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Augustinian Friends— Seeking God Together

# ADICI

## Provincial's Message

*Tom Banks OSA  
Prior Provincial*

God so loved the world that he sent His only Son into the world: an event that is truly special to all of humanity. With my brother Augustinians I wish you all the joy and peace of Christmas that comes from our God through Jesus of Nazareth. May you find the presence of God in all you may do this Christmas and throughout 2008.

This has been an exciting year for the Order with our General Chapter in Rome looking at new directions for the Order. We confirmed that the Asia-Pacific region would be the focus of attention for the Order over the next six years. This will mean much closer ties with the men throughout the region and finding new ways of working with the various groups of Augustinian women in Asia and Australia. This will occur as the European pioneers of Augustinian life in the Asia-Pacific give way to local cultures providing the key personnel. As Augustinian Friends develops here in Australia it will also have the task of helping our Asian brothers and sisters listen to the Gospel call in other cultures and offer suggestions and advice as lay organisations develop throughout the region.

The Order is looking for renewal throughout and this will become a key

theme over the next few years — a time for revisiting the charisms of the Order and for reviewing our structures in line with our vows. This is at a time when the prospects for the Order look bleak in the first world and fantastic in the rest of the world. With four students in our Formation House and three more expected in the early part of 2008 there is renewed hope within the Australian province. We are building new facilities for students. We are also awaiting World Youth Day with the added attraction of the Augustinian International Youth Encounter being held in Sydney the week after WYD. This is the first time the event has been held outside Europe. Maybe more hearts will be stirred by this event!

Christmas is a wonderful time for families and friendship. It is normally a time when we Augustinians are thrilled by the liturgy of the Church and the enthusiasm of those with whom we work. I hope that through the Christmas cards, the liturgy, gifts and the great meals of the season you also may be enriched by the presence of Christ in our world, in our families and in our prayer. We Augustinians will be praying for you and your families.

## Co-Leaders' Message

*Maureen Atkins  
Ruth McGowan*

As 2007 draws to a close, we pause reflect on the year almost gone. What

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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.

a busy time we have had too. We say thanks to all our South Yarra Friends for a memorable Congress. To Fr Art Purcaro OSA, keynote speaker at the Congress: We welcome your challenges and are ready to respond. To all our new Friends across Australia, we say welcome!

In the September edition of *Amici*, we posed some questions for your consideration. These are some of the responses we received.

What do you need from the leadership team?

- Structured discussion topics relating to the life of St Augustine.
- Resource lists.
- Visits from the Friends Chaplain/ leadership team.
- Formation articles in *Amici*.
- Teaming with the Laity Commission to implement its outcomes.

What do Augustinian groups do in your parish to promote Friends?

- Prayer box: pray for requests posted.
- Quotes from Augustine each week in parish bulletin.
- Regular meetings, raffles.
- Celebrations for all parishioners on St Augustine's feast day.
- Hosting a cuppa after Mass.

How can we move forward in response to issues raised during the most recent Congress?

- Ads in Catholic Leader, for example: Would you like to know more about St Augustine?
- Extra copies of *Amici* for parish members.
- Publishing dates of all Friends meetings in *Amici* so Friends can attend any meeting as a guest.
- Formalization of action all Friends groups should take to be more visible and to grow.

- Structure material relating to the lives of Augustine and Monica which can be followed at meetings.

That is plenty of food for thought. We welcome any further suggestions.

We thank each and everyone of you for your support and may we take this time to wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas. May you spend some time with your loved ones, and may the Peace of the Holy Family be with you all.

## Leaders' Weekend at Greystones

*Maureen Atkins*

*Ruth McGowan*

On Friday 9 November, leaders from the various Friends groups travelled by bus, plane train, and automobile, to gather at Greystanes, at the Augustinian Centre for Spirituality.

Our welcome was a warm one. There was this incredibly wonderful sense of being part of the family, the Augustinian Family. Our first evening was spent greeting friends, old and new, sharing a meal, and preparing for the next day.

