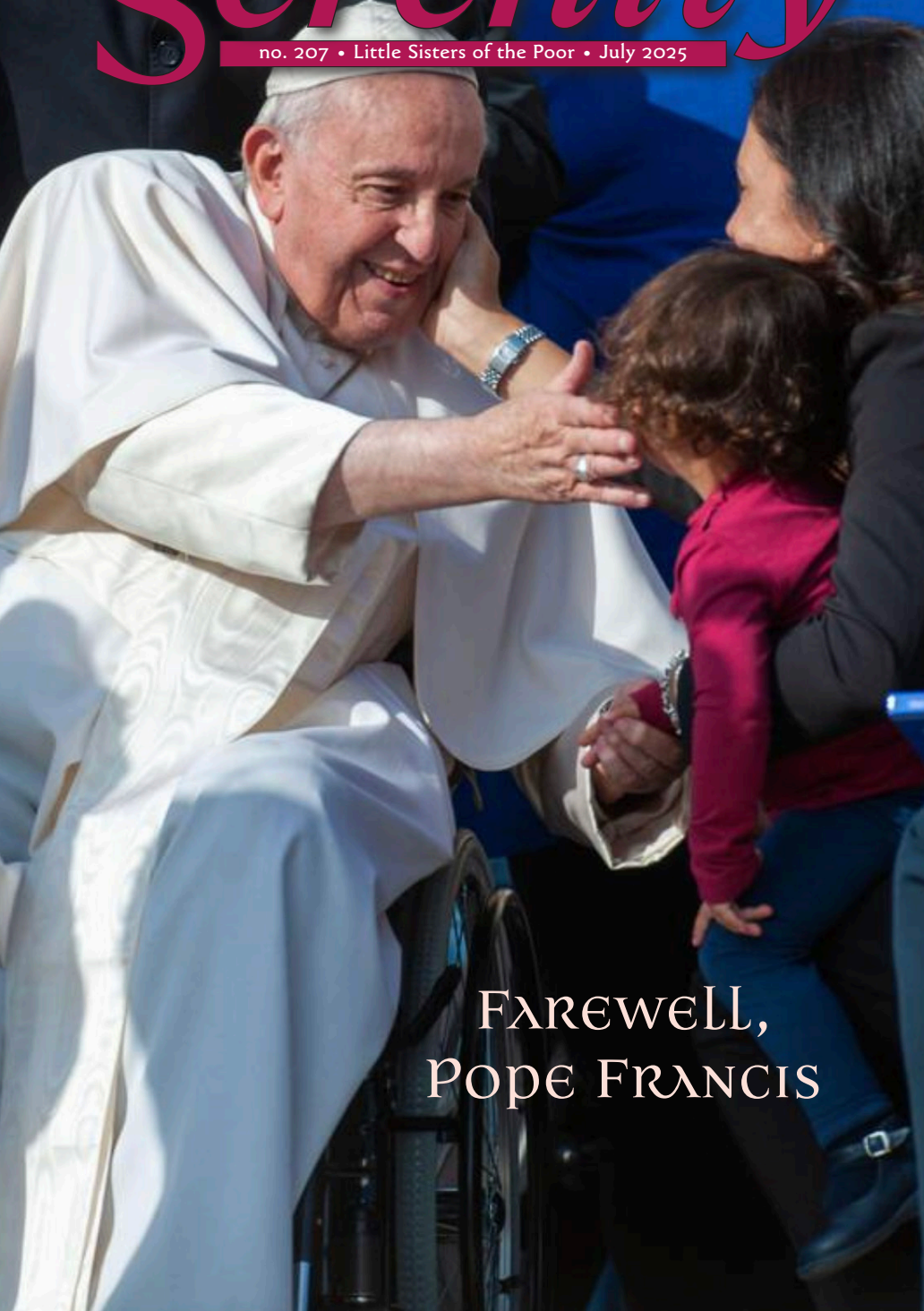


Serenity

no. 207 • Little Sisters of the Poor • July 2025



FAREWELL,
POPE FRANCIS



Our Mission

Continuing the work of Saint Jeanne Jugan, our MISSION is to offer the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home where they will be welcomed as Christ, cared for as family and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself.

Cover Photos

Front cover: Pope Francis interacts with the faithful following his general audience, October 26, 2022. (Alamy.com photo).

