

‘Live Together in Peace on the Way to God.’ The Rule of Augustine as a ‘Rule of Peace’

“Vivir juntos en paz en el camino de Dios”.
La regla de Agustín como una “regla de paz”

8

Pierre-Paul Walraet
Order of the Holy Cross, Italy



Abstract

Love, harmony, unity, and peace are key to Augustine's ideal of the religious life. Augustine's *Praeceptum* is explored from the perspective of peace. The monastic precepts, admonitions and recommendations elaborated in the *Praeceptum* are geared toward peace in the community and finally toward eternal peace (*in Deum, in pace*). To this end, the *Praeceptum* emphasizes harmonious living together in community, observing the community of goods, fostering mutual respect in common and personal prayer, avoiding cases of anger and dealing with them, fraternal correction through a restorative process, love that is not self-seeking but serves the common good, religious obedience to the superior. The brothers are called to seek peace and pursue it, aware that the peace here on Earth is still imperfect. The *Praeceptum* reflects aspects of Augustine's vision and teaching on peace elaborated in Book XIX of the *De Civitate Dei*. In his *Ennarationes in Psalmos* the bishop of Hippo uses images of a harbor, a furnace and a cartwheel to illustrate challenges in achieving peace, and points out faulty expectations for peaceful life in a religious community. Authentic peace lived in community strengthens the longing and love for the spiritual beauty of God who is Perfect Peace.

Keywords: Brotherhood, fraternal correction, *Praeceptum*, religious community, unity and peace.



Resumen

El amor, la armonía, la unidad y la paz son claves para el modelo de la vida religiosa de san Agustín; en *Praeceptum*, de Agustín, se explora este modelo desde la perspectiva de la paz. Los preceptos orientan advertencias y recomendaciones monásticas elaboradas en el *Praeceptum* hacia la paz en la comunidad y, finalmente, hacia la paz eterna (*in Deum, in pace*). Con este fin, el *Praeceptum* enfatiza: convivir en armonía en comunidad, observar la comunidad de bienes, fomentar el respeto mutuo en la oración común y personal, evitar los casos de enojo y tratar con ellos, la corrección fraterna a través de un proceso restaurativo, un amor no egoísta sino que sirve al bien común, la obediencia religiosa al superior. Se llama a los hermanos a buscar la paz y perseguirla, teniendo en cuenta que la paz aquí en la tierra todavía es imperfecta. El *Praeceptum* refleja aspectos de la visión y la enseñanza de san Agustín sobre la paz elaboradas en el Libro XIX de *De Civitate Dei*. En *Ennarationes in Psalmos* el obispo de Hipona usa imágenes de un puerto, un horno y una voltereta para ilustrar los desafíos que requiere la paz, y señala las expectativas erróneas de una vida pacífica en una comunidad religiosa. La paz auténtica vivida en la comunidad fortalece el anhelo y el amor por la belleza espiritual de Dios, que es la Paz Perfecta.

Palabras clave: *Praeceptum*, comunidad religiosa, unidad y paz, fraternidad, corrección fraterna.



About the author | Acerca del autor

Pierre-Paul Walraet [walraet.pierrepaul@gmail.com]

Pierre-Paul Walraet O.S.C. (1959) is a religious priest, belonging to the Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross (Crosiers). He obtained a licentiate in spiritual theology at the Institute of Spirituality of the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome). Collaborated with the Augustinian Historical Institute of Louvain (Belgium) in organizing the annual study day on Augustinian spirituality. Is involved in leadership, serving as councilor to the superior general of his Order.



How to cite in MLA / Cómo citar en MLA

Walraet, Pierre-Paul. "Live Together in Peace on the Way to God." The Rule of Augustine as a "Rule of Peace". *Agustín de Hipona como Doctor Pacis: estudios sobre la paz en el mundo contemporáneo*, edited by Anthony Dupont, Enrique Eguiarte Bendimez y Carlos Vilabona, Editorial Uniagustiniana, 2019, pp. 235-264, doi: 10.28970/9789585498235.8

Introduction

Augustine, as Doctor Pacis, shapes religious life in every generation by instilling peace-promoting values in the lives of brothers and sisters seeking God. The accent on peace in religious community is not so much on the political order of society, as we might find in *De Civitate Dei* (cited hereafter, *civ.*), nor even on domestic order in a family community of parents and children, nor even on the local faith community with its liturgical routines, its incorporation of new members and its ministers and pastors. This chapter focuses on Augustine's concern for peace, order, tranquility and especially for the peaceful order for a unified well-ordered soul, intent on God, who is our Ultimate Peace.

Augustine's particular concern for *cura animarum* for religious members of each fraternal order of religious life focuses on his *Monastic Rule*. In our analysis and discussion of the Rule we recognize first of all that the textual term *peace* does not occur in the entire treatise. The points of contact with the religious value of peace, however, occur at many points along the way, throughout the text. Our method will be to focus on analysis of these contact points between the text of the Rule and the value of peace, through parallel reading Augustine's other texts so as to underscore how the value of peace does explicitly inform a reading of the Rule as a rule promoting interpersonal and even intrapersonal saving peace.

The Rule, on first reading, accents the ordered social role of communal life lived in harmonious peace; on a second or deeper reading, the Rule accents a deeply personal atmosphere that is highly spiritual. We will also refer the reader to understanding peace as a characteristic evangelical mark the Doctor of Peace seeks to inculcate personally and individually in each of the souls, that is, the *anima et cor*, and in the one corporate life (*anima una*) of those who congregate, who join to live life together *unanimes*. All are explicitly intent—that is, share the same life aim *in Deum*; embodied communion with Ultimate Unity, Perfect Peace, and All-encompassing Love (“The Rule of Saint Augustine” 45).

Attain Peace in God

Interior peace was a significant outcome of the conversion of Augustine. While still in the garden of Milan, in 386, Augustine, in a like manner to Saint Anthony, experienced the silent reading of a Scripture passage as if it were a divine light relieving his anxiety and flooding into his heart: “Not in orgies and

drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh” (Rom. 13: 13-14).¹

For Augustine, this chance text acted as a liberator from a lengthy intolerable situation of anguish. The shadows of doubt were dispelled, at once. Immediately Augustine told everything to his friend Alypius, with an untroubled face now serene and at peace (*conf.* VIII, 12, 30).²

At the heart of Book X in *Confessions* (cited hereafter, *conf.*), Augustine offers a reflection on his conversion experience. The poetic-lyric prayer opens with the famous *Sero te amavi*, and continues:

You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours (*conf.*, 10, 27, 38).³

Augustine felt set on fire to attain peace in God. This life perspective resonates with the solemn programmatic opening of *conf.*: “..you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (*conf.*, 1, 1, 1).⁴ The heart resting in God, attains peace in God⁵ as if now well placed, no longer feeling alien inside, awkward and displaced, out of place.

For Augustine, the oneness of mind and heart among brothers building a fraternal community will be the religious route to achieve the intended goal—unity *in Deum*. Attaining peace in God would become an aim to strive after and live for, within the context of a fraternal life with brothers in community, modelled on the primitive Church community (Acts 4: 31-35). Hearts and minds find peace in fraternal oneness. If hearts and minds are not emotionally placed in their intended interpersonal position, namely not in unity and harmony, they are restless.

