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THE OSA SISTERS' MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IN THE
PHILIPPINES TODAY, IN THE LIGHT OF
VAN BAVEL'S INTERPRETATION OF
AUGUSTINE'S CONCEPT
OF JUSTICE

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The focal point of Augustine's "Preferential Option For the Poor", as interpreted by Fr. Tarcisius Van Bavel, O.S.A., is centered mainly on his dynamic synthesis of justice as capsulized into a very concrete humanitarian expression of "assisting the needy".

This principle of assistance to the poor poses a challenge to all who believe in Christ to really get out of their way and render special services to the least fortunate because they are God's chosen ones. It was an urgent call of the Synod of Bishops in 1971, to liberate these people from the sinful and oppressive structures of our society.

The Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation were among the daring Congregations who responded to the call of the Synod of Bishops. They boldly chart a new direction in their apostolate which was the preferential option for the poor, through the services rendered by the social and special ministries (SOSPEMIN) of the Congregation.



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The researcher believes that to be a true disciple of St. Augustine, an O.S.A. has to be deeply concerned with social issues which beset the contemporary world and has to work for the attainment of justice and peace as envisioned by the founder in collaboration with the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines' (PCP-II) urgent call to serve the poor and needy.

In the light of the above perspectives, the researcher is inspired to probe deeper and bring into the fore the notion of justice as envisioned by St. Augustine and to determine its relevance into the context of the present realities and challenges in the Philippines scenario as urged by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, especially in relation to OSA sisters' ministry of justice.

This study made use of two approaches namely; historical and content analysis in order to give pertinent data/information about the topic under study.

In the researcher's attempt to relate the Augustinian concept of justice to the thrust of



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the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation, she found out that there is essential relatedness between St. Augustine's concept of justice and the OSA thrust for social transformation. One of the salient points of unity gleaned from the analysis is that their commitment to preferential option for the poor was born in response to the inhuman realities caused by the greed and selfishness of the few people both in the Philippines and in North Africa in the 70's and in the 4th and 5th centuries respectively. Another significant point of unity is that the main concern of their apostolate is toward the liberation of the poor from severe injustices and oppressive structures.

In conclusion, therefore, to have a credible ministry of justice in the Twenty First Century, a paradigm shift is urgently needed to respond to the demands asked by the fluidity of the signs of times, a shift to an alive OSA participant in the rebuilding of an improved quality of community living and unselfish commitment to help their least fortunate brothers and sisters, so that human dignity and solidarity may be upheld, and



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promoted, thus, justice, freedom, love, and peace may become the inner force in achieving integral development in the Philippines 2000.

