

**CHURCH HISTORY: FROM PENTECOST TO THE GREAT SCHISM**  
**WEEK 6: ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGY**

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**Influence of St. Augustine**

Personal background – student of Dr. Frederick Van Fleteren, teacher of *Confessions*  
First great Church theologian, one of the two greatest theologians, with St. Thomas Aquinas

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Augustine quoted 85 times to Aquinas' 58 times

*Liturgy of the Hours*: Augustine: 82 readings (St. Ambrose and St. Leo the Great: 26 each)

Total output surviving: 113 books, 218 letters, 500+ sermons

Topics of writings: Scripture commentary, music, care of the dead, Church unity, the creed, fasting, lying, marriage, morality, patience, the immortality of the soul, the Trinity, just war

Theological influence: grace, original sin, theology of history, interpretation of Scripture

Monastic Rule of St. Augustine used by: Augustinians, Dominicans, Ursulines

**The Church and World of St. Augustine**

Manichaeism – Founded by Mani (c. 216-276), Persian teacher and mystic;

combination of Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, and Pauline Christianity; based on a primeval conflict between light and darkness – an equality between good and evil; the object of religion is to release the particles of light Satan had stolen from the world and had imprisoned in men's minds; Jesus, Buddha, the prophets, and Mani were sent by God to release these particles of light

Donatism – half of the Church in northern Africa belonged to this schismatic sect that refused to recognize the ordination of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage in 311 because he had been consecrated by a *traditor* who had betrayed the Christian faith during Roman persecution; any sacraments conferred by *traditors* were invalid; rebaptized Catholics who joined with the Donatists

Pelagianism – named for Pelagius, British monk; taught that man can take the initial and fundamental steps toward salvation by his own efforts, apart from divine grace

The Church in northern Africa – c. 400, Christian and Roman; Christians in northern Africa were widespread, but divided; at least 400 bishops; rooted in the Roman empire, Roman literature, and Greek philosophy

### **Important Dates in St. Augustine's Life**

354 – Nov. 13, born at Thagaste  
372 – death of Patrick, birth of Adeodatus  
383 – travel to Rome  
386 – (July) conversion in Milan  
387 – April 23, baptized at Milan  
388 – Monica's death; return to Africa  
389 – Adeodatus' death  
391 – ordained priest at Hippo  
395 – bishop of Hippo  
397-400 – writes *Confessions*  
413-426 – writes *The City of God*  
430 – August 28, dies at Hippo

### **Confessions: St. Augustine's Biography and Conversion**

*\*\*Note: Book (I), chapter (i), and paragraph (1) citations are common to all modern editions of Confessions; page numbers refer to the Oxford UP edition translated by Henry Chadwick.\*\**

Context – written shortly after becoming Bishop to give an explanation of his life's journey and to refute concerns about his faith, the validity of his baptism, and the sincerity of his conversion

Style – a long prayer addressed to God

*Confessions II. i (1), p. 24: Address to God*

Content – Books I-IX: autobiography; Book X: Memory; Book XI: Time; Book XII: Creation; Book XIII: Genesis

### **Family**

Father – Patrick (Patricius); pagan until baptized on his deathbed

*Confessions IX. ix (19), p. 168-169: Monica and Patrick's Marriage*

Mother – Monica (Monnica); Christian, brought up Augustine as a catechumen

*Confessions I. xi (17), p. 13-14: On becoming a Catechumen and the faith of his family*

Monica's "weakness for wine;" patron of alcoholics

*Confessions IX. Viii (18), p. 167-168: Monica rebuked*

Monica's death at Ostia, the port of Rome (buried at Santa Maria d'Aracoeli, Rome)

*Confessions IX. xii (29, 30), p. 174-175: Monica dies*

*Confessions IX. xiii (37), p. 178: Remembrance of Monica and Patrick*

### Early Life

Episode of the Pear Tree: Reflection on good and evil

*Confessions II. ix (17), p. 33-34: Alone I would not have done it*

Student of literature and philosophy: Virgil, Cicero; becomes Manichaeian

*Confessions IV. i (1), p. 52: Manichaeian Life*

Friendship: distraught over death of a friend, reflects on value of friendship

*Confessions IV. vii (12), p. 59-60: Mourning a lost friend*

*Confessions IV. viii (13), p. 60-61: "What we love in friends"*

Augustine takes a concubine and fathers a child: Adeodatus

*Confessions II. I (1), p. 24: Adolescent urgings*

*Confessions IV. ii (2), p. 53: The concubine*

### Development of Faith and Conversion

Travel to Rome: as a teacher of rhetoric

*Confessions V. viii (14), p. 80: Students in Rome and Carthage*

*Confessions V. ix (16), p. 82-83: Physical sickness vs. spiritual sickness*

Move to Milan as a teacher of rhetoric and introduction to Ambrose

*Confessions V. xiii (23), p. 87-88: Ambrose the bishop*

*Confessions VI. xv (25), p. 109: Too many women*

Conversion in a garden in Milan

*Confessions VIII. Xii (28-29), p. 152-153: Pick up and read*

*Confessions IX. vi (14), p. 163-164: Baptism*

### St. Augustine's Life after *Confessions* and the Development of Theology

Return to Africa; ordained priest and then bishop

Worked to combat Donatism and Pelagianism as a way to preserve the faith and unify the Church

Developed doctrine of original sin and salvation by grace in response to Pelagius:  
nature was created good by God, something went wrong, it was Adam's fault, not  
God's, Christ repairs that wrong through grace  
Spent considerable time preparing catechumens for baptism and explaining the  
Christian faith to the newly-baptized  
Developed a theology for a Church of sinners, not saints

### **St. Augustine's Death**

Vandals reached northern Africa in 429 and began to siege the city of Hippo;  
Augustine fell ill with a fever as the Vandals were attacking the city; he asked to be  
left alone so he could pray; he asked for large-print copies of the penitential  
Psalms to be put on the walls of his cell so that he could pray, repenting of his  
sins; he died on August 28, 430; Hippo fell to the Vandals a year later  
St. Augustine is buried in Pavia, Italy