



**Augustinian Recollect
Vocacional Itinerary**

**The harvest
is plentiful**

Second
edition

arvis



Augustinian
Recollect
Vocational
Itinerary

(ARVI)

“The harvest is plentiful” (Luke 10:2).

Second Edition 2024



ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS

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Introduction

A. What is a vocation itinerary?

The concept of *itinerary* refers to the ordered and successive sequence of stages and strategies that, at least as a hypothesis, assures the attainment of a determined goal. A *vocation itinerary* is a complete and concrete proposal of a journey of faith that facilitates the understanding and living out of the Christian life as God's call to life, faith, and happiness and which helps the person who embarks it to respond freely to God's plan of love for him.

B. Why is an itinerary for the promotion of vocations necessary?

This mode of promoting vocations in the Church originates in an evident concern to attend to the very truth about of man, conceived from the present culture and from

its unitary growth. Vocation is rooted in the person, with all that it entails: motivations, ideals, options, qualities, etc., and within all this, 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 intends to enable different means of intervention - steps to be taken and stages to go through - to facilitate the person to listen to the particular call of God in his life and to be able to respond to it.

C. What is the horizon of this Augustinian Recollect vocation itinerary?

This itinerary aims to meet the challenge of creating a culture of vocation. And *what does "a culture of vocation" mean?* The expression "culture of vocation" is used to describe the favorable environment that a vocation needs in order to take root and flourish, character-

ized by the experience of gratitude, openness to the transcendent, availability, trust in oneself and others, affection, understanding, forgiveness, responsibility, the capacity to dream, to wonder, and generosity.

Therefore, we create a culture of vocation when we live our vocation with joy and commitment. When we help all people: children, the youth, adults, and the elderly to be aware of their attitudes, their inner resources, and God's call for them and thus prepare them to ask themselves about the meaning of their life, their future and their vocation as persons and as Christians.

D. Who are the recipients?

This vocation itinerary is designed to accompany vocations in general and particular vocations in the Church. Thus, the recipients are Christians who profess and celebrate the faith (*liturgy*), are fraternally linked to the believing community (*communion*), exercise the service of charity (*diakonia*), and dispose themselves to be witnesses of the love of God that dwells in their hearts (*witnessing*). And also any person who seeks to deepen the transcendent meaning of his life.

E. What is its structure?

The outline of this itinerary is inspired by the work of the sower and is composed of four stages: plowing, sowing, cultivating, and harvesting. The first phase addresses the challenge of creating a culture of vocations; the second, the awakening of vocation; the third, the cultivation of the vocation through accompaniment; and the fourth, the harvesting of the fruits of discernment, that is, the moment of deciding on one's vocation.

This scheme was chosen because the work of vocation promotion can be compared to what the farmer does when he prepares the soil and sows the seed in the field. Just as the farmer plows, sows the soil, cultivates the seed, and harvests the fruit, so too does the vocation promoter prepares, sows, accompanies, and helps vocations mature in the Church. His mission consists of offering the conditions so that the seed, with the help of the Spirit and as a response to the love of God the Father, can unfold and grow and bear fruit in the following of Jesus Christ.

F. What are the keys to this itinerary?

This vocational itinerary assumes the three axes of the culture of vocation proposed in the II Latin American Congress on Vocations (Cartago, Costa Rica, 2011): theology or vocation mentality, spirituality or vocation sensitivity, and pedagogy or vocation praxis. These three keys - *mentality*, *sensitivity*, and *praxis* - are integrated into the development of the itinerary in the following way:

1. *Theology of Vocation.* Each stage of the journey is illuminated by the prophet Elijah's journey of faith and mission, starting from his encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb to Elisha's consecration as a prophet in the desert of Damascus.

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah as prophet in your place.

¹⁷ Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.

¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

¹⁹ So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him.

²⁰ He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?"

²¹ He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant. (NRSVCE 1 Kings 19:15-21).

2. *Spirituality of Vocation.* Since it is an Augustinian Recollect vocation itinerary, the development of each phase is framed in some characteristic marks of Augustinian spirituality and Augustinian Recollect spirituality.

3. *Pedagogy of Vocation.* A concrete pedagogical proposal is offered for each stage. This proposal is based on three pillars: **Attitudes**

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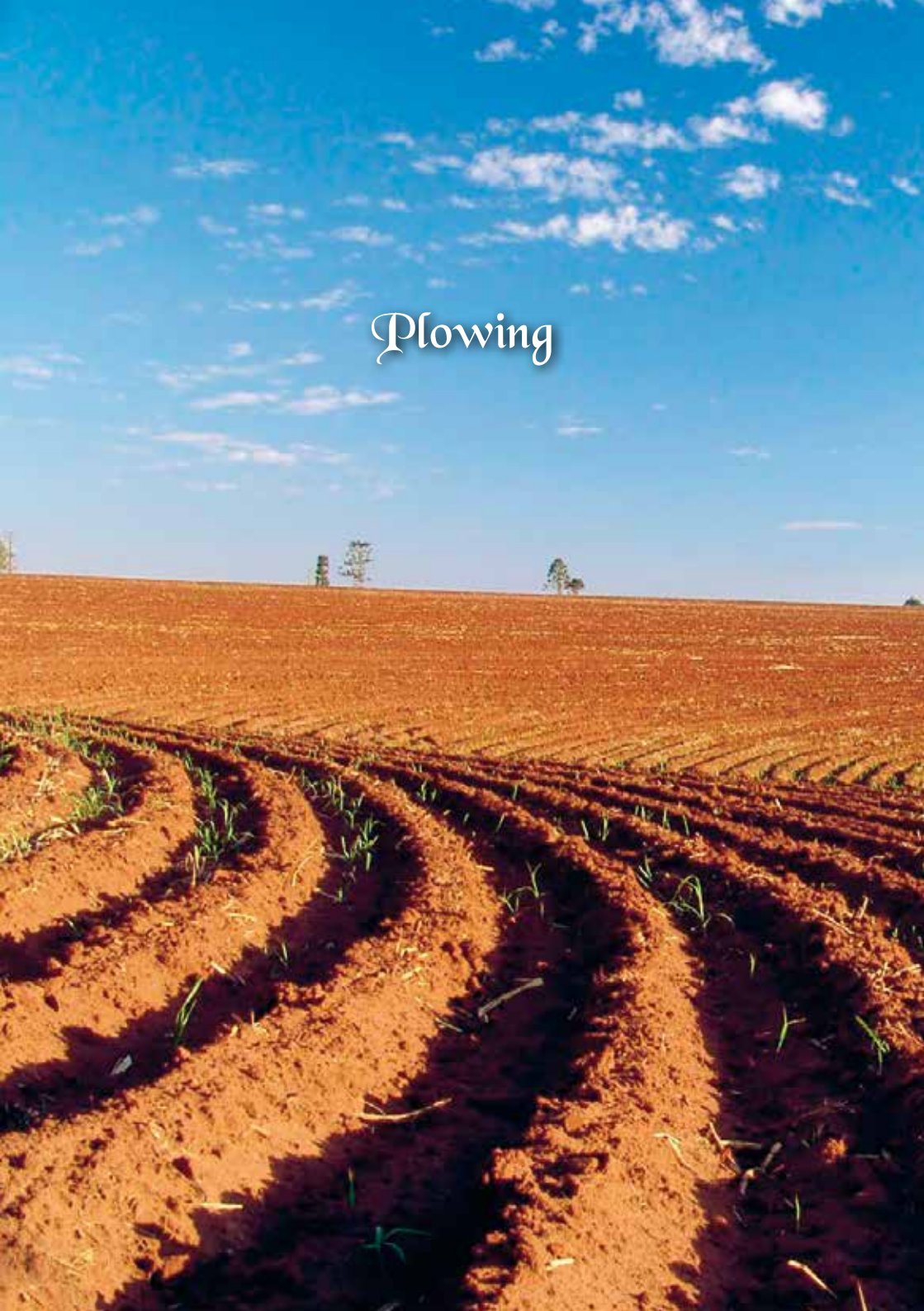
to motivate, the **M**eans to be used and **A**ctions to develop (**AMA**).