Photo at right: Pope Francis receives then-Bishop Robert Francis Prevost in audience, September 9, 2023. (Photo R.Siciliani/Vatican Media/ Sintesi/ Alamy Live News).

Outside back cover: Dreamstime.com photo.

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Contents

- 3 Farewell, Pope Francis
- 11 With you a Christian, for you a bishop
- 25 Celebrating ten years of *Laudato Si'*
- 28 Dedication in the Philippines
- 30 Never too old to live the Gospel
- 32 Living in full color

We are the times

“**B**ad times, hard times, this is what people keep saying, but let us live well, and times will be good. We are the times. Such as we are, such are the times.” This quote could have come from Charles Dickens, or a 1960s folk song. But these are the words of one of the Church’s greatest Saints, Augustine of Hippo.

After Our Savior Jesus Christ, no one has had a greater influence on our new Holy Father than Augustine. As he was introduced to the world from the loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica, Pope Leo XIV said, “I am a son of Saint Augustine, an Augustinian. He said, ‘With you I am a Christian, for you a bishop.’ So may we all walk together towards that homeland that God has prepared for us.”

We could easily use Augustine’s words to describe our own times. In March of this year Pope Francis used an ominous term to describe current events. “Polycrisis,” he wrote, “evokes the dramatic nature of the historical juncture we are currently witnessing, in which wars, climate changes, energy problems, epidemics, the migratory phenomenon and technological innovation converge.”

In light of the difficult times in which we are living, it would have been understandable if Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost shied away from the heavy burden he was being asked to assume on May 8. But the humble, courageous Augustinian missionary did not hide from God’s call — he embraced it!

Pope Leo XIV understands what Augustine meant when he said, “Let us live well, and times will be good.”

As he spoke to the people of Chicago via video on June 14, he suggested, “Saint Augustine says to us that if we want the world to be a better place, we have to begin with ourselves, we have to begin with our own lives, our own hearts.”

“And so, in this sense, as you gather together as a faith community ... as you offer your own experience of joy and of hope, you can discover that you, too, are indeed beacons of hope. That light, that perhaps on the horizon is not very easy to see, and yet, as we grow in our unity, as we come together in communion, we can discover that that light will grow brighter and brighter. That light which is indeed our faith in Jesus Christ. And we can become that message of hope, to promote peace and unity throughout our world.”

“We all live with many questions in our hearts. Saint Augustine speaks so often of our ‘restless’ hearts and says: ‘our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O God’ (*Confessions* 1,1,1). That restlessness is not a bad thing, and we shouldn’t look for ways to put out the fire, to eliminate or even numb ourselves to the tensions that we feel, the difficulties that we experience. We should rather get in touch with our own hearts and recognize that God can work in our lives, through our lives, and through us reach out to other people.”

“And so I’d like to conclude this brief message to all of you with an invitation to be, indeed, that light of hope ... When I see each and every one of you, when I see how people gather together to celebrate their faith, I discover myself how much hope there is in the world.”

“In this Jubilee Year of Hope, Christ, who is our hope, indeed calls all of us to come together, that we might be that true living example: the light of hope in the world today.”

“So I would like to invite all of you to take a moment, to open up your own hearts to God, to God’s love, to that peace which only the Lord can give us. To feel how deeply beautiful, how strong, how meaningful the love of God is in our lives. And to recognize that while we do nothing to earn God’s love, God in his own generosity continues to pour out his love upon us. And as he gives us his love, he only asks us to be generous and to share what he has given us with others.”

Let’s accept Pope Leo’s invitation! 



Pope Francis is honored in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, following his death on April 21, 2025. (Alamy.com photo).

FAREWELL, POPE FRANCIS

Lent was tough this year as we followed Pope Francis along the way of the Cross — he from a hospital bed and we through regular news reports — but then came Easter Sunday. Our Holy Father appeared on the balcony to bless the faithful, he rode around St. Peter's Square in his pope-mobile, and we all breathed a sigh of relief. It looked like Pope Francis was recovering after all!

When we awoke on Monday to the news that the Pope had passed away, our Easter joy seemed to come crashing down, at least temporarily. But then we realized that what we had witnessed the day before was actually Pope Francis' ultimate gesture of hope. He wanted to die with his boots on, and Our Lord granted his wish.

In 2022 the Pope had given a series of catechetical talks on old age which concluded with a hope-filled reflection on death. The circumstances of his own passing in Eastertide seemed to fulfill the vision he had articulated in those talks.



