



Augustinian Foreign Missions

Province of St. Thomas of Villanova | Christmas 2017

Dear Friends of the Augustinian Foreign Missions,



As we approach the celebration of Christmas, we give thanks to God for the great gift of his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to bring us salvation and the good news of God's love for us all. During his time on earth, Jesus taught us by word and example how we should live as human beings, and how we should care for those who are in need.

The Augustinians share that good news and care with the people to whom they minister in Japan and Peru. We invite you, our friends in the United States, to participate in continuing the work of Jesus through your prayers and support for our friars in the missions and their people.

This newsletter will highlight some of the blessings that God has bestowed on our missions, as well as some of the challenges that are courageously being faced with faith and hope.

In Japan, we thank God for the ordination to the priesthood of Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., last April. Fr. Futoshi is now serving in our parish and school in Nagasaki. In October, the friars from the Vicariate of the Japanese Martyrs celebrated the memory of the first Augustinian to be martyred in Japan, Blessed Hernando Alaya, O.S.A., by making a pilgrimage to his place of death.

In Peru, the Augustinians are accompanying many who are still trying to recover from terrible flooding last spring which damaged or completely destroyed their homes. The Augustinian Volunteers working in Chulucanas have also assisted with relief efforts. On a happier note, our friars are very much involved in preparations for the historic visit of Pope Francis to Peru in January 2018. The Augustinians from three vicariates in Peru continue to work together toward eventual unification. Although there is no article included in this newsletter, progress on the construction of the school in Trujillo, reported in previous editions, continues, albeit slowly. Funding is still needed to complete the project.

The good work of bringing the gospel to Japan and Peru by the Augustinians would not be possible without the generous support and prayers of our many benefactors. During this season of blessings, please consider a gift to the Augustinian Foreign Missions to continue the work of evangelization, education, and support for the poor in these parts of the world.

Thank you for all that you do for our Augustinian foreign missionaries and their people. May the New Year be filled with many blessings for you and your loved ones.

In Christ and Augustine,

Fr. Francis J. Horn, O.S.A.

John Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A., Ordained a Priest

God has once again blessed the missionary efforts of the Augustinians in Japan as John Futoshi Matsuo became the latest native Japanese to be ordained an Augustinian priest, on April 22, 2017. Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami of Nagasaki conferred the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the Augustinian parish of Our Lady of Consolation in the Shiroyama section of the city.

Fr. Futoshi first came to know the Augustinians at the parish of Saint Augustine in Fukuoka. Fr. Thomas Dwyer, O.S.A., and later Fr. Masaki Imada, O.S.A., significantly influenced him in his journey to become a religious and priest. He studied philosophy and theology at Sophia University in Tokyo, and spent his novitiate year and finished his theological studies in Australia. Ordained a deacon in Japan in February 2016, Futoshi gained ministerial experience in working with juveniles in prison, students in Catholic schools, and those in rehabilitation centers who were suffering from addictions.

Fr. Futoshi is currently stationed at Our Lady of Consolation in Nagasaki, where he is ministering in the parish and school.



Right: Fr. John Futoshi Matsuo, O.S.A. (left) poses with Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami of Nagasaki and Vicariate of Japan Superior Fr. Hiroyuki Shabata, O.S.A., after his ordination.

Floods Ravage Northern Peru

from information provided by Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A.

This past spring, El Niño struck Peru with a vengeance, including many areas served by the Augustinians. In Trujillo, where we staff two parishes, a school, and our house of formation, the worst floodings ever were recorded. Thousands of people lost their homes, because many of them are built with adobe bricks, which collapse if they become wet in the base. Since it almost never rains, adobe is normally not

a problem, but when it floods the bricks are particularly susceptible to collapsing altogether. Because adobe is much cheaper than sturdier brick, many of the poorest have their homes made of this material.



Augustinian seminarians distribute food and clothing to parishioners in Trujillo whose homes were flooded by torrential rains.

As a response to the crisis, parishes throughout the city organized solidarity campaigns so that those who were less affected could share with those who lost everything. So while the national government was largely paralyzed in its response, the local parish structures were able to organize a network of volunteers to stretch out the helping hand. Along with others, the Augustinians went door to door to collect food and clothing for those called “los damnificados” (who lost almost everything, as opposed to “los afectados,” who experienced flooding but did not lose their homes).

Farther north, the rains lasted longer and more flooding occurred. Much damage was suffered in Chiclayo, where Bishop Robert Prevost, O.S.A., serves, and in Chulucanas, where Augustinian friars and Volunteers are ministering. Many are still trying to recover from the devastation. Through it all, there were many signs of grace, as people came together, shared the little they had with those who had nothing, building a spirit where the response was one of hope and charity.

Reflections on a Visit to Chulucanas

by Joanna Bowen, Director of the Augustinian Volunteers

This past July, as I packed my bags in preparation for travel to Chulucanas, Peru, I found myself filled with an unusual uneasiness about departing. While this trip would be my tenth to Peru, a country with which I now have incredible familiarity, I was unsure of what I would be met with when I arrived in Chulucanas. In March and April, the northern coast of Peru received historic rainfall causing flooding that had not been seen in more than 20 years. Many homes, especially those made from adobe, collapsed from the sheer amount of water; others were uninhabitable due to the presence of mold. In many rural communities in the Sierra and the campo, or countryside, infrastructure such as bridges and roads were destroyed, making food and other supplies scarce and unattainable for many. Schools were delayed, beginning their year at the end of April or even early May as opposed to their traditional start date in March.

