



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO THE AUGUSTINIAN PROVINCE OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

[[Multimedia](#)]

Pope Leo XIV

Good evening and God's blessings to all of you who are taking part in this wonderful occasion.

On the solemnity of Our Holy Father, Saint Augustine, I'm humbled and truly honored to accept the Saint Augustine Medal from the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova. As I record this message, I am away from the roman heat, spending some time at Castel Gandolfo for prayer, reflection and some relaxation. You will be happy to know that the parish church in this town outside of Rome, is named after Saint Thomas of Villanova, known as father of the poor, a wonderfully gifted Augustinian friar and bishop who devoted his life in service to the poor.

As Augustinians, we strive every day to live up to the example of our spiritual father, Saint Augustine. To be recognised as an Augustinian, it's an honor held dearly. So much of who I am I owe to the spirit and the teachings of Saint Augustine and I am grateful to all of you for all the many ways your lives exhibit a deep commitment to the values of *veritas, unitas, caritas*.

Saint Augustine, as you know, was one of the great founders of monasticism; a bishop, theologian, preacher, writer, and doctor of the Church. But this did not happen overnight. His life was full of much trial and error, like our own lives. But through God's grace, through the prayers of his mother, Monica, and the community of good people around him, Augustine was able to find the way to peace for his restless heart.

The life of Saint Augustine and his call to servant leadership, reminds us that we all have God given gifts and talents, and our purpose, fulfilment and joy comes from offering them back in loving service to God and to our neighbor.

It is fitting to be with you all tonight, as you gather in historic Philadelphia and home to Saint Augustine Church, one of the oldest faith communities in the United States. We stand on the shoulders of Augustinian friars, like Father Matthew Carr and Father John Rossiter, whose missionary spirit led them in the late 1700s to go forth and bring the good news of the Gospel in service to Irish and German immigrants, searching for a better life and religious tolerance.

To this very day, we are called to carry on this legacy of loving service to all of God's people. Jesus reminds us in the Gospel to love our neighbor, and this challenges us now more than ever to remember to see our neighbors today with the eyes of Christ: that all of us are created in the image and likeness of God through friendship, relationship, dialogue and respect for one another. We can see past our differences and discover our true identity as sisters and brothers in Christ.

As a community of believers and inspired by the charism of the Augustinians, we are called to go forth to be peacemakers in our families and neighborhoods and truly recognise God's presence in one another. Peace begins with what we say and do and how we say and do it.

Saint Augustine reminds us that before we speak, we first must listen, and as a synodal Church, we are encouraged to re-engage in the art of listening through prayer, through silence, discernment and reflection. We have the opportunity and responsibility to listen to the Holy Spirit; to listen to each other; to listen to the voices of the poor and those on the margins whose voices need to be heard. Saint Augustine urges us to pay attention and to listen to the inner teacher, the voice that speaks from within all of us. It is within our hearts where God speaks to us.

In one of his sermons, Saint Augustine encouraged his listeners: "Do not have your heart in your ears, but your ears in your heart".

What do we need to do in order to practice how to listen with the ears of our heart? The world is full of noise, and our heads and hearts can be flooded with many different kinds of messages. These messages can fuel our restlessness and steal our joy. As a community of faith, striving to build a relationship with the Lord, may we strive to filter the noise, the divisive voices in our heads and hearts, and open ourselves up to the daily invitations to get to know God and God's love better. When we hear that loving, reassuring voice of the Lord, we can share it with the world as we strive to become one in him.

I am grateful for this honor and most especially for the support Masses and prayers celebrated this evening and beyond as I seek to humbly serve.

Please continue to pray for me, for the intentions of all God's people around the world. Be assured of my prayers for all of you who gathered here tonight: to my Augustinian brothers, fellow Villanova's missionaries, past, present and future, to the old and the young, the rich and the poor, to all our dear friends of the order. Like Augustine, we come together with our moments of anxiety,

darkness and doubt and just like Augustine, through God's grace, we can discover that God's love is truly healing. Let us strive to build a community where that love is made visible.

May we continue to strengthen our common mission as Church and community to promote peace, live in hope, and mirror God's light and love in the world. It is in our unity in Christ and communion with one another that the light will grow together and brighter in our world.

Under the guidance and protection of the Virgin Mary, our Mother of Good Counsel, may we never forget the gifts she has given us by the faith filled yes, that she gave as she accepted what God had planned for her.

May God bless you all and bring peace to your restless hearts, and help you continue to build a community of love, one in mind and heart, intent upon God. And may the blessing of Almighty God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit come upon you all and remain with you forever.

Thank you very much.

Father Robert P. Hagan, provincial Prior at the presentation of the Saint Augustine Medal

Your Holiness, Pope Leo, on behalf of the province of Saint Thomas of Villanova, the larger Augustine community, and the whole faith filled believers. We say thank you for accepting this honor of the Saint Augustine Medal for your service leadership, your lifelong commitment to the poor, your witness to Augustinian values, and now as our universal Shepherd for the example that you set for all of us to grow closer to the Lord and to one another, and that we all can be peacemakers. Be assured of our prayers for you, for your grace and your strength as you continue to carry this responsibility for all of us. God bless you.

Pope Leo XIV

Thank you very much! It is indeed a great honor once again to receive this. Thank you very much for your words, for the support of the Augustinians, your province. Just know that from many, many years ago, when we were students at Villanova and took part in so many aspects of the great Augustinian family and the Villanova family. It is great to know that community is still very much a part of our lives. Thank you for this award and God bless you and all of your people.