"The Labors of our Occupation": Can Augustine Offer *Any* Insight on Vocation?

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Around the year 401, a curious incident transpired near Roman Carthage. A cluster of nomadic long-haired monks had recently wandered into the area, causing a stir among locals. These monks took the gospel quite seriously; that is, they lived very literally one part of a gospel, "Consider the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns … Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not" (Matt 6:26-29). They were apparently not only shunning all physical labor on behalf of meditative prayer, but they were also (at least according to Augustine's depiction of the situation) imposing such unemployment upon others, namely local barbers. In response, Augustine penned a unique pamphlet. It takes the form of a retort, but as it unfolds, a commentary on the dignity and duty of work emerges—manual labor, in itself significant, as well as "the labors of our occupation" (*labores occupationem nostrarum*) and "labor according to our rank and duty" (*pro nostro gradu et officio laborantibus*, *De Op. Mon.* 29).[1]

This theme and brief excerpts seem to gesture towards an intriguing and typically unacknowledged avenue in Augustinian thought. They are not alone. Numerous letters written to bishops, civil officials, and friends, myriad homiletic exhortations, and unexpected comments in doctrinal works converge to reveal complexity, connection, and nuance in Augustine's articulations regarding what we would today designate as "vocation" and work. Yet many chronological surveys in larger tomes on vocation only briefly mention Augustine, if at all; at times, Augustine is starkly depicted as a fountainhead for the supposedly stunted Medieval popular opinion about vocation. As Paul Marshall wrote,

> He employed the distinction of an "active life" and a "contemplative life"… The vita activa took in almost every kind of work, including that of studying, preaching, and teaching, while the vita contemplativa was reflection and meditation on God and his truth. While both of these kinds of life were good, the contemplative life was of a higher order …"the one life is loved, the other endured." … A distinction like this formed the basic medieval pattern.[2]

Clearly, deeper investigation is warranted. This paper suggests that such an exploration complicates prevailing assumptions about Augustine's views and can contribute to ongoing conversations about vocation. With "vocation" indeed it seems proper to begin, briefly surveying the term from the present into the past. As Augustine's own use of *vocatio* is addressed, it becomes necessary to view the related topic of work and its contexts. From there, a more robust examination into his presentation of profession, both ecclesiastical and secular, unfolds, and, with that, the landscape of "vocation" can be seen to emerge through a distinctly Augustinian lens.

Vocation: A (Very) General Background

While cursory overviews of the historical trajectory of the concept of vocation exist, there are not many comprehensive historical treatments of the terminologies and definitions pertaining to vocation.[3] What follows in this section purports no such magnitude but is rather a limited attempt at a general trajectory of fundamental vocabularies and concepts. While broad, it may assist in locating an exploration on Augustinian insights within a

wider schema; it also can serve to highlight the difficulties inherent in this very inquiry.

Even today, definition for the English term "vocation" embodies inconsistent variation. It can be used generally to reference a basic identity or specifically in a gesture to an individuals' formal training or occupation. It conventionally bears the latter connotation of occupational functions to which one is particularly suited, but it can also refer to the relationships and consequent tasks with which one engages in a station of life. To further complicate matters, other broadly-defined words such as profession, job, work, and labor variously emerge in many discussions about vocation.[4] Even among Christians, definitions for vocation can be inconsistent, elusive, and more recently grandly inclusive;[5] a summary of Christian writings on the topic within the past three decades alone would be a considerable undertaking (though one perhaps helpful).

A far more limited landscape, then, is advantageous to survey prior to a focused venture into Augustine's perspectives. If we are to speak of Augustine's insights regarding the rather obscure notion of "vocation," we must begin *somewhere*. Do early Christian traditions inherited by Augustine engage any notion of vocation? Certainly, the New Testament does speak of "calling." Greek terms typically translated as "call" or "calling" find their basis in the verb καλέω (*kaleō*) and the noun κλῆσις (*klēsis*), but these terms (used over 150 times in their various forms) are remarkably varied in connotation. They are used in naming, summoning, as invitations to dinner parties, as part of the general and irrevocable call to be a follower of Christ,[6] and, on one occasion, a broad social identity.[7] The term is not, however, used in the delineation of particular tasks in ministry nor of the employment of spiritual gifts.[8] In both the Old Latin and the Vulgate, the Latin forms of *vocatio* (a call) and *vocāre* (to call) are used to translate these Greek forms; they are similarly general in meaning and flexible in use.[9] So it remains, through the centuries that unfurl in the Latin west.

A benchmark transformation occurred in the 16th century, when a novel envisioning of *vocatio* as "one's specific occupation or profession" is often said to have arisen. While this is certainly not the focus of this present study, it is important to note Max Weber's thesis, controversial though it may be. To Weber, values enshrined in religious systems either stymie or stimulate economic development. In sum, he saw Protestant reformers as revolutionary

to the economy, for in their writings, work in itself was given a spiritual significance.[10] Weber explained, "An unbroken unity integrating in systematic fashion an ethic of vocation in the world with assurance of religious salvation was the unique creation" of Protestantism, for "only in the Protestant ethic of vocation does the world, despite all its creaturely imperfections, possess unique and religious significance as the object through which one fulfills his duties."[11] All labor now could be on equal footing as an embodiment of callings, broad professions with different manifestations, given by God. This new theological interpretation of vocation, Weber proposed, surged from Luther to Calvin to the Puritans, each sharing in the beginnings of the modern economic systems of capitalism.[12] Despite many critical questions posed to the argument's nuances, Weber's thesis nonetheless observed "an important and indisputable turning point in the history of theological reflection on vocation," as scholars still admit.[13]

Can we discern other earlier voices in this "history of theological reflection on vocation," or is the 16th century truly the instigation of something altogether different? There could be several beneficial venues for investigation here,[14] but an enquiry into the potential contribution of Augustine is particularly alluring. This is not merely because he was dauntingly prolific (as Isidore of Seville long ago remarked, surely if something is worth seeking wisdom about, Augustine already wrote about it[15]) but because he writes substantially about what it is to be human. While today's automated world would be unrecognizable to him, the tendency to fragmentation in our lives, loves, and labors would be tragically familiar. Augustine does indeed employ the term vocatio, and his writings over the decades speak with considerable nuance and on varied occasions about work and, in fact, profession—that of others and his own.

Augustine's Use of "Vocatio"

When forms of *vocatio* appear in Augustine's works, appropriate translation renders it as "calling." This calling is distinctly the general call of God, the preparation of grace that is the *initium fidei*, the beginning of faith. A comment about the apostles exemplifies this: "but they were chosen from the world by that calling by which God carried out what he predestined" (*Sanct.* 34).[16] Confessions 11.1 simply states, "You have called us" (*vocasti nos*).

On Faith and Works (true to the title's name) associates faithful obedience with this calling: "For who that desires dwelling with God, in whom all are considered predestined, who 'according to the purpose are called,' would not strive to live in this way, as consistent with such a dwelling?" (22.41.)[17] Augustine does not use *vocatio* any more specifically. Perhaps a more appropriate path to pursue begins instead with Augustine's view of work—manual labor, indeed, but also different kinds of work and work with different ends and means. If work is presented with more nuance, perhaps a different set of vocabularies in consideration of profession and even God's role in the matter can be discerned.

