**Life of Augustine**

Never learned Greek.

**Chief Events in the Life of St. Augustin. (From the NPNF)**

354. Augustin born at Tagaste, Nov. 13; his parents, Patricius and Monnica; shortly afterwards enrolled among the Catechumens.

370. Returns home from studying Rhetoric at Madaura, after an idle childhood, and from idleness falls into dissipation and sin.

371. Patricius dies; Augustin supported at Carthage by his mother, and his friend Romanianus; forms an illicit connection.

372. Birth of his son Adeodatus.

373. Cicero's Hortensius awakens in him a strong desire for true wisdom.

374. He falls into the Manichæan heresy, and seduces several of his acquaintances into it. His mother's earnest prayers for him; she is assured of his recovery.

376. Teaches Grammar at Tagaste; but soon returns to Carthage to teach Rhetoric-gains a prize.

379. Is recovered from study of Astrology--writes his books De pulchro et apto.

382. Discovers the Manichæans to be in error, but falls into scepticism. Goes to Rome to teach Rhetoric.

385. Removes to Milan; his errors gradually removed through the teaching of Ambrose, but he is held back by the flesh; becomes again a Catechumen.

386. Studies St. Paul; converted through a voice from heaven; gives up his profession; writes against the Academics; prepares for Baptism.

387. Is baptized by Bishop Ambrose, with his son Adeodatus. Death of his mother, Monnica, in her fifty-sixth year, at Ostia.

388. Aug. revisits Rome, and then returns to Africa. Adeodatus, full of promise, dies.

389. Aug. against his will ordained Presbyter at Hippo by Valerius, its Bishop.

392. Writes against the Manichæans.

394. Writes against the Donatists.

395. Ordained Assistant Bishop to Valerius, toward the end of the year.

396. Death of Bishop Valerius. Augustin elected his successor.

397. Aug. writes the Confessions, and the De Tinitate against the Arians.

398. Is present at the fourth Council of Carthage.

402. Refutes the Epistle of Petilianus, a Donatist.

404. Applies to Cæcilianus for protection against the savageness of the Donatists.

408. Writes De urbis Romæ obsidione.

411. Takes a prominent part in a conference between the Catholic Bishops and the Donatists.

413. Begins the composition of his great work De Civitate Dei, completed in 426.

417. Writes De gestis Palæstinæ synodi circa Pelagium.

420. Writes against the Priscillianists.

424. Writes against the Semipelagians.

426. Appoints Heraclius his successor.

428. Writes the Retractations.

429. Answers the Epistles of Prosper and Hilary.

430. Dies Aug. 28, in the third month of the siege of Hippo by the Vandals.

**His Works - The list from NPNF**

* [**Volume I**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-01/TOC.htm) **-** Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work, Confessions, Letters
* [**Volume II**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-02/TOC.htm) **-** The City of God, On Christian Doctrine
* [**Volume III**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-03/TOC.htm) **-** On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises
* [**Volume IV**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-04/TOC.htm) **-** The Anti-Manichaean Writings, The Anti-Donatist Writings
* [**Volume V**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-05/TOC.htm) **-** Anti-Pelagian Writings
* [**Volume VI**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-06/TOC.htm) **-** Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels
* [**Volume VII**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-07/TOC.htm) **-** Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies
* [**Volume VIII**](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF1-08/TOC.htm) **-** Expositions on the Psalms

**Enchiridion:** You are anxious, you say, that I should write a sort of handbook for you, which you might always keep beside you, containing answers to the questions you put, viz.: what ought to be man's chief end in life; what he ought, in view of the various [heresies](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm), chiefly to avoid; to what extent religion is supported by reason; what there is in reason that lends no support to [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm), when [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm) stands alone; what is the starting-point, what the goal, of religion; what is the sum of the whole body of doctrine; what is the sure and proper foundation of the catholic [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm). Now, undoubtedly, you will [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) the answers to all these questions, if you [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) thoroughly the proper objects of [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm), hope, and [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm). For these must be the chief, nay, the exclusive objects of pursuit in religion. He who speaks against these is either a total stranger to the name of [Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm), or is a [heretic](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm).

