CHURCH HISTORY: THE THIRD AGE (312-591)

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



HOW LONG, LORD, HOW LONG? WILL IT BE TOMORROW AND ALWAYS TOMORROW? WHY DOES MY UNCLEANLINESS NOT END THIS VERY MOMENT?

–Augustine of Hippo

TOLLE LEGE

TAKE AND READ, TAKE AND READ, TAKE AND READ.

The voice of a child in a garden in Milan



13 LET US WALK PROPERLY AS IN THE
DAYTIME, NOT IN ORGIES AND
DRUNKENNESS, NOT IN SEXUAL
IMMORALITY AND SENSUALITY, NOT IN
QUARRELING AND
JEALOUSY. 14 BUT PUT ON THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST, AND MAKE NO
PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, TO
GRATIFY ITS DESIRES.

–Romans 13:13–14

THE CONFESSIONS

- Most of what we know of Augustine's life comes from *the Confessions*
  - His autobiography is in the form of continual prayer, addressed to God
- It is unique in the history of the church thus far, as it is an exploration of the inner life of a Christian
  - Struggles with sins, reflections on providence, and an exceptionally personal view of his relationship to God



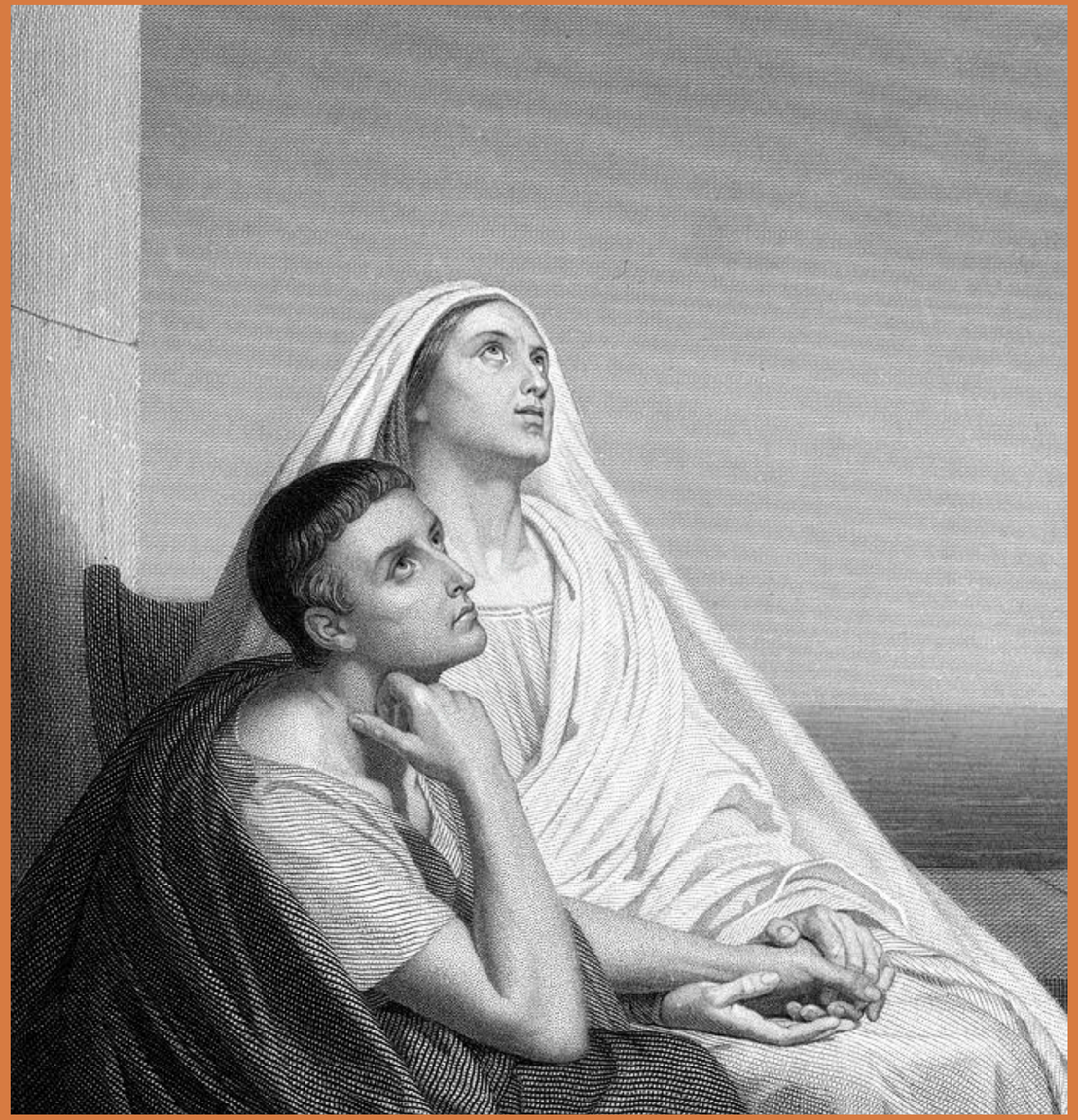
EARLY LIFE

- Augustine was born to a latinized (not originally Roman) family in 354 AD in Thagaste, N. Africa
  - His father, Patricius, was a moderate pagan and a minor Roman official
  - His mother, Monica, was a devoted Christian
    - Monica was a Berber name (not a Roman name)-She was indigenous to N. Africa
    - Latin was her second language



MONICA, MOTHER TO AUGUSTINE

- Monica and Augustine had a stormy but close relationship
- She was a woman of prayer, and she prayed most often for her son



MY MOTHER, YOUR FAITHFUL SERVANT, WEPT FOR ME BEFORE YOU MORE THAN MOTHERS WEEP WHEN LAMENTING THEIR DEAD CHILDREN.

Augustine, on his mother, from the Confessions

MONICA, MOTHER TO AUGUSTINE

- Augustine rejected her faith as a child and young man
  - He lived a worldly life indulging in every opportunity for sin
    - He had a concubine
    - He had a son by his concubine, Adeodatus
- Monica wept and prayed continuously for her son (and her husband)



