

**200 Years of Community Life: Friars with a Dream and a Mission**

1817 – 14 September – 2017



***I sought you - I found you - I loved you!***

Maltese Augustinian Province



I found

I loved You

I sought

I found

I loved

I sought

I found

I loved



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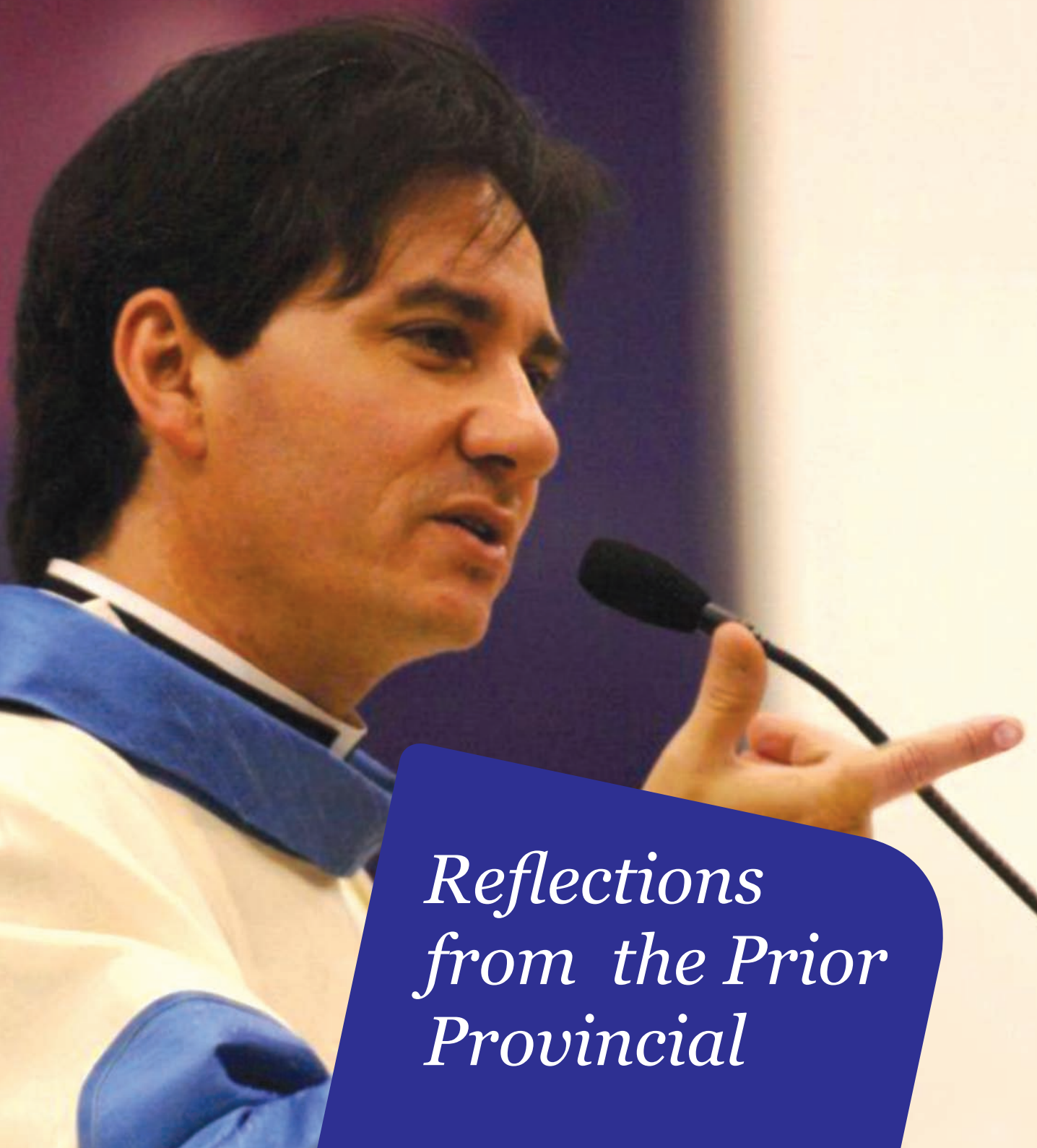
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*Reflections  
from the Prior  
Provincial*

## Friars with a Dream and a Mission

The son of Patrick, a pagan and Monika, a devout Christian, Augustine was born on the 13th November 354 in the Roman African Province of Tagaste, Souk – Ahras (in modern day Algeria). The young Augustine had already been initiated into the Catechumenate, having been administered with the rite of salt. Later on, he himself wrote: *“O Lord, this name of my Saviour Your Son, had my tender heart piously drunk in, deeply treasured even with my mother’s milk.”* (Confessions, III, 4).

