

MEMBERSHIP

Admission

The Secular Augustinian Chapter is open to practising Catholic laymen and women eighteen years and older who are willing to receive a Christian formation according to the Augustinian spirit and accept the responsibility of participating in the life of the Chapter. One cannot belong to another Secular Order.

The Statutes allow for a period of formation that constitutes a minimum of two years with various stages: introduction, initial acquaintance and formation period. Each stage allows for participation in Chapter meetings and activities, and provides time for reflection before moving to the next stage.

After the formation period has been completed, the novice is required to write a formal letter to the Spiritual Director seeking acceptance as a member of the Secular Augustinians. This must be signed and approved by the Director before the promises can be taken.

COMMITMENTS

- To live the Gospel in the spirit of St. Augustine
- To follow the Rule and obey the General of the Order and the Chapter Statutes
- To attend and participate in the monthly liturgy and meeting of the Chapter
- To support the initiatives and projects adopted by the Chapter

Spiritual Activities

- Celebration of the feast of St. Augustine with the Order
- Days of recollection
- Retreats
- Study sessions
- Liturgy of the Hours

The Rule of Life of the Secular Augustinian

- Search for God in a spirit of contemplation
- Fraternal relationships, both among own membership and with others
- Simplicity of life
- Christian stand in the face of secularism, materialism and injustice
- Apostolic commitment that reaches out to all mankind

If you are a practising Catholic lay person who wishes to live a deeper spiritual life in the spirit of St. Augustine under the guidance of the Augustinians and would like further information, please contact:

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Our Lady of Grace Shrine, Marylake

SECULAR AUGUSTINIANS



ONE MIND AND ONE HEART
INTENT UPON GOD

CHAPTER OF OUR LADY OF GRACE

MARYLAKE MONASTERY
King City, Ontario

WHAT IS A SECULAR AUGUSTINIAN

"The Whole Augustinian Family, in accordance with the Apostolic See, is composed of four branches or parts: Brothers under the jurisdiction of the Prior General; Sisters of contemplative life; Religious congregations of apostolic life and secular fraternities -- Societies that bear the name and follow the Magisterium of St. Augustine." (OSA Constitutions no. 44)

Secular Augustinians are one branch of the Augustinian family, made up of lay people (men and women) who are called to live the Christian faith following the inspiration of Augustinian spirituality, and recognized as a lay organization by the Church.

A Secular Augustinian shares the Religious Order's spirit and is governed by the Order and collaborates in its work. Yet its members do not take public vows nor live the community life. Their rule is designed for people '*living in the world*'.

HISTORY OF THE SECULAR AUGUSTINIAN

From the very beginning of the movement initiated by St. Augustine many laymen, attracted and edified by the spiritual beauty of Augustinian monasticism yet prohibited from embracing it because of their vocation in life, approached St. Augustine and his monks for spiritual guidance. They wanted to lead a deeper more regulated life, as monastic as their circumstances permitted. Many of St. Augustine's extant letters are addressed to such petitioners directing them on the path of spiritual progress and perfection. This spirit on the part of individual laymen, seeking affiliation with a monastic institution, was the seed which during the following centuries developed and matured into what today is recognized as the Lay or Secular Augustinians.

SECULAR AUGUSTINIANS

Nature and Purpose:

Through Baptism, all Christians are called to be children of God the Father. From its birth in Jerusalem on Pentecost Sunday, the Church has been the assembly of brothers and sisters, with Jesus Himself as the eldest brother. Secular Augustinians are called to give witness to this spirit of community through their profession in the Order.

Secular Augustinians have an important place in the Augustinian Family. They do not live a vowed life in the community but do share in the charism of community as they participate in the life of the local chapter. Guided by the spirit and inspired by the vision of St. Augustine, they are called upon to labour in the service of the Lord, each in his own way (married or single), working to build the Kingdom of Christ in the world. They are, therefore, an integral part of the Augustinian Order and an extension of it in areas where Religious would have little access: offices, shops, factories, family and social areas of lay life.

The Guide for Augustinian Lay Fraternities and the Statutes are the Secular Augustinian's particular laws. These function to give structural form to Augustine's '*Rule of Life*'.

Spirituality

The '*Rule of St. Augustine*', together with '*Guide for Augustinian Lay Fraternities*', which expands its principal theme, give the fundamental principles of Augustinian spirituality. In the very beginning of the Rule, Augustine insists on obedience to the two main commandments: love of God and love of neighbour.

Secular Augustinians, moved by the love of God and love of their fellowmen, pledge themselves to renew the temporal order and make this a better world in which to live.



MISSION MANDATE

The Secular Augustinians believe that the emblem of the Order definitely symbolizes the basis of Augustinian Spirituality. The open book represents the Word of God. It also represents the intellectual searching which must be part of a living faith. The flaming heart suggests that love must be progressively profound and even passionate. The arrow recalls the divine energy, the stimulating grace, which must be the source of thinking and loving. It represents the very Spirit of God, dynamically piercing the minds and hearts and calling each one to a vivid and continual experience of the growth of faith, hope and love in each one's personalities. The emblem then, portrays the fundamental thrust of charism: the inner experience of grace moving us to learn to love and to live toward God. This is what "interiority" really is.

The Motto of the Order, "One mind and heart unto God", adds a second feature to the charism: "community". Secular Augustinians must work to build up and support each other intellectually and affectively. Each one seeks to become profound communicators of whom and what we are. This calls for self sacrifice as it demands that each one open themselves to one another so that each can appreciate and love each other more profoundly and genuinely. Augustinian Community means making real communication happen each and every day of life together: at worship, prayer, work, meals, recreation and every practical opportunity.

Confessions of St. Augustine, Book X, Chapter 6

"There is no doubt in my mind, Lord, that I love you. I feel it with certainty. You struck my heart with your word and I loved you."