IT CANNOT BE THAT THE SON OF THESE TEARS SHOULD PERISH.

Monica's bishop to her in reference to her concern for her on

MONICA, WIFE TO PATRICIUS

- She was a faithful wife and witness as well
  - Her husband, Patricius, was not a Christian
  - Her mother-in-law was not a Christian as well (she came to live with them)
- By being a loving and faithful wife, all her good deeds ‘spoke like voices of God’ to her husband and mother-in-law
- Augustine calls his mother a ‘servant of the servants of God’





"THE VIRTUES WITH WHICH YOU ADORNED HER, AND FOR WHICH HE RESPECTED, LOVED, AND ADMIRED HER WERE LIKE SO MANY VOICES TO HIM CONSTANTLY SPEAKING OF YOU."

–Augustine, on his mother's life and witness

EARLY LIFE CONTINUED

- Augustine early rejected his mother's faith
  - He tells us he was sinning as soon as he was born (the selfishness of an infant)
  - 'So tiny a child, so great a sinner'
- He tells the story of his stealing pears (not because he was hungry) because he liked stealing



EDUCATION AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD

- His parents saw his exceptional gifts, and paid for the best education possible
  - They sent him to Maduara and then Carthage (a prominent N. African city for culture and learning)
- He was pursuing a career in law or public office, and he studied rhetoric
- He went to Carthage and was involved in all the ‘pleasures’ the city had to offer
  - He began to keep a concubine there
    - He had a son by her, Adeodatus (given by God)



I CAME TO CARTHAGE AND ALL AROUND ME HISSED A CAULDRON OF ILLICIT LOVES.

Augustine on his time in Carthage

O LORD, GIVE ME CHASTITY . . . BUT NOT YET.

Augustine on his time in Carthage

THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE

- Although Augustine continued in his ‘lusts of the flesh’ in Carthage, he recognized that God kept him from greater sin
- God’s grace was at work in Augustine’s life before he was converted
  - ‘God touched with a bitter taste all my illicit pleasures’.



