



Augustinian Recollect  
Vocational Itinerary

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*For the  
harvest is  
plentiful*

ORDER OF  
AUGUSTINIAN  
RECOLLECTS

Augustinian  
Recollect  
Vocational  
Itinerary  
**(ARVI)**



**ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS**  
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# Introduction

## A. What is a vocational itinerary?

The concept of *itinerary* refers to an ordered sequence of successive stages and strategies that, at least as a hypothesis, assures reaching a particular goal. The *vocational itinerary* is a complete and concrete proposal and a path of faith which allows us to understand and live out the Christian life as God's call to life, to faith and happiness. It helps the person who undertakes it to respond with freedom to the loving project which God has for them.

## B. Why is it necessary to have an itinerary in order to encourage vocations?

This way of encouraging vocations in the Church has its origins in a clear concern to attend to the very same truth about man, thinking from the present culture and

from its combined growth. A vocation plants roots in the person concerned, with all that this carries with it: motivations, ideals, qualities, etc. and within it the action of God's grace. In this sense, the Christian vocation and the development of the person go hand in hand. Therefore, the proposal of an itinerary aims to activate the different means of intervention –steps to be taken and stages to go through– which will ease the person called to listen to the particular call that God has for them in their life, and that they make a journey in order to respond to it.

## C. What is the scope of this Augustinian Recollect vocational itinerary?

This itinerary aims to address the challenge of the creation of a vocational culture. *What does vocational culture mean?* The expression “vocational culture” is used to describe the favourable environment which

a vocation needs in order to take root and flourish: the living out of gratitude, openness to transcendence, availability, trusting oneself, affectivity, comprehension, forgiveness, the capacity to dream, wonder and generosity.

Therefore, we are creating a vocational culture when we live with joy and in a responsible way our vocation. This happens when we help people: children, young people, adults, and older people to be aware of their attitudes, their inner resources and the call that God is making to them. In this way we are preparing them so that they can come to ask themselves about the meaning of their lives, about their future and their vocation as people and as Christians.

#### **D. Who are the recipients?**

This vocational itinerary has been thought of for accompanying vocations in a general sense, and also specific vocations within the Church. In this way, the recipients are Christians who profess and celebrate their faith (*liturgy*), are associated fraternally to a community of believers (*communion*), they carry out a service of charity (*diaconate*) and are ready to be witnesses of the love of God which dwells

in their hearts (*testimony*). But this also includes anyone who is trying to deepen their search, looking for a transcendent meaning in their lives.

#### **E. What structure does it have?**

The outline for this itinerary is inspired by the work of the seed sower and is divided into three stages: ploughing, sowing and cultivating. The first phase addresses the challenge of creating a vocational culture; the second of awakening vocations; and the third of cultivating vocations through guidance.

This three-part outline has been chosen because the work of encouraging vocations could be compared with what a farmer does in preparing the earth and in sowing the seed in the field. In this way as the farmer ploughs the earth, sows the seed and cultivates the growing plant, so also does the promotor of vocations prepare, sow and guide the growth of vocations in the Church. His mission consists in offering the right conditions so that the seed, by itself and as a response to the love of God, can germinate grow and give fruit in obedience to God.

## F. What are the keys in this itinerary?

This vocational itinerary takes on the three vertices for vocational culture proposed by the *II Latin American Congress on vocations* (Cartago, Costa Rica, 2011): the theology or vocational mentality; the spirituality or vocational sensibility and the pedagogy or vocational praxis. These three keys - *mentality*, *sensitivity*, and *praxis* - are integrated in the development of the itinerary in the following way:

**1. Vocational theology.** Every stage on the journey is lit up by the trajectory of faith and the mission of the prophet Elijah. This goes from his encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb until the consecration of Elisha as a prophet in the Damascus desert.

<sup>15</sup> The Lord said to him:

- “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram.

<sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

<sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put

to death any who escape the sword of Jehu.

<sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

<sup>19</sup> So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

<sup>20</sup> Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

<sup>21</sup> So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plough and trap to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

(1 Kings 19:15-21).

**2. Vocational Spirituality.** Given that it is an Augustinian recollect vocational itinerary, the development of each phase is marked by some characteristic notes of Augustinian spirituality and of Augustinian recollect spirituality.

**3. Vocational pedagogy.** For each step there is offered a concrete pedagogical proposal. Said proposal is based on three pillars:

Motivational **A**ttitudes, **M**eans to be used and **A**ctions to be developed (**AMA**).

**G. What place does this document have in the OAR pastoral framework for promoting vocations?**

This itinerary expresses, adapts and applies to a particular field the vocational guidance of other documents on which we base the pastoral promotion of vocations in our Order: The Constitutions and the Formation Plan (*Design*), the Pastoral Vocational Plan (*Project*) and the Pastoral Vocational Programme (*Programming*).

# Ploughing







# 1. First stage: “Ploughing”

The Lord sows with abundance and freedom the seed of the Word of God. But for the human heart to take in the Word of God it is necessary to find and root out the weeds, the stones, the hardness which impedes the fertility and the fruitfulness of the earth. The response to God’s call is given, up to a point, when the person is prepared like “ready earth” to receive the good seed. In this preparation of the earth God has a central role as the one who shelters us and is disposed to us. United to this mysterious work of grace is also the specific task of the vocational promotor who ploughs, makes furrows and openings so that this word of God can become a reality in people’s hearts.