Widely known and respected, Augustine of Hippo may unfortunately not be as widely understood. I have reflected on his birth so many times! That day not only was Augustine born... but so was a dream. A dream much bigger than him. For many, he is an intellectual giant... which he is... but in my heart I have always seen him as a man in love... in love with God, with life, with love itself, with friends, with the truth, with freedom. Throughout his life he was restless, he questioned so much and did a lot of soul searching. Through this process one can explore, discover and dream. But then he discovered the One he had always sought...

he found God... He whom he himself confessed... *‘knocked on the window panes of his existence’*. But he still pursued his journey, because, in his own words,

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it is right that one *“seeks to discover... but when one discovers...he must deeper search”* (De Trinitate). He loved God with the love of a poet... with passion. But he then realised that what he had discovered he couldn’t keep to himself. He had to share his new transformation... he wanted to share his life with other brothers (Cor unum). This was also a dream... one of many he had... he wished that friends and brothers could live together, seeking God (Rule 1.2), by loving him together and joyfully sharing him with others. Augustine died on 28th August 430, on what is considered the third month of the Vandals’ siege.



Time passes... years fly by! People from all walks of life formed part of Augustine's journey and were touched by his dream. Those who lived with Augustine knew what he believed in and what he loved; they read what he wrote... amongst which were his 'Confessions'. The reasons why Augustine expressed himself in writing were many... literary, philosophical, historical. Through his literary works, he wanted to share his lifelong journey. In fact, he states that... *"the first ten books were about him and the other three on the Holy Scripture."* (*Retractationes II*, 6). The 'Confessions' came 14 years after his conversion when he was about 46 years old... when he had already served as a priest for nine years and a Bishop for five. It is astonishing

how, even though he had not undergone the eight-year formation process we have today, he had become so well-versed on the Holy Scriptures and a master on Christian philosophy and theology. He was a tireless writer. From the time that Augustine was still alive, many people from all walks of life have followed in his footsteps, embarking on the same spiritual principles of Augustine, making his holy aspirations, their very own, at first alone, and then in groups... germinating into what we can call the 'foundation' of the Augustinian Order; the first in 1244 (*Parva Unio*), which subsequently expanded in 1256 (*Magna Unio*). These communities were known as the Hermit Brothers of St Augustine. It is something incredibly

profound that throughout all these centuries the *Rule* (written by St Augustine in 397) remains the distinctive link and the main inspiration between the heart and mind of Augustine, and the life lived by all those who wished to continue in his footsteps.

We find ourselves towards the end of the fourteenth century and St Augustine's flame reached our island. The Augustinian friars reached our shores some 600 years ago... and from there Augustine's dream moved on. So many were the friars who have lived this dream over the centuries that by means of their love, their work, their generosity and their testimony, they ensured that this flame would continue to ignite and illuminate the lives of so many others. They erected convents and churches, but mostly they formed communities, groups of people, united by the Word of God... that was the very inspiration of Augustine. Our communities provided the necessary ingredient of vision which transformed a religious movement into a religious ideal, not only throughout the Maltese island but eventually also beyond our shores, the flame moved on. Finally, on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1817, the Maltese Augustinian Friars saw another milestone in their age old history, with the sanctioning from Rome of the first Maltese autonomous Province.



This year we wished to commemorate this historic event... but more than the 'autonomy' of our Province, we wish to 'revive' Augustine's dream - his life, his experiences, what he believed in, lived and taught, his personal journey - we wish all this to remain alive. We look back... to what God has done within us and through us, this is not *nostalgia*... but a thanksgiving for the blessing with which we have been bestowed. I acknowledge that in our past as a Province, there were friars amongst our communities who offered their lives in service both in this country and away from our shores. It is good to remember their enthusiasm, their generosity, as well as their silent sacrifices and holy testimony. I also acknowledge how hard our brothers worked, how they remained strong to their faith in the face of trouble, how they trusted in God's eternal providence. A most





characteristic feature in our history clearly shows how our past friars were unwavering and indefatigably devoted to their mission but also looked beyond the cloister to the active winning of souls. We believe that today they are enjoying the One which *“requires inner peace”* to experience. *(Commentary of the Gospel of St John 17,11)*

But I look at us today and ponder about where we wish to see ourselves in the years to come. I look upon all my brothers, and to so many people who live with us and share the same ideals. I still see so much love, so much passion and unlimited drive. We are still builders of communities... perhaps without bravado, which is how it should be... but the very first seed is there... I recognise it and I know that the Good Lord of the harvest, will cultivate it when and how he knows

best. I see in our communities a strong desire for there to be true and authentic adoration towards our Lord and to one another. I see in our Province today a strong and dynamic commitment of generous service to so many people, in many places and situations.

