

Volume 9
Issue 3
October, 2007



Augustinian Friends— Seeking God Together

AMICI

Co-Leaders' Message

Maureen Atkins
Ruth McGowan

Dear Friends,

As we move forward after this year's Lay Congress, we find many exciting tasks ahead. We have been challenged by Fr Art Purcaro OSA, our keynote speaker, "to strive towards a better world – a new way of being together."

On the last day of the Melbourne Congress, we brainstormed the challenges ahead and since then we have been considering how to move that discussion forward into action. The following questions were raised:

- Publicity: how can we spread the word about who and what we are? How can we better use *Amici*?
- How do we keep the Augustinian heritage alive in parishes now without Augustinians?
- How do we support connections between regional groups of Friends?
- What, if any, are the cross-links with other movements in the Province?
- How do we promote St Augustine and St Monica?
- Is a lay formation team that travels in conjunction with the Augustinians feasible/desirable? What would the team's focus be: communal, social, spiritual and/or justice formation? How do we share formation ideas amongst Friends?

- How can we be involved in World Youth Day?
- How do we answer Fr Art's challenge to strive towards a better world?

We could begin close to home with the just released Australian Bishop's social justice theme: "Who is my Neighbour?". This statement asks of each of us:

We are called to be open to all, for we are brothers and sisters, citizens of the world. We are called to see the possibility that any person, anywhere, can be our neighbour; we need only act as neighbour to them.

As Friends across the globe, there is much we can do to share Augustinian spirituality and to learn from each other, as we develop international links between groups that had their beginnings in the International Lay Congress in Rome in 2006. It is also important that each of us in our daily lives promote Augustine and Monica wherever we can.

The Leaders' meeting coming up in November will further closer ties with Friends around Australia, and keep us moving forward. It is hoped that it will particularly help those who are no longer in an Augustinian parish. Keeping our ties close and focus clear requires extra diligence, prayer and encouragement.

It is also important that we engage in dialogue and build community with the elderly, the middle-aged and the young. We need to find ways to support and encourage all age groups and to determine what is important for people at different stages of their faith journeys. One of the questions that has been

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Augustinians On-Line

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.

asked how can Augustinian spirituality enrich family life?

It is time now to make concrete plans about the tasks ahead. We invite you to ask the following questions in your groups and to provide us with feedback? Individual replies would also be very welcome. We would appreciate having responses by the end of October so that they could be used at the Leaders' meeting in November at Greystanes.

- What do you need from the National leadership?
- What do Augustinian groups in your parish do to ensure that the parish knows that Friends exist? How do you promote the groups within the Parish?
- What answers can you suggest to the questions raised at the Congress? How we can move forward?

As Co-Leaders, we believe that our role is to serve by listening to what Australian local groups are asking, to discern how the Friends can be supported in their spiritual journey, to plan for the future, and to work towards meeting the challenges identified at the Melbourne Congress.

From Tree to Table

Ruth McGowan

On the final day of the Congress in April, the parish of South Yarra was presented with a redgum coffee table. The idea for the table came from the Congress theme — Augustine: Ancient and New. The tree's many growth rings speak much more powerfully than words of the passage of time. We were fortunate to acquire the beautiful, round cross-cut of Murray River redgum that became the table. It was worked on and shaped into its present form in the Dick McGowan Men's Shed at Tongala Aged Care .



Like all trees, this tree has a story to tell. The following interesting facts are but a part of the story:

- The cross-cut was taken from a tree found in Barmah Forest, near Picola, in northern Victoria.
- The round was cut from a side branch of that tree.
- Its growth rings showed that the tree was approximately 144 years old. This tree, then, was a seedling in 1862!
- Dry years result in narrow growth rings; good ones in wider rings.
- Dark blue/grey stains on one side (remember it's a side branch) indicate severe floods in the area in its lifetime.
- Bishop James Aloysius Goold OSA came to Melbourne in 1848 as Melbourne's first bishop.
- Gold was found in Bendigo and Ballarat in 1851.
- The rebuilding of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, began in 1858.
- Goold took seeds of *Eucalyptus Globulus*, collected on his travels with Baron Ferdinand von Müller, Chief Botanist and founder of Melbourne's Botanical Gardens, to Rome in 1870. The parcel of seeds was planted at Tre Fontane, a malarial swampy area. The trees that grew from those seeds can still be seen there today.