**Confession**

Restlessness: I.1. Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end.[121](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.vi.I_1.I.html#fnf_vi.I_1.I-p3.2) And man, being a part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee, man, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that Thou “resistest the proud,”[122](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.vi.I_1.I.html#fnf_vi.I_1.I-p4.2)—yet man, this part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee.[123](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.vi.I_1.I.html#fnf_vi.I_1.I-p5.3) Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.[124](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.vi.I_1.I.html#fnf_vi.I_1.I-p6.2) Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first, to call on Thee, or to praise Thee; and likewise to know Thee, or to call upon Thee. But who is there that calls upon Thee without knowing Thee? For he that knows Thee not may call upon Thee as other than Thou art. Or perhaps we call on Thee that we may know Thee.

**Retraction on the Confessions:**

Opinion of Augustin Concerning His Confessions, as Embodied in His Retractations II. 6

1. "The Thirteen Books of my Confessions whether they refer to my evil or good, praise the just and good God, and stimulate the heart and mind of man to approach unto Him. And, as far as pertaineth unto me, they wrought this in me when they were written, and this they work when they are read. What some think of them they may have seen, but that they have given much pleasure, and do give pleasure, to many brethren I know. From the First to the Tenth they have been written of myself; in the remaining three, of the Sacred Scriptures, from the text, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' even to the rest of the Sabbath (Gen. i. 1, ii. 2)."

2. "In the Fourth Book, when I acknowledged the distress of my mind at the death of a friend, saying, that our soul, though one, had been in some manner made out of two; and therefore, I say, perchance was I afraid to die lest he should die wholly whom I had so much loved (chap. vi.);--this seems to me as if it were a light declamation rather than a grave confession, although this folly may in some sort be tempered by that perchance' which follows. And in the Thirteenth Book (chap. xxxii.) what I said, viz.: that the firmament was made between the spiritual upper waters, and the corporeal lower waters,' was said without due consideration; but the thing is very obscure."

[In Ep. ad Darium, Ep. ccxxxi. c. 6, written a.d. 429, Augustin says: "Accept, my son, the books containing my Confessions which you desired to have. In these behold me that you may not praise me more than I deserve; there believe what is said of me, not by others, but by myself; there mark me, and see what I have been in myself, by myself; and if anything in me please you, join me in praising Him to whom, and not to myself, I desired praise to be given. For He hath made us, and not we ourselves' (Ps. l. 3). Indeed, we had destroyed ourselves, but He who made us has made us anew (qui fecit, refecit). When, however, you find me in these books, pray for me that I may not fail, but be perfected (ne deficiam, sed perficiar). Pray, my son, pray. I feel what I say; I know what I ask."--P. S.]

[De Dono Perseverantiæ, c. 20 (53): "Which of my smaller works could be more widely known or give greater pleasure than my Confessions? And although I published them before the Pelagian heresy had come into existence, certainly in them I said to my God, and said it frequently, Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou willest' (Conf. x. 29,31, 37). Which words of mine, Pelagius at Rome, when they were mentioned in his presence by a certain brother and fellow-bishop of mine, could not bear....Moreover in those same books...I showed that I was granted to the faithful and daily tears of my mother, that I should not perish. There certainly I declared that God by His grace converted the will of men to the true faith, not only when they had been turned away from it, but even when they were opposed to it."--P. S.]

**Conversion:** In class handouts.

**On the City of God - DO NOT NEED TO SHARE**

However, this great undertaking was at last completed in twenty-two books. Of these, the first five refute those who fancy that the polytheistic worship is necessary in order to secure worldly prosperity, and that all these overwhelming calamities have befallen us in consequence of its prohibition. In the following five books I address myself to those who admit that such calamities have at all times attended, and will at all times attend, the human race, and that they constantly recur in forms more or less disastrous, varying only in the scenes, occasions, and persons on whom they light, but, while admitting this, maintain that the worship of the gods is advantageous for the life to come. But that no one might have occasion to say, that though I had refuted the tenets of other men, I had omitted to establish my own, I devote to this object the second part of this work, which comprises twelve books, although I have not scrupled, as occasion offered, either to advance my own opinions in the first ten books, or to demolish the arguments of my opponents in the last twelve. Of these twelve books, the first four contain an account of the origin of these two cities—the city of God, and the city of the world. The second four treat of their history or progress; the third and last four, of their deserved destinies. *— Augustine, Retractions*

**Legacy in Orthodox Theology**

The [Fifth Ecumenical Council](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Fifth_Ecumenical_Council), held in Constantinople in A.D. 553, listed Augustine among other [Fathers of the Church](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Church_Fathers), though there is no unqualified endorsement of his [theology](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Theology&action=edit&redlink=1) mentioned (just as there is none for most saints of the Church):