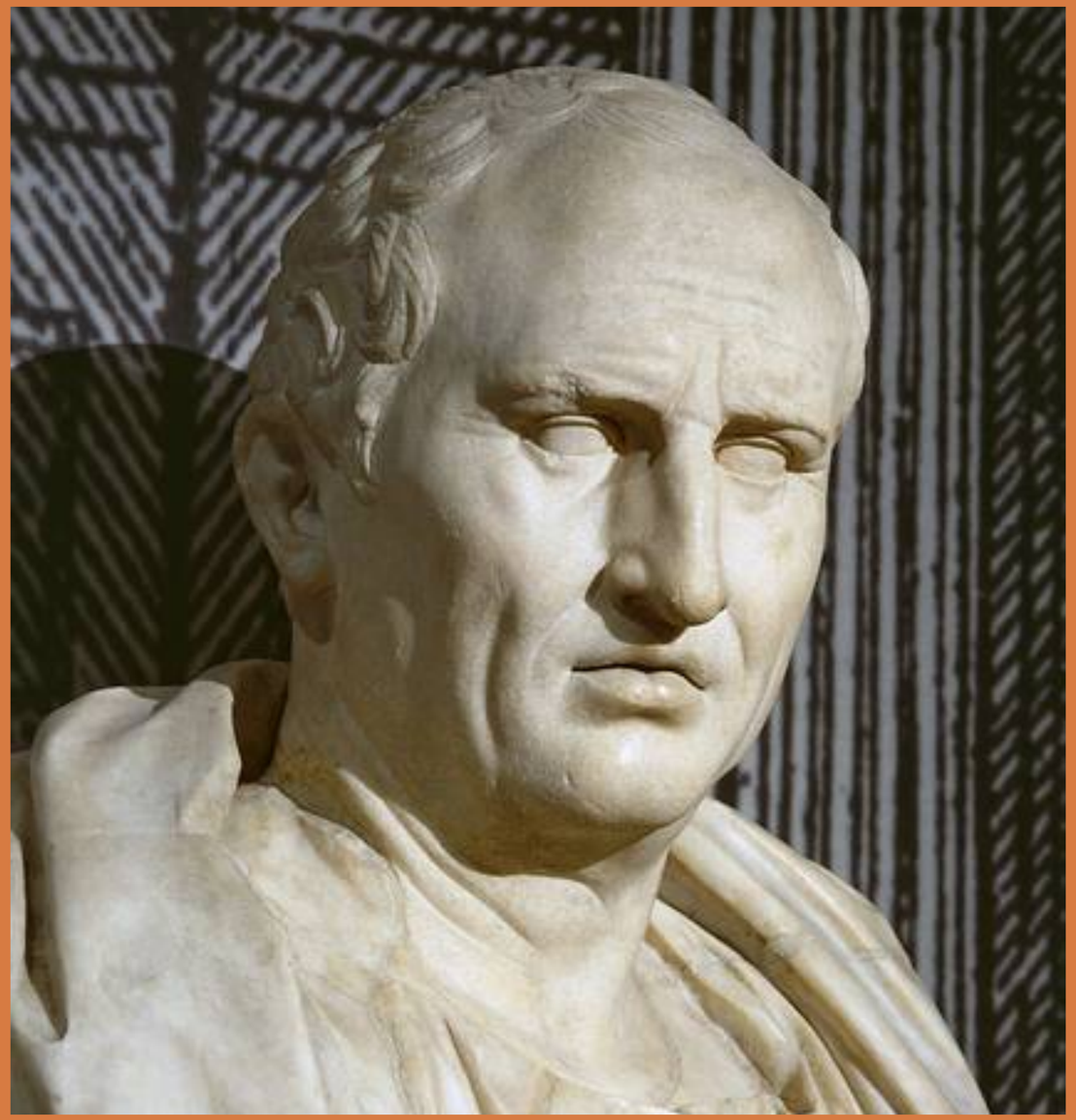


‘I ATTRIBUTE TO YOUR GRACE WHATEVER EVIL ACTS I HAVE NOT DONE.’

