



LENT

2011

Dear Friends of the Augustinian Missions:

As the Gospel on the First Sunday of Lent proclaims, we celebrate the journey of Jesus as He enters into the desert for forty days and nights. It is a familiar story that offers a very powerful image for the season. A desert is not a pleasant place: it is hot, dusty and gritty. Why would Jesus freely choose to enter such a place? Perhaps He felt compelled to enter this place in search of a closer and more intimate relationship with God.

To experience this closer relationship, Jesus needed to undergo a type of purifying or cleansing. He found this in the desert. Through its heat, dryness, and grit, the desert can cleanse and purify a person. It scrubs away the old person to allow a new one to emerge. As we hear in the Scripture, Jesus experienced temptations by the devil while in the desert, and He struggled. Only through His faith was He able to endure and emerge from this experience purified and ready to begin His public ministry. He underwent the desert experience so that He might enter His ministry more centered on God and God's will for Him.

Are we prepared to enter into our desert journey this Lent? This season provides an opportunity for us to be purified and to build a more personal relationship with God. It can be very difficult to go through this experience. Yet if it was necessary for Jesus, how much more necessary is it for us? How do we enter into our desert journey? The Church guides us in this season to be people of prayer, self-denial, sacrifice and almsgiving.

The people whom our friars serve in the Mission experience this spirit of sacrifice and self-denial by their poverty, not just in Lent but also throughout the year. Would you share your Lenten journey with them by offering your almsgiving to help them in their poverty? From the impoverished Peruvian farmers to orphaned South African school children, there are many needs in our Missions that require your support. If you can, please use the enclosed envelope to help them in their needs.

On behalf of the Mission Office and the Augustinian Friars may you have a blessed Lent and a joyous Easter!

In St. Augustine,

Anthony P. Burrascano, OSA
Director, Missions Office