

Reflection Friday Week 24 – 2020

One of the great attractions of Jesus was his desire to live among a group of friends. St Augustine of Hippo was the same. From his youth, Augustine drew people to him and, wherever he went, they followed. Even when he had his conversion his friends also had genuine conversions and a number of them became bishops like him. After his conversion, Augustine established a small monastic community for which he wrote his rule, a rule adopted by the Augustinian Orders and the Dominicans and many others. His Rule is known as the Rule of Love, since love is both creative and unifying. We Assumptionists have built our lives around this Rule, hence our name, the Augustinians of the Assumption. Despite the claim that religion is a personal choice that needs no structure and group to be lived, faith has to be lived in community. Even hermits have links to a community. The community challenges, supports, questions, shares insights, creates possibilities and openings that a single person would invariably miss. Jesus never had any intention of going it alone and valued his friends deeply. Even at his death those who truly loved him, particularly the women, stayed close by and offered him support and strength for his final journey here on earth. What Luke makes clear for us is that the community was both male and female and, contrary to the culture, it was the women who provided for the upkeep of the community. He must have talked and listened a great deal with his followers and they would have influenced and helped shape what he said to the people and how he said it. What we have in the gospels are the bare bones of what he said and did, Jesus would have added the genuine human touch to everything he said and did; elements of care and compassion, empathy and excitement, sorrow and suspense, tension and truth. We can only discover these missing elements by sharing the stories of his life and death in community, be it family, school, parish or Church. We thank Luke for reminding us of this today. Let us also remember that creation is an integral part of our communities:

*“There is no plant in the ground but tells of your beauty, O Christ.
There is no life in the sea but proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing, there is no star in the sky,
there is nothing beneath the sun but is full of your blessing.
Lighten my understanding of your presence all around, O Christ.
Kindle my will to be caring for Creation.”*

A shortie . . . My friend asked me to describe myself in 3 word . . . **“Lazy.”**