On Labor and Work: Augustine and his Latin

Common classical Latin vocabularies distinguishing forms of labor provide assistance in setting the scene.[18] Firstly, the diverse vocabulary that appears in discussions regarding work reveals directions and contours rather than straightforward concepts. Forms of *ponos* and *labor* typically connote work with great effort, often manual in nature. The noun *industria* involves considerable effort as well; it often refers to work performed in the service of or for another person. The verb *operae* and its related noun *opus*, however, are generally used to reference attentive effort or exertion ultimately done by one's own agency; its works or services are viewed as inherently worthwhile, whether for oneself or for others. Forms of *officium* speak more to a service or duty that involves obligations but ultimately is voluntary in its undertaking; this word is commonly used for employment in professional positions and as such is variously translated as work, duty, office, or profession.[19]

Two far more ambivalent words have been given much attention in studies on Augustine and his legacy: *otium* and *negotium*. The terms seem straightforwardly opposite: *otium* as leisure and *negotium* as the lack of leisure, that is, as labor. However, such definitions are so over-simplified that accuracy of meaning must be called into question. Usage of these words throughout both classical and late antiquity is extraordinarily complicated and contextual. Neither is inherently good but serve as abstract ideas related to their setting. In Cicero's tome *On Duty* (*De Officiis*), *otium* can take place in the midst of or serve as the completion of *negotium* and has two equally potential outcomes, laziness or motivation, potentially ruining or inspiring greatness;[20] *negotium*

can mean actions in a general sense, troublesome labor, or benevolent work on behalf of others.[21] In the *Vulgate*, *otium* can be spoken of in relation to the Sabbath or to laziness, and *negotiu*m is morally neutral, occupied well or abusively.[22] A popular Roman poem further plays with meaning: "The one who knows not how to use *otium* has more *negotium* than when there is *negotium* in *negotium*."[23]

Just as the worlds of classical and late antiquity did not easily categorize *otium* and *negotium*, work itself was not necessarily perceived as shameful. Positive and explicit reference to productive work is manifestly present in both epigraphic and iconographic sources of the imperial age and late antiquity; Roman entrepreneurs, artisans, and freedmen of various occupations commonly commemorated their labor in image and inscription.[24] Specific occupations were distinguished from other occupations typically by the labors involved, and, in the words of Verboven and Laes, "the principle that workers acquire a social identity and status from the profession they exercise is clearly visible in our sources."[25] This ought not be taken to imply immediate prosperity among all who labored, however. There was only a "mixed incentive structure for labor" at best, and while markets did play a small role in the Roman world, "the market" was not as dominant as it would become over a millennia later.[26] In Augustine's churches within the small town of Hippo, then, it is unsurprising to note that he not unfrequently challenges his congregants with exhortation and illustration related to various mercantile endeavors (as we shall see) yet also references them as economically modest rather than wealthy.[27]

If work and profession are somehow linked in the cultural mores of Augustine's era, consideration of the ways that he writes about work proves to be a crucial stepping-stone towards vocation. A grand vision of work does emerge in Augustine's sermons, commentaries, various theological tomes, and letters, simple though it is not. Augustine has often been surmised to have presented rest and work in tension or as opposites. In such interpretations, work is presented as part of the civic life, the *via activa*, with a negative connotation of *negotium*, and *otium* is found within the contemplative life, the *vita contemplativa* of monastics—this was, for example, among Arendt's central analyses of Augustine.[28] This opposition is often in turn presented as leading to a purported spiritual elevation of certain professions during the Medieval era.

Contrarily, reality is far more complicated for Augustine, and the terms are, again, more complex. There is no dualism between spirituality and activity, peace and work. This may ultimately find its cause in several factors. In Augustine's perception of the human (in brief), vices are not necessarily in the outside world of action or in the life of the body itself; rather, they are *within* us as tendencies of the heart. Peace is not necessarily obtainable in or through present leisure; rather, it is an eschatologically-oriented *requiescere* (to be in repose),[29] a state of the heart's "flourishing in hope" (*spe beatus*).[30] In addition, Augustine used the *Vetus Latina,* the "Old Latin" translation common in the West before the *Vulgate*.[31] When Augustine references Psalm 46:10, the Old Latin reads, *Agite otium* (that is, "do/lead/work/act/ drive/ pursue/put in motion" in the imperative, with *otium* as its direct object), before *et cognoscite*, "and consider/reflect upon/know."[32] An approximate yet appropriate translation of this could be, "be active in rest, and consider" or even "In your motion, put in motion rest, and reflect..." Jerome's *Vulgate* renders the *agite otium* as instead simply *cessate,* "cease, be inactive" (45:10 *Vulg.*). The difference is striking and, I suspect, bears considerable implication for Augustine's own understanding of *otium* as well as *later* Western conceptions.[33] These features of the landscape in which Augustine ministered assists in providing a setting for his writings. At last, then, we can turn to his specific writings on work itself and, from there, seek his treatment of larger concepts of and surrounding profession.

On Work: Augustine's Writings

Three related collections best occupy an investigation into Augustine's depiction of work itself: several sermons on Mary and Martha, his remarks about human labor in his commentary on Genesis, and his articulations regarding work in *On the Work of Monks.* Mary and Martha might seem like an odd place to begin: is Mary not praised, Martha not chastised? For Augustine, the scene is not so simple:

> In these two women, two lives are shown—the present and the future, work and repose, duress and flourishing, temporal and eternal. These are two lives, but *you must consider them more fully*. What *this life* contains, I do not imply an evil life, or one of immorality, wickedness, luxuriousness, or ungodliness, but a life of

> *labor*. It might be full of sorrows, subdued by fears, disquieted by temptations, even this harmless life, such as was the case for Martha. … Both harmless, both praiseworthy: but one of labor, the other of rest: neither vicious, which the life of labor must beware of; neither slothful, which the life of ease must beware of. There were thus in that house these two lives and Himself, the fountain of life. In Martha was the image of things present, in Mary of things to come. What Martha was doing, that we are now; what Mary was doing, that we hope for. *Let us lead the first well*, that we may have the second fully (*Sermo* 104.4, emphases mine).

