

Philip Yang's journey of the last eight-plus years has been sometimes intense, always challenging, life-changing and ultimately rewarding. That portion of his lifelong spiritual quest came to fruition June 23 as he was ordained an Augustinian priest in Los Angeles.

It was a day of profound joy, hope and gratitude for Fr. Phil Yang, OSA, who was touched by the outpouring of love from so many of his brother Augustinians, family and friends who attended.

"I saw so many old and familiar faces from when I was a child," Fr. Phil recalls. "So many guests and friends came to support me. But it wasn't just about me. It was support for the Augustinian Order and also for the Korean Catholic community of Southern California."

Fr. Phil was originally drawn to the order by Augustinian spirituality, including the emphasis on community, which played a major role in his spiritual formation over the last eight years. "I have had great spiritual directors and wonderful friar brothers who have supported me throughout my journey," he says.

Throughout his eight years as a seminarian, Fr. Phil has been known by his fellow Augustinians to be an upbeat, outgoing young man with a ready smile and a quick sense of humor. He enthusiastically looks forward to serving the People of God, wherever that might take him.

His first assignment is at St. Patrick's, the Augustinian parish in San Diego, where he is working with Fr. Carlos Medina, OSA, a close friend with whom he was in formation as a seminarian. Serving at St. Patrick's gives him the opportunity to sharpen his Spanish language skills, which he has been working on for years as a seminarian. He completed the Summer Intensive Spanish Language Program at the Middlebury Institute of Language Studies in Monterey, CA.

The next year, he participated in an intensive, ten-week Korean language course at Inha University in Incheon, Korea. This prepared him to help meet the growing need for Korean-speaking priests in the U.S.

Born in Los Angeles 37 years ago, Fr. Phil grew up in Orange County, where he spoke English in school and elsewhere, but at home spoke Korean with his Korean-born parents and visiting relatives.

After graduation from Servite High School in Anaheim, he earned a degree in history at UC Irvine. During his high school and college days, he tutored Asian, Caucasian and Latino students from elementary through high school in English and math.



Bishop Daniel Turley, OSA performs laying on of hands in the ordination of Fr. Philip Yang, OSA. Photo courtesy Br. Dominic Smith OSA

## Br. Max ordained a deacon, soon to the priesthood



On the day of Fr. Phil Yang's ordination to the priesthood at Our Mother of Good Counsel church in Los Angeles, Br. Max Villeneuve, OSA (right) was ordained a deacon. Br. Max will be ordained to the priesthood in December of this year.

Photo courtesy Br. Dominic Smith OSA

## Where are they now?

Like all Augustinians, friars of the West Coast Province emphasize community — many members sharing one mind and heart intent upon God. Yet they are diverse in their personalities, interests, ethnicities, locations and in their ministries. They are now serving throughout California, in Oregon, in the Midwest and East Coast:

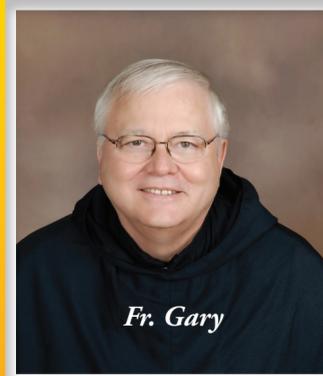
1. St. Augustine High School, San Diego, CA
2. St. Patrick's Church San Diego, CA
3. Border Ministries, San Diego, CA and Tijuana, Mexico
4. Our Mother of Good Council Church, Los Angeles, CA
5. Children's Hospital Chaplaincy, Los Angeles, CA
6. Villanova Preparatory School, Ojai, CA
7. St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Ojai, CA
8. St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, CA
9. St. Rita House, San Francisco, CA
10. Augustinian House, Central Point, OR
11. Augustinian Novitiate, Racine, WI
12. St. Augustine Friary, Chicago, IL
13. Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA



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## Letter From the Editor

Fr. Gary Sanders, O.S.A.  
Spiritu Editor



In the fourth part of his **Sermon 20** St. Augustine of Hippo speaks of the beauty of an old age as a gift of wisdom. The insights of the past enable us to find God in the present and rest in him in the future:

*"But of course, as a wise man you are afraid you may not any longer have two days of a good life. If tomorrow is one of them let today be the other, let that be your two days. If there isn't a tomorrow, then at least today will find you safe; and if there is a tomorrow for you, then it is added to today. There will never be any tomorrow unless there is a today."*

It seems, then, that the celebration of the moment is a recognition of the intimate timelessness of God within the reality of our very being. In this edition of *Spiritu* we Augustinians recognize how blessed we are today --- not just because of the gifts we have received, but particularly for the gifts God has called us to share.

