



AMICI

Volume 23 Issue 4

Friends of St Augustine Newsletter

“Walking Together”

Winter 2024

Dear Friends of St. Augustine,

With great sadness we honour and remember our long time Treasurer Greg Keogh. The sympathy of all readers goes to his family and friends, especially former National Leader, Jacky Worthington and former National Chaplain, Paul Maloney OSA who have both walked closely with Greg.

Sylvia Phillips of Coorparoo has agreed to take on this role. With the 2024 Membership now due we ask that you make your payment as per usual. (Membership form included)

As Leaders we have been busy, Judith preparing for Rome and Mary updating the Mail Out and Email lists. Recently we were asked to prepare a report from FOSA for the Augustinian Mid-Chapter for early July. Some Local Leaders assisted in this and we also included material gleaned from the Leaders Zoom gathering of March 9.

Maureen has responded to some of the issues discussed at the Leaders Zoom Conference in her writing about Spirituality. We appreciate those reflections and hope they may be of use in local groups. We also bring you news from South Yarra as Friends were delighted to receive responses to a set of questions they had put to Young Adults whilst on Retreat with Fr Saldie OSA on June 22nd.

The Agenda items for the Rome Congress are included in this edition as delegates now make ready for the journey. We look forward to hearing about this event. Due to many articles of immediate interest Local news will appear in our next edition of Amici.

Our thoughts continue to go to Mareeba as parishioners grow accustomed to being the Augustinian presence in that part of the world.

Mary McCormick Judith Duncan

Thanks be to You, O Lord!

We see heaven and earth and the light and darkness which adorns them. We see the heavens through which the birds of the air take their wandering flight. We see the beauty of the waters in the expanse of the sea. We see the dry land that is the mother of plants and trees. We see the great lights shining above, the sun illuminating the day, the moon and stars comforting the night. We see the water spread all about us swarming with fish. We see the earth populated by various land animals.

Finally, we see human beings made in your image and likeness and charged with protecting the rest of creation by their wisdom. We see all these things and each is good and the whole of them taken together is very good.

Confessions 13. 32, 47.

Chaplain Dave Austin OSA

Local Leaders

Mareeba Jeanette Hartley
Cairns Gina Rossbach
Coorparoo Brent Cornford
Gold Coast M. Boehme
Nth. Harbour J. Worthington
St Clair L. & S. 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.

A Recollection of Spiritual Ancestors in Faith

Maureen Atkins

To assist *Friends of St Augustine* (FOSA) on their faith journey Maureen, as Formation Coordinator, responds to the call from Leaders for a deeper understanding of Spirituality.

“Spirituality is ... that which gives meaning to life and allows us to participate in the larger whole”

(John Shea. *The New Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, 2005, 49)

This article is a recollection of the religious orders who have had an impact on my spiritual development. This is a broad concept of spirituality. Christian spirituality is focused on living according to the message of Jesus Christ. Our spirituality is developed within our families and in our environment.

Augustinian spirituality is a unique way of living the Gospel (the following of Christ) under the inspiration of Augustine of Hippo. The *Friends of St. Augustine* explore Augustinian spirituality in their quest to discover what they can learn from Augustine about how to live a spiritual life. In the last two years, we have centred our search on The Confessions. This project draws on the work that Fr. Andrés G. Niño OSA has shared with us, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Augustine*.

The Augustinian Australian website reminds us that “Augustinian Spirituality does not take us out of the world (into the cloister or desert) but places us firmly in the midst of life to form community in the face of the individualism and competitiveness of our post-modern society”.

Augustinian spirituality reflects the spirituality of St. Augustine and this is referred to as the Order’s charism. These charisms are defined as “graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church” (Article 799 of the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)).

One way of understanding Catholic charisms is to think about them like holiday traditions.

Christmas is celebrated in many countries, but each family has its own cherished traditions

(<https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/catholic-charism-comparison>) Every religious congregation has a spirituality that reflects the spirituality of its founder, and this is known as its charism.

