



THE MISSIONS

OF THE AUGUSTINIAN FRIARS

Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova

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Contact us!

Dear Friends of the Augustinian Missions:

The Christmas and New Year's celebrations have come to an end. I am sure we have all reflected back on those weeks of preparation and celebration. It was a time of sharing with others and giving gifts. The Augustinians serving in the missions have received some wonderful gifts at this time of year, which we want to share with you in this *Mission Newsletter*.

In South Africa, we continue to see the negative effect of dire poverty with the sad news of what is too typical in the daily life of a South African: crime and robbery. Even our school was a target, as you will read inside. But in the midst of the sadness at this event, we see the great news of the response of donors to make sure that the children of our mission school will continue to receive the food they so desperately need. This is certainly the continuation of the Christmas story so recently celebrated of the ultimate gift from God of Jesus Christ.

In Japan, we celebrate the maturing of our long-time mission as we see the second native Japanese friar assume the service as the Superior of the Order in Japan. What a gift it is to see local friars assume leadership in the local Church and Order.

In Peru, sadness mingled with celebration as our Augustinian Volunteers return after a beautiful year of serving the poor alongside our friars. They return filled with life-changing experiences, and you will read a reflection from one of them. We are preparing for the upcoming departure of more Augustinian Volunteers to Peru and South Africa to continue the presence of this part of the Augustinian Family in our missions.

The friars are truly blessed with the gift of our missions. But this would not be so without the greatest gift which makes our mission ministry possible – you, our donors. If we did not have you as part of our life, we could not serve the Church in countries around the world. These are difficult economic times for all, but you continue to be so supportive of our mission endeavors. THANK YOU!

May you have a Blessed New Year!

In St. Augustine,

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



Fr. John Lydon, O.S.A., with children in Pacasmayo, Peru



Hardships and Blessings in South Africa

By Fr. Frank Doyle, O.S.A.

In our South African mission, St. Leo's School continues to grow. We now have almost 700 children! Though we continue to do good work here, the personal needs of the children continue to grow and at times overwhelm our personnel resources.

Sadly, our school Principal's office was broken into in November 2010, and her computer, printer, and fax machine were all stolen. On top of that, all of the food stored there for the children was stolen! When I asked how the burglars entered, I was shown a small part of a window where we already have burglar guards. I noticed that a piece had been sawed off, so I asked how a burglar got through the small gap. She said it was simple, "they put a child through." Footprints found outside the window revealed those of at least one adult and one child. Imagine teaching a child to do this! It is an all too common experience with poor children here: they are either threatened with harm or promised some money or gift. This child could have been one of our own students because he or she knew exactly where the food was kept.



Fr. Frank Doyle, O.S.A., with students at St. Leo's



Children at St. Leo's receive food parcels for Christmas vacation.

Thanks to all our generous benefactors, I was able to replenish the food immediately. Never a dull moment: just one little crisis after another! I received good news just a few weeks before Christmas when a parishioner from our suburban parish in Kloof informed me that he and his company would be supplying 150 food parcels for the children who will not have access to the government-supplied meal when school is closed over the holiday vacation (December 10-January 19). What a blessing! We also put together 35 Christmas "hampers" for the poorest of the children who otherwise would not have had any sweets and treats for Christmas. Several of our Kloof parish children helped me put them together and deliver them a few days before Christmas. Additionally, over 500 children from our three Zulu mission parishes will receive a small toy for Christmas.

In February, I will be presenting to the parish a five year project plan which is an attempt to provide sustainable assistance to address the basic human needs of the children and to improve the quality of education offered at St. Leo's. Slowly but surely we are bringing the communities together, though sometimes it is hard to see or measure the progress being made.



A New Superior for the Augustinians in Japan

In September 2010, Fr. Hiro Shibata, O.S.A., was appointed as the new Superior for the Augustinian Missions in Japan. In this role, he will exercise a general supervision over the mission and ministry of the friars in Japan.



Fr. Hiro Shibata, O.S.A., newly appointed Superior in Japan

Fr. Shibata was born in Nagoya, Japan in 1964 and entered the pre-novitiate program in 1993 at the age of 28. He was ordained a priest in his hometown of Nagoya in 2000 at the Augustinian parish of St. Monica.

Since his ordination, Fr. Shibata has served in a variety of locations and ministries in Japan. He has ministered at the Augustinian parishes in Fukuoka, Nagoya and Tokyo. For nearly nine years, Fr. Shibata was the treasurer of the Augustinian Mission in Japan. He has also served as the Director of the Formation House in Tokyo.

