

Augustinian Friends Prayer Resource Guide

Co-Leader's Message

As we write we find ourselves coming into two **SEASONS**.
Within the Church we are arriving at the second phase of the Season of **Ordinary Time**.

Within our lived experience in the world of nature we are coming to the **Winter Season**.

With apologies to our *friends* in Queensland, we see Michael Leunig's reflections on Winter as apt.

We give thanks for the blessing of winter;
Season to cherish the heart.
To make warmth and quiet for the heart.
To make soups and broths for the heart.
To cook for the heart and read for the heart.
To curl up softly and nestle with the heart.
To sleep deeply and gently at one with the heart.
To dream with the heart.
To spend time with the heart.
A long, long time of peace with the heart.
We give thanks for the blessing of winter;
Season to cherish the heart.

Amen.

(The Prayer Tree, Leunig. Collins Dove 1991)

How then can these two Seasons 'cherish *our* hearts?'

Certainly **Winter time** is a time for inside things, for different foods, for keeping warm, (especially in Victoria) but can it be a time for deeper reflection upon our spiritual well being?

Inside this issue:

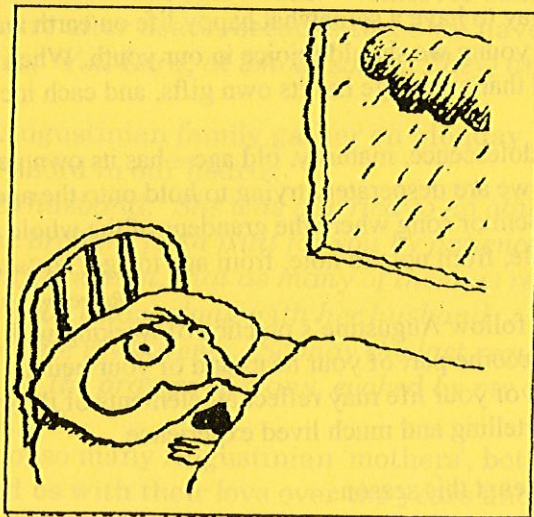
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The Purpose of the Prayer Resource Guide

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 orientated letter from our Chaplain and some tips on Lectio Divina – the traditional Augustinian method of scriptural reflection and meditation.



“The word ‘**season**’ comes in fact from a Latin root meaning ‘**to sow**’.
Living the Church’s year is a process of growth, even a transformational experience.
It engages with an entirely different rhythm, marching to the beat of a different drum.
It is a journey from *chronos*, the chronological world of clocks and calendars,
to *kairos*, time viewed as **opportunity** or **encounter**.”

(Michael Ford, *Eternal Seasons*.)

In **Ordinary Time** when we attend Eucharist we notice that our priests are wearing Green vestments. Green, being a sign of growth and life, offers **opportunity** for reflection on the spiritual growth and life which can be cherished as we live out the daily routine of each day, each week. When we hear the Word of God proclaimed and make it come to life through our relationships, it is then that we can become aware of the Spirit of God within ourselves and others. Here we have **encounter**.

The **Seasons of Life** provide scope for further reflection. In our lives we celebrate Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduations, Weddings, Funerals, Homecomings ... and on a communal level there are **Feast Days**.

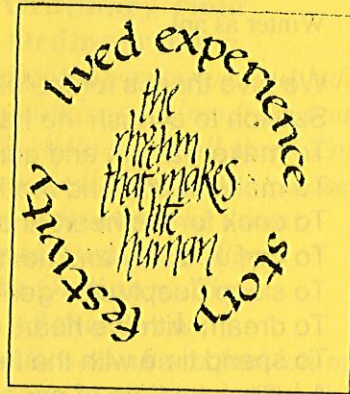
Tad Guzie, (a professor of religious education) would say we have **days of lived experience and days of festivity**.

The Seasons of Life

(A Celtic Reflection)

‘Twenty years a ‘growing,
Twenty years a ‘blooming,
Twenty years a ‘fading,
And twenty years when you’re
not sure whether you’re coming
or going.’