Shortly after the conversion experience in a garden at Milan in 386, Augustine made up his mind. He wanted to be a monk. His conversion to the faith of the

¹ See *conf.* VIII,12, 29.

² “Tranquillo iam vultu.”

³ “In pacem tuam.”

⁴ “Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.”

⁵ See *conf.* XIII, 9, 10: “In your gift we find our rest. There are you our joy. Our rest is our peace” (*requies nostra locus noster*).

Catholic Church included a decision to live as a monk. For him, being a monk could not mean taking flight to live in solitude (*conf.*, 10, 43, 70). Augustine did not desire to become a hermit in the Egyptian desert as had Saint Anthony.⁶ Nonetheless, the life of the Christian anchorites and cenobites in the desert captured Augustine's attention. Filled with awe, but also aware that this way of following Christ would surpass his own endurance, Augustine wrote, in 388, about the peaceful ideal of the coenobitic monasticism:

But if this far surpasses our endurance, who would not admire and praise those who, having scorned and abandoned the allurements of this world, and come together in a most pure and holy common life, spend their time in prayers, reading, and discussion; and who, not puffed up with any arrogance, not troublesome with any inflexibility, not spiteful out of jealousy, but meek, modest and peaceful, offer a most pleasing gift to God, from Whom they have gained the ability to do these things: namely a life lived in the greatest harmony and fully directed toward Him? (*mor.*, 1, 31, 67 qtd. in Zumkeller 304).

Augustine wanted to be a monk⁷ in a way that he would live together with brothers in a community, dwelling in Christ (*en. Ps.*, 132(133), 6), and fully devoted to the service of God in charity. For the distinctive Augustinian form of monastic life he would develop in North Africa, Augustine took inspiration from the monks living even in the Italian cities, be it radically adjusted from the ordinary urban style of life. In Milan, Augustine saw such a dwelling place of consecrated men, presided over by a holy and most learned priest (*conf.*, 8, 6, 15; *mor.*, 1, 33, 70). He got to know more of such places in Rome. This acquaintance with urban monks in Rome happened about a year after his conversion and baptism, before returning to North Africa, following the death of Monnica in 388 at Ostia.

⁶ A while before, Augustine and Alypius were informed by Ponticianus about the life of Saint Anthony, his conversion to follow Christ, and his influence as a monk on innumerable followers (*conf.*, VIII, 6, 14-15).

⁷ Augustine explains the Greek word *monos*, meaning "only one", to focus on intention rather than social arrangement. For Augustine, the term *monk* refers distinctively to the united dedication of heart and mind among the many brothers in one common life (*en. Ps.*, 132(133) 6). See also Burt 631-632: "Though maintaining their individuality, they [monks] should be aiming at becoming one (*monos*), a community living together in peace and love... The peace of the religious community... depended on being friends with each other and friends with God."

On the Way to Peace Through Monastic Community Life

Before Augustine describes the illness and death of his mother at Ostia, quite immediately after their intimate conversation (*conf.*, 9, 10, 23-25) about the divine Wisdom which they touched for one instant, he writes about a holy decision he proposed to undertake. The passage opens with Psalm 67 (68), verse 7, as also quoted in his *Praeceptum* (1, 2):⁸

“You make people to live in a house in unanimity” (Ps. 67: 7). So you made Evodius a member of our circle, a young man from my hometown. When he was a civil servant as an agent in the special branch, he was converted to you before we were. He was baptized and resigned his post on taking up your service. We were together and by a holy decision resolved to live together. We looked for a place where we could be of most use in your service; all of us agreed on a move back to Africa (*conf.*, 9, 8, 17).

Following through on that holy decision, Augustine returned to Thagaste, in order to implement the plan he had undertaken to serve God, in the company of some countrymen and friends, who wished to serve God in the same way.⁹ Once a priest, in 391, and with the permission of the old bishop Valerius, the monk Augustine implemented his decision to establish a monastery in the garden of the *basilica pacis* (*intra ecclesiam*) at Hippo Regius. This allowed him to continue as a priest the monastic life in community. With the servants of God, he began to live according to the manner and the rule of the holy Apostles. When named his successor, and after the death of bishop Valerius, Augustine founded another monastery in the house of the bishop, in 395/396. Augustine as bishop formed a clerical monastery with his priests, deacons and sub-deacons. These brother monks became well-formed—that is, community-formed—clerics. Augustine’s biographer refers to the monastic community’s strategic role in the establishment of peace and unity in the Catholic Church of North Africa, which suffered from the separatist movement of the Donatists:

As the sacred teaching spread, those who served God in the monastery under the holy Augustine’s leadership and in his company began to be ordained as clerics for the church at Hippo. And, then, as the truth of the Catholic Church preaching, and the holy life, continence, and complete poverty of God’s holy servants grew in reputation and daily became more famous, the peace and

⁸ References to the *Praeceptum* are made in the text.

⁹ See Possidius *Vita Augustini* 3; and Zumkeller 424.

unity of the Church began to seek bishops and clerics from the monastery which owed both its existence and growth to this remarkable man.¹⁰

When Augustine, monk and priest became bishop, he was concerned about maintaining the contemplative atmosphere of peace and quiet in the garden monastery, occupied by non-clerical brothers.¹¹ The bishop of Hippo was firmly resolved to remain faithful to his original vocation. He decided to continue his monastic life, in a different place, namely in the house of the bishop (*domus episcopi*). There he formed a community of clerics in a *monasterium clericorum*. Therefore, Augustine was no longer immediately on hand to lead and guide the garden monastery. Keeping in mind the brothers of the garden monastery whom he had left behind as their founding leader, Augustine compiled the *Praeceptum*, the “Rule for Men.”¹² Instructing the brothers through conferences¹³ was not possible anymore. By way of “compensation” for something otherwise routinely personal, dialogical and more dynamically vital, the written *Praeceptum* spells out the norm that it should be read aloud, once a week (VIII, 2).

Ordered by a “Rule of Peace”

The reason why brothers have come to live together to form a religious community is to live together in harmony (Ps. 67(68): 7), “being of one mind and of one heart” (Acts 4: 32) on the way to God, or intent upon God. This is the *primum propter quod* of the *Praeceptum* (1, 1-2). To seek love and harmony in God is the goal of building religious and fraternal community life according to the monastic legacy of Augustine of Hippo. Living together in harmony (*unanimis*) and being of one mind and of one heart (*concordia*) are conditions for realizing peace.¹⁴ Peace practiced in the religious community, ripples out through the community into the society. If the members of a religious community, following the *Praeceptum*, succeed in living together in harmony and

¹⁰ Possidius *Vita Augustini* 11 (424).

¹¹ Augustine “decided to leave the garden monastery in order not to endanger the peace of the community’s existence; as bishop, he could not avoid receiving many visitors to his house” (s., 355, 2). See Zumkeller 40.

¹² See Augustine “The Monastic Rules” 54. See also the English translation of the *Praeceptum* by Lawless 80-103.

¹³ *De diversis questionibus octoginta tribus* collects answers to questions posed by the brothers on various subjects, between 388 and 396.

¹⁴ See civ. 19, 13: “Peace among men is an ordered concord” (*pax hominum ordinata concordia*).

experience moments of oneness of mind and of heart, peace will emerge. The precepts Augustine laid down in the *Praeceptum* to be observed by those admitted to the monastery are meant to order the life in the community in such way that unity and harmony can be established, from which earthly peace and peacefulness may result. Peace among the brothers who live together in community realizes peace in the house.

