

SAINT AUGUSTINE

Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church (A.D. 430)

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Aim

- ✠ Know about the life of Saint Augustine and about his strife and repentance
- ✠ Learn from his virtues and try to apply it to our life

Key verses

¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. ” (Romans 13:13-14)

Lesson

Saint Augustine is one of the greatest Fathers of the Church. He was an original thinker who became recognized as a remarkable leader of Christian faith. One of the guiding forces in Saint Augustine's life was his Christian mother, Saint Monica.

His Childhood and Youth

Saint Augustine was born on November 13, 354 at Tagaste, a small town of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo. His father, Patricius, was a pagan and of a violent disposition; but his Mother Monica was a true Christian who strived for many years to get Augustine and his father to be Christians. Eventually Augustine's father was baptized not long before his death

As a child, Saint Monica instructed Augustine in the Christian religion and taught him how to pray. She set a date for his baptism but then he suddenly fell ill and they had to delay it. When he recovered, he decided not to get baptized.

His father wanted him to become a man of learning and cared very little about his character or salvation. He later on did so well with his studies that he went to Carthage (A city near by) in 370 when he was still 17. He studied literature with eagerness and pleasure; but he was living a loose life.

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Years away from Christ

At Carthage, he entered into relations with a woman (to whom he remained faithful until he sent her away from him 15 years later). She bore him a son, Adeodatus, in 372.

He started getting more into his readings and studies for nine years until he fell into a belief called Manichaeism - a combination of pagan religions and philosophy. These beliefs drew him away from God and took his attention away from drawing closer to Christ and neglected his salvation.

St Augustine's mother, Saint Monica, used to cry with many tears to our Lord to open Augustine's eyes and that he gets baptized and leaves the life of sin. St. Ambrose the Bishop said to her that "the son of so many tears could not perish". St. Ambrose predicted in his heart that St. Augustine will return back to Christ. St. Monica spent 20 years trying to get Augustine to repent, she never ceased by prayer and gentle persuasion to try to bring him to his mind.

In 383 he departed to Rome, secretly, so that his mother doesn't prevent him from going to the big city. He opened a school of literature, and then was appointed by the government as a teacher in Milan, where his mother and his friend Alipius joined him. Saint Monica's only ambition was to convert her son to Christianity.

His Repentance

In Milan, Saint Augustine was influenced by Saint Ambrose the bishop; he began to go to his sermons, not because he wanted to believe in God but because he enjoyed his sermons. He then began to read the New Testament especially Saint Paul's writings. In the same time, the mother of Adeodatus his son left back to Africa leaving the child behind.

St Augustine was struggling because he was convinced of the truthfulness of Christianity but his will was so weak that he couldn't return to Christ. He kept on saying "**Soon, in a little while, I shall make up my mind, but not right now**". This teaches us that it might seem sometimes hard to get back to church and leave our sins but no matter what happens, we should never delay it because we never know how much we will be on earth for.

Soon after, his friend Alipius; told him about two men who had been suddenly turned to the service of God by reading about the life of Saint Anthony. He was ashamed his will

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has been so weak and said to Alipius: **"What are we doing to let the unlearned seize Heaven by force, whilst we with all our knowledge remain behind, cowardly and heartless, wallowing in our sins? Because they have outstripped us and gone before, are we ashamed to follow them? Is it not more shameful not even to follow them?"**

What he meant was that, he and his friend had so much knowledge and know that Christianity is the truth but yet they have been so weak and they should be ashamed.

He rushed to the garden, greatly upset; tears filling his eyes, he threw himself on the grass and started crying and praying to God to accept him

As he did that, he heard a voice that said to him (Take up and read) and he took this to be referred to the bible. He opened the bible and read the passage that we read at the beginning. It was a calling to him to leave the life of sin and to start a whole new life with Christ.

At this time, St Augustine was 32 years old. Him, Adeodatus his son and Alipius his friend were all baptized together after this.

A Priest and then a Bishop

From that time, Saint Augustine went back to Tagaste, his native city, and lived for three years with his friends and shared a life of prayer, study and poverty. In 391 he was ordained as a priest to that city.

In 395 he was ordained as a bishop of the city Hippo

He built many churches and monasteries for monks and nuns.

He loved his people very much and used to link his own salvation with their salvation. He said to them: **"I do not want to be saved without you. What shall I desire? What shall I say? Why am I a bishop? Why am I in the world? Only to live in Jesus Christ: but to live in Him with you. This is my passion, my honor, my glory, my joy and my riches."**

St Augustinos was Abishop for 35 years during which he had to defend the faith against many heresies.

St Augustinos delivered his spirit in August 430. He was 76 years old.

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St Augustinos is called the son of tears because his mother St. Monica shed many tears in prayers for his sake that Our Lord Jesus Christ may open his eyes to believe in Christ. God looked at her many tears and listened and rescued her son. This shows us the power of prayers. If we see someone away from God, Our role, as the church lead by The Holy Spirit, is to pray for them or guide them to come to the right way and God always listens.

After being baptized and believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Augustine said that he died from the sin that had strangled him for many years. One day, the lady had the relationship with him came and knocked on his door and when he opened he didn't want to let her in and when she asked him why, he said to her: "Augustine died. The one you have now is Christ living in Augustine".

St Augustine wrote many books, the most popular of them being "The confessions of St. Augustine"

Conclusion

Augustine was a very educated and high person and it was not easy for him to accept the humble spirit of being a Christian. Through the help of Our Lord Jesus Christ, he was able to conquer pride and to gain great humility that allowed him to be one of our big bishops in the church.

May the prayers and supplications of the great Saint Augustine be with us. Amen.

Glory is to God, forever. Amen.

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Activity:

Choose one of these quotes and tell us why u like it and try to apply during the coming week:

1. *Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility.*
2. *Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.*
 - a. ***Sometimes we can't understand the mass or believe that we actually partake of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. St Augustine is saying that if we believe it, od will reward us by actually making us see and feel that It is truly His Body and Blood.***
3. *God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.*
4. *He that is jealous is not in love.*
5. *It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.*
6. *O Lord, help me to be pure, but not yet.*
 - a. ***Sometimes we want to be good but we keep on delaying it. We ask God to grant us a virtue but we don't work hard to actually obtain this virtue.***
7. *This is the very perfection of a man, to find out his own imperfections.*
8. *Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder is needed by others.*
9. *He that is jealous is not in love.*
10. *He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent.*

