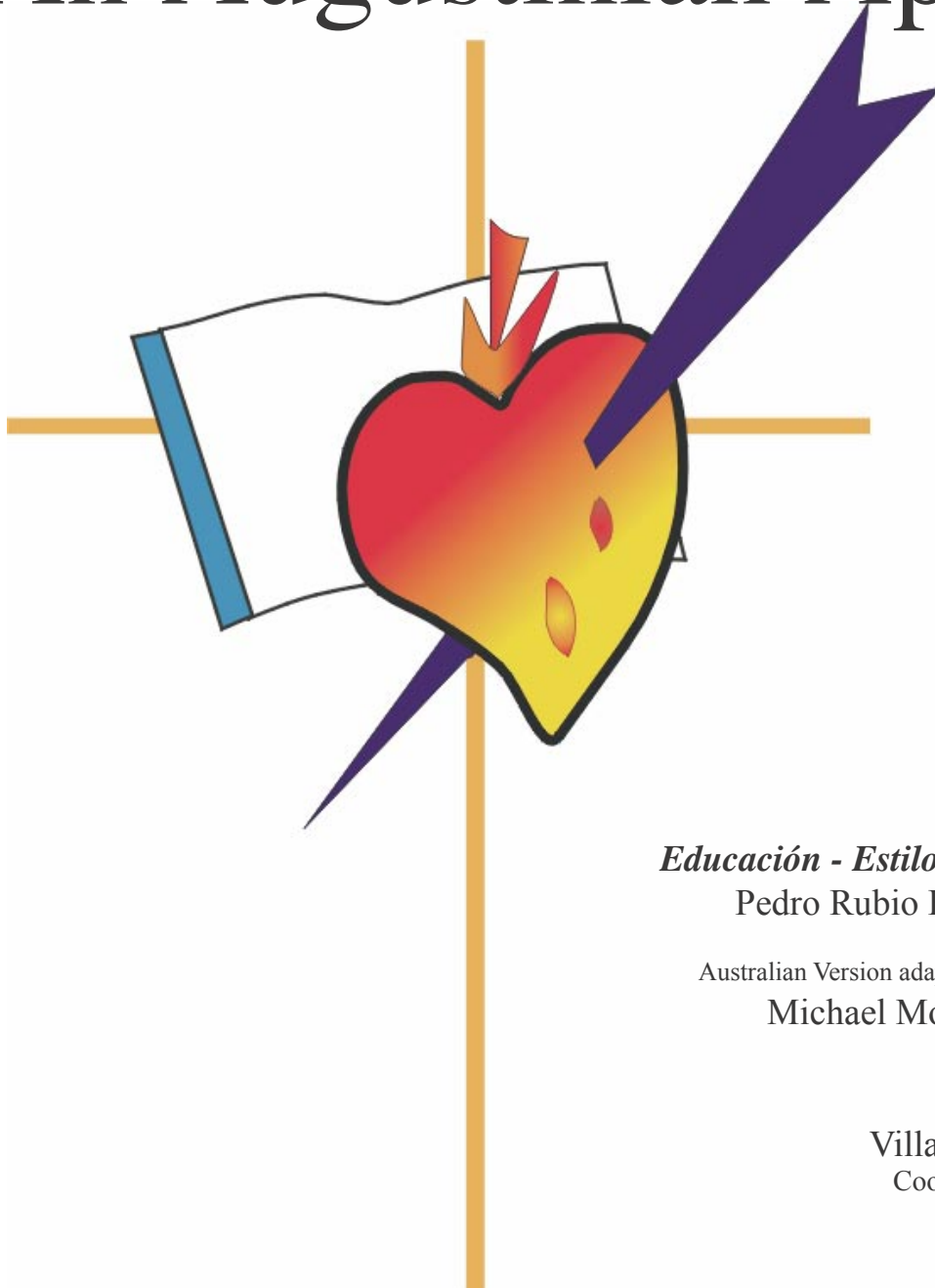


# Education

## An Augustinian Approach



based on  
*Educación - Estilo Agustiniiano*  
Pedro Rubio Bardón O.S.A

Australian Version adapted and edited by  
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Coorparoo, Australia

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This booklet is a response to the interest shown in Saint Augustine by teachers and parents of our Australian Augustinian schools. Their desire to delve into his thought has led me to present this Aussie version of a book written by Spanish Augustinian Pedro Rubio Bardón O.S.A. It was called “EDUCACIÓN - Estilo Agustiniano”. In it he presented a selection of texts from Saint Augustine’s writings on education arranged thematically. It has become a treasured resource of our Augustinian educational communities in Spain and has also been translated into Italian.

This Australian edition is not simply a translation. Although it relies directly on the Spanish original, it is not an attempt to simply reproduce the original. Much has been rearranged and re-expressed. Some sections have been omitted while others have been re-written or augmented. It is offered with thanks to its originator Fr Pedro Rubio and to those involved in the ‘enculturation’ of the text in Australia. I offer it to women and men, especially those in our Augustinian ministries, who wish to educate in a way that is enriched by the insights of Augustine.

The arrangement of the book is simple. It focuses on the key roles in education: the student, the educator and the parent. After briefly sketching Augustine’s own experience of these three roles, each role is explored by delving into Augustine’s writings. These quotations are as much interpretations as translations. A good deal of latitude in adapting Augustine’s thought to the context of education has been taken both by the original author and myself. I hope that this edition is a source from which attitudes inspired by Augustine can grow and deepen.

Michael Morahan O.S.A.

THE LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE  
AND TRUTH SHOULD  
INVITE US TO CONTINUE  
LEARNING.

THE LOVE OF OTHERS  
SHOULD COMPEL US TO  
TEACH.

(ANSWERS TO THE EIGHT QUESTIONS OF DULCITIUS, 3).

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## *Introduction: Why Study Augustine?*

This booklet is intended to be a resource for Augustinian educational communities exploring and implementing Augustinian approaches to education. Although members of Augustinian educational communities might be committed to learning about Augustine because he is part of their heritage, his continuing capacity to speak to the situations we encounter today is a more compelling reason to study his thoughts.