Further, to connect human concord with the transcendent religious horizon, the fraternal life of the Augustinian monastic community is actively intent upon the peace of the brothers with one another in God. Such is the horizon of the peace of the city of God. The peace of the heavenly city is the true peace¹⁵ and the source of every other peace (*civ.*, 19, 13). When Augustine preached to the people at Carthage about Psalm 85, he explored the final transcendent horizon of total, everlasting peace, the true and perfect peace:

We shall be in a city... that city, whence no friend departs, where no enemy gains entrance, where there is no tempter, no disturber of the peace, no one to cause divisions within God's people... A peace made pure will reign among (within) God's children: they will all love themselves as they see themselves full of God, and God will be all in all (see 1 Cor. 15: 28). For all of us God will be the object of our contemplation; he will be our common possession, he our common peace. Whatever he gives us now, he himself will be for us then in place of what he gives. He himself will be our peace, perfect and total (*en. Ps.*, 84(85), 10).

This description of the anticipated outcome of Augustine's ideal of the monastic life governs Augustine's vision of the *Praeceptum*. Monastic life according Augustine aims at God being the object of the community's contemplation; God being the community's common possession and common peace.¹⁶ Speaking in the same spirit about the perfect common life, Augustine publicly said to the faithful at Hippo's *basilica pacis*, recalling the history of his monastic foundations in that city:

I began to assemble brothers to be my companions in this holy undertaking, men possessing nothing just as I possessed nothing and imitating me. Just as

¹⁵ There can be no true peace where there is no real harmony; there is no real harmony when all hearts are privately and when each goes as far as possible to do what he will. See *Io. ev. tr.* 77, 5.

¹⁶ The shortest summary Augustine ever gave of his monastic ideal could be this: "Unus in uno ad unum" (*en. Ps.*, 147, 28). The brothers are "together one, in the one Christ, on the way to the one Father". See "The Rule of Saint Augustine" 45.

I sold my tiny bit of property and gave the proceeds to the poor, so they too who wished to be with me did the same, that we might live from our shared resources; but what we shared would be a great and very rich estate: God Himself (s., 355, 2).

In the opening of the *Praeceptum*, Augustine quotes a psalm. The psalm text he had before him reads: “God, who brings those of one mind together in one house.” Those of one mind, living together in one house, are a privileged place for encountering the Lord (*tabernaculum*). Augustine asks: “Do you want to be a house for God? Then be humble and peaceable and tremble at God’s word and you will yourself become what you are seeking” (en. Ps., 131[132], 4).

Being of one mind and one heart, intent on God, is not merely nor primarily an outcome of human efforts. It is a gift, the fruit of the action of God in the life of the community. The end of Augustine’s *Praeceptum* confirms this acknowledgement: “May the Lord grant that, filled with longing for spiritual beauty (Sirach 44, 6) you will lovingly observe all that has been written here” (8, 1). In other words, brothers are dependent on the grace of God to live together in harmony and to be of one mind and one heart. In line with Augustine’s deepest faith conviction (*civ.*, 15,4), we may say that peace, resulting from living out of the basic principles of the *Praeceptum*, is a gift of God,¹⁷ and contemplatively understood, a religious experience of spiritual beauty (8, 1). To become lovers of spiritual beauty is a significant religious objective Augustine has in mind. It is the heartbeat of Augustine’s spirituality of community life. This intentional prime aim should motivate the brothers to lovingly observe the *Praeceptum*, in view of experiencing God’s unity and harmony, beauty and peace.

The experience of fraternal unity and interpersonal harmony, from which flows a longing for spiritual beauty and peace is not a quick fix. Each chapter of the *Praeceptum* points out driving forces and restraining forces that promote or, conversely, do not promote unity, harmony and integrity as conditions for peace, as well as experiential ways to God who is Perfect Peace.¹⁸ It is our intention to explore the *Praeceptum* from this perspective.

¹⁷ Augustine states: “Brothers dwell in unity by the grace of God—not by their own power, not of their own merits, but by his gift, by his grace, like the dew from heaven. For the earth does not rain upon itself, and whatever the earth has brought forth would dry up if the rain does not flow down from heaven” (en. Ps., 132(133), 10; 403).

¹⁸ See Gillette 108: “The diverse parts of the *Rule* are orchestrated towards building community in the bond of peace, through the process of caring, enduring, serving, forgiving, honoring, and correcting.”

Community of Goods as Way to Peace

The life of the primitive Christian community forms the foundation of Augustine's ideal of the religious life. Acts 4: 32-35 was also the *rule of life* for Augustine's community of clerics (*monasterium clericorum*) gathered in the bishop's house (*domus episcopi*).¹⁹ The distinctive Augustinian focus of this monastic ideal is on forming community. Interpersonal relationships build upon and draw inspiration from the double command of love: "Love God above all else, dearest brothers, then your neighbor also, because these are the precepts given us as primary principles" (*Ordo Monasterii*, 1) (Lawless 75).²⁰ The abiding goal of love is experienced peace. Commenting on Psalm 33(34), verse 15, "seek peace and pursue it", Augustine says:

Scripture does not promise you that you will have peace here; seek it, pursue it... we seek peace here, but will obtain it only at the end. Yet we do have peace in some degree here, in order that we may deserve to have it totally there. ... Let us be of one heart here, let us love our neighbor as ourselves. Love your brother and sister as you love yourself, and have peace with them (*en. Ps.*, 33[34] II,19).²¹

The first practical implication in the *Praeceptum* of the double command of love to achieve unity, harmony and peace is concrete and down to earth: the community of goods. "Among you there can be no question of personal property. Rather, take care that you share everything in common" (1, 3). Making private goods common is fundamental for building a monastic community and making a place for the Lord. By describing the social agitation of the opposite, that is, private possessions, Augustine provides a striking rationale for making clear the positive effects of sharing everything in common:

What are we fighting over? Over the things we call our own. We do not go to law about things we possess in common, do we? We all breathe in the air that belongs to all of us, and we all enjoy the sunshine that is common to all.

¹⁹ See s., 356, 1. At the beginning of this second sermon on the way of life of the clerics, the deacon Lazarus read Acts 4: 31-35, which before continuing the sermon was read again by bishop Augustine.

²⁰ Referring to Mt. 22: 37-40: "Ante omnia, fratres carissimi, diligatur Deus, deinde et proximus, quia ista sunt praecepta principaliter nobis data." The *Regula recepta* consists of the first sentence of the *Ordo Monasterii* followed by the *Praeceptum*.

²¹ See also *en. Ps.* 147, 15: "Pursue this peace, long for this peace... love peace in your homes, ... Love peace with your friends, and love peace with your enemies."

Blessed are those who are so intent on making a place for the Lord that they take no pleasure in their private possessions (*en. Ps.*, 131(132), 5).²²

The terminology used (e.g. fighting) gives evidence that the emphasis on private possessions does not promote the peace that is aimed for in the community, nor in the broader society. Social peace, on Augustine's reading of the Acts story, is conditioned by common ownership and common use. His monastic rule lays out as a fundamental characteristic and norm of Augustinian community the precept of common property.

