

El Padre James A. Mott, O.S.A. de la Orden de San Agustín, cuyo compromiso mundial es el de promover la justicia social, intenta hacer de su rincón del mundo un lugar habitable y justo para todos.

Como párroco de la iglesia Agustiniana, Nuestra Madre del Buen Consejo- en Los Ángeles, el Padre Jim defiende con frecuencia a las familias de bajos ingresos y las personas trabajadoras que tienen necesidades sociales y económicas.

Él ha hablado con el Ayuntamiento de Los Ángeles acerca de problemas de vivienda que enfrentan las familias de bajos y medianos ingresos, y asiste a las reuniones del Departamento de Planificación Municipal. Recientemente, lideró a un grupo de clérigos en una reunión con el Director de Vivienda de la Ciudad, al cual le expresó las necesidades indispensables de las familias que están obligadas a abandonar sus apartamentos por el aumento de los alquileres y la conversión de condominios.

“Nuestra parroquia ha perdido un número de familias que han tenido que trasladarse a las zonas periféricas, y soportar los largos desplazamientos a la ciudad para trabajar”, dice el padre. Jim. “Estas personas de bajos ingresos no son capaces de pagar los gastos del transporte.”

En Nuestra Madre del Buen Consejo, un grupo muy activo de feligreses está formando un equipo para abordar las cuestiones de justicia social. “A través de correos electrónicos, podemos pasar información de reuniones o audiencias en el Ayuntamiento a nuestra genta y así contar con ellos para asistir y expresar nuestro punto de vista católico,” expresó el padre Jim.

La parroquia también es muy activa con LA Voice (La Voz), una organización interreligiosa que promueve la participación cívica y una mayor calidad de vida en las comunidades. LA Voz es parte de PICO, una organización comunitaria que

ha estado trabajando en colaboración con los obispos católicos de EE.UU. en asuntos de inmigración.

Un esfuerzo en toda la provincia

El Padre Jim también es Presidente del grupo de defensa Comisión de Agustinos de la Provincia Occidental para la Paz y la Justicia. La Comisión se centra en tres temas de justicia social: la inmigración y las necesidades de los inmigrantes, el tráfico humano, y recomendaciones para la distribución limitada de los fondos sociales de los Agustinos.

La Comisión se compone de varios agustinos y ahora también incluye a dos civiles: Claire Padama, un miembro de la Arquidiócesis de San Vicente de Paul Junta, y Lorena Muñoz, una juez de inmigración.

La Comisión ya ha adoptado varias medidas hacia el desarrollo de un mecanismo que funcione permanentemente a la defensa en nombre de los inmigrantes. Durante el invierno, invitaron a un experto en temas de inmigración, el Padre Jack Deegan, OSA, quien es Director de la Oficina de Justicia y Paz de la Provincia de Villanova - para hablar con los agustinos de California. Este visitante ayudó a solidificar los planes iniciales de la Comisión.

La comisión adoptó la petición de los



Padre Jim Mott, O.S.A. participando en a demostración VOICE en el ayuntamiento de Los Angeles.

Obispos católicos de EE.UU. para una reforma migratoria integral.

“Mientras que los inmigrantes tienen muchas necesidades”, expresó el padre Jim, “creo que las prioridades más importantes incluyen un proceso jurídico más adecuado para entrar en los EE.UU. y trabajar aquí, que sus familias permanezcan unidas y que su dignidad humana sea respetada, y que reciban salarios justos y condiciones dignas de trabajo”.

La Comisión está elaborando un plan para mantener informados a los miembros de Provincia sobre temas de inmigración y el progreso en curso. El siguiente paso es desarrollar una declaración política en toda la provincia para sugerir cómo los Agustinos de la Costa Oeste, con su afiliación y recursos limitados, pueden impactar positivamente en el servicio a la población inmigrante.



RAPPING (continued from front page)

superficialities and excesses of pop culture.

Since its inception, hip hop has essentially been counter-cultural, an alternative voice challenging the status quo, says Br. Mark. “In the underground hip hop scene, you find the content a lot more spiritual, intellectual or political. That’s not to say that underground hip hop artists are all angels, or always moral, but it would probably be shocking to a lot of people to learn how divergent the mainstream rap music and underground hip hop culture actually are.”

