

THE AUGUSTINIAN

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MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN
AUGUSTINIANS

700th ANNIVERSARY: ST NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE

Nicholas Gurrutti was born in the village of Sant'Angelo in Pontano, Italy in 1245. His parents, middle-aged and childless, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Nicholas of Bari, their special patron, to ask his intercession on their behalf. Shortly thereafter, a son was born to them whom they named Nicholas out of gratitude.

At an early age Nicholas was greatly moved by the preaching of the Augustinian, Father Reginaldo do Monterubbiano, prior of the monastery of Sant'Angelo, and Nicholas requested admission to the community.

He was accepted by the friars and made his novitiate in 1261. Nicholas directed his efforts to being a good religious and priest, and soon became renowned for his charity toward his confreres and all God's people.

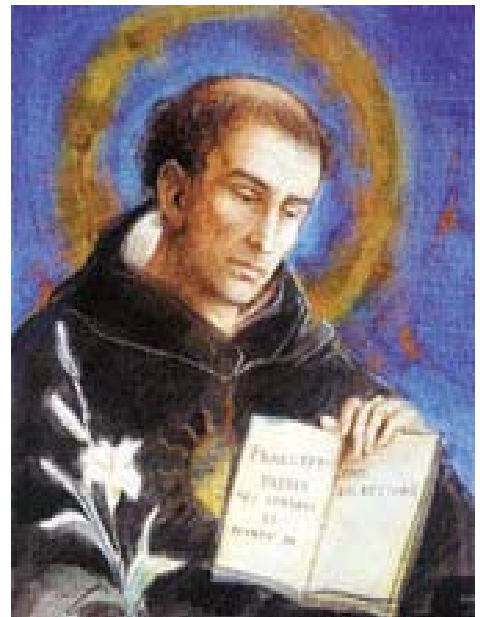
His religious formation was greatly influenced by the spirituality of the hermits of Brettino, one of the congregations which came to form part of the "Grand Union" of Augustinians in 1256. Those communities were located in the

region of the Marche where Nicholas was born and raised.

Characteristic of these early hermits of Brettino was a great emphasis on poverty, rigorous practices of fasting and abstinence and long periods of the day devoted to communal and private prayer. As Nicholas entered the Order at its inception he learned to combine the ascetical practices of the Brettini with the apostolic thrust which the Church now invited the Augustinians to practice.

At times, Nicholas devoted himself to prayer and works of penance with such intensity that it was necessary for his superiors to impose limitations on him. At one point he was so weakened though fasting that he was encouraged in a vision of Mary and the child Jesus to eat a piece of bread signed with the cross and soaked in water to regain his strength.

Thereafter he followed this practice in ministering to the sick himself. In his honor the custom of blessing and distributing the "Bread of Saint Nicholas" is continued by the Augustinians in many places today.



Nine passengers on ship going down at sea once asked Nicholas' aid; he appeared in the sky, wearing the black Augustinian habit, radiating a golden light, holding a lily in his left hand; with his right hand he quelled the storm.

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Special points of interest:

- 1st Augustinian canonised
- Prayer for the Holy Souls
- Carer of the poor

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Praying through St Nicholas



Almighty God,
through the intercession
of St Nicholas of
Tolentine, we pray for all
the members of our
family who have gone
before us and now await
the comfort of your
Kingdom.

Bless them and all the
members of the faithful
departed so that we
might all share in the
joys of your kingdom
together, for ever and
ever. Amen.

Dear God,
As members of the one
human family may we
become bearers of the
Body of Christ to one
another.

May we follow the
example of St Nicholas
of Tolentine in seeking to
live out our membership
of the Body of Christ by
our prayer and by our
witness of Christ's
compassion for others.

Amen.

Augustinian Saints

St Augustine, *pray for us.*

St Monica, *pray for us.*

Sts Alypius and Possidius,
pray for us.

St Nicholas of Tolentine, *pray
for us.*

St Rita of Cascia, *pray for us.*

St Thomas of Villanova, *pray
for us.*

St Clare of Montefalco, *pray
for us.*

St John Stone, *pray for us.*

St Alonso de Orozco, *pray for
us.*

St Ezekiel Moreno, *pray for us.*

Mother of Good Counsel,
pray for us.

