

Morning Prayer

Thursday, August 28



Opening Statement

Leader

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. *Habakkuk 2:20*

Confession of Sin

Leader

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Everyone together, all kneeling:

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Leader

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,
strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

The Invitatory

All stand.

Leader

Lord, open our lips.

Response

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Everyone

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

The Antiphon

The Spirit of the Lord renews the face of the Earth:
Come let us adore him.

Venite

Come let us sing to the Lord;*
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving*
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,*
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth,*
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,*
and his hands have molded the dry land.
Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,*
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.*
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!
Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And will be forever. Amen.
The Spirit of the Lord renews the face of the Earth:
Come let us adore him.

Psalm 18 Part I *Diligam te, Domine*

¹ I love you, O Lord my strength, *
O Lord my stronghold, my crag, and my haven.
² My God, my rock in whom I put my trust, *
my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge;
you are worthy of praise.
³ I will call upon the Lord, *
and so shall I be saved from my enemies.
⁴ The breakers of death rolled over me, *
and the torrents of oblivion made me afraid.
⁵ The cords of hell entangled me, *
and the snares of death were set for me.
⁶ I called upon the Lord in my distress *
and cried out to my God for help.
⁷ He heard my voice from his heavenly dwelling; *
my cry of anguish came to his ears.
⁸ The earth reeled and rocked; *
the roots of the mountains shook;
they reeled because of his anger.
⁹ Smoke rose from his nostrils
and a consuming fire out of his mouth; *
hot burning coals blazed forth from him.
¹⁰ He parted the heavens and came down *
with a storm cloud under his feet.
¹¹ He mounted on cherubim and flew; *
he swooped on the wings of the wind.
¹² He wrapped darkness about him; *

he made dark waters and thick clouds his pavilion.

¹³ From the brightness of his presence, through the clouds, *
burst hailstones and coals of fire.

¹⁴ The Lord thundered out of heaven; *
the Most High uttered his voice.

¹⁵ He loosed his arrows and scattered them; *
he hurled thunderbolts and routed them.

¹⁶ The beds of the seas were uncovered,
and the foundations of the world laid bare, *
at your battle cry, O Lord,
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

¹⁷ He reached down from on high and grasped me; *
he drew me out of great waters.

¹⁸ He delivered me from my strong enemies
and from those who hated me; *
for they were too mighty for me.

¹⁹ They confronted me in the day of my disaster; *
but the Lord was my support.

²⁰ He brought me out into an open place; *
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen. *Amen.*

The Old Testament Lesson

Reader

A reading from the book of 1 Kings 3:16-28

¹⁶Later, two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. ¹⁷The one woman said, "Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. ¹⁸Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were together; there was no one else with us in the house, only the two of us were in the house. ¹⁹Then this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. ²⁰She got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your servant slept. She laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. ²¹When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, I saw that he was dead; but when I looked at him closely in the morning, clearly it was not the son I had borne." ²²But the other woman said, "No, the living son is mine, and the dead son is yours." The first said, "No, the dead son is yours, and the living son is mine." So they argued before the king. ²³Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead'; while the other says, 'Not so! Your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'" ²⁴So the king said, "Bring me a sword," and they brought a sword before the king. ²⁵The king said, "Divide the living boy in two; then give half to the one, and half to the other." ²⁶But the woman whose son was alive said to the king because compassion for her son burned within her "Please, my lord, give her the living boy; certainly do not kill him!" The other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it." ²⁷Then the king responded: "Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother." ²⁸All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had

rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice.

The Word of the Lord.

Everyone

Thanks be to God.

Silence may be kept after the reading.

Canticle 8 The Song of Moses

Cantemus Domino

Exodus 15:1-6, 11-13, 17-18

I will sing to the Lord, for he is lofty and uplifted; *

the horse and its rider has he hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my refuge; *

the Lord has become my Savior.

This is my God and I will praise him, *

the God of my people and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a mighty warrior; *

Yahweh is his Name.

The chariots of Pharaoh and his army has he hurled into the sea; *

the finest of those who bear armor have been
drowned in the Red Sea.

The fathomless deep has overwhelmed them; *

they sank into the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in might; *

your right hand, O Lord, has overthrown the enemy.

Who can be compared with you, O Lord, among the gods? *

who is like you, glorious in holiness,

awesome in renown, and worker of wonders?

You stretched forth your right hand; *

the earth swallowed them up.