In my heart this is how I love Augustine... for this dream that he has bestowed upon us, I admire him because he always remained humble and true to himself. He continued to touch people till the end. His own conversion was long, a path with lots of twists and turns, highs and lows, stops and backtracking... you could call them ‘innumerable’ conversions. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who was very fond of Augustine, recounts that Augustine had “three conversions”: (i) The first fundamental conversion was the inner march towards Christianity, towards the “yes” of the faith and of Baptism; (ii) Augustine described his second conversion at the end of the 10th book of his Confessions with the words: *“Terrified by my sins and the pile of my misery, I had racked my heart and had meditated, taking flight to live in solitude. But you forbade me and comforted me, saying: “That is why Christ died for all, so that those who live should not live for themselves, but for him who died for them” (2 Corinthians 5:15)”; Confessions, 10, 43, 70); (iii) Further,*

there was a third, decisive phase in the journey of conversion of St Augustine. After his Ordination to the priesthood he had requested a vacation period to study the Sacred Scriptures in greater detail. His first series of homilies, after this pause for reflection, were on the Sermon on the Mount; he explained the way to an upright life, “the perfect life”, pointed out by Christ in a new way. He presented it as a pilgrimage to the holy mountain of the Word of God. In these homilies it is possible to further perceive all the enthusiasm of faith newly discovered and lived; his firm conviction that the baptized, in living totally in accordance with Christ’s message, can precisely be “perfect” in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount. Approximately 20 years later, Augustine wrote a book called the *Retractations*, in which he critically reviewed all the works he had thus far written, adding corrections wherever he had in the meantime learned something new. With regard to the ideal of perfection in his homilies on the Sermon on the Mount, he noted: “In the meantime, I have understood that one alone is truly perfect and that the words of the Sermon on the Mount are totally fulfilled in one alone: Jesus Christ himself. *“The whole Church, on the other hand — all of us, including the Apostles — must pray every day: forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”* (cf. *Retract.* I 19, 1-3).



Augustine had learned a further degree of humility — not only the humility of integrating his great thought into the humble faith of the Church, not only the humility of translating his great knowledge into the simplicity of announcement, but also the humility of recognizing that he himself and the entire pilgrim Church needed and continually need the merciful goodness of a God who forgives every day. We are all people of mercy.

I have thought about Augustine’s conversions many a time, and I feel that perhaps this constitutes the greatest legacy that we have inherited from our founding father, and that if we wish to remain faithful to his first dream... it is *this* aspect that we needed to safeguard. For us today and for our future, I believe that our biggest natural vocation is to remain close

**“We are still builders of communities... perhaps without bravado, which is how it should be... but the seed is there... I recognise it and I know that the Good Lord of the harvest, will cultivate it when and how he knows best”**

to everyone who asks, who yearns to discover. We should not rush to seek answers. Questions work within us at their own pace and in time they will bear fruit. It is this sacred journey that Augustine experienced, with his friars, and with so many people for whom he served as a gentle shepherd. After all, throughout his life, Augustine was part of a world of learning which did not have barriers, a world where discourse was open and surprisingly free.

There were moments when in my heart I asked myself whether it made any sense to recall events of so long ago. But then, for each time that I dreamt of Augustine, in my heart, I realised that it would constitute a great mistake to let go of our historic legacy here in Malta. What we are remembering this year is not simply a

historic detail or the many projects that have dotted our history over the years – although in themselves these, of course, deserve our note. What we are rekindling is a dream that is still very much alive and full of energy and drive in our Maltese communities.

For me this dream is called Augustine... he is not only a Spiritual Father... but I also look upon him as my eldest brother, the most renowned of our brethren, the inspired man, the poet, the prophet, he who rekindled the conscience of so many, a man of faith, a man of God, a friend to all.

To all my brothers and sisters, those who share with us this spirit, I hope we can continue to resemble him and to continue to be ‘pregnant’ with God, ‘pregnant’ with light and with joy. May all our friends during this year discover the gift of listening and tenderness, to feel touched by silence and embrace the restlessness of love (Augustine). I also finally pray that through our history we not only continue to discover our religious identity but also “to remain, with resolute hearts, faithful to the Lord [ Ac 11:23-24] and to continue on this journey of grace.”