So it is that this first stage is centred on the figure of the vocational promotor and his mission. The principal agent of vocational promotion is the whole Christian

community. In our case, as a religious family, this is especially true in the local community. Therefore, all the baptized are workers for the pastoral promotion of vocations, although each one from his particular vocation, his living out of his actual situation and his possibilities. It falls to each one of us to create the necessary conditions, in order to bring about an environment which would be *significantly* “vocational”.

## 1.1. Vocational theology (in the light of the Word)

*1 Kings* 19: 15-16

Elijah makes present God’s judgment on Mount Carmel, uprooting the cult to the god of Baal, which put in danger the Alliance between Yahweh and his people. Persecuted and threatened with death for such an action, he makes his way North towards Mount Horeb. This jour-

ney represents for Elijah a kind of pilgrimage, as a return to the fervour of that primary first love. With him something in Israel also returns to the desert, in order to come back to the authentic origin of this people. Crossing the desert, and passing through the crisis of his own purification in the “solitary of the desert”, he enters into the cave of Horeb, God’s mountain. From there he emerges with the strength of inner resistance when faced with the threat that Israel would forget the Alliance; “I am consumed with zeal for the Lord”. God shows himself to him in an unexpected way, not in the hurricane or the strength of the earthquake or the consuming fire, but rather in the still breeze.

God again asks Elijah “what are you doing here?”, and he, putting aside his fears, puts aside his previous ideas and takes on a new mission: to anoint kings and prophets that will keep alive the memory of the Alliance (v.15).

Through the progression indicated by his triple anointing, there is an emphasis on the election of Elisha as a prophet. About this last person we are given his name, his lineage and his place of origin (v.16). With this it is made clear the importance that genealogy has in Israel at the moment of undertaking a mission, the concrete identity of the one who

is called and the concrete situation where the divine calling will take root.

The figure of Elijah highlights very much the spiritual qualities, as much as the concrete tasks, of the vocational promotor. He, like the prophet Elijah, from the moment of his face to face meeting with God leaves aside his fears and uncertainties and, in obedience to this Word and with a heart burning with love for the Alliance, goes out to meet those who are called. The vocational sending out, like the prophet Elijah, requires generosity and courage in the various stages, (or we could say “terrains”). This is where the concrete life of people is reflected, in order to dispose them to take hold of the gift of the divine call.

## **1.2. Vocational Spirituality ...**

It falls to everyone to generate in our concrete spaces and lived reality meaningful vocational spaces, that awaken in everyone the sensibility for a vocational response. In this sense we are ploughing the earth when we allow the people with whom we come into contact to situate themselves before the adventure of discovering their own truth, before the threshold of the mystery which impregnates all life (who am

I? where do I come from and where am I going? why am I here? Etc.).

### 1.2.1. ...*Augustinian*

“In order to convince ourselves that He is the one that cultivates, listen to the Lord: I am the true vine, you are the vine shoots, and my Father is the vine-dresser. If he is called the vine-dresser, he cultivates a field. What field? He cultivates us. The vine-dresser of this visible earth can plough, dig, plant, and if he finds water, do some watering; could he also make it rain? Could he even give growth, make the seed come forth, make the roots go deep into the earth, that it would grow tall, adding vigour to the branches, packing them with fruit and elaborating them with leaves? Still more our vine-dresser, God the Father can do all this in us” (*Sermon* 213, 10).

This sermon from Saint Augustine refers to the handing over of the *Symbol of the faith (the Creed)*, and in his interpretation he turns to the passage of the true vine. The saint reminds us that the vine-dresser can plough and plant, but he cannot make it rain or grow. In the same way, the vocational director does his work having at his disposal earth, but he must also receive with patience and trust the mission which

depends only upon God: it is He who really sows and cultivates the earth. And we are this earth.

### 1.2.2. ...*Augustinian Recollect*

The dream of the Augustinian friars, who supported the inspiration that the Holy Spirit encouraged through the movement of the recollection, continues to be the ideal which also encourages the task of promoting vocations. From this it is that the Augustinian Recollect vocational director, with trust in God, collaborates with Him to prepare the hearts of people. In such a way so that they can come to welcome life as a gift, and can come to live it as an adventure.

## 1.3. **Pedagogy for vocational promotion**

The task of the vocations promoter consists in creating the conditions that help set off among people some *deep-set vocational attitudes*, that at the same time awaken the vocational seed that God has sowed in them.

- a) Attitudes to work on in all the baptized

In what follows we shall present some vocational attitudes that

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the activity of vocations promotion could, and should, encourage amongst all people.