G. *What place does this document occupy in the framework of OAR vocation ministry?*

This itinerary makes explicit, adapts, and applies in the concrete

field of vocation accompaniment the other essential documents of vocation ministry of the Order: The Constitutions and the Plan of Formation (*Ideology*), the Vocation Ministry Plan (*Project*) and the Life and Mission Projects (*Programming*).

Plowing



1. First stage: “Plowing”

The Lord throws with abundance and gratuity the seed of the Word of God. But to welcome the Word of God in the human heart, it is necessary to discover and remove the brambles, the stones, and the hardness that impede the fertility and fecundity of the earth. The response to the Lord’s call is given, to a great extent, when the person is prepared as “soil that is disposed” to receive the good seed. In preparing the soil, God plays a fundamental role, covering and disposing us. And united to the mysterious work of grace, there is also the specific task of the vocation promoter who breaks and opens furrows and gaps so that this word of God becomes a reality in people’s hearts.

Hence, this first stage focuses on the figure of the vocation promoter and his mission. The primary agent of vocation promotion is the whole Christian community. In our case,

as a religious family, it is the local community in a unique way. Thus, all the baptized are agents of vocation ministry, although each one according to his particular vocation, his life situation, and his possibilities. And it is up to all of us to create the necessary conditions to generate an environment that is *significantly* “ideal for vocations.”

1. Theology of Vocation (enlightenment by the Word)

1 Kings 19:15-16

Elijah carried out God’s judgment on Mount Carmel, uprooting the cult of the god Baal, which endangered the covenant between Yahweh and his people. Pursued to death for such an action, he sets out on the road to Mount Horeb. This journey represents for Elijah a kind of pilgrimage back to the ardor of his first love. And with him,

a part of Israel returns to the desert to go back to the authentic origin of the people. He crossed the desert and, after the crisis of purification in the “solitude of the desert,” he entered a cave in Horeb, the mountain of God. There, his inner resistance before the threat of the people of Israel forgetting the Covenant emerged with force, “I have been very zealous for the Lord.” God manifests himself to him in an unsuspected way, not in the force of the hurricane, nor in the impetus of the earthquake, nor in the fire that consumes, but in the gentle breeze.

God again questions Elijah, “What are you doing here?” and he, putting aside his fears, abandons the road he has traveled and confronts a new mission: to anoint kings and prophets who will keep the memory of the covenant (v.15). Through the progression indicated by a triple anointing, the choice of Elisha as prophet is highlighted. And of the last, his name, filiation, and place of origin are given (v. 16). This highlights the importance of the genealogy in Israel when it comes to assuming a mission, the concrete identity of the one called and the subsoil where the divine call will take root.

The figure of Elijah illuminates both the spiritual quality and the

concrete work of the vocation promoter. Like the prophet Elijah, from a face-to-face encounter with God, he puts aside his fears and anxieties and, in obedience to his Word and with his heart burning with love for the Covenant, he goes out to meet those who are called. The candidate, the one who is called, like the prophet Elijah, goes with generosity and courage to the different scenarios, “terrains,” we could say, where the concrete life of people takes place, to prepare them to accept the gift of the divine call.

2. Spirituality of Vocation...

Each of us is tasked to generate, in our reality and circumstances, significant spaces for vocation that awaken in all people the sensitivity for vocation response. In this sense, we will be plowing the land when we succeed in getting the people with whom we come in contact with to place themselves before the adventure of discovering their own truth and before the threshold of the mystery that runs through life (Who am I? Where do I come from and where am I going? Why am I here? etc.).

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1.2.1. ...Augustinian

“To realize that we are cultivated, listen to the Lord: I am the vine, you are the branches, my Father the field worker (Jn 15:1.5). If he is called the field worker, he works or cultivates the field. What field? He cultivates us. And the cultivator of this visible earth can plow, can dig, can plant, can irrigate, if he finds water - but can he rain? Cause growth, produce buds, cause trees to take root, push them up into the fresh air, put strength in their branches, load them with fruit, clothe them with leaves- can the cultivator do all that? But our cultivator, God the Father, can do all these things in us.” (*Sermon 213:10 translation from The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Vol. VI*).

This sermon of St. Augustine refers to the handing over of the *Symbol of Faith*, and in his interpretation, he refers to the passage of the true vine. The saint reminds us that the field worker can plow and plant, but he cannot make it rain or grow. Likewise, the vocation promoter fulfills his task by preparing the land, but he must also patiently and trustingly accept the mission that depends on God alone, the one who truly sows and cultivates the field. And the field is us.

1.2.2. ...Augustinian Recollect

The dream of the Augustinian friars who followed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, through the recollection movement, continues to be the ideal that also inspires the work of vocation promotion. Hence, the Augustinian Recollect vocation promoter, with trust placed in God, collaborates with him to dispose the hearts of people in such a way that they may come to accept life as a gift and come to live it as an adventure.

3. Pedagogy for vocation ministry

The task of the vocation promoter consists of creating the conditions that help cultivate those *deep attitudes of vocation* that, in turn, awaken the seed of vocation that God has placed in their lives.

