



CURIA
GENERALIZIA
AGOSTINIANA

VIA PAOLO VI, 25 - 00193 ROMA

LETTER TO ALL AUGUSTINIAN BROTHERS, SISTERS AND LAITY

Dear brothers and sisters and members of Augustinian lay organizations and fraternities:

We live in difficult times. The news that comes to us every day speaks of illness and death. It seems as if darkness, pain and sadness have taken over our world and the beauty of creation has perished in the face of this evil drama.

Given this complex reality, I need to be reminded and want to remind you of our call to follow Jesus, of our being disciples. I wonder if we are also living the disciple's night of silence (cf. Jn 18,25-27), blocked before the events that seem to overcome us and without knowing where to go in the face of painful situations that overwhelm us. Are we also paralyzed? Do we live in silence before a reality that is imposed on us? Facing this reality, I want to thank so many brothers and sisters, lay people and religious, who, in the darkness caused by the death and illness of Covid 19, are the light of hope and the seeds of Resurrection. Thank you for your testimony; for being the voice and presence of God.

Allow me some reflections at this moment, on our reality today, in the light of Easter.

While today lasts

The Covid 19 has made us take a closer look at our fragility and finitude. Many people have died unexpectedly: family, friends, the elderly, youth ... death does not distinguish or understand ages, riches, classes ... This makes us consider the importance of the time we have been given and in which we live: so full of possibilities but, at the same time, so limited, so fleeting. The experience of this time, a wonderful gift from God, teaches us that the only thing that we have safe in our hands is today.

We also learn that the days of our lives are numbered (Ps 39, 4), even if we do not know the day and time of our death. We live in space and time, without realizing that both express the fragility of the human condition. And we would like to run away from it, deny it. But it's impossible. Being aware of the limitation and finiteness of one's life is not usually an easy task, because it takes a lot of humility to enter into ourselves and become aware of it. I think we should keep it very much in mind, to take better advantage of the time we have been given; really to take advantage of life which is so fleeting.

Today as *kairos*

Today is God's time, *kairos*, a time of special grace. We are pilgrims on the way to our true homeland (cf. Augustine, *Sermon* 346B), and towards it we advance in love. We put our illusion in doing, and now that most activity has stopped, we can ask ourselves: did it make sense? Meaning is found in a higher reality: love. It is not a matter of turning to activism, sometimes a sad reflection of vanity and pride, but of evangelizing, of being Christ's presence in the world,

opening ourselves concretely to mercy and compassion. Above all, it is a matter of bearing witness to love of neighbor, to the neighbor who challenges us, “because if we do not love the brothers and sisters whom we see, how can we love God whom we do not see?” (1 Jn 4,20).

Living in love is already to enjoy the eternity of God. This is the great gift of the Resurrection of Jesus. That is why Paul invites us to live in the light and in the works of the Spirit (cf. Eph 5,8; Rom 8,9), because the time of darkness and obscurity has ended (cf. Rom 13,12). This is the time of Love and, therefore, the time of Life.

Today as evening

Let's not remove ourselves from today, let's not live outside of the now. But on the way towards God, always aware that we are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20). Pope Francis says: “The Lord calls us to get up, to rise at his word, to look up and to realize that we were made for heaven, not for earth, for the heights of life and not for the depths of death: *Why do you seek the living among the dead?*” (*Homily at the Easter Vigil, April 20, 2019*). Today, although we must live it on the cross, is the prelude to glory with God. And this opens us to hope. “O Lord our God, grant us to trust in your overshadowing wings: protect us beneath them and bear us up... When you are our strong security, that is strength indeed, but when our security is in ourselves, that is but weakness. Our good abides ever in your keeping” (Augustine, *Confessions* 4,16,31).

Easter: a today without end

We sing at the Easter Vigil: “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad”. What a gift of love! At Easter we live the Resurrection of the Son of God. In him death has been defeated and life in God reigns forever. All of us have faith in the Resurrection and we know that, in the Risen Christ, we too are eternal. We await the day without sunset and renewed existence (cf. Rev 21, 1-5). Meanwhile, we walk through life in hope, knowing that the Risen Jesus has preceded us on the way. If we have died with him, we will also be resurrected like him (Rom 6,8). Death is different now; it has been transformed. It no longer dissolves into nothingness and silence, but opens itself to infinite joy and eternal Love, even in these difficult times.

Dear brothers and sisters: ¡Happy Easter!

One in mind and heart,

*Given in Rome, from the General Curia of the Order
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