Cardinal Robert Prevost, soon to be Pope Leo XIV, leads the recitation of the Holy Rosary for Pope Francis, Vatican City, March 3, 2025. (Dreamstime.com photo).

“After death,” Francis wrote, “we are born to heaven, to God’s space, and we are still ourselves, who walked on this earth. It is analogous to what happened to Jesus: the Risen One is still Jesus: he does not lose his humanity, his experience, or even his corporeality, no, because without it he would no longer be himself, he would not be Jesus: that is, with his humanity, with his lived experience.”

“The experience of the disciples, to whom he appears for forty days after his resurrection, tells us this. The Lord shows them the wounds that sealed his sacrifice; but they are no longer the ugliness of the painfully suffered disgrace. They are now the indelible proof of his faithful love to the very end.”



Through these words we can appreciate Francis' sunken eyes, thready voice and labored movements on Easter Sunday as the proof of his faithful love to the very end.

DEATH IS A KIND OF
STEP TOWARD THE
ENCOUNTER WITH
JESUS WHO IS WAITING
FOR ME, TO BRING ME
TO HIM.

In his catechesis on August 24, 2022 Francis wrote, "Jesus, risen with his body, lives in the Trinitarian intimacy of God! And in it he does not lose his memory, he does not abandon his history, he does not dissolve the relationships he lived on earth. To his friends he promised: 'And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also' (Jn 14:3). He left to prepare a place for us, for all of us, and after preparing a place, he will come. He will not come only at the end for everyone. He will come each time for each one of us. He will come to seek us out to bring us to him. In this sense, death is a kind of step toward the encounter with Jesus who is waiting for me, to bring me to him."

"He will not come only at the end for everyone. He will come each time for each one of us." We can surmise that after sharing these convictions with the faithful, Francis experienced his own passing as the Lord's coming to him personally to bring him to himself and to open before him what, in the same catechesis, he called blissful exuberance, endless adventure.

“The Risen One lives in God’s world, where there is a place for everyone, where a new earth is being formed, and the heavenly city, man’s final dwelling place, is being built. We cannot imagine this transfiguration of our mortal corporeality, but we are certain that it will keep our faces recognizable and allow us to remain human in God’s heaven. It will allow us to participate, with sublime emotion, in the infinite and blissful exuberance of God’s creative act, whose endless adventures we will experience first-hand.”

In the same talk Pope Francis described heaven as a wedding feast, a party where Christ awaits us. “When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God, he describes it as a wedding feast; as a party with friends.... It is the surprise that makes the harvest richer than the sowing. Taking seriously the Gospel words about the Kingdom enables our sensitivities to enjoy God’s working and creative love, and puts us in tune with the unprecedented destination of the life we sow. In our old age, my dear contemporaries — and I speak to the old men and old women — in our old age, the importance of the many ‘details’ of which life is made — a caress, a smile, a gesture, an appreciated effort, an unexpected surprise, a hospitable cheerfulness, a faithful bond — becomes more acute.



OUR WHOLE LIFE AP-
PEARS LIKE A SEED
THAT WILL HAVE TO BE
BURIED SO THAT ITS
FLOWER AND ITS FRUIT
CAN BE BORN.



Pope Francis during his trip to Canada, July 2022. (Alamy.com photo).

The essentials of life, which we hold most dear as we approach our farewell, become definitively clear to us.”

“This wisdom of old age,” Francis continued, “is the place of our gestation, which illuminates the lives of children, of young people, of adults, of the entire community. We, the elderly should be this for others: light for others. Our whole life appears like a seed that will have to be buried so that its flower and its fruit can be born. It will be born, along with everything else in the world. Not without labor pains, not without pain, but it will be born (cf. Jn 16:21-23). And the life of the risen body will be a hundred and a thousand times more alive than we have tasted it on this earth (cf. Mk 10:28-31).”

Looking back over these last few years, it is clear that Francis



A frail Pope Francis is assisted during his last public appearance on Easter Sunday.
(Dreamstime.com photo).

strove to be a light for others, even as his strength waned. During the summer of 2022, in the midst of his catecheses on old age, he began to use a wheelchair on a regular basis, but this did not prevent him from appearing in public; he even traveled all the way to Canada that summer. It was around this time that he also began to use the term, “magisterium of frailty.”