**Fr Ray Francalanza OSA**  
**Prior Provincial**

followed  
loved you  
I sought





*Historical  
Highlights of  
the Augustinian  
Order in Malta*

## The Augustinians in Malta and beyond...

The arrival of the Augustinian religious order in our islands dates far back in time. While nobody can say with certainty exactly when the Augustinians first landed in Malta, according to reliable historical sources, the first roots of the Order's presence on our shores take us back to somewhere around the second half of the fourteenth century. The Order of the Hermit Brothers of St Augustine or, as it is known today, the Order of St Augustine (the Augustinians), was founded, according to the work and wishes of Pope Innocent IV, in 1244. Since its inception, there were many communities in South Italy and Sicily. It was from there that the first Augustinians arrived in our country.

In accordance with instructions from the Church, the first Augustinian community was established close to Malta's old capital, Mdina. It is a definite fact that the Augustinians lost their monastery and all they possessed during the Turkish Siege of 1429. They eventually built another convent, a stone's throw from the Mdina bastions. Sadly, however, this new monastery only enjoyed a short existence since it had to be demolished by the Maltese in July 1551,



in view of the threat of an imminent siege by the Turks. Being too close to the city walls meant that the invading forces could use this new monastery building for military purposes. The Augustinians once again lost everything and they found themselves roaming around and begging to maintain themselves. Tradition has it that the wooden cross on a stone column in the garden in front of Mdina indicates the place where this convent was once located.



The Maltese friars had to wait until 28 August 1555 to acquire the small chapel of St Mark from the Cathedral Chapter, as well as a number of adjacent broken-down houses in Saqqajja, just outside Mdina. This date is important in the history of the Augustinians in Malta: it is considered a starting point – a new beginning without interruption – a date which saw the formation of a long-standing, uninterrupted presence of the Order in Malta and

Gozo. The Augustinians entrusted the building of this new monastery and church to the renowned Maltese architect, Girolamo Cassar. The church, a prototype of the Conventual Church (co-Cathedral) of Saint John, together with the works-of-art found therein can still be enjoyed today. The actual convent – an architectural gem considered one of the best examples of Baroque in Maltese religious architecture – takes us back to the mid-18th century.

It was Andrea Belli, a renowned architect of the period, who was the brains behind this beautiful construction.

Over time, the convent outside Mdina became the heart of the Augustinian presence in Malta – a place of instruction (today known as the formation house) and the philosophical and theological school for many Religious Orders. It was awarded the title of *conventus maior* and, for a long time (1515-1614), the members of the community enjoyed the rare privilege of choosing their Prior. In 1602, the Prior General Hippolytus of Ravenna called it *domus celeberrima*, since its fame had spread throughout the Order. From this convent there emerged numerous people who left behind them experiences of holiness, the first among them, Francis of Malta.

Many friars who served outside Malta, especially in the homes the Order had in Italy, had begun their studies in this very convent; these included Mons. Gaetano Pace Forno, Archbishop of Malta (1858-1874), Mons. Paul Micallef, Prior General of the Order (1859-1863), Archbishop of Pisa and Primate of Sardinia (1871-1881) and Mons. Giovanni M. Camilleri, Bishop of Gozo (1889-1924). These notable members of the



Order were just a few among the many Maltese Augustinians who distinguished themselves and who were known for their wisdom and their spirituality.

Cardinal Prospero Grech lived and worked in the Rabat convent during the time he spent in Malta, before he continued his work in Rome. To this day, this community continues to serve as a formation house, where young people undergo discernment for God's call and where they receive the necessary training to join the Augustinian Order.

The Rabat Community was the heart from which other communities in our country emerged. Over the





centuries, the Augustinians expanded their presence in several locations: In the fifteenth century we had the St Augustine Convent in Victoria (Gozo) and in the sixteenth century the St Augustine Convent in the then newly-formed capital of Valletta, during the reign of the Order of St John. In the 20th century, we see the opening of the Convent of Santa Rita in St Julian's, the Convent of Our Lady of Good Council in Paceville and the Convent of St Nicholas of Tolentino in Tarxien, while in 1968, Archbishop M. Gonzi founded the Parish of St Augustine in Valletta.

With the start of the new millennium, the Augustinians began a new pastoral project in Paceville: the

Millennium Chapel and WOW (Wishing Others Well) – a project with spiritual and social dimensions. Furthermore, the Augustinians nowadays also take care of the Christian communities in Buskett (found in the outskirts of Rabat) and since January 2015, those in Bahrija. The Province is also involved in the education sector, among other social and pastoral sectors.