In Sermons 103 and 104, and in brief references to the sisters throughout his varied works,[34] Mary and Martha are complimentary. One prepares food to feed others, one receives food; one is a way of life, one is a state of the heart. Augustine interprets "Martha, Martha," as a tender encouragement as to her *direction* and *desire,* not chastisement of action: she cannot be frustrated that she cannot have repose *now* (103.3). Mary, rest, has chosen the best and will only be at the culmination of time in the presence of Christ. Augustine crafts numerous analogies for his explanation. Martha—"you!" he tells his congregation—must navigate the sail that Mary may yet come safe to port (104.3); "we labor in this world … let us continue onward, without sloth, that we may come to our destination" (103.1-2).[35] It is not that one can be Martha and another Mary. Each is to be both, in the words of Paul Kuntz, as "complimentary and supplementary … in a *vita mixta.*"[36]

Augustine's commentary *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* also presents striking remarks pertaining to work. His interpretation that cultivation of the land was without obstacle prior to the fall (8.8.15-23) is unsurprising. While the ease of labor was affected by the fall, nonetheless, even now, productive "work comes from a human in a world under the governance of God" (8.16-9.17). "Creatures are instructed and learn, fields are cultivated, societies are governed, arts are engaged, and other works ... Man was to work in the garden not in servile labor but in dignified delight of spirit … what could be of more profound reflection than this?" (9.17-18).[37] Augustine here relates dignity and work, and he sees daily evidence of God's administration in the productivity from the labor of people. The picture becomes all the more nuanced, however, as he continues.

Commentary on Genesis 2.15 commences with a breathless series of questions, the more pressing of which involves just *what* is being cultivated

and *what* is being guarded. Here Augustine renders his conviction that the latter portion of the passage, "and He [God] placed him in the garden to work and to guard it" (*posuit eum in paradiso operari eum et custodire*) actually implies that man is "to cultivate (or work) in the garden to guard *him*"—"what was being guarded in the garden? ... that thing which man cultivated in the earth by the craft of agriculture he guarded in himself by the practice" (*ut quod operaretur in terra per agriculturam, in seipso custodiret per disciplinam*, 10.19-20). The human is being "guarded" in the very action of working the earth; from the beginning, *in our cultivating we are cultivated* (as Augustine's words fairly sing throughout 10.23) and thus do not labor for God's advantage but for ours (*quae non est illi sed nobis utilis* and *quia non illi ad suam, sed ad nostram utilitatem salutemque servimus,* 11.24). In work, then, Augustine sees inherent dignity as well as effect, that of production indeed but also of our own well-being.

On the Labor of Monks, Augustine's seeming tirade against labor-eschewing monastics, is perhaps best viewed as a lengthy commentary on the value of work, particularly that among monastics (as they were his audience). While the occasion for writing was somewhat peculiar, the symptoms it displayed were less extraordinary. Merely three years earlier, Augustine had sent a letter to the abbot of a monastery built pleasantly on an island off the coast of Tuscany. Sarcastic intonations are not difficult to detect. He communicates profuse gratitude for the numerous prayers of those on the island, since he and his companions are in the midst of "so many tasks we can barely breathe" but are "nonetheless persevering in that ministry in which He [God] has determined to place us" (*Ep.* 48.1).[38] Brusque assurance quickly follows: "But we encourage you in the Lord, brothers: do keep to the way of life you have undertaken … and do not privilege your rest over the needs of the church" (48.2).[39] Lawless has rightly here commented, "flight from the world, *fuga mundi,* though essentially spiritual and a matter of the heart, was never a matter for geographical relocation. The Bishop of Hippo regarded separation from other people as humanly impossible, altogether incompatible with the social nature of humanity and the exigencies of Christian charity."[40]

If monastics in search of a permanent geographical retreat were not so rare a manifestation in Augustine's world, his lengthy challenge to the audience of *On the Work of Monks* is unsurprising. Numerous avenues of retort and exhortation operate here. Augustine invokes the example of Paul consistently,

but he also strikes towards the heart. He relates a story of an impoverished man who had done manual labor before joining a monastic community. As monk, he continued to *do* exactly the same kind of work, but it was not that nothing had changed. Before the man had worked from the hope for increase of material possessions; now, he works with hope among "those who have one soul and one heart tending towards God" (*De Op Mon* 25.32). With satisfaction or tears, work is undertaken with a united heart with others and within the self (one of Augustine's many allusions to Acts 4.32[41]), with hope oriented towards and in the unceasing eschatological rest. For this reason, the work of monks does not deny rest (*requiem*) but acknowledges that Christ "Himself was not free from duress" (*nec ipse sine pressuris fuit,* 29.37). In the same section, Augustine voices a significant comment,

> Investigate and learn about the labors of our occupations … and about the related customs of the churches that we serve … for all of us, you and us, who labor according to our rank and duty, the way is narrow, attended by labor and exertion. Yet, to those rejoicing in hope, sweet is the yoke and light is the burden of He who has called us to rest (29:37).[42]

An eschatological component to his view of work is expanded: people partake in hope-oriented work situationally, according to "rank and duty," "in our occupations," while all are ultimately "called" (*vocavit*) to rest. He may be here indicating different ranks and tasks among monastics, but his writings and sermons elsewhere would open further possibilities. After all, throughout his life, Augustine was ambivalent to uniformly endorse specific disciplines as method for spiritual living, even as he himself was an avowed monastic.[43] In such reticence, his conviction is evident: even if grounded in the same hope and oriented in the same love, humans will not necessarily partake in the same programs of disciplines, types of work, nor even professions. This, of course, leads to another question: how does he speak of "secular" professions?

Augustine on the "Secular" Professions

When faced with the challenge of elucidating Augustine's view of … almost anything, namely anything secular, *City of God* seems the best place to begin.

Indeed, that *opus* will have bearing here. Yet sermons delivered over decades provide intimate details about Augustine's congregations and their contexts, and letters penned in response to inquiries both practical and theological and to incidents both quotidian and substantial reveal the width of Augustine's engagement with others. There is consistency of opinion between these different genres, but there is also different depth of detail.

Sermon 96, delivered around the year 416, revolves around Mark 8.34. "Somehow, people are like the loves that compel them," Augustine observes in exhorting his congregation to obedience. The command to follow Christ in obedience and hope is *not* directed to clergy but not married women, monks but not lay people, "but may the whole church, the entire body, with each of its members distinguished in and throughout various professions, pursue Christ" (*Christum, Serm.* 96.7).[44] While he speaks of each of these groups as having "chosen" their way of life (*elegit,* chose, 96.10), they must "follow Christ in their own way, place, and kind" (*in genere suo, et in loco suo, et in suo modo, sequantur Christum*, 96.9), curating the direction *of* their heart. Sermon 107A, unfolding from the day's passage warning about greed drawn from Luke 12.15, assumes that his congregation is partaking in numerous mercantile activities, including both holding and selling properties. Like comments in other sermons,[45] here his words paint parables about selling, gaining increase, and honesty and greed.[46] Warnings focus not on the activity or the possession but on "being possessed by" (a similar phrase used in 96.4), and he even connects the virtues to moral responsibility in one's mercantile decisions ("go into your conscience, and you will find the price of this possession. If faith, hope, and love are found there, pay for and buy it," 107A.8).

It is evident throughout his sermons that Augustine assumes his congregants are involved in *officia*. Sermon 302, for example, further addresses specific professionals, namely soldiers, tax-collectors, and merchants, mentioned in the Scriptural passages of the liturgy that day. He contrasts ways that such professions can be abusively practiced and ways they can be done faithfully in the present tense. "Soldiering does not prevent you from doing good," he comments, "but spite does," and publicans ought follow the Lukan command to "demand no more than the set fee" (302.15). The comments focus on specific abuses versus honorable participation in those professions, culminated with a flourish: "To say it straightforwardly … we are all Christians" (302.17). As such, an account to God will be given for one's realm of

responsibility in a profession (302.17).

