



THE MISSIONS

OF THE AUGUSTINIAN FRIARS

Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

EASTER 2011

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Contact us!

Dear Friends of the Augustinian Missions:

Christ has died, Christ is risen! The Easter message brings hope to the world. Jesus, in his humanity experienced human death and is now raised from the dead by his heavenly Father. In our humanity we also experience human death and as Christians we believe that Jesus will lead us to eternal life, which is our resurrection from death. We are challenged to live in this world with the firm belief that for those who follow Christ, life will never end. As Christians throughout the world celebrate Easter, we are called to reflect on "life" as it is lived and experienced by people across the globe.

In this issue of the *Missions Newsletter* we see aspects of life in the cultures where our Augustinian missionaries serve. In the midst of the tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami of Japan, we see the fragility of human life. We continue to pray for the victims of the disaster, for those who now rest in eternal peace and for those who work to rebuild their shattered lives.

In South Africa, Jenny Tobin had just begun her year of service as an Augustinian Volunteer when she became critically ill. Her family quickly departed from the US for the other side of the world to be at her side. Through the power of prayer and the wonderful medical care provided, Jenny is now back in the United States recovering from her horrific illness. We see in this experience the power of faith and love in giving and sustaining life!

In Peru, we speak of the future ministry of the Church and the Order through the new life given by Peruvian Augustinian vocations. This process is only possible through your loving support.

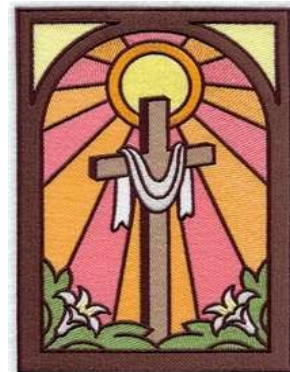
New life is the theme of Easter. Life is seen in the cultures throughout the world where our friars bring the message of life through faith in the risen Christ.

May the Easter celebration be a time for your to reflect on the gift of life around you, especially the gift of eternal life given to us by our faith in the risen Lord.

May you have a blessed Easter Season.

In St. Augustine,

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





Earthquake and Tsunami Hit Japan

[The following article was posted on our blog on March 12, 2011. Please visit our blog for frequent updates on the activities of the Missions: www.augustinian.org/blog]



Fr. Hiro Shibata, O.S.A.,

At approximately 2:46 pm on Friday, March 11, 2011 Japan time, an earthquake of approximately 8.9 on the scale erupted some 100 miles north of Tokyo. This was followed by many aftershocks, and a tsunami reportedly reached 33 feet in height. The devastation was beyond belief. The numbers of dead and the extent of destruction will not be known for a long time. Life is completely uprooted and changed for the survivors.

The Province of St. Thomas has served in missions in Japan since the early 1950s, with the majority of friars now being native Japanese. The friars serve in parishes in Nagasaki, Fukuoka, Nagoya and Tokyo. On Friday March 11, 2011, in the time frame of the eastern United States (Saturday, March 12 in Japan) the Regional Superior of Japan, Father Hiroyuki Shibata, O.S.A., was able to send the following e-mail to the Provincial Office in Villanova, PA:

"Thank you for your prayers. The first major earthquake hit at 14:46pm, about 9 hours ago. It was the biggest one I've ever experienced in the city of Tokyo where people are pretty used to minor quakes. All our friars are well. There seems to be no damage on the building of both formation house and Kasai parish as far as we can see, but we will have to have a close look at them. We are still feeling aftershocks. I just talked with (Rev.) Peter Tetsuya in Nagoya. They were worried about us in Tokyo since telephone (landline and cellular) was not connecting well since the first quake and we could not communicate. Again, thank you for your prayers. The actual damage in the northeast part of Japan is hard to imagine. We will have to see."

Hiroyuki Shibata, O.S.A.
Regional Superior

We are grateful that our friars came through this disaster without injury. We ask you to join us in prayer for the people of Japan in this extremely difficult time.

The Future of the Order and the Church

When a religious order begins the ministry of a foreign mission their purpose is to "put themselves out of business" by helping to establish and grow the local Church. The Augustinians who serve in foreign lands look to also establish the Order in that mission territory. We have been blessed by many vocations in Japan and Peru. The cost of educating, housing and preparing a young Peruvian or Japanese friar is expensive. Can you help us continue the growth of the foreign Church and Order by a donation today or a monthly gift to help us prepare the Church and Order for the future in a foreign land? It costs approximately US \$5,000.00 per year for a young Augustinian friar in Peru. Make a donation online and mark "Formation" in the Donation Notes (www.augustinianfund.org). Thank you for your support.