With your constant love you led the people you redeemed; *

with your might you brought them in safety to
your holy dwelling.

You will bring them in and plant them *

on the mount of your possession,

The resting-place you have made for yourself, O Lord, *

the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hand has established.

The Lord shall reign *

for ever and for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

The New Testament Lesson

Reader

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 27:27-44

²⁷When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. ²⁸So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. ³⁰But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had

lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow, ³¹Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³²Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift. ³³Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. ³⁴Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads." ³⁵After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves. ³⁷(We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship.) ³⁸After they had satisfied their hunger, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea. ³⁹In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. ⁴⁰So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. ⁴¹But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. ⁴²The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; ⁴³but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, ⁴⁴and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

The Word of the Lord.

Everyone

Thanks be to God.

Silence may be kept after the reading.

Canticle 19 The Song of the Redeemed

Magna et mirabilia

Revelation 15:3-4

O ruler of the universe, Lord God,
great deeds are they that you have done, *
surpassing human understanding.
Your ways are ways of righteousness and truth, *
O King of all the ages.
Who can fail to do you homage, Lord,
and sing the praises of your Name? *
for you only are the holy One.
All nations will draw near and fall down before you, *
because your just and holy works have been revealed.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel

Reader

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark 14:12-26

¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations

for us there.” ¹⁶So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” ²⁰He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

²²While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

²⁶When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Word of the Lord.

Everyone

Thanks be to God.

Silence may be kept after the reading.

The Apostles' Creed

All stand

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. *Amen.*

Suffrages

Show us your mercy, O Lord;
And grant us your salvation.

Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
Let your people sing with joy.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in you can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under your care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;
Your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

The Collect of the Day

Leader

Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Collect of Commemoration

O loving God, you called your servant Aidan from the cloister to re-establish the Christian mission in northern England: Grant that we, following his example, may use what you have given us for the relief of human need, and may persevere in commending the saving Gospel of our Redeemer Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us, following the example of your servant, Augustine of Hippo, so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve

you, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Trinity Cycle of Prayer

Patrick Miller

Let us pray now for our own needs and those of others.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Benediction

Leader

Let us bless the Lord.

Everyone

Thanks be to God.

Leader

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen. Romans 15:13*

The Commemoration

The Gospel first came to the northern English in 627, When King Edwin of Northumbria was converted by a mission from Canterbury led by Bishop Paulinus, who established his see at York. Edwin's death in battle in 632 was followed by a severe pagan reaction. A year later, Edwin's exiled nephew Oswald gained the kingdom, and proceeded at once to restore the Christian mission.

During his exile, Oswald had lived at Columba's monastery of Iona (see 9 June), where he had been converted and baptized. Hence he sent to Iona, rather than to Canterbury, for missionaries. The first monk to preach was a man named Cormac, who had no success, and returned to Iona to complain that the Northumbrians were a savage and unteachable race. A young monk named Aidan responded, "Perhaps you were too harsh with them, and they might have responded better to a gentler approach." At this, Aidan found himself appointed to lead a second expedition to Northumbria. He centered his work, not at York, but in imitation of his home monastery, on Lindisfarne, an island off the northeast coast of England, now often called Holy Isle. With his fellow monks and the English youths whom he trained, Aidan restored Christianity in Northumbria, King Oswald often serving as his interpreter, and extended the mission through the midlands as far south as London.

Aidan died at the royal town of Bamburgh, 31 August, 651. The historian Bede said of him: "He neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately to the poor whatever was given him by kings or rich men of the world. He traversed both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity.

Wherever on his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if pagans, to embrace the mystery of the faith; or if they were believers, he sought to strengthen them in their faith and stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works."

Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus) was one of the greatest theologians of Western Christianity. (In his day the Mediterranean world consisted of an Eastern, Greek-speaking half and a Western, Latin-speaking half, with different ways of looking at things, and different habits of thought.) He was born 13 November 354 in North Africa, about 45 miles south of the Mediterranean, in the town of Tagaste in Numidia (now Souk-Ahras in Algeria), near ancient Carthage (modern Tunis). His mother, Monnica, was a Christian (see 4 May), and his father for many years a pagan (although he became a Christian before his death). His mother undertook to bring him up as a Christian, and on one level he always found something attractive about Christ, but in the short run he was more interested in the attractions of sex, fame, and pride in his own cleverness. After a moderate amount of running around as a teen-ager, he took a mistress, who bore him a son when he was about eighteen. Theirs was a long-term relationship, apparently with faithfulness on both sides, and the modern reader is left wondering why he did not simply marry the girl. He never tells us this (and in fact never tells us her name), so that we can only guess. It seems likely that she was a freedwoman, and the laws forbade marriage between a free-born Roman citizen and a slave, or an ex-slave. When he was 19 and a student at Carthage, he read a treatise by Cicero that opened his eyes to the delights of philosophy. He was from the beginning a brilliant student, with an eager intellectual curiosity, but he never mastered Greek -- he tells us that his first Greek teacher was a brutal man who constantly beat his students, and Augustine rebelled and vowed never to learn Greek. By the time he realized that he really needed to know Greek, it was too late; and although he acquired a smattering of the language, he was never really at home in it. However, his mastery of Latin was another matter. He became an expert both in the eloquent use of the language and in the use of clever arguments to make his points. He became a teacher of rhetoric in Carthage, but was dissatisfied. It was the custom for students to pay their fees to the professor on the last day of the term, and many students attended faithfully all term, and then did not pay. In his late twenties, Augustine decided to leave Africa and seek his fortune in Rome.

For a long time Augustine was attracted by the teachings of Manicheism, named for Mani, a Persian who had preached kind of synthesis of Christianity with Zoroastrianism, the dominant religion of Persia. Zoroaster had taught the existence of a power of light, God, the supreme Creator, and of a dark and evil power that opposed him. On the Zoroastrian (Parsi) view, the dark power was a rebel against his creator, and doomed to ultimate defeat. Mani, on the other hand, was a thoroughgoing dualist, who taught that there are two gods of equal power and eternity, and that the universe is the scene of an unending battle between light and darkness, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, soul and body, etc. The Manicheans as they moved west into the Roman Empire adopted many traits of what is generically called Gnosticism. In particular, they advertised themselves as being not an alternative to Christianity but as the advanced version of Christianity, as the faith for the spiritually mature, the intellectually gifted. They claimed that their beliefs were based on reason rather than authority, and that they had answers for everything, at least as soon as the learner was sufficiently advanced to comprehend them. They differed from the classical Gnostics by not contrasting spirit with matter. On their view, everything was composed of material particles, but these were either light or dark. Since the mind was composed of light particles, imprisoned in the body, a cage made of dark particles, something like the Gnostic contrast between spirit and matter was there. Members were divided into an inner circle, the "elect," who were expected to be celibate and vegetarian, so as to avoid all those dark particles, and the "learners," of whom considerably less was expected. Augustine signed up as a learner. He was at first completely captivated, but then met with a series of disappointments. The rank and file of the movement

did not seem to be very clear thinkers. He met the leaders, who were advertised as the Towering Intellects of the Ages, and was not impressed.

Augustine prospered in Rome, and was eventually appointed chief professor of rhetoric for the city of Milan, at that time the capital city of the Empire in the West. It should be noted that this was an extremely prestigious appointment. In classical times, when laws were often made and issues voted on by huge public assemblies, when even juries typically had several hundred members, and when a man's public influence, or even on occasion his life, depended on his ability to sway large audiences, rhetoric -- the art of manipulating an audience -- was a skill that few men thought they could afford to neglect. (Socrates was one of the few, and we know what happened to him!) The art, at first intensely practical, had by Augustine's day become a display form admired for its own sake. However, the admiration was there. Every lawyer, arguing a case, was expected to give an eloquent speech, full of classical allusions and standard rhetorical flourishes. And Augustine was at the top of the field.

In Milan Augustine met the bishop Ambrose, and was startled to find in him a reasonableness of mind and belief, a keenness of thought, and an integrity of character far in excess of what he had found elsewhere. For the first time, Augustine saw Christianity as a religion fit for a philosopher.

Soon after his arrival in Milan, Augustine was plunged into two crises. First, his mother arrived from Africa, and persuaded him that he ought to give up his mistress and get married. He agreed to a betrothal to a suitable young lady; but his betrothed was too young for immediate marriage, and so the actual wedding was postponed for two years. Meanwhile the mistress had been sent back to Africa. Augustine, not ready for two years of sexual abstinence, lapsed back into promiscuity.

