

Augustinian Friends - Prayer Resource Guide

From our Chaplain

First Sunday of Advent

Dear Friends,

a famous play is being produced in Sydney at the moment called "Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett and the reviews are just excellent. It is a difficult play to perform (and maybe to sit through) as we watch two tramps on a bare stage sit under a tree waiting for someone called Godot to turn up - but he never does. It is a rather absurd situation yet this production manages to bring out the humour imbedded in the text by its Irish author.

Godot may not even be a person, but is meant to stand for the meaningless passing of time when nothing much seems to happen, where the characters don't change or develop because they are waiting for someone else to come along and fix up everything that is wrong with them. The play is a critique of people who miss out on life, who spend their time aimlessly conversing and playing games to pass the time away while waiting for something or someone else to rescue them.

Every year we are reminded that Advent is a time of waiting, of expectation that the promises made in Scripture will be fulfilled and that it will be very soon. How soon depends very much on our preparedness to change, to let go the trivia of our lives and begin to cooperate with the full plan and purpose intended for us by our Creator. Augustine's Advent was very much longer than four weeks as he admits in his *Confessions*: "*Here I was already thirty, and still mucking about in the same mire in a state of indecision*" (6.11.18). For the first half of his life he was like the two tramps sitting under a tree incapable of taking responsibility for his own life.

It was only when he read St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires*" (13, 13) that he stopped 'waiting for Godot' - humanities' perennial excuse for doing nothing - and surrendered to the divine overture made by God to enter into our history and our personal lives like a thief in the night. Advent is a time to be alert, to re-awaken in our lives the meaning that Christ gives to our existence, who breaks into the innermost room of our house, not to rob us of anything but to share with us his life, his courage, his love.

We Christians greet the world in all its absurdities and overwhelming tragedies from the perspective that God is with us, He *has* come and has never left us: "*Wherever you go on earth, however long you remain, the Lord is close to you. So don't worry about anything. The Lord is always nearby*". (Sermon 171,5)

This Festive greeting is sent

With much love,

Paul

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Chaplain's Letter

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An Augustinian Prayer

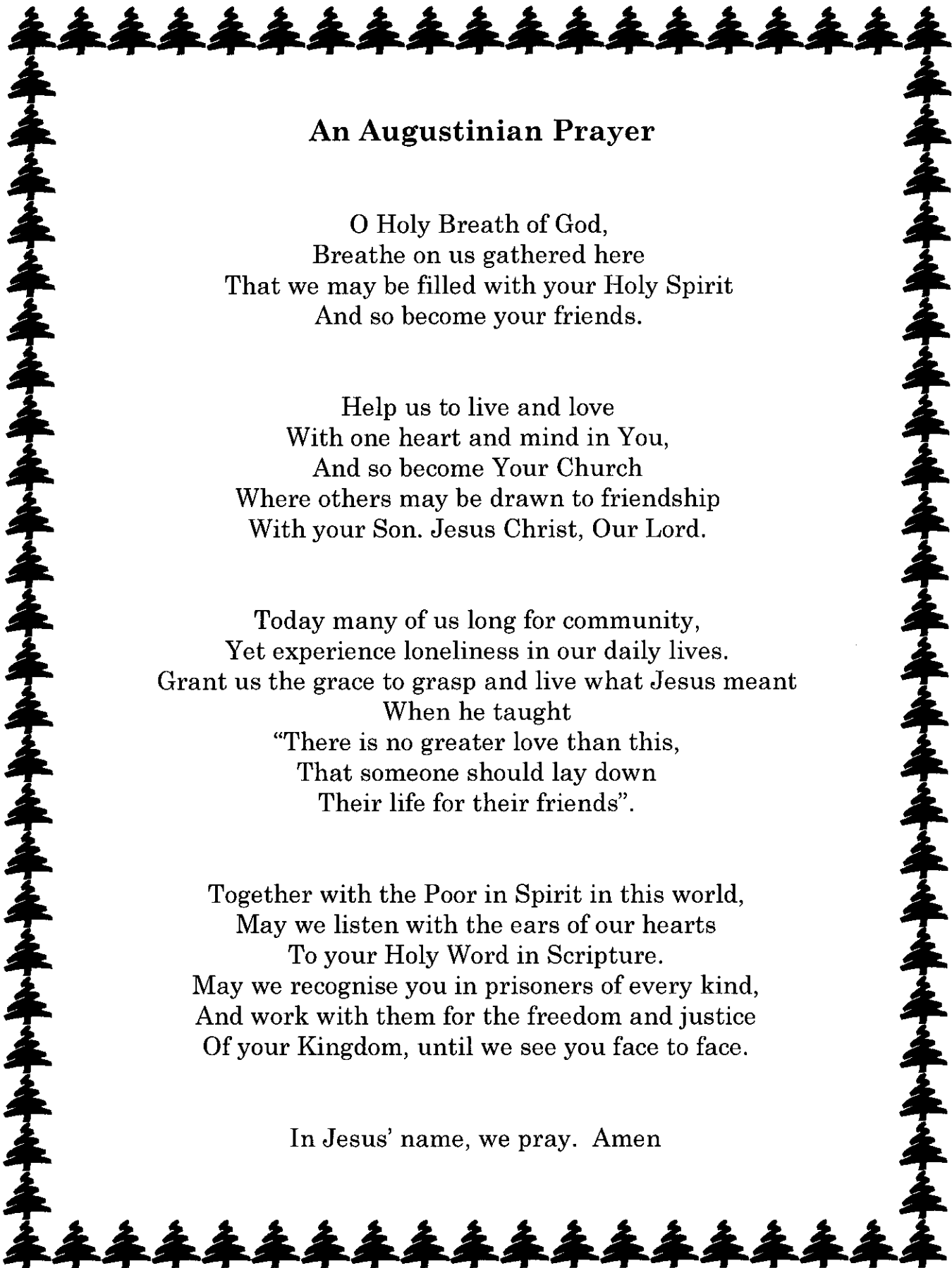
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The Purpose of the Prayer Resource Guide

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.



An Augustinian Prayer

O Holy Breath of God,
Breathe on us gathered here
That we may be filled with your Holy Spirit
And so become your friends.

Help us to live and love
With one heart and mind in You,
And so become Your Church
Where others may be drawn to friendship
With your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Today many of us long for community,
Yet experience loneliness in our daily lives.
Grant us the grace to grasp and live what Jesus meant
When he taught
“There is no greater love than this,
That someone should lay down
Their life for their friends”.

Together with the Poor in Spirit in this world,
May we listen with the ears of our hearts
To your Holy Word in Scripture.
May we recognise you in prisoners of every kind,
And work with them for the freedom and justice
Of your Kingdom, until we see you face to face.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen