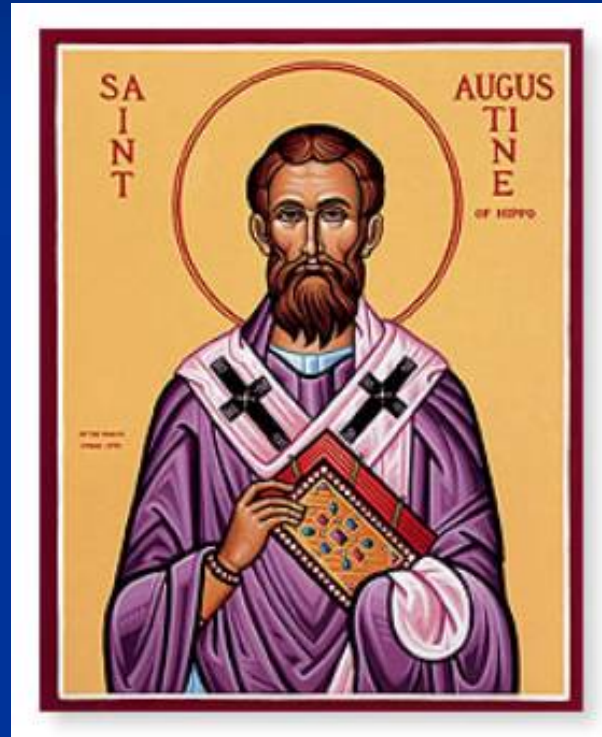
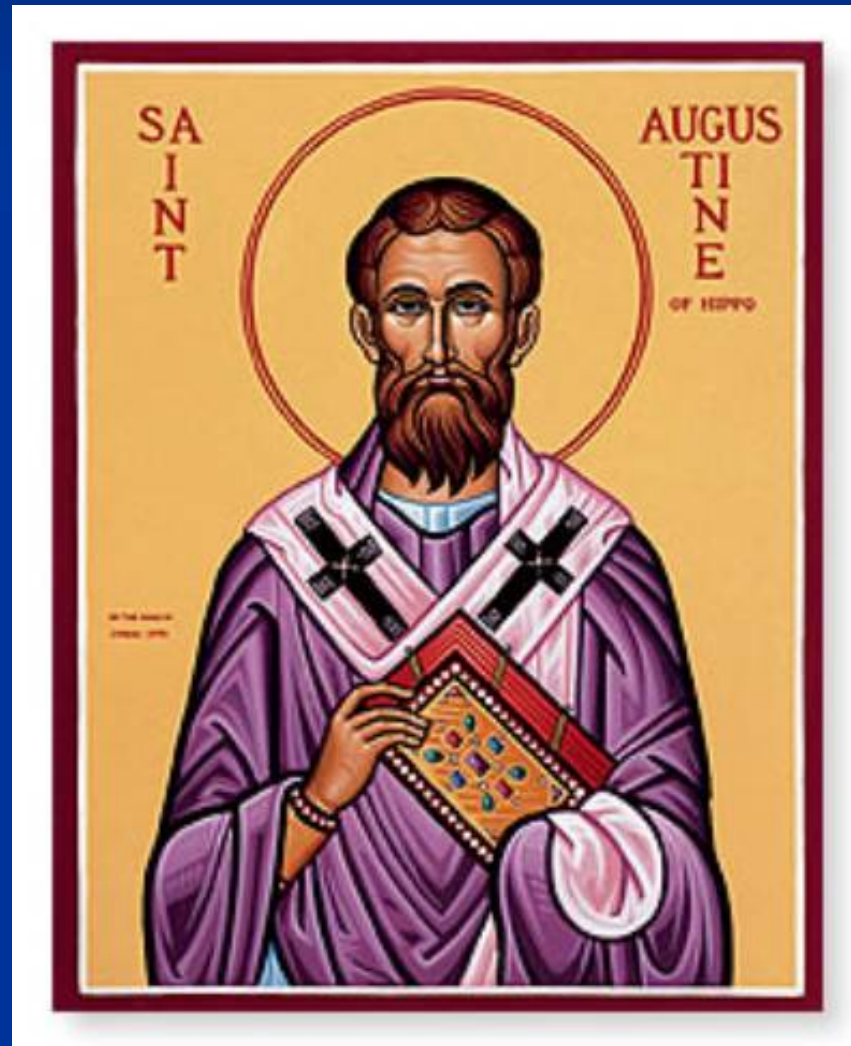


Saint Augustine



Bishop of Hippo

What do you know about St Augustine?



Why learn about St Augustine?

- Learn from his life
- Learn from his writings
- Who thinks they know more about Christ than St Augustine?
 - If not, you have something to learn from him.
- Christianity not like “science”:
 - We are not more advanced than the early fathers, just because we have had more time.

Roman Africa



Roman Africa

- North Africa part of the Roman Empire
- Capital of region was Carthage
- Prosperous, wealthy land owners, Italian estates
- Latin the spoken language
- Christianity the dominant religion
- However....outpost of true Roman civilisation
- Prosperous career to be found in Rome

Early Life

- Augustine born 354 AD in Tagaste
- Modern day Algeria
- Father - Patricius
- Mother - Monica



Early Education

- Early schooling in Tagaste - excelled
- 11 years old - Sent to school in Madaura
- Excelled, and needed to go to larger university in Carthage



Early Education

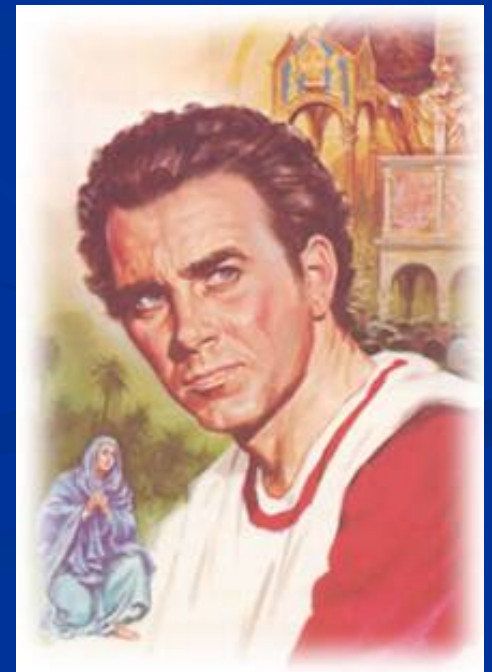
- Parents needed time to raise funds
- Augustine remained idle for 1 year in Tagaste:
 - 16 years old
 - Began life of revelries, drinking, theatre, sex
 - Damaging nature of idleness in youth:
 - “Arrived now at adolescence I burned for all the satisfactions of hell, and I sank to the animal in a succession of dark lusts: my beauty consumed away, and I stank in Your eyes, yet was pleasing in my own and anxious to please the eyes of men...” (*Confessions*)

Overcome by lust....

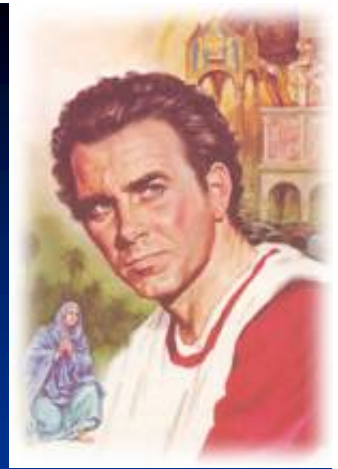
- “My one delight was to love and be loved...but from the muddy flesh and hot imagination of puberty mists steamed up to cloud and darken my heart so that I could not distinguish between the white light of love from the fog of lust. Both love and lust boiled within me to leave me half drowned in a whirlpool of abominable desires.”