*We further declare that we hold fast to the decrees of the four Councils, and in every way follow the holy Fathers,* [*Athanasius*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Athanasius_of_Alexandria)*,* [*Hilary*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Hilary_of_Poitiers)*,* [*Basil*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Basil_the_Great)*,* [*Gregory the Theologian*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Gregory_the_Theologian)*,* [*Gregory of Nyssa*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Gregory_of_Nyssa)*,* [*Ambrose*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Ambrose_of_Milan)*, Theophilus,* [*John (Chrysostom) of Constantinople*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/John_Chrysostom)*,* [*Cyril*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Cyril_of_Alexandria)*,* ***Augustine****, Proclus,* [*Leo*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Leo_the_Great) *and their writings on the true faith.*[[1]](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-14/Npnf2-14-111.htm) (emphasis added)

 In the acts of the [Sixth Ecumenical Council](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Sixth_Ecumenical_Council) (not yet translated into English), he is called the "most excellent and blessed Augustine" and is referred to as "the most wise teacher." In the Comnenian Council of Constantinople in 1166 he is referred to as "Ό Αγίος Αυγουστίνος - "Saint Augustine."

 Despite these acclamations, most of his works were not translated into Greek until *circa* 1360 by Demetrios Cydones and some Orthodox Christians identify errors in his theology—especially those in his [Triadology](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Triadology&action=edit&redlink=1) which gave rise to the [*Filioque*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Filioque) addition to the [Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Nicene-Constantinopolitan_Creed)—and regard him as being one of the major factors in the [Great Schism](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Great_Schism) between the Church in the East and in the West. Thus, there are those among the Orthodox who regard Augustine as a [heretic](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Heresy), although there has never been any conciliar condemnation of either him or his writings.

 More moderate views regard Augustine as (1) a theological writer who made too many mistakes to be included among the [Church Fathers](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Church_Fathers) but still a [saint](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Saint), (2) a theological writer among many in the early Church (but not a [saint](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Saint)), and (3) a theological writer with, perhaps, the title "Blessed" before his name.

**Doctrinal Concerns: Relation of East and West**

**Original Sin:** Inherited through the seed of man.

Man is therefore deprived of all good, due to being recipient of Adam’s sin.

 The problem was that Augustine did not read Greek but read a Latin version of the New Testament translated by Jerome, who mistranslated Romans 5:12. The KJV properly translates this verse as, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12). Many other English translations also properly translate this as “because all have sinned.” However, Augustine read Jerome’s Latin mistranslation which, instead of saying “*for that* all have sinned,” said, “*in whom* all sinned.” However, in the Greek “epi ho” never means “in whom.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Answer from OCA.org: While the Orthodox Church does accord Augustine of Hippo the title “saint” and recognizes the vast number of theological works he produced, Augustine was not as well known in the Christian East. His works were not translated into Greek until the 14th century; as such, he had little or no influence on mainstream Orthodox thought until 17th century Ukraine and 18th century Russia, primarily through the influence of western clergy and the establishment of theological schools which relied on Latin models with respect to curricula, text books, etc.

 With regard to original sin, the difference between Orthodox Christianity and the West may be outlined as follows:

 In the Orthodox Faith, the term “original sin” refers to the “first” sin of Adam and Eve. As a result of this sin, humanity bears the “consequences” of sin, the chief of which is death. Here the word “original” may be seen as synonymous with “first.” Hence, the “original sin” refers to the “first sin” in much the same way as “original chair” refers to the “first chair.”

 In the West, humanity likewise bears the “consequences” of the “original sin” of Adam and Eve. However, the West also understands that humanity is likewise “guilty” of the sin of Adam and Eve. The term “Original Sin” here refers to the condition into which humanity is born, a condition in which guilt as well as consequence is involved.

 In the Orthodox Christian understanding, while humanity does bear the consequences of the original, or first, sin, humanity does not bear the personal guilt associated with this sin. Adam and Eve are guilty of their willful action; we bear the consequences, chief of which is death.

 One might look at all of this in a completely different light. Imagine, if you will, that one of your close relatives was a mass murderer. He committed many serious crimes for which he was found guilty—and perhaps even admitted his guilt publicly. You, as his or her son or brother or cousin, may very well bear the consequences of his action—people may shy away from you or say, “Watch out for him—he comes from a family of mass murderers.” Your name may be tainted, or you may face some other forms of discrimination as a consequence of your relative’s sin. You, however, are not personally guilty of his or her sin.

