

[Introduction - Paul Tufano] We have a very dynamic program today to conclude the Summit and we can start this morning by talking about the influence of Saint Augustine, which you can see in every aspect of Villanova. It's in the commitment to service that was demonstrated on Saint Thomas of Villanova Day when 3,500 students faculty and staff volunteered at 115 service sites throughout the Delaware Valley and Chapters of the Alumni Association who organized service projects in their own communities across the nation. It was observed in the sense of community that is felt by all when they set foot on Villanova's campus and perhaps most importantly as it relates to the summit - the University's commitment to develop ethical and effective leaders is probably its greatest demonstration of its commitment and the influence of Saint Augustine. Today we have a much greater understanding and appreciation of the teachings of Saint Augustine and the importance of Veritas, Unitas and Caritas.

So I'm happy this morning to introduce to you our first speaker, Father Gary McCloskey to offer an Augustinian perspective on leadership. Father McCloskey is a member of the University Board of Trustees and he is the Executive Director of the Way of Life Center. Please join me in welcoming Father Gary McCloskey, Class of 1973.

[Father McCloskey] Good Morning!

I think I'd like us to start our thoughts about Augustine as a leader with how we think about Augustine - how we imagine him.

If we went by the Monastery and looked at the statue where Augustine is there as a bishop holding a heart or if we went into the front of the Saint Augustine Center and see Augustine at a desk alone studying, I think we have unfortunate pictures. They are wonderful and they are things that were about Augustine. But, we lose the flavor of his life of how he was always "with" others. He spent very little time alone. He was surprised when he saw Ambrose reading alone. He had never seen that before. For him, reading was a group activity because there were few books and people were gathered together to hear a reading and talk about it. When he was converted Alypius was with him in the garden and they ran inside to Monica. When he had his spiritual ecstasy, his spiritual union with God, it was along with Monica. As a bishop, he spent about five hours a day as a judge. So he had very little time to himself.

It might be better for us to go in front of the Saint Augustine Center and look at Augustine with the students. But, even there we lose part of his dynamic because he may be better seen if he is understood with the other students as another student because that would give us his notion of friendship. As he tells us about his student days friendships, "My soul found all manner joy when I was in their company, to talk and to laugh and to be kind with each other, to read engaging books together, to go from the lightest joking, to talk about the deepest things and back again, to differ without discourse as I might differ with myself, and when on the rarest occasions disagreement arose you find it highlights the very sweetness of our normal agreement, to teach and to learn from each other, to be impatient with those who are absent and welcome them with joy when they return. These and similar things emanated from our hearts as we gave and received affection. Shown in our faces, in our voices, in our eyes and in a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused our very souls together and made the many of us one." (Confessions, IV, 8, 13)

Made the many of us one – “E Pluribus Unum.” But, in “unum” or “unitas” in the university's motto, I think the Latin doesn't help us. It keeps it distant. Even when translated into English as “Truth, Unity, Love” it still remains in the theoretic. It doesn't have a practical ring. In the practice of friendship, “unitas” was for Augustine, “community.” Community is the core of the core values. We can see this in Augustine. When he speaks about his own leadership he tells us, “My place as your head frightens me but what I share with you comforts me. I am a bishop set over you, but together with you I am a Christian. The first is the title of the office. The second is a grace. The first is a danger. The second is salvation. The office seems like a storm tossing us about in a raging sea. But, when we remember who redeemed us by his blood, it seems we enter the safety of a harbor. In the stillness of that thought even though this office is personally hard work, the common benefit gets me rest.” (Sermon 340, 1)

In his description of this leadership, Augustine juxtaposes “with” and “for.” I think that the emphasis on “with” is a distinctive Augustinian characteristic of leadership. We are not Jesuits – “men for others” but in an Augustinian sense – we are leaders “with” others.

That might take the Villanova core values of Veritas, Unitas, Caritas and cast them in a leadership way into Unitas, Veritas, Caritas. For Augustine this is not just leadership, it's a way to get to heaven. For Augustine that “with others” - that community dimension – is service - a servant type of leadership. Not a passive servant following orders but an active leadership actively serving the community by animating followership. I had this in my thoughts even before Professor Hill.

