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Catholic and Augustinian Heritage

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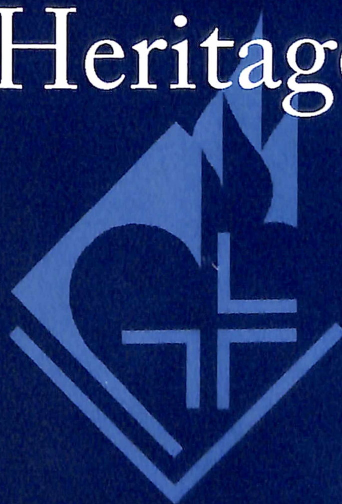
Merrimack College

Catholic and Augustinian Heritage



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Our mission is to enlighten minds, engage hearts, and empower lives.

Inspired by the Catholic faith and the Augustinian tradition of seeking truth through inquiry and dialogue, our vision is:

- To prepare students to adapt creatively to tomorrow's realities through excellence in the liberal arts, sciences, and the professions.
- To be a community of scholars welcoming and respecting all back grounds, experiences, beliefs, and perspectives.
- To cultivate the intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical, and personal awareness needed to make wise choices for life, career, and service.
- To encourage and support scholarly work that contributes to the wisdom on which society bases its decisions.
- To engage other educational institutions, industry, and agencies of social change in collaborative efforts fostering a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

Augustinian Values at Merrimack College

The life and thought of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) serve as a foundation for the Catholic intellectual humanism of Merrimack College. The educational and spiritual traditions of the Order of Saint Augustine (1244 CE) also enrich our academic community. Merrimack College celebrates its Augustinian mission and affirms the following values that are ours by heritage and grace.

Before all else our college is a community of scholarship and service whose members support and challenge each other in a wholehearted pursuit of knowledge, holding one another to the highest intellectual and ethical standards.

Knowledge grows into wisdom when we recognize the limits of reason and of our individual perspectives, attend to the common good, and fashion the changes inspired by learning.

The pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning requires diligent study, freedom of thought, dedication to dialogue, and collegial respect for each person's experience.

The contemplation and reflection encouraged by the intellectual life inspire an ethical sensibility as well as a prophetic critique of social structures in light of justice and peace.

The great texts of human history, including sacred scriptures, call us to continuing dialogue as our varied religious and philosophical convictions enrich our Catholic mission.

Our lifelong pursuit of truth and understanding can be for Christians an expression of the inner pilgrimage with Christ the Teacher, for adherents of all faiths part of the search for God, and for everyone a journey of hope amidst the ever-expanding horizons of human experience.

These values invite all members of our community to learn, teach, work and study in ways appropriate to their discipline and their service, and in a manner that makes Merrimack College a vibrant Augustinian academic community.

Merrimack College

Catholic and Augustinian Heritage

Book I

Catholic Higher Education in the United States

Overview of Higher Education in the United States

There are about three thousand colleges and universities in the United States. This sprawling academic archipelago includes schools of many sizes and kinds. From local two-year community colleges, to private ivies' to large research institutions to states systems, the American higher educational community is diverse and varied. It is also recognized around the world for its general excellence.

About sixteen hundred of these schools, or slightly over half are independent (as opposed to public) institutions. This subset includes traditional liberal arts colleges, major research universities, church related schools, two-year colleges, historically black and women's colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business, and other professions. Over nine hundred of these independent schools, or almost sixty percent, are church or faith related. Of these the largest single denominational group are the Catholic colleges and universities, numbering about two hundred and twenty. Merrimack College takes its proud place among this distinctive community in the wider family of higher educational institutions in the United States.

The Growth of Catholic Higher Education in the United States

Catholic higher education in the United States began with the establishment of Georgetown by Bishop John Carroll in 1789. Bishop Carroll was a leader among the well-educated English Catholic who settled Maryland. As the founding Bishop of the first Catholic diocese in English-speaking America, John Carroll was keen to introduce higher education. He wanted Catholics to take their place as involved and committed citizens in the new United States. Since he was himself educated by the Jesuits, he invited them to found his new College.

This interest in faith and learning was championed by several other early American bishops such as John Ireland. However, the great immigrations of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the arrival of multitudes of Catholics from Ireland, England, northern, southern, and Eastern Europe. There immigrants for the most part arrived with meager resources. The pastors and bishops who came with them were more attentive to and concerned about their peoples' economic and social survival, rather than about higher education. Out of this concern emerged the parochial schools to meet the primary, and eventually the secondary educational needs of the children of these immigrants.

Religious orders of men and women came with the Catholic immi-

grants. They established parishes and parish schools, as well as hospitals, orphanages and other pastoral services. These priests, brothers and sisters also began to found "colleges" for the further education of Catholic children. These schools were what we today might describe as advanced high schools or academies where students who showed promise in grammar school continued their education under the watchful eye of the religious. One example is the Academy founded by the Irish Augustinians fifteen miles west of Philadelphia at Villanova in 1842. Villanova College, as it was called, provided further education for boys educated at the St. Augustine parish grammar school, founded in 1811 in Philadelphia.

Scores of these "colleges" sprung up across the eastern seaboard among the Catholic population. They also followed the migration routes west. These schools emphasized introduction to the liberal arts and moral values. Many of the graduates took their place among the clergy and religious who would lead these institutions through their next phase of development. That development involved changes that gradually bought to these academies the curricula and standards that define what today we would recognize as a college. Many colleges founded by Protestant churches shared a similar history.

More changes came about in the early twentieth century. Presidents of some Catholic colleges, such as Rev. Edward Stanford, O.S.A., of Villanova, became involved in the new National Educational Association and were recognized for their academic and administrative leadership. Some of these colleges, like other independent or state schools, grew in sophistication and in complexity and became universities. Student populations in individual colleges typically grew from just a few hundred students to several thousands, especially after WWII.

Catholic Colleges and Universities and the Wider Enterprise of Higher Education

The theological vision which inspires a Catholic college or university embraces all aspects of human existence and learning, remains open to the richness of diverse and unfolding cultures, and entertains continuing dialogue with all who earnestly and sincerely seek truth. Catholic colleges and universities strive to explore, study, and enrich the cultures and communities in which they share citizenship. The Catholic college or university is not a sectarian institution. It is rather a center of learning where scholars and students can find a community dedicated to the growth of knowledge, built upon a profound respect of persons and of conscience, and committed to the common good. The theological foundation for this vision is found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), especially The Church in the Modern World (Part II, Chapter 2), and in Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution on the

University, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church).

In 1967 leaders from almost twenty Catholic colleges gathered in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, and drafted a statement on academic freedom in Catholic colleges and universities. This document gained general acceptance among the wider community of Catholic colleges and universities. Academic freedom, the appointment of lay people to trustee boards, and re-incorporation that emphasized institutional autonomy helped Catholic colleges and universities to establish themselves as equal partners in the enterprise of higher education in the United States.

Distinctive Missions of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Among the two hundred and twenty Catholic institutions of higher education there is great variety. There are large research universities, liberal arts colleges which emphasize teaching, graduate and professional schools, urban and rural campuses, traditional aged and continuing education populations. There are also distinctions based on the ideas and ethos of the founding religious community. Jesuit schools emphasize the Ignatian tradition in various ways. Dominican colleges place strong emphasis on Thomistic philosophy and theology. Franciscans claim a legacy of holistic learning and environmental awareness. Augustinians understand the collegiate community to be a scholarly fellowship of friends dedicated to the pursuit of truth and to the journey through knowledge to wisdom.

Beyond such distinctions Catholic colleges and universities share some important commonalties. All value a liberal and liberating education. Ethics and the study of values are held to be essential, especially in relation to professional education. Theology and religious studies, reflection on spirituality and ultimate meaning, and education for justice and peace all distinguish the curricula of most Catholic colleges and universities. In addition most schools will have a campus ministry program to address the spiritual and pastoral needs of the members of the community as well as a student affairs division which presents a co-curriculum rooted in the values and ideals of the common good and the development of conscience.

Faith and The Intellectual Life

There is further commonality which Catholic colleges and universities share. This characteristic, though central in Catholic intellectual life and crucial for the mission of a Catholic college or university, is often difficult for the contemporary academic or student to entertain. The departmentalization endemic in academe, the enlightenment presupposition about the incompatibility of faith and reason, and the privatiza-

tion of religion all contribute to that difficulty. The Catholic intellectual tradition, however, affirms that study, research, reflection and teaching, in short, the exercise and the pleasure of the intellectual life in its many and varied forms and disciplines is a sacred task. It is sacred because the search for intelligibility, as a constitutive dimension of the human vocation, can open one up to the possibility of transcendence, to a discovery of an encounter with the Source of intelligibility. Catholicism, and especially Augustinian thought, affirm that intellectual exploration is in and of itself part of the quest for God.

All members of a Catholic college or university are invited to consider their profession as scholar and teacher in light of this understanding of the intellectual life. All members of the school, whether Catholic or Protestant, Jewish or Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, other religion or agnostic, by virtue of their own search for truth and by the encouragement of students in that disciplined search, can share in this essential dimension of Catholic education. All members of the academic community are invited through the Catholic heritage and mission of an institution to entertain the possibility of the discovery of the divine in the very process of intellectual discovery. Even someone who has foreclosed the possibility of transcendence, while finding this invitation not directly addressed to his or her concerns, might value the kind of intellectual community fostered by such an academic heritage and vision.

Merrimack College

Merrimack College was founded in 1947 by the Order of St. Augustine, at the invitation of Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston. Our original students were the veterans returning from World War II. From the beginning Merrimack achieved distinction in academic excellence. That excellence was rooted in the Catholic intellectual life as practiced and taught by the founding Augustinians and their lay colleagues on the faculty. Today Merrimack's students come from all over New England, the country and across the world. Our academic excellence continues to draw from and build upon the distinction and heritage of Catholic higher education in the United States, as well as from the centuries of Catholic and Augustinian intellectual life and university tradition.

Merrimack enjoys the rich intellectual tradition of Roman Catholicism which nurtured the early medieval universities and which encourages thorough study and reflection in all academic disciplines. Catholicism respects the conscience of each person, values academic freedom, and affirms higher education, study and learning as a particular and vibrant expression of the inherent human vocation to know, love and serve God. Passionate interest in religious diversity, care for the common good in society, a love for philosophy and theology, and the celebration of culture and the arts are hallmarks of excellence in the

Catholic intellectual tradition at Merrimack.

Merrimack finds in the life and writings of St. Augustine a particularly compelling legacy of the Christian intellectual life. The fifth century bishop, philosopher and theologian passionately believed the search for Truth to be a common quest, leading seekers ultimately to God Who is the source of all truth and wisdom. As an Augustinian college Merrimack is a community of scholars and students who challenge and support each other in their research and study, who need the diversity of experience, belief and perspective that enriches their collegial life and intellectual quest, and who affirm with Augustine that faith and reason together are reliable guides in the human search for intelligibility.

Augustine's thought and writings were part of a life spent in the service of the people in the North African diocese amidst the political and social ferment of the late Roman Empire. His judicious activism provides the Merrimack community with a model for using their knowledge and expertise to effect the transformation of society. A Merrimack education leads "through knowledge to wisdom," through education in the liberal arts and professions to a mature wisdom, to a commitment to justice, peace and service of society, and to the values disclosed in the Christian gospel.

As a College of the liberal arts Merrimack educates by engaging students in active learning that frees them from parochialism and empowers them to engage in reflection and conversation on the many aspects of civilization. Liberal education at Merrimack deepens the human vocation to know one's self, to contemplate and care for creation, and to claim appropriate responsibility for redemptive citizenship. As a college of the professions Merrimack prepares students to be innovative, ethical and skilled members of society. Students in all disciplines are challenged to integrate theory and practice, to test and try ideas in diverse and demanding contexts, and to prepare for careers in business, education, engineering, liberal arts and the sciences.

A Brief Overview of the Life of St. Augustine

Aurelius Augustinus was born on November 13, 354 in the North African town of Thagaste, the present Souk Ahras in Algeria, about forty-five miles south of the Mediterranean coast. His magnanimous and hot tempered father Patricius was one of the thousands of proud but impoverished gentry of Rome's African Province of Numidia. His mother Monica's name suggests that she was a native Numidian, a descendent of the indigenous peoples closely related to the modern day Berbers. Augustine had perhaps two sisters and at least one brother Navigius.

When North Africa was the prosperous, pleasant and secure home of Augustine's youth, it had already been a province of the Roman Empire

for almost five hundred years. Africa provided wheat, corn and oil for the Roman world. Its citizens were proud of their important role in the economy and culture of Rome, even if their more urbane cousins across the sea in Italia might have considered these southern colonials curious in their accent and extreme in their civic and religious passions.

Augustine's youth. We know much about Augustine's youth, of course, from the early chapters of his Confessions. Doted on by his mother at home, he was bright and arrogant in school. He hated the quick hand and sharp cane of his teachers. The adventures and stories of Roman heroes like Aeneas excited his imagination and his feelings. Homer's tales were less accessible because Augustine had such distaste for Greek grammar. Augustine strove hard to be accepted by his peers as he grew into his second decade, engaging in juvenile pranks which provided him much thought for reflection and regret in his adult years.

After finishing his primary education in the local school of Thagaste he went to the town of Madaurus, fifteen miles to the south, for an additional year of studies at age sixteen. His parents could not afford more than that, however, and he had to endure a stormy year at home until Patricius secured a patron, an influential family friend named Romanianus. In 371 Augustine left for the port city of Carthage, about one hundred fifty miles east on the Gulf of Tunis. He admits that his motives for going on to "higher education" were mixed at best. "So I arrived at Carthage, where the din of scandalous love-affairs raged cauldron-like around me. I was not yet in love, but I was enamoured with the idea of love...." (Confessions III,1). The classical education waiting for him there, however, was one of the few tickets out of the poor, back country life in Thagaste.

During his student years in Carthage (371-374), Augustine began living with a girlfriend who was to be his companion of eleven years. He also became a "hearer" or novice in the Manichean cult, and suffered the death of his father Patricius—a tumultuous and difficult "college" career in any century. Augustine reports, however, that during his second year at Carthage he fell in love with learning. He was inspired to pursue wisdom upon reading *Hortensius,* a now lost work of the Roman orator and philosopher Cicero. From the vantage point of his later years, Augustine understood this to be the beginning of his search for truth, a search that led ultimately to his conversion to Christ.

The cult which Augustine joined, the Manichean sect, was a combination of Christian teaching and Persian dualism, founded by the second century Persian teacher Mani. Manicheans preached two ultimate principles of good and evil: the spiritual world was good, and the material world, evil. These two forces were in constant conflict, even and especially in human beings: our soul being good, but our body and its needs evil. Augustine seemed to have found in this dualistic mysticism a compelling approach to the problem of evil--but only for a few brief

years. Though he maintained social contact with them up to and during his year in Rome, Augustine admits that after meeting the Manichean teacher Faustus when the latter came to Carthage in 382 or 383, he found the sect's intellectual base weak and flimsy. Later, as bishop, Augustine spends significant time and energy in refuting the Manicheans whose influence in Europe lasted for several more centuries.

Professional years in Italy. In 383, after teaching rhetoric in Carthage for seven years, Augustine left for Rome where he heard that the students were better and less disruptive. In Rome, however, students had the habit of not paying their bills. Augustine, who was struggling financially, was frustrated by the situation. His unhappy year in Rome was made more miserable by a serious illness. His talent for rhetoric and teaching, however, had been noticed by Symmachus, the pagan Prefect of Rome. Through contacts and connections of Symmahcus, Augustine was offered the desirable, prestigious and lucrative position of Rhetor in Milan and speech writer for the Emperor. This meant a move to the imperial capital of the western empire, which by the fourth century was in Milan. Augustine moved there in 384 where he was soon joined by his woman companion, son, mother Monica, brother Navigius and assorted cousins and friends.

Several important currents in Augustine's life converged in Milan. In this cosmopolitan city he was introduced to the thought of the neo-Platonists. Augustine found this philosophical school very compelling. Plotinus (d. 270) had retrieved, revived and reframed Plato's philosophy. It appealed to Augustine's growing metaphysical hunger and it challenged his intellect.

The second current of his Milan experience was the Catholic bishop of the city, Ambrose. This distinguished gentleman of noble background was a powerful rhetorician as well as a student of neo-platonism. Even the critical and discerning Augustine could admire and strive to emulate Ambrose. Augustine would go to the cathedral church where Ambrose preached in order to listen to and learn from his rhetorical style. Since Ambrose was speaking about the Christian faith, however, Augustine began to hear the bishop's content even as he studied his style.

The third current of Augustine's life in Milan was a crisis of meaning and an enervating episode of life weariness. He had been responsible for supporting a family and the friends who would visit and stay. His intellectual search, always infused with passion and restlessness, was beginning to wear on him. Monica, never happy with his woman companion, finally prevailed upon Augustine to send her back to Africa. She then arranged a proper marriage for him, a marriage delayed, however, by the young age of the girl. This sent Augustine off on another romantic cul-de-sac. Finally, the competitive, corrupt and deceptive world of fourth century Roman politics, especially fierce in the imperial court, drained his energies.