“Do not hide frailties, no,” he said on June 1, 2022. “It is true, they are real and there is a magisterium of frailty, which old age is able to remind us of in a credible way for the whole span of human life. Do not hide old age, do not hide the frailty of old age. This is a teaching for all of us.” In speaking of a “magsiterium” of “frailty” Pope Francis imbued the humiliating experience of dependence with an authoritative dignity and power. Frailty has something to teach us!

DO NOT HIDE OLD AGE,
DO NOT HIDE THE
FRAILTY OF OLD AGE.
THIS IS A TEACHING
FOR ALL OF US.

In the fall of 2022 our Congregation held its General Chapter, a major gathering which takes place at our motherhouse every six years. Following tradition, Mother General wrote to Pope Francis to inform him of this event and ask his blessing upon it.

In a message responding to her note, the Pope referenced the magisterium of frailty: “One of the missions of the consecrated person is to witness to the liberty of the children of God. Just as Christ was sent on a mission, we too are sent to serve our brothers. The poverty that Christ assumed in the Incarnation makes us available and sensitive to welcome the ‘magisterium of frailty’ which older people offer us (cf. General Audience, June 1, 2022). In contrast to today’s world, which flees our elders in a throwaway culture, your welcoming and loving service of their frailty is a source of hope for the world. A long life — so the Bible teaches — is a blessing, and the elderly are not outcasts to be shunned but living signs of the goodness of God who bestows life in abundance. Blessed is the house where an older person lives!”



Mother General María meets Pope Francis at the Vatican, December 5, 2019.
(Vatican Media photo).

We Little Sisters are so grateful for the example Pope Francis gave the world regarding the magisterium of frailty. Now that he has left us, we cherish his teachings and his

words to us, along with cherished memories and the photos taken during our Congregation's various encounters with him.

Pope Francis' final words in his catechesis of August 24, 2022, the conclusion of his entire series on old age are fitting words with which to bid him farewell:

"Yes, dear brothers and sisters, especially you elderly, the best of life is yet to come.... Let us hope for this fullness of life that awaits us all, when the Lord calls us. May the Mother of the Lord and our Mother, who has preceded us to heaven, restore to us the eager anticipation of expectation, because it is not an anaesthetized expectation. It is not a bored expectation, no, it is an expectation with eager anticipation. It is an expectation: 'When will my Lord come? When will I be able to go there?' A little bit of fear, because I don't know what this step means, and passing through that door causes a little fear. But there is always the hand of the Lord that carries us forward, and beyond the door there is the party."

"Let us be attentive, dear old people, contemporaries, let us be attentive. He is expecting us. Just one step and then the party."

Our dear Holy Father Francis has now crossed the threshold and entered the party where Our Lord was waiting for him, eager to embrace his faithful servant and introduce him to the blissful adventures awaiting him in the Kingdom. 



IN CONTRAST TO TODAY'S world, which flees our elders in a throwaway culture, your welcoming and loving service of their frailty is a source of hope for the world.



With you a Christian, for you a bishop

Some moments in history are so singular that even many years after their occurrence we remember exactly where we were, or what we were doing, when we heard the news of their happening. Many of these events are of a tragic nature — the untimely death of a famous person, a natural disaster, an act of terrorism or war — but others are happier, like the signing of a peace treaty, a great scientific achievement, or the election of a public figure in whom we have placed great hope.

May 8, 2025 will remain one of these days for many of us. Years from now we will recall exactly where we were when we heard the name of the first American-born Pope and saw him step out onto the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica! We Little Sisters here in the United States share in the excitement of American Catholics that one of our own has been elected Pope, but what gives us an even greater sense of joy is the fact that after Pope Francis, a

Jesuit, God has once again chosen a member of a religious order to shepherd the universal Church.

We will leave it to others to analyze the difference between religious order priests and diocesan clergy, and how a Pope drawn from the consecrated life might differ from a diocesan priest. As Little Sisters, we simply rejoice in God's providential choice.

There are two details related to our new Pope that we find especially noteworthy. The first is the Pope's desire, through his choice of name, to honor his predecessor Pope Leo XIII. The second is his Augustinian background.