Guzie offers this image:



He says, “There is a difference between *lived experience* and what we might call raw experience, ie the everyday, the ordinary routine of our lives.

A raw experience starts to become **lived experience** when significance comes into play – ie an awareness that the experience does touch the quality of my life.

“Storytelling is our most spontaneous and basic way of *naming an experience*

If *story* names our experience, *festivity* frames it. Festivity flows out of life and back into life. We always celebrate something, and that something is rooted in the first elements of the cycle. When all the elements of the cycle are working in harmony, festivity has a precious role to play.

.....the rhythm of human life is simply incomplete without it.”

(Tad Guzie, *Sacramental Basics*.)

“Augustine believed the only way to have a somewhat happy life on earth was to deal with our times now, whatever they might be. When we are young we should rejoice in our youth. When we old we should rejoice in our age.

Augustine maintained that every age has its own gifts, and each includes and builds on what went before.

(*Sermon 216, 7, 7-8.8*)

Every age –infancy, adolescence, maturity, old age—has its own peculiar beauty, but we cannot enjoy the particular beauty of our age if we are desperately trying to hold onto the age that went before. (83 *Diverse Questions*, 44)

A full human life is like a poem or song where the grandeur of the whole depends on moving from syllable to syllable, from note to note, from age to age.” (*Confessions*, 11.28.37)

(*Reflections on the Prayer of Augustine*, Donald X Burt OSA)

We pray that you might follow Augustine’s practice of working with some aspect of the Word, making it come to life and allowing it to become part of your heart and of your being.

We pray that the rhythm of your life may reflect all elements of the cycle in true Augustinian style with plenty of celebrating, some storytelling and much lived experience.

We invite you to **cherish your heart** this season.

From our Chaplain

Saturday May 21st. 2005

Dear Friends,

as I write this letter I am in fact preparing to travel to Brisbane for the funeral of the mother of one of our priests. We were told from our earliest days – in words that come from the Rule of St. Augustine – that we are “to hold all things in common”, meaning food and goods and property. But no-one really warned us that when we joined the Order we would also have in common one another’s mothers, and they in turn would treat us as so many extra sons. How cheerfully we accepted that the love they had for their own sons would automatically spill over into our lives and touch and transform our triumphs and our tragedies with a concern and interest that only a mother can show.

This was especially true of Fr. Laurie Mooney’s mother who has remained over all these years a second Monica to all her Augustinian ‘sons’. Just as St. Monica watched and prayed, and it must be admitted, wept as her son travelled across the seas to Rome and later to Milan, so our own Monica Mooney watched and prayed from her home in Coorparoo all the comings and goings of her Augustinian son and his many brothers, particularly those who studied with him in the United States. So much of what Augustine records about his mother could be said of her name-sake over the nine decades of her life: *“Meanwhile my mother . . . persevered in praying for me – her passionate prayers so frequently, so ceaselessly offered; she was far away, but you are present everywhere so you heard her in that land where she was, and took pity on me where I was. I can find no words to express how intensely she loved me”*. (Confessions: V. 9,16)

Barely two weeks before she died Fr. Laurie’s mother said to him “I want you to pray about the day and the hour”, meaning that although we know not the time of either, her’s could come at God’s earliest convenience. Augustine tells us of a similar calmness in his own mother. He remembered that she had often been worried about her burial place, which she had planned to share with her husband back in their home town in North Africa. While he and his brother Navigius were by her bedside they were surprised to hear her say that she was not concerned about where her body should be buried, provided that she lived on in their memory and was not forgotten in their prayers. He learnt a few days later that, with the presentiment of her death, she had revealed this deeper insight: ‘Nothing’, she had said, ‘is far for God, and I need not fear that at the end of the world he will not know where to find me to raise me up’. (Confessions IX, 28)