Conversion and return to Africa. Augustine recounts that, amidst all this inner turmoil and outer stress, he experienced a call to "Pick up and read" *(Tolle lege! Tolle lege!)* the New Testament. There, in his garden in Milan, he picked up Paul's letter to the Romans and read the end of chapter 13. "Not in dissipation and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and lewdness, nor in arguing and jealousy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh and the gratification of your desires." This conversion experience was the beginning of his life in Christ. The next month, in September of 386, an exhausted but newly confident Augustine left his position in Milan and retired to a villa in the foothills of the Alps, in the village of Cassisiacum. There, with son, mother, and friends, he hoped to regain his mental and physical health. The following spring of 387 he was baptized by Bishop Ambrose during the Easter Vigil on April 24-25.

He soon made plans to return to Africa. Augustine's party, traveling by ship back to Africa, was delayed in the Roman port city of Ostia because the harbor was closed by a military blockade. It was that summer in Ostia that Monica died and was buried. Back in Africa Augustine set up a religious commune on the family land he inherited in Thagaste. He intended to live a simple life of prayer and study with like minded intellectual Christians. During the first or second year of this community living his son Adeodatus died, marking the third great personal loss in a few short years for the 35 year old Augustine.

Bishop of Hippo. In the spring of 391 Augustine visited the port city of Hippo, about fifty miles northwest of Thagaste. He was interviewing a potential new member for his community back home. The Christians of the city knew he was in town and during a service in the cathedral presented him to their bishop Valerius, himself of Greek background, who had been seeking a Latin-speaking presbyter.

The recent convert was reluctant to leave his quiet community life of prayer and study. Augustine, however, moved to Hippo and was ordained to the presbyterate in 391. He gathered a community around him in Hippo, as he had in Thagaste, and thus was born one of the first Christian urban monasteries. In 395 Augustine became bishop of Hippo, a ministry he continued for the next thirty-five years.

Bishop Augustine cared passionately for his people. He now employed his famous rhetorical skills and literary gifts for the preaching of the Gospel. In his many letters, sermons and books, he addressed difficult questions of Christian doctrine and discipline. He confronted the issues raised by the Manicheans (his former associates), by the schismatic Christian sect of the Donatists (the radical Christian purists of North Africa), and by the British monk Pelagius (whose teachings on divine grace and human effort were not up to Augustine's standards). In additional to his writings, done mostly at night, and his daily pastoral duties, Augustine regularly heard civil cases brought to him by Christians and others

for his discerning judgment.

His three greatest works, *Confessions (397-399), On the Trinity (419),* and *City of God (413-427),* are undisputed classics in Christian and world literature. Augustine's teaching again and again raises the centrality of God's freely given love and forgiveness, the universal presence and power of Christ, the importance of the Scriptures in Christian life and learning, and reliance on God and God's grace as opposed to civilization and human institutions.

Augustine died on August 28, 430 in his beloved Hippo which was under seige by the Vandal tribes that were sweeping across North Africa, after crossing over from the Iberian Peninsula. To the good fortune of posterity, Augustine's library was saved by his friend Possidius who was also his first biographer. Catholic Christianity died in North Africa shortly after Augustine, since the invading Vandals were Arians. Two centuries later Islam swept across the northern coast of the continent, pushing back the Arian tide, and claiming the land for Allah. Christianity returned to this part of Mediterranean Africa in the nineteenth century with French colonization.

The Order of St. Augustine (1244/1256)

The Rule of St. Augustine. In 397 Augustine wrote a rule of common life for lay Christians. Upon his return to Africa, he lived in his community of lay Christians who sought to support one another in prayer and study. When he first moved to Hippo, he founded a new community of laymen there with whom he shared life and prayer. Then, as bishop, he invited his presbyters to live a common life with him. The rule which he wrote, if not specifically for one or other of his own communities, certainly expresses his ideas about living in such an intentional religious community.

The Rule of St. Augustine is one of the oldest, extant monastic rules. It is short on regulations and ascetic admonitions. Augustine rather puts forth a set of inspiring principles which serve as the foundation for a common life based on love and harmony with Christ as the center of the community. He grounds his rule in The Acts of the Apostles 4:32: "The whole group of believers was of one mind and one heart. No one claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common." Christians come together to establish and enjoy a real and loving common life, centered upon God, striving for God. Material and spiritual goods are to be shared in humility, which is a necessary condition for love. Augustine is less interested in external observances than in inner transformation: seven times the rule invites the hearer to move from external action to interior conversion. The essence of the rule is to value community life as a victory over self-seeking, and as a practical

model for the transformation of wider society.
This rule seems to have spread quickly as a guide for communities of Christians wishing to live out the Gospel together in mutual support. The rule was known to be used across Europe from the fifth century on by small groups of hermit monks and nuns, as well as by diocesan clergy living, like Augustine's presbyters, in cathedral communities of prayer and study with their bishop. It was the practical Christian life companion piece to Augustine's intellectual and doctrinal influence.

The mendicant movement of the thirteenth century. In the thirteenth century Europe was in the midst of great social change. The new class of merchants was becoming an influential economic and political power, as their expanding wealth enabled them to rival the nobility. Urban centers were growing up around these mercantile endeavors, and new centers of learning or "universities" were organizing in these growing cities.

The Church's response to these social changes included new forms of religious communities. Monks had lived mostly hidden within the cloister; active clerics had clustered in the enclave of the court or environs of the cathedral. During the early thirteenth century, however, a new breed of religious community was emerging in Europe. These religious witnessed to their faith in the growing urban centers, among the merchants and their stalls, attending to the poor and to those dispossessed by the changes in European society. They did not retreat to grand monasteries, nor attach themselves to a bishop's cathedral. They preached the Gospel wherever they discerned the need, and they lived off the generosity of God's people. Because of this dependency on alms, they became known as mendicants or beggars.

There were four major mendicant orders, all founded in the first half of the thirteenth century: the Dominicans in 1216 in Spain, the Franciscans in 1223 in Umbria, Italy; the Augustinians in 1244 in Tuscany, Italy. The Carmelites, who originated in the Holy Land, spread throughout Europe in the latter part of the twelve hundreds. Dominic Guzman and Francis of Assisi are the well known founders of their respective Orders. The Augustinians, however, were founded by Pope Innocent IV. The Pope wished to affirm and to further the good works and preaching of the growing mendicant movement. So he gathered groups of hermits living in various communities throughout Tuscany, gave them the Rule of St. Augustine, and coaxed them from their eremitic life to the active service of God's people. Alexander IV gathered more such communities into the new Order of St. Augustine to expand and strengthen it in 1256.

Many members of the new mendicant orders quickly became leading scholars at the growing universities. The Augustinians, after the example of their spiritual father Augustine, dedicated themselves to study and writing as part of their service of the Church. As early as 1245 there was an Augustinian house of study in Paris affiliated with the university. By 1248 the new Order had established a community in the town of

Clare in Suffolk, England where they became known as the Austin Friars. (Canterbury Tales mentions their mendicant status in a somewhat condescending remark about "Austinfriar" by Chaucer's less observant monk.) From Clare Priory they founded houses of study at the newly organizing centers of learning at Oxford (1266, now Wadham College) and Cambridge (1289, now Corpus Christi College). As the fourteenth century dawned, the Augustinians had also established houses of study at Bologna, Padua, Rome, Florence, Prague, Strasbourg, Cologne, Vienna, Erfurt and Magdeberg among other places. These houses of study, which granted degrees of bachelor, licentiate and doctor, were an important part of the university movement, and Augustinian friars were among the renowned scholars and teachers of scholasticism in the high middle ages. The Order continued to spread during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Reformation in Germany and in England closed most houses of the Order in those lands. The Spanish Augustinians, however, led a revival in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Order expanded in Latin America and, in the nineteenth century, in the United States and Australia as well. There are currently 3,000 Augustinian friars worldwide, and scores of other religious communities which follow Augustine's rule of common life.

It was the Irish Augustinians who sent friars to the emerging United States in the late 1700's to assist Bishop John Carroll in establishing the new Diocese for the new country. After years of travelling to small Catholic communities in Boston, Brooklyn, and Baltimore, Rev. Matthew Carr, O.S.A., established the Parish of St. Augustine in Philadelphia in 1801 and a grammar school in 1811. In 1842 the friars opened a monastery and school at the Belle Air estate about fifteen miles west of the city and named it in honor of the 16th century Augustinian bishop Thomas of Villanova. From this new academy Villanova University has grown over the past century and a half. The Augustinians who founded Merrimack College in 1947 came primarily from Villanova. The Villanova community also founded a University in Havana, Cuba, now closed, and St. Thomas University in Miami (now sponsored by the Archdiocese of Miami).

Currently in the United States there are two institutions of higher education sponsored by the Order of St. Augustine: Merrimack College in Massachusetts and Villanova University in Pennsylvania. The Order of St. Augustine is also one of the sponsoring communities of the Washington Theological Union and the Chicago Theological Union.
There are other Augustinian universities, colleges or institutes in Mexico, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Germany, the Philippines, as well as secondary and post-secondary schools throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe and Australia. In addition there are several other religious communities such as the Augustinians of the Assumption, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Mercy, which follow the Rule of St.

Augustine, and which have founded and continue to sponsor many colleges both in the United States and elsewhere.

The Augustinian School in the Middle Ages

Augustine's writings had immense influence on the development of Christian theology from the fifth century on. His teachings on grace and freedom, on the sacraments and faith, on sin and redemption, and on Christ and the Church, as well the Platonic influence in his theology, had formed much of the accepted canon of Christian theology into the second millennium.

The thirteenth century, however, was characterized by new discovery and debate in theology and in philosophy at the new universities. The Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas, a teacher at the University of Paris, employed the newly rediscovered Aristotle in his exploration of theology. He demonstrated that one could rethink, revise and reframe Christian thought by using a set of philosophical principles and categories different from the neo-Platonic-Augustinian ones canonized by previous centuries of acceptance.

One of Thomas' students was the Augustinian friar named Giles of Rome. Eventually joining the Paris faculty himself, Giles showed in his teaching and writing the considerable influence of his former teacher. Often described as "a student but not a disciple" of Thomas, Giles adds new emphases and arguments to those of his teacher. Following Augustine, Giles affirms in a very non-Thomistic way that will is superior to intellect, and that the study of theology involves learning that is ultimately neither speculative nor practical, but affective. The goal of theology is *affectio,* that is, adhering in love to the supreme truth. The effect of theology on the student's life should be caritas, that is, love for one's fellow human beings.

Other Augustinian ideas emerge with new emphasis and clarity in the writings of Giles. He stresses the personal union of the human being with God in grace, and he emphasizes the need for a more psychological description of the relationship between grace and freedom. He takes the reality of sin and evil in society and culture quite seriously, as Augustine had, and returns constantly to the primacy of love and grace. He reflects Augustine's admonition in *De Trinitate* to grow *per scientiam ad sapientiam,* through knowledge to wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge or intellect transformed by love, directed toward the final good by good choices. Giles' influence at the University of Paris, and his religious and intellectual leadership of the Order of St. Augustine, establish him as the founder of the medieval Augustinian School of Theology and Philosophy. Scores of Augustinian friars came to Paris to study under him. Later, as prior general of the Augustinian Order, Giles was responsible

for encouraging the establishment of houses of study for members of the Order throughout Europe. He saw learning and study to be at the heart of the mendicant mission of the new Order.

From Paris the method and content of Giles' work spread across Europe throughout the Augustinian centers of study at the universities. This Augustinian School of thought was an important and dynamic part of the scholasticism of the high and late middle ages.

Martin Luther and other changes. There were many vibrant and scholarly friars in the German provinces and congregations of the Order during the middle ages up until the fifteen hundreds. Their theology is distinguished by a deep spirituality and interest in mysticism, as well as concern for reform in the Church. Perhaps the most famous German friar, a member of the Augustinian community in Erfurt, was one Martin Luther (1483-1546). Luther's theological training involved various, and undoubtedly misleading, understandings of St. Thomas's theology. His resulting discomfort with Thomistic scholasticism, as well as his reliance on scripture and on Augustine (both very characteristic of the Augustinian school) formed the intellectual foundation for the German Reformation. Despite his original intentions, Luther's teaching at the University of Wittenberg led to difficulties with Rome. His calls for reform eventually split not only the Church, but the Augustinian Order as well. The German provinces and congregations all but disappeared under the establishment of the Lutheran Church in the mid sixteenth century.

Distinctive Characteristics of the Augustinian Heritage. The life and work of St. Augustine, the charism and ministry of the Order of St. Augustine, and the writings of the medieval Augustinian School comprise a notable and distinctive tradition in Western Christianity. As mentioned above, the main characteristics of this intellectual, spiritual and pastoral tradition include: the primacy of love; the mystery of Christ; the efficacy of grace; the importance of Scripture; and, a critique of human power and institutions.

These characteristics are certainly not unique to the Augustinian tradition. Augustine's understanding of love and grace, his witness to Christ, his reading of Scripture, and his critique of social structures have all entered the mainstream of Western Christianity as foundations of its theology and spirituality. Recast in their original settings, however, and woven together in the fabric of Augustinian history, the subtle and varied hues of Augustine's thought present rich material for a cohesive and compelling contemporary spirituality. This Augustinian spirituality offers much to deepen and broaden the vocation of the Christian intellectual and the profession of persons of many and varied persuasions who study and teach at Catholic colleges and universities.

Merrimack College

Catholic and Augustinian Heritage

Book II

Theological Foundations for Augustinian Education

The life and work of St. Augustine of Hippo offer a heritage of distinction to enliven and enrich the vocations of contemporary scholars and teachers. Augustine's known writings include over five hundred sermons, one hundred thirteen books, and two hundred seventy letters. His early search for truth and happiness, his conversion to Christianity at the age of thirty-two, and his thirty-five years as Bishop of Hippo in North Africa still yield both insight and inspiration sixteen centuries later. Catholics and Protestants, theologians and philosophers, believers and agnostics continue to find in Augustine a challenging companion, or a worthy adversary, for matters of the mind and habits of the heart.

In addition to Augustine's own contributions, the religious men and women who have lived according to the monastic rule he wrote have enlarged and strengthened the Augustinian heritage. The medieval Augustinian school of thought, which originated in the early medieval universities, further broadened and deepened Augustine's own insights and influence in Western thought. Drawing from Augustine himself, from the Order of St. Augustine, and from the medieval Augustinian school one can discern recurring themes that provide touchstones for an Augustinian spirituality that may enrich the life and work of contemporary educators and intellectuals. These themes are: the primacy of love; the mystery of Christ; the efficacy of grace; the importance of Scripture; and, a critique of human power and institutions. Each of these themes distinguish the Augustinian philosophy and praxis of education.

The Primacy of Love

When reading Augustine's *Confessions,* his letters or his sermons, one sooner or later notices that he is almost never solitary, rarely removed from human companionship. His recollections of childhood and adolescence concern school, peer pressure and friendships—all very social experiences. The death of a friend, suffered when he was in his early twenties, devastated him, as he recounts at length in Book IV of the *Confessions.* Augustine's remembrance of that severe loss is immediately followed in the *Confessions* by his beautiful hymn to friendship. As a young adult he seems to require the steady and supportive companionship of a woman. When he arrives in Milan, a retinue of family and friends soon join him, and he seems to think this very normal.

Even his deeply religious moments are shared. He reported his conversion experience in the garden at Milan immediately to his friend Alypius.

His mystical experience in Ostia was shared with his mother. His ideal of Christian living was a community of friends, and he spent considerable energy on setting up and living in such communities. Friendships, relationships, community living all held the highest value for Augustine. His conversion to Christianity prompted Augustine to reflect deeply on the nature of friendship and gave him new insights about love. In his works on the Gospel and Letters of St. John, Augustine delights in John's affirmation that "God is love" and that when we live in love we live in the divine reality. Inspired by faith and by his reading of Scripture, Augustine begins to write about the importance of loving properly, that is, in ways and means appropriate to the object of one's love. This "ordering of love" in the light of faith enabled Augustine, always the passionate lover and intense friend, to temper and tutor his desires so that all his loving led ultimately to the One Who Is Love. Aided by God's grace we can learn to love all persons, indeed all creatures, in the proper measure and always within the ultimate context of the Divine Lover. The gift of the Holy Spirit in turn inflames and directs our loving.

It is no surprise, then, that in his scholastic theology Giles of Rome insists on the basic Augustinian principle that will is superior to intellect. The way in which we are most like God is not in our knowledge alone, but in our creative capacity to choose to love. The final purpose of theology, according to Giles and the Augustinian scholastics, is to deepen our desire for God and our love for God's creation. Knowledge and understanding are always in the service of love.

Augustinian spirituality, then, rests not on asceticism or methods of religious observance, not on meditation or ritual practice, not on the rarified knowledge of religious ideas or secrets, but simply on love. The spiritual life is itself made possible by the gift of God's love in the Holy Spirit. That gift guides us in the ways of love. Any efforts on our part are both inspired and aided by the divine love, and are all directed to the perfecting of our capacity to love God and each other.

