

Prot. CG 134/2025

TO THE ENTIRE AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT FAMILY

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace.*

### **1. Holiness and Mission: Two Names of the Same Love**

Dear brothers and sisters of the Augustinian Recollect Family,

In the coming days, we will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints and also the feast of all the saints of our Order—radiant celebrations in which the Church reminds us that holiness is not a privilege reserved for a few, but a universal vocation, a call from God to all who bear His image in their hearts. It is the day of the countless, anonymous, and close multitude who have made from their lives an offering of love.

In this context of everyday, concrete holiness, I wish to address the entire Augustinian Recollect Family to joyfully announce the beginning of the **Missionary Year 2026**, under the motto given to us by our Father Saint Augustine: *“Proclaim Christ wherever you can.”*

This year is not merely a period, with a thematic inspiration, but a call to missionary conversion—to rekindle the fire of love that drives us to go forth, to move beyond our geographical, cultural, and spiritual frontiers. Holiness and mission are not parallel paths, but one and the same road that leads to the heart of God.

Holiness without mission risks becoming self-enclosed; mission without holiness is a body without a soul. The saint is the missionary who loves to the utmost, and the missionary is the saint who cannot keep silent about the love that dwells within.

As Pope Leo XIV reminded us in his homily for the Jubilee of the Missionary World, the whole Church is missionary, and we are called to “go out and proclaim the Gospel to everyone, without delay, without disgust, and without fear.”<sup>1</sup> Holiness is not an escape from the world, but the highest form of presence: the soul in mission is the Church that goes forth.

### **2. “Proclaim Christ wherever you can”: A Fire That Cannot Be Silenced**

Saint Augustine, master of the heart, understood that love cannot remain idle. Whoever loves, proclaims; whoever has been touched by Christ cannot remain closed in on themselves. *“Proclaim Christ wherever you can,”* said the Bishop of Hippo—not as a strategic slogan, but as an expression of overflowing love.

This Missionary Year is an invitation to rediscover the passion for evangelizing that lies at the core of our identity. Our history is woven with missionary faces: those who set out for distant lands and those who stayed behind, evangelizing through the simplicity of daily life. From Palawan to Marajó, from Chota to Sierra Leone, from Lábrea to Cuba, from Bocas del Toro to Casanare—every Recollect mission has been an altar where life was offered for love of the Gospel.

In the words of Pope Leo resounds an urgent call: “The issue is not to depart, but to remain in order to proclaim Christ through welcome, compassion, and

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 23.

solidarity." That *remaining* is the verb of holiness: to remain in Christ, to remain in love, to remain beside the suffering brother or sister.

The Augustinian Recollect missionary is, above all, a person who is in love with Christ—one who carries within his heart the holy restlessness of one touched by Love, who desires to “draw everyone into the love of God.” Our mission is not born of duty, but of overflowing love: of having been touched by a love that cannot be contained.

### 3. Mission Sanctifies Us

The missions have been, and continue to be, the most precious flower of our Order—the place where charity becomes concrete and obedience turns into a path. Within them, saints and martyrs have been forged: witnesses of a love that never gives up.

There we find Saint Ezekiel Moreno, Saint Magdalene of Nagasaki, the Blessed Martyrs of Japan, Sister Cleusa, Ignacio Martínez, Gazpio, and so many others whose names may not appear on altars but are written in the Book of Life. In their faces shines the missionary holiness that does not seek applause or recognition, but lives daily fidelity—silent and fruitful.

Holiness, like mission, does not consist in doing great things, but in loving greatly. The saint does not flee from the world; he embraces it with compassion. And the missionary does not seek himself; he offers himself. Wherever love becomes service, wherever the Gospel takes flesh in small gestures, there God becomes visible and the Kingdom grows.

In this sense, the Missionary Year 2026 is meant to be a time of grace—a renewal of our call to apostolic holiness. It is not only about setting out for new lands, but about allowing the Spirit to lead us out of our comfort zones, our securities, and our routines, making us available, humble, and fruitful.

Holiness is not evasion but sending forth. And mission cannot endure without roots of holiness. Whoever truly lives in Christ carries within the impulse of His own missionary love.

### 4. Mission as a Response to the Pain of the World

In his jubilee homily, Pope Leo reminded us of the concrete faces of suffering: migrants, displaced persons, those who cross seas seeking life, those who suffer from injustice or indifference. In them, said the Pope, echoes the cry of the prophet Habakkuk: “*How long, O Lord?*”

That human cry is also a divine sending forth. Mission is born from the world’s pain and from God’s compassion. To be missionaries today means to remain at the peripheries—not only geographical but existential: where people lose meaning, where faith grows dim, where hope seems impossible.

*Evangelii gaudium* reminds us that it is better for the Church to be “bruised, hurting, and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than sick from being confined and clinging to its own security.” We too, as the Augustinian Recollect Family, desire to live this Missionary Year with that boldness of the Spirit that is unafraid to make mistakes if done out of love.

To go forth, to welcome, to console, to accompany—these are the four missionary attitudes this year seeks to rekindle in each of us. And all this is possible only if we first allow God to renew in us the fire of His love. For there is no mission

without conversion, no proclamation without prayer, and no sending forth without communion.

### 5. Opening of the Missionary Year 2026

With great joy, I announce that the official opening of the **Missionary Year of the Order of Augustinian Recollects** will take place on **December 7, 2025**, in **Santo Domingo**, a historic place that witnessed the canonization of the first Augustinian Recollect saint, **Saint Ezekiel Moreno**, where his evangelizing spirit continues to burn strongly.

I invite all communities, parishes, schools, movements, and lay fraternities to mark the beginning of this year with a special celebration—adapted to each reality, yet united in the same spirit: to make visible the joy of being sent.

### 6. Witnesses of Love

This Missionary Year does not ask us to add more activities but to rekindle the fire of our first love. It invites us to look with new eyes at the mission we already live, to allow the Holy Spirit to free us from lukewarmness, from routine, from spiritual worldliness, and to restore to us the joy of the Gospel.


To proclaim Christ is to proclaim Love. And love, when it is true, expands, communicates, and spreads. This is our task and our joy: to be witnesses of God's love in the heart of the world.

I ask everyone that this year be marked by missionary prayer, fraternity among communities, concrete acts of service to the poor, and evangelizing initiatives that spring from the creativity of the Spirit.

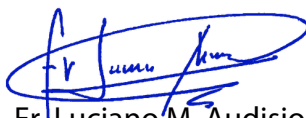
May Mary, the first missionary of her Son, teach us to go forth in haste to the mountains of life, carrying Christ in our hearts and in our hands. May Saint Augustine grant us his passion for truth and his ardor for the Church. And may our Recollect saints and martyrs intercede for us, so that we may live this Missionary Year with boldness, joy, and holiness.

With affection and hope.

Madrid, October 30, 2025.



Fr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Domínguez  
Prior general



Fr. Luciano M. Audisio  
General Secretary

