio X Parish in Nova Londrina, accompanied by Fr. Francisco Ferreira as Vicar.

The installation Mass was presided over by the Bishop of Paranavaí, Msgr. Mário Spaki, in an atmosphere of faith and communion, marking the beginning of a new pastoral phase for the community. After the celebration, community members gathered for a moment of fraternity with a reception to welcome the confreres' new pastoral mission.



Prior Provincial in India

During his visit to India on **February 14**, the Prior Provincial of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province, Fr. Crisologo Suan, met with the Bishop of Kannur, Msgr. Alex Joseph Vadakumthala, along with the confreres of our religious community.



The meeting, marked by a spirit of fraternity and dialogue, was an important opportunity to strengthen our future presence in the Diocese and explore pastoral prospects for the religious community, which is in the process of acquiring land for the future construction of a religious house.



Prior Provincial in Cameroon

During his visit to Cameroon in **February**, the Prior Provincial of the Mother of Good Counsel Province, Fr. Jan Derek Sayson, met with our confreres of the Bafut Community; the Archbishop of Bamenda, Msgr. Andrew Nkea; the group of Third Order members; the teachers and children of Saint Joseph Primary School. His visit was a sign of closeness and support for the life and activities of the confreres and the lay people engaged in pastoral and educational service.

Moving to new house in Ho Chi Minh City

On **February 15**, the confreres of the Msgr. Ilario Costa Community moved into their new religious house.

The Order first arrived in the city in 2009, beginning its formative and pastoral work while residing in a rented house. After years of dedication and with the support of numerous benefactors, the new house has finally been



completed, welcoming the confreres and aspiring philosophy students.

The blessing and inauguration of the house is scheduled for March 19, a moment of great joy and hope for the community, which now has its own space for prayer, formation, and fraternal life.



100th anniversary of the birth of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Carù

On **February 17**, at the Mother Church of the Parish of Ampère, the Prior Provincial, Fr. José Valnir da Silva, presided over the Mass on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù.

60th Anniversary of Ordination of Fr. Angelo Grande

On **February 21**, at the San Lorenzo Martire Convent in Acquaviva Picena, where he was a novice in 1957, Fr. Angelo Grande, assisted by his confreres, celebrated his 21,900th Mass in thanksgiving to the Lord for the 60th anniversary of his Priesthood. The confrere was ordained a priest in Rome by Msgr. Giovanni Canestri, then Vicegerent of Rome, at the Church of Sant'Agata dei Goti, together with Fr. Pietro Scalia and Fr. Giacomo Anziani, who was remembered in prayer during the Mass. Father Angelo served the Order for many years in the General Curia, holding

the Offices of Vicar, Definitory, and Postulator. He also presided over three General Chapters and was Commissioner of the old Genoese Province.

He contributed to the formation of religious life as Master of Aspirants, Novices, and Professors. For several years, he served the Church working at the Vatican Secretariat of State Archive.



Fr. Marcelo: Parish Priest in Yguazú

On **February 22**, at 7:00 p.m., the Parish San José Obrero, in Yguazú (Paraguay), celebrated the installation of Fr. Marcelo Leandro as the new Parish Priest.

The ceremony, characterized by faith and communion, brought together the faithful and members of the community and was presided over by the Episcopal Vicar, Fr. Dario Solorzano, who led the installation

rite with words of welcome and blessing for the new parish priest.

The Mass was concelebrated by the Prior Provincial, Fr. José Valnir da Silva, together with Fr. Joacir Chiodi and Fr. Valdecir Soares, who, during the celebration, were presented to the parish community as the new Vicars. This moment strengthened the pastoral commitment and promoted a spirit of communion and renewal in the mission of serving God and his people according to our charism: Joyfully to serve the Most High in spirit of humility.

Fr. Osmar: Parish Priest in Salgado Filho

On **February 22**, at 7:00 p.m., during Sunday Mass, the installation ceremony of the new Parish Priest of the Parish São Francisco de Assis, in the Diocese of Palmas and Francisco Beltrão, took place. The Parish includes the municipalities of Salgado Filho and Manfrinópolis and has a mission field of 25 chapels distributed between the two localities.

The celebration was presided over by the Diocesan Bishop, Msgr. Edgar Xavier Ertl, and was attended by several confreres: Fr. Darci Przyvara, Vicar Provincial and representative of the Provincial Prior, Fr. José Arnaldo Schott, Fr. Gelson Lazarin dos Santos, Fr. Mikael Mezzomo and Fr. Leandro Xavier Rodrigues.





Retreat of Aspirants in Toledo



On **February 28**, the retreat for Aspirants (Philosophy students) of the Santa Mônica Community in Toledo was held, guided by Fr. Joacir Chiodi, on the occasion of the beginning of the 2025 academic year. During this significant event, the aspirants had the opportunity to deepen their spiritual and formative journey in the light of our spirituality.

Olympics in Butuan City



From **February 25 to 28**, the Asian confreres of the Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Province gathered in Butuan for the Olympics, a special event held every two years that involves all the members of the Province in a spirit of sportsmanship and fraternity. Divided into four teams, the participants competed in various disciplines, including soccer, volleyball, basketball, and many others, demonstrating commitment, team spirit, and healthy competition. The gathering was not only an opportunity to test their sports skills but also a moment of joy and sharing.

Fr. Moacir: Parish Priest in Araucária



On February 28, Fr. Moacir Chiodi officially took canonical possession of the Parish Senhor Bom Jesus in Araucária, thus assuming the leadership of the community in a ceremony marked by a spirit of prayer and the participation of the faithful.



Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRIOR GENERAL

Vows as Augustinian identity

Dear confreres, affiliates, and friends, reflecting on the theme that has dominated all the articles in this issue of our magazine, I am deeply moved to observe the religious who, through their profession of the evangelical counsels, together with all those who profess vows or other bonds of consecration to God, belong to Consecrated Life.

The Church has wisely interpreted this life and has produced the Code of Canon Law, which serves as an excellent guide and illumination for all the faithful, not only for the consecrated, in their earthly pilgrimage toward Heaven.

We, religious Discalced Augustinians, through the Profession of Vows, adding

the vow of humility that characterizes our specific identity, are part of this extraordinary portion of God's people made up of consecrated persons.

I thank and praise the Lord for the call He has addressed to me, to my confreres, and to all the consecrated. I ask for the grace of fidelity to the content of the vows professed, a creative fidelity, open to the light of the Holy Spirit, capable of generating the joy of perseverance.

This is my wish for all the consecrated. May their generous response to the divine call be an encouragement and inspiration so that we may walk together and with joy toward God.