The ideal of the Christian life for Augustine, then, is to live together in humble and sincere love as a community of friends, centered in Christ Who is the revelation of God's love. His rule begins "Before all else, dearly beloved, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.... The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God in oneness of mind and heart." The Rule provides the guidelines for a practical experience in Christian community based on love. Where one might expect to find a reference to a spiritual director or religious mentor, Augustinian spirituality directs one's attention to the Divine Love directing and forming us in and through the Christ-centered community. When one seeks personal transformation in holiness, Augustine recommends daily common prayer. To the earnest scholar seeking truth, Augustine extends the invitation to sustained and engaging conversation

among those many and diverse members "who have come together" in intentional community.

Love and the Intellectual Life

It may be counter-cultural in contemporary American intellectual circles to suggest, as Giles did seven hundred years ago at the University of Paris, that learning should be ordered to love. An Augustinian vision of the academy, however, is founded on the primacy of love. It understands the academic community to be, above all else, a scholarly fellowship of friends. Those friends, from very different backgrounds, disciplines, persuasions and beliefs, can nonetheless be united by *caritas*. *Caritas,* or charity as Augustine understood it, involves a profound respect for and acceptance of one's fellow searchers for truth. It exercises the necessary, and sometimes difficult self discipline to realize that respect and to sustain that acceptance. *Caritas* is willing to practice humility, that is, a realistic assessment of one's own strengths and limits in light of the common search for truth. All members of the academic community should be afforded this respect and acceptance, as they engage one another in the important and sometimes difficult search for truth.

From an Augustinian perspective the scholarly fellowship of friends is called to grow together through knowledge to wisdom. Learning is valued because it opens opportunities for personal and societal transformation. Passionate learning, supported by a compassionate community of students and scholars, can be the beginning of life long transformation of self, and through ones service to others, of society. This is wisdom in the Augustinian tradition: knowledge put to work in the building of a new society, a society whose outlines and blueprints can already be found in the respect and acceptance, in the caritas of the collegiate community itself.

This Augustinian theology of love can also have an influence on the curriculum or course of studies in higher education. In an age of specialization, of isolated and esoteric academic disciplines, people are calling for ways to help students make connections. The emphasis of the Augustinian School on the primacy of love provides a principle of integration and of connection across the curriculum. The respect and acceptance of one's academic colleagues includes, in an Augustinian approach, a respect for and acceptance of their particular disciplines, different from one's own. Augustinian education calls for the exploration of ways to invite and engage students and faculty from different disciplines and majors into sustained and meaningful conversations on civilization and its many and diverse aspects.

The medieval Augustinian School asserted that theology has as its final purpose not only love of neighbor or caritas, but also love of God or *affectio.* All members of the typical contemporary college or

university may not believe in God or in the reality of a transcendent being. An Augustinian spirituality, however, considers and sustains the possibility that human learning, in its many and diverse particulars, is ultimately a participation in the divine. Teaching, research, writing and study are sacred activities, containing within themselves the seeds of transcendence. The life of the student and the scholar are filled with a thirsting for knowledge which knowledge alone cannot quench. As theology is ultimately directed to the experience of God's love, all learning in its proper way is directed to awakening within the student and the teacher an experience of self-transcendence that leaves one open to the possibility of the eternal. Indeed, for Augustine, all ventures searching for the "true" and the "good" are on the way to a discovery of God.

Most Catholic colleges and universities are associated with a community of religious men or women. These communities can be a sacraments of *caritas* and *affectio* to and for the wider academic community. They can enrich the larger scholarly fellowship of friends by hospitality of table and conversation, by openness of mind and heart, by the personal witness of these dedicated men or women to the charisms of their own religious communities.

The Mystery of Christ

Augustinian spirituality is deeply Christ-centered. Augustine understood Jesus to be the very mystery of the Divine One breaking personally and powerfully into human history and experience. To enter into relationship with Christ through Baptism, and to celebrate and sustain that relationship in the Eucharist, is to live in intimate and enduring love of the Holy One.

Augustine's sermons elaborate in many, powerful ways this aspect of Christian doctrine. He puts flesh on the Christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries, as he constantly invites his people into ever deeper relationship with God through Christ. He tells his congregations what it means in every day life that Jesus is truly God and truly human. It means that they, and he, are invited by Christ into the mystery of the Eternal One.

Augustine's conversion involved not only the discovery of Christianity as a convincing system of belief, thought and ethic. After his baptism Augustine, ever the restless searcher for truth, found within himself a new source of confidence and curiosity, a new font of love and learning that intensified his intellectual journey and deepened his spiritual search. He explores the soul, studies the Scriptures and critiques religion, philosophy and society with this new inner confidence, a confidence built upon Christ his "Inner Teacher". Certainly Augustine's early life had been an odyssey of intellectual and existential searching. He would examine and explore on his own various schools of thought such as

Manicheism, Aristotle's categories, academic skepticism, astrology, and neo-platonism. At the same time he would long for a teacher or mentor who might show him the way. After his conversion Christ becomes for Augustine that teacher and mentor, an inner compass, a Virgilian companion, that guides him as he ventures forth into new territories of the soul and new vistas of Christian faith and philosophy.

Faith in Christ and the Search for Truth

It is clear that conversion to Christ did not mean the end of intellectual activity for Augustine. Christian faith for him rather inspired a return to a life dedicated wholly to study and reflection, as well as to prayer. Faith and reason were not only compatible; they were both necessary and reliable guides in Augustine's search for truth. Christianity can never, in its best understanding, be used to foreclose any avenue of truth. The Catholic intellectual must cherish and nurture freedom and openness in intellectual, scientific or professional research, writing or teaching.

This continuing search for truth, however, presents an ambiguity for the Christian intellectual, an ambiguity canonized in the opening paragraphs of John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* where he appeals directly to the thought of St. Augustine: "A Catholic University's privileged task is 'to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that frequently tend to be placed in opposition as thought they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the font of truth'" *(Ex Corde Ecclesiae, #1).* How does one continue the search for truth after conversion to Christ, Whom believers hold to be the Truth? This is a particularly acute question in the modern Catholic college or university with its great diversity of opinions, religious traditions, and philosophical schools.

The question is less problematic perhaps when one is speaking of search for discernable facts in science, or in the interpretative and imaginative pursuits of literary exegesis. It is, however, in the areas of theology, philosophy, and ethics where difficulties about truth and search for truth arise. Are students and faculty who believe in Christ less engaged, by virtue of their faith, in a true, open and continuing quest for truth? Are scholars and teachers who do not believe in Christ, or in God, by virtue of their positions or opinions, on an endless and fruitless search until and unless they eventually discover God in Christ? How can members of the scholarly fellowship of friends continue together on the search for truth within an academic community that includes everything from conviction to agnosticism to atheism about Ultimate Truth? It is clear how Augustine continued that search after his conversion. Christ became his Inner Guide, his Inner Light, in the post-conversion intensification of his intellectual life. He explored the meanings and implications of Christian

doctrines; he elaborated them and broke new ground in the theologies of grace, sin, ministry and Church. He invited others, even those with whom he had basic disagreements, into continuing dialogue about religious and philosophical issues. He had various friendly dialogues, both friendly and stormy, with contemporary pagan intellectuals of his day. The contemporary Catholic college or university should be a place where Christians can explore faith and philosophy, science and business in the context of a community of faith. Such a college, however, should also be a place where persons of other philosophical persuasions or religious commitments can, as full members of the scholarly fellowship of friends, follow their search for truth in ways that remain faithful to their best selves. Augustine would probably find the great diversity of faiths and philosophies in the contemporary Catholic college or university interesting and, indeed, invigorating. While he knew significant philosophical and religious pluralism in his time and place, the contemporary convergence of world religions would no doubt challenge his religious imagination in new ways. In the end though, were he to be consistent with the value he put on intellectual freedom and respect for all sincere adherents to truth, Augustine would enter the debates, conversations, disagreements with his characteristic enthusiasm and passion. That passionate engagement should be a hallmark of the Catholic intellectual life, wherein the scholarly fellowship of friends entertain and enjoy and engage all seekers of truth.

The "Total Christ"

A further aspect of Augustine's Christology is his use and development of Paul's image of the Church as the Body of Christ. This image appears again and again in Augustine's preaching and writing. To be baptized is to become part of, a member of the infinite mystery of the total Christ, the *Totus Christus.* In inviting the assembly to share communion at the eucharistic table in Hippo, he proclaims: "See what you believe! Become what you receive!" To be a Christian then is to become one with the mystery of Christ in the world, loving the world, working to transform the world.

This theme of the Church as the Body of Christ is the foundation for Augustine's option for the poor. In writing and preaching about the Last Judgement scene in Matthew 25, Augustine calls his people to remember that Christ is truly present in the human community, and especially in those who suffer in any way. The Christian has a baptismal responsibility to respond to, care for and relate to persons in distress, poverty and persecution.

Recently discovered letters of Augustine show him involved in issues of his day which concerned justice for the poor and dispossessed. He asked the emperor to promulgate new laws against slave trade, he

worried about the sale of children by very poor families, and he administered his Church's aid and support of the poor of Hippo. It mattered not who the person was--prostitute, fighter in the arena, known sinner: in Augustine's way of thinking, we all stand in need of God's grace and forgiveness. Christians must never discriminate against anyone. Humility calls us to recognize that we are all in need of God's love and forgiveness, healed and made whole not by our own ministrations, but by being made members of the Body of Christ. Ultimately it is Augustine's Christology that informs his political and social themes in the *City of God.* For Augustine, then, Christ is the foundation of his life, Christ is his Inner Guide and Teacher on the journey of life back to God. The mystery of Christ embraces all of humanity and calls Augustine and those who share his vision of the spiritual life to serve the needs of all.

The Efficacy of Divine Grace

The Christ-centeredness of Augustine's own spiritual life is the foundation for his understanding of divine grace. Grace is a continuing theme in Augustine's *Confessions.* As he looks back over his life, he sees God working in, through, around and under all his experiences to draw him into loving union. This pervasive, persistent yet gentle and loving divine work is grace. Grace is the on-going divine creation wherein the Holy One continues to mold and shape all created reality into the divine image. The power of God which made all that exists, is the very same power which guided Augustine to his conversion and life in Christ, God's "new creation". It is no accident that the *Confessions* end with reflections on the Book of Genesis.

For Augustine there is no compromising the importance of grace. As with St. Paul, who also had a powerful conversion experience, so for Augustine, all is grace, all is God's pervasive power and presence constantly calling and nudging us into ever closer union through Christ. While respecting our free will, since love must be free, God's purpose is to complete creation by re-uniting all things in Christ.

A contemporary of Augustine, the British monk Pelagius taught that we are called to grow in perfection, and that God's grace can help us. That grace, however, as Pelagius understood it, is more an external aid provided us by God as we strive mightily toward holiness. Augustine responded to Pelagius' teaching, which had spread throughout the Mediterranean church, with his full rhetorical vim and vigor. In Augustine's experience divine grace was not a spiritual add-on that assisted our efforts in becoming like Christ. Grace illuminates our minds, strengthens our faltering wills, guides our insufficient efforts, shows us the way, and assists us with every step. Even our responses to God's continuing initiatives toward us are themselves also made possible by grace. Augustine argued that human experience is much more complex and

dynamic than Pelagius imagined. We cannot simply identify a goal, religious or otherwise, and naively begin the ascent to achieve it. Our wills are weak; we are compromised by conflicting desires; we lack insight and perspective; we hurt and betray one another. So we stand absolutely in need of divine grace, of God's on-going creative, redemptive activity on our behalf. Our redemption is not the result of our efforts, but of our surrender to God's transforming love. This primacy of grace is reflected in the Augustinian School from Giles of Rome up to and including the Reformation and the theology of Luther.

Grace and the Complexity of Human Experience

Augustine's theology of grace contains an affirmation of God's freedom and creativity. Divine grace is not a commodity of the Church nor a monopoly of believers. Grace moves where it will within society and the individual, creating ever new opportunities for the discovery of divine love. The "Inner Teacher" teaches each in quite different ways sometimes.

Augustine's radical affirmation of grace, therefore, calls Catholics and other Christians in the scholarly fellowship of friends to respect the consciences of those whose intellectual and religious journeys differ from their own. Augustine discerned a complexity in the many intertwining levels of intellect, will and affect in human experience. The scholarly fellowship of friends in an Augustinian model acknowledges that complexity and its ensuing ambiguity by a profound respect for each other's thoughtful opinions, careful convictions and earnest doubts. A kind of intellectual humility is essential for the Augustinian scholarly fellowship of friends. This complexity of mind, heart and will undergird the basic paradox inherent in Augustine's intellectual Christianity, the paradox of continuing the search even as one believes that the Truth has been revealed in Christ. Appreciating such complexity and sustaining that paradox inspire a radical Augustinian tolerance of others and a profound Augustinian respect for differences. Complexity and paradox hold search and discovery in a creative tension. Complexity and paradox invite searchers and believers to recognize and respect that in each and every person at diverse times and on different levels there is believer, searcher, agnostic, atheist. Augustine's theology of grace affirms and is affirmed by recognition of the complexity in all persons. In parallel fashion his theology of sin allows for the paradox of faith and failure simultaneously--*simul justus et peccator,* as Luther put it. An Augustinian spirituality affirms both complexity and paradox; it encompasses both the possession of truth and the continuing desire for truth; and it embraces all the many and varied expressions of both.

Augustinian complexity and paradox, founded on Augustine's theology of grace, not only call for intellectual inclusion. They also comprise

an invitation to transcendence. Augustinian spirituality inspires a continuing and creative invitation to all members of the fellowship of friends to ask their questions, debate their positions, and construct their theories provisionally. It also encourages all members of the fellowship to consider how the possibility of transcendence might reframe their work, illumine heretofore ignored implications of their thought, open new considerations of their basic pre-suppositions.

Augustine re-invigorated many aspects of Platonism and neo-Platonism when, after his conversion, he re-considered it in light of his faith. Thomas and Giles expanded the uses of Aristotelian categories in light of faith in the Eternal and Holy. In the same way Christian and other religious scholars both learn from and give to their agnostic or atheistic colleagues when conversation includes the possibility of the transcendent, even if only as a tempting proposition or friendly amendment. Complexity, paradox and the possibility of transcendence do not lead to a unified school of thought. These do, however, provide enough common ground, indeed, a worthy and expansive campus for serious, exciting, enriching and ennobling work in the scholarly fellowship of friends.

To all this Augustine would add, relying on his understanding of the *Totus Christus*, an invitation to the fellowship of friends to travel beyond the campus, to embrace the less advantaged in society and in the world. An Augustinian spirituality, to be faithful to its heritage, must constantly ask questions about the relationships between the scholarship and learning it encourages and allows, and the needs, problems, hopes and crises of wider social, political and economic communities. It is not enough to accept and explore differences among those in the fellowship of friends. That fellowship must extend itself, transcend the limitations often self-imposed by an academic community, and with the help of divine grace engage the wider and diverse world by dialogue and service.

The Importance of Scripture

In his early years in Carthage, Augustine had read some of the New Testament. He found its literary quality so inferior, that he dismissed both the text and its message. Augustine was indeed reading Latin translations that had not yet had the advantage of Jerome's landmark, literary translation, called the Vulgate, which began to be available toward the end of the fourth century. Scripture, however, played a key role in Augustine's conversion, in his study and reflection as a new Christian, and in his pastoral role as bishop. His preaching is filled with quotes from Scripture. His homilies are invitations to ever deeper understandings of the texts which have just been read during the liturgy. A close analysis of his sermons suggests that he would start a passage from the Psalms, or the Gospel, and his congregation would often finish it, somewhat in the responsive style of Afro-American churches today.

His exegetical works on Genesis, the Old and New Testaments, and his homilies on the Johannine books of the New Testament and on the Psalms comprise a large proportion of his entire corpus. These biblical commentaries by Augustine inspired the medieval Augustinian School's extensive use of Scripture, and its importance in the religious life of Augustinian religious.

The role of Sacred Text in the Intellectual Life

The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament can have a significant place in the discourse and prayer life of the contemporary intellectual and of the academic community. Augustine's reliance on the scriptures, and the attention given to scripture in the medieval Augustinian School, challenge the scholarly fellowship of friends at a contemporary Catholic college or university to honor and cherish the sacred texts. Teachers and students at these schools can experience how scripture enriches faith and prayer as they study the origins, genres, uses and meanings of scriptural texts.

It is also of great value for the sacred texts of other religious traditions to be learned and studied. Such consideration could make members of those traditions feel affirmed and valued in their faith, and accepted as full and equal members of the scholarly fellowship of friends. Finally, since for Augustine scripture by its very nature and purpose led to prayer and praise, an Augustinian approach values opportunities for individual prayer and common worship in the academic or intellectual community. The fostering of a habit of contemplation, of considered reflection on experience, is one that can greatly benefit all contemporary scholars who so often are overburdened by committees, projects, and who can be distracted or enervated by the stresses of our extraverted, market-driven society. Sacred scripture can provide categories and texts for such contemplation, as can the sacred texts of other traditions. Liturgical celebrations for the Catholic and Christian members of the community and worship services for other religious traditions can also affirm God's grace, power and presence in ways that benefit the entire fellowship.

