

Augustinian Friends Prayer Resource Guide

Co-Leaders' Message

We greet you this Easter in the words of St. Augustine

“dearly beloved, let us make constant reflection on
EASTER.

What I mean is that we shouldn't treat these days as extra - specially important, in such a way that we neglect the memory of the Lord's passion and resurrection at other times, while we have his body and blood as our daily banquet; this festival, rather, is intended to remind us more vividly of (the whole Paschal mystery), to stir us up to greater fervor, to renew our faith more joyfully, since in the course of the annual round of the seasons, it somehow or other sets the memory of what happened before our very eyes.” (Sermon 229D, 1-2)

For Augustine 'LIGHT' was a continuing metaphor, never more so than at Easter time. F. Van Der Meer in his book, *Augustine the Bishop*, writes:

“ .. on the eve of Easter, which was observed with the same intensity of devotion and with the same splendour as in old Russia, this man (Augustine) who was always an artist at heart completely betrays himself, for he is full of delight at the fantastic illumination of his church which, with it hundreds of hanging lamps and packed masses of people, must have provided a picture not unlike that to be seen in the mosque of Sidi Okba (which is not far from Hippo in Kairouan) when the new moon marked the end of Ramamdan. Then he shows all his accustomed skill in weaving those lamps and flames into his metaphors, his sermon being sometimes one long play with the idea of light. He builds a hundred delicate bridges between light and virtue, illumination and knowledge, the arising of the light and divine renewal, spiritual progress and clear sight. Then he speaks of the Father as the Source of light, and of the Son, the Reflector of his glory; then baptism is simply spoken of as illumination, for its symbol in the opening to the true light of the eyes of those who have been born blind, the opening of the eyes to that light which can illuminate every man that comes into this world.” (p322-323)

For Van Der Meer the luminous splendour of Augustine's .

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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 and
will be sent to you 4 times a
year.

It is centred on the Gospel
readings for coming Sundays
and quotes from Augustine. It
also contains a prayer ori-
ented letter from our Chaplain
and some tips on Lectio Di-
vina – the traditional Augustin-
ian method of scriptural reflec-
tion and meditation.

Easter liturgy was comparable to the brilliant celebrations of light of other and later traditions. Interestingly we came across a Reflection which highlights the Russian experience.

(This is a description of an Easter ceremony in Russia where it was highly dangerous to be a believer.)

“Someone at the back of the church lit a candle,
a single point of light not able to pierce the darkness.
But there was another, and another,
for each of the worshippers carried a candle.
Swiftly the flame was passed from one to another,
in less than a minute the church was a blaze of light –
no, not the impersonal glare of electricity –
it was a thousand individual flames united in a single faith.
Each candle lit up the face behind it.

That face bore the deep lines of suffering.
Yet it was illuminated,
and the suffering turned into joy,
because of the certain knowledge
that the Lord has risen.

These people do not debate the resurrection
they have experienced it in their lives.
They have preserved the faith in hostile surroundings;
it has preserved them.
Their joy is a glimpse through the curtain
which divides us from heaven.”

**From Michael Bordeaux, *Risen Indeed*,
Darton, Longman and Todd.**

Returning to Augustine we, like him, are all encouraged to ***‘praise God’***, so that this
Easter **“ALLELUIA will be our song.”**

As Augustine says in his discourse on the Psalms, (On Ps 148, 1-2)

“So now, my brethren, I urge you to praise God: this is what we all say to one another when we say ‘Alleluia’ — “Praise the Lord”. Praise God with the whole of yourselves; it is not only your tongue and your voice that should praise him, but your conscience, your life, your deeds.”

As we immerse ourselves in the Easter Triduum, “May God, who once caused light to shine in the darkness by his word, cause light to blaze forth in our hearts, so that we may be inwardly illumined.”

(F. Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, Sheed & Ward. London & New York. p. 363)

This is our Easter wish to all our Augustinian Friends from your new co-leaders

Mary McCormick and Monica Meagher

From our Chaplain

Tuesday March 15th, 2005

Dear Friends,

we are in the season of new beginnings as we celebrate the Feast of Easter. There can be nothing more radical than the new life offered to us by Christ since that triumphant Resurrection morning! Here we have our mortal horizons broken open to display the vista of endless happiness with our God and with one another. Jesus' words are spoken to each one of us personally: *"I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return and take you to myself, so that you may be with me where I am"*. (John 14: 3) It is this promise that forms the basis of our Easter joy.

St. Augustine takes up this theme: *"We have been urged to sing to the Lord a new song. It's the new person who sings the new song. A song is a matter of cheerfulness, and if we think about it more thoroughly, it's a matter of love. So anyone who knows how to love the new life knows how to sing the new song"*. (Sermon 34, 1) It is in the light of this Easter enthusiasm that I welcome the new life and new song that is being offered to the Augustinian Friends in the persons of the two Co-leaders who have accepted the responsibility of guiding our Association for the next three years.

Mary McCormick and **Monica Meagher** have been introduced to you in the pages of this month's edition of *Amici* and their Easter message precedes mine. It was my delight to travel to Melbourne to meet with them one evening in late January to witness the hand-over of office between Paul Griffiths and these two astute ladies. It had always been our hope to have the leadership distributed amongst the different states rather than keep it confined to Sydney, and here we have the first realization of this our dream. Net-working between the Co-leaders and the local groups is a vital part of their vision and there are plans to incorporate the leaders of each local group into a virtual team to guide the national body.

