



St. Augustine: Homilies on the First Epistle of John

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Augustine of Hippo (pronounced /ˈɒɡəstɪn/ or /ˈɒɡəstɪn/;[1] Latin: Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis;)[2] (November 13, 354 – August 28, 430), Bishop of Hippo Regius, also known as Augustine, St. Augustine, or St. Austin[3] was a Romanized Berber philosopher and theologian.

Augustine, a Latin church father, is one of the most important figures in the development of Western Christianity. He "established anew the ancient faith" (conditor antiquae rursus fidei), according to his contemporary, Jerome.[4] In his early years he was heavily influenced by Manichaeism and afterwards by the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus,[5] but after his conversion and baptism (387), he developed his own approach to philosophy and theology accommodating a variety of methods and different perspectives.[6] He believed that the grace of Christ was indispensable to human freedom and framed the concepts of original sin and just war. When the Roman Empire in the West was starting to disintegrate, Augustine developed the concept of the Church as a spiritual City of God (in a book of the same name) distinct from the material Earthly City.[7] His thought profoundly influenced the medieval worldview. Augustine's City of God was closely identified with the church, and was the community which worshipped God.[8]

Augustine was born in the city of Thagaste,[9] the present day Souk Ahras, Algeria, to a pagan father named Patricius and a Catholic mother named Monica. He was educated in North Africa and resisted his mother's pleas to become Christian. Living as a pagan intellectual, he took a concubine, with whom he had a son, Adeodatus, and became a Manichean. Later he converted to Catholicism, became a bishop, and opposed heresies, such as the belief that people can have the ability to choose to be good to such a degree as to merit salvation without divine aid (Pelagianism).

In the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, he is a saint and pre-eminent Doctor of the Church, and the patron of the Augustinian religious order; his memorial is celebrated 28 August. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of Reformation teaching on salvation and divine grace. In the Eastern Orthodox Church he is blessed, and his feast day is celebrated on 15 June.[10] Among the Orthodox he is called Blessed Augustine, or St. Augustine the Blessed.

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