



LENT

2013

Dear Friends of the Augustinian Missions:

When we gather as the community to pray in Church we now see the color purple, which immediately causes us to think of the penitential season of Lent. Once again we enter into the season that challenges us to reflect on our lives, to see those areas where God calls us to conversion, to change. One of the most beautiful aspects of this season is the theme of forgiveness. Immediately we think of the forgiveness offered by God to us when we express our sorrow. There are also other areas that call us to forgiveness. I think the scripture story offered this year on the Fourth Sunday of Lent illustrates the power of forgiveness. It is the familiar story of the Prodigal Son who has gone off and squandered his inheritance and then, realizing his mistake, returns home.

We see the image of the son's father who, without hesitation, welcomes the penitent with open arms. However, what about the prodigal son himself? Before he could return to his father and ask forgiveness, did he experience forgiveness of himself for the mistake he made? In addition to asking for and experiencing the forgiveness of his father, the son needed to forgive himself. It is the same in our lives. We know we make mistakes. We feel the hurt we inflict on ourselves, and others, by our transgressions. We are sorry; we seek forgiveness of the person we have offended and the forgiveness of God. Do we forgive ourselves?

At times, I think the most difficult part of forgiveness is not in forgiving someone else for a hurt to us, but forgiving ourselves for what we do. Self-forgiveness is very difficult. Yet it is what God calls us to experience, forgiveness and healing. Do we experience the healing power of forgiveness? It is not enough to just forgive. We need to heal.

Our Augustinian Friars serve many people who need to experience healing and forgiveness. It is the story of all peoples of this world. The friars could not continue their ministry without your support. One of the pillars of the Lenten season is the practice of almsgiving. Can you make a contribution as your alms giving this Lent to support our missions, by visiting <http://www.augustinian.org/augustinian-fund?>

May God journey with you in the Lenten season towards the glory of Easter.

In St. Augustine,

Rev. Anthony P. Burrascano, OSA
Director of Foreign Missions

