



AMICI

Volume 23 Issue 2

Friends of St Augustine Newsletter

“Walking Together”

Summer 2023

Dear Friends of St. Augustine,

We write to you as so many parts of our world experience intense suffering. Prayer and more prayer is our call at this time. As Leaders our decision to adopt the Congress theme of ‘Walking Together’ has seen us enjoying phone conversations with local leaders. Over three Monday evenings, we were joined by Maureen Atkins as we made contact with group leaders. Ideas and possibilities emerged as we chatted.

In this copy of Amici we have chosen to feature local groups of Friends giving you some insight into the way we are actually ‘Walking Together’. It was pleasing to note that a number of groups have been appreciating the Study Guide for 2023. Maureen Atkins is already looking to the possibilities for 2024. The symbols of Leadership for Friends, the Bowl and Jug, have arrived in Melbourne and we look forward to their presentation at our Christmas gathering.

If you are looking to introduce Friends of St. Augustine to your wider circle of friends you may wish to visit the Augustinian Australian Web Site. There you will find items of interest.

Mary McCormick Judith Duncan



Maureen Atkins, Mary McCormick, Judith Duncan, Fr Dave Austin OSA (Photo by Melbourne Catholic)

City of God, 19.13

God, the wise Creator has made us the loveliest of all the lovely things on earth. He has given us good gifts that enhance our life now, gifts like the blessings of health and friendship. He has given us gifts that are perfectly adapted to our physical life: things like daylight, air to breathe, water to drink and everything we need to feed, clothe, cure and beautify ourselves.

More than this, he gives us a promise that if we use these goods well, we will receive more abundant and better goods, nothing less than an undying peaceful life and all that goes with it: the glory and honor of enjoying God and enjoying our neighbor in God forever.

Chaplain Dave Austin OSA

Local Leaders

Mareeba	Jeanette Hartley
Cairns	Gina Rossbach
Coorparoo	Sylvia Phillips
Gold Coast	M. Boehme
Nth. Harbour	A. Halloway
St Clair	Lorensz Herft
South Yarra	Judith Duncan

Formation Maureen Atkins

In a spirit of reconciliation Friends of St. Augustine acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we gather.

'Walking Together' – Local Groups

MAREEBA - land of the Muluridji people

Parish of St Thomas

Our group here in the north began the year well with a planning meeting in February to get the ball rolling. This was followed in early March by our traditional breakfast gathering at the home of Teresa and Gennaro Marinelli. A spiritual gathering was organised for April but was not well attended because we find that, as we are an ageing group in the main, our health issues are now foiling our best efforts. Different meeting times have been arranged since, but nothing is settled thus far. On an up-note, our trip to Cooktown in June was successful, though we can see the enormous amount of work that needs to be done on the surrounds of the gravesite.



At the beginning of July, we welcomed Fr Joe Farrell OSA and Fr Tony Banks OSA, to our small group, after Jeanette Hartley attended the National Congress in Brisbane. As we progress through this year, we now have the sad news that from January 2024, there will be no more Augustinian priests at Mareeba, and that the parish will revert back to the Diocese of Cairns. We realise that other groups have had no immediate Augustinian presence and so will persevere. Please pray for our continued progress here in Mareeba. *Bernadette Greensill & Jeanette Hartley*

CAIRNS - land of the Yirrganydji people

Here is our group celebrating the feast day of St Augustine. Our group is small and largely made up of Filipinos at this time. We have had only three gatherings due to Covid. After attending the Congress in Brisbane, we are all renewed and reenergised and have distributed the Membership form for everyone to be officially registered as Members of Friends of St Augustine. We are hoping to have a visit from Fr Saldie later in the year. *Gina Rossbach*



GOLD COAST - land of the Kombumerri people

Surfers Paradise Parish – Sacred Heart



When we spoke with Mary Ann on our phonathon, we were impressed by her enthusiasm for Parish life along with her ability to gather people together who are interested in the story and spirituality of St Augustine. In this photo taken earlier, you will notice Friends from Coorparoo visiting with them. On November 25, the group look forward to being visited by Fr Percival Severe OSA. He will be speaking to them about Augustinian Spirituality.

On behalf of Mary Ann Boehme

SOUTH YARRA - land of the Wurundjeri & Boonwurrung people

Parish of St Joseph

Friends continued to appreciate and enjoy the Study Guide for 2023. Our group discussion was enlivened by a visit from a fellow Friend, Jan van Martijn from the Netherlands. We zoomed in to the 2023 Congress ably assisted by fellow Friend, Robert. Two of our newest members, Kris and Gillian, were married and heartfelt congratulations were delivered to them. Sadly, a long standing member of our group, Chaille Lansell passed away in August. *Judith Duncan*



ST CLAIR - land of the Darug people**Holy Spirit Parish**

The Feast day saw fresh pears as the focal point. Leaders, Lorensz and Sylvia Herft, joined the entrance procession with a bowl of fresh pears purchased (not stolen) from the local Woolies. The bowl and a copy of 'The Confessions' were placed in front of the ambo. Fr Dave spoke of the significance of the *pear story* in the life of St Augustine.

