

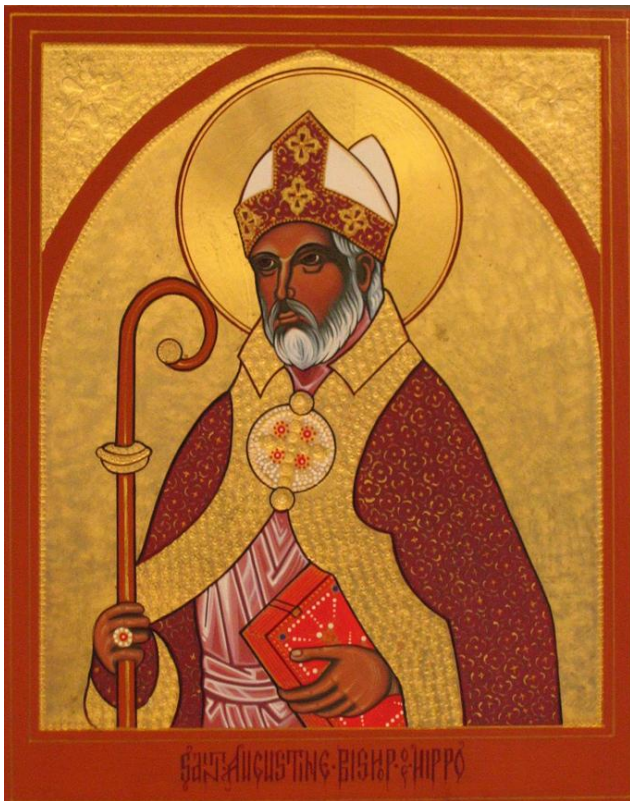
The Cloud of Witnesses

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” – Jeremiah 29:13

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” – Psalm 139:23-24

“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” – Romans 13:12-14

Augustine



- Augustine lived from 354 to 430 AD in North Africa (what is now Algeria & Tunisia).

- He studied to become a professor of rhetoric before joining the church and becoming bishop of the city of Hippo.

- He was a non-Christian and pursued a life of sin before being converted through the influence of some friends, the teaching of a local church, and the prayers of his mother.

- He did more to shape the theology of Western Christianity than anyone since the Apostle Paul.

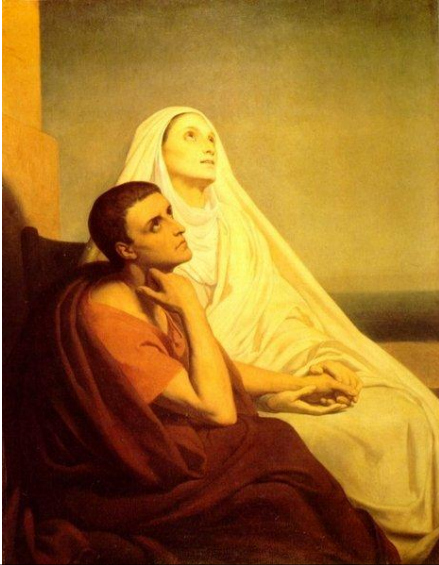
- He wrote 94 books in all, and 2 of them—*Confessions* and *City of God*—are still regarded as among the greatest of Christian classics.

“You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”

Augustine’s theology is characterized by a number of important themes:

- The importance of *self-knowledge* in the spiritual life
- A deeply personal *relationship* with God
- The need for a *community* of Christians to support one another
- The power and extent of the *grace* of God
- A response of *humility* toward God’s grace, leading to *purity of heart*
- The *sovereignty* of God over all things—over history, nations, and individual salvation

“You alone, O God, are always present, even to those who set themselves apart from you...Let them turn back, and they will find you in their hearts, in the hearts of all who confess to you and throw themselves upon your mercy, in the hearts of all who have left the hard path and come to weep upon your breast. Gently you wipe away their tears. They weep the more, but now their tears are tears of joy, because it is not some man of flesh and blood but you, O Lord, their Maker, who remakes them and consoles them.”



Augustine and his mother Monica

“Late have I loved you, Beauty at once so ancient and so new! Late have I loved you! You were within me, and I was in the world outside myself. I searched for you outside myself, and, disfigured as I was, I fell upon the lovely things of your creation. You were with me, but I was not with you. The beautiful things of this world kept me far from you and yet, if they had not been in you, they would have had no being at all. You called me; you cried aloud to me; you broke my barrier of deafness. You shone upon me; your radiance enveloped me; you put my blindness to flight. You shed your fragrance about me; I drew breath and now I gasp for your sweet odor. I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am inflamed with love of your peace.”

“Blessed are those who love you, O God, and love their friends in you and their enemies for your sake. They alone will never lose those who are dear to them, for they love them in the one who is never lost, in God, our God who made heaven and earth and fills them with his presence.”

“You are there to free us from the misery of error which leads us astray, to set us on your path and to comfort us by saying, ‘Run on, for I shall hold you up. I shall lead you and carry you on to the end.’”

“My wish is that you who believe would place yourself with all your love under Christ, and that you pave no other way in order to reach and to attain the truth than has already been paved by him who, as God, knows the weakness of our steps. This way is, in the first place, humility; in the second place, humility; in the third place, humility...As often as you ask me about the Christian religion’s norms of conduct, I choose to give no other answer than: humility.”

“You, my God, are supreme, utmost in goodness, mightiest and all-powerful, most merciful and most just. You are the most hidden from us and yet the most present among us, the most beautiful and yet the most strong, ever enduring and yet we cannot comprehend you. You are unchangeable and yet you change all things. You are never new, never old, and yet all things have new life from you...You are ever active, yet always at rest. You gather all things to yourself, though you suffer no need. You support, you fill, and you protect all things. You create them, nourish them, and bring them to perfection. You seek to make them your own, though you lack for nothing. You love your creatures, but with a gentle love...You welcome all who come to you, though you never lost them...You are my God, my Life, my holy Delight.”

More quotes from Augustine:

“Your goodness, O God, is almighty; you take good care of each of us as if you had no others in your care, and you look after all as you look after each.”

“If the things of this world delight you, praise God for them but turn your love away from them and give it to their Maker....The good things which you love are all from God, but they are good and sweet only as long as they are used to do his will.”

“Wherever we taste the truth, God is there.”

“Man’s heart may be hard, but it cannot resist the touch of Your hand.”

“Come, O Lord, and stir our hearts. Call us back to yourself. Kindle your fire in us and carry us away. Let us scent your fragrance and taste your sweetness. Let us love you and hasten to your side.”

“My love of you, O Lord, is not some vague feeling: it is positive and certain. But what do I love when I love my God? Not material beauty or beauty of a temporal order; not the brilliance of earthly light, so welcome to our eyes; not the sweet melody of harmony and song; not the fragrance of flowers, perfumes, and spices; not manna or honey; not limbs such as the body delights to embrace. It is not these that I love when I love my God. And yet, when I love him, it is true that I love a light of a certain kind, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace; but they are of the kind that I love in my inner self, when my soul is bathed in light that is not bound by space; when it listens to sound that never dies away; when it breathes fragrance that is not borne away on the wind; when it tastes food that is never consumed by eating; when it clings to an embrace from which it is not severed by fulfillment of desire. This is what I love when I love my God.”

“Happiness is to rejoice in You and for You and because of You. This is true happiness and there is no other.”

“My ills are many and great, many and great indeed; but your medicine is greater still.”

“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

“God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.”

“If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don’t like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.”

In response to the question of whether our growth in the Christian life depends on God’s work or on ours: “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.”

“Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.”