

Volume 10  
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Augustinian Friends— Seeking God Together

# AMICI

## Co-Leaders' Message

Maureen Atkins  
& Ruth McGowan

Dear Friends.

Leaders of Augustinian Friends came together recently at Greystanes, to meet, share and discuss progress in our various parts of Australia, as we prepare for the 4<sup>th</sup> Augustinian Congress for the Laity to be held in Brisbane in June 2010.

Some important decisions needed to be made as to who we invite to be our guest speakers, and just as importantly – what will be our theme for this gathering?

Brisbane Friends have been busy – they are doing all the 'domestic and housekeeping details' – all of which Sylvia and her Team have on track at this time.

Venue has been arranged – Villanova College, Coorparoo will be the setting for the Congress with its excellent facilities made available to us.

Caterers need to be sought, accommodation in the area to be found, and lists to be made for sending out a little later for people to make their bookings. We hope to arrange a 'Tour' for all; taking in parts of Brisbane and its history during our visit.

A beautiful quilt with an appropriate theme, has been offered to be raffled at the Congress. This is already underway by our talented quilters of the area.

On the Saturday of our weekend, we looked at themes - this is still not settled but definite progress has been made. More in our next Amici!

We can promise everyone a unique experience in beautiful Brisbane, so please start thinking about 'being there' with many Friends of Augustine.

Much progress has been made on many fronts – see leaders' meeting report.

Finally as 2008 draws to a close,

already we are into Advent and "Waiting for the Child."

We wish to extend to each and every one of our Friends, wherever you may be –

A blessing – 'Wishing you the Peace, Joy and Love of Christmas, now and always!'

Safe travelling to you all.

Love and Blessings,  
Maureen and Ruth

## Report from the Leaders' Meeting November 2008

Leaders from the Eastern States convened at Greystanes from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November where we all enjoyed traditional Augustinian hospitality with our hosts, Fr. Paul Maloney, Fr. Peter Jones, Fr. Senan Ward and Fr. John McCall.

For our opening prayer on Saturday morning, everyone was asked to bring one of their favourite Augustinian quotes and to share why it was important and how it gave direction to their lives. We heard very special stories about the Friends and their search for meaning. Perhaps there is book to be written about the quotes, the stories and the influence of Augustine's writing in our contemporary society.

After the prayer, leaders provided information about what was happening in their groups. Details were provided about programs, meeting structures and useful resources. Please ask your leaders what they discovered from the other groups to help you determine what would be useful for your local group.

The leaders enjoyed welcoming Fr. Dave Austin who came from Brisbane for the day; he talked about the Laity Commission and the different Augustinian lay groups – the Augustinian Formation Association, the Volunteers, Augustinian Friends, the Affiliates and the Australian Filipino Augustinian Solidarity. Other Augustinian connections include the ministry with young people and the students in Augustinian Schools. There was some discussion about the feasibility of consolidating the groups with an overarching laity concept and discerning how this might develop. It seems apparent that more co-ordination may enable all the groups to function more effectively. One suggestion was to prepare only one publication for lay people that would provide information about all the above groups. In Amici the mission is



## LEADERS WEEKEND AT GREYSTANES

L - R: Peter Jones osa, Esther Rose, Mary McCormick, Judith Duncan, Lorraine Robertson, Kay Morrow, Dave Austin osa, Jeanette Hartley, Sylvia Phillips, Paul Maloney osa, Maureen Atkins, Peter Kotsiakos, Ruth McGowan, Peter Moriarty. (Unable to attend): Maureen Caldwell, Sue Mackie, Kathleen Smith.

to enrich and support the laity in living out their faith with Augustinian Spirituality, but there is a different emphasis in each publication associated with the laity.

We moved from the national to the international scene and Mary McCormick provided a time line of the activities of the LAR (Lay Augustinian Representatives, as appointed at the 2006 International Congress in Rome) and her work in making contact with groups in other countries during the year.

The Congress in Brisbane was one of the major topics on the agenda and we had an animated discussion about possible themes and ideas. The words journey, heart, hope, centre, and interiority emerged and suggestions were made about speakers and presenters. The first edition of Amici next year will feature further details.

The Congress is managed by the Friends for Augustinian Laity in Australia. It will be held in June 2010 at the Augustinian School in Brisbane and the local group under the leadership of Sylvia Phillips has already commenced their planning to find accommodation and to organise entertainment for the visitors.

Next year, there will be pilgrimage to Augustinian locations around the

world. Fr. Paul Maloney has been very busy planning the itinerary which includes Milan and Cassiacum, time at the Augustinian Monastery in San Gimignano, a few days in Rome and a tour in North Africa. The pilgrimage will take place in September 2009.