Our American Schools Support the Missions

This Lent the Missions received support from several of our schools in the United States. On March 8, 2011, Fr. Tony and Brian Strassburger went to Our Lady of Good Counsel in Staten Island to speak about the Missions to the grade school. This was a kickoff for their Lenten fundraiser, during which students took home empty water bottles to collect money as a way to “give” (one of the three practical ways we suggest they live as missionaries in their own life). They were also given a handmade Peruvian doll to keep as a daily reminder to “help” and “pray” as other ways to live as a missionary.



Those who are assisted

Malvern Prep and St. Augustine’s Prep also helped to support the Missions during this Lenten season. Malvern had a dress-down day in support of the Missions in Peru, and the school took a homeroom collection for disaster relief in Japan. Following a continuing tradition, Fr. Ron Hamaday, O.S.A., sold candy to students at St. Augustine’s Prep with the proceeds benefiting our Missions.

This support has a great impact on our efforts. It also challenges the students in our schools to learn about our Missions and the hardships faced by those we serve in Japan, Peru and South Africa. We need the generous support of our schools, parishes and donors to continue our work in the Missions. Please visit our website to make a contribution online (www.augustinianfund.org).

School Experiences in Our Missions

Each year in May, student nurses from Villanova University and senior students from Malvern Prep have the opportunity to experience ministry in our foreign missions. During that month approximately 12 nursing students from Villanova journey to South Africa and use their skills in serving the needs of the children of St. Leo’s School, St. Theresa’s Home and the patients of Hillcrest AIDS Center. The Malvern seniors travel to Peru and South Africa as part of the commitment to serving the poor. They provide necessary “muscle” for building projects, but the most important service they offer is their interaction with the people, and especially the youth of the Zulu and Peruvian communities. Both groups offer an invaluable service to the people, but it is as much, if not more, of an “education” and experience for the students themselves.



Can 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 from you, our generous benefactors receiving this **Newsletter**. Can you offer support? Please visit the Augustinian Fund website (www.augustinianfund.org). Thank you!*

The Power of Prayer in South Africa

When Jenny Tobin set off for South Africa as an Augustinian Volunteer (AV), she expected to spend a lot of time at the hospital. But not as a patient. One of the volunteer sites is an HIV/AIDS hospice, so volunteers often have significant experiences working in South African hospitals. Unfortunately for Jenny, her experiences would become even more personal.

In early February, Jenny found herself in major surgery. As soon as family, friends and the AV staff became aware of the situation, they began spreading the news and asking for prayers. Friends began an open blog for people to post their prayers and encouraging words; a group of alumni gathered for daily Masses at Villanova; the volunteers in the Bronx organized a vigil.

The surgery was successful, and Jenny began recovery in South Africa. In the middle of March, she was cleared to return to the United States, and she traveled back home to Chicago to continue her recovery. Jenny sent a note of thanks for all those who were praying for her:

"I can't thank you enough for all your support, prayers, and love. My family passed along emails and messages to me each day while I was at the hospital. They always brightened my day, and I'm certain they played a big role in how quickly I have been recovering from the surgery! You're all amazing and mean so much to me."

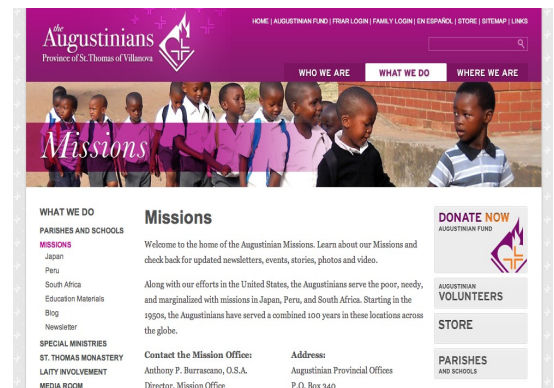
Jenny's recovery is truly a testimony to the power of prayer. Please continue to keep her in your prayers, along with the three volunteers that continue to serve in South Africa. Your financial support to the Missions helps fund the international sites in Peru and South Africa.

NEW Missions Blog & Augustinian.org Website

In December 2010, the Augustinians launched a redesigned website which you can still find at the same web address (www.augustinian.org).

Please visit the new Missions Blog found on the Augustinian website, Augustinian.org. Under the drop down menu "What We Do" go to the column title "Missions" and the to "Blogs". Keep up to date what is occurring in our missions

Visit the website today and check back for updates!



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