There are several reasons for this continuing relevance. The times in which we live have many similarities to those of Augustine. These are times when many find morality uncertain and many are disenchanted with the political processes. Many espouse belief in nothing beyond the immediate and the physical. Others have incredible belief in the human and the self but with little reference to the transcendent. In this we have shades of the Manichees and the Pelagians of Augustine's time. Sects abound, while at the same time profound scepticism has a certain acceptability, especially in some academic circles. These are also times of much noise and little silence. For many people in our schools this is an era of great activity with little time to look within. In our broader community these are times when there is a great deal of confusion, especially concerning values, and there are very few certainties, especially in terms of the transcendent. In his writings, Augustine responds to many situations so similar to these.

Another fundamental reason his writings continue to speak to us is that his thinking relates education to what it means to be human. Augustine does not offer us a simple recipe to follow but rather an approach. This approach is both less than and much more than a simple set of instructions about what to do. His approach is based on the experience of ourselves as human beings 'on the way', i.e. people searching, seeking ultimately for God and an understanding of self. It is a unique approach involving being with others and being at their service, of listening to the Teacher of all, and with a sense of being 'at school' with all other human beings.

The relevance and power of his approach are the prime reasons for studying Augustine's reflections on education today.

Opposite: Frescoes by Gozzoli from the Augustinian Church of Saint Augustine, S. Gimignano, showing i) Augustine as a young child with his parents Monica and Patricius being presented to the schoolmaster, ii) Augustine teaching in Rome, iii) Augustine travelling from Rome to Milan.





1

# AUGUSTINE'S OWN EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATION

# As Student

## Augustine As Student

The organisation of schooling in the late Roman Empire was quite different from ours. 'Schools' or 'Universities' were run by individual teachers. Therefore, in comparison to ours their educational system might seem to be without much formal structure. However this was not quite so. Schooling had three levels, based on the central figure of the kind of teacher involved:

- a) the litterator, or teacher of first letters,
- b) the grammaticus, educator of language and Latin culture, and
- c) the rethor or rethoricus, teacher of the "humanities", with a special emphasis on law and oratory.

Augustine the student completed all of these three stages of Roman education. Certainly it was to his own great personal advantage in terms of the skills he learnt but, as he tells it, not always happily.

He studied under the rod of the litterator in Tagaste, his native town, from age six to thirteen (361-367).

Under the grammaticus he studied in Madaura, provincial capital of his region, from age thirteen to sixteen (367-370).

Then his education was interrupted. After a break back with his family due to a lack of finance, thanks to the help of his patron Romanianus he was able to finish his studies as a student of rhetoric in Carthage, the North African capital of the Empire, from age seventeen to twenty (371-374).

# As Teacher

## Augustine as Teacher

Having finished his academic preparation, Augustine began his professional life as teacher in a world convulsed and dominated by competition.

As a grammaticus he opened a rural school in his home town during the course of 374-375. Amongst his first batch of students was his fellow townsman Alypius, who was to become a great friend and companion throughout his life.

During 375-376, again helped by Romanianus, he moved to Carthage and opened a school of rhetoric. For seven long years he rode out the Carthaginian storm as happily as he could. The student world was unruly. Inflation was rife. His search for understanding led him down a variety of paths. He was attracted to Manichaeism in this restlessness and he struggled with

many issues. Perhaps in a search for peace or for greater success, he set off to conquer Rome. He deceived his mother by departing under the guise of going to farewell another, as she was opposed to his decision.

Arriving in Rome in the year 383, he opened a new school of rhetoric in the capital of the Empire. Once again he was without much good fortune. While the students of the capital were better behaved and calmer than those of Carthage, they were also more street-wise and disappeared when it came time to pay their fees!

Rome, however, was Rome. And in Rome a great opportunity arose: a public competition to become the teacher of rhetoric in the Imperial House in Milan. Although disadvantaged by being an 'African', Augustine was encouraged by his friends to put himself forward. With the help of some influential Roman Manichaeans, he competed successfully and was appointed Public Orator at Milan.

Full of hope and fear, he moved to Milan in the year 384. He had reached the peak of his profession, but his mental anguish continued and he was tormented by ongoing personal restlessness.

He was fortunate in being able to hear Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, speak and then to meet him. He was reunited with his mother, who arrived from Africa in 385. His own interior growth, as well as the enlightenment he was gaining about the nature of God from the writings of Neoplatonist philosophy and those of Saint Paul, led him towards finding the answer to his search in the Christian faith.

The final promptings came through the voice of a child. Distraught with his inner struggles, he was in the garden of his lodgings in Milan when he heard the chanting of a child: 'Take and read. Take and read.' He picked up a book of the writings of Saint Paul and found himself reading from Romans: "Not in dissipation and drunkenness nor in orgies of self centred pleasure or lewdness, not in arguing and jealousy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh or the gratification of your desires." He then completely rejected his former life and its preoccupations. He embarked on a totally new adventure. He converted to faith in Jesus Christ. As a consequence of this, he resigned his role of Public Orator and abandoned his professional career in the summer of the year 386.

He then began to find a new peace and understanding in his life, bringing to a close his twelve year professional career as a teacher. He was not, however, to leave teaching behind.

# As Parent

## Augustine as Parent - Father to his son

Augustine had a son called Adeodatus. Bright and very gifted intellectually, he died prematurely, just seventeen years old, cutting short a promising life.

As a father, Augustine loved his son dearly. He devoted a great deal of his energy to teaching his son. To him he dedicated his work called “The Teacher”, a rich source of educational insight.

Augustine dialogued in depth with Adeodatus, as his father and teacher. We have Augustine’s written recollections of many of these interactions. In these, more often than offering answers, he led Adeodatus to more questions. Rather than satisfying his curiosity, Augustine provoked and stimulated his capacity for initiative. Rather than insisting Adeodatus study from a sense of duty, he encouraged his son to do things for their own sake. While respecting his son’s originality, he subjected him to the discipline of good order. He put into practice that basic principle he so often repeated in his writings: learning should begin with exploration and appreciation, and it should culminate in the discovery and joy of understanding and knowing the truth about something.