The second crisis was that Augustine became a neo-Platonist. Plato, as interpreted by his later spokesmen, in particular by Plotinus, taught that only God is fully real, and that all other things are degenerations in varying degrees from the One--things are progressively less good, less spiritual, and less real as one goes rung by rung down the cosmic ladder. By contemplating spiritual realities, directing one's attention first to one's own mind and then moving up the ladder rung by rung to the contemplation of God, one acquires true wisdom, true self-fulfilment, true spirituality, and union with God, or the One. Augustine undertook this approach, and believed that he had in fact had an experience of the presence of God, but found that this only made him more aware of the gulf between what he was and what he realized that he ought to be.

Meanwhile, he continued to hear Bishop Ambrose. And finally, partly because Ambrose had answers for his questions, partly because he admired Ambrose personally, and chiefly (or so he believed) because God touched his heart, he was converted to Christianity in 386 and was baptised by Ambrose at Easter of 387. About 12 years later he wrote an account of his life up to a time shortly after his conversion, a book called the [*Confessions*](#), a highly readable work available in English. Ostensibly an autobiography, it is more an outpouring of penitence and thanksgiving.

In a well-known chapter, Augustine describes his conversion. His intellectual objections had lost their force, and he was at a point where the difficulty was that he seemed unable to make a commitment to living chastely, or unable to make a commitment, period. He heard of a group of young men, Christians, one of whom decided to become a desert hermit, whereupon the others, one at a time, made the same commitment, encouraged and inspired by the examples of those in the group who had already done so. (In many circles at that time, becoming a desert hermit had the same overtones as joining the Peace Corps did for many young persons in the 1960's, or joining the armed forces for many in the weeks immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor.) Augustine went aside to ponder the question, "How is it that these young men can make so drastic a commitment, and I cannot take even the first step of declaring myself a

Christian?" He heard what seemed to be a child's voice coming from next door, saying over and over, "Tolle, lege; tolle, lege," or, "Pick up and read; pick up and read." Since he could not think of any reason why a child would be saying that, he took it as an omen, and picked up a copy of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. As he opened it, his eye fell on the end of the thirteenth chapter: The night is far gone, the day is at hand.

Let us then cast off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day,
not in reveling and drunkenness,
not in debauchery and licentiousness,
not in quarreling and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the flesh,
to gratify its desires.

As he read, he experienced this as God speaking directly to him, convicting him of his past sins, and offering him forgiveness; calling him to amend his life, and promising him the grace and power to do it. He burst into tears, and surrendered. Later, he wrote:

Late have I loved Thee, O Lord; and behold,
Thou wast within and I without, and there I sought Thee.
Thou was with me when I was not with Thee.
Thou didst call, and cry, and burst my deafness.
Thou didst gleam, and glow, and dispell my blindness.
Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace.
For Thyself Thou hast made us,
and restless our hearts until in Thee they find their ease.
Late have I loved Thee, Thou Beauty ever old and ever new.
Thou hast burst my bonds asunder;
unto Thee will I offer up an offering of praise.

Although written as an account of his life, the [*Confessions*](#) keeps digressing into speculations about the nature of time, the nature of causality, the nature of free will, the motives of human action, etc.

Louis deWohl has written a novel about Augustine, based mostly on the Confessions, called *The Restless Flame*. It is an excellent introduction to the man.

After his conversion, Augustine went back to his native Africa in 387, where he was ordained a priest in 391 and consecrated bishop of Hippo in 396. It was not his intention to become a priest. He was visiting the town of Hippo (or Hippo Regius, now Annaba, 36:55 N 7:47 E), was in church hearing a sermon, and the bishop, without warning, said, "This congregation is in need of more priests, and I believe that the ordination of Augustine would be to the glory of God." Willing hands dragged Augustine forward, and the bishop together with his council of priests laid hands on Augustine and ordained him to the priesthood. (The experience may have colored Augustine's perception of such questions as, "Does a man come to God because he has chosen to do so, or because God has chosen him, and drawn him to Himself?") A few years later, when the Bishop of Hippo died, Augustine was chosen to succeed him.

He was a diligent shepherd of his flock, but he also found time to write extensively. He was an admirer of Jerome, and wrote him a letter hoping to establish a friendship, but the letter went astray. (In those days there was no public post office, and if you wanted to send a letter to a friend in Athens, you entrusted it to someone you knew who was travelling to Athens, or at least in that general direction, with instructions to deliver it or pass it on to someone else who would oblige.) Jerome did not get the letter, and the contents became public knowledge before he heard of it. Augustine, in addition to saying how much he admired Jerome, had offered some

criticisms of something Jerome had written. Jerome was furious, and came close to writing Augustine off altogether. However, Augustine wrote him a second letter, apologizing and explaining what had happened, and Jerome was mollified. They had a long and intellectually substantial correspondence.

