

AGOSTINIANI DELL' ASSUNZIONE

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SUPERIORE GENERALE

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To all Assumptionists: religious and lay.

August 28, 2023

Happy feast of St. Augustine

In my short message on the occasion of the feast of the Assumption, I told you that I was still in the Philippines going through the formalities to obtain the visa to stay in Rome. I'm delighted to inform you that since Thursday August 24 I've been living in our Due Pini community in Rome. Thank you for your prayers and good wishes.

Today I'm coming back to wish you all a happy feast of Saint Augustine. It's our feast day. We are Augustinians of the Assumption. The day after I arrived in Rome, I had a working session with Brother Didier Remiot (former General treasurer). I asked him to help me understand the financial situation of our congregation. I remember that during our meeting, he kept repeating: "I've always asked the treasurers not to touch the portfolios". Yes, it's a patrimony that must be jealously guarded for our financial security. This made me think directly of another patrimony we have: our spiritual patrimony. For this one, the recommendation is exactly the opposite and can be seen as an ordinance: draw from it every day. This heritage is inexhaustible. And as you know, our patriarch Saint Augustine occupies a place of honor in it.

It's true that when St. Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, it was first and foremost to praise God. By confessing God's praise, he wanted to renew his own fervor by remembering how God had worked wonders in his life, and thus become ever more aware of his need for God. But, as he himself says, it was also for others. He wanted to accompany those on the same journey as himself, to encourage them to confess God's mercy. In Book II of his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine puts it this way: "I'm telling this story, but to whom? Not to you, my God; but before you I tell it to my race, to the human race, however small the portion of those who will come across this writing may be. And why do so? Obviously, so that I, and my eventual reader, may consider from what depth to cry out to you. And what could be closer than your ears, for a heart that confesses to you and lives by faith?" (*Confessions*, Book II, 3,5)

With so much going on around us, we seem lost. Not knowing what to do or how to do it. But Father d'Alzon, in his 1868 instruction, asks us to continue our work as God proposes: without unnecessary regrets about the past, and without disappointing hopes for the future. (E.S. p. 142-143). To achieve this, we need to listen to our inner teacher.

Saint Augustine is here to initiate us into this listening, because after all, the fruit of this listening is true love. And what we do with it will always be good. "Love and do what you want!"

May today's celebration rekindle our commitment to the adventure of God and allow ourselves to be transformed by him. Saint Augustine is a figure who continues to inspire. Thank you to those of our Assumptionist brothers who have discovered this great Augustinian treasure and helped us to make it more accessible to the uninitiated. This is an opportunity to pay tribute to our brothers such as Fathers Goulven Madec, Marcel Neusch and Edgard Bourque, and to encourage younger ones like Nicolas Potteau, Jean-François Petit and others.

Happy feast day to us all! And may Saint Augustine, our patriarch, continue to inspire us, especially in this time of turbulence for our Church, but when the signs of God's action and his Kingdom are still perceptible. We simply have to keep learning to discern them. And Saint Augustine is here to help us. May those who are celebrating the anniversary of their first profession today, and those who are about to make their first profession, find here the expression of my prayer that they may always grow in the Augustinian spirit for life and mission.

Happy feast day to all!

Ngoa Ya Tshihemba, aa
Superior General