–Augustine, on God’s Providence in Carthage

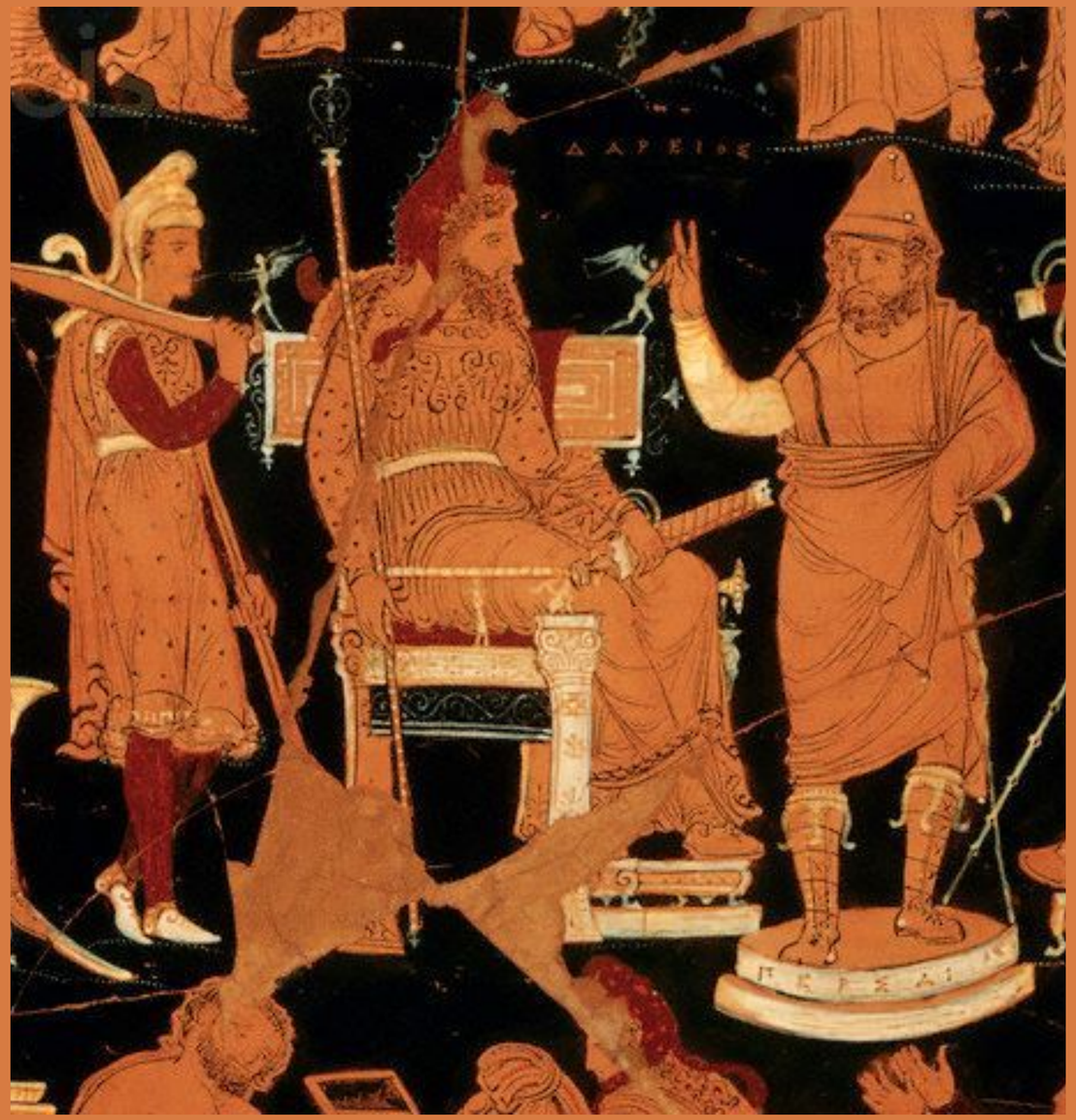
MATURITY AND GROWTH

- As Augustine became more enmeshed in the problems, confusions and disappointments in life, the more he began to look for answers
  - He did not, however, turn to Christianity, or his mother's faith
  - He had difficulty believing the Bible
    - The style was crude and unworthy of a rhetorician
- He loved Cicero, and beautifully composed language and could not pursue truth in an *inferior* piece of literature
  - Cicero's *Hortensius* awakened in him a desire for truth (and not just eloquence).