Because Augustine built a followership, we have five million words from a bishop of a backwards North African town from the fourth and fifth century. When the Augustinians were founded in 1244, we became heirs to already over 800 years of Augustine's followers who had carried those five million words from a lower-middle-class African town to the libraries of the emerging universities of Europe. We're still finding his writings. Just this past year, a small group of writings was found sewn into a larger manuscript. Maybe some followers wanted to save those fragments and sewed them into a document that they knew people would keep rather than losing some small pieces.

How did the Augustine lead his followers in community which resulted in so much care for his legacy? One of the images he uses for building community is deer. “Love empowers us,” he says, “to support one another in carrying our burdens, when deer need to cross a river each one carries on its rear the head of the one behind it, while it rests its head on the rear of the one in front of it. Supporting and helping each other they are thus able to cross wide rivers safely until they reach the firmness of the land together.” (Eighty-three Diverse Questions, 71, 1) Each deer may worry about itself but their physique would ensure that they would drown if they ford the rivers alone when they reach the deep waters.

Is this serving (supporting) of one another something of a team - even a “team of rivals” approach to leadership? How does an Augustinian leader engender serving and supporting one another – being part of the team? I think there are very clear skills/characteristics. Central to them is dialogue for Augustine - conversation in which each one learns from one another. Not

talking at one another but truly listening. Augustine tells us that he even learned through his letter writing when he responded to his correspondents and wrote books to answer their questions - questions that he didn't have but questions that need answering.

Knowing his audience through listening was an important part of what he did. He knew his dialogue partners. When he wrote his books, he wrote in a very elegant Latin for the learned and the elite. But when he preached, he preached in everyday Latin for the dock workers of Hippo.

He gave us an open-mindedness, an active type of listening. In his philosophical dialogues at Cassiacum, he gives Monica a special place in the discussions of philosophy – Monica who had no philosophical training and was a woman not having a place at that table. And he had her, as a leader, leading her co-discussants towards wisdom, because in her faith she had reached wisdom in a better way than all the philosophers.

He empowered. He encouraged. He coached. A Deacon Deogratias wrote to him asking him for a homily that would be able to convert people. Augustine's response was to give him two homilies – a short one and a long one. He made him choose. But, he also wrote an introduction, in what is called "Instructing Beginners in the Faith," on how to encourage and empower the faith of the audience - not worry about the words, but know who you talking to and what their needs are.

Augustine had the skills of persuasion. In his work, "Teaching Christianity," he teaches how to use authentic persuasion, rather than the manipulative persuasion he had been taught. His persuasiveness was part of what led the majority of North African Christians, who were Donatists not Catholics, to become his minority brand of Christianity, Catholicism.

Also knowing when to change by initiating and by creating new things rather than always reacting was one of the skills. In his "Confessions," in his "Soliloquies," in his book, "The Reconsiderations," - in all of those he created new genres of literature. I don't think he cared anything particularly about literature and new genres. But he needed new ways of speaking to show people what he meant. To help them understand, to help them become good followers and then move to good leaders.

The skills/characteristics are not separate, but in Augustine they are connected in what I would call a reflective practice. Starting with community dialogue we move into reflecting on what we have learned together and from what we've learned we revise, renew and when necessary make big changes in the practices that we have. For Augustine those practices were only important when they led to the truth, that is, the long-term improvement, Veritas.

For Augustine truth, meaning and understanding comes not individually but through community. "If the truth is the object of the aspirations of all human beings," he tells us, "it cannot be the exclusive property of any person. The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours, precisely because it has to be both yours and mine." (Commentary on the Psalms, 103, 2, 11) In a community setting a leader needs to find solid ground for his or her authority. For Augustine Faustus, the Manichee, lost his followers by setting himself up as the truth, while