Nicholas the ascetic

“My God and my
Lord Jesus
Christ,
accompanied by
His holy Mother
and our Father
Saint Augustine
are telling me:
Come now, my
good and
faithful servant;
enter into the
joy of your Lord”

“Behold, my
Lord, into Your
hands I
commend my
spirit”

10 Sept 1305

When Nicholas moved to
Tolentine the people had
already heard of his
reputation for great
prayerfulness and his
receipt of divine favours;
its citizens were
delighted to have him in
their town.

In his prayer, Nicholas
often sought the
intercession of Mary, the
mother of Jesus. He
honoured her sorrows
especially, and kept in
his room a small picture
of the Pieta, by
Michelangelo. Nicholas
prayed, kneeling before
this picture.

But it was in front of the
Blessed Sacrament that
he most loved to pray.
There he spent hours,
chiefly petitioning relief
for the souls of the
faithful departed.

Throughout his thirty
active years in Tolentine,
as mortification Nicholas
never ate meat, and ate

one meal a day of soup.
He slept only a few
hours per night, either on
bare planks or a straw
mattress.

The devil tempted
Nicholas by suggesting
that God was not
pleased with him, but
Nicholas fought this
distraction and saw it for
what it was. He valiantly
maintained his acts of
mortification right to the
end of his life.

The process of
canonisation of Nicholas
relates an incident of the
devil snatching from the
hands of Nicholas a
piece of cloth with which
he was going to mend
his Augustinian habit,
and of the devil
smashing to pieces the
small lamp in Nicholas’
room.

An Augustinian brother
who was appointed to
care for Nicholas in his
last illness reported that
he was conscious of

spirits who made bodily
attacks on Nicholas, to
the point of requiring
Nicholas ever afterwards
to use a walking stick.

On one occasion
Nicholas called for the
brother to come to his
sickbed, saying “Help
me, brother. I have been
badly beaten by the
devil.” In spite of all
such provocations,
Nicholas was undeterred
in his prayer and
mortification.

Concerned townspeople
told Nicholas that his
total abstinence from
meat, his regular fasting
and his too-few hours of
nightly sleeping gave
them concern for his
continued physical well-
being. At times Nicholas
devoted himself to
prayer and acts of
penance with such
intensity that it was
necessary for his
superiors to impose
limitations on him.

The Ministry of Nicholas of Tolentino

Nicholas was ordained to the priesthood in 1271. He lived in several different monasteries of the Augustinian Order, engaged principally in the ministry of preaching. In 1275 he was sent to Tolentino and remained there for the rest of his life.

Preacher / Carer

Nicholas worked to counteract the decline of morality and religion which came with the development of city life in the late thirteenth century. He ministered to the sick and the poor, and actively sought out those who had become estranged from the Church.

A fellow religious describes Nicholas' ministry in these words: "He was a joy to those who were sad, a consolation to the suffering, peace to those at variance, refreshment to those who toiled, support for the poor, and a healing balm for prisoners."

Healer / Pastor

Nicholas' reputation as a

saintly man and a worker of miracles led many people to the monastery of Tolentino.

"Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory"

When in 1884 Nicholas was proclaimed "Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory" by Pope Leo XIII, confirmation was given to a long-standing aspect of devotion toward this friar which is traced to an event in his own life.

On a certain Saturday night as he lay in bed, Nicholas heard Fra Pellegrino of Osimo, a deceased friar who Nicholas had known. Fra Pellegrino revealed that he was in purgatory and he begged Nicholas to offer Mass for him and for the other suffering souls so that they might be set free.

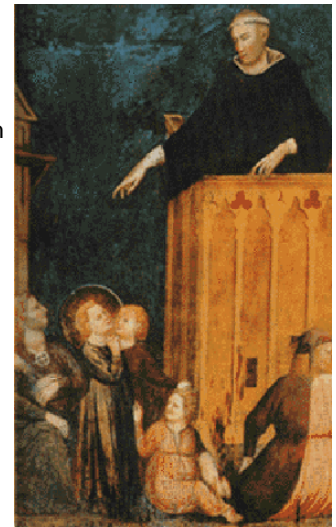
For the next seven days, Nicholas did so and was rewarded with a second vision in which the deceased confrere expressed his gratitude and assurance that a

great number of people were now enjoying the presence of God through Nicholas' prayers.