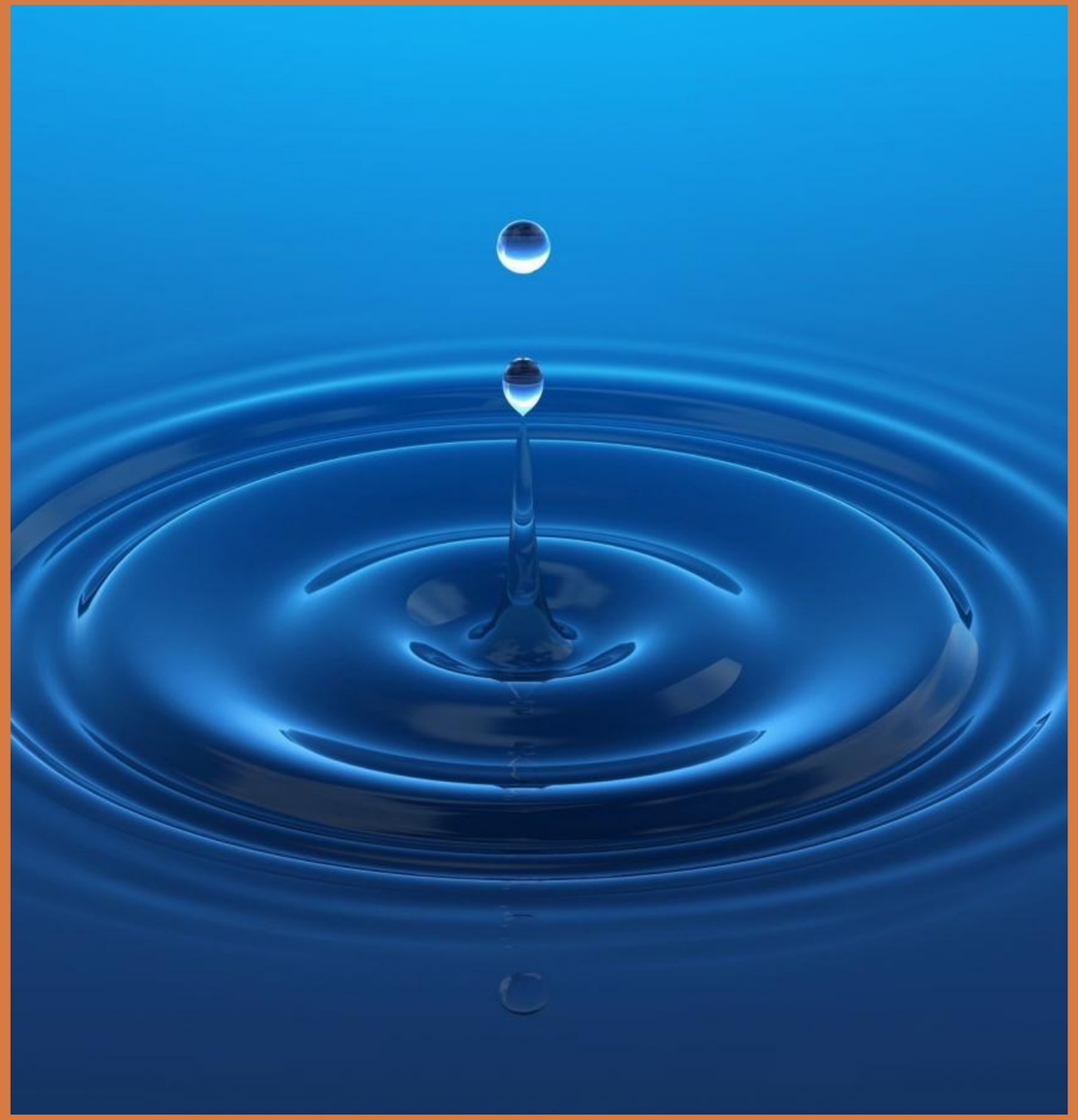
JOURNEY TO MANICHAEISM

- Augustine pursued philosophy, but found little help there
- He moved to Astrology (which was a respectable way of ‘searching for truth’)
- He finally moved into Manichaeism, a gnostic cult movement from Persia
  - Where does Evil come from?
    - sin, suffering, and flesh was all a part of the material world
    - God is separate from the physical realm
  - Manichaeism was a mixture of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity
    - According to Mani: Buddha, Jesus, Zoroaster, and finally Mani were the ‘true apostles of God’



MANICHAEISM TO NEOPLATONISM

- Augustine could not reconcile the assertions of Manichaeism with the doctrinal system
  - If God was so separate from the world, then how would he even be God?
- No Manichean teachers could answer him
  - He left the movement and became a skeptic, believing there were no answers
- He continued to read and study, and found the neoplatonists
  - They taught of a single source, with emanations from that source
  - The goal was ‘mystical contemplation of the source’
  - Evil was ‘moving away from the source’



AUGUSTINE THE RHETORICIAN

- Augustine had decided to make a career out of rhetoric
  - It was a good career for someone who knew how to use words
  - He later calls it a ‘chair of lies’ because the truth of words did not matter in rhetoric
- God used his love of language and rhetoric to later have him tell Truth instead of lies with wonderful language



TO ROME

- At 29, he decided to move to Rome to advance his career
  - His mother, Monica, did not want him to go
    - She thought he would be fine if she could keep an eye on him there
- He would sometimes tell her he was going, then also tell her he wasn't going
- He slipped away on a boat without telling her