Ambrose gained Augustine as a follower by showing him how to find in truth a foundation for his exercise of power and authority. Finding truth as the foundation for lasting power and authority was crucial in Augustine's preparation for conversion - crucial for his ability to hear "Tolle Lege." When Augustine found truth as the foundation of lasting authority he had reached the pinnacle of his career. He was the Imperial Rhetor, that was the lead teacher. Sometimes we talk about it as an Endowed Chair. But actually, part of his job was that he was supposed to go around Milan giving speeches on how wonderful the Emperor was and how everything the Emperor was doing was just the best thing. He was a fourth/fifth century "spin doctor" - a spin doctor for the Emperor. But he knew his speeches were lies. He knew he had arrived at his job through lies by not telling the Manichees that he had left them, but used their connections in order to get the job. He saw his lying as being a "seller of words," in Latin "Vendor Verborum." He saw himself, in that sense, as an entrepreneur of lies who had lost his soul, his health and his way. In converting he found his voice and health and a way to lead. It was not in immediate results but in finding the transcendent. Not just eternal life but that leadership is a pilgrimage, a journey that aids the restless heart in moving forward in fulfilling ways.

For Augustine, our everyday transcending is a pilgrimage of search and discovery and learning. He tells us. "Search in ways by which we can make discoveries and discover in ways by which we can keep on searching." (The Trinity, IX, 1, 1) As a planner a leader needs to aid followers in the search and discovery of planning through the old truism of "plan the work - work the plan," but with an Augustinian twist. A leader should always be asking if our strategies and activities are substantial - sustainable. Are they getting us to a place that will position us for the next challenge - to be able to discover in ways that empower followers to keep on searching - to keep on discovering. In his Confessions, Augustine can be seen as a role model of searching and discovering where he presents his own search and discovery to aid others in learning the reflective thinking of how to differentiate useless searching and useless discoveries from the successful ones. Presenting how to learn in public from your mistakes, he modeled how to find one's way in following and how to change and reconsider direction - "when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em." What enabled Augustine to have this confidence to lay himself bare and to change - simply, love/Caritas. For Augustine love and Caritas is no pretty Hallmark Valentine's Day card. It's hard work. He took great support from Saint Paul in Galatians 5:6 where Paul talks about "Faith working through love." Faith and work unite, but it's love that brings them together.

The work of leadership, if we look at Augustine, involves some intrinsic talent, but it involves diligence - working at it - seeing where we need to change - seeing where we need to adjust. It's not building up habits because Augustine thought habits were a problem because they gave you the "same old, same old." Diligence is where you ask questions. The diligent leader for Augustine has humility. He tells us, "The first step in the search for truth is humility, the second humility, the third humility and the last one humility. Naturally that doesn't mean that humility is the only virtue necessary for the discovery and enjoyment of truth. But if the other virtues aren't preceded, accompanied and followed by humility, pride will find an opening and infiltrate them and sooner or later finish up destroying good intentions. All other vices are recognized when we are doing wrong. Pride is to be feared even when we're doing right. Test those things which are done in a praiseworthy matter, lest they be spoiled by the desire for

praise itself.” (Letter 118, 3, 22) Humility leads to a love that succeeds. Habits leave us open for pride and the love of praise in our annual evaluations.

In teaching Deacon Deogratias, who I mentioned a few moments ago, when he was teaching him how to gain followers Augustine showed him that the humble diligent leader is sustained by a “cheerful attitude” and giving his followers the courage to have such a cheerful attitude. Good humor and humility go hand in hand for an Augustinian leader. They help in building up the leadership requisite of tolerance for ambiguity. Augustine had more than ambiguity. He had opposition. The pagan rhetoricians accused him of betraying the Roman community in going to the dark side by becoming a Christian and thus participating in the causes for the fall of the Roman Empire. Donatists accused him of betraying the Christian community by believing that bishops who were traitors during the persecution did not void their ordinations, while sinning in their cowardice. When he preached, opponents shouted outside so his community had difficulty hearing him. Opponents put out contracts on his life to take him out as he traveled. Pelagians accused him of betraying his followers by having unnecessarily high standards, when salvation was simply self-help with assistance being needed only by the very weak. As he lay dying the Vandal army had laid siege to his city. Unlike other bishops, he stayed with this people. Augustine could be tolerant of ambiguity because he knew leading and following was a long journey of struggles in building our future with interim ladders and scaffolds on the way to building what he called the “edifice of love.” (Letter 55)