- a) Attitudes to be cultivated in every baptized person

The following are some attitudes of vocation that the work of vocation promotion can and should encourage among all people.

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- Disposition of the mind to grasp the Mystery that is present in reality and in the most intimate part of the person.
- Acceptance of this Mystery as that which gives meaning to the finitude of the human being, suffering, and death.
- Clear awareness that life is a gift.
- Openness of gratuity and gratitude.
- Sense of freedom, responsibility, truth, tolerance, understanding and forgiveness.
- Desire for transcendence and personal fulfillment.
- Sensitivity to beauty.
- Respect and promotion of the dignity of others.
- Restlessness to constantly ask questions about life, mainly those that promote important decisions.
- The constant search for a better future.
- Rejection of injustice.
- Capacity for amazement.
- Empathy with those who suffer and go through difficult situations.
- Involvement in initiatives that favors peace, dialogue, and fraternity.

b) The Means to be used

The agents of vocation ministry have various means at their disposal to create a culture of vocation and to create spaces for vocation. For this stage, the resources have to do more with everything that creates the conditions of the possibility for the encounter of the person with himself and with others. In such encounters, care must be taken to keep the window to the transcendent open. If these experiences are elaborated and shared, they will surely trigger in the person a series of questions that will push him or her to search for answers.

- Experiences of rupture or contrast.
- Inculcate the capacity to be amazed or to wonder.
- Formulation of vital questions about existence.
- Experience of interiority, silence, and solitude.
- Education in social skills (gratitude, forgiveness, listening, dialogue, empathy...).
- Exercise in restlessness, desire, and search.
- Solidarity initiatives.
- The Practice of Decision-making.
- Group and cooperative work.

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- Narration in the first person of the different experiences lived out.
- Education in sensitivity and taste for goodness, truth, and beauty.
- Activities in contact with nature.

c) Actions to be developed

The following is a series of initiatives aimed at helping people to ask themselves profound questions about the meaning of life and to cultivate those attitudes of vocation that trigger it.

- Initiate “breakthrough” experiences that introduce them to silence and solitude.
- Schedule risk experience: disconnect from the rhythm of life, live in environments where a sober life imposes itself, put aside for a while the use of the social media and other means of communication, lead a life with ordered schedules, etc.
- Take part in concrete initiatives that rekindle the capacity for wonder, such as visiting soup kitchens and social rehabilitation centers.
- Promote self-knowledge through talks, written questions, personal interviews, etc.
- Elaborate past or present life experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, and communicate them to others.
- Schedule activities in contact with nature.
- Cultivate a sense of attention, imagination, questioning, intuition, contemplative attitude, and aesthetic training.
- Organize team activities that promote deep and meaningful interpersonal encounters that favor the learning of gratitude.
- Discover the false ways - self-deceptions - of filling the personal void.
- Transmit images, videos, and data that show the destructive capacity that man has when he allows himself to be carried away by his selfish interests.
- Assign tasks that promote personal autonomy and the exercise of responsibility towards others.
- Introduce the discipline of personal work and teamwork.
- Pray for vocations.

4. Pedagogical resources

- Vocation Expedition (once every three years).
- Continuous formation in our ministries about the culture of vocation (during meetings of religious, pastoral agents, and/or lay people in general).
- Augustinian Recollect Song Festival (once a year).
- Exposure to Missionary work “Going to the peripheries” with feedback (every year).
- Camps - human values and teamwork (every year).
- Film forum - human values and awareness of reality (www.cineyvocacion.org).



Sowing

2. Second stage: “Sowing”

The one who sows the good seed in the heart of man is always and can only be the Lord. Vocation, like the seed and like the Word, is a mysterious gift of Providence. The sowing of vocations is a task that corresponds to the whole Christian community and to the religious community. In this sense, we must all be involved in the sowing of vocations. Thus, the vocation promoter is a humble collaborator in the sowing of God’s field, who knows that some seeds are destined to fall on “good soil.” Namely, in the hearts of those capable of welcoming the call with availability to make it germinate so that it bears fruit.

2.1. Theology of Vocation (enlightenment by the Word)

1 Kings 19, 17-18

Elisha’s vocation, not yet being set off, takes on the contours of a prophet’s vocation. Given the urgency of the moment, it is under-

stood from the standpoint of “zeal for the things of the Lord” or, in other words, from indignation because the chosen people are abandoning the Covenant. Hence, the biblical text expresses a strong tension between the angry judgment of God for the infidelity of those who gave themselves to idolatry and the recognition of the fidelity of those who have not bowed their knees before the god Baal. In this sense, Elisha’s vocation will be ordered to the culmination of God’s judgment that will seek to restore obedience to the Covenant with those who remain faithful and will deliver the deserters to the disgrace of living on the margins of God’s love (v. 17).

Elijah’s mission will be to approach Elisha and prepare his heart to receive the vocation of being a prophet. For his part, Elisha, together with the seven thousand men whom Yahweh reserves for himself because they have not bowed their knees before Baal and their lips have not kissed him, rep-

resents the chosen ones of God to return to the love of the Covenant (v. 18).

Those who have remained firm and faithful to the Covenant are those who are ready to receive the seed as fertile soil. The rest of Israel, those who praise him with a clean heart and pure lips, constitute the “good soil” and well disposed for the seed to fall and bear fruit. Elijah, as a simple mediator, encourages the prophetic vocation in the heart of Elisha. In this regard, the mission of the vocation promoter, like that of the prophet Elijah, consists in collaborating diligently in the sowing of the divine Word which, fertilized by the power of the Spirit, sprouts in the good soil of those who are ready to receive it.

2.2. Spirituality of Vocation...

It is everyone’s task to carry out the work of sowing vocations, that is, to spread the good seed of the Gospel in the sacred soil of the human heart. The pastoral action of sowing vocations will represent for many a providential opportunity to welcome and allow to germinate the call of discipleship. In fact, giving back the seed to the earth is a great act of faith in the action of the Holy Spirit, and in the openness and availability of the people,

in whom this seed will germinate and bear fruit.

2.2.1. ...Augustinian

“You called, and cried aloud, and forced open my deafness. You gleamed and shine, and chase away my blindness. You exhaled odours, and I drew in my breath and do pant after You. I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. You touched me, and I burned for your peace. (Confessions, X,27,38). How can one prepare a heart well-disposed to welcome the Word of life? St. Augustine, in spite of the many times he resisted, experienced this and shared it with us in the book *The Confessions*. The key is that God himself surprised Augustine, overflowed his expectations, and tasted the source of love. It is the fundamental task of every vocation promoter to empower the person being accompanied with the witness of his life so that the person being accompanied may make his own the same experience of St. Augustine.