Critique of Human Power and Institutions

Augustine's knowledge of himself, his struggles with social institutions first as a teacher and then in the imperial court, and the social and religious conflicts which preoccupied so much of his ministry, kept him from ever being Pollyannaish. His critique of power, and of its potential for corrupting individuals, institutions and society, serve as a powerful preventive against naivete in Augustinian spirituality.

From his early student days, Augustine struggled with the notion of evil. His detour into the dualistic world of the Manicheans was his first serious attempt to wrestle with the nature and existence of personal and social evil. The idealism he later found in neo-Platonist mysticism was soon balanced by his Christian understanding of sin and of our need for redemption. Augustine's reflections on and convictions about evil coalesce in his teaching on original sin.

In elaborating the sin of the primal parents, Augustine challenged his readers to consider sinfulness at the "origins" of humanity as a compelling and convincing theological explanation for the pervasiveness of sin and suffering. In his understanding we enter, at our very conception, a world compromised by sin. Humans are not necessarily bad, in Augustine's understanding; we are rather disabled by our immersion into this world of sin and we need the constant help of grace to do the right thing. We cannot escape sin on our own, whether by citizenship in some utopian society, by withdrawal from the world altogether, or by a program of self-improvement.

One need not accept every detail in Augustine's theory of original sin to appreciate his willingness to take evil seriously, to struggle to account for the very real pain, ambiguity and suffering which he witnessed and participated in as a pastor. He understood that we all have mixed motivation; we are all sinners. A selfish love of self and a selfless openness to God and others co-exist, even within the same person. As Augustine writes in *The City of God*, goodness and evil exist side by side in the same society or community. We cannot in this world ever escape the consequences of sin. It is only in Christ's redeeming love and by the power of grace that the way out of sin and evil becomes a possibility. Thus it is good to sustain healthy critique of power, to develop a holy hermeneutic of suspicion toward our motivations, our society, our institutions, even, Augustine would agree, toward our Church.

The Transformation of Society

Augustine's trust in human power and institutions continued to diminish over the years. In many ways Augustine came to see civilization as a thin veneer over human greed and power. He did not, however, disengage from efforts to improve the lot of society, and especially of the people in his city. His vision of human development and social improvement, however, drew more and more from his faith, from scripture and from his conviction that true and lasting change must be built on the personal, inner conversion of heart and mind made possible by divine grace. He learned to rely on God and God's grace alone when hoping and working for improvements in society. This is the major theme of The *City of God*.

Augustinian spirituality counsels scholars to engage in the issues of

wider society beyond the academy, and strive to become critical catalysts in social development and human welfare. By an informed, inspired and critical understanding of political and social theory and praxis one can become part of the divine work of continuing creation, a "subcontractor" in the work of building the *City of God*. Such concerns and themes were part of the great movement of Florentine humanism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and in the Renaissance. The Augustinian community at Santo Spirito in Florence engaged thinkers, scholars and artists in vibrant debate about civic humanism and the life of the spirit. The community there was often visited by Dante, Petrarch, Bocaccio and Michelangelo and by many other luminaries in literature, philosophy, art and science.

Augustinian spirituality also counsels continuing self-critique, a constant and vigilant personal *semper reformanda*. The medieval Augustinian School was noted for its capacity to maintain a critical stance toward its own tradition and to revise, reframe and recast even basic elements of that intellectual tradition. Augustine would agree. No institution, no person, no matter their history or accomplishments, should ever rest content with their laurels. The reality of sin is too pervasive for such inattentiveness; restless search and striving are essential to and salvific for our human nature. The vocation to the intellectual life, in an Augustinian perspective, involves the willingness and the humility to remain as open as possible to the gentle, persistent promptings of grace that call us to continual growth and redemptive change.

Summary

These five characteristics of Augustinian thought have distinguished and enriched higher study and Christian education for centuries. The Augustinian intellectual and spiritual tradition has brought learning and love, grace and sacred text, social critique and service to sustained inquiry and engaging search. Each of these characteristics offers much to deepen and broaden the contemporary scholar's understanding of her or his vocation to the intellectual life.

Joseph T. Kelley, Ph.D.
Merrimack College
May 17, 1999

Merrimack College

Catholic and Augustinian Heritage

PART III: Educational Foundations

Cracked Pots and Brave Hearts: Augustine on Teaching and Learning

by Gary N McCloskey O.S.A.

With deepest gratitude to: Joseph T. Kelley whose incredibly deep Augustinian sensibilities have invited me to discover Augustine the Learner for myself. My parents William and Julia McCloskey who taught me the only real limitations to learning are the obstacles we ourselves create. Catherine Quinn, P.B.V.M., who in my earliest schooling inspired in me what I have now come to know as an Augustinian desire for wholeheartedness in learning.

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Cracked Pots and Brave Hearts: Augustine on Teaching and Learning

This essay[1] intends to introduce a reader to the ideas of Saint Augustine of Hippo on teaching and learning (pedagogy). In his own life, Augustine used learned experience as a flame that ignited his teaching.[2] This overview attempts to give the reader a flavor of that experience so that the learner can apply it to his or her own life as well as to spur further reading in Augustine.

One can easily ask the relevance of Augustine's thought for 21st century learners and teachers. What can a 5th century Roman citizen from the province of North African have to offer for a contemporary understanding of how best to learn and/or teach? Anton Pegis, a scholar of Saint Augustine, struggled more than 50 years ago with the meaning of Augustine's thought for his audience. As he noted, To attempt to portray the unity of a heart and a mind which lives as deeply and intensely as did Augustine is always a rash undertaking. How can the historian reproduce the life of a man? As it has well been said, we can only follow after Augustine – and it does not even lie within the power of man [sic] to do so. This may be a worrisome paradox, but it is the lesson of Augustine's life and thought, and it is the lesson that is inscribed at the very center of his teaching. He is eminently the disciple of the love of God. But this love is not a doctrine but a life, not an abstract analysis but a journey, not a theory but an experience. Now precisely, how is an experience communicated? It can be possessed only by those who live it, and it is uniquely theirs as their own being. The greatest work that Augustine has produced is his own life: how shall we read that?[3] Pegis' ideas are about the whole of Augustine's thought. When applied to his thought about teaching and learning, Augustine can be seen as having a practical pedagogy or pedagogy of praxis. Such pedagogy strives to arrive at action through reflection on experience taking into account accumulated wisdom. Also in such pedagogy, human understanding of wisdom is an open rather than closed understanding and, experience is the starting point. Thus, this pedagogy is open to the possibility that what we now learn may become part of the accumulated wisdom that

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1 This text is a revised version of a presentation at the January 2002 Cassiciacum Conference of the Center for Augustinian Study and Legacy at Merrimack College. Revisions derived from input given by conference participants, particularly from Professor Steven Scherwatzky on a literary reading of Augustine. Insights from the notion of literary reading enabled the development of a pedagogical reading. Other input came from students and faculty at Merrimack College as well as others working in education at other Augustinian institutions. Further detailed input came from Professors Donald X. Burt, O.S.A., and George P. Lawless, O.S.A. (on clarifying my understanding of Augustine) as well as Professor Gina Vega and Casey Coburn (on stylistics). Still, any problems of argumentation and/or presentation remain purely the responsibility of the author.

2 *Confessions*, IV, 8, 13.

3 Anton C. Pegis, "The Mind of Saint Augustine." *Medieval Studies* 6 (1944), 8. The italics are from Pegis, but the three indentations are the work of this author.

we will use in our future reflection. To evoke experiences of Drucker's notion that for Augustine "teaching is best understood through a metaphor of pointing,"[4] each section of this presentation contains an experiential reflection question in an effort to have this reading point to further development in the learning (and teaching) of the reader. To "point" toward envisioning implications of Augustine's thought, considerations are connected to visual depictions of Augustine teaching in the frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli[5]. To add to the experiential character of this study, the use of Augustine's own words[6] is an attempt to give the reader something of a first-hand hearing of Augustine's thought. To understand this pedagogy of praxis with as much of our ways of understanding as possible, we will use, as an organizing framework for Augustine on teaching and learning, the three observations Pegis makes about Augustine's thought about the love of God, i.e., it is ... not a doctrine but a life, not an abstract analysis but a journey, not a theory but an experience ....[7]

Not a Doctrine but a Life...

To begin we need to know that the core of Saint Augustine's understanding of learning (and teaching) is a deep appreciation of life experience of ongoing personal struggle with transformation.[8] While teachers may assist us, the transformation only becomes "real" learning when learners can integrate learning within themselves. From such a perspective, all education is a form of self-education. Augustine reflected on his struggle in his transformation when he wrote to Bishop Valerius, who believed Augustine was ready to teach as a priest. Augustine requested more time to learn: *It is true that I did not know earlier how greatly I was unfit for the arduous work which now upsets and crushes my spirit.... You think I am qualified, but I know myself better. Surely, I would not know myself if I had not learned through experience.*[9] His understanding reflects his experience of learning as a struggle in transformation that is never completed in this world. As he observed, *Many people promise themselves that they will live a holy life. But, they fail because they go into the furnace and come out cracked.*[10]

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4 J.P. Drucker, "Teaching as Pointing in 'The Teacher'." *Augustinian Studies* 28-2 (1997), 132.

5 The images here are from Benozzo Gozzoli's frescos found in Chiesa di Sant'Agostino in San Gimignano, Italy. These frescoes are among 21 European cycles of Augustine's life from the 14th and 15th century. "With unmatched emphasis, the[se] frescoes portray Augustine as teacher and scholar." (D.C. Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, 122.

6 To make Saint Augustine's words more open to the hearing of the reader, quotes from Augustine are presented in italics rather than within the usual quotation marks. The phraseology and sentence structure is the author's attempt to render Augustine's thought in more accessible English rather than a close following of the sentence structure of the Latin.

7 Pegis, *op. cit.*,

8.While the word conversion is often associated with Augustine in relation to his becoming a Christian, the terms transform and transformation are chosen here reflecting the pedagogical dimensions of this argumentation. Their use is a pedagogical parallel to their use by H. Richard Neibuhr in describing Augustine's teachings in his classic work, *Christ and Culture*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1951.

9 *Letter* 21, 13. 15 See J.J. O'Donnell, Augustine Confessions II Commentary on Books 1-7. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 150.

10 *Expositions on the Psalms* 99, 11. The use of the concept "cracked" extends work on Augustine and the cracked self in Donald X. Burt, *"Let Me Know Myself..." Reflections on the Prayer of Saint Augustine*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002.

In a sense, Augustine's struggle is coming to terms with the reality of being a "cracked pot" always working at becoming better in his learning. By extension, all learners are "cracked pots" being always transformed by our ongoing learning.

Learning Transforms the Learner

If early education were the only predictor of direction one might later take toward teaching, then Augustine would not have become the great teacher pictured by Western Civilization. As he recounted in the *Confessions,* his education in North Africa in his hometown of Thagaste, as well as at Madaura and Carthage, was filled with bad experiences. He was educated as his middle-class father wanted. Augustine's opinion was not part of the decision-making. At one point, because his family did not have the tuition, he had to stay out of school for a year until a patron provided him a scholarship. Augustine did not like all of his studies. In particular, he despised the study of Greek which he never fully mastered. He was even subjected to corporal punishment. As he tells us, *Being worthless, I could not see the use of the things I was sent to school to learn. But if I was lazy in learning, I was soundly beaten.... But the laziness of adults is called business, the laziness of boys, exactly like this, is punished by those same adults.*[11] In this corporal punishment Augustine experienced a teaching that "opposes itself to a student's will, instead of educating that very will."[12] As he put it, *The process of learning, with its punishments, is so painful that children often endure the punishments which are designed to compel their learning, rather than submit to the process of learning.*[13]

But not all was terrible. Augustine was a bright enough student. This enabled him to go beyond the education provided in his town. He was able to go on first to the larger town of Madaura and then to the city of Carthage. He had the advantages of ability and opportunity to expand his possibilities of learning. In Book One of the Confessions Augustine describes how he could use ability and opportunity in the face of "two very different styles of teaching and two very different mechanisms of learning: fear-inspiring compulsion and free curiosity or desire."[14] This is not a distinction between the positive of curiosity and the negative of compulsion. Both are negative because for Augustine curiosity is always a vice.[15] "If curiosity and desire, on the one hand, and fear and compulsion, on the other, are both mechanisms by which one can learn, Augustine also sets them in a social context which constitutes a third principle: imitation."[16] This is more than a social context. It is using ability and

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11 *Confessions* I, 9, 14-15.
12 D. R. Baldwin. Models of Teaching and Models of Learning in the Confessions in K. Paffenroth and K. L. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000, 16.
13 *City of God* XXI, 14. 14 Ibid.
14 *Ibid.*
15 See J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine Confessions II Commentary on Books* 1-7. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 150.
16 Baldwin, *op. cit.,* 18.

opportunity to take a more positive middle ground. While Augustine moved to the positive of imitation away from negatives, he was not unique in seeing imitation (mimesis) as a principle of learning in his education.[17] "Perhaps what is most striking about Augustine's account of his own teachers is the ever-present disjunctions between their activities and his own complex path of learning."[18] Even though Augustine describes a talent for learning he does not describe any early teachers who stood out as clear models for the best way to learn.

Despite any shortcomings in his education, Augustine had positive learning experiences. In his reflection on the death of a friend, Augustine captured the happy moments he found in the intellectual friendships of his school days: *My soul found all manner of joy when I was in their company — to talk and to laugh and to be kind to each other — to read engaging books together, to go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again — to differ without discord, as I might differ with myself, and when on the rarest occasion disagreement arose, to find it highlights the sweetness of our normal agreement — to teach or to learn from each other — to be impatient for those absent and welcome them with joy when they return — these and similar things emanating from our hearts as we gave and received affection, shown in our faces, our voices, our eyes, and a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused our very souls together and made the many of us one.*[19] With intellectual friends he found the joys of freedom and leisure in their learning on the way to adulthood. Even more, they spurred each other on in their spiritual development. As Hadot notes about the role of friendship in education at the time of Augustine,

Above all, friendship itself was, as it were, the spiritual exercise*par excellence:* "Each person was to tend towards creating the atmosphere in which hearts could flourish. The main goal was to be happy, and mutual affection and the confidence with which they relied upon each other contributed more than anything else to this happiness."[20]

Further, the support of these intellectual friends helped him find his way to the status his father and family expected. This was a status even he had grown to desire. The means to this status became the study of rhetoric as preparation for teaching and later the work of a rhetor.

In addition to intellectual friendship, Cicero's book, *Hortensius,* became a crucial element in Augustine's progress. He described the transformation it brought to his learning in these words: That particular book is the Hortensius containing an exhortation to philosophy. *It very definitely changed my ways of feeling, modified my prayers to You, O Lord, and gave me new purpose and ambition. All of a sudden I saw all the vanity I had*

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18 Baldwin, *Op.Cit.*, 23.
19 *Confessions*, IV, 8, 13.
20 P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, edited by A.I. Davidson, translated by M. Chase. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995, 89. The quotation Hadot cites is from A-J. Festugiere, *Epicure et ses dieux*, Paris, 1946, 69.

hoped in as worthless, and I longed after everlasting wisdom with an incredibly intense desire. I started a journey upwards.[21] In this description Augustine showed that, in addition to his mind, the desire in his heart had become fully engaged in the work of learning. This experience at the age of eighteen can be seen as his first transformation in becoming the teacher that history remembers. Here Augustine began a sort of self-education by taking personal responsibility for his own learning. The *Hortensius* was not just a beautiful book for him. As Marrou notes, it "awakened in his soul that ardent love of wisdom (for he so loves to render the fair name of Philosophy by its root meaning) that search for truth which was to inspire the whole of his life. [22]

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning Transforms the Learner
In the light of my own learning experience,
how do my learning experiences inspire me to commit myself to learn?

The Teacher Finds a Teacher

Through the *Hortensius,* Augustine began a "journey upwards."[23] But it was not easy. As Marrou describes the journey, "Thirteen years were to pass, filled with the most complex adventures, moral, religious and intellectual, before Augustine was to submit, by baptism, to conforming his life to the ideal of asceticism which the thinker's vocation implied for a man of the ancient world."[24] Augustine was a needy scholar. With his father's death he became head of his family. As time went on, he had a common law wife and a child to support as well. While philosophy "inspired" his mind, the need to earn a living created the need for securing a profession. His inspiration would be balanced by the "perspiration" of the work of teaching to make ends meet. During his studies at Carthage, in addition to Cicero, Augustine became enamored of Manichaeism, a religious movement begun in Persia by the prophet Mani. This religion was attractive to Augustine because of its dualistic explanation of the relation between good and evil. While a religion in its own right, Manichaeism in Augustine's time also had connections to Christianity. This move to Manichaeism was one of the ways he sought further understanding. O'Connell sees Augustine's connection to Manichaeism as another aspect of his intellectual transformation -- "abandoning the

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21 *Confessions*, III, 4, 7.
22 H. Marrou, *Saint Augustine and His Influence through the Ages*, translated by P. Hepborne-Scott. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957, 18.
23 *Confessions*, III, 4, 7.
24 H. Marrou, *Saint Augustine and his Influence through the Ages*, 18.