In Augustine, leaders build up coworkers. In building, Augustine tells us to “set love as the criterion” (Instructing Beginners in the Faith, 4, 8) of all we do. How do leaders do this in corporations? While we call them corporations, Spanish speakers call them “anonymous societies” and the British term tells us that we're “limited” rather than incorporated. Augustine's notion of Christ as the “Totus Christus” - the head and the body led him to see that whatever we are in, we are all in it together. For Augustine as a leader, there is no anonymity and we cannot let limits define ourselves. This Augustinian notion of corporate leads me to wonder if Augustine might want Offices of Valued Humans rather than Offices of Human Resources - offices focused on helping workers to transcend, to develop, to move beyond the limitations facing them. In what may be his notion of continuous quality improvement, Augustine tells us “Do not grow complacent with what you are - what you have become pleased with. But don't get stuck there. If you say, “That's enough!” you're finished. Always add something more. Keep on walking. Always forge ahead.” (Sermon 169, 18) Offices of Valued Humans would see our colleagues as more a part of the value proposition and less of a risk to be averted.

But if we can't make this type of change at least like Augustine we can thank our coworkers and give thanks for them in a very Eucharistic way. In valuing other people that he worked with Augustine demonstrated that a leader needs to evidence transparency. Augustine showed transparency when he shared his worry about the harm he had done to people he persuaded to become Manichees but who were not persuaded by him to follow him into Christianity.

Also, in Sermons 355 and 356 Augustine confessed his failure as a leader when members of the community were found to have kept private property in violation of the vow to share all things in common. In these sermons he asked forgiveness, involved the larger Diocesan community in

the transparency and the investigation and involved them in the report and the remedies. Imagine a 5th century bishop did that!

In the case of Bishop Antoninus who Augustine had proposed for Bishop of Fussala, Augustine publicly work to have him removed. Before ordination Antoninus was an up-and-coming leader and a protégé of Augustine who had language skills to serve the poor Punic speakers. After becoming bishop, Antoninus showed himself as corrupt with cronies, an extortionist with schemes. Despite his contention that sin does not take away ordination and his own role in Antoninus' ascendancy, Augustine worked far, wide, hard and publicly so that Antoninus would be replaced because the scandal of his remaining a leader, that is Antoninus as a leader, was far greater than the scandal he had already created.

Despite all the struggles and the hard work of "Caritas" love, it is the same love that gave Augustine the passion that a leader needs. In that leadership passion Augustine may be challenging us for tomorrow as he challenged the community of Carthage in his own day when he urged them in this way, "You all say, 'The times are troubled. The times are hard. The times are wretched.' Live good lives and you will change the times. By living good lives you will change the times and have nothing to grumble about." (Sermon 311, 8)

Well, I hope I've given you insights into Augustine on leadership. These thoughts are no blueprint. Augustine did not know our problems and he does not live in our times. Yet, in reading Augustine I am guided by an insight from Robert Dodaro, the Augustinian scholar, (an alumnus a Villanova) who observed, "The more I read Augustine and read studies about him and about his time, the more I come to two conclusions, apparently disjunctive. They continue to strike me forcefully. First, I find it increasingly difficult to domesticate Augustine, that is, to make him appear at home in our times. Secondly, I find his theology and approach to various pastoral issues increasingly more relevant for our times. On the one hand I am saying that Augustine's Church and the times in which he lived, late Roman antiquity, have to be seen as strange even alien to our own times, between his Church and our Church and secondly, in spite of the fact that I continue to reach this difficult conclusion, I continue to see the urgency of Augustine's theology and his pastoral responses for the Church in his times."

While Augustine does not give us a leadership blueprint for leadership today, I believe the urgency found in his leadership thought and his situational responses show that we need to make the core values of Unitas, Veritas, Caritas more than a slogan, more than a mantra. Following Augustine we need to make them an imperative for leadership for tomorrow.

Thank you!