

St. Augustine



FOUNDER OF THE ORDER

*"Late have I loved Thee,
O, Thou Beauty ever ancient, ever new,
Late have I loved Thee."
Saint Augustine of Hippo*

More than sixteen hundred years ago, the great Saint Augustine spoke about the beauty of God in a few words. These words, taken from his Confessions (Book X, 27), have excited the minds and imaginations of millions of people who read or heard them throughout the ages.

The beauty which Augustine knew and loved in all created things – sun and stars, earth and seas, flowers and beasts – old and young – led him to that source of all beauty which Augustine called God.

For many graduates remembering their college days, the Villanova experience may have given them a hint of God's beauty. Friendships begun, joys and sorrows shared, wisdom gained through knowledge – these are all parts of that beauty.

Recognized through the ages for his gigantic intellect, Augustine of Hippo has always been equally celebrated for the strength of his passionate desire for understanding. In mind and in heart, Augustine was well beyond the ordinary.

Augustine's inquiring mind and his burning heart are symbolized on the seal of Villanova University. The seal shows a burning heart pierced by an arrow and resting on a book of sacred Scripture. In his garden at Milan, the command, Tolle Lege, Tolle Lege ("Take and Read, Take and Read"), came to Augustine as a divine message to seek God in the Scriptures, recalling the moment of his conversion. As he read, these words of Scripture pierced his heart with desire for God, the source of all wisdom and beauty. Taken together, his study of Scripture and his heart's desire for its wisdom symbolize Augustine's life-long search to know and love God.

The search for wisdom and beauty continues in the life of Villanova University. It is its own great beauty, ever ancient, ever new. The words of Villanova's motto proclaim this ultimate ideal of a university education: to discover the meaning of life and the beauty of God in the search for Unity, Truth, and Charity.