

# Prayer Resource

From our Chaplain Fr Paul Maloney OSA



Friday May 5th, 2023

Dear Friends

Augustine often remarked that one of the great benefits of having a true friend is that we are not afraid to pour out our feelings to them. We can reveal not only our joys but also our anxieties at the different situations that may be surrounding us in this world. My definition of Augustinian life has long ago concluded that we are a community of friends on our way to God, not just members living in the Priory under the one roof. Such a group of friends also includes the lay people who care for and support our ministry wherever it is located.

You have been my 'Friends' from the very first quarterly newsletter I sent out more than 20 years ago, and we named it 'Amici' for that reason. In a very real way, I 'found my voice' when given the opportunity to write to you about every new inspiration and encouragement I had gleaned from Augustine. I found it easy to share the wonder I felt at how relevant he became the more his own search mirrored our own. In a sense, we have not just been friends of Augustine, but friends with Augustine over all these years. And he has led us to a deeper understanding of what it means to be followers of Christ which is a bond that can never be broken.

The sadness I feel as I write this last letter to you (before handing over to Fr Dave Austin OSA at our Lay Congress in July), finds a parallel in my real-life loss of a friend and companion of 64 years, Fr Laurie Mooney OSA, whose funeral we attended just a few weeks back. It was by learning to share my thoughts with him that I perhaps learned how to share my thoughts with you? Sadly, we must be prepared for such separations in this life for, though truly united in heart and mind with each other, we must remain different persons with different destinies.

St Augustine's experience of losing a friend is vividly like my own:

*"He is alive in that place about which he used to ask me so many questions, ignorant and paltry fellow that I am. No longer does he bend his ear to my mouth: rather does he lay the mouth of his spirit to Your fountain and avidly slakes his thirst as he drinks your wisdom to the uttermost of his capacity, in happiness without end. Yet I cannot believe that he is so inebriated as to forget me, since you, Lord, from whom he drinks, are mindful of us all"* (Confessions: Book 9, 6)

Perhaps I can ask the same of you, 'not to forget me' as we continue to drink from the fountain of inspiration that is our holy Father Augustine? To paraphrase him one last time "I have found the things that have pleased me please me more when they please another person too". You have been that other person, as together we have found delight in sharing the insights on Augustine offered,

*With much love,*

*Paul*

# Prayer Resource cont.

***In this following excerpt from the Address of His Holiness Pope Francis for the opening of the Synod, Saturday, 9 October 2021, Pope Francis examines the three essential elements of the synodal process: Communion, Participation and Mission***

The Synod has three key words: communion, participation and mission. Communion and mission are theological terms describing the mystery of the Church, which we do well to keep in mind. The Second Vatican Council clearly taught that communion expresses the very nature of the Church, while pointing out that the Church has received “the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God, and is, on earth, the seed and beginning of that kingdom” (Lumen Gentium, 5). With those two words, the Church contemplates and imitates the life of the Blessed Trinity, a mystery of communion ad intra and the source of mission ad extra. In the wake of the doctrinal, theological and pastoral reflections that were part of the reception of Vatican II, Saint Paul VI sought to distil in those two words – communion and mission – “the main lines enunciated by the Council”. Commemorating the opening of the Council, he stated that its main lines were in fact “communion, that is, cohesion and interior fullness, in grace, truth and collaboration... and mission, that is, apostolic commitment to the world of today” (Angelus of 11 October 1970), which is not the same as proselytism.

In 1985, at the conclusion of the Synod marking the twentieth anniversary of the close of the Council, Saint John Paul II also reiterated that the Church’s nature is koinonia, which gives rise to her mission of serving as a sign of the human family’s intimate union with God. He went on to say: “It is most useful that the Church celebrate ordinary, and on occasion, also extraordinary synods”. These, if they are to be fruitful, must be well prepared: “it is necessary that the local Churches work at their preparation with the participation of all” (Address at the Conclusion of the II Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 7 December 1985). And this brings us to our third word: participation. The words “communion” and “mission” can risk remaining somewhat abstract, unless we cultivate an ecclesial praxis that expresses the concreteness of synodality at every step of our journey and activity, encouraging real involvement on the part of each and all. I would say that celebrating a Synod is always a good and important thing, but it proves truly beneficial if it becomes a living expression of “being Church”, of a way of acting marked by true participation.

## **The Purpose of the Prayer Resource Guide**

*Each of us is on a journey to God like our patron Augustine.*

*The Friends prayer resource is offered to you as a support in your day to day prayer.*

*It is centred on the Gospel readings and quotes from Augustine. Formation material is offered from different sources including a prayer orientated letter from our Chaplain.*