Carthage

- Went to Carthage in 370 AD - 17 years old
- Commenced studies in rhetoric
- Continued pursuit of pleasure:
 - Began living with mistress (in total 10 years)
 - Had son - Adeodatus
- Monica pleaded with Bishop of Tagaste to intervene
- “Do not fear, as the son of so many tears will never perish”



Carthage



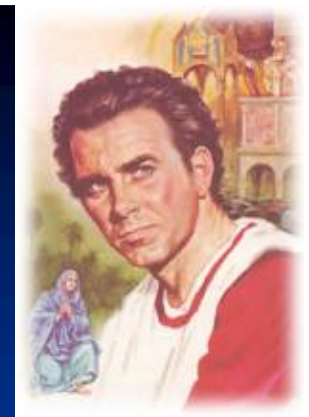
- Excelled in rhetoric
- Read book by Cicero - “Hortensius” (now lost)
 - Book designed to inspire a love of philosophy
 - Deep impact on Augustine
- Began lifelong pursuit of philosophy and truth
 - Critical aspect of his character

Augustine's tensions.....



- In search for the truth, Augustine had a number of philosophical tensions:
 1. Origin of Evil:
 - Where did evil come from?
 - Questioned Christianity:
 - If God is “good” how could His creation become evil?
 - Received inadequate answers from Christians
 - Augustine rejected Christianity as the faith of simple people with little understanding
 - “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...” 1 Pet 3:15

Augustine's tensions....



2. Purity:

- Realised that to be free from the slavery of worldly desires (i.e. purity) was desirable and good
- However, despite his desire for purity, he could not attain it, and derived pleasures from his worldly life
- In his “Confessions” prayed:
 - “Give me chastity and continence, but not yet”
- Sought answers to these 2 sources of tension:
 - What is the origin of evil?
 - Why is purity hard to attain, even though he wants it?
 - Rejected Christianity and looked to other religions

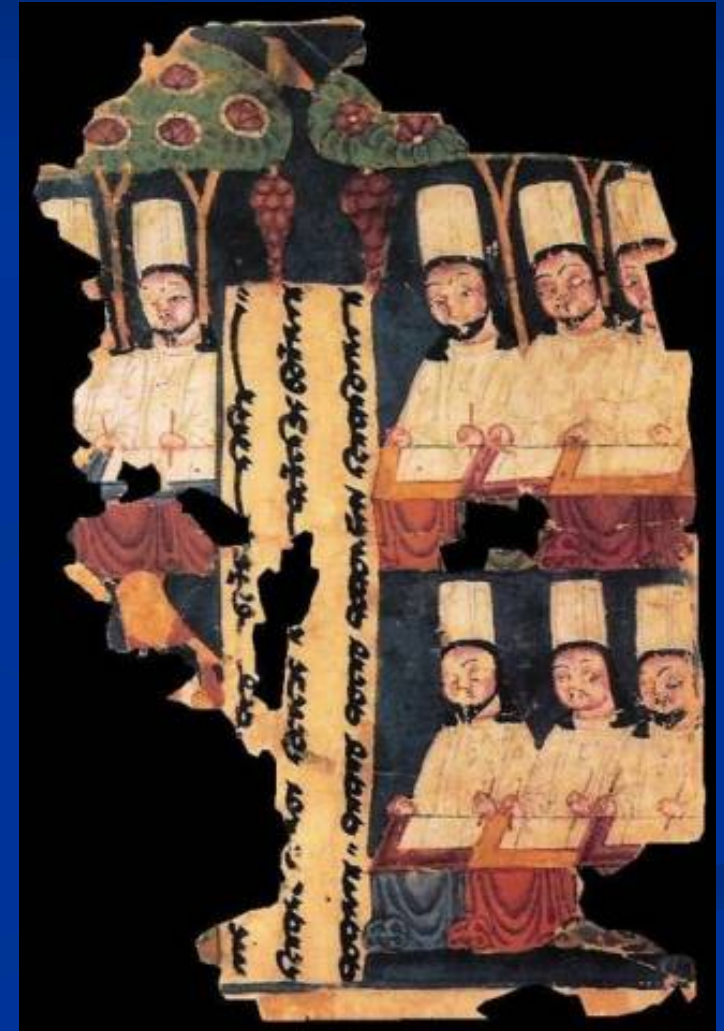
Manicheism

- Religion started in Persia about 250 AD by founder 'Mani'
- Spread throughout Roman Empire and China