Leo XIII served as Pope from 1878 until 1903. These were important years in the development of our religious family. The Congregation had received approbation from the Holy See during the pontificate of Pius IX, on July 9, 1854. This approval excluded the Constitutions, which were not studied at that time. On April 16, 1878, Father Ernest Lelièvre, who did so much to help our young Congregation establish itself on sure footing, had a private audience with Pope Leo XIII to seek Papal approval of the Constitutions. Lelièvre emphasized the Little Sisters' desire to gain approval for the fourth vow of hospitality and for their intention, quite radical, to allow no guaranteed sources of income as proof of their confidence in Divine Providence. The Church's approbation of the Constitutions, including these two elements, was given on March 1, 1879. Saint Jeanne Jugan, our foundress, passed away not long after, on August 29 of that year.

In 1886 Pope Leo XIII granted the Congregation a unique favor. Prior to being elected Pope, he had served as the archbishop of Perugia, Italy. In memory of his election, he wished to endow Perugia with a lasting monument of his affection. He thus purchased a house with a garden and gifted it to the Little Sisters, inviting them to establish a home for the elderly there. Receiving the Sisters in audience on June 16, 1886, he said to them, "When people know you, when people see your life of sacrifice, they will love you at Perugia." They made the foundation soon after, receiving two

men named Peter and Paul as the first Residents of the home.

The second detail in the life of Pope Leo XIV that intrigues us is his Augustinian spirituality. We, too, are followers of St. Augustine and so we feel like cousins, or kindred spirits of our new Holy Father!

Through the influence of the Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St. John of God, who based their Constitutions on the Rule of St. Augustine, in 1846 our first Little Sisters also chose to follow this Rule, which dates back to the fourth century and is still influential among apostolic religious communities.

Pope Leo XIV is the first member of the Augustinian Order to be elected Pope. As he was introduced to the world on May 8 he concluded his first speech, “I am a son of Saint Augustine, an Augustinian. He said, ‘With you I am a Christian, for you a bishop.’ So may we all walk together towards that homeland that God has prepared for us.”

With these words Pope Leo captured the essence of what it means to be an Augustinian. We read on the Order’s website, “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



Pope Leo XIII

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.”

Writing for Aleteia, Daniel Esparza identified five aspects of the Augustinian tradition that may shape the papacy of Leo XIV. They include the following:

1. Christian life begins with love. Augustine’s Rule begins with these words: “Before all else, love God and then your neighbor.”
2. Unity matters more than uniformity. The Rule insists on common purpose, shared possessions and mutual forbearance in the service of interior unity rather than external sameness. Differences are reconciled within communion, not rigid conformity. “Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart,” Augustine wrote.
3. Authority must be humble and accountable. St. Augustine counseled superiors to be servants, not dominators, remembering that they too are under God’s judgment. “The more you are honored,” he wrote, “the more you must humble yourselves.
4. Augustine’s focus was interior, not performative. His Rule pays more attention to faults of the heart than of the body. It calls for moderation, modesty and truthfulness.



5. The Rule is for people in the world. Augustine wrote his Rule for communities of lay Christians and clergy, not cloistered monks. Holiness does not consist in withdrawal from the world, but in living in the world differently, with mercy, patience and shared purpose.

In the first month of his papacy, Leo has already incorporated Augustinian values into his preaching on numerous occasions.

“Brothers and sisters, I would like that our first great desire be for a united Church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world,” he said during his inaugural Mass on May 18.

“In this our time, we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth’s resources and marginalizes the

poorest. For our part, we want to be a small leaven of unity, communion and fraternity within the world. We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles! Listen to his offer of love and become his one family: in the one Christ, we are one...”

“In the One, we are one.” This was the motto chosen by Pope Leo XIV when he became a bishop. In a 2023 interview with Vatican News, then-Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost spoke about its significance: “As can be seen from my episcopal motto, unity and communion are truly part of the charism of the Order of Saint 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 key words of the Synod. So, as an Augustinian, for me promoting unity and communion is fundamental.”

Returning to his inaugural homily we read, “We are called to

(continued on page 18)



**As an Augustinian,
for me promoting
unity and communion
is fundamental.**



One of our own!

Our Little Sisters and Residents at St. Mary's Home, Chicago, rejoice in the election of Pope Leo XIV, a native of the Windy City. In the back row, center, is Rev. Gilbert Ostediek, OFM, a founding faculty member at the Chicago Theological Union and professor of liturgy for over fifty years. Among his students at CTU was none other than Robert Francis Prevost, our new Holy Father!



offer God's love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people."