Augustine's correspondence provides more detail here, particularly his exchange of numerous with three civil employees of various roles, Marcellinus, Macedonius, and Boniface. *Epistles* 133 and 138 address the former, a court magistrate. As Augustine lobbies Marcellinus to take a certain position on a judicial matter, he pointedly remarks, "you have been sent for the use of the church" (*pro ecclesiae utilitate missus es,* 133.3). While he does not indicate explicitly *who* did the sending, implication would seem to say God—that is, God placed him in this profession to be of efficacy to the *ecclesia.* In a consequent letter, he emphasizes to Marcellinus that Christians are not to withdraw from but participate well, "as the doctrine of Christ requires," in civic activities and positions, explicitly including that of military service, judges, rulers, servants, and publicans, that can contribute to "the state's well-being" (138.2.15).

A similar tone is found in correspondence with Macedonius, who around the years 413-414 posed various questions about the Scripture and apparently wondered if he ought to abandon his position as imperial governor of Roman Africa to pursue monasticism. The final letter in the collection (155) is most pointed, drawing on Ciceronian philosophical concepts and Augustine's own theology of human flourishing (the *beata vita*[47]). As Clair remarks, "Augustine takes Macedonius further out and further up the expanding circles of *oikeiōsis* [the transformative vision of the City of God], encouraging him to view his responsibility for the peace of North Africa in light of his primary responsibility to love God, the highest good."[48] "Serving in the position of earthly judge," Macedonius can live "in the reign of Christ," pursuing by means of the virtues of faith, hope, and love "a true life of flourishing" (155.4.17). Professions can disappear in disaster, Augustine notes soberly, but "the flourishing life lies in our own control … and the highest good will never be lost" (155.1.3, 155.3.12). As Dodaro has noted, "Augustine's description of a public official whose official duty in the earthly city is explicitly connected—not contrasted—with citizenship in the heavenly city."[49] He articulates to Macedonius that a Christian governor's objective is to "assist his subjects in loving God as completely as possible in this life," an objective that shapes all other endeavors, no matter how temporal they may seem.[50] In Augustine's exhortation, a person's virtues in and aims of a profession are key; theological virtues redirect, but do not necessarily replace,

professional positions and their corresponding actions. This theme is all the more brought to bear in his communication with the prominent military commander Boniface.

Augustine's letters to Boniface are explicit in conviction that even as the transitory *must* submit to the eternal, secular authorities have the task (*officium*) to protect social order and the populations entrusted to them. As R. A. Markus articulates, in Augustine's vision "all human order was fragile,"[51] and secular authorities, Christian or not, were given responsibility for reinforcing this order. As a Christian, Boniface is instructed seek the eternal while participating in the temporal—even in facing prospect of warfare. "Do not presume that the one who as soldier carries weapons of war cannot please God," *Epistle* 189 proclaims, listing various soldiers in the scripture, "for even your bodily strength is a gift from God; in that way, remember not to act against God by means of a gift of God … Your will ought to be aimed at having peace" (189.4, 6).

Directives in *City of God* 19.19 compliment those expressed in sermons and letters. This well-known passage focuses on professional options for Christians. Not only is the content of this passage noteworthy, however, it is immensely significant but rarely acknowledged that it comes immediately prior to Augustine's confirmation that human flourishing is attainable—at least, in part—when hope and love are aligned in appropriate orientation (19.20). One's labors, profession, and flourishing-in-hope (*beatus in spe*) are, in short, associated with one another. Again, his audience is instructed to consider their orientation and resultant action within whatever profession: "No one ought to be in such leisure as to, in his own ease, forget useful service to his neighbor; nor may anyone be so entrenched in an active life that he does not seek contemplation of God" (19.19). Those in places of action and authority must partake in their work (*opus*) in such a way that it is useful, working for the welfare of all under their jurisdiction.[52] Even promotion in these offices is fine, provided that one's ambition does not consist of myopic pride.

Augustine's perspectives, however, do reflect a bit more nuance than his infamous "love, and do what you will" (*Io. Ep. Tr.* 7.8). He frequently references compulsion and burdens of work, particularly his *own* work. "It is under the *compulsion* of love" that *negotium* must be undertaken, *City of God* 19.19 further declares; indeed, "it is necessary for love's sake to receive

and undertake it" (19:19).[53] Apparent is the acceptance of a burden that is *imponit,* imposed. What is this burden imposed and yet received, and who is imposing it?

Augustine's Depictions of the Pastoral Task

Augustine's depictions of the pastoral task are informed by his *own* task. Approximately two years after his baptism in Milan, Augustine had relocated to provincial Roman North Africa.[54] In a wake of grief from the loss of his teenage son and a beloved friend soon after, he formed a small monastic community there, devoting himself to writing and prayer. His quiet was short-lived, for the Bishop Valerius and his congregation in Hippo ordained Augustine into the priesthood in 391. By 395, he had been declared co-bishop, then soon became sole Bishop of Hippo, with his cathedra in a church named the Basilica of Peace.[55] He continued to labor there as he lived in a clerical monastic community until his death in 430.[56]

Some have indicated that Augustine's appointment to the priesthood changed little "the practical parameters of a life centered on speaking" for the recently retired teacher of rhetoric,[57] but this seems only partially the case. He depicts this retirement in the narrative of the *Confessions.* As the ninth book begins, Augustine is a new convert. "I am Your servant," he acclaims, "You [God] have loosed my bonds," and his heart, tongue, and bones can now be united in praise (9.1). In this state of freedom, he declares that it was pleasing both to both himself and God "to withdraw the ministry of my tongue from the talker's trafficking place," so that students could no longer "purchase the weapons of my mouth to further their own frenzy" (9.2).

In his retirement, however, he does not necessarily lay down the tools of the trade. Rhetoric remains a significant tool at his disposal, but it is poised towards a different end, employed in a different setting, and bore fruit among different recipients. *Prima facie,* perhaps, Augustine quits his secular job involving persuasive speaking and soon enters another job involving persuasive speaking. Yet he regards the professions as two completely different ways of life, relationship, and work: one is slavery, one servitude. "I serve with my heart and voice and writings" (*Conf.* 9.13.37), he proclaims. Yet all was not entirely well. Augustine was thoroughly overwhelmed with the gravity and extent of the task.

The *Confessions* might have used the metaphor of loosed bonds for his conversion, but his writings uniformly return to the language of involuntary burdened affliction and sheer obedience in speaking of his work as bishop throughout his thirty-five year tenure. In an early epistle, written while he was still a Bishop's assistant, he wrote, "I am clenched in the fist of church administration" (*qua Ecclesiae cura tenear,* 31.4). The bishop Valerius "imposed on me the burden of cobishop" (*coepiscopatus sarcinam imponeret*), yet "I trusted that the Lord had willed this" (*Dominum id velle credidi*, 31.4). "There are some who God has willed to be guides of churches" (*quos gubernatores ecclesiarum esse voluit, Ep.* 10), and "we persevere in that ministry in which He has placed us" (*perseverantes nos in eo ministerio, in quo dignatus est collocare*, *Ep.* 48.1). In the case of a new presbyter, "Pinianus took his oath in my presence and with my permission, but it is not true that he did it in obedience to any command from me … for the consecration of a presbyter is a work of God" (*opus Dei, Ep.* 126.6).