On Saturday we were joined by Fr Dave Austin OSA from Brisbane. Our opening session was centred around the unique role each of us has in the world. Birthdays are always a significant time to reflect on the past year, and to ponder and plan for the year to the next one. November 13 was St Augustine's 1,653rd birthday, so our prayer focus centred on his contribution to the world, and the contribution we can make. It also happened to be Fr Paul's birthday on this Saturday, so the discussion of birthdays was doubly apt. (No, not a coincidence...)

Another aspect of this opening reflection centred around our name. What is its meaning? Are there any

family stories about it? Do you like your name? And so on. We learned a lot about ourselves and those others with us at that time, something that Augustine calls us to do daily as we seek God in our lives and those of others.

This was followed by a report from Fr Dave, Chair of the Augustinian Laity Commission, recently established to liaise with the lay groups within the Province regarding their needs.

Visions and tasks from the April Congress were discussed. How can these be achieved? This was followed by an introductory discussion of the Congress to be held in Brisbane in 2010.

Lunch was followed by ideas for an pilgrimage in 2009 to places of Augustinian interest. Suggestions for places to visit included Rome, Milan, Ostia, San Gimignano, and tracing Augustine's footsteps in Algeria.

Discussion was then had of spreading Augustinian spirituality abroad, so to speak. An example was *Sandpiper* the newspaper of the Sandhurst diocese, which has begun publishing a series of articles on spirituality, commencing with the Augustinian charism.

Our final item for Saturday was long term planning for Friends, including how we can include the needs of young families. A celebratory dinner with an Algerian theme for Fr Paul, was followed evening prayer and a blessing.

Sunday saw us addressing the ongoing needs of Friends and the roles and responsibilities of our leaders. What is needed? We then reviewed the weekend and made outlines of plans for 2008.

A beautiful Mass celebrated by Fr Paul, was followed by more wonderful Augustinian hospitality, before our thanks and appreciation were given and we returned to our homes. Thank you everyone!



Augustinian Friends :Leaders' Meeting  
9-11 November 2007, Greystanes.

Front (L to R): Peter Kotsiakos (Echuca), Robert Huggins (St Yarra), Esther Rose (St Clair)

Middle (L to R): Kathleen Smith (Newcastle), Maureen Atkins (Co-Leader), Jeanette Hartley (Mareeba), Ruth McGowan (Co-Leader), Sue Mackey (Nth Harbour), Mary McCormick (LAR Representative)

Back (L to R): Fr Paul Maloney OSA, Maureen Caldwell (Kyabram), Fr Dave Austin OSA, Sylvia Phillips (Coorparoo), Sarah-Jane Greenaway (Greystanes), Peter Moriarty (St Clair)

## Fr George Lawless OSA to Visit in 2008

Fr George Lawless OSA is coming to Australia in April 2008. Not only will he fulfill his dream of visiting Australia but we will be able to hear him as he offers a series of lectures across the country.

Fr Lawless, an Augustinian Priest ordained in 1956, is a Professor of Historical Theology at the Patristic Institute, Augustinianum, Rome, and an Adjunct Professor of Patristics at the Gregorian University, Rome. He has written several books about Augustine and has published numerous articles for scholarly journals. He is an internationally renowned lecturer on St Augustine. We have heard that Fr Lawless brings Augustine to life as he presents his audiences with entertaining insights into the life and spirituality of the great saint.

Fr Lawless will be visiting the various Friends groups during his time in Australia. Your local leader will have further details.

## Friends Meet

### Coorparoo

Contact: Sylvia Phillips

Coorparoo Friends had their last meeting for the year on 14 November. Great interest was shown by all in the topics discussed at the leaders' meeting just held in Sydney. Full

marks to Maureen and Ruth for the planning and organisation of the weekend. It was good to have Mary McCormick with us to give us an in depth report on what's happening on the international scene.