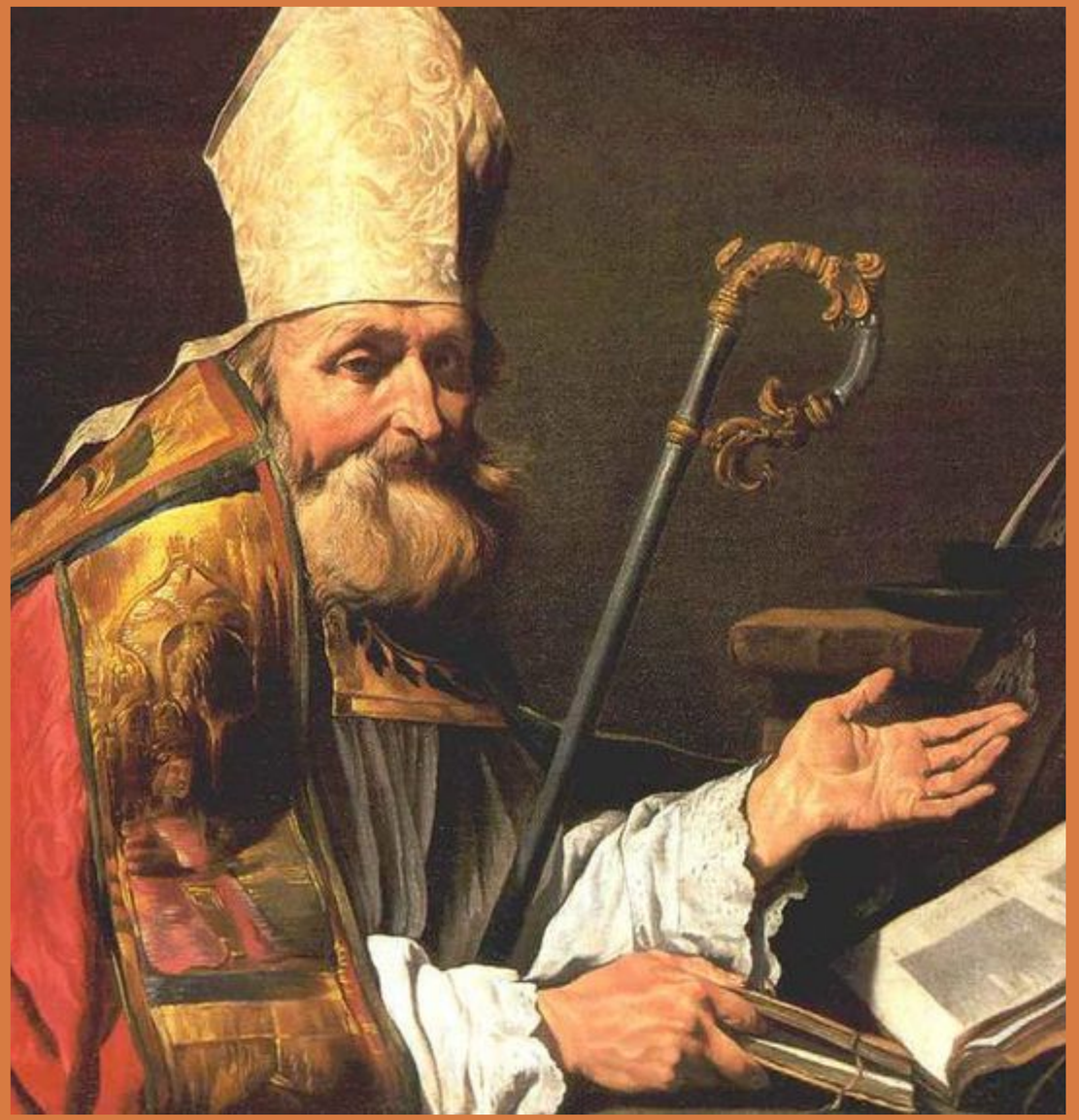


BY HER FLOOD OF TEARS, WHAT SHE WAS BEGGING OF YOU, MY GOD, WAS THAT YOU WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO SAIL TO ROME. YET IN YOUR DEEP COUNSEL, YOU HEARD THE CENTRAL POINT OF HER LONGING, THOUGH NOT GRANTING HER WHAT SHE THEN ASKED, NAMELY THAT YOU SHOULD MAKE ME WHAT SHE CONTINUALLY PRAYED FOR.