Next, the *Praeceptum* refers to the role of the superior. Once the possessions are commonly shared, and nobody says, "this belongs to me", the superior can take over care for the needs of each of the brothers without distinction. He,

Should see to it that each person is provided with food and clothing. He does not have to give exactly the same to everyone, for you are not all equally strong, but each person should be given what he personally needs (1, 3).²³

The unity and harmony in the Augustinian community is not fostered by mechanistic equality or uniformity. The brothers or sisters are unique persons with strengths and weaknesses.²⁴

Augustine's community of the garden monastery was composed by unique persons. A conditioning background "distinction" is noticed between "those who owned possessions in the world" (1, 7) and "those who did not have possessions" (1, 4-5). Augustine is aware that living together in community is a challenge for both "former rich" and "former poor". The first come from a more comfortable manner of life. The latter are considered more robust individuals (3, 4). Their former status in life and their background differ. Augustine weighs

²² See also s., 355, 2, qtd. in Gillette 89. The monk-bishop of Hippo underlines that the really great and profitable common estate is God himself.

²³ For those who had nothing before entering the monastery "allowance should be made for their frailty, however on the basis of individual need, even if previous poverty never permitted them to satisfy those needs" (1, 5). Augustine's definition on peace and order is applied: "The peace of all things is the tranquility of order. Order is the distribution of things equal and unequal, each to its own place" (*civ.*, 19, 13). See also *civ.*, 19, 4: "What is to be said of justice, whose task is to assign to each man his due..."

²⁴ See *ep.*, 130, 14, 31: "Let each of you do what she can in fasting, vigils, and every chastisement of the body, by which prayer is helped very much. If another cannot do as much, let her do what she can if she loves in the other what she does not do because she cannot. Hence, let one who cannot do as much not hold back the one who can do more, and let not the one who can do more not urge on the one who cannot do as much."

in on the aptness of a superior, considering personal background information, to determine fair distribution according to need.

Chapter I of the *Praeceptum* presents a list of admonitions addressed to those who were “rich” and to those who were “poor”:

Do not call anything your own; do freely consent to possess everything in common; do not seek in the monastery possessions which were beyond your reach outside; do not consider present good fortune to consist in the possession of food and clothing..., do not put your nose in the air...; do not pursue hollow worldly concerns...; do not belittle the brothers who come to the holy society from a condition of poverty...; do not have a high opinion of yourselves because of making available some of your possessions to the community.

Through these warnings, Augustine instills renunciation of possessions via the personally appropriated virtue of humility in the members living in the monastery. The central issue is not weighing up on objective scales equal portions. Rather, the central concern is developing good judgment and personally appropriated values within members’ assessment of what is good and apt and concords harmoniously to the God’s eye point of view. Augustine’s observation about pride, considered a trap able to destroy even good works, speaks of itself. “Hasten on ahead” (*en. Ps.*, 132(133), 13)²⁵ could well point out the dynamic cutting-edge standard involved in each person’s attaining personal improvement and poised blessedness in communal life and communal sharing.

...desire for that security where peace is fullest and most certain. ...There the virtues, no longer struggling against any vice or evil whatsoever, will have as the reward of victory eternal peace which no adversary may disquiet. For this is the final blessedness, this is the ultimate perfection, the unending end (*civ.*, 19, 10).

The above listed cautions, pointing out important attitudes, Augustine proposes, should be honored by the brothers, in striving for unity, harmony and peace. The purpose of these principle attitudes is to bring order in the living together of people with a diversity in background. One required attitude stands out: “No one should desire the extras given to a few more out of tolerance than out of deference” (3, 4). The *Praeceptum* (3, 3-4) calls the brothers to be at peace when seeing another receiving more; when noticing that excep-

²⁵ “Hasten on ahead with your heart where you cannot follow with your body” parallels *Praeceptum*, 1, 6: “...but they should lift up their heart, seeking the nobler things” (*sed sursum cor habeant*). See also *en. Ps.*, 85(86), 6.

tions are made: better food, a special diet for health reasons, better bedding, more blankets.²⁶ Being at peace is fostered when one is aware concessions are granted not to show favor but out of concern for the person in special need. That a brother is at peace will become obvious when he is glad and grateful for having the strength to endure what others cannot.

The monastic community for which Augustine compiled the *Praeceptum* was characterized by multiplicity and rich diversity, due to the uniqueness and proper history of each of the members. In this human and social reality of a monastic community, peace will be found in what Augustine later will call the tranquility of order (*tranquillitas ordinis*).²⁷ The meaning of order, applied to the shared life lived in an Augustinian endowed monastic community, implies that each member is assigned to his proper passive receptive and active contributing place, by appreciating both his personal background and his proper strengths. On the way to God, experienced multiplicity will not be an obstacle to striving for unity and harmony amid personal differences of need and contributed gifts. For that desired peace and unity to happen, members old and young will need to be schooled in appropriate assessing skills, learning to judge wisely and not merely mechanistically and rigidly. Good judgment is a cultivated religious gift of perfecting the soul toward a life bent on real care of the other and mutual love.

The short final paragraph of Chapter I, echoing I, 2, summarizes our exploration: “Live then, all of you, in harmony and concord (*unanimitet et concorditer vivite*);²⁸ honor God mutually in each other; you have become His temples (1,8).²⁹ It is a call to life (*vivite*)! According to Agatha, the Latin *concordia* “calls to mind harmony, friendship, and peace—qualities that a loving heart can bring to birth.” She adds:

But can these be born among a group whose common difficulties have been probed earlier in this chapter? Yes, but not once and for all. Yes, again and again, every time that a monk’s mind and heart turn away from self-regarding

²⁶ The needs listed are physical and bodily. Meeting these human needs will benefit the inner tranquility which is indispensable for living in unity and harmony with one another. See also Gillette 97: “If everyone has what he or she needs, there will be less worry and fuss and therefore fewer complaints. Peace reigns where there is tranquility of order.”

²⁷ See *civ.* 19, 13: “*Pax omnium rerum tranquillitate ordinis*”. Augustine’s well-known definition for “peace.” Schrama 860-865 points out that Augustine’s *Praeceptum* and *civ.*, 19 have themes in common.

²⁸ See Acts 4:32; Rom. 15: 6.

²⁹ See 2 Cor. 6:16.

to see and to worship him who is at the center of the community's life (Agatha 88-89).

The close-knit order of life inside the Augustinian monastery is concretely different from the way people's life is ordered in the social world, characterized by personal and private property. A monastic common life requires efforts and adaptations from all brothers, regardless of their background, seeking now to share life together, to grow into unity (*civ.*, 19, 17), and to live peacefully in the house. The peace called *concordia* is experienced when brothers in the monastery, regardless of their background, are intentionally and intently centered on God, and honor God in one another. The Augustinian accent on developing one's interiority, each one's soul, entails intent conversion to God so as to shape one's judgments and decisions and behaviors dynamically based *in Deum*.

Awaiting the everlasting blessings promised for the future, the brothers in the community, like pilgrims, should use anything earthly and temporarily, not letting these goods entrap or distract from the path that leads to God and the most blessed life.³⁰ To facilitate this conversion of soul to the final horizon of God Augustine recommends to move from having to improving on how we exercise our soul weighing what is really better: "...it is better to need less than to have more" (3, 5).³¹

An Ordered Life of Prayer as Way to Peace

Praeceptum 1, 8 (see above) serves as transition to Chapter II. The use of the image of the *temple* is striking: a place within each brother; a place prepared for God. Chapter II is dedicated to the personal and communal prayer life in the monastery. The precepts include ordering this dimension of the life in the religious community. The importance of the concrete *oratorium* is emphasized.