As Augustine reflected on his sinful nature in 'The Confessions', he was amazed at his desire to and ability to sin in stealing something of little worth and of no use (the pears were sour) simply to be with his friends and do something reckless. St Clair have made use of the The Study Guide for 2023.

Lorensz Herft & Peter Moriarty

**COORPAROO - land of the Turrbal and Jagera people****Parish of St James**

During 2023 the St James Friends group has enjoyed the Spiritual Exercises created by Fr. Andres Nino OSA and adapted by Maureen Atkins. These sessions provided great guidance, insight and opportunities to reflect and share as we learnt more about St. Augustine and his life.

Brent shares his travel *In July, I had the opportunity to visit Italy with my family. We spent time with Father Mani OSA at the Church of St Augustine at San Gimignano, visited Milan Duomo and*

Baptistry, the tomb of St Augustine in San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro Basilica in Pavia and the Augustinian chapter hall and refectory in the Basilica of Santo Spirito in Florence. It was amazing to see such beautiful artwork in the cloisters, chapter hall, refectory and chapels and be in places where the Augustinian friars met, prayed and discussed the Order's business.

Brent Cornford & Sylvia Phillips

NORTH HARBOUR - land of Gayamagala and Canagal people**Church of St Kieran's**

'Afternoon Tea with Augustine' was hosted by Fr. Paul Maloney OSA on Saturday 11th November and attended by twenty Friends and Parishioners. We familiarised ourselves with quotes from Augustine's writings, namely 'The Confessions' and his Sermons. These were printed on cards. We were asked to select a quote that resonated with us and then invited to share with the small group why those words spoke to us personally. Interesting discussion resulted from this exercise.

Fr. Paul highlighted the role of Memory that Augustine referred to regularly in his Confessions. He recalled a sense of God being with him at times and also times where he felt isolated from God's loving presence.

We reflected on the 'flow of time' and discussed how we could use time more effectively, being aware that nothing stands still in time. We are governed by it in every aspect of our lives. However, in eternity, gained for us by Jesus Christ, there will just be the 'now', a now filled with joy. "Augustine hoped his writing might encourage others to remember/discover their own evolving relationship with God."

Anne Holloway



Formation Coordinator - Maureen Atkins

In Appreciation

From the very beginning of Friends, the role of Formation Coordinator has been vital. Ed Maher of Sydney created a great resource, *Life with Augustine* in the beginning. After 2010 Mary McCormick prepared a myriad of resources for groups to use. In 2016, Maureen Atkins accepted the role. Maureen responded to planning and ideas discussed at the Annual Leaders' Conference. She then went on to create wonderful Study Guides over a number of years.

2017 **Window on the Word Phase 1**

2018 **Window on the Word Phase 2**

2019 **Window on the Word Phase 3 - The Psalms**

2020 **Window on the Word and the World**

2022 **Augustine: A Window on Contemporary Challenges**

2023 **The Spiritual Exercises of St Augustine: Fr Andres Nino OSA**



Friends are grateful to Maureen Atkins for listening to the leaders, and for discerning and creating study programs each year. As the Leaders often met late in the calendar year, summertime for Maureen meant much reading, plenty of thinking, planning and then the task of writing and creating interesting programs for Friends across Australia to enjoy and follow throughout the next year. Not only has Maureen given so generously of her time and her expertise but she has been ever ready to share her very own spirituality, a gift to Friends each year. Friends of St. Augustine remember Maureen in prayer and ask much blessing on her ongoing journey in spirituality as she continues to be informed and formed by her loving God.

Membership – 4 local Gatherings
Quarterly Newsletter
Prayer Resource

Remember in your prayer those who are sad, unwell or anxious at this time, Rejoice with those who know good news, are new members, newly ordained, or have come from afar.

Melbourne Catholic Interview & Article.

How it came about?

Christian Bergmann is a writer for *Melbourne Catholic*. This is a news service in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. One regular practice of their team is to read parish bulletins as they search for stories about people living their faith within community. In their role as the new national leaders of Friends of St Augustine, Judith Duncan and Mary McCormick were surprised and delighted to hear from Christian regarding an item they published in a Parish Bulletin in South Yarra. They wanted to encourage the parishioners to come to the Friends' gatherings and open themselves to a deeper exploration of their spirituality.

Fr Dave Austin OSA had been appointed as the new chaplain for Friends and it was fortuitous that his visit to Melbourne to confer with Judith and Mary coincided with the interview for *Melbourne Catholic*. While they were conscious of the responsibility inherent in their new role, Judith and Mary were stimulated by responding to Christian's questions and sharing their vision about the future for Friends. One emphasis in Friends is the concept of coming to faith within a community.

Fr Dave explained that the idea of friendship is integral to understanding Augustine. 'The core aspect of Augustine's spirituality was community,' he said. 'He himself formed a community even before his conversion because he was very much a person energised by people.'

Judith and Mary are animated by their desire to promote opportunities for the development of Augustinian spirituality, and they are enthusiastic about articulating the possibilities they see for faith enrichment to a wider audience.

Maureen Atkins

FYI. International Congress For Augustinian Laity - Rome July 10-15, 2024

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Our Thanks to

*Dave Austin OSA
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