

Augustine intended his community in Hippo Regius to be a concrete representation of the “Whole Christ.” He began the Rule for his community with these words:“ In the first place, live in harmony and be of one mind and heart intent on God; for this is the purpose of your coming together.” His community was to be, within the Church, an example of what the Church is in the first place, the “Body of Christ” intent on ascending to God the Father.

If the Gospel is to be really Good News for real men and women, he insisted that it must to be concrete: it has to be a promise that can be realized in the present. Living “in community” was not a matter of lifestyle; it was matter of “reality.” The only good worth possessing, the only real “common good” is God. In a community where each possesses God, all other possessions lose their significance and can be held in common. Where God can be one’s lover, exclusive relationships lose their significance and their power. Where God is the Sovereign Good, one’s own will for a happiness infinitely less than God loses its hold on one’s life. An Augustinian community is to be where God is pursued exclusively as the only Good that is really humanly satisfying.

To be “of one heart and one soul intent on God” is for the community to have Christ at the center of their lives and to be that center themselves. This requires the courage that Father D’Alzon demands: to be Christ for one another. A community where the brothers or sisters dare to be Christ for one another becomes itself the promise of possibility for the Church. If you want to be saved, be Jesus Christ yourself in your world. If you need an example to encourage you to be Jesus Christ for others, you should be able to see it in a community that has set out to live in

the spirit of Saint Augustine.

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