For peace to be established in the community, the tranquility of an ordered life of prayer is important. Aspects that bring order in a community life entirely centered on God are, thus, included in Chapter II of the *Praeceptum*, on prayer. Augustine exhorts the community to "be assiduous in prayer (see Col. 4: 2) at the scheduled hours and times" (2, 1). Time and space are set aside. Together with the need for scheduled time and the observed hours (*horarium*), the

³⁰ See *civ.*, 19, 17.

³¹ "Melius est enim minus egere quam plus habere."

Praeceptum clarifies the need for an ordered space (*oratorium*). Space thus ordered is mindfully set apart as an exclusive place of undisturbed quiet and silence. This space should be freed from any business that disrupts the purpose the oratory is to serve. No one can do anything there except that what the prayer space in the monastery is built for. Because, “if some wish to pray even outside the scheduled periods, during their free time, they should not be deterred by people who think they have some other task there” (2, 2).

Order is disrupted when a brother performs tasks that violate the purpose of the place assigned for individual prayer. Peace in the community and in the heart of the brothers is fostered by a mutual respect for dedicated or mindfully purposed privacy. Peace is cared for by commonly providing a spiritual architecture (an *oratorium*) without disturbance. For the brothers in need for praying to God outside the appointed hours and times, an ordered priority space is provided. Whenever the brother enters the *oratorium*, he may move into this place with the right and good intention for turning to God in prayer: respecting the place and providing for his intention, the other brothers, thus respect the order of a shared communal religious life, dedicated as it is (*primum propter quod...*) to enable loving and turning to God. This specific norm of the rule concretizes the aim and purpose for life together.

Augustine, furthermore, emphasizes the importance of integrity and congruency in the common prayer life of the brothers: “When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, the words you speak should be alive in your hearts” (II, 3). Integrity and congruence are expressions of the peace of the rational soul which enjoys an ordered agreement of knowledge (what is alive in the mind and heart of the brother) and action (praying psalms and hymns). The brothers exercise their mind and heart in contemplation and act in accordance with it (*civ.*, 19, 14).³²

Table Fellowship as a Way to Peace

Not only is the *oratorium* the place where the Word of God is listened to; the community is exhorted to also “listen to the customary reading from the beginning to the end of the meal without commotion or arguments” (3, 2), that is to say in peace, without resistance, in obedience and meekness (*s. dom. m.*, I, 4, 11). Augustine adds: “Food is not for the mouth alone (Mt. 4: 4); your ears also should hunger for the Word of God (Amos 8, 11)” (3, 2). Because, as

³² On *Praeceptum*, 2, 3, see Gillette 86–87.

Augustine says elsewhere: “The voice of Christ, the voice of God, is peace, and it calls us to peace” (*en. Ps.*, 84(85), 10). Hearing the voice of Christ and listening to the Word of God keeps the brothers focused on the aim of their life as religious in the community: *in Deum*, growing enthusiasm, and fullness of life in God.³³ Moments of table fellowship are ordered moments. Attention should be given to both the body and the soul. The body hungers for food. But the brothers should not focus in such way on the bodily hunger for food as to forget the hunger for the Word of God. Augustine’s definition of peace, connecting soul and body, is applied in practice: the peace of the body and soul is the ordered life and health of the brothers living in community.³⁴

Regarding table fellowship, Possidius points to another obstacle to peaceful relationships among the brothers as well as when invited guests join the meals of the community. An inscription in the table served as a caution for those—even Augustine’s fellow-bishops and friends—who would openly disturb the peaceful fellowship at meals by openly voicing infectious and hateful criticism about absent people. Possidius writes:

At the table he [Augustine] preferred reading or conversation to eating and drinking, and to counteract a contagious habit of men he had these words inscribed on his table: “If anyone feeds by biting at other men’s backs, he will not find at this table the food that he lacks (*Possidius Vita Augustini*, 22; 425).³⁵

Augustine once was very agitated. Friends at table forgot the inscription. He rebuked them saying that either the warning in writing would be removed from the table or he would leave the table right away and withdraw in his room.

Fraternal Correction as a Way to Peace

Striving and working for unity and peace in a religious community can be harmed, by the disruptive behavior of a wayward brother, by a manner of life that damages his integrity, and the integrity of the community, and by attitudes that are inconsistent with the way of life the brother committed himself to. What he does wrong gives offense to those who see him because it is not

³³ For a description of this aim, see *en. Ps.*, 99(100), 12: “That rest which awaits us, where we shall be equal to the angels” (*In illa requie, in illa aequalitate Angelorum*).

³⁴ See *civ.*, 19,1 3: “*pax corporis et animae ordinata vita et salus animantis*.”

³⁵ “*Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam, hanc mensam indignam noverit esse suam*.”

in keeping with his holy state (4, 3). His behavior does not befit his call to monastic community life intent on the way to God.

The purpose of Chapter IV in the *Praeceptum* is not to develop a theory or theology of celibacy. The provisions included were, instead, a cultural conditioned necessity for safeguarding the unity and well-being and peace of the community. They elaborate a procedure (4, 7-8-9)³⁶ for how to deal in community with a brother who behaves improperly, and whose heart is harmfully infected by sin, namely the provocative and lustfully looking at a woman. What should be done if it happens? Reporting the offender to the superior is not the first step. After that, given neglect of the warning by an individual brother, when noticing falling back into the improper behavior, then two or three other brothers—a small delegation of the community—should be informed first. Out of the community's felt responsibility for one another, and prompted by honest fellow feelings for each member, a group effort seeks to convince the errant brother of his fault. He must be called back to order with firmness. His mind and heart are to be redirected back to the fundamental aim of his vocation, conducting his life on the way to God, on the way to Peace. All these efforts may still fail. In case of perseverance in evil-doing, finally the superior gets involved. He first calls the suspect brother to accountability. This shall happen in a private colloquium. The superior shall not immediately and publicly expose the brother's wrongdoing to the full community. However, in case the brother's misconduct does not change, "then the others are to be summoned without his knowledge so that he can be accused in the presence of all" (4, 9). Because the brother who does wrong is member of the community, all other brothers have a stake in redressing the problem and should engage the brother in working at a resolution to acknowledge the evil and restore to good. Silence, at this point, would mean ruinous denial or tacit complicity and thus further harm both the erring member and the community's common life, which can only be built up by supportive fraternal and healthy interpersonal relationships among all the brothers.

If the brother is proved guilty, a suitable punishment is determined by the superior or by the priest, with a view on the improvement of the behavior, again be it noted, so that peace might be re-established in the heart of the brother as well as in fostering mutual brotherly relationships in the community. Dismissal from the community is not ruled out if he refuses the imposed

³⁶ Augustine builds upon Mt. 18:15-17, on what it means to live in an evangelical community. See also *civ.*, 19, 16 on what to do when disobedience breaks the domestic peace.

punishment. Dismissal is the ultimate step in the “tough love” procedure noted in the *Praeceptum*.