A senior priest who energizes a community while inspiring the younger members, three young friars called to the ordained ministry, and the sharing of our resources throughout the world --- remind the Augustinians in the province of St. Augustine in California that we should, must, and do prepare for tomorrow by wisely giving thanks to God today!

Fr. Gary

## At age 90 An inspirational mentor, true friend to the young



Back row from left: Brothers Mauricio Morales, OSA; Nicholas Porter, OSA; and Adnan Ghani, OSA. Front and center: Fr. Harry Neely, OSA.

Unlike our ageist secular society, there are no "please-go-away-quietly" retirement parties for senior members of Augustinian communities. Augustinian priests and brothers customarily serve, consistent with their capabilities, for life. Many continue to register notable accomplishments well into their advanced years. They are appreciated for their contributions and for who they are.

An example is Fr. Harry Neely, OSA, who at age 90 is the senior member of the St. Augustine Monastery community in San Diego. Fr. Harry personifies the values of intergenerational relationships, specifically the trove of riches that those of advanced age can offer the young. Seminarians living in the monastery highly value their friendships with Fr. Harry.

(continued inside)

## Foundation partners with other ministries To help meet critical needs

Reflecting the core values of the Augustinian Order, The St. Augustine Foundation in San Diego is lending a helping hand to previously incarcerated men in need of job training; to homeless people in their desperate search for permanent housing; to abused and abandoned children who need legal representation.

The Foundation's generosity extends to many other groups locally, nationwide and across the world. Working quietly behind the scenes, The Foundation provides financial grants to agencies and organizations which directly serve specific groups of people in need.

**Rise Up Industries (RUI) of San Diego** is a good example. RUI provides hope, job training and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men, to help them become contributing members of the community. Fulltime employment is offered through an 18-month program that trains the men to become computer numeric controlled (CNC) machine operators, a technical, well-paying skill in high demand. With a grant of \$86,000, The St. Augustine Foundation enabled RUI to purchase a fifth CNC machine, thus increasing training capacity.

(continued inside)

**'The spiritual heart of the Province'**

"Father Harry is an exemplary priest and something like the spiritual heart of the Augustinian Province in California," says Br. Nicholas Porter, OSA, 34, a seminarian who is continuing work on his doctorate in philosophy this fall. He will be ordained a deacon in December.

Br. Nicholas particularly admires the ways in which Fr. Harry unites both old and new elements of the priesthood and religious life in himself. Obviously a priest of the contemporary church, he has spent decades of his life teaching in high schools and ministering in parishes. Yet he also celebrates Mass in Latin and can read his New Testament in Greek.

"Fr. Harry interacts with people with an easygoing familiarity, yet he has a touch of old-world formality. He always wears his habit in a Province where casual attire is quite common. And yet the youngest of the brothers, those least formed in the old ways, often find him the most sympathetic and broadminded of the community's members. He has such varied qualities, which in the eyes of many might seem to conflict. Yet in Fr. Harry they are harmoniously combined."

Br. Nicholas says it is very important for younger religious to be able to talk with a more senior member of their province who is not a superior. Superiors must always be conscious of their responsibilities and their authority in all their interactions with their subordinates. "That Fr. Harry has played this role so often — more often, I think, than anybody else — is plain proof of the regard that the younger members of the Province have for him."

**An honest friend and mentor**

Br. Adnan Ghani, OSA, 33, is a seminarian who is deeply committed to chaplaincy work at a San Diego Hospital as well as home visits to the sick. He also devotes limited time to music and liturgies at St. Augustine's High School. He started to get to know Fr. Harry when he moved into the San Diego Monastery earlier this year. Br. Adnan was initially impressed at how active 90-year-old Fr. Harry stays at his age, but even more impressed with the priest's calm and peaceful presence, his humility and simplicity.

He found Fr. Harry to be always approachable and began having informal conversations with him, morphing into spiritual teaching and learning. "I have learned so much from him about the church's teachings, our order and community life," says Br. Adnan.

But there is far more to the relationship for the young seminarian. "I would definitely call Fr. Harry my mentor. Whenever I share my concerns with him, I always leave with something new. Fr. Harry is affecting me in so many different ways — to live a life of simplicity, prayer and humility, to build my relationship with God, his people and within myself.

"Father Harry is an honest friend who not only encourages you for the good you do, but also helps you to know and work on the growing edges of your life," says Br. Adnan.