Such assumption is not made without some caveat on Augustine's part and, indeed, only exists in connection to his larger theological perspectives. "God has placed you in that seat" (*te in illa sede Dominus Deus noster constituit*), he tells the Bishop Caelestine in *Epistle* 209. In the same letter, however, Augustine admits to his own mistaken "imposing" of a bishop on a congregation, a young man "whom I had not proved, who was, at least in age, not yet established, by whom they have now been afflicted" (209.9). What makes a bishop willed and placed by God or imposed by man? Augustine does not indicate it here, but in every one of Augustine's letters to or about Caelestine, Augustine admires Caelestine's *unity*—with his congregation but also within his own heart, in loves and in direction of hope. The shamed young bishop (who apparently had difficulty keeping his hands off the wealth and women of his congregation) demonstrated the opposite, and he was certainly not alone in his abuse of the pastoral task.

Sermon 340A, delivered at the ordination of another bishop, expertly advises both the cleric and the congregation on the qualities of a good bishop versus those of a bad bishop. The latter, he explains, has only an empty name; like a scarecrow contrasts to a farmer, a bad bishop simply enjoys the views in the field without tilling (340A.4-6). *All* Christians, after all, "are mixed together in public appearance but distinct in their roots" (340A.10). A similar note can be heard in Sermon 340,[58] delivered on an anniversary of his own

ordination. He notes that some pastors enjoy the title without undertaking the *officium* (340.1), some do that work but are negligent with their own lives (340.9-10), some falsely promise present happiness to their congregants (*promittunt felicitatem*[59] *huius saeculi,* 340.11), and others naively forget that "the sheep are insolent" (340.14).[60] Here a passage from *City of God,* itself Augustine's grand envisioning of God's omnipotence and omniscience, may be worth recalling: "He [God] gives earthly kingdoms to both the good and the wicked. He does not do this flippantly, for He is God not fortune. Rather, He acts in accordance with His order of things and times, obscure to us but entirely known to Him" (*Civ. Dei* 4.33). It would seem, just as he expressed in his letter to the official Marcellinus, "you have been sent for the beneficial use of the Church" (*pro Ecclesiae utilitate missus es, Ep.* 133.3) for reasons unbeknown, but the action within that position is determined by personal orientation.

Proper orientation may be inextricable from Augustine's envisioning of flourishing, but it did not imply an easy journey. "When will I ever suffice with the tongue of my pen to express all Your exhortations, and terrors, and comforts, and guidance, whereby You led me (*me perduxisti*) to preach Your Word and to dispense Your sacrament unto Your people?" (*Conf.* 11.2). Augustine accepts liability for his submission nonetheless: "It is because of our own stubbornness and weakness, if this chain chafes me in some ways" (*Ep.* 31.4). This submission only happens in hope's recalibration: "He who truly gives up everything is the one who gives up not only as much as he was able to have but also as much as he wanted to have" (*Ep.* 31.5).[61]

Augustine alludes to what *he* wanted to have often. "Nobody could outdo me in grand, anxiety-free *otium*" he reflects in the midst of a sermon, "but preaching, arguing, rebuking, edifying, having to manage for everyone, is a great task, a great burden, a great labor (*magnus labor*)—who would not seek refuge from such labor? But the Gospel terrifies me" (*Sermo* 339.4; cf. similar sentiment in *Sermo* 340.2). Tasks, burdens, labors—indeed, bishops faced numerous demands. They served as church administrators, delivered sermons to sizeable congregations, rendered judgments in both civil cases and ecclesial matters, and often acted as lobbyists to civic officials, among other tasks.[62] What of Augustine's monastic lifestyle in the midst of such commitments? In a clerical monastery, Lawless notes, one's life was "transmuted into the communal practice of the church."[63] To Augustine, this would

have been part of the human's reorienting relationship with God and others, in a nexus that was far more composite than a simplistic *vita comtemplativa* or a *vita activa*.

Accordingly, even as monastic, he remarked amidst his communications with Marcellinus, "You would also be astonished at the number of things which I cannot put off and which pluck me by the sleeve" to prevent him from writing (*Ep.* 138). "As for the whole management of those ecclesiastical tasks (*istam omnem rerum ecclesiasticarum procurationem*), which we are believed to love to have authority over, I endure it as part of the service, out of love for the brethren and fear of God. It is tolerated, not loved. If I could, without unfaithfulness to my office, I would be rid of it" (*Ep*. 126.9). He wrote in a terse series of letters with Jerome, "I do not have such great knowledge of the Divine Scripture as I see you do. If I do have some acumen here, it is expended on the people of God, as because of this ecclesiastical occupation (*ecclesiasticas occupationes*) I am not able to have the vacant time of more details than the people will listen to" (*Ep.* 73.2.5). I suspect Augustine would be astonished to see most artistic depictions[64] of him—typically alone, in authorial contemplation—for that seems not to have been his primary *modus operandi*. "Nothing in this life is more difficult, laborious, and dangerous than the office of bishop, priest, or deacon," another early epistle opines, "yet before God, nothing is more blessed than if one soldiers as our emperor commands" (*Ep.* 21.1).[65]

Various other works echo this refrain. Both *On the Work of Monks* and *Epistle* 48 comment that even as he and his clerical companions are engaged in "so many tasks we can barely breathe," they are "nonetheless persevering in that ministry in which He [God] has determined to place us" (*perseverantes nos in eo ministerio, in quo dignatus est collocare*, *Ep.* 48.1). In *On Christian Doctrine,* a discussion about the Christian's proper orientation moves into illustration: human action itself takes place in the present yet is founded upon inference from the past and expectation for the future. The work of numerous professions, from artisans of dining-ware and wrestlers to doctors and managers, are specifically given as examples. After listing these professions, Augustine hastily adds that he is not necessarily encouraging his audience to engage in any one of them "unless led by compelling *officium*."[66] This should not be considered an invective to avoid labor unless one must; its juxtaposition of *officium* and the state of being compelled, viewed

in light of Augustine's comments elsewhere, seems rather to hint at divine placement in specific professions.