Augustine’s dominant message of love makes its impression here as well. The heart of the brothers, the superior or the priest should always be ordered to fraternal love, in every step of whatever procedure is used, including the dismissal step. The unruly brother shall never be totally identified with his act of wrongdoing. Augustine clearly distinguishes sin from sinner. A communal act of totally identifying the person with his act would point to unjust harshness in both the superior or the other community members. Augustine concludes:

Diligently and faithfully, then, attend to my word about suggestive glances at women. Such advice holds also for detection, prevention, disclosure, proof, and punishment of other offenses, with love for the person and hatred for the sin (4, 9).³⁷

It strikes us that punishment is reserved as the last remedy. Energy goes first and foremost into fraternal correction. Fraternal correction is a relational process. It keeps the interconnection between the brothers alive and restores by face-to-face encounter the bruised relationships. The community’s duty is based in building the fraternal relation of love, that is, even in finding a step forward. It is to lovingly persuade the brother who does wrong. The brothers seek to get him to think about his unacceptable behavior, which distances him from the community and his own good, and to amend it. The kind of message they should convey to the brother could be like this: no matter what you do or say, we will continue to love you, to support you, to hold you accountable to be all that you can be as a human person and as a religious fellow brother in the community. To be all that you can be would mean to be faithful to your call and primary commitment to the fraternal community on the way to God in oneness of mind and heart.

The fraternal correction process as spelled out at length in the *Praeceptum* aims at restoring order in the community, at the rehabilitation of the brother who did wrong. The process also restores peace as a constitutive component of fraternal relationships and as an indispensable condition for relational growth in the community. The purpose and end of fraternal correction is reforming the offending brother so as to participate in the constitutive peace and harmony in community, a peace which he had bruised, a concord from which he had broken away (*civ.*, 19, 16).

³⁷ “Cum dilectione hominum et odium vitiorum.” See also *civ.*, 14, 6.

The Rule's lengthy attention to health and healing underscores the Augustinian community's vivid human-sacramental process of embodying and enabling the work of achieving health-as-shalom, glorifying God in honoring the interpersonal dynamics present in a community of tough love.

Reconciliation as a Way to Peace

Chapter VI of the *Praeceptum* opens with this admonition: "Either have no quarrels or put an end to them as quickly as possible" (6, 1). This phrase mirrors an earlier warning: "If you notice in any of your number this roving eye referred to above, immediately admonish the individual and correct the matter as soon as possible, in order to curb its progress" (4, 7).

Both phrases accentuate interpersonal fraternal immediateness: "notice" leads to "act" as quickly as possible. When inner peace is at danger, when an interpersonal peaceful relation in the community is disturbed, something needs to be done, as soon as possible. In terms of quarrels or cases of anger between brothers in the community, Augustine indicates two guidelines: one is to avoid having them; the second guideline is to put an immediate end to them. Quarrels should be transformed to reconciliation as soon as they arise. Augustine writes to Felicity, the superior of the women's monastery at Hippo, and to Rusticus, the superior of the men's monastery who served as priest to the women's convent:

Put more effort into establishing harmony among yourselves than into rebuking one another. For just as vinegar spoils a container if it is kept there too long, so anger ruins a heart if it lasts until the next day. *Do this, then, and the God of peace will be with you* (Phil. 4: 9), and at the same time pray for us that we may quickly carry out the good admonitions we give (*ep.*, 210, 2).³⁸

A brother who quarrels, excludes the other from his love. Divided and separated individuals do not live in harmony. They do harm to the prime reason for why members have come to live together to form a religious community (1, 2). For in discord, the Lord cannot be not praised (*en. Ps.*, 132(133), 13). To enjoy harmony with God and to praise Him, hearts must be open and at peace with everyone in the community. Therefore, Augustine underlines that whatever quarrels and disagreements might surface, that these be ended as quickly as possible: "A swift course of action is called for since the heart itself suffers corrosion until peace is reestablished" (Gillette 104).

³⁸ See Gillette 99. See also *ep. Io. tr.*, 4, 6.

Augustine is straightforward in his admonitions to deal with discord in the community, but also realistic. He says: “It is impossible, though, for disputes never to arise. They have broken out between brethren, even between saints, between Barnabas and Paul (see Acts 15: 39), but not so as to destroy the unity of hearts, not so as to kill charity” (*en. Ps.*, 33(34), 2,19). Augustine encourages people to be active in searching for peace:

Seek peace, then, brothers and sisters. The Lord said, *These things I tell you, that in me you may have peace. I do not promise you peace in this world* (see John 16: 33; 14,27). In this life there is no true peace, no tranquility. We are promised the joy of immortality and fellowship with the angels. But anyone who has not sought it here will not find it on arriving there (*en. Ps.*, 33(34) 2, 19).³⁹

Seeking peace and pursuing it (Ps. 33(34):15) entails the ongoing and freely willed efforts in the monastic community to return to the *anima una et cor unum* from which quarrelling, anger, discord, insults, the use of harmful words, having gone too far, accusation, turn away. Seeking peace and pursuing it means “to right the wrong... at the earliest opportunity”, to mutually “forgive without further bickering”, and to make sure that the same lips from which harsh words have escaped “promptly heal the wounds they have caused” (6, 2).

Obedience in Love as Way to Peace

On several occasions, Augustine’s *Praeceptum* addresses the role of the superior (*praeposito*). The superior shall provide each of the brothers with food and clothing (1, 3). A stubborn wayward brother is to be reported to the superior (4, 9). A salutary punishment shall be determined by the judgment of the superior or the priest (4, 9). The priest or the superior may judge it necessary to severely correct someone (4, 11). Gifts are to be submitted to the superior as common property so that it can be given to whoever needs it (5, 3). The superior decides how often a brother’s clothes are to be laundered (5, 4).⁴⁰ The superior may oblige brothers to visit the public baths (5, 5). The superior designates the companions with whom a brother will visit the public baths or any other place (5, 7). And, the superior has a good opinion of his brothers.⁴¹

³⁹ Perfect peace will be given to those who draw back from evil and do good. See s., 72, 9.

⁴⁰ To avoid that an inordinate desire for clean clothes disturbs the inner peace of the heart.

⁴¹ See s., 355, 2: “bene autem sentio de fratribus meis”, referred to by Gillette 89.

Chapter VII of the *Praeceptum* is on authority and obedience, citing scripture: “Obey your superior (Heb. 13: 17) as a father” (7, 1). A superior is in a position of authority. The superior serves in love, because the double commandment of love applies to him. The opposite of serving in love would be the desire to rule over others by striving to be feared by them instead of striving to be loved (7, 3). The superior, by his formative religious role, should desire and pray that all in the community may reach the heavenly home where the duty of commanding them will be unnecessary because there will be no duty of providing for those who are already happy in that immortal state, and enjoy the everlasting love and peace the contemplation of the spiritual beauty (*spiritalis pulchritudinis*) (8,1).