–Augustine, on answered prayers

AUGUSTINE IN MILAN

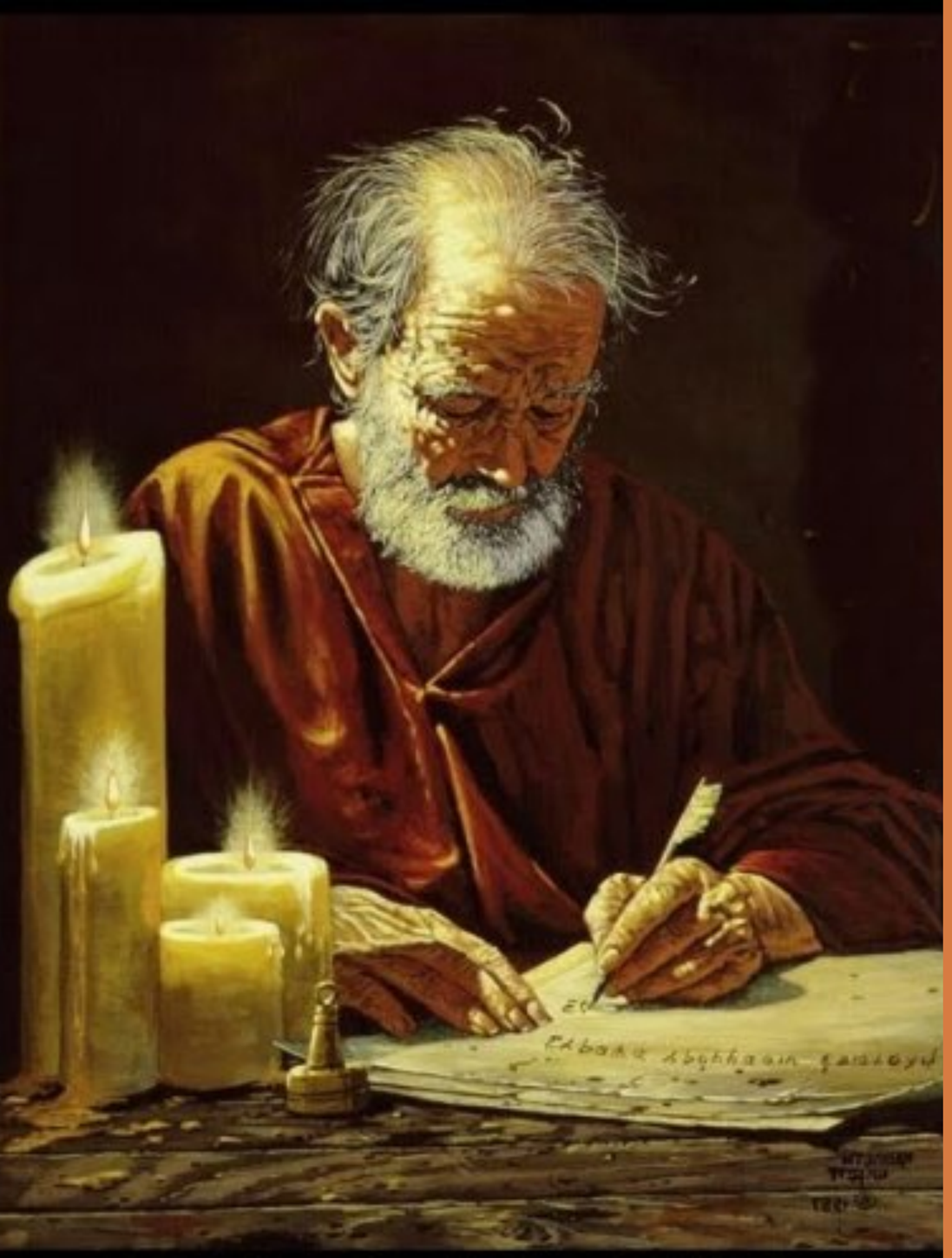
- After arriving at Rome, he decided that Milan, was more important than Rome and more necessary for him to go there
- In Milan, he met the bishop, Ambrose of Milan, and loved the strength of his rhetoric, not necessarily the content of his preaching
  - Ambrose was kind to Augustine and Augustine began to like him as a person
  - Ambrose was the bishop of a great city and had many concerns and things to attend to
- He heard sermons, went to church, was moved by the singing, read the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius
- He read the Bible (and it was different for him)



AUGUSTINE'S CONVERSION

- Tolle Lege (Take and read)
  - He heard the voice in the garden, opened the manuscript of Paul from Romans and read it





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AUGUSTINE'S CONVERSION

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- At the age of 32, in 386, Augustine repented of his sins and worldliness, and followed Christ



I HAVE LEARNED TO LOVE YOU LATE.

Augustine on his conversion

BETWEEN CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

- In the months between his conversion and baptism, he stayed at a friend's country estate with friends and family
  - He wrote about the loveliness of God's evergreen paradise
- He rested there with his friends, his mother, and his son, Adeodatus
- He wrote 4-5 books during that time (but lamented they 'still breathed the spirit of the school of pride')



WE RESTED IN YOU FROM THE HEAT OF THE WORLD.

Augustine on his time of rest near Como

THE DEATH OF MONICA

- Augustine left Milan for Africa in 387
- He could not return because of war, so he stopped in Ostia near Rome
- His mother died in Ostia, 1 year after the conversion of her son



AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

- Augustine stayed in Rome for a time, then moved to Hippo in N. Africa
  - He wanted to pursue a life of study and the philosophical life (for the sake of the church)
- He visited a friend at Hippo, and while at a church service, the bishop, Valerius preached about God always sending shepherds for the flock
  - Augustine was ordained there (against his wishes) and began to serve with Valerius
  - He became Co-bishop with Valerius in 395
- He wanted to retain his life of contemplation, study, and writing
- He must now, however, take care of his pastoral duties