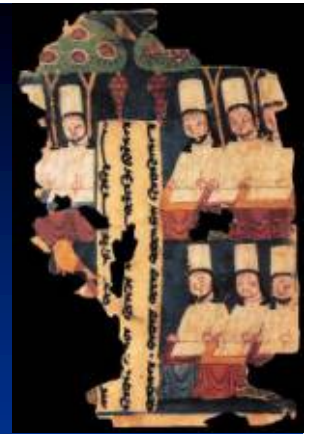


Manicheism

- Mani claimed to have received a revelation from a spirit
- Gave him perfect insight and completed the teachings of all other religions
- As spread, incorporated the teachings of religions of the region - eg. Christianity and Buddhism



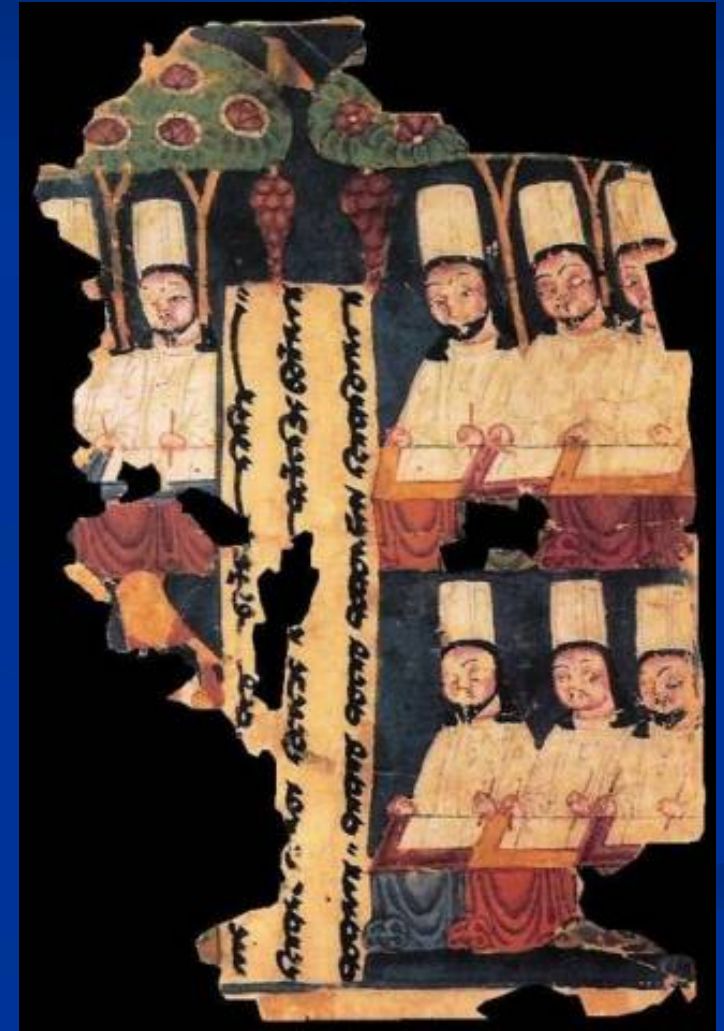
Manicheism



- Key beliefs:
 - No omnipotent 'good' power
 - Rather, two equal and opposite powers - good and evil
 - Humanity is the battleground
 - The soul, made of light, is good and the body, made of earth, is bad.
 - The soul is what defines the person, but it is ruled by the evil of the body - people not responsible for their actions
- Answers Augustine's two problems:
 - Origin of evil
 - Difficulty of purity

Manicheism

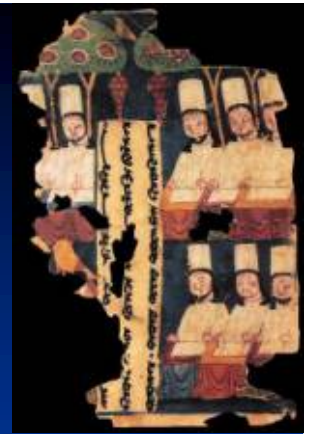
- “Elect”
 - Group of people who were ‘enlightened’ and were able to live perfect lives on earth
 - However, they could not defile themselves by touching earthly things, so the followers should serve them
 - To pluck fruit was to kill the fruit, so the elect should not do that, but rather the followers



Manicheism

- I was gradually led to believe such nonsense as that a fig wept when it was plucked, and that the tree which bore it shed tears of mother's milk. But if some sanctified member of the sect were to eat the fig - someone else, of course, would have committed the sin of plucking it - he would digest it and breathe it out again in the form of angels or even particles of God, retching them up as he groaned in prayer. These particles of the true and supreme God were supposed to be imprisoned in the fruit and could only be released by means of the stomach and teeth of one of the elect. I was foolish enough to believe that we should show more kindness to the fruits of the earth than to mankind, for whose use they were intended. If a starving man, not a Manichee, were to beg for a mouthful, they thought it a crime worthy of mortal punishment to give him one.

