



THE MISSIONS

OF THE AUGUSTINIAN FRIARS

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Dear Friends of the Augustinian Missions:

When missionaries leave the United States to serve in the missions in foreign lands, we feel that we are bringing those people great gifts, and we do. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we walk with them on their journey of faith, we try to help them in the experiences of their every day lives. We go to serve.

Those serving in the foreign missions can feel the gratitude of the people for what we bring to them. There is another experience called “reverse missioning”. Yes we give to the people, but the people give so very much back to those who serve. We are not the only ones who “give”. We receive so much in return.

In this issue of the *Augustinian Mission Newsletter* we hear of the experience of our Augustinian Volunteers serving for a year in the missions in Peru and South Africa. While they are bringing the gift of themselves in service to the people, they are learning that they are also receiving so much back from these same people. Read of their reverse missioning experiences.

Within this *Newsletter* share some exciting, yet sad, news on the mission in South Africa.

As always our Augustinian Friars are so grateful to you, the benefactors of our foreign missions. Without your years of faithful support we could not have served as we have. Without your continued support we cannot continue to serve.

May God bless you for your kindness to our missionaries and those we serve.

In St. Augustine,

Anthony P. Burrascano, O.S.A.
Director, Mission Office



They Give So Much to Us



The Americans Move On

By Anthony Burrascano, O.S.A.

In 1996 the first group of Augustinian Friars arrived in South Africa. The goal of a missionary is to establish the Church with local clergy and ministers and then to move on. Missionaries are not intended to be a “forever” presence in a mission territory. After 17 years of service the American Augustinian Friars have established the local Church in their mission and now move on, leaving the churches they served to the ministry of the local clergy. This is not the end of the presence of the Augustinian Friars serving in South Africa, native African Friars from Nigeria have arrived to begin their service to the Church of South Africa. Although the Nigerian friars will serve in a different mission than the American friars, the presence of the male branch of the Order will continue along with the African community of Augustinian Sisters.



The original Friars: Adian Powers, John Bresnan, Edward Hatrick

In our parish of Our Lady of Mercy, Kloof, the Cardinal has assigned a diocesan priest. In the Zulu missions of St. Leo, St. Helen and St. Aloysius, a priest from the Zulu tribe will now minister to the community. This is a tremendous step for the Zulu community to have a priest of their own tribe serve the parishes. This is the way the local Church should be served.

We are very proud of the work of the Augustinian Friars of the foreign missions and Augustinian Volunteers who have served in South Africa. In those 17 years we have more than doubled the enrollment at the mission school of St. Leo. We have begun food programs for the poorest of the children, supervised a fruit distribution program, installed running water and electricity at the school, and a first for a Zulu school in that area, we have begun classes in English and the use of computers. In the Zulu mission we have assisted in the financing and building of two new churches and developed plans for a third church to serve that community. Countless people have been received into the Catholic Church at the vibrant and lively Easter Vigils. The Zulu parishes have taken on a large degree of responsibility for their parish and the community. In addition to food programs, the St. Vincent de Paul Society has engaged the needs of the poor of the local community. We will continue to accept donations for the food fund for the children.

We can see the physical advancement during our time but a more important service has been instilled by the friars and Volunteers. South Africa was a country torn and divided by the Apartheid laws. The laws may have changed but the feelings, mistrust, anger did not disappear with a change of government. The biggest contribution of the Augustinian's is that they were bridge builders between the white parish and the African Zulu parishes. Through the ministry of the friars and Volunteers the long standing tensions of Apartheid have changed in the Augustinian parish. That will be their biggest legacy of ministry in South Africa.

None of this would have been possible without the prayers and financial support of you, our benefactors in the United States. We could not have fed the poor, clothed the naked, enlarged schools or built churches for worship, without your love and support.

There is sadness in leaving the beauty of the country of South Africa and her wonderful people. It is hard to say “good bye,” but the Americans leave the local Church in wonderful shape and the legacy of the Augustinian Order, continuing to serve through our African brothers of Nigeria.