Speaking of local leaders, I would also like to thank **Kaye Coates** for accepting that role in the Manly Vale –Balgowlah association of *Friends*. When I asked Kaye to take on this job she had just started a fresh career in Counseling after thirty years as a registered nurse. Her new beginnings surely echo the hopes we have of revitalising the network of Friends contained in the Augustinian parishes of St Kieran's and St. Cecilia's. Kaye and her husband Peter have decided to have an *"At Home"* for all the Augustinian Friends who have missed the opportunity of gathering at a local level for quite some time so that we can plan some future functions and cement the bonds of friendship that have united us in the past. I look forward to meeting as many old Friends as possible on the evening of Friday April 22nd, at **94 Allambie Road, Allambie Heights**. We welcome any fellow parishoners you might like to invite along to learn more about this Lay Association.

In one of the most comforting statements in the Bible we hear God say *"Look, I am making the whole of creation new."* (Revelation 21:5) Nowhere is this more true than on that morning when He raised his Son out of death to stand in the new light of the Resurrection. May we always find new ways of expressing and sharing with one another that life which is in us. *"Make sure your life sings the same tune as your mouth. Sing with your voices, sing with your hearts; sing with your lips, sing with your conduct. Be yourselves what you sing. You are his praise if you live good lives"*. (Sermon 34,6)

I repeat once more Augustine's blessing: "May the joy of Easter **be** our Alleluia song!"

With much love,

Paul

Tolle Lege (Take and Read)

It is suggested that you reflect on the readings taken from the Sunday liturgy during a quiet time in the previous week. "Take and Read" the passage and stay open to Augustine's question "What is God wanting me to know now?" Then let God's grace illumine your understanding.

- March 27** **Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord** **John 20:1-9**
April 3 **Second Sunday of Easter** **Acts 2:42-47**
Scripture says that they were of one mind and of one heart in God. But many prefer their own profit, love their own things, delight in their own power, are greedy for their own private interests. Whereas he who wishes to make a place for the Lord should rejoice not in his private, but in the common good. (On Psalm 131,5)
- April 10** **Third Sunday of Easter** **Luke 24:13-35**
Those two (travelers), even when the Lord was talking to them, did not have faith, because they didn't believe that he had risen, nor had they any hope that he could rise again. They were walking along, dead, with Christ alive. Life was walking along with them, but in their hearts life had not yet been restored. You too, then, if you want to have life, do what they did in order to recognise the Lord. They showed him hospitality. Constrain the stranger if you want to recognise the Savior. What had been lost through infidelity was restored through hospitality. (Sermon 235, 3-4)
- April 17** **Fourth Sunday of Easter** **John 10:1-10**
April 24 **Fifth Sunday of Easter** **1 Peter 2:4-9**
May 1 **Sixth Sunday of Easter** **John 14:15-21**
The main reason for Christ's coming, then, was that the greatness of God's love should be recognised in such a way that we should be enflamed with love for the one who first loved us - and that we should love our neighbour according to the commandment, and following the example of him who, by his love for those who had strayed away from being his neighbour, thus became his neighbour. (The Instruction of Beginners 1, 7-8)
- May 8** **The Ascension of the Lord** **Matt 28:16-20**
The Lord Jesus Christ, after all, did not descend from the Father in such a way as to leave the Father behind; because on the other hand his ascending from us does not mean he withdrew from us. As he was about to ascend, you see, and take his seat at the right hand of the Father such a long, long way away, he said to his disciples, "*Behold I am with you right up to the completion of the age.*" (Sermon 229K, 2)
- May 15** **Pentecost Sunday** **John 20:19-23**
At that time whoever received the Holy Spirit spoke in many languages, individual though he was. Now in the same way unity speaks through all nations in every tongue. If you yourselves are established in that unity you have the Holy Spirit among you, and nothing can separate you from the Church of Christ which speaks in the language of every nation in the world. (Sermon 271,1)
- May 22** **Trinity Sunday** **John 3:16-18**
By grace we are bidden to imitate this bond (of love between the 3 Persons of the Trinity) in our relationships with one another. . . It is by God's gift that we are one with each other. (*Augustine detected echo's of the Divine life in our human experience of relationships*) (De Trinitate 6.5.7)
- May 29** **Corpus Christi Sunday** **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**
One bread; what is this one bread? The one body which we, being many, are. Remember that bread is not made from one grain, but from many. When you were being exorcised it's as though you were being ground. When you were baptised it's as though you were mixed into dough. When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit it's as though you were baked. Be what you can see, and receive what you are. (Sermon 272)
- June 5** **Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** **Hosea 6:3-6**
Perhaps *Turn, Lord* is to be understood to mean "make me turn," since the soul in the very act of turning experiences difficulty and hardship. Our conversion, once completed, finds God ready and waiting, just as Hosea says: "We shall find him ready like the dawn." This is because *we* lose him by turning away, not by the absence of him who is everywhere present. (Exposition of Psalm 6)