

The “Augustinian Man”: A Profile of a Graduate of St. Augustine Preparatory School

“In the school of the Lord we are all schoolmates.”

(St. Augustine of Hippo, Sermon 242, 1)

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

(Rule of St. Augustine, I, 3)

Inspired by the life, work, and example of their patron, St. Augustine of Hippo, a graduate from St. Augustine Preparatory School (St. Augustine Prep) will learn to channel his restless heart so as to search for knowledge on the way to wisdom. The graduate from St. Augustine Prep will have successfully completed the academic program, participated in a variety of athletics and/or activities, experienced spiritual growth through engagement in prayer and sacrament, and journeyed through the maturation process from the time of his arrival on campus. A graduate of St. Augustine Prep will realize that the world is a classroom of the Master Teacher and see all subjects through the lens of faith. At the time of his commencement exercises, the Prep graduate will have as his foundation the Augustinian core values of *Veritas* (Truth), *Unitas* (Unity), and *Caritas* (Love). Built upon that foundation will be the pillars of Augustinian Education which will, in turn, hold aloft a meaningful and happy life of servant leadership, resulting in the “Augustinian Man.”

The six pillars of Augustinian Education are:

1. Knowledge and Wisdom - “Understand so that you may believe. Believe so that you may understand.” (Semon, 43)

An Augustinian education acknowledges, as St. Augustine asserted, that “nothing is to be preferred to the search for truth,” as his friends and students dedicate themselves to a journey of living lives of interiority and conversion. But Augustine knew well that knowledge, understanding, and wisdom were only to be found at the intersection of faith AND reason. “Do not think that any human teaches any other” he said. “That sound of our voice can admonish, but the one who teaches is inside. The sound we make is useless.” “We all have one Master, whose school is on earth and whose seat is in heaven.” (Villanova, 2014)

Rooted in the value of *Veritas* to embrace the search for knowledge and wisdom, a St. Augustine Prep graduate and is one who:

- Has a basic knowledge of the major doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church.
- Having been introduced to Augustinian spirituality, the graduate will also have examined his own religious feelings and beliefs with a view to choosing a fundamental orientation toward God and establishing a relationship with a religious tradition and/or community. What is said here, respectful of the conscience and religious background of the individual, also applies to the non-Catholic graduate of a Augustinian high school. The level of theological understanding of

the Augustinian Man will naturally be limited by the student's level of religious and human development.

- Develops a knowledge of central goals, purposes, and methodologies of a variety of academic disciplines.
- Possesses an openness to and a pursuit of continued growth in logical and critical thinking and is capable of presenting a convincing argument in both written and oral form that evidences sound analytical reasoning and compelling rhetoric.
- Has a mastery of those academic and study skills required for an advanced education at the university level and elsewhere.
- Assesses information critically with special attention to the credibility of sources, and the respect shown to others.

2. Invitation to the Interior Life - “*Do not go outside yourself, but enter into yourself, for truth dwells in the interior self.*” (True Religion, 72, 102)

Both Augustine's personal life and his spiritual teachings are dominated by a continual call to interiority. He contends that it is “inside one's self” where truth is found, and that only in contemplation and silence is understanding achieved. According to Augustine, the visual and audible of the external world serve only as reminders to the student, and that learning takes place in the interior world. The interior activity of contemplation and a search for the ultimate Truth allows us to transcend ourselves to an eventual encounter with God, the Teacher. (Villanova, 2014)

By living interiority, a St. Augustine Prep. graduate and is one who:

- Is comfortable with silence
- Is in touch with his deeper self and is aware of his ongoing personal story.
- Discovers who he is, where he is, where he is going, and the goals by which he is going to orient his life.
- Sees beyond the surface values of society and popular culture.
- Opens himself to the possibility of going beyond himself by first returning to himself.
- Discerns and evaluates between truth and falsehood, goodness and evil in everything he sees and hears; and even his own thoughts and emotions.
- Grows in knowledge and acceptance of his own gifts and graces.
- Learns to dialogue with Christ, the Inner Teacher, through a dynamic spiritual process.

3. **Cultivation of Humility** - *“Unless humility precedes, accompanies, and follows whatever we do, we will find that we have done little good to rejoice in. Pride will bereft us of everything.”* (Letter, 188, 22)

According to Augustine, humility is the root of true charity. It calls us to accept the sacred in ourselves and others. It allows us to recognize that we are human, to accept our place in reality - neither making oneself more nor less than what one actually is, and to love all things, but in an appropriate way. Humility teaches us to see each other as equals. “Humility induces us to presume on our own strength and to trust in God.” Humility allows us to listen to others and to see the truth in them. According to Augustine, the only way to reach an “abiding, active knowledge of the truth is through humility.” (Villanova, 2014)

By modeling humility, a St. Augustine Prep graduate and is one who:

- Recognizes that human beings are “wired” for God and that no earthly satisfaction can provide everlasting fulfillment which comes from the Lord alone.
- Learns how to accept self, both talents and limitations, with an attitude of thanksgiving.
- Values diversity and is inclusive of differences.
- Is open to alternative points of view, recognizing the importance of careful listening and reflection while also being aware of potential biases.
- Adapts to seeing criticism and setbacks as interesting, challenging, and beneficial.
- Forms a healthy and appropriate sense of humor.
- Is open to tradition and the wisdom of the elders.

4. **Formation of Community** - *“Community is a place where the search for truth takes place in a climate of love and friendship, where one can experience that the ‘truth is neither yours nor mine, so that it can belong to the both of us.”* (Esmerelda, 2001)

In an Augustinian community, the purpose of life is to search for God, the ultimate Truth, not alone, but among friends, who are committed to the same journey. In such a community “love is at the center and the heart” of every act and interaction, and respect for each person, as a child of God, is primary. Members strive to live in harmony - in a quest for union of mind and heart, to mutual concern for and assistance to each other in every way possible, including fraternal correction, in a spirit of love and understanding. Members look upon their work as an expression of one’s human nature, not as a burden, but in cooperation with the Creator in shaping the world and serving humankind. Always conscious of the virtues of honesty, integrity, and compassion as fundamental to the Christian way of life, members work for unity, making justice and peace, the fruits of love, a reality in the Church and in the world. (Villanova, 2014)

Rooted in the value of Caritas, a graduate of St. Augustine Prep. is one who:

- Values the formation of community as an end in itself.

- Acknowledges Jesus Christ as the cause and sustainer of true community (especially through our regular sacramental participation in the Eucharist).
- Recognizes that humility is the necessary condition for love and serves as an antidote to pride, the root of disharmony.
- Explores career and lifestyle choices and consequences within a framework of faith and objective moral values.
- Accepts and meets others where they are on life's journey.
- Is versed in Catholic Social Teaching and the 'common good' through the practice of both Subsidiarity and Solidarity.
- Understands friendships as a place where God is made present.
- Recognizes and celebrates the giftedness of others.
- Is willing and able to offer correction in a spirit of love, mercy, and forgiveness.
- Is willing to share his gifts and talents with the community for the benefit of all.

5. Call to the Sacramental Life - *"Every good thing is sealed to us in the celebration of the sacraments."* (On the Spirit and the Letter, 17, 18, 11)

An Augustinian education is a Catholic education that "nurtures the development of religious faith and practice, develops moral and ethical perspectives and values of its members." All in such a community are invited into the sacramental life- that is, active participation in an outward expression of one's faith. Exploration of religion and faith, participation in prayer, liturgy, and other forms of communal worship are both respected and encouraged. Those who have a desire to live an Augustinian life seek to make "unity and peace a reality in the Church and in human society." It requires a particular expression of faith, of Gospel values - putting aside narrowness and selfishness and becoming "attuned to a broader social love, joining ourselves to others in such ways that we may have on 'one mind,' the mind of Christ." (Villanova, 2014)

Rooted in the sacramental life of the Church, and in recognition and being present to the special moments of life, a St. Augustine Prep graduate is one who:

- Has a personal encounter with Jesus the Christ through the experience of the Paschal Mystery as presented in the Gospels and the New Testament.
- Is developing in areas of prayer and sacramental formation by, but not limited to, participation in the Eucharist, devotional practices, and other grace-filled moments during the Liturgical Year.
- Able to articulate the basic tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, especially those Gospel-rooted teachings on life and death and the inherent dignity of each individual.

- Understands the unique charism of Augustinian Education within the larger tradition of Catholic Education.
 - Continues to engage in conscience formation and character development - seeing both as lifelong endeavors.
 - Has a willingness to share their faith or spiritual insight with others.
6. **Commitment to Service and Stewardship** - *“The degree to which you are concerned for the common good rather than for your own, is the criterion by which you can judge how much progress you have made.” (Rule of St. Augustine, 7, 2)*

Stewardship of the common good requires that we willingly accept accountability for others through service to them, without control of them. In the Catholic tradition, “the Beatitudes teach us the final end to which God calls us, and confronts us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods. They teach us [how] to love.” “Love, when it is true, is always directed away from oneself. It is transcendent. The two-fold command of love, therefore, translates into working for the common good, [and] working for the common good is service.” Service in an Augustinian context is done in the spirit of gratefulness and in recognition that the service owed to God must be rendered to humankind. Service is love in its dynamic dimension. Service gives expression to Jesus’ command, “Love one another as I have loved you.” (Villanova, 2014)

Rooted in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, a St. Augustine Prep graduate:

- Sees the face of Christ in each member of the community while appreciating differences in ability, age, culture, economic status, gender, physical ability, race, religion and sexual orientation.
- Begins to see that a commitment to the Christian Faith requires a commitment to justice in society.
- Has accepted the reality of sin as an impediment to social progress while maintaining hope in conversion and redemption.
- Faces inequalities in the world and works to make positive change.
- Lives the Beatitudes and showcases a commitment to the biblical mandate of having a preferential option for the poor.
- Demonstrates a commitment of the two master principles of Catholic Social Teaching: solidarity and subsidiarity.
- Committed to safeguarding the gift of creation and the call to “till and keep” (Gen. 2:15) the earth through environmental stewardship.