Manicheism



- Augustine's tensions were answered and he could continue living his life unchanged
 - NOTE – Beware when your 'truth' allows you to keep living the way you are
- He learned everything about Manicheism and became a strong proponent of the cult
- Converted many to the religion including his own friends

Rejection of Manicheism....

- Began to question Manicheism, but no one could answer his problems
- Told to wait until a Manichaen theologian, Faustus, arrived who would answer everything
 - “And for almost all those nine years I had looked forward with unbounded desire to the coming of this Faustus. For the others whom I had met, when they failed to answer my questions Promised me Faustus: on his arrival these things would be most lucidly explained...”

Rejection of Manicheism....

- When at last he came I found him a pleasant man of pleasant speech, who rolled off the same kind of things that the others had said with a great deal more charm....
- I mentioned certain questions that concerned me, and I found at once that the man was not learned And when I realised I began to despair of his being able to clarify the questions that troubled me...
- Augustine ultimately rejected Manicheism....

Career → Rome

- Applied his energy to his career
- He started a grammar school in Tagaste, then Carthage → highly successful
- Moved to Rome:
 - Went in middle of night with mistress and son
 - Very successful scholar in Rome: became noted as a great intellectual



Career → Milan



- 384 AD (30yo) offered job as professor of rhetoric in the court of Milan
 - Highly prestigious academic chair
 - Lead to successful political career
- Monica joined him in Milan:
 - Persuaded him to break his relationship as it would prevent him progressing politically
 - He agreed, but when she left he said “I felt the blood run out of my heart”
 - Society marriage arranged to be in 2 yrs
 - Augustine commenced relationships with other women

Beginning of conversion....

- Bishop of Milan - St Ambrose
 - Favourable in public life to be seen attending Church
 - Listened to Ambrose's sermons - who was a theologian and intellectual
 - First time saw Christianity as a respectably intellectual religion
- Tensions:
 - Felt extreme tensions of public life
 - On route to see the Emperor, noticed a drunk beggar who was happier and more carefree than him

Reclusion and search

- 386 AD (32yo) resigned from academic position:
 - Retired to country estate with friends, Monica and Adeodatus
 - Pursued Christian learning and philosophy
 - Spent days in reading and Christian debate
 - Not yet a Christian, but realised need for a quiet and pure life to search for truth
 - Read “Life of St Anthony” and was deeply affected by his purity and freedom from the control of the body
 - Tormented by his desire to be pure, but the delight he got from bodily pleasures - struggled passionately with this problem in himself:

Internal struggle of conversion....

- “I regarded it as settled that it would be better to give myself to Your love rather than go on yielding to my own lust; the first delighted my mind, the second delighted my body and held it in bondage.
- “Thus I was sick at heart and in torment, accusing myself with a new intensity of bitterness, twisting and turning in my chain in the hope that it might be utterly broken, for what held me was so small a thing....For I kept saying within myself: “Let it be now, let it be now” and by the mere words I had begun to move towards the resolution. I almost made it, yet I did not quite make it. And I tried again...

Conversion....

- “This was the controversy raging in my heart....”
- “When my most searching scrutiny had drawn up all my vileness from the secret depths of my soul and heaped it in my heart’s sight, a mighty storm arose in me, bringing a mighty rain of tears....”
- “I flung myself under a fig tree and no longer tried to stop my tears, which poured forth from my eyes in a flood....”



- And suddenly I heard a voice from some nearby house, a boy's voice or a girl's voice I do not know: but it was a sort of sing-song, repeated again and again, "Take and read, take and read". I ceased weeping and immediately began to search my mind whether we were accustomed to chant these words in any kind of game, and I could not remember that I had heard any such thing.