At the time of his conversion in the garden at Milan Augustine wrote: *“To my mother, to her prayers and merits, I owe all that I am.”* After he had closed her eyes in death he expresses his sadness with the following words: *“Being now bereft of her comfort, so great a comfort, my soul was wounded; it was as though my life was rent apart, for there had been but one life, woven out of mine and hers”*. (Confessions IX, 30) It is this very bond woven between a mother and her son, between a husband and wife, or a friendship that spans many years, which convinces us that what united us in life will certainly be the same bond that perdures through death. Whatever comfort or support has been given us in life will be even more secure after death, because those we have loved and honoured are with God, and as Augustine reminds us, *“You Lord, at whose source (they) drink, are mindful of us all.”* (Confessions IX,3)

When the Mooney family and the Augustinian family gather on Monday for her funeral, the words of Augustine will stike a particular chord in our hearts:

“May she then rest in peace with her husband. She was married to no other man either before or after him, and in serving him she brought forth fruit for you by patience, to win him for you in the end. Inspire others, inspire my brethren, that as many of them as read this may remember Monica, your servant, at your altar, along with her husband. . . Let them remember with loving devotion these two who were my parents. So may the last request she made of me be granted to her more abundantly by the prayers of many, evoked by my confessions, than by my prayers alone”. (Confessions IX, 37)

Let us give thanks for the blessing of so many Augustinian ‘mothers’, both those living and those who have died, who have surrounded us with their love over the years and to whose prayers and merits we owe all that we are.

With much love,

Paul

Tolle Lege (Take and Read)

It is suggested that you reflect on the readings taken from the Sunday liturgy when you can find a quiet time in the previous week. 'Take and Read' the paragraph chosen and keep in mind the question, "What is God wanting me to know about this passage now?" Then let God's grace illumine your understanding.

June 12	Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt. 9:36-10:8
June 19	Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 10:26-33
	<i>The divine message which has just been read advises us to fear by not being afraid, and by being afraid not to fear. . . . So, let us be afraid in order not to be afraid; that is, let us fear wisely, in order not to fear groundlessly. The holy martyrs, for whose festival this passage from the gospel was recited, precisely by fearing were not afraid, because by fearing God they took no notice of human beings. (Sermon 65, 1-2)</i>	
June 26	Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 10:37-42
	<i>He didn't abolish love of parents, wife, children, but put them in their right order. Love your father, but not above your Lord; love the one who begot you, but not above the one who created you. (Sermon 344,1-2)</i>	
July 3	Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 11:25-30
July 10	Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 13:1-9
July 17	Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt13:24-30
	<i>Today I have some words for the weeds. Straighten yourselves out before the harvest comes along. God hasn't lost his power, but what he requires from you is repentance. I'm saying this to you who are bad, and yet Christians for all that. I'm saying it to the weeds. You see, they are in the field, and it can well happen that those who are weeds today are wheat tomorrow. And so I am also addressing the wheat. (Sermon 73, 3)</i>	
July 24	Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 13:44-52
July 31	Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 14:13-21
August 6	The Transfiguration of the Lord	Matt 17:1-9
	<i>So while the cloud was overshadowing them all, and after a fashion making a single tabernacle for them, a voice boomed out from the cloud, saying 'This is my beloved Son'. Moses was there, and there too was Elijah; it didn't say 'These are my beloved sons'. The only son is one thing, you see, adopted sons another. . . . They, however, are there as servants, as attendants. They are like water pots, he is like the spring. Moses and the prophets spoke and wrote, but it was from him they were filled up, when they poured out their message. (Sermon 78, 2,3-6)</i>	
August 7	Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 14:22-33
	<i>Now by the very nature of the voyage we are bound to endure turbulence and storms, but it is essential that at least we should stay in the boat, that is, that we should be carried on the wood, to be enabled to cross the sea. Now this wood, on which our febleness is carried, is the Lord's cross, with which we are stamped and reclaimed from submersion in this world. We suffer from seasickness, but the one who will come to our aid is God. (Sermon 75,2)</i>	
August 14	Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 56: 1,6-7
August 21	Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matt 16:13-20
	<i>So in that one apostle, that is, in Peter, first and chief in the ranks of the apostles, in whom the Church was symbolised, each kind of member had to be symbolised too, the strong and the weak; because without the one or the other there is no Church. (Sermon 76)</i>	

**AUGUSTINIAN FRIENDS
SHARING THE SPIRITUALITY OF AUGUSTINE**

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