To be obedient is to be at peace. Disobedience breaks the peace (*civ.*, 19, 16). Book XIX of *De Civitate Dei* links peace and obedience. First when Augustine speaks about the peace between mortals and God, it is an ordered obedience in faith to eternal law (*civ.*, 19, 13). Further: “...domestic peace is ordered concord among those ruling and those obeying... For those who are concerned for others give commands... But those who are objects obey...” (*civ.*, 19, 13; 14). This description could be applied to the house in which the brothers live together under a superior whose principle task it is one of seeing to it that all precepts of the *Praeceptum* are observed (1, 2; 7, 2). In short, the peace and the unity in the monastic community is fostered and determined by both “commanding in love” and “obeying with respect.” To that end, the peace in the community is ordered through a superior who regards himself to be fortunate as one who serves the brothers in love, and not as one who exercises authority over the brothers (7, 3).⁴² In other words of Augustine, the superior does indeed command, however “not through desire to dominate but through dutiful concern for others, not with pride in exercising authority but with mercy in providing for others” (*civ.*, 19, 14). The atmosphere of peaceful living together in the religious community is also actively ordered by the brothers who wholeheartedly and freely obey their superior as a father, as well as the priest who bears responsibility for the brothers and has greater authority over them (7, 1-2). The brothers in the community, including the superior who is to be a model of good deeds for everyone (7, 3), give practical expression to their obedience when in their daily life, the common purpose takes precedence over the private purpose, and the common good over the private good. If this happens growth is assured, progress is made, and love which is not self-seeking

⁴² “Non se existimet potestate dominantem, sed caritate servientem felicem.”

(1 Cor: 13, 5) is put into praxis (5, 2).⁴³ Self-seeking would disrupt peace in the community.

The superior of the community should lead through the spiritual good of true wisdom, by prudently directing his judgments, his courageous actions, self-control, and just dealings toward that end where it is finally God who shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15: 28) in sure eternity and perfect peace (*civ.*, 19, 20).

Harbor, Furnace and Cartwheel

Many tend to think of a monastery as a safe and peaceful harbor, a calm “get-away” place of retreat where good and worthy people have chosen a life of quiet, peace, and contemplation, far removed from the clamor of the people, from the tumult and the noise of the great crowds, from the towering waves of the world, as though they were safe in a harbor. Focusing on the imagery of a harbor, Augustine applies its features to monastic life in community. Brothers joining a religious community, do not yet find there the awaited final joy. They do not yet experience the promised jubilation. Because, in the monastery, are still laments and worry over temptations. It is not yet an experience of the security and the peace of the Celestial City, which is to be a perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and of one another in God.⁴⁴ Augustine explains:

For even a harbor has an entrance somewhere—if a harbor had no entrance on any side, then no ship could enter it. So it must of necessity lie open on one side. Yet sometimes the wind rushes in from that open side. And even where there are no rocks, the ships are dashed against each other and are shattered. Then, where can that security be found, if not in a harbor? (*en. Ps.*, 99(100),10; 387-393).

Augustine, however, notices that the ships in the harbor⁴⁵ are still more fortunate than the ones on the open sea, i.e. the people in the world. To assure and protect the vulnerable peace in the harbor of a religious community, the brothers should love one another. Quoting Saint Paul, the brothers should bear with each other in love, eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4: 2-3), just as the ships in the harbor are to be bound to

⁴³ See also *op. mon.*, 25, 32.

⁴⁴ See *civ.*, 19, 13: “Pax caelestis civitatis ordinatissima et concordissima societas fruendi Deo et invicem in Deo.” Here, in this life, security and peace are in the hope of God’s promises. There, in the fulfilment of God’s promises, is full security and peace, when the bars of the gates of Jerusalem are made fast (Ps. 147: 13). See also *en. Ps.*, 99(100) 11.

⁴⁵ The brothers in the monastic community who have chosen a quiet life.

each other by good and not be dashed against each other. And further, if by chance the wind rushes in from the open side, if conflicts arise, let there be careful piloting (*en. Ps., 99(100), 10*). Applying the imagery of harbor and ships to the religious life in community, reference is made to the office, the authority and responsibility—the careful piloting—of the superior.

Augustine himself was a monastic community leader. In his exposition on Psalm 99(100) he speaks from experience. To assure and maintain peace and tranquility in the monastery, brothers in charge of community leadership, could putatively easily adopt a principle of precaution in favor of peace: be carefully not to admit evil and wicked people and exclude them from religious community living. Augustine, however, pleads against such a criterion using some refined psychological thinking.

To recognize a man as evil, you must first test him within the monastery. So how do you shut out the man who is about to enter and who is to be tested afterward, but cannot be tested unless he has entered? Will you send all the wicked men away? (*en. Ps., 99(100),10*).

Just avoiding *a priori* bad people from joining the monastic community does not *ipso facto* guarantee unity, concord, happiness, and peace in a monastery that would, thus, be reserved only for so called “good people”. Augustine pleads against an *a priori* judgment.⁴⁶ He does want, in fact first of all, an *a posteriori* formation experience of monitoring. The deepest motivations of the heart—often still unknown to new members—and equally the over-idealistic expectations of the heart of those who wish to be admitted need to be scrutinized, discerned, tested and purified in the community, as in a furnace:⁴⁷

For many have promised themselves that they would fulfil that holy life that holds all things in common, where no one calls anything his own, and where they have one soul and one heart toward God (Acts 4:32). They have been put into the furnace and they have cracked (*en. Ps., 99 (100), 11*).

Entering the common life of the brothers in the monastery, in the sweet hope for praiseworthy peace and security, is quite an unrealistic, even romantic expectation. Without doubt, Augustine’s idealized description of that common life is beautiful:

⁴⁶ Augustine asks: “What is the work of peace? It passes no judgment on uncertain matters, it does not assert what it does not know. It is more inclined to think the best of any man or woman than to suspect the worst” (*en. Ps., 147, 16*).

⁴⁷ A furnace “burns”, but also “purifies”, e.g. metal, silver and gold.

Great men, holy men, live there in daily hymns, prayers, and praise of God. They occupy themselves in reading and support themselves by manual labor. They do not seek anything greedily, but use in contentment and love whatever their pious brothers bring to them. No one takes anything for his own that another does not have; they all love one another and bear with each other (*en. Ps., 99 (100) 12*).⁴⁸

But at the same time, Augustine knows that the lived daily reality is different. Such perfect community as pictured above does not exist. A person who joins the community in the hope he will find perfect Christian love, or vaguely imagines that no one living there will ever have to be tolerated, is entertaining a naïve social expectation. The image of the harbor shows ships dashing against each other when the wind enters. A community with no difficult person to live with is a utopia. Therefore, living realistically the common life of real brothers in the monastery requires patience and tolerance with the bothersome men. Patient and tolerant behavior by exemplary good brothers may even correct and reform the troublesome. Augustine offers a principle for peacefulness in the monastery: “[one] should tolerate the real actions of the wicked for the sake of the fellowship of the good” (*en. Ps., 99 (100) 12*).

Irritation, exasperation and intolerance with the tiresome habits of the few, may make a newcomer want to leave the community to at least find peace in himself. That means that he becomes “a deserter of so holy an undertaking” (*fit desertor tam sancti propositi*). Augustine assesses such a consideration a questionable decision:

...when he has left that place, he, too, becomes a critic and a slanderer; he tells only of those things that he swore he could hardly have endured. ...What is more, he belches forth the bad odor of his indignation, and frightens away those intending to enter the monastery, since, when he himself had entered, he could not persevere. What sort of people are those brothers? They are envious, quarrelsome, completely intolerant, greedy. This one did this here, and that one did that. Wicked man, why do you keep quiet about the good brothers? You shout of those whom you could not tolerate, but you keep quiet about those who tolerated you in your wickedness (*en. Ps., 99(100), 12*).