The Augustinians propagated their devotion to St Rita, Saint of Impossible Causes, a saint who is venerated in a number of shrines and convents, while the Province also founded a number of lay groups, inspired by the Augustinian ideal (*the Confraternity of our Lady of the Girdle, the Christian Mothers Group, Agostinian Lay Persons, youth groups*, amongst others).

The missionary spirit is an essential element of Augustinian life, and Maltese Augustinians and our religious members have worked in missionary lands all over the world. One of these religious people – a son of the Convent of St Mark – was Fra Emanuele Farrugia (circa 1770) who, after completing his studies in Rabat, was appointed Apostolic Prefect of the Portuguese India region and subsequently, Vicar General of Maliapur in India.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Augustinian Friars in Ireland approached the Maltese Augustinians to help them in their mission in Australia. A good number of friars served in America while other Maltese friars worked in Algeria and Tunisia in North Africa. After much struggle, in 1930, Prior General Ven. Klement Fuhl acquired authorisation from the Holy See to allow the Order to enter the City of Hippo in Algeria, where St Augustine had served the Church as a bishop. Fuhl left entrusted the Maltese Augustinian Province to take over this mission, where it continued to serve until 2010.

In 1948, the Augustinians also settled in Tunisia, where they remained until 1981. From 1978 until 2006, the Maltese friars also worked in the convent and church of St Augustine in Catania.

It was in December 1962 that the Maltese Augustinians set their sights on the vast land of Brazil, where to this day, evangelisation and social work continue through the missionary groups of young people who travel to this Latin American nation. In recent years, various Augustinian groups in this country came together and set up a single Brazilian province. As



part of its mission to share Augustinian zeal around the world, the Maltese province has recently started to carry out annual projects in Kenya in coordination with the Secretariat for the Augustinian Missions. Furthermore, several fellow Maltese Augustinians today work on mainland Italy as well as in Cuba.

The Augustinians in Malta have contributed considerably to the education of the Maltese people. From the start, the Rabat Convent was synonymous with education on the island. In 1848 the Augustinian Province set up what is today the College of St Augustine of Pietà and Marsa.

To further instill and promote the culture, study and research on St Augustine, our Province gave its contribution through the Augustinian Institute for Studies and Research, formally established in 1986, with the aim of spreading the teachings of St Augustine and the Augustinian cultural heritage. The institute works to help the Maltese people to savour and share the wisdom of the theological and spiritual teaching of St Augustine, a project that will see, amongst other work, the translation into the Maltese language of the writings of this greatest of the stalwarts of the Church to-date.

After several attempts during the 18th century by the Maltese Augustinians to cut their ties with Sicily, upon which they still relied, it was on 14 September 1817 that orders were received from Rome to officially establish the Augustinian Province in Malta, placed under the auspices of the Evangelist St Mark. This meant, among other things, that the Maltese convents acquired their autonomy and could elect their own immediate superiors, as well as be present at the General Chapter of the Order. The Maltese Augustinian Province was for the first time also conferred the right to celebrate what is called the Provincial Chapter, during which all the friars meet together to discern and plan their mission and service in the life of the Church, the Order and our local Church.

Today, 200 years following this autonomy from our Sicilian neighbours, this journey continues... with the same passion and the same spirit of service, while with great faith in the abundance of God, we hope to continue to discover new vision and prophecy which for us are not abstractions but individual gifts we live together in our communities.

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loved you  
I sought





*The Official  
Bi-Centenary  
Programme*

# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## September 2016

**7/9: Press Conference:** Convent of St Mark – Rabat. The Prior Provincial meets with representatives of the Media in Malta to announce and launch the programme of this year's Bi-Centenary celebrations.

**14/9: Official Opening of the year's Bi-Centenary, during Solemn Mass led by Prior Provincial Fr Ray Francalanza OSA together with all members of the Province.** All religious friars and priests in Mdina and Rabat, as well as the Augustinian Sisters and all lay people who live in the vicinity and who share our devotion and spirituality are invited. Following Mass, there will be the inauguration of a memorial plaque set on the Rabat convent facade. The *New Choral Singers Choir*, under the direction of Shirley Helleur, will animate the Mass.

**30/9: Musico-Literary Academy: St Augustine Convent – Gozo.** An event animated by the Stella Maris Choir and Orchestra and led by Mro Carmel Peter Grech. **This academy will mark 350 years since the founding of the Church (1666-2016).**

On the local front, during this month we also see the following celebrations and events: (a) the Secondary Feast of the Madonna of the Girdle in Valletta (4/9), (b) the Feast of St Nicholas of Tolentino in Tarxien (24/9) and (c) the opening of the academic year of the St Augustine College in Pietà and Marsa ( 19-22-23/9) .







# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## October 2016

**5/10:** Pilgrimage on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy and to give thanks to Our Mother Mary - Protector of the Augustinian Order. *Location: Sanctuary of Our Lady of Mellieħa.*

**10/10:** Opening of the new venue where the Province will welcome refugees and other people in need. The Province will not only be offering a 'place where to stay' to these people in need but it will be supporting them with material needs as may be required.

**14/10:** Inauguration of the restoration of the painting of St Augustine by Mattia Preti at the Convent of St Mark – Rabat. This is a magnificent painting by Mattia Preti. (1694 – Oil on Canvas 269.5cm x 191cm). There are historical references to this painting both in 'Caravaggio to Mattia Preti, Baroque Painting in Malta' by Profs Keith Sciberras, as well as the more recent book, 'Vetustior Glorior' by Fr Mark Cauchi OSA and Dr Simon Mercieca.

**31/10:** Mass and a visit to the graves of the Province at the Addolorata Cemetery to commemorate all the deceased brothers of the Province.

On the local front, this month will also see the following events: (a) the inauguration of the scholastic year at the Augustinian Institute and the Centre for Augustinian Studies and Research in Pietà (7/10), (b) the 20th Ordination anniversary of Father Alex Cauchi OSA (16/10 - Valletta), (c) the Award Ceremony at St Augustine College (26-28/10), the inauguration of the programme 'Step by Step' - an educational initiative which the community of Tarxien has been offering for the last two years (28/10) and (d) the Feast of Our Lady of the Girdle in Rabat (29/10)

# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## November 2016

**3/11:** Vocations Day is celebrated, during which the renewal of vows will be performed. This event will be celebrated together with the Augustinian Sisters. *Venue: Monastery of the Cloisters of St Catherine – Valletta.*

**7-12/11:** Augustinian Vocational Week organised by the Vocational and Youth Commission.

**Advent retreats will be held in our communities, as well as the first annual Provincial retreat.**

On the local front, this month will also see the following events: (a) The Inauguration of the Monument of St Augustine in the primary section of St Augustine College in Marsa (11/11), together with an Augustinian week in both schools and (b) The feast of St Martin is celebrated in the pastoral area of Bahrija, which our Province began taking care of as from January 2015 (12/11) and (c) The Lay Commission of the Province will organise an event with the theme: *“The contribution of the Augustinians to the Church and Maltese society over the years.”* (23/11).





# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## December 2016

**7/12:** Inauguration of a plaque near the cross in the garden in front of Mdina where, tradition has it, was the place where the early Augustinians in Malta had their monastery destroyed in 1551. The inauguration ceremony will be followed by a concert organised by the *Augustinian Cloister Foundation* inside the Convent of St Mark - Rabat ( Malta)

**Inauguration of the Biblical Garden.** Location: *Millennium Chapel – Paceville.*

**Advent and Christmas celebrations in all our Convents and Churches,** followed by a meal for all the brothers of the Province.

## January 2017

**19/1:** A moment of prayer for Christian unity in coordination with the Archdiocese and other Christian churches. *Location: St. Augustine Parish – Valletta.*

**24/1:** **Augustinian Dialogues on the Roads of Life** – Guest speaker: His Eminence Cardinal GianFranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture. *Location: Santa Monica Hall, Theresa Spinelli Street, Gzira.*

# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## February 2017

**22/2:** Seminar on St Augustine’s Rule. Speaker: Fr Salvinu Caruana OSA. All religious Orders who share our *Rule*, as well as those who share our spirituality, are invited to attend.

On the local front, this month will also see the following events: The Lay Commission of the Province will organise training with the theme: “*The contribution of the Augustinian Province outside of Malta.*” (16/2)

## March 2017

**Presentation of a children’s book on the life of St Augustine to our Augustinian schools.** Written by Andrew Borg and illustrated by Nicole Diacono.

**Lenten retreats** in all communities.

On the local front, this month will also see the graduation ceremony at the Augustinian Institute and the Centre for Augustinian Studies and Research (31/3).







# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## April 2017

**24/4:** Concert on the occasion of St Augustine's Conversion: Mro Domenico Anastasi's '*Oratorio a Sant' Agostino*'.

This concert will be led by the *Chorus Urbanus* under the direction of Maestro John Galea. This classical music event will be held under the auspices of His Eminence Cardinal Prospero Grech OSA.  
*Location: St Augustine Parish – Valletta.*

### Open weekend – St Mark, Rabat.

On the local front, this month will also see the celebration of the Feast of Mary, Mother of Good Counsel in Paceville (20/4).

