

COMMISSION ON VOCATIONS AND INITIAL FORMATION

“See, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity.”
(Err. in Ps. 132, 1)

Vocation Promotion

Underlying Principles

Vocation is a call from God.¹ And all *States of Life* are called by God to holiness.² Our religious state or vocation to religious life is a special gift from God that enables a person to live one’s baptismal consecration radically through the evangelical counsels³ in following the Total Christ.⁴ It is also a call to serve and sanctify God’s people in the Church⁵ “according to each one’s mission and charism.”⁶

Augustinian religious life has shown its inherent power to attract people to follow the Total Christ through the ideals embraced by Augustine “in living together in a community in oneness of mind and heart on the way to God.”⁷ “For love of the charism we have received, so that our Order may properly continue its mission in the Church, we should not only gladly accept those who feel themselves called by God and asked to be admitted to the Order, but we should also promote vocations in every place where the Order is active.”⁸ Therefore it is the “fundamental priority” of the Province and all friars especially those who are assigned in the different areas of apostolate of the Province such as pastoral care, missionary activities, educational institutions and centers of formation, to “promote vocations to Augustinian religious life.”⁹

Situational Analysis

In the Philippines, there is abundance of vocation to religious life. However, our Province has yet to fully exhaust, implement and intensify the approved recruitment program to benefit from this wealth of vocation. Moreover, to determine the right motivation of candidates it needs to employ scientific system of “Admission and Measurements” suitable for Augustinian formation.

1 John 15:16

2 *Perfectae Caritatis* (PC), 1.

3 *Ibid*, 1; Cf. *Ratio*, 31.

4 *Ibid*, 1.

5 PC, 2.

6 LG, 33; OSA Constitutions (Constitutions), 187.

7 Cf. *Ratio*, 14-15.

8 Constitutions, 186.

9 Constitutions, 187; Cf. PC, 8; 24; *Optatam Totius* (OT), 2.

Furthermore, there is a need to update and standardize our Manual of Vocation Promotion and campaign materials, such as: videos, posters, brochures, leaflets, websites (not only in the houses of formation but also in the other fields of our apostolate), etc.

In the Circumscription level, there's a need to strengthen collaboration among the members in promoting the Augustinian way of life.

In the Provincial level, there's a need for collaboration among different commissions in producing materials in promotion of Augustinian way of life. "The friars should remember that all are obliged to promote vocations to the Augustinian religious life"¹⁰ and to help the Local and National Directors of Vocation in their different programs.

Action Plan

1. To choose a zonal coordinator from among the Local Directors of Vocations.
2. To require all Vocation Directors to attend seminars on vocation promotions.
3. To review, revise and update the Manual of Vocation Promotion and Recruitment and be made available to all friars.
4. To organize lay Augustinian Vocation Promoters to all communities, particularly in collaboration with our lay affiliates and associates.
5. To celebrate Augustinian Vocation Month in all communities every November.
6. To enhance the Augustinian Vocation Promotion by establishing a Province website and to have updated campaign materials and techniques (posters, brochures, videos, leaflets, etc.).

Initial Formation

Underlying Principles

"Formation for religious life in the Augustinian community is of the greatest importance for every one of the brothers and for the well-being of the Order. Presently, initial formation includes the periods of pre-novitiate, novitiate and simple profession. Formation is to take place in a gradual and systematic way, while keeping a proper balance between human values and those based on the evangelical counsels. This formation should always be carried out in the context of the shared life, faith and apostolate of the community, which constitute the very substance of the Augustinian community."¹¹

10 Constitutions, 187.

11 Ratio, 85.

In line with the recommendation of the *Constitutions* (2008)¹² to create an adjunct Plan of Formation based on the *Ratio Institutionis* as determined in the Ordinary General Chapter of 1989 as expressed in the *Canon Law* 646; 650, 1; and especially 659, 2-3, and emphasized by the Holy See on its document *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*,¹³ the “formation of candidates aims at an integral development of the person, it must be one that is human, Christian, affective, intellectual, religious, and Augustinian, as well as apostolic and pastoral. These various aspects complement one another and should be attended to in a greater or lesser degree as age and maturity demand.”¹⁴

Primarily, our Augustinian-Christian formation aims to unite us with Christ through the profession of evangelical counsels.¹⁵ Secondly, “it seeks specifically by following the example and teaching of St. Augustine and of sound Augustinian tradition.”¹⁶

All these aspects of formation should mold the candidates in the Filipino cultural context to become Augustinian religious and live harmoniously in community among brothers sharing with the greater community of God’s people the ideals and charism of St. Augustine.

Situational Analysis

The Filipino Augustinian identity should begin and develop within the initial formation. “Due attention, then, must be given at all times to the various dimensions of our lives: as human beings, as Christians, as Augustinians and as apostolic ministers”¹⁷ to answer the call of the Church as a “prophetic sign in the world.”¹⁸ Recently, “religious communities” were challenged to be a “prophetic sign of community life in a society in which a participatory democracy is constantly threatened by divisions caused by political strife and economic inequality. The Church, with its BECs and religious communities, could be a laboratory in which we show forth what society could be.”¹⁹

An assessment of the initial formation program discloses a need to deepen the candidate’s Augustinian formation. The initial formation program lacks trained Formators, spiritual directors,

12 *Constitutions*, 190.

13 DFRI, 1, 4.

14 *Constitutions*, 192; Cf. *Ratio*, 8.

15 *Ratio*, 5; Cf. *Constitutions*, 187.

16 *Ratio*, 6.

17 *Ratio*, 8.

18 Intermediate General Chapter (IGC), 21; 28; Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 85.

19 Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II), 500.

counselors and professors. Moreover, there is also a lack of coordination in the different levels of formation. There is a need to review and update the Manual of Formation of the Province in relation to the *Ratio Institutionis*, the updated Constitutions and other recent documents of the Order.

Action Plan

1. To require the Commission on Vocations and Initial Formation to organize training skills program for all members of our formation communities and for potential seminary Formators in the Province, and require them to undergo the said program
2. To study the possibility of adding one year of pre-aspirancy to both college and late vocation formation
3. To continue the annual Augustinian Spirituality Congress for seminarians
4. To intensify mission consciousness in the formation program in the Province and develop an Augustinian approach to mission
5. To let the STVI-Director revise its curriculum and endorse to (BOT-USA and CHED) then to the Provincial Council and Commission on Educational Apostolate for their approval
6. That each Commission must set a specific program of action regarding the approved decrees, suggestions or recommendations, and must establish definite objectives and approaches on how to realize and monitor them
7. To create an Associate Program in Philosophy at STVI for the Late Vocation Students