

AMICI

Friends of St. Augustine – Seeking God Together

Leader's Message July 2020



Dear Friends

“No one should spend so much time in contemplation that they ignore the needs of their neighbour, nor be so absorbed in action that they feel no need for contemplation of God.” St Augustine

Fr Paul refers to this quote in his Prayer Resource and I have also seen it pop up on various Augustinian sites over the last few months as it does so aptly reflect life for many of us at the moment. The reality of the pandemic meant some experienced an increase in their workload and stress as they were required to do the same or more work but in difficult conditions. Others were plunged into the frightening world of unemployment or business owners saw their work dry up with breathtaking suddenness. The foundations of their life crumbling beneath them leaving nothing but time. Time to worry. Time to fear.

We wonder – where is God in all of this? The answer for me, as always, is within each other and ourselves.

“One of the very graced aspects of what it is to be human is our need for each other. Our need for relationship, connection and presence.” Beautiful words spoken by Fr Peter Jones, Augustinian Prior Provincial, in a homily livestreamed from North Harbour Parish during lockdown. These words take shape in the reports provided from Friends on the pages of this newsletter. Reports from Melbourne, Brisbane and Mareeba reflect on the balance between personal prayer and the importance of contact and service to others. These echoing themes remind me of the arch of our formation series a few years ago *Interiority, Prayer, Action*. Covid-19 has certainly provided us with an opportunity to nurture our own faith and do all we can to support and nurture each other. We may all have had the experience of finding *“a pearl of great price”* within ourselves and our community.

I see this time as an opportunity to embrace and experiment with new ways of doing things, the internet and social media have played an important part in keeping everyone connected over the last few months. Those who may have been a bit sceptical have taken the leap and benefitted greatly. This is the world in which we live and we either embrace it or become irrelevant.

In an effort to have a more personal connection we have recorded Fr Paul's Prayer Resource and it is available to view on YouTube via the following link <https://youtu.be/HN8TB2XMIr0>

I am very grateful to Fr Paul for doing this and we also plan to develop a series of meditations that will be available online.

Just prior to the Laity Congress in Rome last year I started a Facebook page for Friends in Australia. I'll admit it has been a bit neglected however I will be looking to update it and use it as a tool to share some of the wonderful resources available to us from our Australian and worldwide Augustinian family. The link to the page is <https://www.facebook.com/FOSAau>

The Feast of St Augustine is fast approaching and would normally be a time when we gather for a meal to celebrate. Depending on where you live it is likely you will be unable to celebrate in the usual way. We are all becoming very good at doing things differently so I'm sure we will find new ways to mark the occasion.

Stay safe, love Jacky

Reflections from Lockdown

Melbourne

What strange times we have been through!

There has been much to be thankful for, much to pray about, and much to be alert to.

As we all went into Lock Down, I am sure you experienced a certain fear, were faced with numerous questions, and wondered how you would cope with the challenges of isolation.

Like many of you I collected a bundle of books from the Library, made sure that I was eligible for Coles On-Line Delivery Service and set about creating a possible agenda for each day.

Prayer featured in that agenda, and as I had made several attempts over the years to daily pray the Divine Office, now seemed the perfect time for another such attempt. Sara Maitland, in *The Tablet* of May 16, had this to say about this prayer of the church. *As the 'base line' of my prayer I use the Church's Divine Office. I do so because I think that for me having a regular and external discipline is helpful, because I love the Psalms, and because – living and therefore praying alone- it gives me a sense of community and solidarity with the Church.*

Although both Sara and I struggle with the non-inclusive language of this great prayer we keep on.

Sorting boxes of family photos, left over files from various history writing projects and the residue of moving house provided me with challenging tasks on a daily basis.

I imagine that my nephews and nieces may well be grateful to Covid 19 in time to come!

In the PM of each day it was time for a *phon-a-thon* to those who may be at home alone, to those one had failed to be in touch with over Christmas and to those one missed all the time. It was in this daily phon-a-thon that I found some semblance of *eucharist*, noting the increased use of 'God bless you' by those who were phoned.

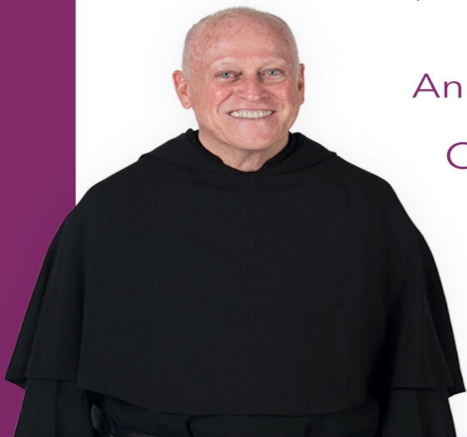
Some time ago my niece, who had been living with me, made the suggestion that I should outline plans and instructions for my funeral, whenever? Family seem pleased that this is done.