- Readiness to encourage the perception of Mystery, which is present in all reality and in the depths of all people.
- Acceptance of this Mystery, as that which gives meaning to the limitations of human beings, suffering and death.
- A clear sense of life as a gift
- Openness to freedom and gratefulness.
- A sense of freedom, responsibility, truth, tolerance, comprehension and forgiveness.
- Desire for transcendence and personal realization.
- Sensitivity for beauty.
- Respecting and promoting the dignity of others.
- Interest to continually form questions about life, especially those which favour important decisions.
- Constant search for a better future.
- Rejection of injustice.
- A sense of wonder.

- Empathy for those who suffer and who go through difficult situations.
- Commitment to all initiatives that favour peace, dialogue and fraternity.

**b) Means to be used by people engaged in vocational promotion**

The participants involved in vocational promotion have at their disposal various means to create a vocational culture, and to open up vocational spaces. For this stage, the resources have more to do with all that which creates the possible conditions for the encounter of people with themselves, and with others. In such encounters we need to ensure an openness to the transcendent. If these experiences are elaborated and shared, they will surely set off in people a series of questions which will drive them towards a search for answers.

- Experiences of difficulty or contrast.
- Starting off the capacity for wonder.
- Forming existential questions.
- Experience of the inner life, silence and solitude.

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- Education in social skills (thankfulness, forgiveness, listening, dialogue, empathy...).
- Enabling intellectual interest, desire and searching.
- Charitable initiatives.
- The practice of making decisions.
- Group and co-operative working.
- Narrating in the first person distinct lived experiences.
- Education in the sensitivity and appreciation of goodness, truth and beauty.
- Activities in touch with nature.

### c) Actions to be developed

In what follows we offer a series of initiatives directed towards helping people to ask deep questions about the meaning of life, and to cultivate those vocational attitudes which are set off as a result.

- Starting off experiences of “contrast” that introduce them into silence and solitude.
- Programmed experiences of risk: suspension with the normal rhythm of life, living in places where an austerity of life is by itself required. Putting aside for a time the use of means of communication, taking on a life with fixed timetables, etc.
- Taking part in concrete initiatives that revive the capacity of wonder, such as: visiting soup kitchens, centres for social rehabilitation...
- Promoting self-knowledge through talks, written questions, personal interviews, etc.
- Elaborating experiences on past life or the present, pleasing and unpleasing, and communicating them with others.
- Programming experiences in contact with nature.
- Cultivating the need for attention, imagination, questioning, intuition, a contemplative attitude and training in aesthetics.
- Organizing activities in groups that favour deep meaningful interpersonal encounters that allow for learning about gratefulness.
- Discovering the false ways – self-delusions – in which we fill our personal emptiness.
- Projecting images, videos and information that show the destructive capacity that man has when he is led by his selfish interests.

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- Entrusting tasks that encourage personal autonomy and the use of responsibility towards others.
- Introducing discipline in personal and group work.
- Praying for vocations.
- Educational resources
- Vocational trips (once every three years).
- Formation in our ministries on vocational culture (in meetings with religious, pastoral leaders and/or lay people in general).
- Augustinian Recollect song festival (once a year).
- Missionary experience *in sitio* “going to the outskirts”, with feedback (once a year).
- Camps – human values and teamwork (every year).
- Cinema club – human values and being aware of reality ([www.cineyvocacion.org](http://www.cineyvocacion.org)).



Sowing





## 2. Second stage: “Sowing”

He who sows the good seed in the heart of man is always, and only, the Lord. The vocation, like the seed and the Word, is a mysterious gift of Providence. The sowing of vocations is a task which is the responsibility of all the Christian and religious community. In this sense, we have to involve ourselves in the sowing of vocations. In this way, the vocations promoter is the humble collaborator sowing in God’s field, who knows that part of the seed is destined to fall on “good ground”. That is, in hearts able to take hold of the call and being disposed to make it grow so that it might bear fruit.

### 2.1. Vocational theology (in the light of the Word)

*1 Kings* 19, 17-18

The vocation of Elisha, without yet being set off, is acquiring the context of the vocation of a prophet. Given the urgency of the mo-

ment this takes form in “zeal for the things of God”, or what is the same thing, from a sense of indignation because the chosen people are abandoning the Alliance. This is why the biblical text expresses a strong tension between the judgement meted out by God due to the infidelity of those who have handed themselves over to idolatry, and the recognition of fidelity by those who have not bent the knee before the god of Baal. In this sense, the vocation of Elisha will be ordered towards the culmination of God’s judgement that will try to re-establish the obedience to the Alliance with those who stayed faithful. And to handing over the deserters to the disgrace of living on the margins of God’s love (v. 17).

The mission of Elijah will consist in approaching Elisha, and preparing his heart to accept the vocation to be a prophet. For his part Elisha will be untied with the seven thousand men who reserved themselves to Yahweh. They have not bent their knees before Baal and their lips have

not kissed him, and so come to represent the chosen ones of God to rekindle the love of the Alliance (v.18).

Those who have stayed faithful and firm to the Alliance are those who are prepared to take hold of the seed as fertile land. The remnant of Israel, those who praise him with a clean heart and pure lips, constitute the “good earth” which is well disposed for the seed which falls on it and which gives fruit. Elijah, as a simple mediator, encourages the prophetic vocation in the heart of Elisha. In this sense, the mission of the vocational director, like that of the prophet Elijah, consists in diligently cooperating in the sowing of the divine Word. This, made to increase by the strength of the Spirit, comes forth in the good earth from those who are disposed to receive it.