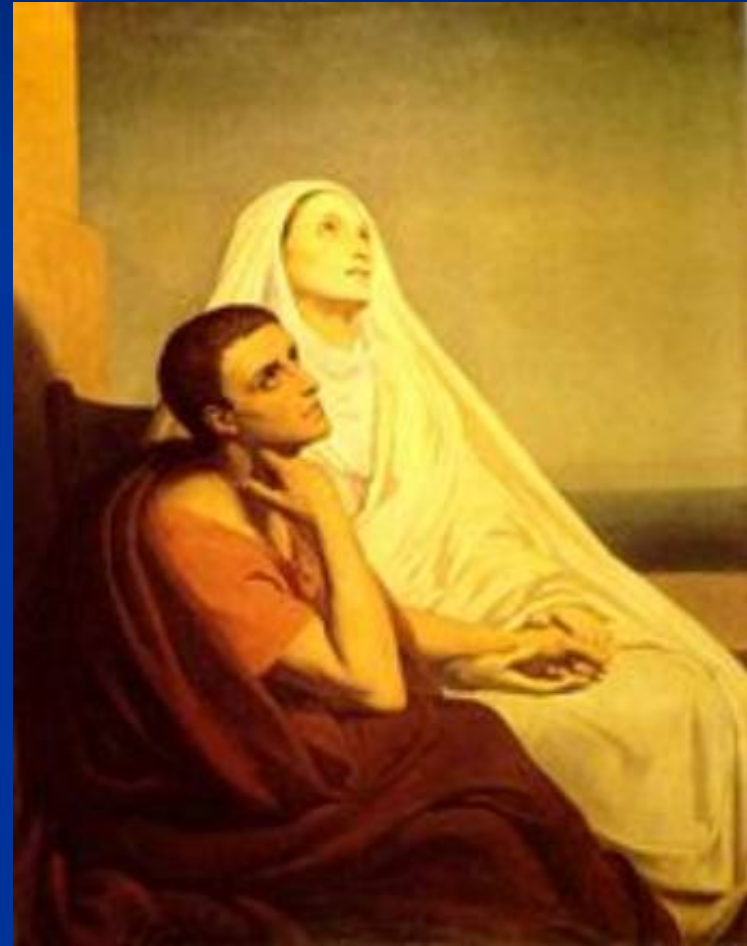
- Damning back the flood of tears I arose, interpreting the incident as quite certainly a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the passage at which I should open. For it was part of what I had been told about Antony.....



- I snatched up the scripture, opened it and in silence read the passage upon which my eyes first fell: “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Rom 13:13-14)
- I had no wish to read further and no need. For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty vanished away.

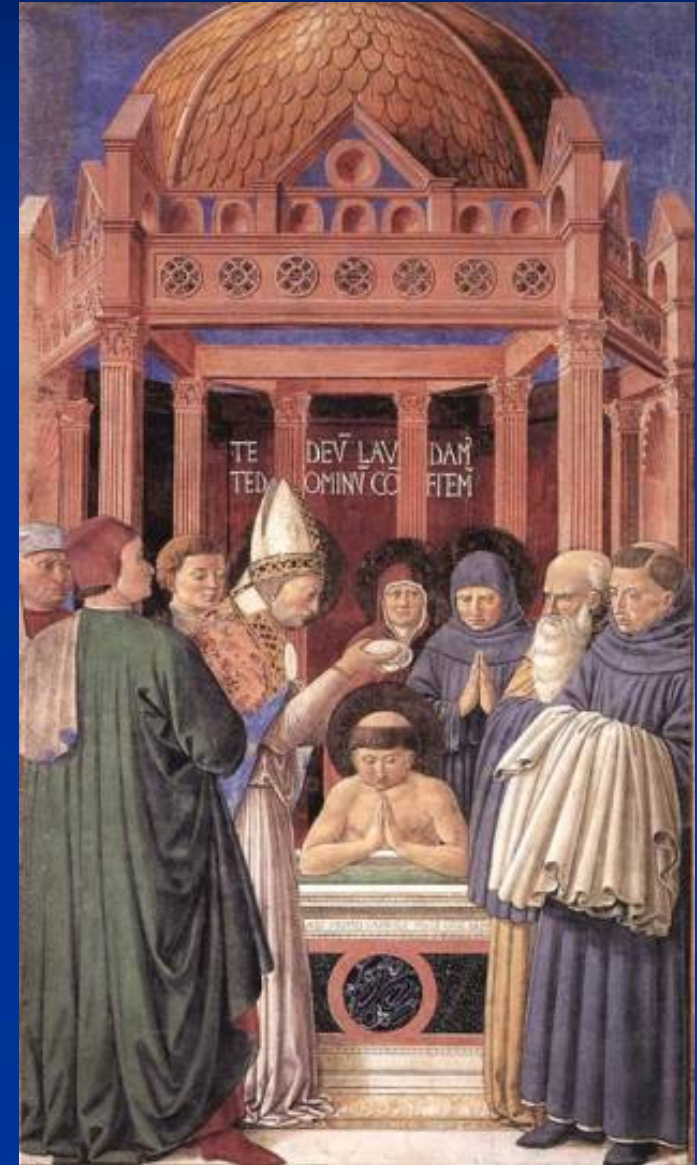
- Augustine went and told his mother Monica:

“...and she was filled with triumphant exultation, and praised You who are mighty beyond what we ask or conceive: for You had given her more than she had ever asked.”



Baptism

- 387 AD (33yo):
 - Returned to Milan to be baptised by Bishop Ambrose
 - Adeodatus baptised as well
 - Wanted to return to Tagaste to live ascetic life on country estate
 - On the way, Monica died
 - Soon after, Adeodatus died



In Africa....

- Lived in Tagaste for 2 years
- Ordained priest by Valerius, Bishop of Hippo
- Requested to stay on estate to continue writings
- Lived further 2 years there - prolific writings
- Valerius requested his assistance to administer the diocese
- Greatly loved by the people
- When Valerius died, Augustine ordained Bishop of Hippo in 396 AD (42 yrs old)

Hippo (modern day Annaba)



Bishop of Hippo

- Gave great care to his flock - first priority was as their shepherd
- Tended to their problems and judged disputes
- Prolific sermon writer



Ant-Heretical Works

1. Manicheism

2. Donatism

- Argument that Christians that denied Christ during the persecution should be rebaptised
- Heretical as presumes those within the church are righteous

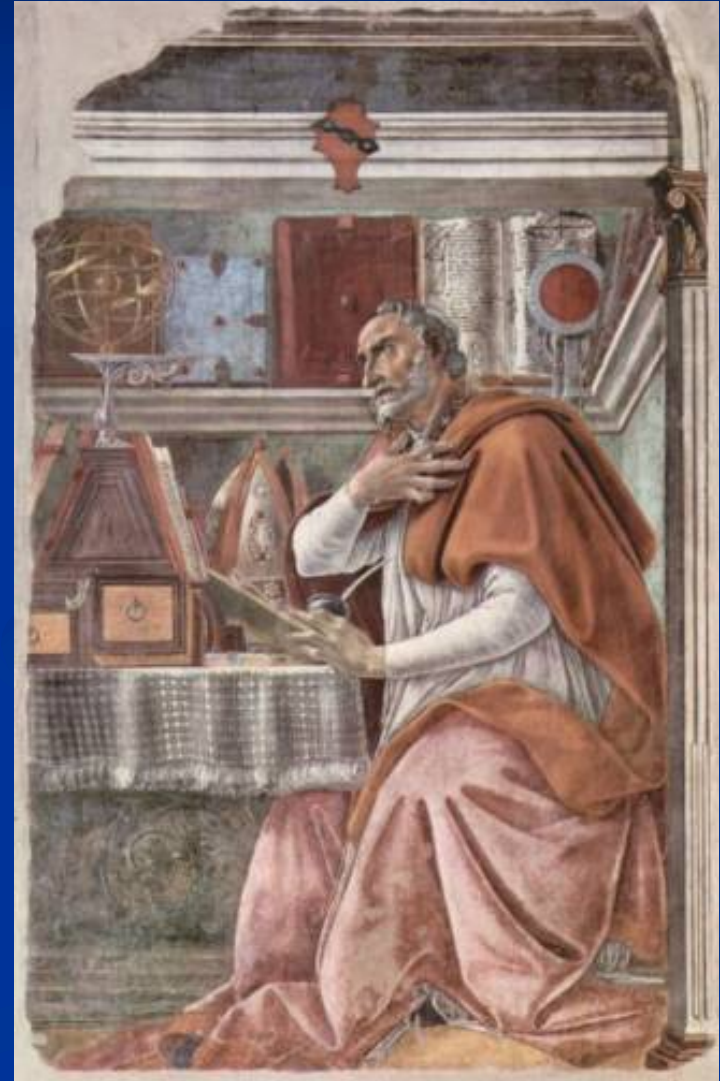


3. Pelagianism