During this unusual time of reflection, prayer, and of being alone came a wonderful link to *The Confessions*. Art Purcaro OSA of Villanova University, U.S.A. was offering reflections and insights into each of the 13 books, perfect timing, and so valuable.

Whilst we are now beginning to be back in touch with people and moving out from home I for one will always be thankful for the time of quiet reflection and of prayer possibilities. *Mary McCormack*

Since Mary wrote this Melbourne has gone back into lockdown. We prayer for all those suffering in Vic.

I can highly recommend this series by Art Purcaro OSA as mentioned by Mary. You can access it via this link: <https://www.augustinian.org/confessions-of-saint-augustine-video-series>



An Introduction to the
Confessions of Saint Augustine
Book I through XIII



PLAY

A Report from the Mareeba Friends of St Augustine

Effects of the Global Pandemic in Mareeba

Covid 19 has had an enormous impact on the whole world, including our township of Mareeba. As the world has faced the challenging changes, so have we.

We have had to cancel all our gatherings and our Easter celebrations were nothing like they have ever been before. Indeed, we like everyone else had no celebrations at all. We all felt the acute loss, however, at the same time, we also knew that we were in this together. It was strangely unifying and the community was brought together in some surprising ways.

On a walking track nearby there is a meeting point and this became a focal point for the community, as messages started appearing.

Early in the Pandemic the first message was "G'day Mareeba" and every day after a new one appeared. They included, Love One another, Each day is a treasure. During Easter, the messages became more faith centered, and ranged from Happy Easter to Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." The last messages written were, God gives peace when we go to pieces, Almost there! The very last message still to be seen is, What If = Fear, Even If = Faith. Hope filled messages during difficult times.

Fr Rob and Deacon Ralph have still been kept quite busy with the usual running of the Parish, even though they have been constrained by the restrictions, Deacon Ralph celebrated 11 years as a Deacon during the Pandemic and enjoyed a quiet celebration with his family and friends.

The ABC regarding the community in Coen interviewed Fr Rob. They inquired how they were faring. Fr Rob was able to report that they were soldiering on and coping quite well despite missing their monthly Mass and visits. Both Fr Rob and Deacon Ralph have also been celebrating daily Mass in the Priory chapel for the people of the Parish.

The Friends have also been busy, keeping in contact over the phone and emails, watching Mass and daily prayers on line with Bishop James Foley and the many other activities they have ventured into with more time up their sleeves.

Ultimately, however, as Fr Rob said in one of his regular letters to the Parish, the Pandemic is a time to make time for prayer at home with the Rosary being especially suited for this purpose. May this time of trial draw us closer to each other and to our God.

God bless

Teresa and Anni

Mareeba Friends of St Augustine



Greetings from Brisbane

It has been an interesting and worrying time for all of us as we try to stay healthy and still be able to remain in touch with community and family. I decided that I was going to plan my routine so that it was stimulating, sensible and sane. One of the ways of keeping sane was with the advent of a cat name Formosa into my home. Having an animal to care for during the lockdown has been a great source of joy and amusement. Mary McCormick also sent me a little book call "The Pope's Cat", written for people from age six and up. I was able to enjoy it as it was for "the young and the young at heart!"

It has been a great comfort to share Eucharistic celebrations from Villanova College Chapel, St James and the Catholic Community of North Harbour. There have been some challenging homilies delivered and the quality of the presentations made me feel delighted to be part of the Augustinian family.

There have been small group contacts by phone and I found the voice contact with so many relatives and friends to be reassuring. It was also wonderful to share pet photos via the phone of all creatures great and small.

Prayer has been another constant to my daily routine whether it be the streaming of the Eucharist online, moments of quiet reflections, reading and using the Prayer of the Church with the richness of the Psalms.

We weren't able to have our Friends gathering in May but hopefully we were able to access Maureen's Augustine: Window on the Word and the World in the comfort of our homes. Fraternal love to all and may we be united in our faith and friendship in the days to come.

Ray Mitchell

Membership 2020

We invite all members to renew their membership for 2020

The annual subscription remains at \$25 and we invite those able, to pay an additional \$5 bringing their contribution to \$30 per year. A membership form is included in this edition. We now offer the option of paying on-line. Please use your last name and first initial as a reference.

If you are currently receiving Amici by post and would like to receive via email or if you no longer wish to receive Amici please either return the enclosed form by mail or email Jacky on gjworth@tpg.com.au

Thank you for your continued support of Friends as together we sustain and build a vibrant Augustinian laity.

***Faith is to believe what you do not see;
the reward for this faith is to see what you
believe.***

St Augustine

Contact Information

Chaplain
Paul Maloney OSA
paulmal@bigpond.com
(02) 9949 4455

National Leader
Jacky Worthington
gjworth@tpg.com.au
0403 834 043

Formation Co-ordinator
Maureen Atkins
mvatkins@netspace.net.au
0439 631 329