When I arrived in Chulucanas, now months after the rains had ceased, it seemed that even the earth knew something was wrong. I sat with the Augustinian Volunteers in the backyard at their house amidst overgrown weeds and greenery, a spot last year that had been just a patch of dry dirt. Every surface seemed to be overrun with crickets, and we even shooed a frog out of the house. At the Obispado in the center of town, I encountered staff from Catholic Relief Services who had already begun relief efforts, meeting with local residents to begin dredging canals to prevent future flooding.

Yet despite this unusual year, the resilience of the residents of Chulucanas and the Augustinian Volunteers has been both impressive and inspiring. Supplies are still limited, houses are in need of repair, and people are still struggling, but many of the local ministries and services have resumed their normal operations, working to meet the needs of as many as possible.



Erica Peters and Elizabeth Houbeck, Augustinian Volunteers serving in Chulucanas Peru, help with flood relief efforts. Not pictured is AV Patrick McDonnell, who also serves in Chulucanas.

Blessed Hernando Ayala, the First Augustinian Martyr in Japan

by Fr. Thomas Masaki Imada, O.S.A., Vicariate Secretary

On October 18, during the week of our annual assembly in Nagasaki, the friars of the Vicariate of the Augustinian Martyrs of Japan made a communal pilgrimage to a small island called Taka-Shima, or Hawk Island, in the Bay of Omura, about nine miles from downtown Nagasaki. This site became the 'calvary' on June 1, 1617, for Hernando Ayala, O.S.A., and two others who had died for the faith ten days earlier.

Born in 1575 near Toledo, Spain, Hernando Ayala was admitted into the Order in 1593 and was simply professed the following year. Distinguished in studies, he was given the opportunity to study in the Order's seminary at the University of Alcalá de Henares, and upon completion, was even asked to teach a course at the university. However, when he met the Mission Procurator visiting from the Philippines who shared exciting stories about Japan, where the Order was about to open new missions, Hernando was the first to step forward. After several months each in Mexico and the Philippines, he arrived in Japan in 1605 and served in the eastern part of Kyushu for several years.

In 1612, Padre Hernando, as Vicar Provincial, founded a monastery and a parish under the patronage of Saint Augustine in Nagasaki, which had been transformed over the course of a few decades from a small fishing village to the principal port and the Christian center of Japan with a resident bishop. He also established there the Confraternity of the Cincture and the Third Order, both Augustinian lay movements, for the spiritual nourishment of his parishioners. Although the physical foundation that Hernando established was torn down only two years after its completion due to the edict of banishment and total ban on Christianity issued in January of 1614, the faith of the parishioners and the bonds nurtured and forged through these lay fraternities remained strong to support him and others by offering shelter and sustenance at the risk of their lives in the following years of persecution.

While the majority of missionaries were exiled to Macao and Manila, some went into hiding, including Padre Hernando. As the persecution intensified in Omura, he weighed his options in prayer as to how he could best serve the Christians there. Indeed, when he decided to go to Omura out of hiding, it was never to seek the honor of martyrdom but simply to give a living example of love and fortitude. Shepherd and missionary to the last moment, he offered all that he had and all that he was for Christ and his Church.

Serving today in the same part of the Lord's vineyard, we humbly asked the intercession of this humble, dedicated, and compassionate servant that our apostolate might be fruitful and in accordance with God's will as we celebrated the Eucharist right there on the island to commemorate the fourth centennial of his and two others' total gift of themselves by shedding their blood for the faith through beheading.

Below: Augustinian friars, along with local parishioners, celebrate Mass at the site of the martyrdom of Blessed Hernando Ayala, O.S.A., as part of a pilgrimage during their annual assembly.



Blessed Hernando Ayala, O.S.A.



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Friars Prepare for Pope's Visit to Peru

Pope Francis plans to visit Peru on January 18-21, 2018. His trip will take him to Lima and Trujillo, two cities where the Augustinians live and minister.

Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A., was recently named Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Trujillo and appointed coordinator of the Central Steering Committee for the pope's visit. Fr. Edinson Farfan, O.S.A., was also named to the five-person central committee, which is entrusted with the many details of the full day of events. In addition to an outdoor Mass and a meeting with local priests, Pope Francis will visit one of the neighborhoods severely impacted by the flooding caused by El Niño last spring. The Augustinians have their pre-novitiate and theological seminaries in Trujillo, as well a parish, school, and ministries for the poor.



The Augustinian novices in Lima have prepared a musical video to welcome the pope. It may be viewed at <https://youtu.be/M05BugFo5d0>

Three Peruvian Vicariates Consider Federation

During the week of November 6, Augustinians from the three Vicariates in Peru held a common retreat at the community house in Cuzco. In attendance were 20 friars from Chulucanas, 14 from Apurimac, and 12 from Iquitos. At the end of the retreat, there was a meeting to continue a dialog that has been ongoing about establishing a Federation (a juridic joining of circumscriptions for the sake of collaboration) in order to move toward a possible new province in Peru. The group reaffirmed its desire that their respective provincials request the Prior General to establish the new Federation. The friars attending the retreat are pictured below.

