

Volume 8
Issue 1
March, 2006



Augustinian Friends — Seeking God Together

AMICI

Co-Leaders' Message

Monica Meagher
Mary McCormick

It is with great excitement that we in Augustinian Friends celebrate the third year of the Augustinian Jubilee. The motto for this final year is: "One heart and one soul, united on the way to God". And the Jubilee theme is: "The Augustinian Family — Religious and Laity."

As Augustinian laity we are caught up into this Jubilee. We suggest as each group meets and plans the year's events that you reflect on the theme of the Augustinian family, and allow the motto to influence your lives.

At the weekend gathering of group leaders at Greystanes last November it was evident that Augustinian Friends is offering spiritual nourishment and is providing opportunities for faith formation for its members.

Leaders in attendance were Kay Morrow (Mareeba), Sylvia Phillips (Coorparoo), Peter Kotsiakos (Echuca), Maureen Atkins (Kyabram), Kaye Coates (Manly Vale), Greg Keogh (National Treasurer), Sarah-Jane Greenaway (Greystanes, *Amici* Editor), Peter and Margaret Moriarty (St Clair), Mary McCormick and Monica Meagher (South Yarra, National Co-Leaders), Fr. Paul Maloney (Chaplain) and Fr Laurie Mooney (Greystanes). Unfortunately Robert Huggins (Melbourne) and Kathleen Smith (Newcastle) were not able to attend.

It was inspiring for us Co-Leaders to witness this group of leaders sharing together so truly an Augustinian spirit. Both of us were aware of the 2006 Jubilee motto operative in our midst.

We were also encouraged in a conversation with the Prior General Fr Robert Prevost OSA in December by his affirmation of *all that is occurring* in Augustinian Friends.

As the season of Lent is now underway, we hope and pray that all of us will be awakened to the Spirit working in our own lives and in our own communities.

National and Regional Leaders' Weekend

Sydney airport was where it all began! Flights from North Queensland, Brisbane and Victoria were all arranged to arrive within ten minutes of each other. *Friends* in Sydney had arranged for Peter Moriarty to be waiting not only with his people-mover but also with a prominent sign that read AUGUSTINIAN FRIENDS.

The happy spirit of the weekend was well and truly created during our drive to Greystanes. In true Augustinian fashion the community there provided generous hospitality.

What did we do and what transpired during this weekend?

- (1) Local stories were shared and friendships forged; prayer was a part of all this.
- (2) Two presentations gave information and generated discussion:
 - (a) Mary spoke of the evolving role of the laity;
 - (b) Monica talked about the call to discipleship — the Augustinian way.
- (3) The Leaders embraced the presentations with openness of mind and great generosity, enabling fruitful sharing and constructive planning for the future of Augustinian Friends.

In This Issue

Co-Leaders' Message	1
From a Friend in WA	2
Friends meet	2
Farewell Friends	3
In Augustine's words	3, 4

Augustinians OnLine

Stay in touch with the latest news from the Augustinian community through the Province's website: <<http://www.augustinians.org.au>> Details of upcoming events in Augustinian spirituality and in parishes and schools around the country can be found on this easy to use site. Links to local lay Augustinian associations and the international community can also be found on this site.

Annual fees

Also included in this mail out is a reminder notice for members to pay their annual fees, due 1 January, 2006, or to let us know that you no longer wish to receive information.

- (4) Since the establishment of Augustinian Friends there has been one national gathering of leaders in each leadership cycle. Those present at Greystanes saw the need for this gathering to become an annual event. A fund raising raffle will assist local leaders to meet such a commitment.

The weekend could be summed up in Augustine's words:

To talk and laugh, and to do each other kindnesses;
to read pleasant books;
to pass from the lightest jesting to talk of the deepest things and back again;
to differ without rancour, as persons might with themselves.

To teach each other and to learn from each other.
These and such things kindled a flame that fused our very souls together and made us one out of many.

(Augustine, Confessions 4.8)

From a Friend in WA

Margaret Wilcox

Greetings from Western Australia to all Amici in the East! I wish to share this great news with you: St Monica and St Augustine arrive in the West! I am ecstatic.

In our Catholic weekly paper, *The Record*, on January 19, there appeared an almost whole page illustration of St Augustine, *The Triumph of St Augustine*, by Claudio Coello!

It seems that Fr Brian O'Louchlin, of the parish of St Thomas the Apostle, had the splendid idea of using the prayers of St Monica as inspiration for all those parents with concerns about their children. He presented an outline of St Monica's life, the

mother of tears over her wayward son, and invited all and everyone to come to a meeting to be held in his parish on February 14 at 7.30 pm.