**'One of the most important people'**

At just 28 years old, Br. Mauricio Morales, OSA



Br. Nicholas

is the youngest professed brother living in the San Diego Augustinian Monastery. Now in initial formation, he is studying history and philosophy at the University of San Diego, due to graduate next year.

At their first meeting in 2015, Br. Mauricio found Fr. Harry to be a wise, warm, approachable person. He soon came to appreciate Fr. Harry's willingness to serve others. "At the age of 90 years, he still has the burning desire to minister, to help and to be there for those in need. It is quite remarkable to see someone with the limitations he has now because of age, and still have the fire within him to be of service to God's people," says Br. Mauricio.

From the beginning, Br. Mauricio and Fr. Harry have enjoyed both a formal spiritual teaching relationship and an informal friendship. Br. Mauricio relies heavily on the priest's knowledge and experience.

"I can truly say that Fr. Harry has been one of the most important people during my brief time in religious life," says Br. Mauricio. "His demeanor and his wisdom have been inspiring, a guide through the challenging times. The patience and meekness he maintains during the times when things are not going smoothly allow him to rely on God's providence and to pray faithfully in ways that I've yet to learn. Fr. Harry is a blessing that I continue to enjoy every day."

**A sense of humor, too**

Fr. Harry is a walking reminder to his brother friars that true spirituality is never grim. In fact, most remark about Fr. Harry's sense of humor, with good reason, observes Br. Nicholas.

"What is most remarkable about his sense of humor is how he combines charity with keenness. He can simultaneously be kind and cutting, which is no common achievement. But he doesn't talk just for a laugh. There is usually some wise purpose for his wit. Even when he is at his most mischievous — and he can be quite mischievous — his face never loses its natural kindness."



Br. Mauricio

**What Fr. Harry has to say:  
'Now the future is looking much brighter'**

"For me, seeing our house filled with a number of young men is a great encouragement," says Fr. Harry Neely OSA. "I am in the final years of life, and for years, my community had consisted of old men, as well as a number in their middle years. I feared that the Order in the West was dying out. Now the future is looking much brighter.

"One of my favorite community moments in the year is our annual Christmas party. The party is fun, and we all show up. During that week, I have the opportunity to meet with all the men in formation except our novices and discuss the more serious things that we share in religious life. Unfortunately, experiences like this are rare."

Fr. Harry continues to marvel at the exuberance of youth. "A challenge for me living with younger men can be the noise they make at the dinner table," he says. "They are enjoying themselves so much that their enthusiasm is almost deafening. It is a joyful noise, however!

"These young men inspire me when I discover the studies they are pursuing. Some of them who have completed their basic academic work are so generous in the various ministries of service. They make me feel embarrassed by comparison."

**Meeting original goals, fulfilling dreams**

The St. Augustine Foundation, an arm of the West Coast Province of the Augustinians, is just completing its fourth year of operation. But the planning process for developing the Foundation was under way as long as ten years ago. Prime movers in its genesis were Fr. John Keller, OSA, of the San Diego Augustinian community, now President of The Foundation; and David Canedo, now The Foundation's Executive Director.

Canedo, retired from a long career in aerospace and private equity, credits Sister Regina Fox of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for invaluable assistance and advice in bringing the St. Augustine Foundation to reality. "Sister Regina has long experience running a foundation. She helped us tremendously in formulating the rules of the St. Augustine Foundation, how to set things up, what we should be concentrating on, even how to develop our application and our website," says Canedo.

Looking back on the last four years with The St. Augustine Foundation, Canedo feels a sense of satisfaction. "I think the best thing about it is the ability to give back and to make a real difference in some of these ministries," he says. "Whether it's helping meet the immediate needs of the poor and the needy, welcoming newcomers or developing jobs, this Foundation can provide life-changing assistance to a lot of these organizations which might not have had the funds before to do that."

In its first three years of operation, The St. Augustine Foundation has awarded \$1.5 million, with another \$900,000 to be awarded in 2018. That will bring the four-year total to \$2.4 million, with 36 separate organizations receiving the grants.

Foundation funds are limited, of course, and each grant application must have an Augustinian friar as an "endorser." Applications are rigorously evaluated to determine whether the potential investment would be appropriate, the most effective use of the money and consistent with the mission and core values of the Augustinians. The St. Augustine Foundation supports only those projects that have a strong Augustinian presence or involvement over the years.