2.2.2. ...Augustinian Recollect

“Just as our target is the love of God, so our principal care must

be all that will light our way more clearly to it, things such as his worship and praises, the use of the Sacraments, the exercise of meditation and prayer” (*Forma de Vivir* I,1). Impelled by the spiritual disposition that characterized the recollection movement, the Augustinian Recollect vocation promoter sows the Word with generosity and confidently awaits the seeds of vocation.

2.3. Pedagogy for the sowing of vocations

The sowing of vocations and the nucleus of the Gospel message (kerygma) merge to give rise to the announcement of the *vocational kerygma*. The concrete content of this can be summarized as follows: “Your life is not the result of coincidence or of a mistake; it has originated in love and has been created by God. Therefore, you can be sure that you are unconditionally and absolutely loved. This original love has imprinted an order in your existence, according to the model of Christ. Your life has an objective meaning that you need to discover little by little. It is a gift that is not depleted only within yourself because it is ordered toward others. To develop this gift is your task. When you assume this de-

sign and this direction, your freedom acquires a new and absolutely original meaning” (LAVANIEGOS GONZÁLEZ, Emilio and BARRÓN PORCAYO, Rubén, *El kerygma vocacional. Materiales para un primer anuncio de la vocación*, Mexico, 2009).

The sowing of vocations consists in the patient and continuous work of explicitly announcing the human and Christian life as a vocation, which should be heard in all areas of the Church’s life: liturgical celebrations, catechesis, prayer, charity works, witnessing, etc. And it should be addressed to everyone because, like the message of the Good News, it has a universal projection that knows no boundaries of age, race, language, or nation....

- a) Attitudes to be cultivated in every baptized person
 - Willingness to listen.
 - Inner certainty that “we are a gift.”
 - Trust in God’s unconditional love.
 - Consciousness of having been created free to love.
 - Offering one’s own life as a path to fulfillment.
 - Concern and interest for others.
 - Detachment

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- Overcoming frustrations and accepting difficulties as an avenue for growth.
 - Strength in the face of discouragement.
 - Sincerity, simplicity, and humility.
- b) The Means to be used**
- Breakdown of isolation among young people.
 - Involvement and commitment to do good.
 - Bonds of communion and sense of belonging.
 - Skills for group integration and interpersonal relations.
 - Teamwork for personal growth.
 - Service initiatives that require personal effort without remuneration.
 - Working on the Life Project I.
 - Capacity for personal and group initiative.
 - Liturgical and life celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.).
 - Explicit, direct, and personal proclamation of the *vocational kerygma*.
 - Self-knowledge and personal acceptance.
 - Involvement of the religious community in the sowing of vocations.
- c) Actions to be developed**
- Summon and offer spaces for silence and solitude as keys of encounter and dialogue with God.
 - Connect with one's own inner world and personal qualities and abilities through questions and reflecting on God's place in the midst of it.
 - Accompany the exercise of *lectio divina* (to enable oneself to listen). Choose biblical quotations that show how God takes the initiative and goes out to meet people to initiate a dialogue of love.
 - Motivate celebrations such as the Eucharist, which lead to the experience of feeling deeply loved by God and the certainty of being able to love.
 - Encourage young people to be active and participative in their family environment.
 - Promote strong experiences of donation and giving from gratitude.
 - Show films on values and discuss them as a group (video forum).
 - Implement catechesis as the space to proclaim the vocational kerygma (call to life, faith, and happiness in a specific vocation).
 - Maintain an open dialogue with

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young people so that they can share the meaning of “life is a gift received and, because it is a gift, tends to become a good to be shared”.

- Encourage and facilitate among young people the approach to “exemplary lives” that stimulate them to do great deeds.
- Hold personal interviews in which the young person can express themselves and what personal difficulties they are going through.
- Organize meetings that promote gratuity, overabundance, and joy.
- Approach young people with a direct proposal of vocation: Would you like to deepen your faith? Have you thought about forming a Christian family? Have you considered the possibility of becoming a priest? Have you ever thought about becoming a religious...? Are you interested in missionary life?

2.4. Pedagogical resources

- Personal
 - First contact dialogue with young people who are in search of something.
 - Personal interviews.
- Christian spiritual accompaniment.
- Exercise of self-awareness and overcoming difficulties (see the following books: *Bebiendo del propio pozo- La danza de los sentimientos*).
- Registration form.
- Community
 - Expo-charisma/vocation fairs.
 - Vocation week.
 - Vocation Camp (Kairós).
 - Working on the Life Project I.
 - Working on the Life Project II.
 - Mission experience.
 - Vocation seedbeds.
- Celebrations
 - Monthly celebration of the Eucharist for Vocations.
 - Lectio Divina.
 - Day of prayer for OAR vocations (28th of each month).
 - Holy Hour for Vocations.



Cultivating

3. Third stage: “Cultivating”

The response to the call of the Lord opens the way when the one who listens to the Word of God strives to grow from what he feels he is called to be. Therefore, each person prepares the soil, his soil. However, it is also true that we all need to receive adequate guidance so that our response to the Lord would be authentic. Hence, after sowing the Word, the vocation promoter journeys with those who, having heard the call, desire to respond.

The third stage of this itinerary is centered on the accompaniment of vocations. Accompaniment consists in the human and spiritual help that an older brother in the faith and in the discipleship of Christ gives to a younger brother. Thus, after the latter recognizes that God is calling him, with the help of the one who accompanies him, he can clarify it, discern it, and respond to it with freedom and responsibility, according to a life

project. Therefore, those directly involved in this stage are God the Father, who calls towards the following in the footsteps of his Son Jesus Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit, the person who feels he is being called, and the one who accompanies.

3.1. Theology of Vocation (enlightenment by the Word)

1 Kings 19, 19-21

Elijah obeys God, and with his heart burning for Yahweh, he goes to Elisha to consecrate him as the prophet that will succeed him (v. 19). Elisha is called, through the mediation of Elijah, to the service of the prophetic vocation while he was in the field plowing (v. 19). The prophet of Carmel goes in search for God’s chosen ones where they live and develop their concrete lives, in other words, where they work, suffer, and rejoice. Elisha is

“plowing,” that is, preparing the land for harvest. As he completes his journey, we could say that he also prepares his own soil to make it ready to receive the divine call that will make the “fertile soil” of his heart rich and bear fruits of love.