"Brothers and sisters, this is the hour for love! The heart of the Gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters. With my predecessor Leo XIII, we can ask ourselves today: If this criterion "were to prevail in the world, would not every conflict cease and peace return?" (*Rerum Novarum*, 20)."

"With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made 'restless' by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity."



Father Theodore Tack, O.S.A., was an Augustinian priest, teacher and writer who was serving as Prior General of his Order when young Robert Prevost became a friar. Many years later, as Prior General, Father Prevost preached the homily at Father Tack's funeral. One of Tack's books, *If Augustine Were Alive, Augustine's Religious Ideal for Today*, contains a chapter entitled *Love the Lord, Love the Church*. In it, Tack interpreted Augustine's understanding of the Church for our own day. During his formative years, Father Pre-

Pope Leo leads a procession into St. Peter's Basilica on the Jubilee of the Holy See. (Alamy.com photo).

vost was surely influenced by this perspective of his Prior General.

According to Fr. Tack, St. Augustine began his religious life with a contemplative orientation; but as a priest and then a bishop, he was forced to sacrifice this perspective. However, his love of community, his contemplative orientation and the “innate restlessness which guided his search for God and the truth” gave a definite direction to his priestly life. Through the influence of his example and the efforts of his followers who served throughout the Church in Africa, the contemplative dimension of religious life began to meld with the active demands of pastoral ministry.

In a letter to one of his followers, Augustine wrote, “If the Church should request your services, do not accede to this request out of a desire to get ahead, nor refuse it moved by pleasurable idleness. Obey God, rather, in simplicity of heart, submitting yourselves humbly to him who directs you.... Neither should you prefer your peaceful leisure to the needs of the Church: if there were no good people to minister to her as she gave birth, not even you would have found a way to have been born.”

On another occasion Augustine wrote to a young member of his own monastery who was torn between following his vocation and yielding to his overly protective mother: “The Church, your mother, is also the mother of your mother. The Church conceived both of you through Christ... and gave you life so that you might attain eternal life.... This mother, scattered about the entire earth, is tormented by the assault of error.... She is also afflicted by the laziness and indifference of so many of the children she carries in her bosom, as well as by seeing so many of her members grow cold in various places, while she becomes less able to help her little ones. Who then will give her the rightly necessary help she cries

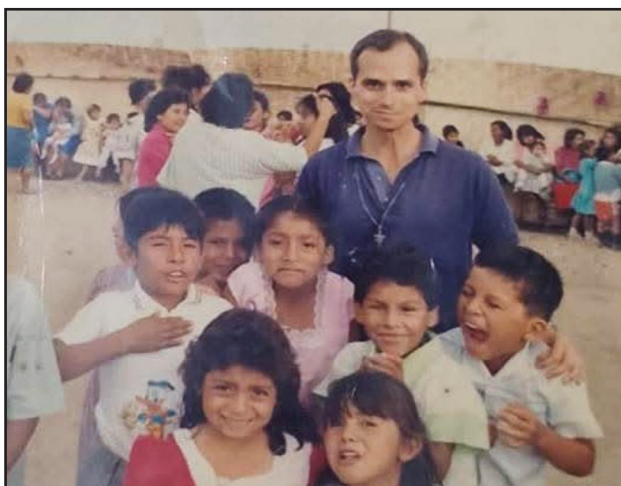


Brothers and sisters, this is the hour for love! The heart of the Gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters.



for, if not other sons and other members to whose number you belong?”

St. Augustine’s advice to his followers was practical, direct and demanding. He believed that the Church should be able to depend on those blessed with special graces to help her give birth to new sons and daughters



Father Robert Prevost serving in Peru as a young priest.
(photos from social media).

and to spread the Gospel. These individuals, he taught, ought to serve others, because they have little or no need to attend to themselves: “Those whom the Gospel and the grace of God have made perfect, live in the world only for the sake of others. They no longer need their life for themselves.”