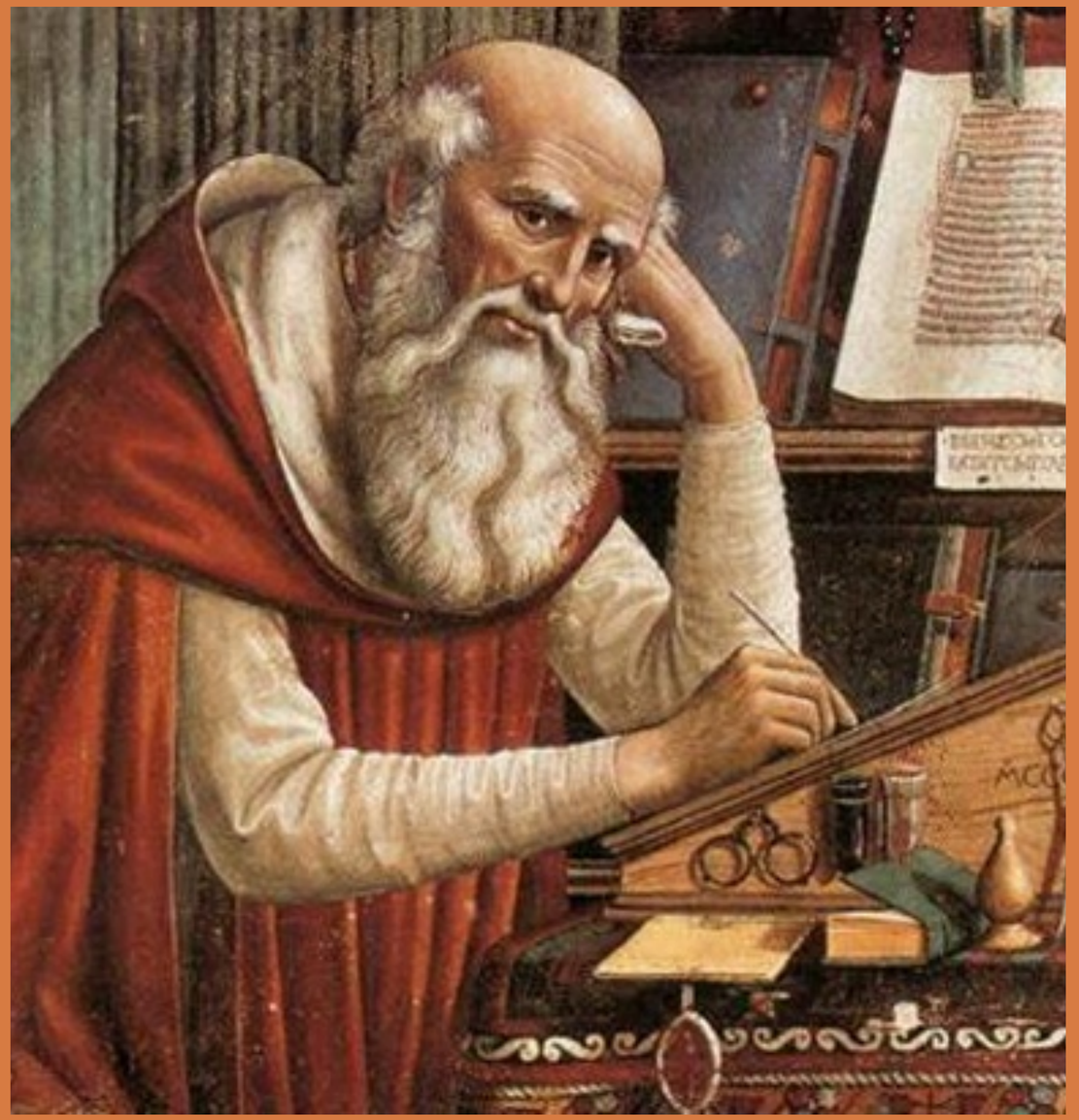


TO PREACH, TO REBUKE, TO CORRECT, TO EDIFY, TO CARE FOR INDIVIDUAL SOULS IS A GREAT BURDEN, GREAT WORK, GREAT LABOR. WHO WOULD NOT AVOID THAT LABOR? BUT THE GOSPEL FRIGHTENS ME.

–Augustine, on the duties of shepherding a flock

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

- The first thing he asked for was a sabbatical
  - He wanted to spend time getting ready for the task ahead
    - He wanted to spend time studying the Bible, praying, and weeping over his sin
- Ordination focused Augustine and gave him direction, purpose, and made him a servant of God
- He spent the rest of his life in Hippo, an unimportant town in N. Africa



THE WORKS OF AUGUSTINE

- Augustine's pastoral role was the impetus for the writings that made him the most influential Christian Author between Luther and the Apostle Paul
- His *Confessions* and the *City of God* are his two most famous works
  - He wrote over 5 million words (written and preached)
  - The equivalent of a 300 page book every year for 40 years
- He wrote against Heresies (the donatists, Manichaeism, Pelagianism)
- He wrote to comfort his parishioners (letters on various subjects)
- He wrote to comfort the people of God abroad (City of God, Confessions)



THE DEATH OF AUGUSTINE

- Augustine died in 430 in Hippo
- On his deathbed, he had the penitential psalms of David copied and placed on his wall so he could read them
  - Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
- He served the Lord and the church for many years, and the Lord still uses his works and life today for the sake of his people