The way “the deserter” pictures the common life of the brothers in the monastery to the outside world is completely opposite to Augustine’s earlier quoted

⁴⁸ Did this description—probably inspired by Augustine’s experience in the Thagaste community, which was composed of relatives and friends—make living together as *servi Dei* easy, pleasant, and peaceful?

description. The intolerant person depicts no more than a false caricature of those who wish to live Christ-like through love that is self-giving. Augustine uses the image of “the bad odor of indignation” the intolerant man belches forth. This reminds us, by contrast, of the concluding prayer in Chapter VIII of the *Praeceptum*. The brothers are exhorted to observe the Rule, exuding the fragrance of Christ in the goodness of their lives (8, 1).⁴⁹

Augustine left behind a wonderful paean to common life in his exposition on Psalm 132(133). This psalm is short and includes images, names and places: the oil, the dew, the robe, the hem, the beard, the mountains, Aaron, Hermon, Sion, etc. The bishop of Hippo applies this Psalm and its imagery also to brothers living together in unity and mutual love, thus building religious community. As in the *Praeceptum*, Augustine confirms that the brothers who really live in unity are those of whom it has been said: “And they had one soul and one heart toward God; and no one called anything his own, but they held everything in common” (Acts 4: 32). They have “the dew of Hermon flowing down over the mountains of Sion” (Psalm 132(133): 3). Therefore, they are “quiet, peaceful, humble, and tolerant.” They pray. They do not murmur. The love of Christ is made perfect in them. Augustine notes in his preaching the gap between his ideal of the religious life and the experienced reality:

So those in whom the love of Christ has not been made perfect do not live in unity ...even though they may be in the same place, [they] are hateful, troublesome, and quarrelsome. By their own restlessness they disturb others, just as the restless beast in the yoke does not pull but also breaks with his hooves whatever is yoked to him. ...all the murmurers are splendidly described in a certain passage in Scripture: “the feelings of a fool are like a cartwheel” (Eccli. 33, 5). ...A cartwheel carries hay, and it murmurs. For it cannot find rest from murmuring. Many brothers are like this; they do not live in unity, except in the body (*en. Ps., 132(133), 12*) (Zumkeller 403-404).

Conclusion

Augustine’s *Praeceptum* was explored to discover that a fraternal life together in peace is a way to God. The opening purpose of the Rule concentrates on the “*anima una et cor unum in Deum*”⁵⁰ as the life goal for those who serve God

⁴⁹ See 2 Cor. 2: 15; and 1 Pet. 3: 16.

⁵⁰ *In deum* highlights the Augustinian accent on our aim and transcending finality, at once eternal, but also operating now as an active attraction, in community. God draws the community’s life (*anima*) higher through fraternal love, experienced joy and delight, but still leaves

and as a statement to gain peace via a fraternal life lived together: minds and hearts intimately connected, seeking to be one soul and one heart on the way to God.

The precepts in Augustine's *Praeceptum* foster and safeguard harmony, unity and peace in the ordinary daily life of the community. Their observance in obedience helps the brothers to transform their mind and heart, to interiorize the values of the *Praeceptum*, and to attract attention by the life they live (4, 1).

Augustine underlines that harmony, unity and peace are more than a mere result of following laws and rules. One phrase in chapter VIII of the *Praeceptum* is of importance in this regard: "you are no longer slaves under the law, but a people living in freedom under grace" (8, 2). Living in freedom under grace is a significant "step" in the direction of living in peace (*in pace*) brought to perfection, fully possessed, loved and praised.⁵¹

Living Augustine's *Praeceptum* as a "Rule of Peace" is an apostolic endeavor. The Augustinian endowed monastic communities can serve as parables of peaceful brotherhood in Church and society.⁵² Augustinian monasteries should support Church communities, families and groups who strive for earthly peace and point out the final perspective: celestial peace in the City of God, where God is experienced as the Absolute One, Perfect Peace and All-Embracing Love.⁵³

hearts restless and turning toward greater personal appropriation. The "will toward wholeness" for the restless heart never attains full satisfaction, even in the grace of the fraternal life intentionally lived. The final fulfilled value, for Augustine, is always the eschatological patria of the Kingdom, the homeland to which life's journey always points, even with moments of felt peace and enjoyed reconciliation. The God of peace (*in deum*) always transcends even the best practiced fraternal life.

⁵¹ Augustine uses the fourfold division of marked periods for God's economy in human salvation history as: "ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia, in pace". The last period (*in pace*) will culminate only in the final eschatological shalom of all salvation history. See also *en. Ps.*, 147, 15.

⁵² See also Burt 631: "The peace of the larger societies flows from the peace of those that are smaller."

⁵³ See "The Rule of Saint Augustine" 45.



Works Cited

- Agatha, Mary. *The Rule of Saint Augustine: An Essay in Understanding*. Villanova, Augustinian Press, 1991.
- Augustine of Hippo. *Confessions*, translated by Henri Chadwick, Oxford, University Press, 2008.
- . *Expositions of the Psalms (Ennarationes in Psalmos)* 33-50. Translated by Maria Boulding, O. S. B., edited by John E. Rotelle O. S. A., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2000.
- . *Expositions of the Psalms (Ennarationes in Psalmos)* 51-72. Translated by Maria Boulding, O. S. B., edited by John E. Rotelle O. S. A., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2001.
- . *Expositions of the Psalms (Ennarationes in Psalmos)* 73-98. Translated by Maria Boulding, O. S. B., edited by John E. Rotelle O. S. A., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2002.
- . *Expositions of the Psalms (Ennarationes in Psalmos)* 99-120, translated by Maria Boulding, O. S. B., edited by John E. Rotelle O. S. A., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2003.
- . *Expositions of the Psalms (Ennarationes in Psalmos)* 121-150, translated by Maria Boulding, O. S. B., edited by John E. Rotelle O. S. A., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2004.
- . *Letters 100-155*, translated by Roland Teske, edited by Boniface Ramsey, Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2003.
- . *Praeceptum*, translated by Georges Lawless O. S. A., Oxford, Claredon Press, 1987.
- . *Selected writings*, translated by Mary T. Clark, New York, Paulist Press, 1984.
- . *The Monastic Rules*, translated by Sister Agatha Mary S. P. B. and Gerald Bonner, edited by Boniface Ramsey, New York, New City Press, 2004.
- Burt, Donald X. "Peace." *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U. K., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 629-632.
- Chadwick, Henry. *Augustine of Hippo. A Life*. Oxford, University Press, 2009.
- Gillette, Gertrude. *Four Faces of Anger: Seneca, Evagrius Ponticus, Cassian, and Augustine*. Lanham, University Press of America, 2010.

- Lawless, Georges O. S. A. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Possidius. *Vita Augustini. Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, translated by Adolar Zumkeller. New York, Fordham University Press, 1986, pp. 423-428.
- Schrama, Martijn. "Praeposito tamquam patri oboediatur. Augustinus über frieden und gehorsam." *Augustiniana*, vol. 41, 1991, pp. 847-878.
- The Rule of Saint Augustine. Masculine and Feminine Versions: With Introduction and Commentary* by Tarcisius J. van Bavel O. S. A. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1996.
- Zumkeller, Adolar. *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*. New York, Fordham University Press, 1986.