Summary of Augustine on Vocational Calling: Voluit, Duxit, Collocavit

In sum, Augustine consistently used terms indicating that God "willed," "led," and "placed" (*voluit, duxit, collocavit*) for something more specific than a *vocatio,* the general call to faith. The latter of those terms, from *collocare*, is illustratively layered. It implies "to invest, place, set, station, order, arrange, occupy, and employ," and it is Cicero's term for both the arrangement of words in speeches and the depiction of people waiting in ambush.[67] Augustine likely would have concurred. Professions, with their relationships of exchange and specific labors, seem to be God's arrangement, as well as a kind of ambuscade on one's life (at least as he certainly viewed his own). His sense of "calling" entailed no bloated sense of responsibility or micromanagement: Augustine is seen delegating tasks when able.[68] He spoke of his ministry and his monastic identity as both personal and directed by God (e.g., *Conf.* 11.2, *perduxisti*), but he never communicated that these identities were applicable or directed to all. He did not recruit. Even as he noted the significance of work in itself, he refrained from prescriptions as to the *kind* of work.[69] He recognized his own tendency to solitude and inaction, just as he was cognizant of others' propensities to task-oriented, nearly frenzied public service and action (e.g., *Ep.* 10). In itself, an occupation generated no special sanctity to practitioners or those in proximity. Professions were unique in demands, and are often referred to as placed on a person's shoulders by God, but in the larger picture of Augustinian thought were not in themselves privileged. The rightly-oriented love of God, on the other hand, was something to which *all* Christians were called in their quotidian lives.

It can be said, then, that in Augustine's writings there is a general *vocation* to orientation and a specific *placing* or *leading* into profession within that. For the latter, there are specific kinds of work and relationships of exchange entailed in each, and these can be properly or improperly stewarded. This work is ultimately a means by which God works in (or cultivates) his creatures. There are numerous limitations, further questions, and practical trajectories that emerge from such conclusions, of course. As thoughtful conversations

about vocation continue,[70] however, it seems that we would do well to engage in retrospection. Perhaps Augustine can be said to articulate significant theological perspectives regarding vocation and labor ... that is, perhaps Isidore of Seville was right, after all.

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1 Augustine's works in Latin obtained from S. Aurelii Augustini *Opera Omnia*, editio Latina, accessed at http://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm. Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own. Titles of Augustine's works are abbreviated in citation and follow those of James O'Donnell's commentary on Augustine's *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). I am grateful for the invitation from the Commonweal Project to explore this topic.

2 Paul A. Marshall, "Work and Vocation: Some Historical Reflections," *Reformed Journal* 30:9 (1980), 17. He also reflects this view in *A Kind of Life Imposed on Man: Vocation and Social Order from Tyndale to Locke* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 19.

3 E.g., the classic article by Karl Holl, "The History of the Word Vocation," trans. H. F. Peacock, *Review and Expositor* 55 (1958), 126-154; William Placher, *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

4 Distinction between these is interesting but not always apparent. For example, a job generally involves transactional relationships and commitments oriented around certain labors, whereas labor itself might be said to imply the action that specifically embodies the job and actualizes a vocation.

5 Indeed, among authors of all Christian traditions—Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox. As an example of this grand inclusivity, Steven Garber's *Visions of Vocation* painted in beautifully compelling prose a dauntingly vast panorama: vocation is woven into God's work, incarnates the gospel, involves tasks that are chosen "for love's sake," attends to the flourishing of ourselves and of others, and ultimately answers the question, "knowing what I know, what will I do?" in *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 18, 224, 238-9.

6 E.g., Luke 14:16, Matt 10:5; 2 Thess 2:14, Eph 4:4, 1 Pet 5:10, Rom 11:29, Gal 1:6; 1 Cor 1:9.

7 1 Cor 7:17, "Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him" (ESV) and 7.20, "Each one should remain in the calling (typically translated as "condition", e.g., ESV) in which he was called." The latter verse contains two uses of the same word, within a larger passage that employs 'calling' otherwise as that of Christ unto Himself.

8 Eph 4:11-12; In 1 Cor 12:28, we see instead τίθημι (*tithēmi*), to establish, fix, or put in place (which is also used in John 15:16); in 1 Tim 3:1, such offices are "aspired to" (ὀρέγω, *oregō*).

9 E.g., in 1 Cor 7, v.17 features *sicut vocavit Deus*, and v.20-21 reads, *unusquisque in qua vocatione vocatus est in ea permaneat servus vocatus es non sit tibi curae sed et si potes liber fieri magis utere* (ESV: Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it, but if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity).

10 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (trans., T. Parsons; London: Unwin Hyman, 1930, orig. 1905).

11 Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (trans., E. Fischoff; Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 182.

12 Thus emerges arguably unforeseen attitudes and comments, such as Sir John's irony-laden comment in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, "'tis no sin for a man to labor in his vocation" in defense of his thievery:*Henry IV*, act 1, scene 1, lines 104-5.

13 Edward Hahnenberg, *Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call* (Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 4; cf. Paul Marshall, *A Kind of Life Imposed on Man: Vocation and Social Order from Tyndale to Locke* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

14 E.g., inquiry into notions of "vocation" in the medieval world could be undertaken by examining medieval sermons, e.g., the 13th c. *Sermones* of Étienne de Bourbon, as well as the writings of Petrarch and Dante, are certainly worth examining on this topic.

15 He also famously declared in the same stanza that anyone claiming to have read every word produced by

Augustine's pen is an obvious liar (Isidore of Seville *Etymologies* 7).

16 *Electi sunt autem de mundo vocatione in qua Deus id quod praedestinauit, impleuit, De Praes.*

17 *Quis enim digne cogitans habitationem apud Deum, in qua omnes praedestinatione sunt deputati, qui secundum propositum vocati sunt, non enitatur ita vivere, ut tali habitationi congruat?* The passage integrated into his comment similarly used a form of *vocare* (*vocati sunt,* Roms 8:28) in its Latin translations. Rowan Williams comments briefly on Augustine and *vocatio* in this way: it is "the receiving of the grace of Christ which reconnects us with our vocation to be God's created image … we come to "image" God by grasping that our reality exists solely within His activity" Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 175.

18 See the significant recent volume edited by Koenraad Verboven and Christian Laes, *Work, Labour, and Professions in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); resources for investigation into the language also include De Gruyter's voluminous *Thesaurus Latinae Linguae* and the classic Lewis and Short Latin Dictionary, accessible at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/resolveform?redirect=true&lang=Latin. We should of course add the caveat that ancient literature on labor should be expected to reflect the perceptions of a minority in society (a minority that often inconsistently speaks of and does not follow its own ideals—and one with very different assumptions than our own era, e.g., significant civic positions with obvious economic return, such as that of provincial governor, are not typically referred to as professions; cf. Verboven and Laes, "Work, Labour, Professions. What's in a Name?" in *Work, Labour, and Professions in the Roman World* (ed., Verboven and Laes; Leiden: Brill, 2017, 2-4).

19 Cf. *Vulgate* Num 7:8; Pliny *Ep.* 7.15; Suetonius *Aug.* 57.

20 *De Offic.* 3.1-4. 3.28; Catullus' poetry similarly observes "*otium* has in the past destroyed kings and flourishing cities," 51.15-16.

21 Cicero *Tusc.* 1.6.

22 Ezek 21:22; 1 Thess 4:6 entails a warning about taking advantage of others in *negotium*, but 2 Cor 7:11 is positive, complimenting a *negotium* wholly without contamination. Cf. Jean Leclercq, *Otia Monastica:* études *sur le vocabulaire de la contemplation au moyen* âge, Studia Anselmiana 51 (Rome: Herder, 1963), 13-49, for these term as carried on through the Middle Ages.