 There are some within Orthodoxy who approach a westernized view of sin, primarily after the 17th and 18th centuries due to a variety of westernizing influences particularly in Ukraine and Russia after the time of Peter Mohyla. These influences have from time to time colored explanations of the Orthodox Faith which are in many respects lacking.

**Purgatory:** Because we continue to sin after choosing God, the soul needs to subsequently be purged.

Ad Simplicianum 1, 2, 16: "Therefore all men are . . . one condemned mass [massa damnata] of sin, that owes a debt of punishment to the divine and supreme justice. Whether it [the debt] be exacted, or whether it be condoned, there is no injustice."

City of God 21, 12: "Hence there is a condemned mass of the whole human race . . . so that no one would be freed from this just and due punishment except by mercy and undue grace; and so the human race is divided [into two parts] so that in some it may be shown what merciful grace can do, in others, what just vengeance can do. . . . In it [punishment] there are many more than in [mercy] so that in this way there may be shown what is due to all."

**Free Will:**

De gratia et libero arbitrio 16, 32: "It is certain that we will when we will; but He brings it about that we will good. . . . It is certain that we act when we act, but He brings it about that we act, providing most effective powers to the will."

Ibid. 6. 15: "If then your merits are God's gifts, God does not crown your merits as your merits, but as His gifts."

Pereverance of the Saints

**Predestination:**

Enchiridion 103: "When we hear and read in sacred Scripture that He wills all men to be saved . . . we must . . . so understand [it] . . . as if it were said that no man is saved except whom He wants [to be saved]. . . . Or certainly it was so said . . . not that there is no man whom He is unwilling to have saved, He who was unwilling to perform the wonders of miracles among those whom He says would have done penance it He had done them: but in such a way that we understand 'all men' to mean the whole human race, distributed into various categories: kings, private citizens, nobles, ordinary men, lofty, lowly, learned, unlearned. . . ."

Epistle 217, 6, 19: ". . . and so that which is said, 'God wills all men to be saved' although He is unwilling that so many be saved, is said for this reason: that all who are saved, are not saved except by His will."

**CHAPTER II.—*A Sketch of the Life of St. Augustin*.**

It is a venturesome and delicate undertaking to write one’s own life, even though that life be a masterpiece of nature and the grace of God, and therefore most worthy to be described. Of all autobiographies none has so happily avoided the reef of vanity and self-praise, and none has won so much esteem and love through its honesty and humility as that of St. Augustin.

 The “Confessions,” which he wrote in the forty-fourth year of his life, still burning in the ardor of his first love, are full of the fire and unction of the Holy Spirit. They are a sublime composition, in which Augustin, like David in the fifty-first Psalm, confesses to God, in view of his own and of succeeding generations, without reserve the sins of his youth; and they are at the same time a hymn of praise to the grace of God, which led him out of darkness into light, and called him to service in the kingdom of Christ.[1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p4.1) Here we see the great church teacher of all times “prostrate in the dust, conversing with God, basking in his love; his readers hovering before him only as a shadow.” He puts away from himself all honor, all greatness, all merit, and lays them gratefully at the feet of the All-merciful. The reader feels on every hand that Christianity is no dream nor illusion, but truth and life, and he is carried along in adoration of the wonderful grace of God.

 Aurelius Augustinus, born on the 13th of November, 354,[2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p6.2) at Tagaste, an unimportant village of the fertile province of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo Regius, inherited from his heathen father, Patricius,[3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p7.1) a passionate sensibility, from his Christian mother, Monnica (one of the noblest women in the history of Christianity, of a highly intellectual and spiritual cast, of fervent piety, most tender affection, and all-conquering love), the deep yearning towards God so grandly expressed in his sentence: “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee.”[4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p8.1) This yearning, and his reverence for the sweet and holy name of Jesus, though crowded into the background, attended him in his studies at the schools of Madaura and Carthage, on his journeys to Rome and Milan, and on his tedious wanderings through the labyrinth of carnal pleasures, Manichæan mock-wisdom, Academic skepticism, and Platonic idealism; till at last the prayers of his mother, the sermons of Ambrose, the biography [4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101/Page_4.html)of St. Anthony, and above all, the Epistles of Paul, as so many instruments in the hand of the Holy Spirit, wrought in the man of three and thirty years that wonderful change which made him an incalculable blessing to the whole Christian world, and brought even the sins and errors of his youth into the service of the truth.[5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p9.1)

