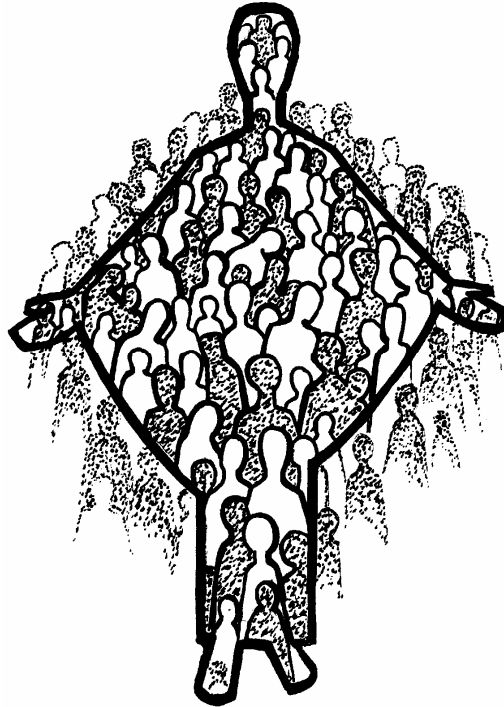


FRIENDS OF AUGUSTINE

AUGUSTINE FOR TODAY



LIVING TOGETHER

LIVING TOGETHER

Augustine's Rule was written for religious communities but has proved to have principles applicable to any community: family, school, work, recreation. Each chapter contains principles of profound wisdom, relevant to human behaviour in all sorts of circumstances.

**Before all else,
Live together in harmony,
Being of one mind and heart**

**On the way to God,
Mutually honouring God in yourselves,
Whose temples you are.**

Rule Ch.1

I appeal to you make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in mind and heart Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2: 2, 5

Do you not realise that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,
Who is in you and whom you received from God.

1 Corinthians 6: 19

Mutual respect is the basis for living happily and peacefully,
Each one recognising the dignity of others,
Each one desiring the well-being of the others,
As Jesus has clearly shown us in the Gospel.

**Among you there can be no question of personal property.
Rather, take care that you share everything in common.
Not all should receive the same because not all are equally strong,
But each person should be given what he or she personally needs**

Rule Ch. 1

With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women ... and many others who provided for them out of their own resources.

Luke 8: 2,3

And all who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

Acts 2: 44,45

Significantly, the first requirement for community is the sharing of goods.
This applies to family life as it does to religious community.
The sharing of goods calls for a spirit of generosity
Which extends to other important areas of life together,
Such as generosity in judgement of each other.

**Some receive more; others are happier because their needs are fewer.
The simpler a life, the more suited to a servant of God.
Those who have strength to lead simple lives,
Should consider themselves the richest of people.
It is better to make do with a little than to have plenty.**

Rule ch.3

A man of the road said to Jesus. 'I will follow you wherever you go'. Jesus said, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

Luke 9: 57,58

In his honour Levi held a great reception in his house, and with him at table was a large gathering of tax-collectors and others.

Luke 5: 29

Do not store up treasure for yourselves on earth where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal .. for wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.

Mt.

6; 19-21

While material wealth can enrich our lives in ways,
It cannot buy happiness or contentment.
Simplicity of life does not mean misery or squalor or penny-pinching.
Jesus was criticised for eating and drinking, sometimes with rather rowdy groups.
Sharing according to need removes the competitive urge to have more than others.
Contentment with having enough brings inner peace.

**Imagine that your brother or sister has a physical wound
And wished to conceal it for fear of the medical treatment,
Would it not be an act of mercy to make it known?
How much greater then, is our obligation to make known a spiritual condition**

And to prevent evil gaining a stronger hold in their hearts.

Rule Ch. 4

'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him.
If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.
If he refuses to listen, take two or three others
Then report it to the community.'

Mt 18: 15-17

Fraternal correction is an act of kindness,
In the way a surgeon's knife, though painfully cutting,
Is intended to promote future health and well-being.
To tolerate bad behaviour, for the sake of maintaining 'peace'
Is a misguided notion of kindness in any community.

**It is written of love that 'it is not self seeking', that is to say
Love puts the interest of the community before personal advantage.
The degree to which you put the interests of the community before your own is a measure of
your progress in love.**

Rule Ch. 5

'You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them ...
Among you this is not to happen.
No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant ...
Just as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve.

Mt. 20: 20-28

This is the Golden rule of community life,
Of all human relationships inspired by love
Ever asking, not 'what is in it for me?' but rather
'What can I give? How can I serve?'

**Do not quarrel,
But if you do, put an end to it as quickly as possible.**

Rule Ch. 6

'Love you enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
For if you love those who love you, what reward will you get?
Do not even the tax collectors do as much?'

Mt. 5: 43-48

Occasional abrasions are almost inevitable when people live closely together.
The inner wounds and scars should be helped to heal immediately,
So they do not fester.
Paul's principle 'Let not the sun go down on your anger'
Is good

**By ready and loving obedience to the superior,
You show compassion both to the superior and to yourself.
The higher a position a superior holds,
The greater the danger for him or her.**

Rule Ch. 7

After he had washed their feet at the Last Supper, Jesus said:
'You call me Lord and Master, and rightly; so I am.
If I then, the Lord and Master have washed your feet,
You must wash each other's feet.
I have given you an example, so that you may copy what I have done to you.'

John 13: 15

Every group needs some organisation
And individuals to occupy certain offices, sometimes of power and influence.
Exercising power and influence is the way they serve the community.
The others serve by co-operating,
Being punctual, thoughtful, observant of the necessary rules.

**The Lord grant that, with longing for spiritual beauty,
You will lovingly observe all that is written here,
Not weighed down like slaves straining under a burden,
But living like free people under grace.**

Rule Ch. 8

You must love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.
You must love you neighbour as yourself.
On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the prophets also.
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Mt. 22: 34-

'Lovingly' can also be expressed as 'with cheerful generosity'.
The spirit of observance is not 'Do this because you have to', but rather
'Listen; these are words of wisdom. Take them to heart.'

POINTS TO PONDER

How do these passages from the Rule of Augustine apply to my life?

What do they have to say about:

family

parish

work

and other communities and groups with whom I am involved?

Compiled by Bernard O'Connor OSA