Augustine’s experience in his own family seems also to have had its influence upon him. He shared with Patricius, his father, a desire for education and the intellectual life. With Monica, his mother, he eventually came to share the gift of unyielding perseverance and a commitment to love at any price. In some sense, he combined something from the character of these two: head and heart, truth and love.

Opposite: Fresco of Augustine from the Lateran Palace in Rome. Painted within a lifetime of his death, it is the oldest known depiction of Augustine.



# 3

## SOURCES OF AUGUSTINE'S THOUGHT ABOUT EDUCATION



# The Sources

After Augustine converted to Christianity and resigned his post in the Imperial Court, he was no longer the professional educator. However, he was no less a teacher in his new undertakings. He was no longer teaching a class but preaching God's word. Even in the first phase of his new life while he enjoyed the "sacred leisure" of his early monastic community life at Cassiciacum, outside Milan, he was teaching several of his fellow community members, including his own son Adeodatus. In his ministry as priest and bishop, he did not abandon his reflections on being human, nor what he had learned about teaching. Instead, these reflections deepened and broadened and became the centre of his message. His gifts as a teacher were employed to spread this message.

These gifts became hallmarks of the way he served people as priest and bishop. Both his message and the way he delivered it were energised by his new-found faith. His written works are direct evidence of this. They number many hundreds. They range in subject matter from the *Confessions*, a reflection on the story of his life carried out in dialogue with God, to *The City of God*, a philosophical reflection on the history of the world, understood in the light of the communion of all the human beings throughout time.

Three of his works focus specifically on the topic of education: *The Teacher*, *Christian Teaching* and *The Initial Teaching of Beginners*.

## ***The Teacher (De Magistro)***

This book was written one year after his return to Africa. Its fundamental theme is communication: between the student, the Interior Teacher and the external teacher.

According to Augustine the external teacher, i.e. the parent or the professional teacher, is not really a teacher at all but one who serves. This role of the external teacher is to facilitate the dialogue between the student and Truth. The true teacher is the Interior Teacher, the God who is within.

The external teacher's basic function is to facilitate and remove obstacles to the encounter between the student and Truth. It requires a twofold ministry: a) to open up the Truth to the student - this demands competence and professionalism - and b) to open up the student to the Truth - this demands witness and the infectiousness of enthusiasm and love for the Truth on the part of the teacher.

This also presumes a) the teacher's own encounter with the Truth - this makes the teacher a fellow student with his or her student and b) a personal relationship with the student to whom he or she is committed to helping, rather than merely to instruct or train.

Therefore, the success of education thus is not to be measured by the degree to which students become a ‘photocopy’ in attitude and beliefs of the external teacher, be it the mother or father of a family, or the class teacher. The goal is clearly an unfinished project, since each one is on a journey of ongoing discovery and on a path to maturity which involves the uniqueness of each individual and their ongoing dialogue with the Interior Teacher. In this sense education never finishes, and makes the world a great classroom in which all human beings are partners on the way together.

### *Christian Teaching (De Doctrina Christiana)*

The thread that unites this book is Augustine’s presumption that educators need to offer an academic curriculum that responds to our diverse needs as human beings. These needs are revealed in our underlying restlessness and range from knowledge about our external world to the more deeply spiritual and religious knowledge. For Augustine, everything is now best sought in the light of faith and with the help of the Scriptures.

In this book education is once again located in the context of the relationship between the student and Truth, a relationship that is dynamic and uplifting, akin to life itself. It has three foundations:

- i) **faith** in the human thirst for knowledge as the starting point,
- ii) **hope** creating desire to achieve objectives - as motivation for effort, and
- iii) a passionate **love** of Truth - like the force of gravity that attracts and energises.

True educators, be they class teachers or the father or mother of a family, should keep in the forefront of their minds the students’ internal dynamism and focus entirely upon it: stimulating the students in their capacity for wonder in front of mystery, promoting and encouraging their enthusiasm and accompanying them closely on the challenging path of discovering knowledge and wisdom while nurturing in this search a great love of Truth. According to Augustine, good example rather than great speeches, authenticity of life rather than formal commands, are decisive in this context.

### *The Catechesis of Beginners (De Catechizandis Rudibus)*

Catechesis is the kind of instruction that is appropriate for new Christians in order to deepen their knowledge of the mysteries of faith, especially in so far as it applies to their lives. This book of Augustine is a manual of educational and teaching techniques for the specialised world of beginners. It is a guide for their teachers or catechists. The context within which these techniques are dealt with is the sacred stories of Christianity and the history of salvation. However, its insight into the nature of teaching and learning and techniques transcend the subject matter and can be applied to other contexts, especially where beginners are involved.

The relationship between teacher and student is one of the key issues in this work. It is with even greater reason in this case; in the first encounter with a subject it is often the most decisive factor in determining the student's attitudes to it.

Alongside this fundamental theme, the book deals with a great number of issues that are important for any teacher. These include:

- i) the importance and the limitations of language used by the teacher,
- ii) the long term preparation of the teacher, as well as the teacher's immediate preparation for classes,
- iii) balance in the developing topics,
- iv) the pressing need to adapt one's teaching to the individual realities of particular students,
- v) the trilogy of hear-listen-understand as the backbone of learning,
- vi) the need for love in the encounter with students and their particular needs.

These are but some of the points Augustine makes as he delights in responding to the questions of a deacon from Carthage named Deogracias in 400 AD. His questions prompted the writing of this book.

Opposite: Augustine teaching, School of Verona.





# 3

## AUGUSTINE'S REFLECTIONS ON BEING A STUDENT, EDUCATOR, AND PARENT

# Being a Student

For Augustine, being a student is a lifelong task for all, not a role restricted to those who attend classes or are enrolled in courses. The fundamental task of the student is to learn about themselves and what they are intended to become. Ultimately, being a student is about discovering those things about oneself, one's world and the transcendent that are necessary for happiness in both this world and the next. Consequently, if we are looking for what Augustine thinks about being a student, we are also asking what Augustine thinks about being a human person. For him the two are closely allied. He sees the whole world and its peoples as a kind of classroom where we are all fellow students. God, the Truth present within each of us, is the Teacher. What follows are but some of Augustine's reflections about being a student and thus really about being human.