Father Tack wrote that Augustine saw religious as a “very honorable part, a model part” of the Church, and in his book he applied these ideals to consecrated life. today. “In the same way



Local Connection

Msgr. Joaquin Bazan, a Resident of Jeanne Jugan Residence, Washington, D.C., is a fluent Spanish speaker. For many years he enjoyed traveling to Central and South America during his annual vacation time, arranging to replace the pastor in a very poor parish so that the latter could have some down time of his own. Msgr. Bazan remembers meeting Rev. Robert Prevost during one of his visits to Peru. “I was struck by how smart he was,” Bazan notes, “and also how quiet.”

that the members of the early Jerusalem community were closely joined to the Apostles and instructed by them, so also must religious today be closely united to the Church and concerned principally about her needs, not their own. In the same way, every apostolic work must be intimately related to the Church’s needs and reality, because everything the Spirit gives us is at the service of the common good.”

Father Tack set the bar quite high for consecrated persons! To be more concerned with the needs of others than one’s own is a real challenge. He wrote, “The main point that Augustine seems to be trying to make is this: no matter what position we may be in, we are at the service of the Church, because the Church is

Christ, the whole Christ, and also our spiritual mother. All ministers must be united with her in carrying out their particular mission, because every true mission comes as a mandate from Christ through the Church.”

Another point emphasized by Tack is the Church’s universality. When Augustine spoke of the Church, he asserted, he identified it with the “whole Christ” scattered throughout the world. Augustine wrote, “I have not said ‘we’ as though to indicate only we who are here.... I mean all of us who are here and by the grace of God faithful Christians in this church, that is, in this city; all those in this region, in this province, across the sea, all those in the whole



A Peruvian pilgrim greets Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican. (Alamy.com photo).

world.... Such is the Catholic Church, our true mother, the true spouse of so great a husband.”

Father Tack concluded his reflection, “We must remain sensitive to the emerging, changing needs of the Church. We have to keep questioning ourselves as to how we can better respond to these needs as they develop.... The more we are faithful to our call in the Church, the more we will be mission-minded.... To love the Lord and love his Church — the ‘whole Christ’ — is a joyful task, but also, and always, a challenging one.”

In Pope Leo XIV we have an outstanding model of a consecrated religious who has given his life completely to others, especially those most in need; he has done so for many years and very far from home. May his example speak powerfully to young people who are reluctant to move away from home, to those Gen Zers who fear being over-scheduled or stretched too thin, to those who are afraid of the unknown.

Just three days after his election to the papacy, our new Pope preached on Good Shepherd Sunday, the World Day of Prayer for

Vocations. As we look forward with great hope to this new era in the life of the Church, let us reflect on Pope Leo's words that day and share them with the young people we know:

"During the recent work of the Cardinals, before and after the election of the new Pope, we spoke a lot about vocations in the Church and how important it is that all of us search together. First and foremost by giving [a] good example in our lives, with joy, living the joy of the Gospel, not discouraging others, but rather looking for ways to encourage young people to hear the voice of the Lord and to follow it and to serve in the Church. 'I am the Good Shepherd,' he tells us."

"This mission we carry forward is no longer to a single diocese, but to all the Church: this universal spirit is important. And we also find it in the first Reading we heard (Acts 13, 14:43-52).

Paul and Barnabas go to Antioch; the Jews go first, but they do not want to listen to the voice of the Lord, and so they begin to announce the Gospel to all the world, to the pagans. They go, as we know, on this great mission.

Saint Paul comes to Rome, where he also eventually fulfilled it. Another example of the witness of a good shepherd. But in that example, there is also a very special invitation to us all. I also said it in a very personal way, what it is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world."

"Take courage! Without fear! Many times in the Gospel Jesus says: 'Do not be afraid.' We need to be courageous in the witness we give, with the world and above all with life: giving life, serving, sometimes with great sacrifices in order to live out this very mission."

"I saw a little reflection that made me think a lot, because it also comes out in the Gospel. In this sense, someone asked: 'When



This mission we carry forward is no longer to a single diocese, but to all the Church: this universal spirit is important.



you think about your life, how do you explain where you have arrived?’ The answer they gave in this reflection is in a certain sense mine too, with the verb ‘to listen.’ How important it is to listen! Jesus says, ‘My sheep listen to my voice.’ And I think it is important for all of us to learn how to listen more, to enter into dialogue. First and foremost,

with the Lord: always listen to the Word of God. Then also listen to others, to know how to build bridges, to know how to listen without judging, not closing the doors thinking that we have all the truth and no one else can tell us anything. It is very important to listen to the voice of the Lord, to listen to it, in this dialogue, and to see where the Lord is calling us towards.”