## May 2017

**14-23/5:** Canonical visit by the Prior General of the Order, Father Alejandro Moral OSA. This will be his first official visit to the Province during which he will visit all our communities.

**Award of the Affiliation Order** to several people in our country.

**21/5:** Titular Feast of the Parish of St Augustine in Valletta and the arrival of the new titular image in the aforementioned parish.

On the local front, this month will also see the celebration of the Feast of St Rita in all our communities. For this bi-centenary year, her relic will be transported to Malta from Cascia. The Feast of St Rita in Valletta will be celebrated on Monday 22th May, while that of the Buskett Chapel will be held on Sunday 28th May.

**28/5:** Augustinian Family Feast organised by the Lay Commission of the Province entitled "*The contribution of Augustinians in society and the future of the Church in Malta.*"

# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## June 2017

**24-25/6:** Open weekend in our Convent in Valletta.

The presentation of the sum collected by the Province to the Hon. Minister for Health Dr Chris Fearné to purchase new medical equipment at Mater Dei Hospital. This is another gesture of solidarity that we wished to make to our people.

The second annual retreat will take place.

## July 2017

**14/7:** Missionary work in Kenya by the Group of the Secretariat of the Province of Missions begins. The Cross Award will be presented to these young people on 25/6 .

**21/7:** Thanksgiving social activity in our College grounds with all our relatives, friends and benefactors.

On the local front, this month will also see: (a) the 25th Ordination anniversary of Father Joseph Zammit OSA (7/7 – Tarxien) and (b) the 50th Ordination anniversary of Fr Lucian Borg OSA (9/7 - Paceville) .





# The Official Bi-Centenary Programme

2016 – 14 September – 2017

## August 2017

**28/8:** We celebrate the Feast of St Augustine in Gozo with Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral of the diocese led by His Excellency, Mgr Mario Grech, **Bishop of Gozo**. Mass will be animated by the *Stella Maris Choir* and Orchestra conducted by Mro Carmel Peter Grech.

## September 2017

**14/9:** Official closing of the bi-centenary year, with Pontifical Mass led by His Excellency **Archbishop Charles J Scicluna** at **St John Co-Cathedral**. Taking part in this celebration of the Eucharist will be: the Prior Provincial, the Maltese Bishops, the Provincial and the Superiors of all the Religious Orders in Malta together with parish priests from parishes where we serve, other religious priests, 'old boys' and friends of our Province. A number of dignitaries will also be invited to this closing Mass, along with all those who share in our spirituality and ideals. The choir and orchestra will be in the hands of the New Choral Singers.

## Other Initiatives during the year

**Testimony of Evangelical life:** It is hoped that during this bi-centenary year, the formal process of the Beatification and Canonisation of Bro Grazzja Gauci OSA will be initiated. This will take place at the Diocese of Gozo.

**Publications:** In addition to the publication '*Vetustior Glorior*' by Fr Mark Cauchi OSA and Dr Simon Mercieca, which was published recently, there are plans for four new publications to be issued during this bi-centenary year. These are: (a) '*Spirituality, Devotions and Traditions of the Augustinian Friars in Gozo – Commemorating The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Maltese Province: 1817-2017 & The 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the present Priory in Gozo: 1717-2017*'. This is a study by Fr Peter Paul Cachia OSA; (b) '*Searching and Confessing. Aspects of Augustine of Hippo's Spirituality*'; (c) '*Monika. Qaddisa, armla, omm u filosofa*'; (d) '*Wistin ta' Ippona. Daħla għall-ħsieb u l-kitba tal-Qaddis Isqof ta' Ippona*'. The last three are all the work of Fr Salvino Caruana OSA.

**Social commitment:** During this bi-centenary year, the Province is undertaking two projects with a social aspect; the first is the inauguration of an area in the Convent in Rabat (Malta) which will be offered to refugees or other people in need. The province is also committing itself to helping these people with all that they will need. The second initiative, which runs along the same lines, is a sum of money - collected from all our communities where our Order is based – which will be presented to Mater Dei Hospital to help purchase medical equipment needed to better the Maltese people's healthcare services.

**Moment of Renewal:** During this period of historical commemoration, the Province is offering to all religious brethren the possibility to make a spiritual pilgrimage in order to serve as a moment of personal renewal.