## Restless, Striving, Searching

You have made us, Lord, for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. (*Confessions*, 1, 1, 1).

When truth is eagerly sought, finding it produces greater enjoyment. Found, it is sought again with renewed desire. (*The Trinity*, 15, 2, 2).

We are pilgrims, people on the road, not residents. We should therefore feel unsatisfied with what we are, if we want to arrive at that to which we aspire. If we are totally happy with what we are, we will stop going forward. If we think we have gone far enough we will not take another step. Let us continue, therefore, going forward, walking towards the goal. Let us not stop half way along the route, or look backwards or stray from the path. Someone who stops, does not make progress. Someone who strays, loses hope of arriving. (*Sermon 169*, 18).

It is better to be a cripple on the right road than a great runner off it. (*Sermon 169*, 18).

One loses nothing by questioning more carefully. (*Music*, 6, 23).

While the battle continues to rage, there is still hope of victory. (*Sermon 154*, 8).

But of course, as a wise man you are afraid you may not any longer have two days of a good life. If tomorrow is one of them let today be the other, let that be your two days. If there isn't a tomorrow, then at least today will find you safe; and if there is a tomorrow for you, then it is added to today. There will never be any tomorrow unless there is a today. (*Sermon 20*, 4),

If you look for true peace and happiness, do not look for it amongst those things which are shallow and transitory... (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 16).

## Reflective, Able To Look Within

People are moved to marvel at the peaks of the mountains, the gigantic waves of the sea, crashing waterfalls, the vast stretches of the oceans and the dance of the stars, while they forget themselves. (*Confessions*, 10, 8, 15).

Human beings change, worsen and become poor when, rushing to conquer so many things outside themselves they live so much on the surface that they throw aside their own inner life. (*Letter 55, 9*).

Is something more yours than yourself? And is something however less yours than yourself, when not even you belong to yourself? (*Treatise on Saint John's Gospel, 29, 3*).

Curiously, the less human beings pay attention to their own shortcomings, the more they seem concerned with the shortcomings of others. They are looking to tear the other person to bits, not to put that person to rights. Unable to excuse themselves, they are only ready to accuse others. (*Sermon 19, 2*).

How much wealth is stored within each one of us! But what use is this wealth to us, if we do not investigate it? (*Commentary on the Psalms, 77, 8*).

“The fullness of the Law is love.” Do not run about everywhere and strain yourself. The spread of the branches of the tree is so wide. Do not let it worry you. Don't waste time; take good care of the root, and you won't have to bother yourself with the extremities of the branches. If love finds a place within you, the fullness of knowledge will follow. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 80, 2*).

First, for your own sake, sit in judgement on yourself. You won't be able to judge others, unless you are first able to judge yourself. Go back within yourself and sit down as one on trial before a court. Pay attention to yourself, examine yourself, listen to yourself. Test your own integrity like a judge in that interior court in which you don't need to depend on external witness. (*Sermon 13, 7*).

Let us leave something for people's reflection, a generous margin for silence. Go within yourself, leave the noise and the confusion behind. Look inside yourself and see if you can find that hidden corner of the soul, where, free of noises and arguments, you don't need to begin disputes or brood on pig-headed quarrels. Be gentle in hearing the word, in order to understand. Listen to the voice of truth in reflection and in silence so that you are able to understand it. (*Sermon 52, 19, 22*).

In fact anyone who in the depths of his or her heart is tormented by a bad conscience is like a person who has to flee his or her house because it is leaking or filled with smoke and thus not able to be lived in. This is why such people want to live outside themselves seeking happiness in external things that distract. They seek peace in frivolities and distractions such as shows and other amusements and by following every whim. Why do they seek happiness in this way? Because they cannot find all well within; they are not at peace with their conscience. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 100, 4*).

Inside my heart I am whoever I am. (*Confessions, 10, 3, 4*).

To look for rest in external things is to prostitute the soul. (*The Trinity, 11, 5, 9*).

To love external things is to be estranged. (*The Trinity, 11, 5, 9*).

Longing for things outside themselves, people become exiles from themselves. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 58, 1*).

A disoriented heart is a place where false gods are manufactured. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 80, 14*).

## Open To Others, Rejecting Arrogance

Accept yourself as human. That is humility. (*Treatise on Saint John's Gospel*, 25, 16).

The first step in the search for truth is humility. The second, humility. The third, humility. And the last one, humility. Naturally, that doesn't mean that humility is the only virtue necessary for the discovery and enjoyment of truth. But if the other virtues aren't preceded, accompanied and followed by humility, pride will find an opening and infiltrate them and, sooner or later, finish up destroying good intentions. All other vices are recognised when we are doing wrong; but pride is to be feared even when we do right. Test those things which are done in a praiseworthy manner lest they be spoiled by the desire for praise itself. (*Letter 118*, 3, 22).

If you are a stubborn person, be careful. A swollen head unbalances the whole body. Beware of becoming top-heavy and toppling over a cliff. (*Sermon 266*, 8).

It pleases the fool to be pleased with himself. (*Sermon 47*, 13).

People, though, who think they live good and harmless lives, as human reckoning approves it, have got stuck on the road. They don't desire anything better, because they think they have arrived; and especially if they take all the credit, they will be proud. A sinner who is humble is better than a just person who is proud. (*Sermon 170*, 7, 7).

Look at the tree: to grow up, it grows down. It thrusts roots into the ground and then thrusts its branches to the sky. Can it reach upward from anywhere except its humble roots? You, though, wish to comprehend the heights without love; you are challenging the winds without roots. That's the way to come crashing down, not to grow. (*Sermon 117*, 17).

What could be as great as the sin of pride, which overthrew an angel, turned an angel into a devil, and debarred him from the kingdom of heaven for evermore? Arrogance is so bad that it can change an angel into a demon. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 18, 2, 15).

It is wrong to think that there is nobody good. Or that there is no one who is good except oneself. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 25, 2, 5).

If you are not able to understand, if you are still covered in down, have patience until your wings gain strength. Be careful. Trying to fly before you are ready, the attraction of freedom can lead to the ruin of recklessness. (*Sermon 117*, 17).