'superstitious' blind-faith religion he had encountered in North Africa's *Catholica*, and stepping upward to a type of Christianity which proclaimed, whatever be its other shortcomings, that faith was meant to lead onward to understanding." [25] In this way, taking up Manichaeism seems to be something of a logical extension of his intellectual conversion to the seeking of understanding emanating from his reading of the *Hortensius*. Augustine was trying to make sense of human nature with respect to understanding good and evil as well as rational thought and sexual drives. In the syncretism of Manichaeism, he found a means which seemed to enable him to connect conflicting insights.

Following the completion of his studies, Augustine put himself to work as a teacher, first in his hometown of Thagaste and then in Carthage, the city of his higher studies. In both places he experienced a difficult time teaching students uninterested in learning. Augustine later recalled the physical threats he experienced in Carthage from students who wanted results without putting in their own efforts. Hoping to find a better class of students who would want to learn from his teaching, Augustine used his Manichean contacts to move to Rome. The move enabled him to escape the physical threats of his students in Africa. However, the "better class" of Roman students left his classes just before the tuition was due. As a result, Augustine exchanged physical threats for the threat of poverty.

During his time as a Manichean, Augustine waited to meet a true teacher of this religion. His friends assured him that the teacher Faustus was just the one to answer all his questions and doubts. After meeting Faustus, Augustine was mightily disappointed. While Faustus' form of presentation was impressive, his content lacked the substance Augustine sought. Continuing his search for wisdom, Augustine moved away from the Manicheans. Before he made a complete break, he was able to use his contacts to move first to Milan and then out of teaching to become the official Rhetor of the emperor. The Rhetor gave public orations extolling the virtues of the emperor and the good work of the imperial court. This was the major means of public political communication of the day. In assuming this position, Augustine became a part of the imperial court at Milan. From outward appearances Augustine had found success. For a person from the distant provinces (with an accent to match) rather than a cultured offspring of the city of Rome, Augustine had gone pretty far. Yet, his questions and doubts remained. Drifting away from Manichaeism, he explored the philosophy of the Skeptics but found little satisfaction in it. Neo-Platonism also gave him some insights

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25 R. J. O'Connell, S.J. Images of *Conversion in St. Augustine's Confessions*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1996, 52.

but not enough to answer all his questions. His health became affected by his questions, doubts and need for money. In all, he was foundering. At his mother's behest he went to hear Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, preach. In contrast to Faustus' presentation of Manichaeism with great form and little content, Ambrose's preaching of Christianity challenged Augustine's thinking even though the presentation was not as elegant. The challenge led Augustine to give the Christianity of his youth another look. From Ambrose's presentations, Christianity seemed a more sophisticated way of thinking than Augustine had judged it to be. Imagine the Inner Struggle Augustine Had as He "Calmly" Picked Up Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans. His exploration of Christianity as part of his search for wisdom still left Augustine struggling with questions and doubts until one afternoon in the garden of a rented house in Milan. As he reported it, he was reflecting on Christian ideas when he heard children near the garden saying *Tolle Lege!*

Tolle Lege!, i.e., Pick It Up and Read It! Pick It Up and Read It! In that moment he took up the Letter of Paul to the Romans and experienced an illumination of understanding: I seized it, opened it and read silently the passage that my eyes first saw: *"Not in dissipation and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and lewdness, nor in arguing and jealousy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh or the gratification of your desires." I had no wish to read further, and no need. In the instant that I ended the sentence, it was as if a light of utter certainty lit up my heart, and the darkness of doubt vanished.*[26]

In taking up the Scriptures, Augustine found the teacher he had been searching for. Christ had become his preeminent teacher. This experience with the Scriptures brought Augustine to find the teacher working within him. He began to say to himself, as he would later encourage others, *Do not look outside. Return to yourself. Truth resides inside a person. When you discover that you can change, transcend yourself.... Go where the light of reason is illuminated*[27] Enthused by this experience of illumination (enlightenment) Augustine sought to learn more and to throw himself into becoming a Christian. Augustine gladly did this by gathering with friends to prepare to become a Christian. They gathered at Cassiciacum, a villa in the countryside outside of Milan. Augustine described the change not only as intellectual but also as physical, in this way: *That summer, my lungs had begun to give way due to the strains of teaching. I breathed with difficulty. The pain in my chest showed how they were affected. They no longer let me talk with any strength for any length of time.... But when the full reason for taking the time to meditate on how You are the Lord came to me and*

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26 *Confessions*, VIII, 12, 29.
27 *True Religion*, 39,72.
28 *Confessions* IX, 2, 4; 3, 5 and 6, 14.

I resolved to take it... [Vericundus] very generously offered his house since we were going to be in the country ... at Cassiciacum, where, away from the troubles of the world, we rested in You.... When we were baptized all anxiety about our past life went away.[28] The experience led not only to baptism but to his official resignation from the post of Imperial Rhetor. This was difficult for Augustine because he had worked hard to achieve this position. Not only had he moved to be close to sources of power, he had also given up his common law wife. Unfortunately, she had not fit into the status his ambitions had led him in pursuing this Imperial rank.

The experience of his conversion in Milan and preparation at Cassiciacum for baptism became the second step in Augustine's transformation into a great teacher. According to O'Meara "The conversion of Augustine, of his intellect which could not resist the truth, and of his will which could not resist the good, was accomplished."[29] He could not resist the Inner Teacher that he found in Christ.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION

The Teacher Finds a Teacher

In the light of my own learning experience,

how do I transcend my desires and passions to find teachings which bring lasting understanding?

Learning Transforms the Teacher

In this next phase of his life, Augustine became a teacher within a commu nity setting of friends, relatives and two students whom he was tutoring. His writings like *The Teacher and The Happy Life* now reflected the community dialogues that emerged as his primary mode of teaching. According to Kevane, these community dialogues arose out of "A common life of lay intellectuals, cultivating the new type of teaching program which Augustine has begun to draft in theory and to put into practice at the villa of Cassiciacum when he was preparing for his baptism."[30] After baptism, Augustine and his community of friends made their way back through the port of Rome at Ostia (where his mother died) to his hometown of Thagaste in North Africa. In Thagaste, Augustine and his friends established a lay Christian community under his leadership. Finding comfort in teaching through dialogue, Augustine was able to master both his doubts and his health problems. He discovered an ease in this form of teaching that he could not find in his earlier teaching of rhetoric.

29 J. J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind up to His Conversion.* 2nd edition. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 2001, 183. 27 28

30 E. Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine.* Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1989, 8-9.

Teaching through community dialogue seemed to be emerging as the direction for Augustine's future. His reputation as a Christian teacher began to grow. Fearing he would be taken away from this pleasure, he avoided towns where Christians were searching for a bishop to lead them as chief teacher. He was able to avoid the call to be a bishop until he went to the city of Hippo Regius. There he planned to meet someone who might be encouraged to join the Thagaste community. Since Valerius was still active as Bishop of Hippo, Augustine thought it was safe to enter the cathedral there for the celebration of the Eucharist. However, that was the day Valerius chose to raise the question of succession. At that time in history, the local Christian community chose its own bishop. In response to Valerius' concern, the community seized Augustine as successor to Valerius. *Augustine recalled the situation more than 30 years later in these words: I feared the office of bishop so much that when my reputation became important among "servants of God," I avoided anywhere I knew they did not have a bishop. While I was on my guard...I came to this city to visit a friend, whom I thought I could bring to God in that he might join us in the monastery. Even though I felt safe, because the place already had a bishop, I was seized. I was made a priest...and from there, I became your bishop.*[31]

For the third time in his life Augustine was "seized." First, the beauty of the *Hortensius* seized his intellect to seek wisdom. The second time the Letter to the Romans seized his heart and mind to become a Christian. Third, the mob of Christians at Hippo seized him, against his will, to become a priest (in anticipation of becoming bishop). As the first two times changed Augustine's approach to teaching, the Christians at Hippo seizing him became the third step in Augustine's transformation toward teaching excellence. As Cary interprets this change,

> After a few years writing philosophical dialogues and the occasional polemic against the Manichaeans, his usefulness to the Church was recognized and he was ordained priest against his will. Submitting his will to the will of the church, he henceforth put his talents and his restless pursuit of truth to work in the service of his neighbors in the church. He became a different kind of teacher — a bishop, a preacher of sermons to the illiterate and a writer of treatises and polemics for an audience of churchmen around the Mediterranean. And quite contrary to his original plans, he became the most important teacher in Western Christendom.[32]

Even though he had concerns about being a teacher outside of the community dialogue, Augustine began to preach and teach as the community leader in more traditional ways. Yet, he was able to do it because his teaching was rooted in a community experience of dialogue with his

31 *Sermon* 355, 2.
32 P. Cary, Study as Love: Augustinian Vision and Catholic Education in K. Paffenroth and K. L. Hughes, op. cit., 70

co-learners through the "office" of bishop. Augustine reflected on this relation when he observed, *Despite my appearing to stand in a higher place than you, it is simply for the convenience of projecting my voice better. In fact you are in the higher place to pass judgment. It is I who am being judged. We bishops are called teachers, but in many things we ourselves seek a teacher. Surely we do not want to be regarded as master teachers.* [33]

On the surface, Augustine's role as Christian teacher and author appeared to be a lone master teacher with followers at his feet. If that were so, it would have required a reversion to his earlier role as teacher and rhetor, where he sought status and renown. As Burt observes, "Augustine believed there was nothing wrong in accepting and even seeking such positions *[of authority]*. He believed those with the necessary talents had an obligation to seek higher office so they might be of service to others."[34] Augustine's description of the fear of a reversion to seeking status and renown demonstrated that he had been transformed. Augustine described the tension he experienced in moving into this leadership role as bishop-teacher: *My place as your head frightens me, but what I share with you comforts me. I am a bishop set over you, but together with you I am a Christian. The first is the title of the office I have assumed, the second is a grace; the first is a danger, the second is salvation. The office seems like a storm tossing us about in a raging sea. But when we remember who redeemed us by His blood, it seems we enter the safety of a harbor in the stillness of that thought. Even though this office is personally hard work, the common benefit gives us rest.*[35]

In dealing with himself as a "cracked pot" called to teach, Augustine had become a teacher who shared his understandings with a community while still remaining a member who learned through the community in which he taught. At one point he even cautions his community to be careful about any trust they put in him. He talked about himself when he observed, *Augustine is a bishop in the Catholic Church. Having his own burden, he will have to give an account to God. If he is bad, he knows it. But if he is good he is not the foundation of all my hope. Above all I have learned in the Catholic Church not to set my hope on any human being. Since you do not set your hopes on human beings, it is understandable that you reproach us for our human faults.*[36]

Further, his writings testify to his change. Kevane reflects that after Augustine's ordination, "It is a fact that his writings manifest from this point a marked change of character. They are simply saturated with Scripture and show that mastery of the Bible in teaching, explaining and defending Christian doctrine which makes Augustine the greatest of the Fathers of the Church. The period of his philosophical dialogues and treatises is over. He has entered into that new kind of catechetical teaching to which his *De cathechizandis rudibus* is the abiding witness among

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33 *Sermon* 23, 1.
34 D. X. Burt, *op. cit.*, 61. The italics are Burt's.
35 *Sermon* 340, 1
36 *Expositions on the Psalms* 36, 3, 20.

his works, and all his writing from this point on are distinctly pastoral and catechetical in character."[37] This is the teacher whose powerful voice has come down through history. It is this teacher that reflects the truest nature of Augustinian pedagogy.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning Transforms the Teacher
In the light of my own learning experience,
how do my learning experiences empower me to share what I have learned with others?

... Not an Abstract Analysis but a Journey ...

As Pegis goes beyond identifying Augustine's thought as "not a doctrine but a life,"[38] Augustine's life is more than a series of struggles through transformations in his learning. His struggles evidence a level of vulnerability in Augustine much of the study of his thought does not reflect. As a learner appreciative of the reality of being a "cracked pot" Augustine's analysis of his experiences is informed by the journey of his life. Through further reflection on the impact of Augustine's transformational experiences we will also be able to see his thought as "not an abstract analysis but a journey."[39]

Learning as a Restless Journey

In our review of his life we have seen how Augustine was transformed. But, his life experience is not ours. What then can we glean from Augustine's experience that we can use to develop our own learning? First and foremost, Augustine's intellectual travels were for him a restless journey. He even began the *Confessions* with this thought when he wrote, *You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you.*[40] Augustine knew keenly the difference between a journey toward meaning and understanding and a purposeless wandering. While everyone's learning journey is life-long, he saw that we need to be making steady progress rather than meandering. As he expressed it, *On earth we are always travelers, always on the go. Do not grow complacent with what you are.*

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37 Kevane, *op. cit.*, 13-14. The translation for *De catechizandis rudibus* is Religious Instruction of the Uninstructed.
38 Pegis, *op. cit.*, 8.
39 *Ibid.*
40 *Confessions*, I, 1,1.

Where you have become pleased with yourself, there you get stuck. If you say "That's enough," you are finished. Always add something more. Keep on walking. Always forge ahead.[41] For Augustine, a meaningful restless journey is a pilgrimage, a sacred action making an individual into the person he learns to become. The journey involves daily personal growth. Or as he put it, *It is the daily work of Christians to make progress toward God, and to rejoice in God or his gifts always. The time of our pilgrimage, our wandering in exile, is very short, while in our home country time does not exist. After all, between eternity and time there is a considerable difference. Here you are required to show devotion; there you take rest. Thus, like good traders, let us note every day how well we have done, what profit we have made. Not only must we be attentive in listening, but also vigilant in action. This is a school in which God is the only teacher. It demands good students, those who are enthusiastic in attendance, not those who play hooky.*[42]

Consider How Augustine's Travels Helped Him Experience Learning as a Journey While Augustine saw Christ as Teacher in his life of learning, the journey was not something imposed externally from on high. Rather it was journeying to find the Inner Teacher as the connection to ultimate Truth. In Augustine's words, *Consider this great puzzle. The sounds of my words strike the ears but the Teacher is within. Do not think that any human teaches another. The sound of our voice can admonish, but the one Who teaches is on the inside. The sound we make is useless.*[43] We may go from place to place, but the journeying outside is associated with the journey within. Keller sees this movement as part of Augustinian interiority whose "value needs to be ransomed."[44] For him this attention to inner life [45] is a spiritual process or dynamic consisting of four inseparable steps. These can be summarized in this way:

1. Return to yourself, i.e., go from outer life to inner life.
2. Go beyond yourself, i.e., go from inner life to the truths of reason.
3. Transcend truths, i.e., go from the varied truths of reason to ultimate Truth.
4. Experience Enlightenment, i.e., return to the outer life with a truer vision of self and reality.[46]

To benefit most fully from this inner life journey with the Inner Teacher, Keller identifies three dispositions[47] the learner must cultivate:
1. Desire for Authenticity (To be aware of who I am – where I am – where I am going and what goals I am orienting my life toward.)

41 *Sermon* 169, 18.
42 *Sermon* 16A, 1
43 *Tractate on I John III*, 12.
44 See M.A. Keller, Human formation and Augustinian Anthropology in *Elements of an Augustinian formation. Rome: Pubblicazione Agostiniane*, 2001, 208.
45 The term "inner life" rather than "interiority" is being used to convey the active notion of inner life/interiority. Sometimes interiority can be too easily connected to the secluded life of a hermit.
46 See Keller, *op. cit.*., 210.
47 See *ibid.*, 210-211.

2. Capacity for Discernment (Sound self-criticism, Critical judgment in the light of truth, Consistent commitments)
3. Sense of Transcendence (Preventing myself from being wrapped up in the sensate, in myself, in my own culture, in what is merely human).

When we cultivate these learning dispositions in dialogue with the Inner Teacher, we have begun to apply Augustine's experience to our own.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning as a Restless Journey
In the light of my own learning experience,
how do I make significant progress on my learning journey?