**Training:** An instructional programme to be broadcast on RTK, *Radju Marija* and *Lehen is-Sewwa*, as well as on newspapers, is being prepared; this will serve to disseminate teaching material and information about the Augustinians to the general public.



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*The Augustinian  
presence in  
Malta, Gozo  
and Overseas*



## St Augustine Convent – Rabat ( Malta)

This monastery is the Provincial House, as it serves as the official residence of our Prior Provincial. Apart from housing the main library of the province, the Rabat convent is also the place where the provincial offices are coordinated. In this community, which serves as a formation house, young future Augustinians gain insight as they embark upon their journey of spiritual discovery in the footsteps of St. Augustine. In recent years, and in collaboration with the *Augustinian Cloister Foundation*, a project has been set up so that the vast cultural heritage found in the convent may be better enjoyed and appreciated. The community also carries out pastoral work at the Conventual Church Convent dedicated to St. Mark, and also serves Christian communities in Buskett and, since January 2015, the pastoral zone in Baħrija.





## St Augustine Convent – Valletta

Today, and for almost 50 years now, this historic old centrally-located convent in Valletta has been performing pastoral activity in the Parish of St Augustine. This church is also known as the Sanctuary of Saint Rita and here, an abundance of pastoral work is carried out, both by the people of the parish, as well as by the many others who visit the Church throughout the year. In recent years, a project was initiated, with the aid of the *Socio-Cultural Environmental Augustinian Foundation (FSKAA)*, to explore new ways in which to share the great cultural wealth inherent in this convent. Also found here are the archives of the Province, including the musical annals.





## St Augustine Convent – Rabat(Gozo)

This unique Augustinian monastery located in the Diocese of our sister island of Gozo is another gem of the Maltese Province, which for a long time has served as a Novitiate House of the Order. Over the years, major works have been carried out to transform it into a place of retreat, where one can spend days of reflection, discernment and support. The convent itself tells a very old story – a story which today has been transformed into a place which is enjoyed by visiting locals and foreigners alike.







## Convent of St Nicholas of Tolentino, Tarxien

This community takes care of a very beautiful pastoral area in Tarxien and its surroundings. Apart from the church and the convent, the oratory has also provided services to children, youths, families, the elderly and other groups for many years now. It is worth mentioning that in the eighties, half the structure of the entire convent (*where St Augustine College was located before it was transferred to Pietà*) was donated *gratis* to the Ursuline Sisters Congregation of St Angela of Merici to be used as another building from which they can provide services to children.





## Convent of St Thomas of Villanova – St Augustine College – Pietà

This community is responsible for pastoral education in the Province. Together with a large educational team, they manage St Augustine College, which today incorporates two campuses: the Primary in Marsa and the Secondary in Pietà. This community also co-ordinates the work of the Lay Provincial Commission as well as offering pastoral services during weekends at the Chapel of St Rita in St Julian's. In the Pietà area (*the building known as St Joseph's Home*) we also find the Augustinian Institute and the Centre for Augustinian Studies and Research.





## Convent of Mary Mother of Good Counsel – Paceville



The community in this tourist and nightlife spot takes care of the pastoral work of this church dedicated to Our Lady of Good Counsel, as well as evangelisation work and social work through the Millennium Chapel and WOW (Wishing Others Well) projects. The community in Paceville also serves the Chapel of St Rita in St Julian's (after the Provincial Chapter of 2014 had decreed that friars in this locality should live in one location) while coordinating the work of the Secretariat of the Provincial Mission, which has been in charge of taking up groups of young people to Brazil and Kenya for these last twenty-two years.

In addition to its presence in Malta and Gozo, the Province has several religious brethren serving overseas - in the **Holy See in the Vatican City** (*His Eminence Cardinal Prospero Grech OSA*), the Curia General in **Rome**, the College of Santa Monica (also in **Rome**), and in Cascia (Italy). There are also friars in **Brazil** and **Cuba**.

# Glory to God alone.

The Augustinian friars,  
in Malta for more than six centuries,  
who from the Convent of Rabat,  
considered as the cradle of the Augustinians,  
were disseminated in these islands and beyond,  
as they commemorate two hundred years since  
the establishment of the Augustinian Province of St Mark in Malta,  
give honour and glory  
to God for the graces on whom he dispersed,  
the greatest among them,  
to be of service to the Maltese people,  
while with thanksgiving, praise  
the Augustinian friars who from this convent  
prepared to walk in the footsteps  
of St Augustine, our Father, to serve the Church.

1817 – 14 September – 2017





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Ahwa Agostinjani Maltin