Spiritual formation is another critical issue for the leaders and Fr. Peter Jones provided details about some work he was developing about Lent and Easter. The proposed format includes a review of your life, a Scripture reading and an Augustinian text with reflection and discussion. A leader's leaflet will be provided for each session. Group members were enthusiastic about his ideas and, with their encouragement, the program will be developed for Lent and Easter in 2010 and the themes will be linked to the Scripture for each week in the Lenten and Easter seasons.

We are still working on providing more comprehensive information about resources to all the groups; if anyone has prepared or discovered some resources, please forward the details so that they can be included on the Resource list that is being compiled.

The Leaders are committed to serving the groups of Augustinian Friends and to providing what they need for their spiritual formation in the Augustinian tradition. We would like to hear from you about what you need; please convey your ideas to the leaders and thank you to all members of Augustinian Friends for your support and encouragement.

Addendum: A message of encouragement and support came to Australia in time for the Leaders' gathering at Greystanes in November. This message from John Grech of Malta not only wished the weekend well but also hoped for more contact between the various lay Augustinian groups across the world.

## Friends Meet

### Mareeba

Contact: Jeanette Hartley

At the end of August, Augustinian Friends from Mareeba and Kuranda celebrated the feast of St. Augustine and St. Monica with an early morning Mass at St. Thomas's followed by a meal that evening. Numbers were down at this event with at least five members overseas at the time.



GET-TOGETHER AT KYABRAM

L-R: Ruth McGowan, Maureen Cullen pbvm, Maureen Atkins, Brian & Barbara Mitchell, Annette Ryan, Sheila Gregg, Anne & Peter Kotsiakos, Judith Duncan, Pat Guinan, Beb Larsen, Stella Moore, Lucy Mangan, Maria Radenov, Gail Hansen, Maureen Caldwell, Betty Ryan.

However the Mass was beautiful and the meal was an occasion for friendship and laughter. In October, several members of the Friends were able to join with other parishioners at St Thomas school for the annual celebrations of the feast of St. Thomas of Villanova. The day began with a visit by us 'oldies' to the classrooms to delight the students with tales of our schooldays. Accompanying us were paraphernalia from our era – leather school satchel, cane, dunce's hat, report cards and photos. Surprisingly, the older students were very much in favour of the old style report cards! They could not, however conceive a time when there were no computers. They could not understand how our generation could cope without such necessities.

After the school room visits, everyone went to Mass, which was a beautiful celebration at which the children displayed their knowledge of the great saint.

Later we partook of a sausage sizzle lunch and cold drinks and the children had great fun during the afternoon competing in fun sports activities.

Early in December, Augustinian Friends hope to have their Christmas gathering at Kuranda, since all efforts thus far this year to have celebrations at Kuranda have fallen through. We plan a lunch, hopefully in some very cool surroundings!

## Kyabram

Contact: Maureen Caldwell

On Saturday Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>, a gathering of Augustinian Friends from Kyabram, South Yarra and Echuca met in "the old convent" (now part of St

Augustine's school) for shared friendships, a meal, formation and prayer. Kyabram Friends were delighted and affirmed that people had travelled such a long way to be with them.

The day began with lunch which was preceded with an Augustinian Prayer of "Mealtime Praise" prepared by Ruth McGowan, and which concluded with the words "May the gifts before us nourish our bodies and our faith as signs of Your love and presence among us."

After a delicious lunch (our bodies well nourished) the more formal part of the day commenced. Both our Co-Leaders Ruth and Maureen had prepared the agenda. Each group gave a report and it was noted that those groups without an Augustinian presence in the Parish were finding it more difficult to sustain membership.

The 2010 Congress in Brisbane was discussed and Maureen and Ruth shared relevant information re – planning so far. Excitement is already building with many Kyabram "Friends" already making plans to attend.

Following afternoon tea, we all adjourned to St Augustine's church and with the wonderful, circular, stained glass window of Augustine filtering its light upon us, we shared in an Augustinian Liturgy which Mary McCormick had adapted for us, from one that Australia had presented at the second International Congress of the Augustinian Laity in Rome in July 2006.

At the conclusion as we all sang the song "Together" we felt a great

sense of Augustinian spirituality and companionship.

Kyabram Augustinian Friends would like to thank all those who journeyed to Kyabram and made the day such a memorable one.

## South Yarra

Contact: Judith Duncan

A December gathering is planned to celebrate Augustinian friendship and to plan for the coming year. Christmas greetings to all Friends from the Melbourne group.

## Brisbane

Contact: Sylvia Phillips

Our meeting on the night of 12/11/08 was well attended. Members were very generous with purchasing tickets for our Christmas hamper - \$100 worth of tickets sold. Congress 2010 was discussed and seeds have been sown for sub-committees to be formed; also billeting.