Friends Meet

Coorparoo

Contact: Sylvia Phillips

Our last meeting was held on 8 August. Father Tony Banks OSA, who was in Brisbane on the night, joined us. This meeting was focused on the Laity Commission Survey of July 2007. Copies of the survey form had been sent out to all members with a request to have a close look at the questions asked as the meeting would be based on feedback from members. Laurie Sheehan kindly acted as main scribe and did a fantastic job; he not only recorded every point made but his handwriting is a treat to read! It made life so much easier for Karleen and me when we sat down to collate Coorparoo's submissions. The survey was important because it made us think deeply on all issues raised in the questionnaire form.

St James Parish celebrated St Augustine's Feast Day on August with a barbeque brunch after 9 am Mass. It was an opportunity for fellowship and bonding among parishioners and families. Great credit is due to parishioners who contributed table settings, colourful balloons, home baked muffins and other treats. Special thanks to Sr Margaret Shannon SGS who pulled the strings and made things happen. A good time was had by all.

Friends had their own special celebration on St Augustine's Feast Day (28 August) with a presentation by Fr Laurie Mooney OSA. The meeting was open to all and there was a large turnout. For the first time we had to have two rows of chairs. (We are rapidly outgrowing the Priory dining room!) Fr Laurie held our interest from beginning to end with a telling of St Augustine's fascinating life: his conversion; his relationship with his mother, other family members and close followers; reflections on his spirituality; meetings with St Ambrose; strong views



Sr Kathleen's Birthday Celebrations

on justice and fair play; and so much more. We were all on a high at the end of the meeting. There was food for thought and for the body.

One of our members, Sr Kathleen Lee SGS, turned 80 on 9 September. We celebrated the occasion on 7 September after 8 o'clock Mass with a spread of sandwiches, dips, cakes and, of course, her birthday cake.

Mareeba

Contact: Jeanette Hartley

The last few months have been exciting Mareeba Friends! We have been visited by several Augustinian priests in the absence of Father Rob. We hear too that everything is progressing nicely for him.

During visits from Fathers Peter Jones and Paul Maloney we were privileged to have two inspirational evenings on St Augustine and the Augustinians throughout the world. Friends from Kuranda attended as did members of the Parish Pastoral Council from Dimbulah. On the second evening, members of the wider parish attended.

Whilst here in Mareeba, Fr Peter travelled to Cooktown with Kay Morrow and Jeanette Hartley. Fr Peter found the Museum there and the Augustinian grave sites especially moving. He was disappointed, though, that he did not see any crocodiles!

It has been great to welcome back Augustinian priests from past times:

Frs Joe Walsh, Peter McHugh, Abel Van der Veer and Peter Hayes. People from all walks of life in Mareeba welcomed them back, and they were entertained all over town. The First Holy Communion Masses were touching and beautiful. Fresh ideas blew into town with Fr Jun. He filled us with life and enthusiasm and joined in with school activities. His joyousness and gregariousness endeared him to us all. Father Peter Hayes arrived in town quietly, fitted right in, knowing us all, being our Good Shepherd.

On 28 August, we celebrated the feast of St Augustine with Frs Joe Walsh and Peter McHugh. First we had a meeting, preceded by a reading from St Augustine's *Confessions*. Following the meeting, Fr Peter celebrated Mass. Later we adjourned to the Mareeba Leagues Club for dinner.

We celebrated the feast of St Thomas of Villanova, with a gathering after Mass on 7 October. On 10 October we had a wonderful day with the students of St Thomas's school. Many of us talked with the students about our school days and stayed on for the rest of the day.