23 Ennius, *Iphigenia,* preserved in Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights,* 19.10: *otio qui nescit uti plus negotii habet quam cum est negotium in negotio*.

24 With excellent documentation and explanation, Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, "Work, Identity, and Self-Representation in the Roman Empire," in *Work, Labour, and Professions in the Roman World*, ed. Verboven and Laes, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 262-289; the majority of the labor force in Roman antiquity consisted of free labor, not slavery, cf. Verboven and Laes, 8-9.

25 Verboven and Laes, 4; this is particularly so in terms of the significant social framework of *collegia*.

26 Ibid., 13.

27 E.g., *Sermo* 107A, 302.2-16, 107.4-6, 108.6, 93.

28 Arendt argued that Augustine essentially accepted the typical classical dualism between a civic, active life and a restful contemplative life, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 14-16, 288-292, 304. Without invoking Arendt, some scholarly works still view Augustine with such a dualistic lens: Paul Marshall, *A Kind of Life Imposed on Man: Vocation and Social Order from Tyndale to Locke* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 18-20;

29 E.g., *Conf.* 1.1, *requiescat in te*; God's rest described with *requiescere* in Augustine's discussion of God's ongoing works (*operari*) and God's rest in Genesis, *De Gen ad Litt.* 7.28.42.

30 E.g., *Trin.* 13.9, *Civ. Dei* 19.5, *Gen. Litt.* 4.16.27, *Ep.* 130. My translation of *beatus/beata* is "flourishing," to emphasize its layered meaning. Some translate this term as "happy," others as "blessed," but I am convinced that "flourishing" is the most appropriate term to use today. Cf. Megan DeVore, "'This is the Beata Vita': Augustine on Human Flourishing," delivered at the Commonweal Project Spring Symposium at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 2017.

31 For more thorough information, H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

32 E.g., in *De Ver. Rel.* 35.65.

33 Cf. Jean-Marie André, *L'otium dans la vie morale et intellectuelle romaine des origines à l'époque augustéenne,* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).

34 E.g., *Trin.* 1.10.20.

35 Another pair of Scriptural sisters present the same lesson, in Augustine's exegetical method and theory: in his polemical *Against Faustus,* Leah represents "the temporal life in which we labor," and Rachel "the hope of life eternal" (*Cont. Faust.* 22.55). The present life will engage in *laborosia opera ad utilitatem,* toilsome

work with a useful end, that is, the service of others. This is productive: Leah bears children. In this life, however, Augustine continues, the purely contemplative mode is "sterile" and potentially breeds vices: cf. Giovanni Catapano, "Leah and Rachel as Figures of the Active and the Contemplative Life in Augustine's *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*," in *Theoria, Praxis, and the Contemplative Life after Plato and Aristotle* (ed., Thomas Bénatouïl and Mauro Bonazzi; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 215-228. Augustine's fascinating interpretation of Martha and Mary, while not typical (E.g., Cyril of Alexandria saw Mary as a symbol of the gentiles, and Martha as a symbol of the Jews, *In Joannem* 7.9.6.), and similar to only the commentaries of Chrysostom (*Homilies on the Gospel of John* 44), will be echoed by others in the Western tradition for several centuries, e.g., Gregory the Great *Ep.* 5: "I loved the beauty of the contemplative life as a Rachel, barren, but able in sight and pretty. Though in her repose she is less fertile, she sees the light with more ability. But for reasons I do not know, Leah has been coupled with me at night—that is, the active life, fruitful but weak in eyes, seeing less but bearing more … I am compelled to serve with Martha in many public tasks."

36 Paul Kuntz, "Practice and Theory: Civic and Spiritual Virtues in Plotinus and Augustine," in *Arbeit Musse Meditation* (ed., Brian Vickers; Stuttgart: Tuebner, 1991), 71. The *vita mixta* is explained beautifully in Augustine's *Ep.* 10, as well.

37 *In hac autem altera signa dari, doceri et disci, agros coli, societates administrari, artes exerceri, et quaeque alia… ut operaretur agriculturam, non labore servili, sed honesta animi voluptate… quid plenius magna consideratione?*

38 *Tamen… perseverantes nos in eo ministerio in quo dignatus est collocar.*

39 *Vos autem, fratres, exhortamur in Domino ut propositum vestrum custodiatis… nec vestrum otium necessitatibus ecclesiae praeponatis.*

40 Laweless, 142.

41 Luc Verheijen opined that Augustine's monastic ideal, the "symbol of monastic life as he conceived of it" is Acts 4.32: Luc Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32-35*, The Saint Augustine Lecture Series (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1979).

42 *Quaerite, et cognoscite labores occupationum nostrarum… et Ecclesiarum quibus servimus talem iam consuetudinem … Sane omnibus et nobis et vobis pro nostro gradu et officio laborantibus et arcta via est in labore et aerumna, et tamen in spe gaudentibus iugum eius lene est et sarcina levis, qui nos vocavit ad requiem.*

43 E.g., *Ep.* 36 and 130. Cf. George E. Demacopoulos, "Augustine of Hippo and Resistance to the Ascetic Model of Spiritual Direction," in *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 95; George Lawless, "Augustine's Decentering of Asceticism," in *Augustine and his Critics* (ed., Robert Dodaro and George Lawless; London: Taylor and Francis, 1999), 141-162.

44 *Sed universa ecclesia, universum corpus, cuncta membra per officia propria distincta et distribute, sequantur.*

45 *Sermo* 302.16 asks, "have *you* always traded honestly?"; *Sermo* 108 has a pointed example that assumes similar activity in household business specifically, "You at least pay wages to those who do work for you" (108.6).

46 This paper will not explore how wealth itself is viewed: such studies have been done thoroughly elsewhere, e.g., Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

47 The most appropriate translation of *beatus/beata* is "flourishing:" cf. footnote 29.

48 Joseph Clair, *Discerning the Good in the Letters and Sermons of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 102; Clair more thoroughly explains the leitmotif of "*oikeiōsis*" on p. 39-40.

49 Robert Dodaro, "Augustine the Statesman and the Two Cities," in *A Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (ed., Mark Vessey and Shelley Reed; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 388.

50 Ibid., 391. Milbank's position that Augustine ultimately envisions a transformation of the profession to such an extent that he insinuates a theocracy seems too excessive a reading: cp. J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 380-438.