## **2.2. Vocational spirituality...**

### *2.2.1. ...Augustinian*

“You did call and shout and broke through my deafness; you gleamed and shone and chased away my blindness; I breathed in your sweet fragrance and I drew my breath for you; I tasted you, and hungered and thirsted for you;

you touched me and I burned for your peace” (*Confessions* 10, 27, 38). How can we prepare a heart well-disposed, to take hold of the Word of life? Saint Augustine, despite his great resistance, shares his experience of this process in the book of his *Confessions*. The key is the fact that God himself surprised Augustine, overwhelming his expectations and prepared him to taste the fount of love. This is the fundamental task of every vocations promotor, to enable the one he guides with the testimony of his own life, so that he can make his own this same experience as that of Augustine.

### *2.2.2. ...Augustinian Recollect*

“In the same way that our target is the love of God, so also our principal concern care has to be everything which closest to it enflames us. As is its cult and praise, the use of the sacraments and the exercise of meditation and prayer” (*Way of Life* 1, 1). Promoted by the spiritual disposition that characterized the recollect movement, the Augustinian Recollect promotor of vocations sows the word with generosity and waits with trust for the signs of a vocation.

### 2.3. Pedagogy of sowing vocations

Sowing for vocations together with the heart of the Gospel's message – the kerygma – are put together in order to bring about the *vocational kerygma*. Its concrete content could be summed up thus: "Your life is not the result of chance or an error, it has its origin in love and has been created by God. For this reason, you can be sure that you are unconditionally and definitively loved. This origin of love has impressed upon your existence a sense of order, according to the model of Christ. Your life has an objective meaning that you have to discover little by little. It is about a gift which is not used up on itself, but rather it is ordered towards others. To develop this gift is your task. When you assume this design and this direction, your freedom acquires new meaning, which is completely original" (LAVANIEGOS GONZÁLEZ, Emilio y BARRÓN PORCAYO, Rubén, *El Kerigma vocacional. Materiales para un primer anuncio de la vocación*, [The vocational kerygma. Materials for the first vocational call] México, 2009).

The sowing of vocations consists in the patient and continuous labour of the explicit call of human

and Christian life as a vocation. This has to be heard in all parts of the Church: liturgical celebrations, catechesis, prayer, charitable actions, witness, etc. And it should be directed towards everyone, for just like the Good News it has in its ramifications a universality which ignores distances of age, race, languages, nations...

- a) Attitudes to work on in all the baptized
  - Willingness to listen.
  - An interior conviction that "we are all a gift."
  - Trust in God's unconditional love.
  - Awareness of having been created freely to love.
  - Giving of our own life as a way of fulfilment.
  - Concern and interest for others.
  - Detachment and freedom from material things.
  - Overcoming frustrations and accepting difficulties as a possible means for growth.
  - Strength in the face of discouragement.
  - Sincerity, simplicity and humility.

**b) Means to be used by those involved in vocational promotion**

- Breaking through isolation amongst the young.
- Implication and responsibility in doing good.
- Communion ties and a sense of belonging.
- Skills for group integration and interpersonal relations.
- Working in groups for personal growth.
- Forms of service which require effort without payment.
- Life projects.
- Capacity for personal and group initiative.
- Explicit proclamation, direct and personal of the *vocational kerygma*.
- Self-knowledge and self-acceptance.
- Implication of the religious community in sowing vocations.

**c) Actions to be developed**

- Organizing and offering spaces for silence and solitude focused on an encounter and dialogue with God.
- Connecting with the personal inner world and with personal qualities and abilities through

questions, and reflecting on the place which God takes in this encounter.

- Guidance in *lectio divina* (being trained to listen). Selecting biblical texts in which it is shown how God takes the initiative and goes out to meet people to start off a loving dialogue.
- Animating celebrations like the Eucharist, that bring about the experience of feeling deeply loved by God and the certainty of being able to love.
- Motivating young people so that they can be active participants in their families.
- Encouraging strong experiences of giving and commitment based on gratitude.
- Implementing catechesis as a particular space for announcing the vocational kerygma (call to life, to faith and to the happiness of a specific vocation).
- Maintaining an open dialogue with the young, so that they can share what it means to say that “life is a gift received, and that because it is a gift tends to be transformed in something to be shared”.
- Strengthening and encouraging amongst the young examples of “extraordinary lives”, which encourage them to do great things.

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- Having personal discussions in which young people can express who they are, and the personal difficulties they are going through.
- Organize meetings which promote gratitude, fulfilment and joy.
- Addressing with the young a direct vocational proposal: Would you like to deepen your faith? Have you thought about having a Christian family of your own? Have you thought about becoming a priest? Have you at any time thought about being a religious? Does the missionary life attract you?
  - propio pozo [Drinking from your own well] and La danza de los sentimientos [The dance of feelings].
  - Registration cards.
- In communities
  - Exposition on the charism/ vocational fairs.
  - Vocations week.
  - Vocational camp (Kairos).
  - Life project I.
  - Life project II.
  - Missionary experience.
  - Vocational seedbeds.