At our Coorparoo meeting particular interest was shown in Congress 2010 and the pilgrimage planned for 2009. Two Coorparoo Friends have already signed up for the trip...

There was a wonderful moment for me personally when I was having a casual chat during breakfast with the Augustinians who call Greystanes home after the leaders' weekend. It transpired that Fr John McCall OSA went to school in Taiping, my hometown in Malaysia. He produced his leaving certificate class photo. I recognised his maths teacher, whose daughter went to school with me. Can you believe it? Isn't it marvellous the way Augustine brings us together?

For members who may be travelling in Queensland next year, we have meetings planned for the following dates. You would be most welcome to join us as a special guest:

- Tuesday, February 12.
- Wednesday, May 14.
- Wednesday, August 13.
- Wednesday, November 12.

All our meetings are held at the St James Priory, Coorparoo and start at 6.30 pm. As there may be times when meeting dates need to, please keep in touch through your leader.

## Greystanes

Contact:

Sarah-Jane Greenaway

Greystanes Friends have been quite this year in the wake of the Congress. I was also invited to co-facilitate a course with Fr Peter Jones about Augustinian possibilities for family life, which we ran at Holy Spirit, St Clair for five Wednesday nights in October. The course was based on the Rule that Augustinian religious communities have as their foundation. We started with a bit of history: Augustine's family history and the history of his Rule. We then explored some of the themes that are covered in the Rule that resonate especially for 21st Century family life: the common purpose of life together as a Christian community, prayer, forgiveness and freedom and grace. By the feedback Fr Peter and I received, those that attended found something in the evenings that spoke to their daily lives and that would encourage them to be the change that they wish to see in the world as Christian parents, children, and siblings.

We have a full programme planned for 2008, with meetings scheduled for the following dates:

- Tuesday, 11 March;
- Tuesday, 1 July; and
- Tuesday, 9 September.

The meetings will start at 7:30 and finish at 9:30. We have some ideas for discussion themes, but if there is anything that you would like to

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The final thing I have to do in 2007 is to wish you all a happy and holy Christmas and many blessings in the New Year!

## International News

Mary McCormick

In September 2007 a presentation was made to the General Chapter of the Order by two lay persons from the Lay Augustinian Representatives group (LAR). This group was formed at the 2006 Congress in Rome. The Presentation was seeking closer working links between the Order and various groups of lay people. Debate took place about the need for these links and the way by which they could be established.

Our Provincial, Fr Tony Banks OSA spoke and offered some valuable insights. He said, "The call of the laity at this Chapter seems to be a call not to start with a structure but to work with us to create lay Augustinian spirituality:

Our lay people want to discover something new — what it is to be Augustinian and laity. They take us back to the very roots of St Augustine.

...

The Church has called for the laity to embrace new and different forms of the lay vocation. We see this in many new movements that have sprung up in the Church. These new movements are creative forces in the Church. But they begin with the laity. The laity who addressed us are challenging us to allow such new movement in association with them. They see in Augustine one who inspires them, and they wish to respond. They seek a new beginning — partnership. They ask as a group to develop a new expression of lay life. They call on us to broaden our family.

The 2007 General Chapter adopted the following resolutions concerning the laity:

- Resolution 19. The Chapter will encourage the communities of the Order to establish more intense channels of participation and co-responsibility with the laity in the mission and spirituality of the Order promoting the creation and development of Augustinian secular fraternities.
- Resolution 20. The General Chapter encourages the International Commission for the Laity to continue looking for paths of dialogue with different groups of Augustinian laity. This includes working with the people who were elected during the International Congress of Laity (2006), as well as other representatives who will be designated in dialogue with the Major Superiors of the Order.

Here in Australia Augustinian Friends and the Province Laity Commission will closely follow any further developments in this area.

Monica Meagher who was elected to LAR in Rome last year has recently resigned and it is important that her contribution to Augustinian laity be acknowledged. She brought a keen mind to all discussions and provided valuable input towards the preparation of the presentation for the General Chapter. Thank you, Monica.

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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