We are striving for great things. Let us do well at the little things and we will be great. Do you wish to lay hold of the loftiness of God? First catch hold of God's lowliness. (*Sermon 117*, 10, 17).

No one is more incurable than the sick person who does not recognise their illness. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 59, 2, 6).

You would not lift your head so proudly if it weren't so empty. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 38).

It is better to have many good qualities, even to a lesser degree, than to have some great good quality combined with some great evil one: this applies even to characteristics of our body - it is better to have the short stature of Zacchaeus

with sound health, rather than the height of Goliath with a life threatening fever. (*The Goodness of Marriage*, 29).

The proud resemble an inflated object. Apparently of great stature, inside they are empty. Great indeed is the rich man who doesn't think he's great just because he's rich. But if that's why he does think he is great, then he is proud and destitute. He's a big noise in the flesh; in his heart of hearts he's a beggar. He has been inflated, not filled. If you see two wineskins, one filled, the other inflated, they each have the same bulk and extent, but they don't each have the same content. Just look at them and you can't tell the difference; weigh them, and you will find out. The one that has been filled is hard to move; the one that has been inflated is easily removed. (*Sermon 36*, 2).

Humility should be proportional to greatness. The higher one rises, the more disastrous can be the fall. (*Holy Virginity*, 31).

“Learn from me, I am gentle and humble of heart”: what then does it do us good to learn? He is suggesting we have the most genuine sort of love for one's fellows, love without mixed motives, without conceit, without arrogance, without deceit. That's what is being suggested, by the one who says, “Learn from me, because I am gentle and humble of heart.” (*Sermon 142*, 12)

Accept your own imperfection. This is the first step to perfection. (*Sermon 142*, 10).

Do not be afraid of proud men or women who make much of themselves. They are like the winter torrents, making a lot of noise together for the world. They are like the thaw water that rushes amongst the rocks. Winter passes and it disappears. Everything is gone in noises and threats, but, after flowing fleetingly, it is gone without a trace. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 58, 11).

No one says to you, “Be less than you are,” but rather, “Recognise what you are.” Recognise yourself as weak, as a human being, as a sinner. When you accept and admit your shortcomings, you are on the way to healing. (*Sermon 137*, 4, 4).

Walk the path of humility, if you want to arrive at eternity. Christ, as human, is the path we are following. Christ, as God, is the destination towards which we are travelling. It's to him we are going. It's by him we are going. (*Sermon 123*, 3, 3).

God is high: let a Christian be lowly. If you want the Most High God to come near to you, embrace humility. A great mystery, friends. God is above all: if you seek to make yourself as high as God, you separate yourself from God: if you embrace humility, God comes down to you. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 33).

You attribute to yourself perfection, and then lead the first defection. How much better it would be if you considered yourself less perfect so that you might be perfected by Him who knows how imperfect you are! (*Sermon 47*, 17).

The proud are like grass that grows in the tiles on the roofs of houses. It is very high, but does not have any roots. It grows and dies very quickly. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 128, 11).



## Seeks To Act Freely And Responsibly

No one is doing right who acts unwillingly, even if what he does is good in itself. (*Confessions*, 1, 12, 19).

It is one thing to be in the law, another to be under the law. Anyone who is in the law, acts according to the law; anyone who is under the law, is acted upon according to the law: the one therefore is free, the other a slave. Again, the law, which is written and imposed upon the servant, is one thing; the law, which is mentally discerned by the one who needs not its “letter,” is another thing. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 1, 2).

I can only truly accomplish what I wish, when I cease to wish for that which I am not able to accomplish. (*Letter* 10, 1).

If any laws, therefore, have been enacted against you, you are not thereby forced to act rightly, but are only prevented from doing ill. For no one can act rightly unless he or she has deliberately chosen to act in such a manner, and unless he or she has embraced what is commanded with a free act of the will. However, something can be said for fear of punishment. Even if it does not lead to the pleasure of a good conscience, at least it keeps evil desire from escaping beyond the bounds of thought. (*Replies to the Letters of Petilian*, 2, 83, 184).

Other peoples’ shortcomings, no matter their seriousness, are a poor excuse to hide or to justify one’s own. In the vain intent of finding a patron in the same bad cause, all we find is a companion in the same misery. (*Sermon* 137, 7, 7)

While we are on this earth, we cannot avoid falling. But what is important, anyway, is not to ignore these falls or to minimize them as being so small they are not worthy of our notice. Of what are made the rivers that overflow to flood the fields, but small drops of water? A small leak, not repaired in time, in the long run causes the ship to sink. (*Sermon* 58, 9, 10).

Being faithful in minor things is a major undertaking. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 18).

## Able To Put Things In The Right Perspective

A body gravitates to its proper place as a result of its own weight. Weight does not simply mean things move down but rather that each thing finds its appropriate place. Fire moves up, the stone down. Drawn by their own weight, things seek their rightful place. If oil is placed under water it will rise to the surface but if water is placed onto oil it will sink below the oil; drawn by their weight, things seek their rightful places. They are not at rest as long as they are disordered, but once brought to order they find their rest. My weight is my love, and wherever I am carried, it is this ‘weight’ that draws me. (*Confessions*, 13, 9, 10).

The human soul is like a dove. When it is enslaved by earthly loves, its plumage becomes heavy because of the mud and it cannot fly. But when the mud of earthly affections is removed from its feathers, it recovers its freedom. Using the love of God as one wing and the love of neighbour at the other it begins to fly. It ascends because it loves. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 121, 1).

Put love in all the things that you do and they will make sense. Take love away and they become worthless and empty. (*Sermon* 138, 2).

All kinds of love have a driving force and there is no such thing as a love, good or bad, that is at a standstill. Love spurs us to action without fail. Do you want to know what your love is? Just look at what drives you and in what direction. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 121, 1).

Not everybody who is indulgent with us is our friend, nor is everybody who punishes us our enemy. It is better to love with severity than to deceive gently. (*Letter 93*, 2, 4).

Do you want to know what class of person you are? Take the test of love. Do you love the things of the earth? You are earth. Do you owe your love to God? Be not afraid in saying it: you are God. (*Treatise on the First Letter of John*, 2, 2, 14).

Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are. Like sticks to like, unlike shuns unlike. (*Sermon 15*, 2, 2).

There are two classes of people, because there are two classes of love. The one is holy, the other squalid. One is turned towards neighbour, the other centred on self. One is concerned for the common good for the sake of fraternity and mutual understanding, the other one tries to subject the common good to its own power, arrogantly looking to dominate. The one is in the service of God, the other one seeks to rival God. One works to make peace, the other causes rebellion. One prefers truth to false praise and human honours, the other searches without rest for praise of any sort. One is friendly, the other envious. One wants for its neighbour what it wants for itself, the other wants to dominate its neighbour for its own advantage. The one helps others for their own sake, the other helps out of motives of self interest. (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 11, 15, 20).

Right will is, therefore, well-directed love, and wrong will is ill-directed love. When love looks for and yearns for that to which it is attracted, it becomes desire. Having and enjoying it, it becomes happiness. Fleeing what is opposed to it, it becomes fear. And when it suffers and tolerates, it is sadness. These affections or movements are good if they are motivated by a good love, and bad if it is an evil love that sustains them. (*The City of God*, 14, 7, 2).

Moral failure is not the possession of evil things, but rather an act of the will that is evil; that is to say an action is evil not because the things sought are themselves evil, but rather the act itself is evil if it is contrary to the right order of things, or an abandonment of that which is good for something which is less good. For example, avarice is not a fault inherent in gold, but in the one who inordinately loves gold to the detriment of justice, which ought to be held in incomparably higher regard than gold. Neither is luxury the fault of lovely and charming objects, but of the heart that inordinately loves sensual pleasures, to the neglect of temperance . . . Nor yet is boasting the fault of human praise, but of the one who is inordinately fond of the applause of others, and that makes light of the voice of conscience. Pride, too, is not the fault of the one who delegates power, nor of power itself, but of the soul that is inordinately enamoured of its own power, and despises the more just dominion of a higher authority. Consequently he who inordinately loves the good which everything possesses, even though he obtain it, himself becomes evil in the good, and wretched and unhappy because he is deprived of a greater good. (*The City of God*, 12, 8).

When working at something we love, the effort is not taxing. In fact, we sometimes even enjoy that work. People enjoy hunting, fishing, harvesting grapes or playing

some game. For when it involves something that is loved, either there is no work or the work itself is also loved. (The Good of Widowhood, 21, 26).

Living a just and good life requires one to make an evaluation of things; to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally. (*Christian Teaching*, 1, 28).

When we desire many things we condemn ourselves to poverty. Greed makes one a victim of diffusion and a slave pulled in a great multiplicity of directions... I will give you an image: in all circles, big or small, there is only a point in which all the radii coincide: the centre. The centre is on all the radii and they divide the circumference into an infinite number of points without any one of them not passing through the unique centre. If, on the other hand, one considers one of the points on the circumference, this is no longer the case. Analogously, the soul that moves away from its centre fragments itself into so many parts. Such a soul is condemned to a kind of deep poverty because our nature pushes us towards unity, but our avarice for many things can pull us apart. (*Order*, 1, 2, 3).

To love the enemy, as enemy, is madness. To love him or her like a brother or sister, is charity... How do physicians love those that are sick? Is it the sick that they love? If they love them as the sick, they would wish them to always be sick. No, it is for a different purpose that they love the sick; not that they should still be sick, but that from being sick they should be made whole. Think about how often they have to suffer from the frenzied! What foul language! Very often they are even struck by them. The physician attacks the fever, and forgives the person. What shall I say then, friends? Do doctors love their enemy? No, they hate their enemy, disease; for it is this that they hate, and they love the one by whom they are struck: they hate the fever. (*Treatise on the First Letter of Saint John*, 8).

It is not enough to be peaceful, it is necessary to be a “pacifier”. The true lovers of peace also love their enemies. It is not enough not to hate or to ignore your enemies, it is necessary to love them. (*Sermon 357*, 1).

If you love daylight you do not get angry with the blind, but feel sorry for them. You know what a good thing it is that you enjoy and are aware of what a good thing they are deprived of. You realise they deserve your pity. Just as you don't hate the blind though you love light, so you should love peace without hating those who wish to make war. (*Sermon 357*, 1).



## Human And Understanding

Generally, we suspect others act according to the same motives as ourselves. This happens because those outside ourselves, even if they are able to observe what we do, will always have hidden from them the motive for which we do things. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 118, 12, 4).

For the more you are an enemy to your friend's crimes, the more truly you are a friend to that person. (*Letter* 151, 12).

Let us love human beings, but not in the way a glutton says, "I love thrushes." Do you know why he loves them? To kill them and to eat them. He doesn't love the thrushes, but rather he loves them for his own gain and their loss. (*Treatise on the First Letter of St John*, 8).

But there is a certain friendliness of well wishing, by which we desire at some time or other to do good to those whom we love. However, what if there be no good that we can do? The benevolence, the wishing well, of itself is sufficient for the one that loves. (*Treatise on the First Letter of St John*, 8)

If the truth is the object of the aspirations of all human beings, it cannot be the exclusive personal property of any person. The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours precisely because it has to be both yours and mine. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 103, 2, 11 see also *Free Will* 2, 12, 33).

Love your fellow human beings, but fight their errors. Teach them the truth, but without pride. Love fights with them for the truth, but without resentments. (*Reply to the Letters of Petilian*, 1, 29, 31).

There is extraordinary perversity of self-love in the person who desires others to be mistaken in their thinking, so that his or her own mistakes may not be discovered. How much better and more profitable is it that in the points in which someone has erred others should not err. That these others may be delivered from error by that person's advice, or, if that person refuses this, at least that the person has no followers in the same error. (*Letter* 143, 2).

A human lifetime truly involves tribulation. There are two torturers that torment the human being in turn: fear and pain. When everything goes well, the ghost of the fear appears. When everything goes wrong, it is suffering's turn. Is there anyone who is not disappointed by prosperity in this world, not broken by adversity? (*Sermon* 124, 2, 2).

Let nobody be considered close to immortality for not having feelings. The health of the human being that writhes in pain is closer to immortality than that of someone who has lost sensibility and who is hard and unfeeling. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 55, 6).

