

Daily Prayer

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys. We begin by saying

O Lord, open our lips.

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,

and teach me your paths.

The First Reading

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

1 John 4.7-16

The Psalm

This shall be written for those that come after, ♦
and a people yet unborn shall praise the Lord.

For he has looked down from his holy height; ♦
from the heavens he beheld the earth,

That he might hear the sighings of the prisoner ♦
and set free those condemned to die;

That the name of the Lord may be proclaimed in Zion ♦
and his praises in Jerusalem,

When peoples are gathered together ♦
and kingdoms also, to serve the Lord.

He has brought down my strength in my journey ♦
and has shortened my days.

I pray, 'O my God, do not take me in the midst of my days; ♦
your years endure throughout all generations.

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, ♦
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

'They shall perish, but you will endure; ♦
they all shall wear out like a garment.

'You change them like clothing, and they shall be changed; ♦
but you are the same, and your years will not fail.

'The children of your servants shall continue, ♦
and their descendants shall be established in your sight.'

The Gospel Reading

But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 23.8-12

In silence, we ask what the readings have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Word of the Lord

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, ♦
call upon him while he is near;

Let the wicked abandon their ways, ♦
and the unrighteous their thoughts;

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy; ♦
to our God, who will richly pardon.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, ♦
neither are your ways my ways,' says the Lord.

'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ♦
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

'As the rain and the snow come down from above, ♦
and return not again but water the earth,

'Bringing forth life and giving growth, ♦
seed for sowing and bread to eat,
'So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; ♦
it will not return to me fruitless,
'But it will accomplish that which I purpose, ♦
and succeed in the task I gave it.'

Isaiah 55.6-11

*Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.*

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God and
continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

We pray for the flourishing of God's gifts to his Church, saying:
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

God our Father, you give us gifts that we may work together
in the service of your Son:

bless the leaders of your Church,
that they may be firm in faith,
and humble before you.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who teach,
that they may increase our understanding,
and be open to your word for them.
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who minister healing,
that they may bring wholeness to others,
yet know your healing in themselves.
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those through whom you speak,
that they may proclaim your word in power,
yet open their ears to your gentle whisper.
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who work in your world today,
that in the complexity of their daily lives
they may live for you, fulfil your purposes,
and seek your kingdom first.
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who are uncertain of their gifts
and those who are powerless in this world's eyes,
that they may be made strong in your gift of the Holy Spirit.
Lord of the Church,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Our prayers conclude

God, ancient of days and for ever new,
you are 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.
Remember, we pray, your servant Augustine,
and grant us so to rejoice in his teaching and holy life,
that we may set our minds on the beauty of your truth
and order our desires by the rule of your Spirit;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

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

We conclude

May God grant to the world justice, peace and truth.

Amen.

Augustine—28 August

Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430—Memorial

Augustine of Hippo was a North African bishop who died in the year 430 — and a teacher of the faith whose thought has continued to shape the mind and imagination of the western Church ever since.

Augustine was raised a Christian but wandered away from the Church in his youth. His restless intellect and fierce ambition led him into a neo-Christian cult and from his small home town in North Africa to Carthage, then to Rome, and finally to the imperial capital of Milan. There he underwent a spiritual and intellectual crisis which brought him back to the Church; he was baptized at Milan in the year 387, at the age of thirty-three.

Shortly afterwards he resigned his post in the imperial government and returned to North Africa, where he hoped to live as a monk in company with his friends. But during a visit to the North African port of Hippo Regius he was seized by the congregation and forcibly ordained as a presbyter. A couple of years later he became their bishop and served them in this office until his death three and a half decades later.

There is hardly an aspect of Christian thought that Augustine's own thinking did not influence. But his work as a theologian grew out of his vocation as a pastor, and he usually would not address an issue unless it affected his flock or was raised by a correspondent. He was able to talk on many different levels at once, combining practical instruction, the interpretation of Scripture, and theological insights of rare speculative power in a style of writing and speaking which had few equals in its day.

Augustine also possessed enormous personal charm, a quality which made all sorts of people take pleasure in his company. This attractiveness may still be met and felt by those who choose to engage Augustine's life by reading what he wrote. In commemorating him today, the anniversary of his death in the year 430, we are not only remembering an influential intellect of the church. We are also honouring a whole person who gave his heart as well as his mind to the task of growing up, with others, "to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

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