

Commemoration of the Deceased Benefactors of the Order

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Order and Keeping Them in Prayer

During my Solemn Profession of Vows last August in San Diego, I was very happy to see a number of Augustinian seculars, affiliates and friends and benefactors of our communities in California. I am forever grateful for their presence, prayers, cards, gifts and support. Also present were many relatives, from both my father's and mother's side of my extended family and my parents and I communicated with each of them (prior to my profession) to enroll them as members of my province's Augustinian Guild.

We also have an orphanage named Hogar Infantil La Gloria in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico just across the border from San Diego. *Hogar Infantil* means "a place for little children." This orphanage of about 50 children (infants, elementary school kids and teens) does not get any funding from neither the Mexican government nor the U.S. government nor other non-profit organizations. It is mainly supported through the generous financial contributions of our benefactors, many of whom are people we minister to in our parishes, schools and friends of our Augustinian family. The orphanage also gets a lot of donations in kind from our benefactors such as food from Costco or Sam's Club, diapers, baby food, milk, clothes, blankets, school supplies, household supplies, medicines, toys – the list goes on. Once or twice a week, for the last eight years, my provincial Fr. Steve Ochoa, O.S.A., has been transporting all of these goods by sports utility vehicle from San Diego to Tijuana, a trip that can easily take three hours given the U.S.-Mexico border traffic. We also have two Augustinian Volunteers from San Diego who play with the children, teach them and simply be with them on a weekly basis. The school-age children all attend a nearby Catholic school, run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Their tuition fees, books, school uniforms and other expenses are all paid for by many generous mothers in Tijuana.

Our benefactors who are now living continue to do the work of our Order's deceased benefactors. Our deceased benefactors have been so faithful to God and to us in their lifetime. In their own little ways, they have lived our Augustinian charisms of community, charity and truth and have followed the teachings of the Gospel. They have fed us, given us drink and clothing, visited us when we were sick, comforted us in our times of trial and distress and attended to our needs – the deeds of mercy Jesus calls us to do in today's Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Not only have our deceased Augustinian benefactors prayed for us and supported us, but they have also supported our ministries, projects and missions especially in Japan, Peru, South Africa and in other needy provinces and circumscriptions in our Order. Through their monetary contributions, charity, prayers, presence and participation, they have done these same deeds of mercy mentioned in Matthew's Gospel to the least of our brothers and sisters in our needy apostolates and in our foreign missions.

And now they are all in Heaven, brought to life in Christ, as St. Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, our second reading. We are very blessed and grateful that they were and continue to be a part of our lives. They continue to support us and care for us through their prayers and we are united with our deceased benefactors in spirit, prayer and charity. As we partake in this Eucharistic sacrifice, let us continue to pray for them always as they pray for us, and thank God for their many gifts, especially the gift of their lives, which they have so generously allocated to our Order of St. Augustine.