Newcastle

Contact: Kathleen Smith

Greetings from the Newcastle Augustinian Friends!

We continue to meet every week for prayer and enjoy the beautiful hospitality of one of our Friends on a Saturday afternoon. Here we feel free to share our thoughts, ideas and spiritual experiences. As this friend puts it: "We are a community gathered."

It's now a few months since the Congress but the joy, sharing and great spirit of community it gave are still very much part of us. Only one friend from Newcastle was able to attend so Fr Laurie Mooney kindly sent a CD-Rom of the proceedings so that those who

could not be there would be able to see and read about the Congress. This has been greatly appreciated and members have said that it made clear to them the depth of Augustine's spirituality with its emphasis on communion, justice, love peace, sharing with others and looking out for the underprivileged.

As a Friend has said: "I was so impressed. It was spot on. I feel so privileged to be connected with the Augustinians and to be an Augustinian Friend".

North Harbour

Contact: Sue Mackey

On 27 September, Fr Paul Maloney OSA led a group of 16 North Harbour Friends in a discussion of Augustine's aging years, something we had not the opportunity to reflect upon previously. Fr Paul certainly gave us plenty to consider. It is encouraging to read Augustine's own words, written so long ago, and to consider how they relate to our current lifestyle, and in particular to us Baby Boomers. Of particular importance was the following quote from his Sermon on Ps 131:

It is necessary that we be always new, without permitting the influence of the old to subvert us, growing, progressing, renewing our interior being day by day; we should not progress by growing old, rather, we should let newness grow within us.

We were grateful to Fr Paul for this programme and look forward to more discussions in the future. This was a particularly spiritual and uplifting evening.

On 18 November we will join together for a pre-Christmas Mass and discussion over "table" on other aspects of the life of Augustine and how we can relate his wisdom and spirit to modern living. Mass will be celebrated at midday at St Kieran's, Manly Vale, followed by lunch in the Parish Centre.

Amici

A publication of
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Please remember in your prayers Kaye Coates who has not been in good health. Kaye has been our Leader here at North Harbour for some time. Our thanks go to Kaye for all her input and good works over the last few years.

St Clair

Contacts:

Peter & Margaret Moriarty

The Augustinian Friends at St Clair celebrated the feast of St Augustine at the Saturday night Mass on 25 August. Friends did the readings, sang in the choir and helped as ministers of the Eucharist. Our thanks to Fr Jun who celebrated the Mass and spoke of Augustine in his homily. All those present gathered after Mass for a light supper and drinks. We also shared there about the Melbourne Conference.

Fr Peter Jones OSA is conducting a series of five talks on "Discovering Friendship in Family Life" at St Clair Wednesday evenings from 17 October. He will be assisted by Sarah-Jane Greenaway.

Our parish has just finished a novena of Marion devotion, followed by a Fiesta on 6 October. The well-attended Novena evenings, were each lead by a different reflecting on the significance of Mary to the group. Fr Peter Jones started the Novena rolling with Augustinian reflections on Mary and highlighted the significance of Mary holding Jesus in her heart before she held Him in her womb. Thanks Fr Peter for your input. The Fiesta was a great success with over 300 people sampling delicious food prepared by the various cultural groups from the St Clair community.

International News

Mary McCormick

In the March edition of *Amici* we reported that the committee of lay people formed at the International Congress in Rome in 2006 was to meet in Malta in late March.

Representatives from Italy, Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands and Malta attended with apologies and responses sent from Australia, Argentina and Panama.

The name chosen for this group is now: *Lay Augustinian Representatives (LAR)*. The following terms of reference were agreed to:

1. The major responsibility of LAR is to prepare a document for presentation to the General Council in September 2007 (this document was duly finalised at the meeting).
2. To continue working with the Order to put the Committee's proposals into effect.
3. To co-operate with the Order in preparation for the next Lay Congress
4. To co-operate with the Order in developing a lay Augustinian structure.

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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