Learning as a Journey with Others

When correctly understood, Augustine's learning journey can never be viewed as a solitary experience. If Augustine had never been transformed beyond his love of wisdom (sparked by his reading of the *Hortensius),* a solitary journey might seem to be the true way. But the community aspects in the second and third steps in his transformations make clear that, in Augustinian pedagogy, learning involves working with others. In our learning journey we can help each other in our struggle to learn. As Augustine observed: *While we are walking, one walks more slowly and another walks with greater speed. But both continue walking. Those who are falling behind should be rallied. Those who are turning to go back should be called to continue on. Those who go astray should be led back to the road. Slow walkers should be urged on. Fast walkers should be imitated. Those who are making no progress are stuck on the way. Those, who go from a better purpose back to a worse one they had abandoned, have turned and gone backward. Those who have abandoned the faith have strayed from the way totally. Let us walk with the slow ones behind those walking faster. But, still with those who are walking.*[48]

Augustine also saw his journey with others as his own continuation in school with the Inner Teacher. As he put it, *I must tremble in the face of your judgments, Lord, because your truth is neither mine, nor his, nor hers. Rather, it belongs to everyone whom you call to share it in communion with you. Likewise, you give us the terrible warning not to take truth as personal property, for fear we will find ourselves deprived of it.*[49] Likewise he noted that, *Truth is the inheritance of all, and thus is not the particular property of anyone. What*

48 *Sermon* 306B, 1.
49 *Confessions* XII, 25, 34

is in common belongs to everyone so that all who come to it may use it and be enlightened. It is equally distant and equally close to everyone.[50]

Journeying with others enabled Augustine to travel the full circle: a flow from outward learning into the Inner Teacher and back out in learning to live and work with others in meaningful ways. In Augustine's conception, this social dimension of the journey demanded attention to order, not as a rigid imposition but rather as the discovery of a harmony that enabled one to journey toward more effective learning. His practice of going inward to the Inner Teacher led him to an understanding of the nature of society itself. As he described it, *Love is the highest human law. Human beings, who both desire and ought to live in harmony, best respect this law when they connect themselves in social relationships where no one monopolizes more than one relationship, and a common social life of the greatest number is best fostered by distributing, as widely as possible, many different relationships.*[51] This social order was all the more profound for Augustine because he did not perceive our individual learning as radically changing the world. Rather, he saw it as changing how we view or understand the world together with others. For Augustine, in a world where good and evil do not exist in separate realms, true understanding is being able to see the two and to differentiate between them in a world where we confront them mixed together. The complexities of this confrontation can be understood through his images of the City of God and the City of Man. In a world where both cities coexist, we journey with others learning both right relationships and wrong relationships. It can be difficult sorting out the two by ourselves because *The temporal progress of these two cities mix together from beginning to end — both enjoy temporal goods or suffer temporal ills in similar ways. But differing in faith, hope and love, they will be separated at the final judgment where each will receive its end.*[52]

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION

Learning as a Journey with Others

In the light of my own learning experience,

how can learning with others help me to learn more than by learning alone?

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50 *Expositions on the Psalms*, 75, 17.
51 *City of God*, XV, 16.
52 *City of God*, XVIII, 54.

Learning to Navigate through Knowledge toward Wisdom

Augustine viewed the learning journey as significant in his relation to God. This extended beyond the journey itself to the things he learned. As he expressed it, *Through him we move toward him, i.e., through knowledge toward wisdom, without ever turning aside from one and the same Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3)*[53]

Despite the unity of its connection to God, knowledge in its many forms can often seem to us as being at odds with itself. The more one knows, the more confused one may become. Augustine understood this well. Making sense among the many things he learned and stored in memory was difficult. Memories of things learned did not, at times, come together well on their own for him. As he described it, *I pass over the lawns and spacious structures of memory where treasures of all the images the senses have stored there.... Some things summoned from memory are instantly available while others require a longer search of recesses less penetrable. During such summoning jumbled memories flit out on their own, interrupting the search for what we want. It is like they are, pestering you, saying: "Aren't we what you were seeking?" My heart draws the strength to wave these interruptions off from my memory's gaze until the dim thing I sought arrives at last, from fresh depths. Yet some things are brought up easily, in proper sequence, from beginning to end, and returned to memory in the same order. I experience recall at will whenever I recite a passage by heart.*[54]

Navigation, travel and destination are not, for Augustine, simply problems among things learned (knowledge), but also among the different ways in which we recognize things learned. *It is in three things that an image is recognized, namely memory, understanding and will. In this I mean the understanding we have as we think, that is, when things are recalled that were available in memory but not being thought about. Our thought is formed from such images. The will, or love, or esteem I mean is the one that joins the child (understanding) to its parent (memory) and is in a way common to them both.*[55] Augustine saw his navigation through various philosophies as tough sea travel. For him philosophers are *seafarers*[56] needing strong navigational skills because *God or nature or necessity or our own will or some mixture of these or even all of them together have cast us into this world as into a stormy sea, accidentally and indiscriminately, as it were.*[57]

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53 *The Trinity*, XIII, 24.
54 *Confessions*, X, 8, 12.
55 *The Trinity*, XIV, 10
56 *The Happy Life*, 2.
57 *Ibid.*, 1.

For Augustine, as we navigate through the stormy seas of learning, knowledge offers an understanding of the "experience of changeable, temporal things"[58] On the other hand wisdom offers "changeless and eternal truth."[59] For him wisdom is not known directly but comes rather by seeing past (through) knowledge. In O'Connell's words, the mind "must content itself with an 'intel-ligence' of the desired object, quite literally a 'reading between' the obstructing lines of the intervening veil: inter-legere in its exact etymological meaning."[60] There is for Augustine a desire for an ongoing navigation through various forms and directions of knowledge toward wisdom. Very rarely is it a straight-line journey. Some knowledge can take us toward wisdom. Other knowledge can lead us to confusion and away from wisdom. Also, for Augustine, the journey through knowledge toward wisdom is one that involves more than a mental change. O'Daly sees Augustine understanding that "Every quest for knowledge is willed orientation of the mind towards the desired object."[61] It involves mind and heart. Augustine knew from experience that the heart brings the learning tools of will, motivation, passion and power to bear as the mind navigates among the varied trajectories of knowledge toward wisdom. This movement of the will toward understanding impels one to action. Bourke finds in Augustine's thought that the "gaze of the mind discovers and judges the things and events in the bodily world. The result of this is knowledge, a less perfect type of understanding that enables humans to regulate their actions and lives. Augustinian wisdom is not only a cognitive quality of mind; it is also a volitional habit inclining its possessor to act rightly when faced with moral problems."[62] Such action is not automatic. *It involves choice. As Augustine observed, When I was considering serving the Lord my God, as I had long meant to do, it was I who willed to do it, I who refused. It was I. I neither fully willed nor fully refused. I struggled with myself and was torn apart by myself. This was an experience I underwent although I did not want to. But it did not reveal the nature of some alien mind, but rather the punishment of my own mind.*[63]

Kent reflecting on this description by Augustine of his struggles observed,

> In analyzing the conflict he himself experienced, Augustine distinguished between his new will to follow God and his old will, which forged the very chains of habit (or custom: *consuetudo*) in which he had come to be trapped. Far from believing himself imprisoned by some Prince of Darkness, as Manichaean doctrine suggested, Augustine

58 *The Trinity*, XII,16.
59 *Ibid.*, III, 8.
60 R. J. O'Connell, S.J., op. cit., 50.
61 Gerard O'Daly. *Augustine's philosophy of mind.* London: Gerald Duckworth, 1987, 211.
62 Vernon J. Bourke. *Augustine's love of wisdom: An introspective philosophy.* West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1992, 22.
63 *Confessions* VIII, 10, 22.

> emphasizes that his bondage is self-created. There were not two selves in him, nor was there one true (good) self at war with some alien (evil) force. The two wills are both expressions of a single self, however sorely divided.[64]

Thus for Augustine, good or bad, "will is the central human characteristic"[65] and a *good will is our way to seek right and honorable living as well as to arrive at the highest wisdom.*[66] Despite a desire for wisdom through exercising a good will, Scott interprets Augustine knowing the limits of will as a tool for navigating toward wisdom when he notes, "Ignorance and folly may make it impossible for us always to do the right and honorable thing, and the attainment of wisdom may be beyond our power in this life."[67] While recognizing himself as a "cracked pot" struggling toward wisdom, Augustine also knew that it took a good will to overcome fear. Rather than an act of the mind, the right will is an act of the heart. In the face of navigating stormy seas it needs to be a "brave heart."[68]

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning to Navigate through Knowledge toward Wisdom
In the light of my own learning experience,
how can I develop the will (brave heart) to navigate through varied forms of knowledge to reach wisdom?

Learning to Dialogue toward Wisdom

Learning wisdom is not just an internal personal journey of navigation. It is also a group endeavor because, for Augustine, learning must involve a dimension of dialogue or, more specifically, dialectic. For him, *The discipline of disciplines, which we call dialectic, teaches us both how to teach and how to learn. In dialectic reason displays itself, shows itself for what it is and evidences its aims and its powers. Through dialectic we know how to know. It alone has both the desire and the power to create knowledgeable people.*[69] Augustine's early intellectual transformation might have made his work on dialectic a personal endeavor of the mind. But his transformations as Christian and priest/bishop brought this form of teaching and learning into a communitarian/dialogic framework. From his transformations

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64 B. Kent. Augustine's Ethics in E. Stump and N. Kretzman (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Augustine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 220.
65 W. R. Stevenson, Jr. *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St. Augustine and His Modern Interpreters.* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987, 78.
6 *Free Choice of the Will,* I, 12, 83.
67 T. K. Scott, *Augustine: His Thought in Context.* New York: Paulist Press, 1995, 161.
68 The use of the concept "brave hearts" extends work on Augustine and fortitude, in Donald X. Burt, *"Let Me Know Myself..." Reflections on Augustine's Search for God,* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003.
69 *On Order II,* 13, 38.

taken together, he understood the inner struggle of his divided will and his need for a brave heart as also something connected to social relations. Dialogue/dialectic, combined with the struggle of will, underlies his concept of "two cities." As Bourke notes, "As early as the year 400, he had described two cities, one of evil people and the other of the holy, now living together in one mixed society but differing in their wills and only to be separated at the last judgment of mankind."[70] In dialogue/dialectic and in the struggle to exercise the will rightly, learning and teaching require concerted effort.

While dialogue/dialectic may be complicated and time consuming, for Augustine, *there is no better way to truth*[71] for both student and teacher. To the student of dialectic and in dialogue, he offered this encouragement: *Those who listen are luckier than those who speak. The leaner is humble, but the teacher must work hard at not being proud.*[72] Likewise, Augustine's conception of the dialogic nature of learning was evident in this advice to learners: *Through watching and listening to us when we are actually engaged in working, you will learn better than by reading what we write.*[73] For a teacher he had this additional advice on the dialogue: *Let anyone who has a better understanding teach me. I am the teacher -- but in such a way that I hope that I am not unteachable.*[74] Such outer dialogue does not always involve teachers and students progressing together, but can refer to teachers and students whose learning intersects. At times we can even learn from people who are not wholly intent upon their own learning. For Augustine they *are like milestones, pointing out the way for the traveler, even though they themselves stay fixed and are immovable.*[75]

Clearly, an outer dialogue cannot account for learning. Augustine's ideas, about the workings of the mind, frame his concept of the inner dialectic/dialogue. For him, as we have seen, there are three basic elements at work in the mind: memory, understanding and will. Accordingly, *It is usual to discuss with children these three things so that we can see what kind of promise the children show. The easier and stronger remembering things is for a child as well as the sharper his understanding and application to study, the more we admire his disposition.*[76] The outer expression of this inner mind of memory, understanding and will not only appear in the dialogues among learners, but is also evident in the outer expressions of their wills by learners. As Augustine saw it, *When we discuss disposition, learning, practice in a person,*[77] *we judge the first by what he can do with his memory, his understanding, and his will. We figure the second by what he actually has in his memory and understanding as well as what he has done with his will to study.*

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70 V. J. Bourke. *op. cit.*, 12.
71 *Soliloquies*, II, 7, 14.
72 *Expositions on the Psalms*, 50, 13.
73 *Religious Instruction of the Uninstructed*, 23.
74 *Sermon* 244, 2.
75 *Sermon* 199, 2.
76 *The Trinity*, X, 17.
77 The exact words for Augustine are *ingenium* (natural disposition), *doctrina* (learning) and usus (practice).

But, we find the third in the use his will makes of what he has in memory and what he understands either by referring to something else or taking delight in both memory and understanding as ends in themselves.[78]

The role of the will, i.e., the practice or use of our knowing and learning, is crucial to understanding Augustine's notion of dialogue/dialectic. He has been seen as the first writer in Western Civilization to use the concept of will as part of his notion of the development of philosophical thinking.[79] According to him, *To use something is to put it at the will's disposal. To enjoy it is to use it with an actual, not merely anticipated, joy. Thus, everyone who enjoys a thing, uses it because the will uses that thing for enjoyment. But not everyone who uses a thing, enjoys it when he wants what he puts at the disposal of the will for the sake of something else and not for its own sake.*[80]

These emphases on use and enjoyment parallels Augustine's own practice in his both his learning and his teaching. To follow Augustine as a learner and teacher one can ask: How do we practice, i.e., how do we use, well what we know? What aspects of practice should we explore to improve our learning? How do we exercise the will to learn? How do we develop a brave heart to use the will in the right way. Augustine's description (given above) contains ways to go forward, specifically,

1. What one can do with one's own memory, understanding, and will.
2. What one actually has in one's own memory and understanding, as well as what one has gotten out of using the will in learning.
3. What use the will makes of what memory and understanding hold.[81]

For Augustine, these three ways for advancing through learning and teaching connect to ends he exhorted co-learners to achieve, namely,

1. Unity (connecting memory, understanding and will)
2. Truth (how the use of the will in learning relates to what one has in memory and understanding)
3. Wholeheartedness[82] (the good use the will (brave heart) makes of what memory and understanding hold).

Importantly, the aim of wholeheartedness holds a stronger place in this triad because it emphasizes the centrality of the will in learning more than either truth or unity does. When Augustine talks about these ends related to good living and eternal life he speaks about them this way,

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78 *The Trinity*, X, 17.

79 See Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: Thinking and Willing. Willing* (Volume 2) New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, 84.

80 *The Trinity*, X, 17.

81 Ibid.

82 The utilization of this term is informed by its use in J. Wetzel, Snares of Truth: Augustine on Free Will and Predestination, in R. Dorado and G. Lawless, *Augustine and His Critics* (London and New York: Rutledge, 2000) 124-141 as well as in M.T. Clark, Introduction, in *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings, Translation and Introduction by M.T. Clark*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984, 14.

When you want to be alive in the Holy Spirit, be wholehearted (caritas), [83] *love truthfulness and long for unity to attain eternal life.*[84] Using this reordering, the practice of learning in an Augustinian framework can be reflected in three areas of learning and teaching practice, namely,

1. Learning Wholeheartedness for Learning, i.e., How one uses the mind through the will (applies a brave heart)
2. Learning to Search for Truth, i.e., Where one gets to with the mind
3. Learning to Dialogue in Unity amid Division, i.e., What one can do with the elements of the mind to unify understanding as well as uniting one's own learning with the learning of others who see the world very differently.

We now shift to exploring these three areas of Augustinian learning and teaching practice.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning to Dialogue toward Wisdom
In the light of my own learning experience,
how can I learn to dialogue well so that I can reach wisdom? ...

Not a Theory but an Experience ...

As Pegis went beyond describing Augustine's thought a "not a doctrine but a life" and " not an abstract analysis but a journey," [85] we must also go further. While Augustine's struggles and vulnerability in his life experiences and journey can be realities that learners can identify with, we should also emulate Augustine as we struggle to exercise a good will in understanding his thought as "not a theory but an experience.[86] Rather than having a theoretic understanding, we need to integrate our experiences into cohesive actions employing our wills. In philosophical and religious thinking the term "exercise(s)" would be used to express this idea of cohesive actions employing our wills in the way Hadot entitled the text *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault.* I am using the term "practice," which is the pedagogical equivalent of the

83 In *City of God* XIV, 7 Augustine discusses his interchangeable use of the Latin terms for love including *caritas*. However, his usage always follows the ways he finds them used in Scripture.
84 *Sermon* 267, 4.
85 Pegis, *op. cit.*, 8.
86 *Ibid.*

philosophical and religious term "exercises." Conversely the pedagogical meaning of "exercise(s)" is akin to school homework or daily follow-up assignments. Pedagogical exercises carry the message of a lack of depth rather than the depth of experience implied by the philosophical term "exercise(s)." Following the triad of learning practices, identified above, we move to Learning Wholeheartedness for Learning.

Augustinian Learning (Teaching) Practice: Learning Wholeheartedness for Learning

Since Wholeheartedness for Learning reflects the Latin word caritas, it is a commitment to learning necessitating a deep involvement of one's will (brave heart). As Augustine phrased it, *when one asks about another's learning, we do not want to know how easily or strongly he remembers things or how sharply he understands, rather we want to know what he remembers and understands. Since a person's character (animus) is deemed praiseworthy by how good and how learned it is, we take note of what he wills in addition to what he remembers and understands. We do not start with the strength of his will. Rather, we begin with what he wills, and then move to how strong his will is. We praise a character for loving passionately only when what it loves deserves to be loved passionately.*[87] This wholeheartedness for learning does not draw its power from a person connecting to realities outside of himself. It starts within oneself. As Augustine recommended, *Do not stay outside yourself, but enter within since the truth dwells in the interior person. When you find you can change your nature, transcend yourself. Do not forget that when you climb above yourself, you are lifting yourself above your soul, which has the gift of reason. Step, therefore, to where the light of reason is lit.*[88] Augustine makes this recommendation in accord with his belief that the true teacher is the Inner Teacher, and that teaching and learning flows from outward learning into the Inner Teacher and back out in learning to live and work with others in meaningful ways.

This flow, while centered on the self, requires wholeheartedness for learning achieved by transcending what one already knows. Transcendence may be seen as a purely religious experience, but, in its most basic form, transcendence is a deep and continual desire to search out the unknown. In Augustine's words, *the whole love of the mind that desires to know what it does not know, is not the love of what it does not know but rather of what it does know since the desire to know what it does not know arises out of what it knows.*[89] This desire, wholeheartedness for learning, may also be seen as the courage (brave heart) to know the unknown. Transcendence has a very practical dimension in overcoming a fear of the unknown.

