

## Correspondence

# The social paradox of COVID-19 pandemic: the duality of socialization and the value of fraternal charity

### ABSTRACT

Government across all nations had promulgated precautionary measures in controlling the wide spread of the disease. One that takes precedence is the practice of community quarantine where people are mandated to stay at home and avoid going outside if is not utterly necessary. This mandate caused a lot of catastrophic outcomes in the socio-economic condition and mental health of many. Many people are in psychological and existential despair for the loss of their jobs and the isolation that they are experiencing. However, in the midst of this undesirable condition, the natural tendency of the human person to socialize is still present. Done in the spirit of fraternal charity, an individual's way of socialization gives hope to those who are in despair. The COVID-19 pandemic does not deter the human person to exercise his fraternal instinct but gives him sufficient reason to employ it all the more, creating the social paradox of human presence.

**Keywords** behavior, communities, mental health

To the editor

The prodigious Greek philosopher Aristotle, with other renowned classical and contemporary thinkers, plausibly observed that the human person is by nature a social being,<sup>1</sup> or in the Aristotelian term, a political animal. As a social being or a political animal, man's sense of purpose is always intrinsically connected with the nature of socialization. In other words, the way a person deals with other human beings in the process of socialization defines how an individual creates meaning in relation to his own existence. Hence, socialization is important not only in the search of the human person for existential meaning but also for keeping himself psychologically lucid. Departure from this natural tendency of the human person to socialize and to participate in the existential discourse of society would tragically result into a certain feeling of dejection and anxiety.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the present situation that the society in general is currently facing, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, this tendency to express oneself in the process of socialization has been pacified.

Different governments across nations had implemented various forms of community quarantine just to prevent the widespread of the disease and the deleterious effect of the virus to different sectors of society.<sup>3</sup> The preventive measures of the government in controlling the spread of the virus

while good in itself pose a danger not only on the mental health of individuals but also their socio-economic condition. These aspects—the mental health of individuals, relational aspect of the human person and the socio-economic condition of individuals are interrelated with each other simply because one aspect, respectively, affects the condition of the other two aspects. In the case of the social condition brought by the pandemic, many people across countries have lost their jobs when various businesses needed to be shut down because of the mandated quarantine or because of the lack of resources in funding their operation; if these businesses would not shut their operation they would consequently end up minimizing their overall operation cost by reducing employed personnel and shortened their production hour just to cope up with their monetary lost which, resulting to a sense of depression and anxiety on the part of those who are heavily affected - the ones who lost their jobs. This condition has left those people who have lost their jobs to spend their hard-earned savings to provide the basic needs of their families and think of practical ways to survive given the absence of a suitable job. The withdrawal from communal life and participation in social affairs certainly poses a threat to the socio-economic condition of an individual, which in return, would affect his own mental health. This proposition is true especially in the case of the most deprived ones in

the social stratum,<sup>4</sup> leaving them more deprived and utterly vulnerable.

However, in the midst of the catastrophic phenomenon that the general populace is currently experiencing, the natural tendency of the human person to socialize is still apparent. The pandemic or any forms of restrictions could not stop the human person's participation in the process of socialization, but instead, makes his yearning for the other person even stronger; the human nature to socialize could not be stopped by the pandemic simply because it is imbedded in his nature, and it is this same social setting that the pandemic brings gives sufficient reason for the human person to be connected to others, especially the suffering ones. Many people were moved into action in helping those who are deeply affected by the pandemic. The silent yet obvious cry of those afflicted by the pandemic serves as a force that enable many people to socializes in the spirit of fraternal charity with a profound hope to alleviate the suffering and replace it with a deep sense of hope for a better tomorrow. A hope that shines through the feeling of hopelessness that the pandemic brings. Fraternal charity seen in the process of socialization is a proactive advocacy and response to the anguish of the vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> While people suffer in this time of global crisis, the ray of hope coming from the natural tendency of the human person to socialize, done in the spirit of fraternal charity, is an assurance that humanity could withstand the disaster that threatens its very own existence. Who would have thought that the COVID-19 pandemic could bring out the best in many people to be a neighbor toward the other even if the situation requires corporal isolation? Who would have thought that the pandemic could result in a social paradox?

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