Augustine's written output was vast, and largely responsible for the fact that the entry for him in the index of the Encyclopedia Britannica is more than a column long. His surviving works (and it is assumed that the majority did not survive) include 113 books and treatises, over 200 letters, and over 500 sermons. His work greatly influenced Luther and Calvin, to the point where for a while Roman Catholic speakers and writers were wary of quoting him lest they be suspected of Protestant tendencies.

We have already mentioned his *Confessions*. A second great work of his is the book, *De Civitatae Dei* ([*The City of God*](#)). This was written after Rome had been sacked by invaders led by Alaric the Visigoth. It is a reply to those who said that the Roman Empire was falling apart because the Christians had taken over; he discusses the work of God in history, and the relation between the Christian as citizen of an earthly commonwealth and the Christian as citizen of Heaven.

His third great work is his *De Trinitate* ([*On the Trinity*](#)). Here, he discusses the doctrine of the Trinity by undertaking to compare the mind of man with the mind of God, since man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Augustine begins by pointing out a Trinitarian structure in the act of knowing something. He continues by pointing out a Trinitarian structure in the act of self-awareness. He concludes by pointing out a Trinitarian structure in the act of religious contemplation by which man sees himself as made in the image of God.

Augustine and the Donatists

Almost a century before Augustine was born, the Church in Africa had been torn apart by the Donatist controversy. For a brief account of this controversy (and the Pelagian and other controversies of the day), but a longer one than I am prepared to give here, I refer the reader to the relevant section of the book, [*Sketches of Church History*](#), by Canon Robertson.

During the persecution of the Church by the Emperor Decius, some Christian clergymen in Africa, or so it was alleged, had stood firm against threat of torture, imprisonment and death more consistently and nobly than others. The Donatists maintained that their clergy derived their ordinations from clergy with very good records of constancy under persecution, and that they were the Church of the Martyrs, as opposed to the Church of the Sell-outs, which was everybody else. They further held that sacraments received at the hands of unworthy ministers were of no value. Or at least it seems that they held this. Augustine had a long correspondence and controversy with them, and at one point they apparently replied that they did not hold this, to which Augustine replied, "In that case, will you kindly tell me what the controversy is all about, and what you and I have been debating for the last eighteen months, and what your bishops and ours have been out of fellowship with each other about for the last century?" The controversy dragged on, with part of the dispute historical (whether Bishop so-and-so, now seventy years dead, had really done what he was accused of doing), and part theological. It seems clear that the Donatists, at least most of the time, argued that the holiness of the Church depended on the holiness of its members, especially its clergy. Against them, Augustine maintained that the holiness of the Church is not derived from the average level of virtue of its individual members, but is derived from the Holiness of its Head, who is Christ.

Augustine and the Pelagians

In Augustine's day, a man from Britain named Morgan, or in Latin Pelagius (means "islander" -- consider the words "pelagic" and "archipelago"), began to preach, denouncing what he saw as a slackening of moral standards. He saw professed Christians living less than exemplary lives, and offering human frailty as an excuse. His reply was: "Nonsense. God has given you free will. You can choose to follow the example of Adam, or you can choose to follow the example of

Christ. God has given everyone the grace he needs to be good. If you are not good, you simply need to try harder." Augustine asked him about original sin, and he replied that there is no such thing. Augustine asked him why, in that case, it was the universal custom to baptize infants, and he had no answer. Augustine saw the teaching of Pelagius as totally undermining the doctrine that God is the ultimate source of all good, and encouraging the virtuous and well-behaved Christian to feel that he had earned God's approval by his own efforts. Pelagius was condemned by Pope Innocent I, and then re-instated by Pope Zosimus. Augustine refused to accept the judgement of Zosimus, and ultimately won the day.

Near the end of his life, the Vandals, a barbarian people with a reputation for wanton destructiveness (hence our modern term "vandal"), who had earlier invaded Spain from the north and settled down there (hence the province of Spain called "Andalusia"), became involved in a civil war in Northern Africa, and their troops invaded Africa in huge numbers. The leader of the losing side took refuge in the town of Hippo, and the Vandals were besieging the town (which they ultimately captured) when Augustine, bishop of Hippo, died 28 August 430, aged 75.