"The Foundation encourages applicant organizations to reflect on the Foundation's mission and their own to clarify how the grant will serve the missions of both," says Fr. Keller. "The Foundation seeks to be a partner in realizing the Gospel's call to full human life, not simply a source of funding — shared values, shared mission, shared passions." He suggests that potential applicants visit the Foundation's website, [thestaugustinefoundation.com](http://thestaugustinefoundation.com) to read about grants, partner organizations and communities.

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**2017 grants reflect community's diversity**

A partial list of the grants conferred by the Foundation in 2017 shows the diversity of people and needs in the local area: Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from The Foundation, **Hogar Infantil La Gloria**, the Tijuana orphanage established and run by the Augustinian Western Province since 1970, has a new 15-passenger van to transport young residents to school,

medical appointments and recreational activities. Hogar is a refuge and a permanent, fulltime home for more than 30 children placed by the Mexican Government Social Services Agency.

**The Karen Organization of San Diego** serves a population of ethnically diverse refugees from Burma who are typically victims of oppression, poverty-stricken and utterly unfamiliar with American communities, culture and customs. The St. Augustine Foundation awarded a \$50,000 grant to support an innovative approach to "navigating" San Diego urban life and services through the use of highly-trained community advocates to help the refugees solve their own social issues.

Over the years, **St. Luke's Episcopal Church of San Diego** has forged a mutually beneficial relationship with the nearby Augustinian parish, St. Patrick's. Awarding a \$20,000 grant, The St. Augustine Foundation teamed up with St. Luke's to help fund a commercial kitchen upgrade for the development of job skills for some 40 Sudanese refugees annually.

The **Western Service Workers Association** is a free and voluntary self-help association in San Diego County by and for San Diego's working poor. The St. Augustine Foundation awarded a \$22,000 grant to upgrade WSWA's main facility in order to accommodate an increased number of volunteer participants and clients.

**Casa Cornelia** is a public interest law firm providing pro bono legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations. The St. Augustine Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant to the organization's Children's Program to provide services to indigent immigrant children to ensure that each eligible child receives quality legal representation and support. Particular emphasis is on those children who have been abused, abandoned and neglected.

**Father Joe's Villages** is one of Southern California's largest homeless services providers whose mission is to prevent and end homelessness. With a grant of \$42,000, The St. Augustine Foundation continued a previous grant to upgrade Fr. Joe's website for a robust online presence to attract potential donors



Children of Hogar Infantil boarding shiny new van. Photo courtesy of Tricia Garland



Rise Up Industries trainees shown in front of a CNC machine, similar to the one financed by the Foundation. Photo courtesy of Joe Gilbreath

as well as individuals and families in most need of services.

Reaching out to the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Medford, OR**, The St. Augustine Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant to its Housing Program. The funds will provide housing move-in costs (deposits, first and/or last month rents) for those who are homeless or threatened by homelessness.

The St. Augustine Foundation is also making itself known across the nation with a grant to the **Augustinian Defenders of the Rights of the Poor** with a \$10,000 grant to help the organization defray costs associated with serving the poor and needy of South Philadelphia.

**Adding a worldwide focus**

About 65 percent of The St. Augustine Foundation grant monies are awarded to domestic agencies. The remaining 35 percent are international. The Foundation has forged a partnership with the Foundation of the Order out of Rome, **Fondazione Agostiniani nel Mondo**, to help the poorest of the poor.

The Foundation reached across the world with a \$100,000 grant to help fund a new **Augustinian primary and secondary school in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The school serves the poor, and in particular, child laborers.

The **Augustinian Sisters of Mercy** provide health care services in the inland regions of Indonesia. With an \$87,000 grant, The St. Augustine Foundation supported purchase of a state-of-the-art stationary x-ray system to be used at Fatima Hospital in Ketapang.

The **Augustinian Order's ministries in South Korea** include parish work, retreats, chaplaincy, and operating a social welfare facility providing care for youth from dislocated families. A \$25,000 grant from The St. Augustine Foundation helped in completion of a retreat and spirituality center located just a few miles from the North Korean border.

With a grant of \$5,000, The St. Augustine Foundation supported completion of a hall for **St. Monica's**, a small parish serving people of limited means in Kaduna City, Nigeria. The much-needed facility is now serving children of the parish for their educational requirements in the daytime and for various parish activities evenings and weekends.

The St. Augustine Foundation operates with a five-member Board of Directors which makes the final decisions on grant recipients and grant amounts. Members are Fr. Keller, Foundation President; Fr. Kevin Mullins, OSA, Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Augustine in California; Br. Mike Bube, OSA; John O'Beirne, Vice Principal of St. Augustine High School; and Leo Sullivan, an attorney.

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