 A son of so many prayers and tears could not be lost, and the faithful mother who travailed with him in spirit with greater pain than her body had in bringing him into the world,[6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p11.1) was permitted, for the encouragement of future mothers, to receive shortly before her death an answer to her prayers and expectations, and was able to leave this world with joy without revisiting her earthly home. For Monnica died on a homeward journey, in Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, in her fifty-sixth year, in the arms of her son, after enjoying with him a glorious conversation that soared above the confines of space and time, and was a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath-rest of the saints. If those moments, he says, could be prolonged for ever, they would more than suffice for his happiness in heaven. She regretted not to die in a foreign land, because she was not far from God, who would raise her up at the last day. “Bury my body anywhere, “was her last request, “and trouble not yourselves for it; only this one thing I ask, that you remember me at the altar of my God, wherever you may be.”[7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p12.1) Augustin, in his *Confessions*, has erected to Monnica a noble monument that can never perish.

 If ever there was a thorough and fruitful conversion, next to that of Paul on the way to Damascus, it was that of Augustin, when, in a garden of the Villa Cassiciacum, not far from Milan, in September of the year 386, amidst the most violent struggles of mind and heart—the birth-throes of the new life—he heard that divine voice of a child: “Take, read!” and he “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” ([Rom. xiii. 14](http://www.ccel.org/study/Romans_13%3A14)). It is a touching lamentation of his: “I have loved Thee late, Thou Beauty, so old and so new; I have loved Thee late! And lo! Thou wast within, but I was without, and was seeking Thee there. And into Thy fair creation I plunged myself in my ugliness; for Thou was with me, and I was not with Thee! Those things kept me away from Thee, which had not been, except they had been in Thee! Thou didst call, and didst cry aloud, and break through my deafness. Thou didst glimmer, Thou didst shine, and didst drive away my blindness. Thou didst breathe, and I drew breath, and breathed in Thee. I tasted Thee, and I hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burn for Thy peace. If I, with all that is within me, may once live in Thee, then shall pain and trouble forsake me; entirely filled with Thee, all shall be life to me.”

 He received baptism from Ambrose in Milan on Easter Sunday, 387, in company with his friend and fellow-convert Alypius, and his natural son Adeodatus (*given by God*). It impressed the divine seal upon the inward transformation. He broke radically with the world; abandoned the brilliant and lucrative vocation of a teacher of rhetoric, which he had followed in Rome and Milan; sold his goods for the benefit of the poor; and thenceforth devoted his rare gifts exclusively to the service of Christ, and to that service he continued faithful to his latest breath. After the death of his mother, whom he revered and loved with the most tender affection, he went a second time to Rome for several months, and wrote books in defence of true Christianity against false philosophy and against the Manichæan heresy. Returning to Africa, he spent three years, with his friends Alypius and Evodius, on an estate in his native Tagaste, in contemplative and literary retirement.

 Then, in 391, he was chosen presbyter against his will, by the voice of the people, which, as [5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101/Page_5.html)in the similar cases of Cyprian and Ambrose, proved to be the voice of God, in the Numidian maritime city of Hippo Regius (now Bona); and in 395 he was elected bishop in the same city. For eight and thirty years, until his death, he labored in this place, and made it the intellectual centre of Western Christendom.[8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p16.1)

 His outward mode of life was extremely simple, and mildly ascetic. He lived with his clergy in one house in an apostolic community of goods, and made this house a seminary of theology, out of which ten bishops and many lower clergy went forth. Females, even his sister, were excluded from his house, and could see him only in the presence of others. But he founded religious societies of women; and over one of these his sister, a saintly widow, presided.[9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p18.1) He once said in a sermon, that he had nowhere found better men, and he had nowhere found worse, than in monasteries. Combining, as he did, the clerical life with the monastic, he became unwittingly the founder of the Augustinian order, which gave the reformer Luther to the world. He wore the black dress of the Easter cœnobites, with a cowl and a leathern girdle. He lived almost entirely on vegetables, and seasoned the common meal with reading or free conversation, in which it was a rule that the character of an absent person should never be touched. He had this couplet engraved on the table:

 “Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

 Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.”