Why South Africa ?

By Jimmy Kane (Augustinian Volunteer in South Africa)

“Why South Africa?” It’s a question that I get every so often from someone I encounter during my day. It’s a good question because they are right in asking. Whether it is the clear divide between the rich and the poor or the unsettling tension between the whites and the non-whites; it is disconcerting. But I stand here and think about the Zulus, the stunning landscape, and most importantly the patients I am serving. My work at the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust has proved to be an enriching experience, and it is a joy to get up early every morning because of the positive environment. The Respite Unit is a welcoming place that has provided me with the opportunity to work in a diverse setting that shows strong loyalty to the people of the Valley of a Thousand Hills. It’s this work that I do everyday that brings me to the answer, “Why not.”



Women of the Zulu Tribe

Hope really exists, and I witness many examples at the Unit. Patients come in on the verge of death, but over a matter of time I see an incredible change take place before my eyes. The caregivers devote their attention to each patient’s needs, while treating them with the dignity and respect they deserve during their stay. I have seen patients walk for the first time after coming into the unit unable to do so because they were too weak. I spend my time with the patients in many ways: by driving them to clinic or hospital, taking them on outings to the beach or to get frozen yogurt, and advocating for them by obtaining disability grants. It is the human interactions I have with others that keeps me motivated. It is in those interactions I experience God in community with others, sharing their love and acceptance with each other.

They Teach Us Generosity

By Lacie Ann Michaelson (Augustinian Volunteer in Peru)



The Children of the Missions

What is generosity? I often learn fun slang phrases and words from my English students and the most recent of these was the phrase, "Estoy aguja." This phrase directly translates to "I am needle," but means, "I'm broke." Generally, the person says this phrase while pointing to their neck with their index finger. I love trying out and using as much slang as I can in daily conversation as it generally delights the person with whom I am speaking and often makes them laugh. With the goal of making them laugh in mind, I tried out my new phrase on Pelau and Socorra, my Peruvian host parents. They immediately became deeply concerned and Pelau kept trying to give me money! Oops. It took a lot of work to placate their fears and assure them I am actually ok and not living in squalor, but I finally was able to leave them and continue on my way without any of their money. To understand the reality of just how generous these people are, you need to understand Pelau and Socorra a little better. These people are by no means of the "upper echelon" of society and work extremely hard each and every day for everything that they do have. This generosity was not only defined in the way that they tried to give me the little money that they have but also in the way that Socorra hugged me goodbye and whispered, "Come back to visit us soon daughter."



A Normal Day At St. Leo's School

by Brian Manning (Augustinian Volunteer in South Africa)

A normal day at St. Leo Mission School in South Africa begins as Caitlyn and I pull into the parking lot around 7:55 AM with the echoes of the learners singing their morning prayer. As we round the corner and go into the middle of the school, we see roughly 860 learners all lined up in their green and white uniforms with the educators standing behind or among the children. They are singing our personal favorite, and it is actually about how the gates have been opened and that apartheid is over. For both the learners, as well as the staff, it is an emotional and vibrant song that wakes up the people of Molweni. As I look around and see the sun beaming through the South African flag, I know that I'm in the right place and I am doing the right thing.



The students of St. Leo's School

Will You Help? *The main source of financial support for our Missions is through the preaching of Mission Appeals in parishes during the summer months. The other important source of support is you, our generous benefactors receiving this **Newsletter**. Can you offer support? Please visit the [Augustinian Fund](#) webpage. Thank you!*

Any donation is greatly appreciated!

At the Passing of a Loved One ...

When a loved one or friend passes from this life to the next we often wish to memorialize them through flowers, cards, etc. Would you consider a Memorial Donation to the Augustinian Missions? If you include the name and address of the next of kin and the name of the deceased, we will send a note acknowledging your donation.

Checks may be made payable to: Augustinian Fund—Missions

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