Many of the members of the Friends of St. Augustine may have been nurtured and influenced by the spirituality that reflected the charisms of other religious orders, such as the Carmelites, Franciscans, Jesuits and the Josephites. They may also be attuned to different perspectives on spirituality including Creation, Ecological, Ecumenical, Feminist, First Nations, and Global spirituality. All the Orders are committed to following God and each one has a particularly dedicated lens through which they express their spirituality. The charisms of all these orders, which are reflected in the lives of their founders, have all nurtured my search for God and I have also been transformed by exposure to different perspectives on spirituality.

During my primary and secondary education, I was shaped by the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph who reflected the charism of their founder Mary MacKillop, the first Australian saint. I was guided and influenced by Augustinian spirituality for almost four decades of parish life and I have been a member of the Friends for twenty-five years. In recent years, I have been encouraged and stimulated by Ignatian spirituality through the prayer of the Spiritual Exercises and the study of spiritual direction.

Every person has a spiritual story. We ask what ‘gives meaning to life and allows us to participate in the larger whole’. This story begins with our families and it is affected by our life experiences. Last year, we created our spiritual life maps with Friends. Through this process, we identified important connections that supported our emerging spiritualities. In Christian spirituality, we are invited to follow the message of Jesus. In this journey, we gather the graces from all the people and situations that lead us to God. As members of Friends, we are inspired by Augustine, one of the major saints in the Christian tradition. He wrote for his time; we strive to interpret his message in the 21st century context as our spirituality continues to flourish.

As Christians, we follow the Good News and we are influenced by many spiritual traditions.

National Leaders remember long time Treasurer – Greg Keogh

As the news of Greg's recent death went out to readers several National Leaders responded with warmth and appreciation about the early days of Friends and his involvement. We now share those thoughts.

From Anne Halloway (1991-2001)

Judging from the incredibly large funeral to honour Greg it would not be an exaggeration to say he was dearly loved and admired by the parish and large numbers of colleagues and friends going back to his early childhood days. He absorbed and lived the Augustinian Themes he referred to in Amici, Volume 16, Issue 1. In Greg's words "Interiority (finding God in our hearts), Community (finding God in others) and Service (being God for others)."

Tributes in the Eulogies referred to him always finding time for others, his great sense of humour, lasting friendships and strong commitment to his faith resulting in a wonderful example to young folk. Greg really lived that faith in many branches of The Augustinian Family beginning with his home life, St. Kieran's Primary School and St. Augustine's College. He will be greatly missed and has left a lasting legacy for all who were privileged to know him.

From Peter Moriarty (Co-Leader 1991-2001)

Peter remembers an early meeting at Brookvale where he met a very pleasant young man who seemed so happy to be able to help the Augustinians and this new group called Augustinian Friends. As time went on Greg was efficient and effective in his role as Treasurer of the Association. This gave Peter and others confidence that the money matters and reporting were in good hands.

From Monica Meagher (2004-2007)

Monica wrote, I met Greg Keogh at the first National Congress 2001 in Echuca. He always displayed a happy outgoing nature. Family and friends were important to Greg and he had an innate ability to broaden friendship and enhance community. He generously accepted the role of Treasurer from the inception of Augustinian Friends (now Friends of St. Augustine). We are the richer for the presence of Greg in our lives.

From Maureen Atkins (2007-2010)

When Leaders came to Greystanes for their annual gathering it was an excellent opportunity to meet some of the people involved in the organisation from the beginning. Greg Keogh was extremely faithful in coming to these gatherings and providing reports about the financial details for FOSA. I was impressed with his extensive years of service to the group and the generous manner in which he provided this assistance. I enjoyed meeting him and appreciated his sparkling personality. It was also good to meet someone who had attended Augustinian gatherings overseas. Greg had been associated with the spirituality of St Augustine since his early adulthood and this resonated with him all his life.