Br. Mark says the entire people of God are and always will be the focus of all his ministry. Yet being young, he feels he’s in a position to connect with young people in ways other ministers in the Church just do not. He sees that as an important gift.

“I also see that young people do look for places in the Church where they can live out their faith and encounter Christ. But I do believe that the primary ministers to teenagers are in fact teenagers,” he reflects. “The reality is that adults have to learn to show teenagers how to be leaders in youth ministry. I personally want to find ways to incorporate the gifts of young people.”



Br. Mark, third from left, middle row, with members of a youth group.



How the People of God Shaped His Priesthood

Letter from the Editor...

Very Reverend Gary E. Sanders, O.S.A. Provincial, St. Augustine Province



St. Augustine, in one of his *Sermons* (91.3.3) speaks from and about the heart:

With the heart one asks, with the heart one seeks, with the heart one knocks, and it is at the voice of the heart that God opens the door.

In this issue of *Spiritu* we have several examples of people who were led by the Spirit to ask the right questions, seek a valuable treasure, and knock at the door of an opportunity to serve. They remind the rest of us of what it is to be persons of heart.

One Augustinian friar gives witness to how the impoverished of a small village in the Andes were instruments of the Spirit in discerning his vocation to be a priest; another Augustinian priest of the California province is led by the Spirit to speak out on behalf of undocumented immigrants in the Los Angeles metropolis.

It is the seeking hearts of six recent college graduates to listen to the Spirit and volunteer their services so that *doors* may be open to others, and it is that same spirit who guides one of the youngest members of our province not to *bring* Jesus to young people but through the world of hip hop music to help the young find Jesus where they are.

St. Augustine was a man of heart who acutely knew that the intimate asking, seeking, and spiritually knocking at a door is always made richer when one chooses to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit. With this issue of *Spiritu*, I invite you to explore the ways in which the Spirit leads the Augustinians and those with whom we are in collaboration or call.

Fr. Gary



Father Steve in the high Andes, 1991.

Fr. Steve Ochoa, O.S.A. remembers his experiences as a missionary in Peru as though they’d happened yesterday.

To be sure, he recalls the enormous challenges involved in reaching 20,000 people spread out across 67 villages — the bone-jarring muleback rides into the high Andes, the torrential rains, political unrest and violence, the ups and downs and frustrations in ministry, the cholera epidemic, the death threats...

Most of all, however, he remembers the people he served. They were the poorest of the poor, subsistence farmers. They had little, but they always shared what they had. “The most generous people I’ve ever met,” says Fr. Steve.

He will never forget how ministering to them changed him forever and transformed his consciousness as a priest. Their influence is felt today nearly 15 years later and thousands of miles away, in Ojai, California, where Fr. Steve is now pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas parish.

“The Peru experience really taught me how to be patient with people, very trusting, to see God in them,” says Fr. Steve. “Ministering there opened me up to allowing the parishioners I serve to really shape the priesthood I have. If you’re open to it, parishioners will show you how to minister to them according to their needs. It’s not just me giving. It’s them

teaching me through their own faith.”

Fr. Steve is continuing that approach in his present assignment, with his characteristically gentle and caring manner. “I thoroughly enjoy being with the people here at St. Thomas,” he says. “I enjoy learning about their lives. I’m interested in learning where they are, how I can walk with them, how I can best serve them with the talents I have.” (As this issue of *Spiritu* was going to press, Fr. Steve was preparing to conduct a survey — using a detailed questionnaire — of St. Thomas parishioners to identify their visions and concerns.)

An Eventful Journey of Service

Steven Ochoa was born in East Los Angeles in 1953, one of four siblings. The family moved to Palmdale, where young Steve saw the parish priests as important role models and began to think about a vocation. He

(continued inside)

Rapping the Good News to a Hip Hop Beat

Beatitude demands our hearts undergo revolution! Each of us are lights that must make contribution! Christ is our master teacher, we are the student! In order for us to harmonize with angelic music! Blessed are you for yours is the kingdom! Blessed are you for yours shall be wisdom...

— Opening lines of a hip hop song based on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 through 7) written by Brother Mark Menegatti, O.S.A.

Br. Mark Menegatti, O.S.A. has always been passionate about youth ministry, going back to his high school days — sharing his ongoing encounter with the Living Christ with young people — via contemporary music.