### **2.4. Pedagogical resources**

- Personal
  - Point of contact dialogue with young people who are searching.
  - Personal talks.
  - Christian spiritual direction.
  - Exercises on self-knowledge and overcoming difficulties (see the book *Bebiendo del*
- Celebrations
  - Monthly vocational Eucharist.
  - Lectio Divina.
  - Day of prayer for OAR vocations (on the 28th every month)
  - Vocational Holy Hour.





Cultivating





## 3. Third stage: “Cultivating”

The answer to God’s call comes about when he who listens to the Word of God makes an effort to grow, from that what he senses that he is called to be. For this reason, everyone prepares the earth, their earth. Nonetheless, it is also true that we all need to receive the necessary guidance so that the answer we give to the Lord is an authentic one. From this, after the sowing of the Word the vocations promotor has to guide those, who having listened to the call, want to respond.

The third stage of this itinerary is centred on vocational guidance. Guidance consists in the human and spiritual support, that one experienced in the faith and discipleship of Christ, lends to one less experienced. So it is that after adverting to someone the call that God makes to them, with the help of a guide they then clarify, discern and respond to it with freedom and responsibility based on a life project. Therefore,

directly implicated in this stage of the process is God the Father, who guides those who feel called to follow his Son Jesus Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit.

### 3.1. Vocational theology (in the light of the Word)

*1 Kings* 19, 19-21

Elijah obeys God with a heart burning for Yahweh, and goes to where Elisha is to consecrate him as his successor as prophet. Elisha is called, through the mediation of Elijah, to the service of a prophetic vocation whilst he is at work in the field ploughing (v.19). The prophet from Carmel goes to search for God’s chosen ones where they live and carry out their normal life; where they work, suffer and find joy. Elisha is “ploughing”, that is, preparing the earth for the harvest. And whilst he does his daily work,

we could say that he also prepares his own earth. That is, he avails himself to take hold of the divine call which is made fertile in fruits of love in the “fertile earth” of his heart.

Next stage, Elijah throws his cloak over him, to show with an external sign a visible symbol of the expressive call of God (v.19). With this gesture, Elijah makes him take part in his vocation as a prophet. Elisha quickly takes hold of this divine call, and from this moment decides freely to follow him.

Elisha’s determination to go and say goodbye to his parents expresses the rupture that the call brings with it, for he leaves one way of life to start another as a prophet (v.20). This new direction which effects Elisha’s life is symbolized in the sacrifice of a pair of oxen with which he worked. And also through the invitation to a feast with the intention of saying goodbye to his people (v. 21). Once he has left the fields, the oxen and his family he enters into the service of his vocation as a prophet.

The figure of Elijah constitutes a correct response in terms of the service which the vocations promotor has to carry out. Because he is the model of a guide who puts himself next to the one who is called, and helps him to discover his vocation and encourages him to respond to

the mission. Elisha, for his part, with the help of Elijah, accepts the divine call and puts himself at the service of the prophetic vocation.

Any guidance which is given to help flourish a vocation implies on the part of the guide to “put himself next to” the one who is called, to share the spirit of the vocation which he himself lives and to enable the other to generously respond to God’s call. The behaviour of the one who is accompanied requires that he weighs things up, informs himself and takes decisions. In this way there flourishes from within him the truth of his life and the willingness to put himself at the service of the mission.

## **3.2 Vocational spirituality...**

### *3.2.1. ...Augustinian*

“With eagerness I can urge others to this commitment, and in the name of the Lord I have companions that have accepted it, convinced by my ministry” (*Letter 157, 4, 39*). In this letter, which Saint Augustine sent to Saint Hilary of Poitiers as a response to his letter, he praises his religious enthusiasm for the Word of God and for the care he takes of his salvation. In it he responds to the questions that Hilary asks

about the perfection of justice and the possibility of living without sin. Almost at the end of the letter the saint from Hippo shows to him the reason for his constant encouragement: to invite others to abandon all riches, in order to have a treasure in heaven and later they can follow the Lord. The vocations promotor has readily assumed this sensitivity in order to lead others to the radical following of Christ, in the diverse vocations in the Church.

### *3.2.2. ...Augustinian recollect*

The religious communities which blossomed as much as in *Talavera de la Reina (Spain)* as in *El Desierto de la Candelaria (Columbia)* incarnate the ideal of the Augustinian recollect life. In these places there was the presence of the Spirit and the cultivation of a life centred on God. This along with persons who interacted amongst themselves with vision and determination in order to discern and take decisions, and those who worked putting themselves at the service of others. The way of life of these two communities is a stimulus for the vocations promotor who is a guide, so that he who is called can indicate a way of living the beauty of his own vocation for the mission.

## **3.3 Pedagogy for vocational guidance**

Guidance is the specific task of the vocations promotor and/or the local promotor: to him it falls to awaken, discern and cultivate the specific vocations within the Church. These materials offer a horizon in which to understand and practice vocational guidance, but it does not take the place of the responsibility of the promotor or the vocational director in the specific task of qualified guidance.