From Sylvia Phillips (2010-2013, 2013-2016)

I first met Greg at the Leaders' Conference 2005 at Greystanes. Greg was a softly spoken man, dedicated to his role as Friends' Treasurer and was always a pleasure to work with. For the many times I requested information from him, his response was always courteous, prompt and to the point. On several times I met with him for coffee and these times are now special memories as we talked about his children, his wife and his dear mother. Vale Greg.

From Friends of St Augustine - an appreciation (A History of FOSA compiled in 2021, page 51)

Long-time treasurer and keeper of the finances is Greg Keogh. Greg was part of Friends from the very beginning having been to Italy on Youth adventures. He has kept the books with quiet efficiency and has been ever ready to support events and the various outlays. From Amici, Volume 16, Issue 1, we find Greg reflecting on the benefits of Friends.

Friends of St. Augustine has been a benefit to many people over the years. For me it has been a constant reminder that being part of an Augustinian Parish makes us part of something much bigger. We are connected to all the other parishes in Australia that have had or have an Augustinian presence and in turn we are also connected to the Universal nature of the Church through the Augustinian Order. I experienced this connection many years ago when I attended Augustinian festivals for young people in Italy and Spain. No matter what country people came from they had common issues and the teachings of Augustine could be applied to these issues and would help us deal with them.

To me Friends is a continuation of this and I look forward to receiving Amici, not only to see what is happening around the various groups, but to also reading the Prayer Resource Guide. This helps strengthen the Augustinian themes of Interiority (finding God in our hearts), Community (finding God in others) and Service (being God for others). Friends of St. Augustine is a great reminder to me that we, as lay people, are the Church and it is our responsibility to ensure that we act accordingly and build and strengthen the Church. If we don't who will?

Friends of St Augustine make ready for ROME. Please pray that their journey will be safe and fruitful.

“Walking Together in Communion, Participation and Mission”

TOPICS on their Agenda:

- *I am a child of God and member of the Body of Christ.*
- *The charismatic dimension of the Church - Basis for a synodal experience of Church, the total Christ.*
- *The method of spiritual conversation in the exercise of ministries.*
- *Our role as lay Augustinians, walking together, listening to the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God, in daily situations.*
- *Our challenges in the secular world & our mission as Augustinians.*



Delegates to be accommodated at St. Monica's, near to the Augustinian Patristic Institute, with a day visit to Tolentino honouring St Nicholas.* (*See Chart on Nicholas of Tolentino created by South Yarra Friends 2010)

Meanwhile, in Australia, we continue our focus on Augustinian Spirituality

Some Responses to a couple of the Questions posed at the 2023 National Congress

What stands out for me? Lay people are very much people of prayer. Patricia Gemmell said, 'We are witnessing a re-founding of Church'.

What can I do? Try to listen to young people, be open to discuss everyday issues with groups of people. Ask 20 year olds all manner of questions. Listen in a better way.

Friends in South Yarra recently asked young adults, on a Retreat Day with Fr. Saldie OSA, to respond to some questions. We share the questions and a few of the responses.

1. What does following Jesus look like for you?

Simplicity, honesty, kindness: learning to be courageous, this will exercise our faith.

2. What kind of activities and/or experiences could you see yourself involved in to assist further development of your faith and spirituality?

Community engagement, a deeper curiosity in St. Augustine.

3. What are the challenges you experience in living as a Christian in a modern Australian society and world?

Knowing how to speak about God, lack of spirituality around us, it can feel lonely at times.

4. Do you think that Christians are recognisable by others?

Yes and we should be.

5. What questions do you have about your Christian beliefs and practices?

Why do many people struggle to find faith? How to keep nourishing my faith so as not to lose it? How will Christianity look in 20 years? How Christians can be more connected in daily life with modern lifestyles?

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. In your Prayers please remember the families of Greg Keogh & Colleen Maher of Sydney, and Ralph Madigan from Mareeba, whose brother, Darryl, died recently. God bless all.

Be sure of your Membership – 2024 Membership now due.

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Our Thanks to
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