 He often preached five days in succession, sometimes twice a day, and set it as the object of his preaching, that all might live with him, and he with all, in Christ. Wherever he went in Africa, he was begged to preach the world of salvation.[10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p22.1) He faithfully administered the external affairs connected with his office, though he found his chief delight in contemplation. He was specially devoted to the poor, and, like Ambrose, upon exigency, caused the church vessels to be melted down to redeem prisoners. But he refused legacies by which injustice was done to natural heirs, and commended the bishop Aurelius of Carthage for giving back unasked some property which a man has bequeathed to the church, when his wife unexpectedly bore him children.

 Augustin’s labors extended far beyond his little diocese. He was the intellectual head of the North African and the entire Western church of his time. He took active interest in all theological and ecclesiastical questions. He was the champion of the orthodox doctrine against Manichæan, Donatist, and Pelagian. In him was concentrated the whole polemic power of the catholic church of the time against heresy and schism; and in him it won the victory over them.

 In his last years he took a critical review of his literary productions, and gave them a thorough sifting in his Retractations. His latest controversial works, against the Semi-Pelagians, written in a gentle spirit, date from the same period. He bore the duties of his office alone till his seventy-second year, when his people unanimously elected his friend Heraclius to be his assistant.

 The evening of his life was troubled by increasing infirmities of body and by the unspeakable wretchedness which the barbarian Vandals spread over his country in their victorious invasion, [6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101/Page_6.html)destroying cities, villages, and churches, without mercy, and even besieging the fortified city of Hippo.[11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p26.1) Yet he faithfully persevered in his work. The last ten days of his life he spent in close retirement, in prayers and tears and repeated reading of the penitential Psalms, which he can caused to be written on the wall over his bed, that he might have them always before his eyes. Thus with an act of penitence he closed his life. In the midst of the terrors of the siege and the despair of his people he could not suspect what abundant seed he had sown for the future.

 In the third month of the siege of Hippo, on the 28th of August, 430, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, in full possession of his faculties, and in the presence of many friends and pupils, he past gently and peacefully into that eternity to which he had so long aspired. “O how wonderful,” wrote he in his *Meditations*,[12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p28.1) “how beautiful and lovely are the dwellings of Thy house, Almighty God! I burn with longing to behold Thy beauty in Thy bridal-chamber.…O Jerusalem, holy city of God, dear bride of Christ, my heart loves thee, my soul has already long sighed for thy beauty!…The King of kings Himself is in the midst of thee, and His children are within thy walls. There are the hymning choirs of angels, the fellowship of heavenly citizens. There is the wedding-feast of all who from this sad earthly pilgrimage have reached thy joys. There is the far-seeing choir of the prophets; there the company of the twelve apostles; there the triumphant army of innumerable martyrs and holy confessors. Full and perfect love there reigns, for God is all in all. They love and praise, they praise and love Him evermore.…Blessed, perfectly and forever blessed, shall I too be, if, when my poor body shall be dissolved,… I may stand before my King and God, and see Him in His glory, as He Himself hath deigned to promise: ‘Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which I had with Thee before the world was.’” This aspiration after the heavenly Jerusalem found grand expression in the hymn *De gloria et gaudiis Paradisi:*

 “Ad perennis vitæ fontem mens sativit arida.”

 It is incorporated in the *Meditations* of Augustin, and the ideas originated in part with him, but were not brought into poetical form till long afterwards by Peter Damiani.[13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p31.1)

 He left no will, for in his voluntary poverty he had no earthly property to dispose of, except his library; this he bequeathed to the church, and it was fortunately preserved from the depredations of the Arian barbarians.[14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p33.1)

 Soon after his death Hippo was taken and destroyed by the Vandals.[15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p35.1) Africa was lost to the Romans. A few decades later the whole West-Roman empire fell in ruins. The culmination of the African church was the beginning of its decline. But the work of Augustin could not perish. His ideas fell like living seed into the soil of Europe, and produced abundant fruits in nations and countries of which he had never heard.[16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.iv.2.html#fnf_iv.2-p36.5)

**St Monica:** 322-387. Our venerable Mother Monica of Hippo was the mother of St. [Augustine](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Augustine_of_Hippo). Born in a Christian family, she quietly and patiently nurtured her son while he was enamored with pagan and heretical sects until through the influence of St. [Ambrose](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Ambrose_of_Milan) Augustine was baptized. She is commemorated on [May 4](http://orthodoxwiki.org/May_4).

1. https://biblicaltruthresources.wordpress.com/2013/06/03/on-original-sin-sinful-nature-and-romans-chapter-five-jesse-morrell/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)