I immediately rang him to congratulate him on such a good idea, and suggested that people from all over the metropolitan area would turn up. He modestly thought otherwise. He wanted a picture of St Monica and St Augustine sharing their vision in Ostia. I was able to give this to him from *Out Where the Dead Men Lie*. He also wanted a written description of this scene and something from Augustine that touched upon the Gospel of the day, which was the story of the Prodigal Son. As luck would have it, I had a *Golden Hours of Prayer* rendering of the vision, which also included the Prodigal Son story in the context of "within disorder there is order", based upon Augustine's *On Order* paper. As a focal point, I loaned him an oil painting I had done for myself of Sts Monica and Augustine studying scripture.

The night came. People kept arriving well after 7.30, finding their way to St Thomas's from all over the metropolitan area! The small parish room was over-crowded, and people spilled outside. There must have been 50 people and more in attendance.

Father Brian proposed, from the start, that this was to be a time, not of reproach or criticism of the participants of themselves as parents, or of the church, or of modern society, but rather a time of collective prayer to God, using St Monica's example as a guide, knowing that God answered her prayers in abundance.

From the small room we went to the church for meditation, hymns and prayer, all before the Blessed Eucharist. The night ended with supper. There will be another meeting in a month's time to give people opportunity to share their problems with others through small group discussion.

Prayer time would then hold greater empathy. I am working on a thing or two for the next meeting, and look forward to sharing the outcome with you all.

Friends Meet Greystanes

Contact: Sarah-Jane Greenaway

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a great Christmas. Ours saw the arrival of another member of our family, Gwendolyn Rose. Peter was very impressed by the fact that Santa could bring babies as well as presents!

Here's the 2006 programme for Greystanes Friends so that you can pen the dates into your diary, which if it is anything like mine, is rapidly filling!! We've got another great year planned. As before, each gathering will start at 11 am, to be followed by a shared lunch:

- **Sunday, March 12:** *The Jubilee of the Augustinian Order*. In this jubilee year, we draw from the humanity and foresight of those who founded the Augustinian order, the gifts which nourish our present-day families, Augustinian communities and Augustinian spirituality.
- **Sunday, June 4:** *Augustine and the Eucharist*. What did those who gathered for Mass at Hippo experience as they heard Augustine and saw him preside? The focus of this day will be his teaching on the Eucharist and its application to everyday life.
- **Sunday, September 17:** *Augustine's Confessions*. We'll take a fresh look at one of Christianity's best-loved stories. Who did he include in his story? What was he confessing? How can Augustine's story of grace illuminate our life story?

Looking forward seeing not only Greystanes Friends, but any other Friends who may like to join us!

Kyabram

Contact: Maureen Atkins and
Ruth McGowan

On 16 February in Kyabram we held our first meeting for the year at Our Lady of Peace Parish Centre. There was a different feel at this our first time together since our

Augustinian priests, Fr Dave Austin and Fr Joe Walsh, had been farewelled at the end of January. A memorable weekend of celebration and thanksgiving to mark the occasion of the withdrawal of the Augustinians from our parish and from the Diocese of Sandhurst after 130 years. There was an air of sadness at the empty chair in our midst as we planned for the year ahead. For our study of St Augustine, we looked at *The Desert*, as appropriate as could be in the circumstances.

Two of our number, Maureen and Ruth, have booked to travel to Rome for the Second International Lay Congress in July with the Australian contingent, with our "Pilgrim Father" Paul Maloney leading us. We are very much looking forward to that, and being able to share our travels with Friends and our own group on our return.

Manly Vale

Contact: Kaye Coates

Manly Vale has planned a meeting for 10 March, to look at the title and devotion of Mary, the Mother of Good Counsel.

Several of Friends from our group are attending the Congress in Rome: Carol and John Murphy, Rosemary Mc Ewan, Linda Taylor, Peter and Kaye Coates. We look forward to sharing the experience with you our Friends in a future edition of *Amici*.

In Augustine's Words

Compete and emulate each other in good works, in mutual love, because in doing so you don't really compete against each other, but all against the common difficulty. Let each one achieve what they can; what one cannot do, is achieved through what another can do, provided one loves in the other what they do not have in themselves. This way the weakest among you won't be held back by the strongest, and the strongest won't make the weakest feel suffocated. For your conscience is responsible to God; to each other you owe nothing but love.

Letter 130,16,31

Third National Congress of the Laity

Augustine Ancient & New: A Vision for the Future

Melbourne, April 20-22, 2007

Mareeba, Nth Queensland

Contact: Jeanette Hartley

On 23 February the group met for the first time in 2006 at the home of Jeanette and Barry Hartley. We were small in number (five, plus Fr Rob Greenup), but we talked about our group and planned the year, choosing several dates for gatherings.