Vocational guidance, more than any stage of the itinerary, corresponds to the general lines which pass through all the vocational process. This itinerary specifies four concrete actions for the practice of guidance: “educating”, “forming”, “discerning” and “serving”. Before developing each one of these vocational actions, we will provide some pedagogical criteria for such guidance:

1. The reference for locating the mission of the guide we find in the Bible. In this itinerary we have opted for the figure of Elijah.
2. Guidance is always a personal relationship of trust and close-

by support, which allows for the expression of affection and reciprocity.

3. The skill which the guide has is the aptitude of relating through dialogue; a good vocational guide listens a lot and talks little.
4. Every person has within themselves the secret of their own life, that the guide has to help discover; he should do so with delicate, respectful and patient communication.
5. What is important is that the person finds their own identity, helping to awaken the vocation which dwells in the heart of the young person.
6. More specifically, the end of this guidance is to advert, discern and help the person to respond to God's personal calling.
7. It is important to agree on the frequency of the talks, how long they will last, previous work to be done and other indications that the guide considers could help or that the person who is being led suggests.
8. This process does not look for success or the efficiency of the same process, but rather to help

think through the decision of a vocation.

9. It is a good idea that the guide shares the process of their own experience of God and their vocational response to the Lord; without giving the impression that is definitive criteria but rather an indication of his disposition to journey together.
10. It should not be forgotten that the most adequate resource for guidance is frequent prayer before the Lord by the one who guides the one who is discerning.

### *3.3.1. Educating*

Vocational discernment implies journeying through a process that goes from the shy listening of God's voice up until the certainty of faith, which is received through the Word. From the listening of the divine call up until the concrete vocational decision, time is needed in order that it be cultivated. This first moment of discernment corresponds to "educating", and has as an objective reaching a certain clarity on the awareness of a vocation, that is to recognize it is genuine.

Educate comes from the Latin "*e-ducere*" which means to take

out, extract, bring out something which is inside. That is the truth of the one who is to be educated, to find what they have in their heart even when they neither know nor understand it themselves; be it weaknesses or aspirations. In this way the freedom of the vocational response is favoured.

The process of vocational education is very similar to the process of growth in a seed. For it involves unfolding the strength that is inside, in order that the originality of its being can start to be shown.

**a) Attitudes to work on by those who feel called**

- The search for God as the beginning of man's happiness.
- Living out the vocational process with trust and sincerity.
- Availability to let themselves be helped.
- Preference for the truth over security, for the adventure of growth above the conformity of known securities.
- Total openness to God's plans.
- Accepting the vocation as a way of fully trusting in God.
- Giving up considering the vocation as the result only of personal effort.

- Discovery of the mystery which is part of life and the vocation.
  - Patience and calm in the vocational process, without always delaying things for another time.
  - Availability to discover without fear their wounds, and to cure them in a new horizon of understanding them; that of divine tenderness.
  - Taking advantage of the events and experiences in the discernment process.
  - A constant desire for prayer as a natural path for the vocational search.
  - Willingness to meet the Lord in prayer, where God the Father is particularly listened to in the call to follow his Son.
- b) Means to be used by those who guide the process**
- Support and guidance in the knowledge of self (self-esteem, strengths, limitations).
  - Helping the "one called" so that they can read their personal history from the perspective of faith, and to discover in the make-up of life God's dreams for them.
  - Strengthening the gift of vocation through the experience of

forgiveness and mercy of the God who heals them from within.

- Education in perseverance in order to realize their goals.

c) Actions to be developed

- Strengthening the process of self-knowledge (physical, psychological and spiritual) that allows the person to free themselves of their fears, and the clinging to securities (known or unknown) related to the very same vocation.
- Developing the process of guidance in affectivity, relating to their own body and sexuality from the perspective of respect and clarity, and offering paths for integration and maturity.
- Help in accepting and overcoming emotional conflicts that indicate hidden affectivity problems.
- Offering materials to be worked on that favour a faith-based reading of their personal biography, mainly in their emotional development.
- Promoting personal autonomy, thus avoiding the escape into “defensive strategies”. And so rescuing them from some of the dangers which effect personal decisions (inhibition, excessive reserve in communicating, isolation, etc.).

- Education in the discipline of constancy and faithfulness in work.
- Proposing that the one who is guided writes a vocational diary.
- Participating in prayer groups in the parish or religious community.
- Celebrating and appreciating in prayer the gift of a vocation.

*3.3.2. Forming*

Vocations promotion, in general, and the guidance of vocations in particular is directed to guide young people to reach the best of their possibilities according to Christ’s model (Cf. *Guadium et spes*, 22). The vocations promotor in the realization of his task of guiding, proposes to the one who is on this journey a model of humanity; that of Christ.

Without a doubt, the person of Jesus Christ is always present on the horizon in the vocation of the one who is called. However, in this stage of the process he acquires a special importance. For this moment suggests to the person involved a lifestyle, a way of being and living. Thus they themselves recognize their identity and the truth about their lives, the measure of love in which they are also loved. Christ is, at the

## Augustinian Recollect Vocational Itinerary

same time, the one who forms and the form itself. The one who guides is a mediator for God's action, that helps the believer to recognize this call and let themselves be formed by it. Therefore, the key is in guiding the one who is called to take on the same feelings as Christ did.