Immediately, Elijah throws the mantle over him to endorse with an external gesture, a visible and expressive sign of God’s action, the call (v. 19). With this gesture, Elijah makes him participate in his vocation as a prophet. Elisha promptly accepts the divine call and, from that moment on, freely decides to follow him.

Elisha’s determination to say goodbye to his parents expresses the rupture that comes with this choice, for he leaves a way of life in order to begin the life of a prophet (v. 20). This new orientation of Elisha’s life is symbolized by the sacrifice of the pair of oxen with which he worked, and by the invitation to a feast with the intention of bidding farewell to his parents (v. 21). And once he has left the fields, the oxen, and his family, he enters into the service of the vocation of a prophet.

The figure of Elijah is an apt reference to the service that the vocation promoter performs because he is the model of the one who ac-

companies who stands beside the one who is called, 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 places himself at the service of the prophetic vocation.

The accompaniment that takes place at the beginning of every vocation implies, on the part of the one who accompanies, “placing himself at the side” of the one who is called, sharing with him the spirit of the vocation he is living, and disposing him to respond generously to God’s call. It implies, on the part of the one being accompanied, to weigh, to be informed and make decisions, to make the truth of one’s life spring from within oneself, and to place oneself at the service of the mission.

3.2 Spirituality of Vocation...

Accompaniment in vocational discernment points to a relationship of helping someone, wherein a disciple takes part in the discernment path of another disciple so that the latter can discover and realize the call of God in his life. The vocation is the undeniable intuition—typical of faith—nailed to the heart of the disciple, through which he himself discovers that

he is invited by God the Father to live the fullness of love in the following of Jesus Christ, and which takes shape in a Christian way of life, which is made possible by the Holy Spirit.

3.2.1. ...Augustinian

“And with as much energy as I can, I exhort others to this goal, and in the name of the Lord I have companions who have been persuaded to this by my ministry” (St. Augustine, *Letter 157*, 4, 39 translation from *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Vol. III). In this letter that St. Augustine sends to Hilary in response to him, he praises his religious zeal for the Word of God and for the care he has for his salvation. He responds to the questions he asks him about the perfection of justice and the possibility of living without sinning. And almost at the end of the letter, the saint of Hippo manifests to him the constant intention of his soul: to invite others to abandon all wealth in order to have a treasure in heaven, and then they can follow the Lord. The vocation promoter has this intense sensitivity to lead others to the radical following of Christ in the various vocations in the Church.

3.2.2. ...Augustinian recollect

The religious communities that flourished in both *Talavera de la Reina* and *El Desierto de la Candelaria* embody the Augustinian Recollect ideal of life. The presence of the Spirit and the cultivation of a life centered on God, people who interact with each other with vision and determination, who discern and make decisions, who work and put themselves at the service of others, could be seen in these communities. The way of life of the two communities is a stimulus for the vocation promoter who accompanies so that those who are called can set out to live the beauty of their own vocation for the mission.

3.3 Pedagogy for the accompaniment of vocations

Accompaniment is the specific task of the vocation promoter and/or the local vocation counselor: it is up to him to awaken, discern, and cultivate specific vocations in the Church. These materials offer a horizon in which to understand and practice the accompaniment of vocations, but they do not replace the responsibility of the vocation promoter and the vocation counselor for specific training for accompaniment.

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The accompaniment of vocations, more than a stage of the itinerary, corresponds to the transversal axis that runs through the whole vocational process. This itinerary specifies four concrete actions for the practice of accompaniment: “educate,” “form,” “discern,” and “serve.” Before developing each of these vocational actions, some pedagogical criteria for accompaniment are provided:

- 1) The reference that situates the mission of the one who accompanies is to be found in the Sacred Scriptures. In this itinerary, we have chosen the figure of Elijah.
- 2) Accompaniment is always a personal relationship of close help and trust, which allows the emergence of affection and reciprocity.
- 3) The skill that corresponds to the one who accompanies is the quality of the relationship through dialogue; a good companion in discerning one’s vocation listens a lot and speaks little.
- 4) Each person has within himself the secret of his own life that the one who accompanies must help the other person discover. This must be carried out in a delicate, respectful, and patient manner.
- 5) It is fundamental that the person discovers his or her own identity, aiding him to awaken the vocation that lives in the heart of the young person.
- 6) More specifically, the purpose of accompaniment is to advise, discern, and help one to respond to God’s call to each person.
- 7) It is important to agree on the frequency of the meetings, the duration of the meetings, the work to be done before the meeting, and other arrangements that the one who accompanies may consider helpful or that he may suggest.
- 8) Accompaniment does not seek success nor effectiveness but rather that a mature decision regarding one’s vocation be made.
- 9) It is good that the one who accompanies shares in the process of accompanying his own experience of God and response to the Lord, without claiming that this is a decisive criterion but rather an indicator of the willingness to walk the path together.
- 10) It should never be forgotten that the most proportionate resource for accompaniment is frequent prayer before the Lord of the one accompanying for the one who is

being accompanied.

3.3.1. Educate

The accompaniment of vocations involves a journey that goes from timidly listening to the voice of God to the certainty of faith, which is received through the Word. From listening to the divine call to the concrete decision of one's vocation, time is needed to cultivate it. This first moment of accompaniment corresponds to "educate" and has as its objective to reach a certain clarity of awareness of one's vocation, that is, to recognize its authenticity.

To educate comes from the Latin "*e-ducere*," and means "to draw out, to extract, to bring out something that one has inside," the truth of the learner, what he has in his heart, even what he does not know or realize about himself, his weaknesses and aspirations; in this way, the freedom of the response of vocation is favored. In this sense, the process of educating one's vocation is very similar to the process of the germination of a seed because it unfolds the strength it carries within to begin to manifest the uniqueness of his being.

a) Attitudes to be cultivated by the

person who feels called

- The search for God as the primary principle of man's happiness.
- Living the process of vocation with trust and sincerity.
- Willingness to be helped.
- Preference of truth over security, of adventure over growth towards conformity to worldly securities.
- Total openness to God's plan.
- Acceptance of vocation as a path of full trust in God.
- Abandoning the idea that vocation is the sole result of personal effort.
- Discovery of the mystery that comprises life and vocation.
- Patience and serenity in the vocational process without always postponing things for another time.
- Disposition to fearlessly discover one's own wounds and heal them with a new horizon of meaning, that of divine tenderness.
- Taking advantage of events and experiences in the accompaniment process.
- Constant desire for prayer as a natural path of the search for one's vocation.
- Availability to meet the Lord in

prayer, where we listen, particularly to God the Father, who calls us to follow his Son.

b) The Means to be used

- Aid and accompaniment in self-awareness (self-esteem, values, limitations).
- Support to the “one being called” so that he could read his personal story in the eyes of faith and discover God’s dream for himself in the web of life.
- Strengthen the gift of vocation through the experience of God’s forgiveness and mercy that heals interiorly.
- Instilling the value of perseverance for the realization of their goals.

c) Actions to be developed

- Strengthen the process of self-awareness (physical, psychic, and spiritual), that allows the person to free himself from fears, attachments, and securities, known or ignored, regarding the vocation itself.
- Deal with affectivity, the relationship with one’s own body and sexuality, with respect and

clarity, offering channels for integration and maturation.