- Heresy that original sin did not taint human nature, and that humans can 'choose' good without God's help.
- Wrote "On Original Sin": All human beings inherit Adam's sin, and human's require God's grace to repent and persevere in the holy path.

Writings

1. Confessions
2. City of God
3. On the Trinity
4. The Literal Meaning of Genesis
5. On Free Choice of the Will
6. Numerous letters
7. Over 350 sermons





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“Confessions”

- “Great are You O lord and greatly to be praised.... You so excite man that to praise You is his joy. **For You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless till they rest in You.**”
- “ I propose now to set down my past wickedness and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not for love of them but that I may love You, O my God. I do it for love of Your love, passing again in the bitterness of remembrance over my most evil ways that You may thereby grow ever lovelier to me....”

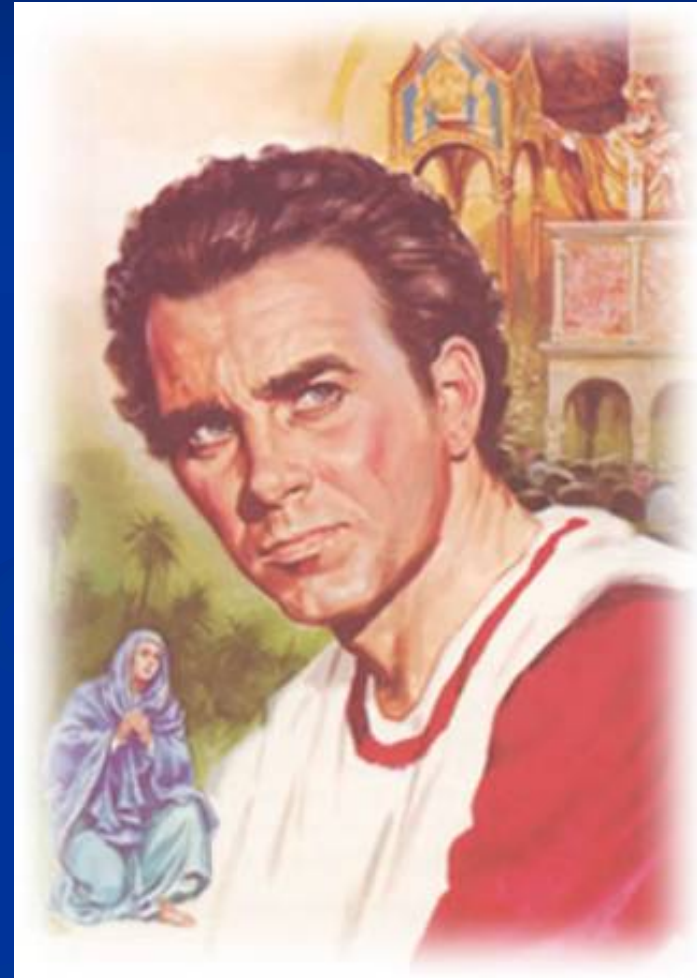
Departure



- 430 AD (76 yrs old) barbarians invaded north Africa and beseiged Hippo
- Augustine sick and departed

Lessons

- Passionate in pursuits
- Search for the truth
- Avoid idleness
- Flee from lusts of the flesh
- Power of Christ can turn a sinner into a saint



Questions?