### a) Attitudes to work on by the one who feels called

- Perceiving things in terms of faith.
- Willingness to put their life in play for something, or better yet for Someone.
- Recognition of the presence of Christ in the different circumstances of life.
- Openness to let themselves be shaped by the way of being and life of Christ, in order to come to have the same feelings as he did.
- Appraisal of the calling as a way of fulfilment.
- Living out of the notion of having received a gift.
- Thankfulness to God, and to others, for the good things which have happened and continue to happen in their lives.
- Accepting what needs to be given up as a result of taking decisions.

- Frequent contact with the Lord in prayer.

### b) Means to be used by those who guide

- Vocational experiences with communities.
- Catechesis about vocations.
- Presentations about the person of Jesus Christ and discipleship.
- Presentations on the biographies of some of the Augustinian recollect saints.
- Sharing knowledge about the Augustinian recollect charism.
- Moments of celebration and vocational prayer.
- Personal talks.
- Formation on prayer methods (one resource: "formation in the Augustinian *lectio divina*").

### c) Actions to be developed

- Suggesting to a young person the challenging path of following Jesus.
- Orientating the distinct daily activities (studying, working, resting, leisure and personal relationships) from a friendship with Christ.
- Vocational experience living with a community centred on the person of Jesus Christ.



- Catechesis on the particular vocations, as a form of being and living in Christ Jesus and in the Church.
- Presenting the charismatic identity of the Augustinian recollects as a specific way of living the faith in Christ.
- Offering resources for prayer and talking with Jesus.
- Invitation to a regular sacramental life.
- Carrying out radical gestures: constant apostolate, experience of volunteering in situations and places of poverty and exclusion, changing life habits...

### *3.3.3. Discerning*

The vocational process guides the itinerary of the believer so that they are disposed to take hold of the divine call, and give a free response. The decisive element in this process is the free action of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, vocational discernment consists essentially in the attentive listening to the Holy Spirit, which guides the life of every believer and shows them the concrete way by which God wishes to lead them. Making a vocational discernment is to listen and understand the “silent and powerful” voice of God in

the different moments of life. This relativizes human limitations which weaken the perception of this voice, guiding and sustaining the growth and the response of the call.

- a) Attitudes to work on by those who feel called
- The desire to live vocationally their own existence.
- Understanding and comprehension of what every specific vocation in the Church implies.
- Realism about their own possibilities to live out the vocation: aptitudes, qualities, interior disposition, etc., (*suitability*).
- Accepting changes which are asked of when required to make decisions.
- Willingness to adopt this lifestyle, although it seems demanding.
- Openness to listening, silence and solitude as a way of meeting with God (*sincere devotion*).
- Right intention.
- Desire for personal transformation with God’s help, and that of the guide.
- Authenticity and openness in order to purify deep-seated motivations.

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- Zeal for the things of God, without rigidity or relativism.
  - A well-organized life and discipline in ways of behaving.
  - A well-ordered emotional life enabling personal encounter with others.
  - Capacity to make decisions freely.
  - Trust in God in the journey of responding to a vocation.
  - Frequent relationship with the Lord in prayer, and allowing for the interior life.
- b) Means to be used by those guide**
- Experiences of meeting with Augustinian recollect communities.
  - Vocational experiences living with communities.
  - Catechesis on the vocation and on vocations, with particular insistence on the religious and priestly life.
  - Presentation of the action of the Holy Spirit in following Jesus Christ.
  - Presentation on the life of some Augustinian recollect saints, highlighting the discernment that they made in important moments in their lives.
- Times of prayer prepared with vocational emphasis; it is recommendable the celebration of the Eucharist and the exposition of the blessed sacrament.
  - Personal talks in which discernment is especially cared for.
  - Use of psychological techniques (therapies, tests, etc.).
- c) Actions to be developed**
- Carrying out of personal talks (*at least once a month*).
  - Frequent visits to an Augustinian recollect community.
  - Spiritual exercises.
  - Reading one's own life from the perspective of faith.
  - Making a visit to the candidates' families.
  - Applying some sort of psychological test.
  - Undertaking experiences of volunteering or pastoral placement in a ministry.
  - Participation in some important celebrations for our religious family (professions, ordinations, anniversaries, day of the Order, etc.).
  - Experiences living the "Augustinian recollect charism and discernment".

### 3.3.4. *Serving*

No vocation is born of itself or for itself, but rather is always a call to mission. A vocation always comes from the generous heart of God and grows in the good earth of a faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love. The response to God's call to a specific vocation is a fruit which matures in a well cultivated field of reciprocal love which becomes mutual service; in the context of an authentic ecclesial life. From this comes the importance of inviting young people to participate with trust in a communal path that awakens in them their best energies and the handing over of their lives (cf. Francisco, *Message for the LI World day of prayer for vocations*, Rome, 2014).

- a) Attitudes to work on for those who feel called
- Attention to the needs of others to help them in concrete initiatives.
  - Disposition to serve others with constancy and effort.
  - Accepting the mission as that which encompasses the life of the person.
  - Humility and charity in the services which are carried out.