Hip hop music has long been a part of who he is, so it’s only natural that he raps his own spiritual lyrics to hip hop’s driving rhythms and beats to evangelize teens and young adults. The positive message yields positive results. His listeners typically ask him to do more songs and do them more frequently.

Now an Augustinian seminarian at the Catholic Theological Union Seminary in Chicago, Br. Mark is quick to explain that true hip hop is not typically the commercialized gangster rap music that glorifies youth rebellion and immorality. To the contrary, hip hop remains outside the mainstream and in fact challenges the

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FATHER STEVE (continued from page 1)



Fr. Steve greeting parishioners at St. Thomas.

attended high school at the Los Angeles Minor Seminary, then entered college at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo. It was there that he met Fr. Harry Neely, O.S.A. and some Augustinian pre-novices. At that point, Steve was not sure the priesthood was for him, and the Augustinians offered the opportunity to serve as a brother. Plus, he was mightily impressed with the Augustinians' emphasis on community life.

Br. Steve first went to Peru in January, 1977, on the first of several short-term assignments that would lead to a career there for the better part of the next 14 years. He went to work fulltime in Peru in 1980 after completing college and theology.

A pivotal moment occurred early on when he was serving as an Augustinian brother in the high Andes. "I was in a town meeting and the parishioners asked what was keeping me from becoming a priest," Fr. Steve recalls. "I gave them a boiler plate answer and moved on. But coming down the mountain toward home was an eight-hour trip, so I had a lot of time to think about the question they'd asked. When I got to the rectory, I told the pastor, 'I think I might want to go on for Holy Orders.'" He was ordained a priest of the Order of St. Augustine in 1983. "I believe God was speaking to me through them," he

says today.

In 1987, Fr. Steve returned to the U.S. and was assigned to St. Thomas for about a year and a half, returning to Peru in 1989. In 1992, summoned home to help his family when his father suffered a fatal heart attack, Fr. Steve had a heart attack himself and had triple bypass surgery at age 39. After recuperation, he went back to serve in Peru until coming back to the U.S. permanently in 1996.

When he returned, Fr. Steve became Director of Social Services at the Villa Nueva Apartments in San Ysidro, a housing complex then run by the Augustinians, and an administrator at Hogar Infantil, the Augustinians' orphanage near Tijuana.

In 1998, Fr. Steve was elected Prior Provincial for the Augustinian West Coast Province. "I was thankful for the opportunity to serve, but it was probably the toughest job I've ever had. It taught me a lot about the people in our Province and left me marveling many times to see how God works through members of our communities."

He taught religion at Villanova Preparatory School, Ojai, for a year before moving fulltime to St. Thomas Aquinas last year as associate pastor.

As he looks back on his varied priestly career to date, Fr. Steve notes how important community life and the support of his brothers have been for him. He is grateful for all the opportunities to serve, and the freedom to use his talents that his Augustinian vocation has afforded him.

Asked what he'd tell a young man considering a vocation about the Augustinians, Fr. Steve advises, "Come, live with us. Let the Spirit direct you. Be open to the possibilities, as yet undefined, that God will give you."

Every year or two, Fr. Steve travels back to Peru to visit and renew friendships among the laymen he served, including those he recruited to help with evangelization and parish-building, as well as fellow missionaries of those years.

"We're always glad to see each other. What I find exciting is that the places where we were working as missionaries are now run by Peruvian Augustinians, because we were able to build up vocations during those years. So I go back to remind myself that even if I didn't see a lot of immediate results then, God was and is working in our midst," he says with a smile.

"This is a life-giving moment," said Most Rev. Daniel Turley, O.S.A.,



Most Rev. Daniel Turley, O.S.A.

Bishop of Chulucanas, Peru, as he presided at the ordination July 10 of Augustinian Fathers Tom Davis, O.S.A. and Kirk Davis, O.S.A. at Our Mother of Good Counsel church in Los Angeles.

Life-giving indeed, not only for Tom and Kirk, but for those who witnessed and

participated in their day of ordination — brother Augustinians, family members, friends — and for all who eventually will be served by these humble, personable ministers of the Gospel.

