

# AUGUSTINIAN FRIENDS - PRAYER RESOURCE GUIDE

## SHARING THE SPIRITUALITY OF AUGUSTINE

### Inside this issue:

#### MORNING PRAYER

Day 1

2nd International

Congress for Laity.

p. 1,2,3.

Chaplain's letter p 4

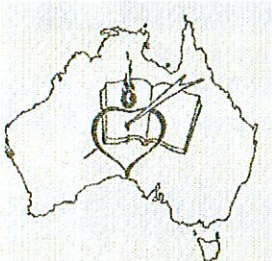
On Day 1 of the Congress for Augustinian Laity held in Rome in July the Australian representatives were invited to prepare the **Morning Prayer**.

We were asked to create a context which spoke to the theme of the Congress: "**Together for a Better World**". and expressed aspects of our country, **Australia**.

(The Song: **Together** became an integral part of the Prayer as did aspects of our culture, our land, our history and our identity.)

**We offer this Prayer for your reflection and benefit.**

*Imagine a very large auditorium (the Aula Magna), the hint of Eucalyptus, an image of Gum leaves as backdrop, 20 Australians on stage, and the invitation to prayer beginning with the Sign of the Cross as we viewed the Constellation of the Southern Cross.*



### 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 also contains a prayer orientated letter from our Chaplain.

### Introduction

"**Augustine** was alert to the presence of God around him, in the special-ness of human friendship, but also in the beauty of the world around us. He wrote, "Look at the heavens and the earth. The very fact that they are there proclaims that they were created..." 'We exist' they tell us 'because we were made'. It was you O Lord who made them, you who are beautiful, for they too are beautiful.

As members of one community of friends, we have a **Dream**, a Dream for our country and our world that we will become one human family, without distinction or division, where all will find unity, a love, justice and peace in Christ".



*With the sound of Ceremonial Sticks in the background and various images on screen **Alcheringa** was received with wonder and awe.*

### **ALCHERINGA ~ THE DREAM**

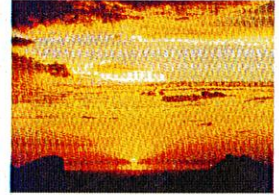
*( adapted from a work created by Fr. Rod Cameron OSA following his time with Aboriginal communities in Australia )*

The Aborigines called it '**Alcheringa.**'

The sacred Dreaming. The Eternal now.

We humans live in time where passing moments are touched with meaning by eternal presence.

**Where the eternal touches time is Alcheringa.**



We leave our footprints on the crimson earth and light our little camp fires in the night, but our human spirit cannot be contained. It leaps beyond the canopy of stars.

**The human soul is a citizen of the universe.**

This faith-vision of the world is told in story from generation to generation handed down.

In the circle of humanity a camp fire glows as children listen to the sacred stories.



**We live in story as a fish lives in the sea.**

It is in the Sacred that we find our identity as the timeless myth places us in time, giving us a home and a familiar land, giving us a habitation and a name.

**The myth is told in time that has no tense.**



By our little steps we journey to a great beyond and in the Sacred our footprints are deeply blessed.

Anyone who does not look to the beyond does not understand this present world.

**The meaning of every moment is in the dream.**



All things are symbols of deeper things unseen. The lily that holds the light of the wintry moon, the mystic mountain and the valley of shade & gloom; all these are whispering of a deeper, higher world.

**The land is the mask of God, worn to reveal.**



Listen to the words that the land is speaking. Hear the hymn that is singing in the wind. The paintings in the sacred cave are silent but all the living world is full of words.

**In every blade of grass is revelation.**

Ritual is written into the drama of the universe, into the slow enacted corroboree of stars backed by the silent music of the night.

There is ritual in the circulation of the light.

**It is ritual that makes the story real.**



It is the function of most sacred ceremony to realize the myth and to build the dream, so that the distant theme becomes the reality and all is seen in the light of **ALCHERINGA.**



(Fr. Paul presented a symbolic PARCEL of. EUCALYPT LEAVES as the following story told was told)

**The Dream was rising from the ground** in Australia in 1838 when an Augustinian priest of Irish heritage arrived as a volunteer for the mission just lately established. James Aloysius Goold, who had studied and worked in Italy, went first of all to the Sydney area but it was not long before he was asked to become Bishop of the fledging Melbourne mission.

Melbourne had only known settlement for ten years. Bishop Goold was first a pastor and secondly a builder. He traveled all over the colony of Victoria seeking out his flock, tending to their spiritual needs and arranging for churches to be built.

In Melbourne at that time the Botanist for the colony was Baron Von Mueller. He and Goold became friends and often rode out to country areas together - Goold gathering souls and Von Mueller gathering seeds, plants and specimens. When the time came for Bishop Goold to travel to Rome for the meetings of Vatican I in 1869 he was asked by Von Mueller to supply some Eucalyptus seeds to the Tre - Fontane area in Rome. That area was inclined to be swampy and people were often suffering from malaria. It was thought the growth of gum trees would help heal and somehow cure malaria. So Goold came to Rome bearing his special **parcel**.