87 *The Trinity*, X, 17.
88 *True Religion*, 39, 72.
89 *The Trinity*, X, 3

While wholeheartedness is an act of the will, we have seen Augustine experience the will as divided. For him, a will acting well was evidencing caritas, while a will acting wrongly was evidencing cupiditas. As Arendt interprets Augustine, "The sign of *caritas* on earth is fearlessness, whereas the curse of *cupiditas* is fear — fear of not obtaining what is desired and fear of losing it once it is obtained."[90] This fearlessness derives from Augustine's understanding of the biblical concept, "Love casts out fear."[91]

Caritas is often translated as "charity." In the same way that wholeheartedness is used here, Cary interprets the Augustinian pedagogical implications of "charity" in this way:

> Charity is the name for any act by which we willingly obey the twofold command for love of God and love of neighbor.... The pedagogical implication of this is that teachers should care for their studies first and their students second. How else shall they teach the most fundamental thing, which is love of truth? Since teachers teach by example, their most important obligation is to study, to love truth for its own sake, so that their students may learn to do likewise. To this extent every good teacher is a scholar first and a teacher second. This does not mean she must be a "productive" researcher in the careerist sense, it does mean that teaching will always to some extent pull her away from her first love.[92]

Even though teachers should care for their own learning, Augustine points to at least two obstacles to wholeheartedness for learning, apathy and boredom, in discussing how a teacher's care can help a learner. In dealing with apathy Augustine suggests that teachers can demonstrate a caring attitude. He suggests this clearly understanding that it is difficult for teachers to interpret the specific source of the apathy for an individual learner because all that any teacher sees is an "unmoved hearer."[93] As he encourages other teachers when he says, *We should in our presentation try everything to succeed in rousing him to bring him out of a hiding place. Through gentle encouragement we should overcome any excessive timidity. We ought to temper any shyness through the introduction of the idea of brotherly fellowship. Through questioning we should discover whether or not he understands and give him the confidence to put before us freely any objection that comes to mind. We should also ask him if he has heard these things previously, since previously known and common sense things may fail to move him. We must then act according to his answer by speaking more clearly and simply, by refuting a contrary opinion, or by giving a brief summary rather than present-*

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90 H. Arendt. *Love and Saint Augustine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 35.
91 1 *John* 4:18.
92 P. Cary, *op. cit.*, 69.
93 *Religious Instruction of the Uninstructed*, 18.

ing at great length anything familiar to him.[94]

This familiarity can also be a source of the learning obstacle of boredom. In describing ways a teacher can engage learners who may already be familiar with some or all of what a teacher is presenting, Augustine suggests, *With them, we ought to be brief and not go on at length in a boring way concerning what they already know. We should touch lightly on these things noting that we believe they are familiar with this thing or that which we are reviewing as things that should be brought to the attention of those who have not learned or are ignorant of them.*[95]

In the end, however, nothing a teacher does will produce learning, unless the learner engages the will (brave heart) to learn. The care of a teacher can point out the love of the Inner Teacher for the learner. It can also be of assistance to the learner in building wholeheartedness for learning by sharpening mental powers. This honing of understanding may come through teachers' contact with their own reasoning in ways similar to how Augustine hears Reason teach him when it tells him, *In all these round-about argumentations we have simply been exercising your abilities in order for you to become fit.*[96] Such assistance can enable a learner to add to a chain of reasoning through which the learner builds wholeheartedness for learning by making connections among the things already known.

Beyond any learning or teaching practice of the chain of reasoning, caring, developing a transcendent attitude or having the courage (brave heart) to learn, wholeheartedness for learning grows through practices that reflect its unending nature. Our practice of learning should aim to generate wholeheartedness for learning that continues to build without ever arriving at completion. Trying to foster this aspect of learning, Augustine instructed a fellow learner this way, *Use knowledge as a kind of scaffolding to help build the structure of love and understanding, which will last forever even after knowledge destroys itself. Knowledge is useful when it is used to promote love. But it becomes useless, even harmful in itself, if separated from such an end.*[97] Beyond the metaphor of scaffolding, Augustine saw this development of wholeheartedness (courage to know the unknown) as scaling a ladder. In his words, *to reach a high spot you need a ladder. To get to the height of greatness, use the ladder of humility.*[98]

In building the "how" of learning, i.e., wholeheartedness for learning through courage, a transcendent attitude, caring, chain of reasoning, scaffolding or ladder, it is quite natural to ask, Where is this learning

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94 *Ibid.*
95 *Ibid.*, 12.
96 *Soliloquies*, II, 20, 34. There are also discussions of honing mental abilities in *The Teacher*, 21, *On Order*, I, 8, 25 anII, 5, 17 as well as *The Greatness of the Soul*, 25.
97 *Letter* 55, 33.
98 *Sermon* 96, 3.

going? Such a question takes us to the next of the Augustinian learning and teaching practices.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning Wholeheartedness for Learning
In the light of my own learning experience,
how can I learn a love of learning?

Augustinian Learning (Teaching) Practice: Learning to Search for Truth

In our postmodern time with all its questioning of "truth" claims, it may be surprising to focus on truth. In an Augustinian sense this, however, is the right time to do so because our relation to truth is the search (restless journey) rather than the attainment of it here and now. As Augustine prayed, *Search in ways by which we can make discoveries, and discover in ways by which we can keep on searching*[99] Another way the lack of attaining truth is not so negative is that it results, for Augustine, in our continually being in school with the Inner Teacher. The search can be a constant reminder of our need to be good students.[100]

A search for the truth demands that after discovering our wrong actions we work toward right action. Knowing this from his own struggles, Augustine described dialectic as a method for dialogue toward right action. *This is why we chose this method of discussion. There is no better way of seeking truth than through the method of question and answer. But rare is the person who is not ashamed of being proved wrong. As a result, a good discussion is often spoiled by some hard-headed outburst with its frayed tempers, generally hidden but sometimes evident. We planned to proceed peaceably and agreeably in our search for truth. I would ask the questions and you would answer. If you find yourself in difficulties, do not be afraid to go back and try again.*[101] This conception of changing understanding as one gains more, or clearer, knowledge is not just a search. For Augustine, it is also the active exercise of good reasoning. As he framed it, *When time and circumstances change, right reason demands a change in what was seen as right at some earlier time. In such situations, when objectors say it is not right to change, truth shouts the answer that it is not right if we do not change.*[102]

99 *The Trinity,* IX, 1, 1.
100 See *Sermon* 16A, 1.
101 *Soliloquies,* II, 7, 14
102 *Letter* 138, 4.

One of the obstacles to our success in searching for truth is a lack of clarity within what we study and in the instruction earthly teachers provide us. Augustine calls attention to clarity by encouraging teachers to rely on a multitude of resources to make sure their presentations aid in continuing the search of the learner. As he suggests, *At times, even when everything is rightly and correctly presented, the listener may be offended or disturbed by something that is misunderstood or is so novel it is difficult to understand because it contradicts belief or practice coming from a long-standing error. When this becomes evident or appears curable, the teacher should cure the listener without delay through an exposure to an abundance of authorities and reasons.*[103]

When clarity cannot be achieved, error and change can lead to doubt. While doubt may be another obstacle to learning, according to Howie, "Augustine regards the condition of doubt in positive terms as implying a desire to learn, i.e., a readiness for learning."[104] Such readiness is also an opportunity for finding coherence among our understandings through the search for truth. Descartes is renowned for saying, "I think, therefore I am."[105] But, Augustine's certainty of his own existence came through another path. As he put it, *If I am deceived I exist.*[106] Where deception is such a part of life, there is strong ground for doubt even as one searches for the truth. Such doubt can be a way to coherent understanding and truth. As Augustine notes: *Anyone, knowing that he doubts, knows with certainty something true, namely that he doubts. In this, he is sure about a truth. As a result, anyone, doubting that there is such a thing as the truth has at least a truth limiting his doubt.*[107] Simon Harrison interprets this passage in this way,

> A way in to thinking about freedom and responsibility and their place in a systematic understanding of the universe – all this Augustine has achieved by taking the ordinary term "voluntas" and calling it into question. He has taken the possibility of doubting that I have a will seriously and shown it to be self-defeating. This is precisely the cogito-like argument adopted at *City of God* 11.26 and elsewhere to argue the security of my knowledge of my existence, and my being alive, and to use this knowledge as a starting point for further reflection.[108]

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103 *Religious Instruction of the Uninstructed*, I, 11, 16.
104 G. Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, 148.
105 R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, IV (1637).
106 *City of God*, XI, 26. Other of Augustine's discussions of doubt and limited certainty see also *Soliloquies*, II, 1, 1; *The Happy Life*, 7; *Answer to the Skeptics*, III, 9, 18-19; *Free Choice of the Will*, I, 7, 16; and II, 3, 7; *The Trinity*, XV, 11, 21; and *Teaching Christianity*, IV, 11, 26.
107 *True Religion*, 39, 73.
108 S. Harrison, Do We Have a Will?: Augustine's Way in to the Will in G. B. Matthews (ed.) *The Augustinian Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 203.

Bourke places this doubt in the larger framework of knowing and understanding when he observes,

> Among the things that Augustine finds in the treasure-house *(thesaurus)* of his memory are the eternal principles *(rationes aeternae)* that the divinely enlightened mind discovers at the peak of its consciousness (Trin 10.10.14) here he makes a discovery (*inventio,* literally a coming-into) that the "interior man" is a unity of three functions: knowing, retaining, and willing (mens, *memoria, voluntas*). The same one soul (animus) is cognitive, retentive, and dynamic. This interior psychic triad brings one as close as is possible for human understanding to reach up to the divine exemplar, the creative ideal (*ratio aeternae)* of humanity, and of each individual human soul. These three psychic features are beyond doubt: "If one doubts, then one is alive (*si dubitat, vivit*) and to be alive as an immaterial being is to remember, to understand, to will, to think, to know, and to judge who may be doubting" (*Vivere se tamen et meminisse, et intelligere, et velle, et cogitare, et scire, et judicare quis dubite*t)."[109]

If doubt and deception are so alive within us as we are always searching for truth, where does a teacher get the authority to teach? Even Augustine wondered about this when he asked, *What foolish oddity could ever lead someone to send a child to school so that he can learn what the teacher thinks?*[110] Augustine answered his own question from the standpoint of the truth and coherence as known to the learner: *After teachers have used words to explain all the branches of learning that they claim to teach, including those dealing with virtue and wisdom, students ponder interiorly if what has been said is true, that is, they contemplate on the inner truth according to their capacity.*[111] Augustine did not build a case for relativism, but rather valued the judgment of the learner. The value of the teacher lies in what the teacher points the student toward. Testing the truth the teacher points at will determine the authority of the teacher. For Augustine this concept was, according to Jacobs, a move away "from the truth of authority communicated externally to the authority of truth discovered internally."[112] Cary describes this movement through this concrete example,

> The road to understanding often begins with our believing what our teachers tell us — as when we believe a mathematical formula on the authority of our math teacher, even though we cannot really see what it means. But of course if we are good students then we desire to under-

109 V. J. Bourke. *op. cit.*, p.24.
110 *The Teacher,* 45.
111 *Ibid.*
112 R. M. Jacobs, O.S.A. Augustine's Pedagogy of Intellectual Liberation: Turning Students from the "Truth of Authority" to the "Authority of Truth" in K. Paffenroth and K. L. Hughes, *Op.cit.*, 117.

stand the changeless truth it signifies — to see it for ourselves, with our own mind's eye.... If, in studious love, we seek to understand what the formula signifies, we may be rewarded with vision — that brief moment of insight when we say, "Aha! now I see it!" What we see is located within us, not in the external world.[113]

Augustine described the factors of this "now I see it" phenomenon as part of his coming to Christian faith. As a Manichean, he waited for Faustus, the great Manichean teacher, to come to illuminate him. When Faustus came, he spoke in the rhetorical form of an authority, but Augustine found him lacking in the substance of insight and truth. On the other hand, when he heard Bishop Ambrose preach in Milan, Augustine found the insight and truth he conveyed truly enlightening. As Baldwin notes, "Faustus as a model of a bad teacher offering form without content is set against Ambrose as the model of a good teacher offering truth."[114]Augustine learned little from Faustus and his great rhetorical form, but learned much from Ambrose even though Baldwin observes, "Ambrose is — to say the least — hardly the model of an enthusiastic teacher at the heart of a learning community. His students, bewilderingly ignored as they sit silently around him waiting to be taught, are literally and figuratively peripheral to Ambrose's activity."[115] Despite any weakness as a teacher Ambrose helped Augustine attain a brave heart to overcome doubt through a coherent presentation of what Augustine came to know as truth.

Going further, Augustine subjects the authority of the teacher to reason in order to arrive at an authority of truth. He captures this relation of authority and reason in these words: *It is without question that two things bring us to learning -- authority and reason. Since I find nothing stronger, I am certain that I shall never depart from the authority of Christ. But, my search must continue through subtle reasoning because I am convinced that what I want most is to grasp the truth, not just by faith alone but also by understanding.*[116] *To be a good teacher, then, is about helping people in their search for truth and understanding. For Augustine, The teacher leads people from what they know to what they do not know, or even are unwilling to believe. The teacher shows all the other conclusions that follow from what learners already understand or accept on faith. The effect is that, starting from one truth which learners already accept, they are compelled to give their assent to other truths, which they had previously rejected. Beginning by dismissing a true idea as false, but finding that it in harmony with something they already accept as true, they make a clear distinction between the true idea and what is false.*[117]

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113 P. Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: Legacy of a Christian Platonist.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 145.
114 D. R. Baldwin. *Op.cit.*, 20.
115 *Ibid.*, 21.
116 *Answer to the Skeptics*, III, 20

The teacher does not provide truth but facilitates the search, in another image Augustine captured his intention this way, You must tell yourselves the truth. I have simply put a mirror in front of you for you to look at yourselves. I am the mirror's reflective power showing those who look into the mirror their faces. Note that the faces I am talking about now are the ones that are inside of us. I can address these faces through your ears even though I cannot see them. Now that I am presenting you with a mirror, each of you should look at yourselves and tell yourselves what you see.[118]

Because of possibilities for doubts and deceptions, good teaching demands careful attention to what the learner understands. For Augustine, great preparation is not worth much if the learner does not arrive at some understanding. As he said, *What value does purity of speech have if understanding, on the part of the listener, does not follow it? Speaking has no purpose when those, for whose benefit we speak, do not understand what we are saying. Thus, the teacher should avoid all words which do not teach.*[119]

Reflecting Augustine's pedagogical transformation as a priest and bishop, this dialogue of teacher and learner is also a dialogue involving the teacher's ongoing learning as he comes to know more through dialogue during teaching. Contrary to any understanding of Augustine's writings presenting a solitary teacher and writer with his own "take" on truth, Augustine described his dialoguing in search for truth, that lies behind his writings, in this way, *May God grant that even I should make continuing progress when I provide others with books to read. Also, even I find what I am seeking when I try to answer the questions of others. Therefore, following the Lord's command and with His help, I have not undertaken to speak with authority on matters known to me as to increase my knowledge by speaking devoutly about them.*[120]

From this, Augustine's religious sense of the search for truth is clear. Yet, the religious understanding which he terms illumination does not negate the essential role of human reasoning in searching for truth. For Augustine, without reason we will never see the truth we seek. *As he saw it, Just as the sun is shown to the eyes, reason pledges to make God known to your mind when it speaks with you. In a way the senses of the soul are the mind's own eyes. Further, those things which are most scientifically certain are like the earth and earthly things, which the sun shines upon so that we may see them. While God Himself does the illuminating, reason functions in the mind like the act of looking occurs in the eyes.*[121]

According to Pelikan there is a somewhat Divine pedagogy informing Augustine's own pedagogy, i.e., "Not cycles, but sequence; not fate, but providence; not chaos, but order; not caprice, but pedagogy — this was, for Augustine, the meaning of the mystery of historical continuity,

117 *Answer to Cressonius*, I, 19.
118 *Sermon* 306B, 4.
119 *Teaching Christianity*, IV, 10, 24.
120 *The Trinity*, I, 8.
121 *Soliloquies*, I, 6, 12.

by means of which God was carrying out 'the education of the human race.'[122]"[123]

In Augustine's pedagogical practice of the search for truth, the Liberal Arts have a special place. As he shared with a companion in his dialogues, *Study of the liberal arts, when moderate and within bounds, makes students more alert, more persevering and better equipped to embrace truth. As a result, they desire truth more enthusiastically, pursue it more firmly and in the end rest in it more satisfyingly. This Licentius, is what I call the happy life.*[124] Since truth is not and probably never will be fully at hand in this life, Augustine also cautioned about the study of the liberal arts, *While many holy people have not studied them at all, many who have studied them are not holy.*[125] Hughes sees this caution clearly resulting from Augustine's personal educational experience,

> Augustine's hostility toward classical liberal education in his later writings seems clear enough. He found it built upon praise and thus prone to cultivate pride in its masters. His experience as one such master bore witness to this vulnerability, and his conversion to Christianity required a purification, an "unlearning" of so much of his past. If useful skills were still to be found in the liberal arts, they could only be so if they were broken loose from the structures of Roman culture.[126]

Not all in Roman culture was good. Neither was it all bad. Augustine's concern was for finding all the tools available for a truly liberating education. His conversion to Christianity led Augustine to see how some aspects of his liberal education were more enslaving than liberating. Cary interprets Augustine's understanding this way: "In the classical philosophic view of education represented by Augustine, liberal education (the learning appropriate to a free person rather than a slave) forms human character by strengthening it with the virtues necessary for the pursuit of truth, which is the pursuit of happiness. Thus any pedagogy not based on the students' innate love of truth is not liberal education but training for servants."[127] For Augustine, liberal education always needs to be critiqued to ensure that it is aiding in the liberating search for truth and not enslaving students in a privileged form of training. Augustine's caution thus comes from the help liberal education gave him as well as the vulnerability he experienced when his liberal education supported his straying from the search for truth.