“Walking together in the Church, let us ask the Lord to give us this grace of being able to listen to his Word, to serve all his people.” 🌿



We need to be courageous in the witness we give, with the world and above all with life: giving life, serving, sometimes with great sacrifices in order to live out this very mission.

Celebrating ten years of *Laudato Si'*

As he began his pontificate Pope Leo told us how important it is to have a universal spirit. We Little Sisters celebrate the universal dimension of our Congregation by following news of our houses around the world. In this spirit, we are happy to share the following story from our home in Perth, Western Australia, where the Little Sisters and Residents have put the ideals of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* into practice in stunning ways.

Sister Rafaele, who spearheads the home's efforts, shared the *Laudato Si'* Movement's message for the tenth anniversary of the encyclical's publication, which served as their inspiration:

Ten years ago, Pope Francis gave us *Laudato Si'* — a prophetic gift that awakened hearts and inspired a global movement to care for our common home. Since then, we've prayed together, acted boldly, and supported one another with love and hope.

This year, we're not just looking back — we're stepping joyfully into the future.

This is our moment to celebrate everything we've built together — and to share that light with others.

As we mark this tenth anniversary, we invite you to spread the hope that *Laudato Si'* has brought to your life.

In these next ten years, we hope even more people join the movement, for as Pope Francis said, "Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home."

In Perth a plan was made to create a Pope Francis Memorial



Garden on the home's grounds. The Little Sisters invited local young people to get involved and enlisted the help of their gardeners to prepare the terrain. The trunk of a dead gum tree was chosen for placement in the center of the garden, with the intention of mounting a statue of St. Francis on it.

Sister Rafaela shares, "Earth matters a lot to all of us. Our youth group who come on weekends help to beautify the environment around the home, especially near the Residents' rooms. The



Residents love coming out to watch the young people working. Great moments of intergenerational interaction are shared, just as Pope Francis encouraged the young not to forget their elders and grandparents.



The members of our youth group hail from Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, India, Philippines, Paraguay.”

Inspired by Pope Leo’s acknowledgement of *Laudato Si’s* anniversary, our LSP ecologists in Perth are eager to get started on their next project! 🌿



Dedication in the Philippines

In April of 2023 the Congregation made its third foundation in the Philippines, beginning in a house gifted to the Little Sisters in Magalang, Pampanga. On April 8 of this year they broke ground there for a new building that will house forty elderly Residents. The home will be named after Saint Jeanne Jugan.

The groundbreaking included a solemn Mass celebrated by



Most Reverend Florentino Galang Lavarias, archbishop of San Fernando, an outdoor procession, and the burial of a time capsule containing significant items. The archbishop blessed the capsule and then it was symbolically lowered into the ground by the Little Sisters, including Sisters from our other two homes in the Philippines, signifying unity and commitment to the project. *✍️*



Never too old to live the Gospel

The Missionary Disciples at our home in Enfield, CT, never tire of reaching out to the less fortunate. In the top photo they traveled to the University of Connecticut to help students fill backpacks for homeless veterans.



In the photo above Residents prepare to deliver Teddy bears to local immigrant children. The bears are purchased, decorated and donated to the home by an elderly friend.

Opposite page: In his Lenten message this year Pope Francis urged the faithful to examine their consciences: "It would be a



good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father.”

Our Residents, Little Sisters and a young volunteer in Washington, DC took this suggestion to heart by visiting the Welcome Plaza at the Catholic University of America, which features a large sculpture entitled *Angels Unawares*, by Timothy Schmalz. The work depicts a ship full of immigrants and refugees from many walks of life, with angel wings mysteriously rising from the center of the group. 🌿



Living in full color

Our Residents in Pittsburgh, PA enjoyed an outing to Phipps Conservatory this spring (top and opposite page). Although it was a cold day, they were so impressed by the individually decorated display rooms that they didn't notice the cold.



Above, our family at the Jeanne Jugan Center in Kansas City, MO celebrated Cinco de Mayo with lively music, dancing and a delicious taco bar. The kitchen and activities departments went all out to make the Residents happy! 🌿



Triune Lord,
wondrous community
of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.

— Pope Francis

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Let us entrust ourselves
to the intercession
of Mary Most Holy.

By the power of
the Holy Spirit,
she became
“a dwelling-place
consecrated to God.”

With her, may we too come
to know the joy
of welcoming the Lord
into our lives
and of being signs
and instruments
of his love.

— Pope Leo XIV

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