

## **Getting to Know the Augustine Order**

### **So that we May Understand More About Pope Leo the XIV.**

#### **About the Augustinian Order**

Being part of the Augustine Order means joining an international Catholic religious community of men and women inspired by the teachings and life of Saint Augustine of Hippo. Members of the order, known as Augustinians, strive to live together in harmony, sharing their lives, goods, and work, while pursuing a contemplative spirituality and service to others. They are called to follow the Rule of St. Augustine, which emphasizes living together in community and serving the Lord's people.

The Order of St. Augustine, or Augustinian Order, fundamentally based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ and later of Aurelius Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo (354 - 430 A.D.), was founded to live and promote the spirit of community as lived by the first Christian communities (Acts of the Apostles 4, 32-35).

The Order of Saint Augustine was born juridically in March 1244, when Pope Innocent IV united various groups of hermits in service to the Universal Church as a community of Mendicant Friars. The Order, from its very beginning, has recognized Saint Augustine of Hippo as its father, teacher, and spiritual guide, not only because it has received the Rule and the name of the Order from him, but also because it has received from him its doctrine and spirituality.

There are many ways to describe the Augustinian Order, to speak of its character, its history, its mission, its charism. First and foremost, however, the Augustinian Order is people - men and women - who, in the words of the Rule we profess, "live together in harmony, being of one mind and one heart on the way to God." We are Christians who, captivated by the example of Saint Augustine, journey together, as we build community and serve the Lord's people.

#### **From the Rule of St. Augustine:**

The main purpose for your having come together is to live harmoniously in your house, intent upon God, with one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32).

Therefore, call nothing your own, but let everything be yours in common. Food and clothing shall be distributed to each of you by your superior, not equally to all, for all do not enjoy equal health, but rather according to each one's need. For so you read in the Acts of the Apostles that "they had all things in common, and each was given what he needed" (Acts 4:32, 35).

Through the course of our history, with the teaching of St. Augustine as our basis and in full consonance with our eremitical roots, we can affirm a contemplative dimension, which ought to be understood, respected, and accepted as a component of Augustinian tradition.

The foundation of Augustinian life is life in common, in which all the brothers by sharing themselves, construct a path directed to God in service to others, and in the communion

of all their goods, perfecting themselves through the gift of divine grace. Thus, in their life, they reflect the mystery of the Trinity and of the Church, anticipating now on earth the reality they hope for in the future in the Father's house.

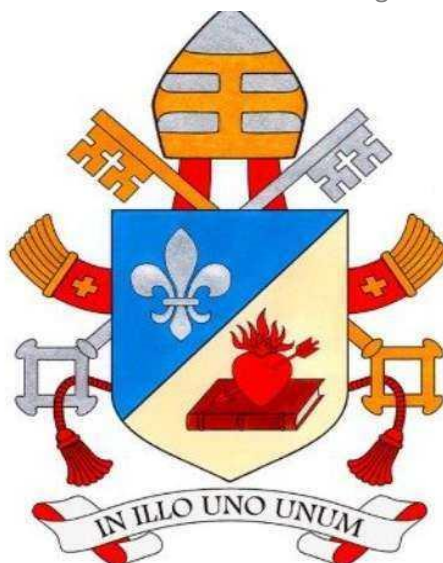
Fraternity in the Order should be manifested in a special way in the equality of all the friars, overcoming distinctions arising from privileges as well as social and economic situations.

Community for an Augustinian is not limited to the house in which he lives, nor the circumscription to which he belongs, because our family is the Order; as such the community and the friars will be at the service of the universal Church.

[www.augustinianorder.org](http://www.augustinianorder.org)



Leo XIV  
8 maggio 2025



### **Pope Leo's motto, coat of arms a homage to St. Augustine**

'United in Christ, we are one' - Pope Leo XIV, an Augustinian, calls the Church to unity, peace, and fearless proclamation of the Gospel.

Vatican News explained that the phrase is taken from St. Augustine's "Exposition on Psalm 127," where he explains that "although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one."

As a cardinal, he told Vatican News in 2023, "As can be seen from my episcopal motto, unity and communion are truly part of the charism of the Order of St. Augustine, and also of my way of acting and thinking."

"I believe it is very important to promote communion in the church, and we know well that communion, participation and mission are the three keywords of the Synod" of Bishops on synodality, he said. "So, as an Augustinian, for me promoting unity and communion is fundamental."

His shield, now topped by a miter instead of the red galero hat on the shield of cardinals, is divided diagonally into two. The upper half features a blue background with a white lily or fleur-de-lis, symbolizing the Virgin Mary, but also his French heritage.

The lower half of the shield has a light background and displays an image common to the religious orders named after and inspired by St. Augustine: a closed book with a heart pierced by an arrow.

*Vatican News* said, "This is a direct reference to the conversion experience of St. Augustine himself, who described his personal encounter with God's word using the phrase: 'Vulnerasti cor meum verbo tuo' -- 'You have pierced my heart with your Word.'"