- Generosity in carrying out various tasks or services.
- Promotion of justice and the dignity of people.
- The strength of character to accept the frustration which is part of not being able to solve others problems.
- Interest in knowing about and supporting the distinct initiatives of social responsibility that exist in their surroundings.

b) Means to be used by those who feel called

- Experiences of individual and group apostolate appropriate to their age.
- Organization and evaluation in groups of services offered.
- Praying for people with whom they come into contact in the service they offer.
- Adequate materials for their age, in order to get to know about and be informed about social realities.

c) Actions to be developed

- Carrying out some type of social and/or ecclesial action with people who require help.

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- Guiding and evaluating these experiences in personal talks.
- Reading, and informing themselves about social reality both globally and locally.
- Helping in tasks and services in their own homes.
- Collaborating in the services of the Christian community (catechesis, distributing food to the poor, visiting the sick, etc.), and in liturgical celebrations (reading in the Church, co-ordinating, participation, etc.).
- Experience of mission.

### 3.4 Notebooks

#### Beginning:

Notebook 1. Cultivating a field (explaining the meaning of guiding and following an itinerary).

Notebook 2. Introduction to vocations.

Notebook 3. General information: family, state of health, knowledge about the faith and educational history.

#### Educating:

Notebook 4. Autobiography

Notebook 5. Affectivity-sexuality.

Notebook 6. Qualities and personal limitations.

Notebook 7. Relating to others.

#### Forming:

Notebook 8. Friendship and relationship with Jesus.

Notebook 9. Forms of Christian life.

Notebook 10. Way of life of the Augustinian recollects (1<sup>st</sup> level).

#### Discerning:

Notebook 11. Listening to Jesus.

Notebook 12. Free to follow Jesus.

Notebook 13. Confessio (Reading life in an Augustinian way following the *Confessions*).

Notebook 14. Augustinian recollects: who we are, where we are and what we do (2<sup>nd</sup> level).

#### Serving:

Notebook 15. Global and local social reality.

Notebook 16. Serving in the Church (mission).





# Conclusion





# Conclusion

“The earth is, above all, every man’s heart,  
in particular that of young people,  
those who you direct in your service of listening and guidance:  
a heart often confused and disorientated,  
but able to contain in itself unimaginable levels of commitment;  
available to open itself in the fullness of a life handed over in love to  
Jesus, able to follow him in totality and with the certainty  
that comes from having found the greatest treasure in life and living”  
(Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the participants in a European congress  
on vocations promotion*, Rome, 2009).

The work of promoting vocations in our Augustinian recollect family is like the labour of the worker, who prepares the earth and sows the seed in the field. Sowing is always a risky and demanding task; there may or may not be fruits. The vocations promotor also prepares, sows and waits for the birth and growth of vocations in the Church. Their task consists in offering the conditions so that the seed, by itself, and as a response to God’s love, can unfold, grow and give fruit.

This itinerary wants to be a pedagogical tool for those who encourage and guide the new vocations in the Church; so that they can be disposed to be “good earth” which listens, takes in and lives the Word

and so give fruit. Nonetheless, we find ourselves before the mystery of God passing through people’s lives. So it is that the closer we are to those who feel called to Jesus in prayer, meditating on the Word and taking part in the Eucharist, greater will grow in them the joy to collaborate in the service of his Kingdom. It is this, and not human effort, that will make the harvest plentiful in the abundance of grace (cf. Francisco, *Message for the LI World day of prayer for vocations*, Rome, 2014).

The framework of the itinerary is taken from the “vocational trend” originating in the different international congresses on vocations: vocational mentality, vocational sensitivity and vocational praxis. Every one of these key elements has a key



role throughout the document. Of these three elements, the third is unfolded in a pedagogical proposal that covers some attitudes, some means to be used and some actions.

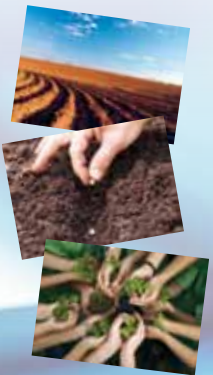
The journey of faith, and the response to a vocation, that is here outlined is a clear and direct invitation for everyone, including ourselves, to collaborate in encouraging vocations. For today, more than ever, it is becoming evident that the pastoral promotion of vocations is an action that includes the whole of the Church. The importance of vocations in the Church carries with it an openness, every day more important, to the pastoral processes for encouraging vocations. Only in this way will it become a reality, so that the pastoral promotion of vocations

will be the option for all pastoral actions.

All vocations in the Church have their origin in gratitude for a love which always proceeds us, the love of God. This is the Good News which cannot be kept quiet. From there the zeal which moves the evangelizer, and more specifically the promotor of vocations, to carry out with enthusiasm their mission. In this sense, we have to take on the task of promoting vocations as certainly a hard task, but above all as a service to God who made himself the Lord and master of our hearts; so that others could do the same. Therefore, we say with Saint Augustine: “We are thankful for our efforts, and we believe that God will assist us” (*Soliloquies*, 2, 1).

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