- Help in the acceptance and overcoming of emotional conflicts that show latent problems of affectivity.
- Offer work materials that encourage reading through the eyes of a believer of one’s personal biography, especially in its emotional development.
- Promote personal autonomy without escaping into “systems of security,” in order to avoid the risk of personal decisions (inhibition, excessive reservation to communicate, isolation, etc.).
- Educate candidates on the discipline of perseverance and fidelity in work.
- Suggest that the person accompanied keep a diary of one’s vocation.
- Participate in parish or religious community prayer groups.
- Celebrate and give thanks in prayer for the gift of vocation.

3.3.2. Form

Vocation promotion, in general, and accompaniment of vocations, in particular, is oriented towards directing young people towards their best versions of themselves

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according to the measure of Christ (Cf. *Gaudium et sp*, 22). The vocation promoter, in the exercise of the task of accompaniment, proposes to those who embark on this journey a prototype of being a man, that of Christ.

Undoubtedly, the person of Jesus Christ is always present on the horizon of the vocation of the one who is called. Now, at this stage of the process, it acquires particular importance since it is the moment in which a form is proposed to the person called a way of being and living, in which the person himself recognizes his identity, the truth of his life, the measure of the love with which he is loved. Christ is, at the same time, the formator and the form. The one who accompanies mediates God's action that helps the believer to recognize this call and to allow himself to be formed. Therefore, the key is to accompany the person so that the one who is called has the same feelings as that of Christ.

a) Attitudes to be cultivated by the person who feels called

- Faith-based Perspective
- Willingness to put one's life on the line for something, or rather, for Someone.

- Recognition of the presence of Christ in the different circumstances of life.
- Openness to allow oneself to be formed in Christ's way of being and living in order to have the same feelings as that of Christ.
- Valuing the call as a path to fulfillment.
- Living in the logic that everything is a gift.
- Gratitude to God and others for all the good things that have happened and continue to happen in one's life.
- Accepting that sacrifices are involved in making decisions.
- Frequent encounters with the Lord in prayer.

b) The Means to be used

- Experiences in vocation ("Search-in").
- Catechesis on vocation.
- Presentation of the person of Jesus Christ and discipleship.
- Exposition of biographical sketches of some Augustinian Recollect saints.
- Knowledge of the Augustinian Recollect charism.
- Moments of celebration and prayer for vocations.

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- Personal interviews.
- Formation in prayer methods (see resource: “Formation in Augustinian *lectio divina*”).

c) Actions to be developed

- Propose to the young person a demanding path in the following of Jesus.
- Orient the candidate to the different activities of the day (work, study, rest, leisure, and personal relationships) from the point of view of friendship with Christ.
- Allow the candidate to experience living together with the community (“search-in”) centered on the person of Jesus Christ.
- Give catechesis on particular vocations as a way of being and living in Christ Jesus in the Church.
- Present the charismatic identity of the Augustinian Recollects as a specific style of living the life of faith in Christ.
- Offer resources for prayer and dialogue with Jesus.
- Invite the candidate to an assiduous sacramental life.
- Carry out radical gestures: constant apostolate, volunteer experience in situations and places of marginalization, change of

habits...

3.3.3. Discern

The process of vocation accompanies the believer’s itinerary so that he may be ready to accept the divine call and be able to give a free response. The decisive element of this process is the free action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the discernment of vocation consists essentially in listening attentively to the Holy Spirit, who guides the life of every believer and shows him the concrete path along which God wants to lead him. To discern one’s vocation is to listen to and understand the “silent and powerful” voice of God in the intricacies of life, to relativize the human conditioning that weakens the perception of that voice, and to accompany and support the growth of the response to the call.

a) Attitudes to be cultivated by the person who feels called

- Desire to live out one’s vocation.
- Knowledge and understanding of what each specific vocation in the Church entails.
- Being realistic with one’s own possibilities to live one’s voca-

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- tion: aptitudes, qualities, interior disposition, etc. (*suitability*).
- Acceptance of the required changes involved in making decisions.
 - Willingness to embark on the path of one's vocation, even if it seems demanding.
 - Openness to listening, silence, and solitude as a possibility of encountering God (*sincere piety*).
 - Right intention.
 - The desire for personal transformation with the help of God and of accompaniment.
 - Authenticity and openness to purify deep motivations.
 - Zeal for the things of God, without rigidity or relativism.
 - Order of life and discipline in behavioral habits.
 - Ordered affectivity in order to encounter oneself and others.
 - Ability to make free decisions.
 - Trust in God in the chosen path as a response to the call of vocation.
 - Frequent contact with the Lord in prayer and disposition to interiority.
- b) The Means to be used**
- Experiences of encounter with Augustinian Recollect communities.
 - Experiences of Vocation (“search-in”).
 - Catechesis on vocation and vocations, with particular emphasis on religious and priestly vocations.
 - Presentation of the action of the Holy Spirit in the following of Jesus Christ.
 - Exposition of the life of some Augustinian Recollect saints, highlighting the discernment they made in specific moments of their lives.
 - Moments of prayer oriented towards deeper reflection on vocation, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are recommended.
 - Personal interviews in which specific attention is paid to discernment.
 - Use of psychological tools (therapy, tests, etc.).
- c) Actions to be developed**
- Conduct personal interviews (at *least once a month*).
 - Frequent visits to an Augustinian Recollect community.
 - Participate in Augustinian experiences of God: silent retreats,

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prayer workshops, etc.

- Reading with faith one's own life story.
- Visiting the families of the candidates.
- Conduct a psychological test.
- Allow candidates to have volunteer experiences or pastoral involvement in an apostolic ministry.
- Participation in some important celebrations of our religious family (professions, ordinations, anniversaries, day of the Order, etc.).
- Living out together the "Augustinian Recollect charism and discernment" through a "search-in program."