Amid possible scandals, always think well of others. Humbly try to be yourself what you want others to be, and then you will not think others to be what you are not. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 30, 2, 7).

Don't despair of anyone as long as they are alive. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 36, 2, 11).

While the frivolous pursuits of grown-up people are called "business," children are punished for behaving in the same fashion and no one is sorry for either the

children or the adults; so are we to assume that any sound judge of the matter would think it right for me to be beaten because I played ball as a boy, and was hindered by my game from more rapid progress in studies which would only equip me to play an uglier game later? (*Confessions*, 1, 9, 15).

### **A Seeker of Harmony and Balance**

The one who holds onto more is not the happier, rather the one who needs less. (*Rule*, 3, 5).

Don't be ambitious for more than is needed. Be satisfied with that. Wanting what is superfluous is a disguised form of greed. Being satisfied with what we truly need is the only true form of wealth. (*Sermon* 177, 10).

Keep the middle path, the true, straight road that threads the way, as it were, between the left hand of despair and the right hand of presumption. (*Sermon* 142, 1, 1).

Although water puts out fire and fire dries up water, both are dangerous. Fire burns; water rots. The same thing happens in life. When adversity visits us, the fire of the tribulation tests our spirit. When prosperity smiles upon us, the water of the corruption weakens our solidity. Take care, therefore, that you are not burnt by fire nor rotted by water, and that you remain strong. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 66, 15).

And indeed this is the best way to manage things: that all things be distributed to their times and be done in order, lest becoming enravelling in perplexing entanglements, they throw our human mind into confusion. (*The Work of Monks*, 21).

The truth is that disordered lust springs from a perverted will; when lust is pandered to, a habit is formed; when habit is not checked, it hardens into compulsion. (*Confessions*, 8, 5, 10).

### **Sincere And Open About One's Self**

Let our voices be heard in our deeds. [Sincerity is a kind of marriage between words and works.] (*Sermon* 88, 12).

The happiness of the person that springs from a good conscience is a 'Heaven': a spiritual state where the soul is happy. (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 12, 34, 65).

Everyone needs to enter the hermitage of their inner self and examine oneself without flattery. Nothing in fact is more foolish than trying to deceive oneself. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 85, 7).

Face your heart as the court to judge you. Let memory appear for the prosecution, conscience as the witness, and the fear of God as the executioner. Admit your crimes with all honesty, your tears flowing like the blood of your spirit. (*Sermon* 351, 4, 7).

There are some of you for whom the desire for human respect keeps you apart from your own conscience. If you are amongst these, take note that God sees within and that it is not possible to deceive God as witness, nor to escape from God as judge. (*Letter 144, 3*).

Hypocrites worry less about their own health than they do about other people's illnesses. They point out the wrongs of the others in order to hide their own. (*Sermon 351, 1, 1*).

Look to that which is merely human and deprived in the man, and you will find lies and confusion. Don't depend on yourself alone. Expose yourself to the light that comes from on high. If you stay closed in on yourself, you are seeking falsehood. The brow that bears the mark of insolent pride is undone and the brow marked with humility, like the cross of Christ, is victorious. (*Sermon 32, 10*).

Put aside deception, speak the truth. Expose yourself to the illumination of the Truth and be open and transparent. (*Sermon 166*).

[Conscience and good name are two aspects of truthfulness. The conscience for yourself, your good name is for your neighbour.] As far as we are concerned, our consciences are all that matter; as far as you are concerned, our reputation among you ought not to be tarnished, but influential for good. Mark what I've said, and make the distinction. There are two things, conscience and reputation; conscience for yourself, reputation for your neighbor. Those who, being clear in conscience, neglect their reputations, are being cruel; especially if they find themselves in this position, a position about which the apostle says, when he writes to his disciple, "Show yourself to all around you as an example of good works." (Ti 2:7). (*Sermon 355, 1*).

Beating your breast, without correcting your fault, is shaking hands with your sins. To go on doing the same things is nothing other than hardening your sins into concrete. (*Sermon 332, 4*).

What use is it to make the sign of the cross on the forehead, if the same sign is not in the heart? (*Commentary on the Psalms, 50, 1*).

Punishment does not make martyrs. They are made by their motivation or cause. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 35*).

## Attentive And Willing

God does not give you a mark on your talents, but on your willingness. If God knows that you wanted to do something but were unable to, he marks you just as if you had done it. That you have done what you were able to, although you may have failed to achieve what you wanted, counts in your favour; that you tried to do something and you were not able to, counts as if you had done so. (*Sermon 18, 5*).

Do what you can. God asks no more. (*Sermon 128, 10, 12*).

God does not ask the impossible; but counsels you both to do what you can for yourself, and to ask for God's help in what you cannot do. (*Nature and Grace, 43, 50*).

The recently fallen snow melts easily. But if it evades the action of the sun, it becomes hard. And if it accumulates year after year resisting the changes of weather, it becomes a great rock of ice. Something similar happens with ourselves. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 147, 23, 24).

These are the means of purging ourselves of the tiny daily sins which we cannot help because of our human weakness. These sins are tiny, they aren't big ones. These are not wild beasts like a lion, able to tear your throat out with one bite. But it's often the case that many tiny beasts can kill. If someone's thrown into the flea-pit, doesn't he die there? They are not very big it is true, but human nature is weak and can be destroyed, even by the tiniest creatures. So it is with little sins. You notice they are little; take care, because they are many. How tiny are grains of sand! Put too much sand into a boat, it sinks and you can write it off. How tiny are drops of rain! They fill rivers and wash away houses, don't they? So don't just shrug these sins aside. You will say, no doubt, "Who can exist without them?" In case you say this - and it's true, nobody can - a merciful God, seeing how fragile we are, has provided remedies against them. What are the remedies? Almsgiving, fasting, prayer: there are three of them. To make sure, though, you are telling the truth in your prayers, your almsgiving must be thorough and complete. What is thorough and complete almsgiving? Out of your abundance to give to anyone who has nothing, and when anyone does you harm, to forgive them. (*Sermon* 9, 11, 17)

There are some that, although they don't sleep, doze. They don't give themselves over completely to sleep but they abandon their eyelids to sleepiness and, as they become drowsy, they nod. Instead of taking the reins of their life, they are taken without direction by her. Wake up and be alert! (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 131, 8).