As this event became known, many people approached Nicholas, asking his intercession on behalf of their own deceased relatives and friends.

Nicholas died in Tolentino on September 10th, 1305. He was declared a saint in 1446, the first member of the Augustinian Order to be canonized. Saint Nicholas' body is venerated in the basilica in Tolentino which bears his name. His feast is celebrated by the Augustinian family on this day each September.

Rotelle, John, [Book of Augustinian Saints](#), Augustinian Press 2000



St Nicholas was canonised in Rome on 5 June 1446, the Feast of Pentecost by Pope Eugene IV. It was officially proclaimed by a Papal Bull on 7 January 1447.

Where is Tolentino?



Tolentino is in the Marche area of Eastern Italy to the east of Umbria. It is not very far from the Franciscan shrine of Assisi and is near the other great Augustinian centres of pilgrimage, Cascia - St Rita and Montefalco - St Clare. The nearest large city is Ancona and the Marian shrine of Loreto is also nearby.



**A YEAR WITH PRAYER
A YEAR IN COMMON LIFE**

Lecceto, named after an Augustinian monastery in Italy, calls young people aged 18 - 35 to live in Christian community, based on Augustinian spirituality. Those in the Lecceto community have clearly loved every minute of their unique opportunity to learn first hand about Augustinian spirituality and the famous Augustinian hospitality! The Lecceto community lives nearby to the Augustinian community of Brookvale and shares some meal and liturgical experiences.

A previous Lecceto member has said: "The community program encourages and affirms young people in their faith formation and Christian journey. It teaches us how to embrace Christ-like qualities, and particularly to model the self-emptying love of Christ."

For details on any of these programs please see our website below or contact:

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AUGUSTINIAN VOLUNTEERS

An exciting new concept combining a spirit of self-giving while offering benefits to the greater Church.

AIM: Young adults in the service of God's people, working in partnership with Augustinians and others such that hearts and minds are united with our God.

WORK: **Either with Augustinians in their ministries;** South Yarra (Melbourne), Manly Vale / Brookvale in Sydney, Coorparoo (Brisbane) are the most likely sites; **or with diocesan agencies close by such houses.**

Work may involve you in one or other of teaching support, care of the elderly, ongoing maintenance of facilities, youth ministry, advocacy, social justice ministry, food and shelter assistance.

COMMUNAL LIFE: Volunteers live together in housing provided by the Augustinians. By living in community the life of the Volunteers will be enriched as they enrich others. The Augustinians provide also for the living expenses of the community and a small stipend.

DURATION: Mid-January to mid-December each year. Extended service opportunities may be possible. Links to overseas programs may become a possibility.

REQUIREMENTS: Volunteers must be 21-35 years of age and must have trained skills (see website). They need to live with others in harmony, to know their rights and be ready to accept responsibility. We require people who wish to develop their full potential.

YOUNG ADULT FAITH FESTIVAL January 2006

Koonjewarre is on the Gold Coast hinterland. It will be the venue for the next Augustinian Young Adult Faith Festival to be held from the 15th - 20th January, 2006.

These events are held every two to three years throughout Australia. The previous AYF was in the Victorian Alps in 2003.

PARTICIPANTS

Young adults in the 18-30 age bracket who remember their senior retreat or similar events and who wish to share their faith with like-minded young adults.

PROGRAM

The program has been

developed by young adults working with the Augustinians and will be run by a team of young people from Brisbane, Sydney and Northern Victoria.

PREPARATION

Each region will prepare parts of the overall program; this young people speaking to and with young people. We will be celebrating our faith with the key symbols of our faith and the sacraments. But most of all we are inviting young people to dialogue with one another, to meet up with a whole host of Augustinians and to experience something of Augustinian prayer, moments of transcendence, hospitality, community and celebration.



INTERNATIONAL EVENT

This AYF also will help to prepare participants for a similar International gathering at Pavia in Italy in late July, 2006.