## 2010 Congress June 24 – 27

*Following up on the suggestion that some Congress participants may be interested in a North Queensland Augustinian pilgrimage, the Mareeba Friends have put forward a proposal.*

- ◇ At the end of the Congress, either Sunday lunchtime or Monday morning, interested participants fly to Cairns.
- ◇ Mareeba people will pick up all at the Cairns airport.
- ◇ Sunday/Monday night billeted with Mareeba people/stay at motels (depending on numbers).
- ◇ Monday/Tuesday Mareeba people take visitors to Cooktown for the day.
- ◇ Monday/Tuesday night accommodation as previous night.
- ◇ Tuesday/Wednesday take visitors to Innisfail for the day.
- ◇ Tuesday/Wednesday night accommodation as previous night.
- ◇ Wednesday/Thursday, take visitors to airport in Cairns or where visitors may choose to stay longer in the Cairns area or fly home.

*Thank you Mareeba Friends for such a generous proposal. No doubt discussion will follow in the various groups and indication of interest can be given to local leaders.*

# Augustinian Laity Commission

Dave Austin OSA

The Augustinian Laity Commission of the Province met four times during 2008 seeking to strengthen the relationship between Augustinians and laity in Australia. Thankfully, this task is not unique to the Order in Australia but a focus of the Augustinians world-wide, inspired by the powerful teaching of Vatican II in the Constitution on the Church:

*'Although by Christ's will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for the others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the body of Christ' (n 32).*

This prompted the adoption in May this year of an additional goal that the Commission promotes the nature, mission and responsibility of lay people within the Vatican II concept of the Church as communion in "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism" (Eph 4,5) in which all Christians possess true equality.

A detailed report on the Commission's work was sent to leaders of various lay groups in September along with a letter from the Provincial, Fr Tony Banks, inviting them to engage in dialogue on a number of issues concerning the role and identity of each group within the Augustinian Family in Australia, each inspired by our common Augustinian spirituality. This dialogue will take place early in 2009.

Last year's survey results indicated a hunger to learn more about Augustine and Augustinian spirituality and this will require more formation opportunities for laity, especially lay leaders, and reflection and discernment concerning possibilities for ministry as a new area for growth in collaboration between Augustinians and laity in Australia.

Each lay group has its own character and we are keen to build on this variety within the rich framework of Augustinian spirituality. Planning for the June 2010 Lay Congress to be held in Brisbane is well underway and, like the previous gatherings in Echuca, Sydney and Melbourne, this will deepen further our identity as Augustinian Laity.

Other areas being pursued by the Commission include: gathering of resources for Augustinian Laity; formation of a Young Adults group, especially in light of the experience of World Youth Day and the Augustinian Youth Encounter; support for the Team at the Centre for Augustinian Spirituality possibly through appointment of a lay member; improved communication with laity across all groups. Some tasks are being undertaken in conjunction with other Province Commissions.

The Order's International Commission for the Laity meets in Rome in February 2009, and among other things, the group will discuss a proposal for a Gathering of Laity in Rome in 2012. Fr Dave Austin will attend this meeting.

During 2008, we have all been enriched personally and spiritually in so many ways and we look forward to the coming year and the blossoming of many of the initiatives of the Laity Commission and our Augustinian lay groups throughout Australia.

## History of Amici and Augustinian Friends

As you read this edition of Amici Volume 10 Issue 4 you will realise that for 10 years Amici has been prepared, posted and appreciated. Next March some reflection, review and reminiscing will celebrate this milestone.

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## From the Treasurer Greg Keogh

Thanks to everyone who sent their membership fees in over the last twelve months.

I apologise if anyone was inconvenienced by a delay in the processing of their cheques.

The wonderful Kay Stenner, of the Augustinian Provincial Office, receives your cheques, records your payment and then contacts me when there are a few cheques to be banked. Occasionally this process can take a few weeks. If this has caused a problem, once again, I apologise.

If it is more convenient for anyone to pay directly to our account with internet banking, please feel free to do so. If you do, please contact Kay or me by email so we can record your payment correctly. Kay is at [osaadmin@bigpond.com](mailto:osaadmin@bigpond.com) and my email is [keogh01@optusnet.com.au](mailto:keogh01@optusnet.com.au)

Happy Christmas and God Bless,  
Greg

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## Augustinians On-Line

[www.augustinians.org.au](http://www.augustinians.org.au)  
Stay in touch with the latest news from the Augustinian community through the Province's website. 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.

[www.augnet.org](http://www.augnet.org)  
Augnet is a website containing a total of 1,800 pages about Augustine's life and work, and about history and activities of the Order of Saint Augustine. It contains pages on Augustinian Friends in Australia and England.