3.3.4. Serve

No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself, but it is always a call to mission. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people in the experience of fraternal love. The response to God's call in a specific vocation is a fruit that matures in the well-cultivated field of reciprocal love that becomes mutual service in the context of an authentic ecclesial life. Hence, the importance of inviting young people to participate with trust in a commu-

nitarian journey, which awakens in them their best energies in the giving of their own life (cf. Pope Francis, *Message for the 51st World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, Rome, 2014).

a) Attitudes to be cultivated by the person who feels called

- Attention to the needs of others to help them with concrete initiatives.
- Willingness to serve others with effort and perseverance.
- Acceptance of the mission as that which encompasses the life of the person.
- Humility and charity in the services being performed.
- Generosity to perform various services.
- Promotion of justice and human dignity.
- Magnanimity in assuming the frustration that comes with not being able to solve the problems of others.
- Interest in knowing and supporting the different initiatives of social commitment that exist around them.

b) The Means to be used

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- Individual and group apostolate experiences appropriate to their age.
- Group organization and evaluation of the services provided.
- Prayer for the people with whom they meet in the service they provide.
- Age-appropriate materials to learn about and be informed about reality.

c) Actions to be developed

- Perform some type of social and/or ecclesial service with people who may need help.
- Accompany and evaluate these experiences in personal dialogue.
- Read and be informed about the global and local social reality.
- Help with household chores and services.
- Collaborate in the services of the Christian community (catechesis, distribution of food to the poor, visiting the sick, etc.) and in liturgical celebrations (proclaiming the word, coordinating participation, etc.).
- Mission experience.

3.4 *Pedagogical resources*

Getting started:

Form 0. Vocational resume.

Form 1. Cultivate a field (explanation of the meaning of accompaniment and following an itinerary).

Form 2. Introduction to Vocation.

Form 3. General information: family, health status, faith formation, and academic history.

Educate:

Form 4. Autobiography.

Form 5. Affectivity-sexuality.

Form 6. Personal qualities and limitations.

Form 7. Being a person with others.

Form:

Form 8. Friendship and relationship with Jesus.

Form 9. Forms of Christian life.

Form 10. Augustinian Recollect way of life (1st level).

Discern:

Form 8. Friendship and relationship with Jesus.

Form 9. Forms of Christian life.

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Form 10. Way of life of the Augustinian recollects (1st level).

Discern:

Form 11. Listening to Jesus.

Form 12. Free to follow Jesus.

Form 13. Confessio (Augustinian way of reading one's life similar to the manner of *The Confessions*).

Form 14. Augustinian Recollects: who we are, where we are, and what we do (2nd level).

Serve:

Form 15. Global and local social reality.

Form 16. Service in the Church (mission).

A photograph of a harvested wheat field. The foreground is filled with a dense field of cut wheat stalks, showing a mix of golden-brown and greenish-yellow hues. In the background, several large, round, dark brown bales of harvested wheat are scattered across a field of dry, golden-brown grass. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The word "Harvesting" is written in a white, serif font in the center of the image.

Harvesting

4. Fourth stage: “Harvesting”

The last important nucleus of the pastoral care of vocations is related to making a decision in one’s vocation. In the Gospel of St. John, when speaking of “the true life,” Jesus reminds his disciples on several occasions that he has destined them to “go and bear fruit” (cf. John 15:2,4,26). Hence, he who seeks to bear fruit with his life must sow it. The journey of searching, accompaniment, and discernment of vocation must lead the disciple to make a decision, that is, to opt for a particular way of living out the following of Christ.

4.1. Theology of Vocation (enlightenment by the Word)

1 Kings 19: 19-21

Elijah set out and found Elisha plowing with twelve yokes of oxen in a row, and he was with the last one. When the prophet passes by and throws his mantle over him,

the farmer leaves the oxen, runs after Elijah, and makes a request: “*Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you*” (NRSVCE v. 20). In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus openly states the demands of following him. When the would-be follower of Jesus said: “*Lord, first let me go and bury my father.*” The Master told him: “*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God*” (NRSVCE, Luke 9:62). A certain complicity can be noted in the two biblical texts.

Elisha’s request to Elijah is resolved as follows: “*Go back again; for what have I done to you?*” (NRSVCE, v. 20). The text tells us that Elisha turned back, took the yoke of oxen and offered them as a sacrifice. He took advantage of the yoke’s equipment to cook the meat and made a feast. Then he rose, followed Elijah, and became his servant (v. 21). Elisha’s action is as radical as what Jesus asks in following him: to sacrifice the oxen and use

the yoke equipment to prepare the meat. From that moment on, that farmer no longer had the tools for the work of sowing. The gesture of making a feast and saying goodbye to his family did not prevent him from a radical change in life.

The following of Jesus is demanding, yes, because the proclamation of the Gospel is urgently needed in the world. *“I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled”* (NRS-VCE, Luke 12:49). Jesus asks that one puts the hand on the plow as a radical choice in following him, and Elisha burned the plow to go after the prophet Elijah and placed himself at his service. In both cases, the response to the call was the decision to embark on a life of discipleship. In this sense, the mature fruit of the time spent on searching, accompaniment, and discernment is the decision one makes about one’s vocation. The pastoral care of vocations fulfills its task when it makes possible the following of Christ in a particular option of the Christian life. It would make no sense to plow, sow, and cultivate without ever reaping anything.

4.2. Spirituality of Vocation...

The task of the pastoral care of

vocations consists in accompanying the process of searching and discernment of the new disciples of Jesus until the initial maturation of an option for life in Christ. It is not about urging and precipitating an option of vocation but rather about accompanying so that the untransferable call that Jesus, the Lord, makes to each disciple emerges in the conscience of the new generations. Following Jesus is presented as a crossroad before which one decides and creates options because it is urgent to bring the Gospel to life as the best alternative of life for this world.

4.2.1. ...Augustinian

St. Augustine, commenting on the text, *“If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”* (cf. Matthew 16:24), says that denying oneself means sowing oneself for the Kingdom. *“How can someone who loves himself deny himself? God though, says to such a person, ‘Let him deny himself, if he loves himself.’ By loving himself, you see he loses himself; by denying himself, he finds himself. [...] It is a painful thing to lose what you love, But from time to time even the farmer loses what he sows. He brings it out, scatters it, throws it*

away, buries it. The joy of the reaper shows you the wisdom of the advice of the sower. Therefore, whoever loves his soul, let him lose it. Whoever is looking for fruit in it, let him sow it. So that's the meaning of 'Let him deny himself.'" (St. Augustine, *Sermon 330,2* translation from *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Vol. IX).