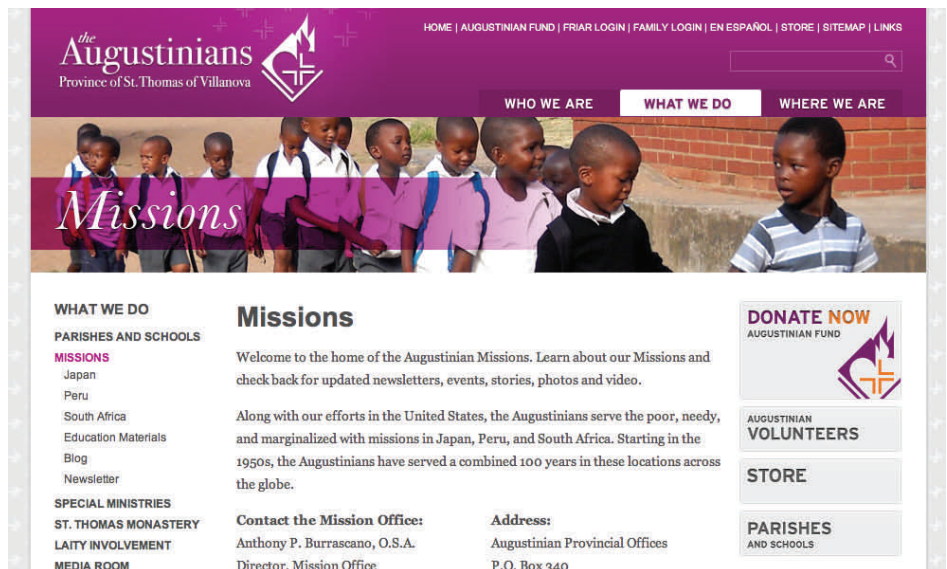
With his appointment, Fr. Shibata is the second native Japanese to serve in this position. After centuries of suppression in Japan, American Augustinians from the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova established a mission in Japan in 1952. Since that time, there have been a number of vocations from native Japanese, who continue to share in their ministries with their fellow friars from the United States.

Augustinian.org Website Redesigned!

In December 2010, the Augustinians launched a redesigned website which you can still find at the same web address (www.augustinian.org). This includes a redeveloped section for the Augustinian Missions. The Missions section of the website features:

- ◊ Contact information for the Mission Office
- ◊ History and background from Japan, Peru and South Africa
- ◊ Multimedia from the Missions
- ◊ Education Materials for schools and parishes
- ◊ A new “Missions blog” with weekly postings
- ◊ Archive of Mission Newsletters

Visit the website today and check back for updates!



How Have I Seen God In My Service In Peru?

By Katie Abajian



(Katie was an Augustinian Volunteer serving in Chulucanas, Peru from January—December 2010. She volunteered at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, where she was involved in accompanying patients through the hospital procedures, including traveling to receive proper care.)

How have I seen God in my year of service in Peru? I have seen God in working with the poor and humble, and in the moments where I have been challenged to humble myself. Many times I have had to put aside the pride I have in my experience and education as I have been called to place myself in the shoes of the patients I accompanied. I have felt God's presence in learning what it means to be illiterate, to enter a hospital and not know how to read the numbers posted, let alone the words and instructions written.

I have seen God in the frustrating moments, such as the time I spent seventeen hours on a bus with a patient, and then we came to find out that we were not going to be attended nor would we have a place to stay. Then the realization came that our case was not unique, that there were countless patients in such need. God was present and giving me strength when I made the dozens of phone calls and visits and eventually found the necessary resources. But mostly I saw God's love when the patient called me "little sister" and smiled at me.

I've also felt God's love in the more common activities of life in Chulucanas. One day I remember eating lunch with a friend, when a poor street kid came up asking for leftovers. To my surprise, my friend invited the kid to pull up a chair and eat lunch with us, ordering him a new meal and asking him if he knew Jesus.

I saw God in the innocent faith of the people of Chulucanas and in my Augustinian community. It is a faith similar to that of a child, not based on research and hard proof, but rather on the hope in a God whose blessings are made present through more than just material goods. In living lives of simplicity, the people of Chulucanas and my community have shown me a deep faith.

My Augustinian Volunteer community taught me about living and loving. They challenged me to pray for patience and understanding in living with strong and diverse personalities. And I have felt humbled and blessed at the same time when our little community could laugh alone, even in a huge group of people, or when I lacked a word and I had them as my living dictionary.

God strengthened and taught me throughout this year and did it through all of those with whom I interacted. Through them I learned a new form of love: love that is manifested through humility.

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