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### **The Restlessness in our Journey for Communion**

Right from childhood through adulthood to old age, the life of Augustine was characterised by relationships struck in the search for meaning – truth. Augustine lived the experience of many hurdles that enriched and shaped him. After making a resolution to give up his past and having received baptism, he confessed the restlessness that inflamed him to remain keen on God in whom all come to rest.<sup>1</sup>

The first quarter of this year 2021 is coming to an end. Yet the world health crisis caused by Coronavirus that took us unprepared at the beginning of last year is still very much with us. Concerted effort has been put in place to neutralise the virus especially with the production and distribution of vaccinations. However, there seems to be no adequate knowledge of when the virus will be defeated so that life will return to another “normalcy” different from the one prior to the reign of the virus. In any case the impact of the virus on us and on our lifestyle is noticeable everywhere. We all have suffered and may still be suffering from the dramatic effect of the virus: the loss of some of our friars, nuns and lay faithful; a number of us still remember the death of some members of our biological family, our friends and acquaintances, those who work with us or are close to us through our apostolates. Many people are devastated by the consequences of this microscopic being; loss of employment or means of livelihood, living in isolation, breakdown in relationships, uncertainty and fear of the future and trauma which will require time to get over. Our life has significantly been affected by the virus. Nevertheless, this is also an opportunity to look inward, return to ourselves and to God. This period has made us to come to the awareness of how fragile and vulnerable we are; it has opened our eyes to the discovery of our dependence on one another, the need for relationship. Many of the things that we took for granted have turned out to be crucial. We have come to value and appreciate physical contact in interpersonal relationship. What more? We have rediscovered the centrality of God in our life.

What do you long and hope for at this period? It is not unlikely that each one of us longs for a return to meet and embrace one another again. Our desire is to journey with one another in a search to emerge anew and strengthened by the grace and love of God to move ahead. This desire to embark on the path of togetherness finds meaning in the transformation within us and the outreach to others. Our hope then becomes the driving force that sustains us on the way. “Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together”. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.”<sup>2</sup> These words of Pope Francis remind us of the need to cherish one another, the driving force of any accomplishment in life and apostolates by which we grow and become more human.

The inconvenience of the present may seem to slow us down. It may still pose obstacles to our set plans and aspirations. But let us be courageous, hold firm, fix our gaze on the Lord who leads and will lead us gently across the shore to safety.

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<sup>1</sup> Confessions 1. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter “Fratelli Tutti”, on Fraternity and Social Relationship, 2020, n. 8.

The Commission for the Augustinian Lay Movement wishes to share this short piece with all those who work in the Youth Ministry. In addition it wants to communicate the theme for the next Augustinian Youth Encounter scheduled to hold in 2023 in Portugal. “Let us cling to him and rise again” (Augustine, *Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed*, 3.6). With this, the Commission is launching a “Logo and Anthem” competition of AYE 2023. Thus young people are invited and encouraged to participate in it by sending in their proposals. The person or persons whose proposal or proposals are evaluated and rated as the best, will get an award. Intending competitors should endeavour to submit their work not later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022. Further information related to this and the AYE will be made known in due course. The Commission kindly requests the Major Superiors to send to us ([edaleng@osacuria.org](mailto:edaleng@osacuria.org)) the e-mail contact of friars or those entrusted with the responsibility of Youth Ministry in their circumscriptions not later than 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

We wish you spirit-filled celebrations of the Holy Week and Easter Triduum of the Lord Jesus Christ. Happy Easter of the Resurrection!

Rome, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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