Our Kuranda friends always travel the half hour drive to Mareeba so on 21 May we will attend the 6 pm Mass at St Christopher's, Kuranda, as a group and then will gather together for fellowship.

The month of June will see us travelling to Cooktown for what has become an annual pilgrimage to attend to the Augustinian graves at Cooktown cemetery. The road is now sealed the entire way which will make the journey easier. We plan to head to Cooktown on 19 June and return 21 June. This trip we will complete the work on the fence around the graves with welding and painting and generally tidy up. So anyone in the area at that time is most welcome to join us!!

On 27 August, the Feast of St Monica, First Communion is being held at St Thomas's Church, so on 28 August the group will celebrate the Feast of St Augustine with a Home Mass at 6.30 pm followed by a shared meal.

For the Feast of St Thomas of Villanova, on 8 October, the group will hold a sausage sizzle in the Church grounds following 10.00 am Mass.

And that is our year!! In December, we usually finish the year with Mass and home made pizza, but no date has been set.

Newcastle

Contact: Kathleen Smith

Greetings from Newcastle to all our Augustinian Friends. We wish you all God's blessings in 2006.

Our group started meeting again for prayer and meditation at the beginning of February. It is lovely being together and able to share in this time of prayer.

We are really looking forward to spending a day at Greystanes in May with Frs Laurie and Paul. Our group leader caught up with other group leaders at Greystanes.

South Yarra

Contact: Robert Huggins

God of my life,
I give you thanks and praise
that I have life,
and that my life is filled with touches of your love

Farewell Friends

With sadness, we farewell the following friends, and keep their families in our prayers:

Des Dooley, Brisbane;

Myra Morrison, mother of Rhonda Narezzi, Greystanes.

Amici

A publication of
Augustinian Friends

PO Box 679,
Brookvale NSW 2100

Ph. (02) 9905 3049

Fax (02) 9938 4465

Designed, edited, and typeset by
sjgreenaway@ains.net.au

Thirteen of our wonderful members gathered in my house on a balmy summers evening, a meeting filled with Joy and a little sadness, more on this later. The bubbles of happy chatter and laughter as we all caught up, gave way to our opening prayer, a short extract of which opens this account. This Augustinian prayer for discernment set the scene for reflection on our own vocation for life and got the first 2006 meeting for Melbourne's Augustinian friends rolling. Warmth filled the room as our intimate gathering moved to a further reading this time on "Augustine on Spiritual Direction":

The spiritual director is not the person with all the answers, as much as a more experienced fellow-student at the feet of Jesus, the Master.

This the first part of a four part series (the other three parts to be read in successive months) was read aloud by each of the members. It discusses Florentina who wrote to Augustine seeking spiritual guidance. In letter 266 to Florentina, Augustine wrote:

I am not offering myself as an accomplished teacher, but as one who should progress alongside those whom he is called to enlighten.

Our throng discussed this quotation and the humility that it contained before moving on to the next item on our agenda.

Nuts and Bolts: What are we going to do this year, suggestions? And there were plenty of suggestions as the froth of conversation spread around the room. Augustine's Gospel reflections, Augustinian saints, the feast day, and even a session on the criticism of Augustine. Watch this space on how these go for us. Mary and Monica addressed us regarding the 2007 Congress here in Melbourne and a flurry of titles for it ensued, as we all tried to be marketing gurus.

A soft silence entered our gathering as Margaret Starrs made her final contribution for Melbourne friends with a look at Augustine looking at Easter. This dissolved into a little sadness (I mentioned this earlier) as Mary McCormick made a small

presentation to Margaret for her wonderful time and effort to Augustinian Friends in Melbourne as Margaret walks out of our lives to return to live in her home city Adelaide. We miss her already but wish Margaret well.

Then to Pancakes!!!! And a little wine as we celebrated an early (one week) Shrove Tuesday to fit in with Margaret's departure. 2006 promises to be a great year and we at South Yarra wish this for you all.

CONTACTS

Sarah-Jane Greenaway

(02) 4751 5813

sjgreenaway@ains.net.au

Monica Meagher

(03) 9866 2839

mmeagher7@bigpond.com.au

Mary McCormick

(03) 9804 3441

mary.mc.cormick@bigpond.com.au

Paul Maloney OSA

(02) 9631 0340

paulmal@bigpond.com

In Augustine's Words

We search God out by loving Him; we reach him, not by becoming entirely what He is, but in nearness to Him, and in wonderful and immaterial contact with Him, and in being inwardly illuminated and occupied by His truth and holiness. He is light itself; we get enlightenment from Him.

*The Customs of the Catholic
Church 11,18*