

Augustinian Friends - Prayer Resource Guide

From our Chaplain

June 20th. 2010

Dear Friends,

the evening of June the 4th proved to be a very wet Friday indeed as several hundred people travelled from all parts of Sydney, from interstate and from around the world to be present at the Ordination of Fr. Minh-Tan Hoang to the priesthood. Nothing as trifling as a downpour could dampen the enthusiasm of the guests who came to surround the young candidate with their love and best wishes as well as to be in wonder at the miracle that such an event in today's world was taking place at all!

Bishop David Walker presided in a warm and fatherly way and spoke to Tan of the call of each priest to mirror to his people the face of Christ, specifically as the selfless spouse who loved the Church so much he gave himself up for her. Very powerfully the Bishop suggested that just as a husband and wife become one, so Christ and his Church becomes one in an intimate communion of life-giving love, and the ordained priest is the sacrament or sign of that relationship to the people he is given to serve.

Sitting in the auditorium on that night I found this spousal image of the priesthood very moving and it clarified for me the distinction between the ordained priesthood and the priesthood shared by all the baptized. The Vatican Council in its "Constitution on the Church" revolutionized our thinking when it stated: *"The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all their Christian activities they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the marvels of him who has called them out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (Lumen Gentium 10).

On the night Tan was ordained it became clear to me that there is a reciprocal role between the two expressions of priesthood. The baptismal consecration of each person sets them apart to offer 'spiritual sacrifices' in their every-day lives. The role of the ordained priest is to be the sacrament of Christ's loving response to that gift, reflecting back to them the precious part they already play in His eternal sacrifice and re-presenting it to the Father.

St. Augustine describes the relationship between the priest and his people in the following way: *"Why do I preach? Why do I sit up here? What do I live for? For this one thing alone: that together we may live with Christ! This is my passion, this is my honour, this is my fame, this is my joy, this is my one possession! . . . But I do not want to be saved without you"*. (Sermon 17,2)

This prayer, re-learned at Tan's Ordination,
I share with you,

with much love,



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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 centered on the Gospel readings and quotes from Augustine. Formation material is offered from different sources including a prayer orientated letter from our Chaplain.