Their ordinations were the culmination of long, challenging journeys for both of them. Fr. Tom and Fr. Kirk (not blood relatives but now brothers in Christ as Augustinians) both entered the West Coast Augustinians' Pre-novitiate program in 2001. Tom was 44; Kirk was 41.

Tom had held a variety of jobs in sales and management. For 12 years, Kirk worked in Hollywood for a design and advertising firm. Both benefited from the West Coast Augustinians' policy of accepting men who had a calling later in their lives. They both felt warmly welcomed when they were accepted as Pre-novices.

Looking back on their nine-year period of formation, both are grateful.

Fr. Tom: "I don't know where I would be without my brother

Augustinians. They have meant the world to me in my formation as a pre-novice, novice, and as a professed friar. Everyone has been very supportive and many have become close friends as well."

Fr. Kirk: "My vocation has been nurtured not only internally through personal prayer, but externally by the generous and consistent support of my brothers. This has taken the form of community prayer, phone and email contact with friars back home when I've been away, and the way we celebrate milestones in our lives."

Neither will ever forget their sublime life-giving moment of ordination. Both said they experienced overwhelming feelings of joy and gratitude.

Fr. Tom's first assignment is as associate pastor of St.



Father Tom, O.S.A.

Thomas Aquinas parish in Ojai, California, where he served a pastoral internship during his seminary days. "I feel fortunate and blessed to be able to begin my priesthood there," he said. "There are so many terrific people and groups who provide many types of ministries. To be a part of something like this is awesome and humbling."

As his first assignment, Fr. Kirk recently began a new fulltime position as Director of Christian Service at St. Augustine's High School in San Diego. He also helps out part time with weekend Masses at St. Patrick's parish. He welcomes these assignments because he enjoys working in a variety of settings. Taking a longer view of his future, he has this to say: "I find myself thinking that much will be asked of me in the coming years, but I've been well prepared to meet the coming challenges, whatever they may be. I face this future with little or no fear, because I know that I move forward not alone, but supported by a community that is committed to my success."



Father Kirk, O.S.A.

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Augustinian Volunteers Making Differences in the Lives of God's People

Augustinian Volunteers are Catholic men and women between the ages of 21 and 29 with a college degree or the equivalent in work experience who wish to serve God's people in partnership with the Augustinians and others. Living in small communities, they serve for a period of one year at any one of several sites across the U.S. — or at two international sites — in established educational, social and health programs. As they enrich the lives of others, they grow spiritually and personally. To learn more about the Augustinian Volunteers, go to www.osavol.org. Meanwhile, meet this year's Augustinian Volunteers serving in San Diego:

◆ Allison Folker — Villanova University, '09. Volunteering as a Registered Nurse at the St. Vincent De Paul Family Health Center, a medical clinic primarily serving the homeless. "As a former Volunteer told us during our orientation to the Augustinian Volunteers, we aren't getting rich during this year of service, but it is the richest experience we will ever have."



◆ Kaitlyn Kupski — Merrimack College, '09. Working at St. Patrick's parish elementary school as physical education and computer teacher. Also tutors students individually after school. "This is an experience I will never forget, and I will always be able to take everything I have learned — from both my community and my work — with me in the future."

◆ Anne Mollner — Franciscan University, '05. Physical education/computer teacher at St. Patrick's School and assistant at the Augustinian-run Hogar Infantil orphanage near Tijuana, Mexico. "Becoming a Volunteer has allowed a lot of personal growth for me. It has also inspired me to work toward becoming a teacher."



◆ Christopher Schettini — Villanova University, '09. Serves at Hogar Infantil and as children's literacy tutor and preschool assistant at St. Vincent de Paul Village. "I really love the people I serve and my community. The Augustinian Volunteer experience has made me realize how much more I can be doing in my life to truly serve God and His people."

◆ Michael Shanahan — University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, '09. Teaches physical education at Holy Family School. "I'm enjoying community life and living in a new city. It's rewarding to me to see kids able to experience the Catholic education that was so valuable to me. My Volunteer year has given me a firm direction for my future."



◆ Emily Trancik — Villanova University, '09. Works at St. Augustine's High School in Campus Ministry and tutors students after school at St. Patrick's. "I am enjoying having a community of five other people who are always around to share my experiences as an Augustinian Volunteer. I also enjoy my job a lot, as it is challenging me and helping me to learn about myself as a leader."