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122 *City of God*, X, 14.
123 J. Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time, History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1986, 50.
124 *On Order*, I, 8, 24.
125 *Retractations*, I, 3, 2.
126 K. L. Hughes, The "Arts Reputed Liberal": Augustine on the Perils of Liberal Education in K. Paffenroth and K. L. Hughes, *op. cit.*, 102.
127 P. Carey, Study as Love, *op. cit.*, 62.

Where does all this bring us to in understanding pedagogical practice that will help us in the search for truth? Like Augustine, we are vulnerable learners struggling as we find our way on our journey in the search for truth. Chadwick observed that the "unity of truth may lie beyond the various subjects of human knowledge with their different methods of investigation."[128] Assuming that Chadwick's reflection is correct, then the Augustinian pedagogical practice of the search for truth is tied to our attempts to find a unity in what we know amid division emanating from competing ideas and explanations.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning to Search for Truth
In the light of my own learning experience,
how can I learn constructive ways to search for truth?

Augustinian Learning (Teaching) Practice:
Learning to Dialogue in Unity amid Division

In struggling to arrive at a unity of truth that "may lie beyond" in Chadwick's sense, Augustine was always pointing out human limitations. But, he also found hope. As Schuld observes, Augustine "leavens his sober pessimism about the political realm with a measure of hope for piecemeal and provisional advances in the pursuit of justice."[129] Rather than a sober pessimism Markus sees Augustine's less than easy struggle to find a unity of truth as disenchantment. As he puts it,

> There is, at any rate, nothing pessimistic about Augustine's disillusion with the attainability of youthful hopes, or with the euphoric self-assurance of his contemporaries. "Disillusion," "disenchantment" – the very words seem to suggest liberation: liberation from illusion, from the grip of a spell. And that, in the last years of his life, is precisely what disenchantment brought to Augustine.[130]

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128 H. Chadwick. *Augustine.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 34.
129 J.J. Schuld. *Foucault and Augustine: Reconsidering Power and Love.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, 174.
130 R.A. Markus. *Conversion and Disenchantment in Augustine's Spiritual Career* (Saint Augustine Lecture Series 1984). Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1989, 39.

For Markus, the disenchantment results from Augustine's conversions or (as they have been termed in this work) transformations. Disenchantment came not only from these transformations, but also from really difficult experiences in his life where he had trouble developing a brave heart. His teaching, through writing, placed many annoying and distracting demands on him. At times it seemed everyone wanted him to deal with their problems.[131] While he writes of being *weary from the scandals of the world,*[132] Augustine experienced the disillusion of learning from his own scandals. He had to deal with the scandal in his community at Hippo resulting from the failure of some of his community to give all they owned to the poor[133] as well as the destructive results from his role in Antoninus becoming Bishop of Fussala. [134]

In struggling with these divisive difficulties Augustine learned insights into the truth he shared in unity with others. Paradoxically,135 while teaching through writing divided him from his planned directions, it also was a way he learned. As Augustine describes it, *In our writing we make progress. We are learning every day. We are engaged in research while we dictate, i.e., knocking at the door as we speak. When I can be useful to the fellowship, both by writing and by speaking, I certainly will not keep quiet, if I can help it.*[136] Within his experience of scandals he finds wholehearted love (caritas) akin to his positive experience of writing. Augustine describes the paradox in his relationships with friends in this way, *I readily throw myself entirely upon their wholehearted love, when I grow weary from the scandals of the world. I rest in their wholehearted love without any anxiousness.*[137]

In Arendt's understanding of Augustine this struggle was not just with others. For him, it was a struggle we each have with our own will in trying to develop a brave heart. She observes, "Augustine does not speak of two laws but of '*two wills*, the one new and the other old, one carnal and the other spiritual,' and describes in detail, like Paul, how these wills struggled 'within' him and how their 'discord undid [his] soul."[138] Even here the solution for Augustine is wholeheartedness, i.e., wholehearted love. Arendt goes on to say,

> But the healing of the will does not come about through divine grace. At the end of the *Confessions* he returns once more to the problem and relying on certain different considerations that are explicitly argued in

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131 See, *Letter* 23A*, 4.
132 *Letter* 73, 10.
133 See *Sermons* 355 and 356.
134 See *Letters* 270 and 20*
135 In a dialogue on an earlier version of this work that a probing question from Professor Michael Bradley of Merrimack College enabled me to understand that the elements of paradoxical positions of Augustine help in understanding the scope of Augustine's thought, particularly an underlying unity within apparently divided elements.
136 *Sermon* 162C, 15 (Dolbeau 10).
137 *Letter* 73, 10.
138 H. Arendt. *The Life of the Mind*, 87. Arendt's reference here is to Confessions VII, 5. The italics and bracketing are Arendt's.

the treatise *On the Trinity* (which he was to spend fifteen years writing, from 400 to 416), he diagnoses the ultimate unifying will that eventually decides a man's conduct as *Love*.[139]

In our journey in the search for truth, Augustine even finds in the ways we reason methodological sources for conflicting senses of oneness. As he reflected, *Reason is the faculty that enables me to analyze and synthesize the things that ought to be learned.... Both in analyzing and in synthesizing it is a unity that I seek, a unity that I love. But when I analyze, I seek a homogenous unit; when I synthesize, I look for an integral unit.*[140] Here a role for the teacher may be helping the learner to move beyond struggling with differing methods for achieving an integrated understanding.

Even when Augustine finds unity in truth, any learner may easily need aid in overcoming division of thought. As an example of such a need, Augustine describes differing presentations of Scriptural teaching in these words, *When someone says "Moses meant what I say," yet another responds, "No, he meant what I think," I believe that I will be answering more religiously when I say, "Why not both, if both are true?" If a third or a fourth or more see additional different meanings, why would we not believe Moses saw all these meanings? For it was through Moses that the one God shaped Sacred Scriptures so that many minds would see different things in them — and all of it true.*[141]

For Augustine, a teacher can imitate him in aiding a learner by pointing toward a unity underlying disparate elements. The teacher can do this by laboring with learners to build a structure of cohesive unity. Augustine describes such building of cohesive unity in this way, *If the beam and stones of the house were not fitted together by a definite order (in a way if they were not connected to one another in peace, united in love by mutual cohesiveness), no one would ever dare enter this house. We know this because when you see a building in which the beams and stones are solidly joined together, you enter with confidence and do not fear its falling apart.*[142]

Beyond differences in method, meaning or order, the different paces at which learners make their journeys in the search for truth can lead to confusion. Augustine described a way for us to develop a helpful "interdependence" (unity) with co-learners when we encounter varying paces of learning in these words, *Let those quicker in understanding show that they walk along the road together with those who are slower. When one is faster than a companion, he has the power to let the slower one catch up, not vice versa. If the faster walks as fast as possible, the slower will not succeed in following. The*

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139 *Ibid.*, 95. Again, italics are Arendt's.
140 *On Order*, II, 18, 48
141 *Confessions*, XII, 31, 42.
142 *Sermon* 336, 1-2.

faster one must slow the pace to avoid abandoning the slower companion.[143]

Interdependence can also have "reciprocity" experienced in the very tension of different paces of learning. Augustine alerts the "faster" learner to ways to find new insights from our walking with "slower" learners. According to him, *When repeating the things to beginners becomes boring, we should think of them affectionately like their brother, or mother or father. When we do this our empathy with their feelings will make what we say become new for us again. The impact of this sympathy will be so great that when we move listeners by our speaking, we enter into each other's reactions so that hearers speak in us, and we learn in them, what we are teaching. Is that not what happens when we show others beautiful scenes which we have often passed by with only a careless glance, but now find new fresh joy in the scenes by sharing in another's joy on first seeing them? The intensity of this experience is greater, the closer we are to each other. The deeper the bond of love is when we enter into each other's minds, the more likely old things become new for us again.*[144]

Paradoxically, not all interrelationships bring learners to helpful interdependence or reciprocity. The different ways learners hear each other and their teachers can be another obstacle in arriving at a unity of understanding. As Augustine notes, *Different people will necessarily affect the teacher in different ways. A teacher's presentation should appear as an expression of the mind that generates it. It will affect hearers in differing ways as their frames of mind vary. This is similar to the various ways that hearers affect one another by their simply being together.*[145]

Augustine also cautions that teacher attitudes can even prevent interdependence or reciprocity and become a source of division. Augustine describes the agitation or harshness of an impatient teacher as an obstacle to learning in this way, *A person studies the precepts of God, drinking them in peacefully from a peaceful source. Then someone approaches him wanting to learn something from him. He storms and rants, accusing the learner of being too slow in learning. In this way, the teacher throws the learner into confusion and as a result the learner understands in a lesser way what the teacher himself had the opportunity to listen to in a calmer circumstance.*[146]

According to Schuld, Augustine's ability to see goodness and ways of uniting with others, even in the most tragic circumstances, comes from his understanding of the Christ's sacrifice on the cross. As she posits,

> Because "sacrifice" creates these bonds of unity, Augustine declares, the solidarity it shapes through imitative acts of self-emptying love always interacts with another solidarity that binds all persons together, inside and outside of the church — the solidarity of Adam. The community should thus form (and continually "re-form") itself through

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143 *Expositions on the Psalms* 90, 2, 1
144 *Ibid.* 17.
145 *Religious Instruction of the Uninstructed,* 23.
146 *Sermon* 47, 9.

sacrificial acts of compassion as an outwardly and not just inwardly looking body[147]

In this way of thinking, that we have described earlier, the Inner Teacher thrusts us out from our inner life toward solidarity with others. Here there is a connection between Augustine's description of Christ as the Inner Teacher and his understanding of the Whole Christ *(Totus Christus).* In solidarity with others, Augustine learned a unity not of external structures or of just philosophical agreement, but rather of community (communion) with others struggling to learn.

For Burt such teaching and learning obstacles are, also in an Augustinian sense, an opportunity to see our unity in our recognition of our solidarity in knowing that we are all like Augustine vulnerable and broken people -- cracked pots in need of brave hearts. In Burt's conception, Recognizing happiness as the goal or end of humanity and unity as the means to that end, he *[Augustine]* came to see that the great tragedy of the human condition was alienation. Every human being is a cracked pot. We want to be whole while we live fractured lives, afflicted by the separations within ourselves, separations between ourselves and other individuals, and separation from that one being who can bring final happiness, the infinite God.[148]

For the teacher working in solidarity (dialogue) with other learners helping them over learning obstacles, the struggle is a paradoxical reminder that teaching is not status but service. In Augustine's understanding, *My attitude, as I teach you, is to remember and keep in mind my duties as a servant. As a result, I speak not as a master but as a minister, not to pupils but to fellow pupils, not to servants but to fellow servants.*[149] He always worried that the teacher and even the advanced learner could easily lose sight of this service. He put it this way, *The more they think they are learned, the more unteachable they have become. They have become ashamed to learn, because that would mean admitting ignorance. They have none of the necessary humility, which is the one right thing God came to teach.*[150]

Further for Augustine, unity and solidarity come from wholeheartedness (charity/ *caritas*) in our service to others. In his words, *Wholeheartedness empowers us to support one another in carrying our burdens. When deer need to cross a river, each one carries on its rear the head of the one behind it while it rests its head on the rear of the one in front of it. Supporting and helping each other, they are thus able to cross wide rivers safely, until they reach the firmness of the land together.*[151] Burt describes Augustine's understanding

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147 Schuld, *op. cit.*, 122.
148 D. X. Burt, O.S.A. *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999, 2-3.
149 *Sermon* 242, 1.
150 *Sermon* 198, 13.
151 *Eighty-three Diverse Questions*, 71, 1.

of service in teaching and learning as a means of arriving at a unity even in the face of evident inequality in these words,

> When some inequality is present, for example between teacher and pupil, the rule of the superior should be a loving rule. Though there is a real inequality in knowledge, friendship must flow from the equality and goodness shared by all members of the human race because of being equally images of God. The authority that is exercised in the context of such leveling love seeks to remedy the accidental inequality of the inferior and therefore is more a service to the ruled rather than a privilege of the ruler. Augustine believed that the teacher who wishes that the student remain always a learner and never achieve equality in knowledge is not truly a teacher.[152]

Augustine describes his own work at being a true teacher when he describes the change in his relationship with one of his students. He finds a joy in a student becoming an intellectual friend. As he put it, *I could not restrain my joy in seeing this young man, the son of my very dear friend, becoming my son also. And, still more in seeing him growing and developing into a friend when I had despaired of being able to cultivate in him a taste even for the ordinary study of literature.*[153]

Thus, Augustine finds in his own struggles and vulnerability in earning a paradoxical key to unity. As vulnerable strugglers in learning we have a never ending basis for communion with other learners. For Augustine, our individual walking with the Inner Teacher will be an impetus, a source, moving us beyond ourselves, uniting with others, finding solidarity in common weakness as we learn together.

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152 D. X. Burt, O.S.A. *"Let Me Know Myself..." Reflections on the Prayer of Saint Augustine.*, 74.
153 *On Order*, I, 6, 16.

AUGUSTINIAN REFLECTION QUESTION
Learning to Dialogue in Unity amid Division
In the light of my own learning experience,
how can I experience unity through dialogue with others whose understandings differ from mine?

Summations

Normally this part of a presentation might be called conclusions. But, in the face of an Augustinian understanding that teaching and learning are experiential and active, including an ongoing journey and ongoing dialogue, conclusions would convey an inappropriate level of closure. Yet Augustine's ideas on learning have enough clarity to demand some summations. His distinctive conceptions which, according to Carol Harrison, set apart his literary aesthetic also can be seen as setting apart his pedagogical practice, i.e., the distinctive concern with truth and clarity, the priority of teaching, the role of delight in relation to the fallen will, and of the love of God and neighbor[154]

For Augustine, teaching should assist us to take wholehearted responsibility (have a brave heart) for our own learning, not as a doctrine but in our living as he did after reading the *Hortensius* and after each of his other pedagogical transformations. Further, a community of co-learners in dialogue, like the one Augustine found in unity with his fellow converts to Christianity, enhances what we find not in an abstract analysis but in our own journey through individual action of personal responsibility for learning. Where there is need, teachers can emerge from the community. The diverse teaching of such teachers will only be successful when they remain rooted not in a theory of learning but rather in their experience of learners in community. Among the means for a successful learning journey are developing ever stronger abilities, in the search for truth, for navigation among and dialogue about knowledge, memory, understanding and will and their relation to wisdom.

Given the importance of the will for Augustine, authentic Augustinian pedagogy demands that disposition and learning are put into action through practice. This practice (praxis) reflects Augustine's own arrival at effective learning. The values of effective Augustinian pedagogy flowing from Augustine's lived experience, and his reflective thought, can be found in his being transformed to attain and keep a wholeheartedness for learning, a never ending journey in the search for truth and his

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154 C. Harrison, The Rhetoric of Scripture and Preaching: Classical Decadence or Christian Aesthetic? in R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (eds.), *op. cit.*, 226.

building a dialogue of unity in the midst of overwhelming diversity. As Baldwin interprets it,

> The ending of the *Confessions* is directed at the teacher as well as at the learner, at the teacher who is a learner, who asks, seeks and struggles to understand how best to affect others who seek understanding. And surely Augustine takes up this struggle. Teaching is central to his own activity — in his capacity as bishop, as polemicist, and as a writer of the *Confessions* themselves. But by posing teaching as a problem in his *Confessions,* he invites us also to enter into that struggle by considering where exactly the constructive human activity of human teaching is to [be] found.[155]

According to Augustine's biblically based reflections on the means to gain understanding at the end of his *Confessions,* one finds only by seeking, one receives only by asking and one has doors opened only by knocking.[156] In humble (cracked pot) parallel one may say that according to Augustine's understanding of teaching and learning, through a journey seeking truth we find understanding, through dialogue with learners different from ourselves we receive understanding, and through a transforming wholeheartedness for learning we have the doors of understanding opened. After reflecting on Augustine's thoughts, hearing his words and seeing his lived experience of learning and teaching, the struggle before us, as cracked pots, is to set our will (brave heart) to act by taking personal responsibility for implementing the practices of this distinctive pedagogy.

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155 D. R. Baldwin. *op. cit.,* 15-16.
156 *Confessions* XIII, 38, 53.

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