Those trees, in drinking up lots of water, did cause the swamps to dry and so alleviate the breeding ground of the mosquito. Later scientific and medical research showed the link of malaria to the female mosquito. The people living there at that time were always grateful not only to Von Mueller for providing the seeds, but also to Bishop Goold for bringing those seeds to Rome. These trees and others can be seen there today and cause Australian visitors to feel quite nostalgic when they visit.

**Australians of the Augustinian family once again come to Rome as did people from many countries.**

**We gathered as an Augustinian family exploring ideas of HEALING and HOPE.**

*With this in mind the SONG: 'TOGETHER' gave voice to the thoughts of the family present.*

**Just as Bishop Goold brought his PARCEL to Rome, we prayed about the gifts each person brought with them and those they might take away.....**



We come with the gift of listening; listening to each other, ready to listen to the words of wisdom we expect to hear. **We give thanks for this gift.**

We come with the gift of friendship; friendship for those we meet, friendship for those we are concerned about, friendship in the true Augustinian fashion. **We ask blessing on this gift.**

We come with the gift of openness; openness to ideas, openness to knowledge, openness to new awareness. **We seek help with this gift.**

From **Vatican II** a message was shared:

*"The human spirit needs to be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in the ability..... to wonder, to understand to contemplate."*

Our Australian Song suited us as we sang:

**Together, Together, There's a life to be lived in this circle of friends**  
Who bear the name of Jesus deep in their hearts. It's a life that reaches out to embrace the world we serve,  
As dreaming together, Laughing together, We walk **together** in LOVE

**Returning to the idea of PARCELS:**

We pray that during this gathering we receive the gift of healing and hope;  
*Hope of seeing a future of goodness and equality for all. **We do walk together in love.***  
We pray that we receive the gift of courage;  
*Courage to challenge issues and to right the wrongs in our world. **We do walk together in love.***  
We pray that we receive the gift of the Spirit;  
*the Spirit of love, of generosity and of willingness. **We do walk together in love.***

*Morning Blessing*

*Lord, fountain of life and beauty, at the coming of each new day,  
open our eyes to look upon your world with fresh wonder. Open our ears to hear your voice in the life-giving sounds around us. Open our hands to touch the beautiful things you made. Open our minds to the mystery of life, and our hearts to love, and so you will open to us the path of salvation*

September 25th. 2006

**Dear Friends,**

a highlight of the recent Congress of Augustinian Laity held in Rome was the opportunity to listen to various national groups tell of their different ways of participating in the spirituality of the Order which gives them their name and inspiration. A deep hunger exists in the world today for a workable spiritual discipline that people can practice in the midst of their daily responsibilities. St. Augustine's spiritual journey uniquely speaks to the struggles of many, no matter what age or stage of life they may be. He believed that such a journey could only be carried out when a group of friends helped share each other's burdens along the way.

One of the documents we took to Rome as part of our presentation was the Provisional Constitution of Augustinian Friends of the Australian region of the Order which has been reviewed and approved at each of the National Congresses that have been held. It gives a blueprint of the daily practices entered into which connects the many friends and followers of St. Augustine to those formally vowed to live the Augustinian religious life in common.

*"Augustinian Friends" is established as a movement of laity who desire to practice a common spiritual discipline in union with fellow priests and religious - while still living and working in the world.*

After reading our document Fr. Paul Morrissey OSA, an Augustinian stationed in Philadelphia, recently e-mailed me his "sharpened up" version of what has been set out as the essential activities of our members who are asked to live in :-

- 1) Community and Friendship: usually expressed in local gatherings consisting of a shared meal, prayer and liturgy with some discussion topic. This also can be expressed by **actively participating in the celebration of the Eucharist** at least once a week as a way of being united with the Whole Christ and with one another in "one mind and heart".
- 2) Prayer: regular prayer is part of the Christian's daily life and so we might **spend 15 minutes a day in some reflective discipline**, e.g. to meditate, read scripture, pray the rosary, in order to foster a sense of God's Beauty and Presence in the world and in my own life.
- 3) A Gospel centered life: some pastoral activity is encouraged such as **living a simpler lifestyle**, and if possible taking part in peace and justice endeavours, as a way to build up the City of God.
- 4) Undergoing Formation: by attending adult education programs, courses in the thought of Augustine, conferences and retreat days provided by the Association, reading, but also **acknowledging my failings and sinfulness** once a month to a friend, spiritual director or confessor in order to experience the mercy of God and the healing power of Confession as Augustine did.
- 5) As active and committed Christians: I do this by **living chastely in accordance with my life commitments** as a way to foster a deep Friendship with Jesus Christ and with others.

In the aftermath of the Lay Congress I am sure you will have shared in the experience of unity, friendship and common purpose described by the returning members of our group. The final day was an historic invitation by the friars to all lay people connected with them in whatever way to participate more fully as partners in their on-going mission. A committee was elected to find out views at the local level and feed this back to the General Chapter in 2007.

In light of this discernment process I would like to suggest that the five points listed from our Constitutions should be prayerfully studied at your next meetings and a simple ceremony held where each of the members can make a re-commitment of themselves to our shared way of life. From this reflection we can learn the practical steps necessary to achieve our common goal: *"Let all of you then live together in oneness of mind and heart, mutually honouring God in each other, whose temples you have become"* (Rule Ch.1,8)

With much Love

Paul