51 R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. xi.

52 Augustine instructs "pilgrims" in this world that they can maintain the customs and institutions of the day, so long as these do not hinder worship of God (*Civ. Dei* 19.17). "Those who live by faith expectantly desire the eternal peace which is promised, and they use (*utitur*) as pilgrims the advantages of earth and time that do not captivate and divert them from God but that nourish (*sustentetur*) them to bear on with greater ease and keep down to a minimum those burdens of the temporary body that weigh upon the soul" (*Civ. Dei* 19.17). Thus, firstly, the well-oriented utility of goods is an important component to our nourishment as we seek with faith, hope, and love the *summum bonum.* Secondly, an overemphasis on the total unattainability of flourishing in this world might be an overly limited reading of Augustine, for while the *perfection*

of flourishing is eschatological, it would seem that there are instrumental "advantages of earth and time" that are useful to nourish and to assist our trajectory thereunto. Augustine seems to be indicating that part of our expectant desire for the fulfillment of all things is the use of (not captivation *with*, but proper *use of*) such resources that allow us to be sustained in this body, because the burdens that exhaust our bodies have the power to press upon the whole of our lives, reaching to our very souls. This seems consistent with Augustine's convictions in other works. "If a thing is to be loved for its own sake," that is, when God is loved rightly, "then in the enjoyment of this comes a *beata vita*—if not yet the reality, the hope of which is our comfort" now, in our present pilgrimage (*Doct. Chr.* 1.22; cp. *Ep.* 130.7; *Div. Qu.* 83.3; *Lib. Arb.* 2.13.26).

53 *negotium iustum suscipit necessitas caritatis … si autem imponitur, suscipienda est propter caritatis necessitate.* A note on choice of vocabulary: *suscipere,* rendered here "to receive and undertake," is the verb used when a father formally held up and therefore acknowledged his newborn child, for the voluntary undertaking of a lifelong civil position, and when the Roman state formally admitted a citizen. All are presented for one's acceptance, and have their own demands, but each can be potentially abused in their undertaking.

54 For more on this city, see Jane Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (London: Yale University Press, 1997); Naomi Norman, "Carthage," in *Augustine through the Ages* (ed., Allan Fitzgerald; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 132-133; Claude Lepelley, "The Survival and Fall of the Classical City in Late Roman Africa," in *The City in Late Antiquity* (ed., John Rich; London: Routledge, 1992).

55 There is debate about how many were in his congregation there: estimates range from three hundred, limited by architectural space suggested by excavation, to over a thousand. Cf. discussion in Peter Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching* (Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014), 13-15: O'Donnell, van der Meer, and MacMullen all present differing voices as to both numbers and composition of attendees. The city of Annaba in Algeria, formerly the Roman metropolis Hippo Regus, still has a Basilica of Peace on the site. Augustine was buried there in 430 (though his body was later moved, like so many others, to Italy).

56 This kind of coenobitic lifestyle was very common for clerics at the time: cf. Andrea Stark, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

57 Hildegund Müller, "Preacher: Augustine and His Congregation," in *A Companion to Augustine* (ed., Mark Vessey and Shelley Reid; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 297.

58 Sometimes listed as *Sermo* 46, depending on collection.

59 It is worthy of remark that the term "happiness," *felix/felicitas,* ought not be confused with *beatus/beata, "*flourishing" (itself sometimes translated as "blessed" or "happy", but certainly not in the same sense as *felix*).

60 He knew that both leaders and lay, in their various posts, had their own fragmentations of the heart: ordination did not a saint make. This might explain why his criteria for ordination focus on education and administrative competence, as can be seen throughout *de Doctrina,* which was composed as a handbook for Christian preachers. Cf. discussion in Demacopoulos, 85-106.

61 Van der Meer gravely affirms here, "The nature of Augustine's choice is evident in all he did" (233).

62 On a bishop's many tasks, cf. Henry Chadwick, *The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society* (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1980); discussion in F. Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 235-274.

63 John Peter Kenney, "Mystic and Monk: Augustine and the Spiritual Life," in *A Companion to Augustine* (ed., Mark Vessey and Shelley Reid; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 295.

64 E.g., the well-known paintings of Philippe de Champaigne, Gerard Seghers, Fra Angelico, Antonio Rodríguez, *et al.* An exception to this would certainly be the stunning 15th c. altarpiece panels by the Vergós group (incl. Jaume Huguet).

65 "Burden" appears often in his letters: *Ep.* 31.4, 69.1, 71.2, 85.2, 86, 101.3, 149.34, 242.1, 34.1, etc.

66 The fascinating section in whole reads: "Further, as to the remaining arts, whether those by which something is made that remains as a result of his work when the effort of the workman is over, as, for example, a house, a bench, a dish, and other like things; or those that (so to speak) display God in His works, like medicine, agriculture, and navigation; or those whose sole result is an action, such as dancing, racing, and wrestling—in all these arts, experience leads us to infer the future from the past. After all, no one who is skilled in any of these arts moves his limbs in work without connecting the memory of the past with expectation for the future. Thus a general, basic knowledge is to be acquired from these arts, not with a view to practicing them (unless led by compelling duty, which I am not going to engage at present), but in terms of forming a judgment about them, so that we would not be ignorant all that Scripture conveys when it uses figures of speech derived from these arts."

67 Cicero *Or.* 51, *Tusc.* 5.1, 5.4.10, *Fam.* 2.13.3, *Fin.* 5.2.4; Suet. *Aug.* 49, etc., each with slightly varied meanings.

[68] In a discussion of the operations of a *collegium* of silversmiths, he notes that a better product is produced more quickly by the "combined work of many craftsmen": "in the street of the silversmiths, one vessel, in order that it may go out perfect, passes through the hands of many craftsmen, when it might have been finished by one perfect craftsman. But the only reason why the combined skill of many was thought necessary, was that it is better that each part of an art should be learned by a particular craftsman, which can be done speedily and easily, than that they should all be compelled to be perfect in one art throughout all its parts, which they could only attain slowly and with difficulty," *Civ. Dei* 7.4. See R. Arbesmann, "The Attitude of St. *Augustine* Toward *Labor*," in *The Heritage of the Early Church* (ed., D. Neiman and M. Schatkin; Rome, 1973), 245-259, and E. Booth Consult, "A Marginal Comment of St. Augustine on the Principle of the Division of Labor, *De Civ. Dei* VII.4," *Augustinianum* 17 (1977), 249-256.

[69] It is not certain that this implies that Augustine is a curmudgeon, nor that he felt insecure by the possibility of competition. The latter was proposed by Maureen Tilley as the reason that Augustine does not advise men to be monastics, that is, there was potential for men who became monastics to earn a renown greater or contradictory to Augustine's own: Maureen Tilley, "No Friendly Letters: Augustine's Correspondence With Women," in *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and History* (ed., P. Cox Miller and D. Martin; Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 40-62; this is countered by Demacopoulos, 94.

[70] A more lengthy elucidation explicitly relating flourishing and the ethical nuance addressing enjoyment and use with work, profession, and vocation in Augustine would enrich the present discussion. Further inquiry as to whether all people have been placed in professions is also necessary. Further research on the *Augustinian* legacy of many of Luther's perspectives on work (e.g., "everyone must tend to his own vocation and work," *WA* 8.588, 1521) is also possibly in order. Lastly, even as Augustine might pose an "Augustinian Option" to us today (one in which the question is not whether we ought to be engaged in the secular but *how* our labors in this "mixed" world and life properly reveal the orientation of our hope), conversation must still occur about nuance needed in the purported fusion of calling or leading by God and existing jobs or roles in contemporary society.