4.2.2. ...Augustinian Recollect

The purpose of the reaping stage consists of *making possible a love that is free* and enables the person to take life into one's own hands and invest it in a concrete project of love in the following of Christ. The person matures in his option of vocation when he is aware that the following of Jesus Christ consists basically, according to the Gospel, of renouncing oneself, taking up one's cross daily, and following the Lord by giving one's own life (cf. Matthew 16:24). Hence, as the *Forma de Vivir* of the Discalced Augustinians indicates, "*because the true end of the Christian is love, and because this end cannot be achieved perfectly except by him who denies and mortifies himself*" (*Forma de Vivir*, Prologue 1). To deny oneself is to sow life in order to find it from the fruitfulness of the Kingdom.

4.3. Pedagogy for the harvesting of vocations

After laying out the demands of following Jesus (cf. Luke 9:57-62), Luke the evangelist narrates the missionary sending of the seventy-two. To these missionary disciples, he says: "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest*" (NRSVCE Luke 10:2). That the harvest is plentiful refers to the fact of the overabundance of God the Father scattered as a great blessing in the heart of the world in Christ Jesus. He is the ripest fruit of the Father's love sown with generosity in the world. And now, it is Jesus who convokes new collaborators for the life of the Kingdom, "friends" who sow their lives together with the life of Jesus for the harvest of the civilization of love.

a) Attitudes to harvest

- Disposition in the soul to follow Jesus with determination and conviction.
- Awareness of one's own freedom as the possible condition for love.
- Ability to narrate and share their experience of God.
- Acceptance that the particular

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vocation corresponds to that option of life in Christ that leads to love more and better.

- Openness to the Holy Spirit, source of freedom and presence that gives courage to make decisions.
- Acceptance of investing one's life in Christ in order to find it according to the logic of the Gospel.
- Inner disposition for the constant conversion of the heart.
- Desire to joyfully live community life as a gift and a task.
- Desire to sow one's life for the Kingdom of God so that it may bear fruits of love, joy, and hope (*missionary dimension of every vocation*).
- Desire to configure oneself to Christ in chastity, obedience, and poverty.
- Openness to divine providence as the wisdom between accepting and acting.

b) The Means to be used

- Promote experiences that involve some kind of commitment to Christ that are lasting and demanding.
- Employ various activities – working in teams, games, assigning

responsibilities, etc. – to help those who are being accompanied to become aware of how they live and cultivate their own capacity for freedom.

- Teach the candidates to invoke the Holy Spirit for help and inspiration before starting an activity.
- Challenge those being accompanied to some type of activity that involves sacrificing their personal time and desires for a good that benefits others.
- Cause amazement at the way in which the Lord transformed the lives of people who seemed to be “lost cases.”
- In personal accompaniment, talk about the deep motivations that move the person in one direction or another.
- During the last meeting of the “search-in,” the balance of the discernment process should be discussed, where the process made, the progress achieved, and the pending challenges should be appreciated.

c) Actions to be developed

- Give catechesis, visit a sick person, support solidarity activities, etc.

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- Work on the sense of freedom through working in teams, games, assigning of responsibilities, etc.
- Organize a debate about the Augustinian phrase: “*Love and do what you will.*”
- Recite some brief prayers of invocation of the Holy Spirit and invite them to pray these prayers as a way of entrusting an activity to the Holy Spirit or when making a decision.
- Accompany experiences of solidarity in rural or precarious environments.
- Offer volunteer experiences where they can recognize the commitment of different people in social projects that have great social impact.
- Community
 - Offer experiences of being in a community (“Search-in”).
 - Share with others the path that one is undertaking.
 - Mission or volunteer experience.
- Celebrations
 - Eucharistic celebrations in which the Word of God is shared.
 - Lead moments of prayer centered on the Holy Spirit.
 - Offering acts of Marian devotion in which the decision and vocation of the Virgin Mary are meditated upon.

4.4. Pedagogical resources

- Personal
 - Offer *lectio divina* guides on responding to the divine call.
 - Work on the material of Life Project III.
 - Write down in a journal the steps involved in decision-making.



Conclusion



Conclusion

“The earth is above all the heart of every person, especially of the youth, to whom you address your service of listening and guidance: a heart that is often confused and disoriented, yet capable of containing unimaginable powers of generosity. The vocation promoter accompanies the adventure of the young freedom that is like a bud ready to open to a life spent for the love of Jesus, able to follow him with the totality and the certainty that comes from having found the greatest treasure that exists”.

(Benedict XVI, *Address to the participants in the European Congress on Vocation Ministry*, Rome, 2009).

The work of vocation promotion in our Augustinian Recollect family is like the work of the farmer who prepares the soil and sows the seed in the field. Sowing always involves demanding and risky work; there may or may not be fruits. The vocation promoter also prepares, sows, and waits for the birth and growth of vocations in the Church. His task consists of offering the conditions so that the seed, by itself and as a response to God’s love, can unfold, grow, and bear fruit.

This itinerary is intended as a pedagogical tool for those who promote and accompany new vocations in the Church so that they can prepare themselves to be “good soil” that listens to, welcomes, and

lives out the Word, and thus bear fruit. However, given that we are before the mystery of God that passes through the lives of people, the more we bring those who feel called to Jesus in prayer, meditation of the Word, and participation in the Eucharist, the more there will grow in us the joy of cooperating with God in the service of the Kingdom. The latter, and not human effort, will make the harvest abundant, according to the measure of grace (cf. Pope Francis, *Message for the LI World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, Rome, 2014).

The methodology of the itinerary is taken from the “vocation current” originating in the different international congresses on vocations: mentality on vocation,

sensitivity towards vocation, and praxis of vocation. Each of these important themes appears in this document. Of these three, the third one is elaborated into a pedagogical proposal that encompasses attitudes, means, and actions.

The journey of faith and response to vocation proposed here is a clear and direct invitation to all of us to get involved and collaborate in vocation promotion because today, more than ever, it is evident that the vocation ministry is the work of everyone in the Church. The centrality of vocations in the Church entails opening more and more pastoral processes to vocation promotion. Only in this way will it become a reality that the pastoral care of vocations would pave

the way so that other ministries are opened for the person being called.

All vocations in the Church have their origin in gratitude of a love that always precedes us: the love of God. This is the Good News that cannot be silenced. Hence it is zeal that moves the evangelizer and, more specifically, the vocation promoter to carry out his mission with enthusiasm. In this sense, we have to assume the task of vocation promotion as an arduous task, yes, but above all, as a service to the God who made himself Lord and Master of our heart so that others may experience the same. Therefore, let us say with St. Augustine: “Let us love our effort. Let us believe that God will be present” (St. Augustine, *Soliloquies* 2,1).

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