As well as a human being doesn't eat wheat without first grinding it in order to make bread, the devil doesn't eat anybody without first grinding him down with tribulation. In order to eat you he first needs to grind you up. Therefore, even if you are amidst affliction but remain whole, don't worry. No harm will come to you. Does the wheat grain fear the threshing that separates it from the straw? No, as the straw is blown away, the grain is set free of all it does not need. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 100, 12).

Usually human beings do not truly know themselves. They do not know of what they are able and what not. Often they presume that they can do certain things when they cannot while at the same time presume they cannot do others of which they are perfectly capable. Only when trials come to test them do they discover their own possibilities, possibilities hidden from them but known to their Creator. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 55, 2).

A curious lot people are, curious to pry into the lives of others, but slow when it comes to correcting their own. (*Confessions* 10, 3, 3).

## Committed And Studious

God made you without you. You didn't, after all, give any consent to God making you. How were you to consent, if you didn't yet exist? So while God made you without your help, God does not save you without your help. (*Sermon 169, 11, 13*).

Let us not waste time with the delights of the past, nor allow ourselves to be caught up totally in the preoccupations of the present. Let us not be complacent, lest anything past prevent us listening to the present, or anything of the present prevent us thinking of the future. Let us go forward confidently toward what awaits us. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 67, 10*).

Nevertheless, although I am not able to do all that I wish, that is no reason not to do all that I can. (*Letter 166, 1*).

God doesn't condemn someone who is unable to do something if he or she has not the means of achieving it. It is a different case for those who don't want to do what they can. (*Sermon 54, 2*).

You cannot win a contest, unless you fight. For that reason we should not ask God that we be free of temptation, but rather that we not be led into it, that we be preserved from wrong. It is as if we should be tried by fire, we should pray, not that we not be touched by fire, but rather that we not be consumed by it. For the kiln tests, strengthens and proves the quality of the potter's vessels, just as adversity does good people. (*The Sermon on the Mount, 2, 9, 31*).

Our life is a pilgrimage and as such, it is full of difficulties. But our maturity is forged by these difficulties. We are not known to ourselves, unless we are tested; neither can we be crowned, if we don't conquer; nor conquer, if we don't fight; nor fight, if we lack enemies. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 61, 2*).

Don't be sleepy when listening to the truth so as not to be woken up with a start when it comes to settling the bill. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 32, 2, 2*).

It is of no use "to know" the truth, if, at the same time, you do not embrace it with your life. It is necessary to build on a sure foundation, that is "to hear" and "to do". The one that hears, and does not do it, builds on sand. The one that neither hears nor does it, builds nothing. The one that hears and does, builds on stone. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 58, 17*).

It is not enough to suffer to be counted righteous. It is necessary to suffer for justice. Don't boast because of the torture. It tests your cause. (*Commentary on the Psalms, 35*).

Let no one say, because I suffer, I am righteous. Because He who first suffered, suffered for justice' sake; therefore He added a great exception, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice". (*Commentary on the Psalms, 35*)

## Friendly And Community Oriented

We are neighbours of all as a result of our birth on earth, and brothers and sisters of each other as a result of the shared hope of heaven. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 25, 2, 2).

All human beings are your neighbour. Where human nature is shared, differences are always accidental. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 118, 8, 2).

We need the gifts of others to make up for what is lacking in ourselves. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 125, 13).

Happy the one who loves you, and loves his friend in you and his enemy for your sake. He alone loses no one dear to him, to whom all are dear in the One who is never lost. (*Confessions*, 4, 9, 14).

In the school of the Master, we are all fellow students. (*Sermon 292*, 1).

I don't speak as a school master or teacher, but as a servant or minister. I don't speak to pupils, but to fellow students; not to servants, but to fellow servants. There is but a single Teacher whose school is on earth and who teaches us from on high. (*Sermon 292*, 1, 1).

Before all else, those of you who come together in community live together in harmony, being of one mind and one heart on the way to God. (*Rule 1*, 1-2).

There were other joys to be found in my friends' company which still more powerfully captivated my mind - the charms of talking and laughing together and kindly giving way to each other's wishes, reading well written books together, sharing jokes and delighting to honour one another, disagreeing occasionally but without rancour, as a person might disagree with himself, and lending piquancy by that rare disagreement to our much more frequent accord. We would teach and learn from each other, sadly missing any who were absent and blithely welcoming them when they returned. Such signs of friendship sprang from the hearts of friends who loved and knew their love returned, signs to be read in smiles, words, glances and a thousand gracious gestures. So were sparks kindled and our minds were fused inseparably, out of many becoming one. (*Confessions*, 4, 8, 13).

Charity makes for harmony. Harmony generates unity. And unity leads to charity. Charity leads us towards our true destiny. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 30, 2, 1).

But will you be like a spoiled child in its father's house, loving your father if he caresses you and hating him when he corrects or chastises you, never thinking that he is all the while preparing an inheritance for you, whether caressing or chastising. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 32, 2, 3)

Real community life can only be created by those who are prepared to live out their love of others as Christ did. Those who really do not live out this love, although they may live together with others, but they end up despising, upsetting and tormenting the others with whom they live. With their bad humour they disrupt the peace of the others as they seek fodder for their gossip. They are like an unbroken mule yoked to a cart that, besides not pulling the cart, tries to destroy the cart with blows from its hooves. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 132, 12).



You are all to live together, therefore, one in mind and one in heart and honour God in each other because each of you has become His temple. (*Rule*, 1, 8).

Where there is no envy or fear, differences, far from creating divisions, foster harmony. (*Holy Virginity*, 29).

Where there is a sense of unity, there is community. Where there is no unity, there is a mob, that is to say, an unruly crowd. (*Sermon* 103, 4).

Truth is the inheritance of all and, for that reason, it is not the particular property of anyone. That which is in common is between all so that all who come may use it and be enlightened. It is equally distant from all and to all equally close. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 76, 12).

A community is a group of individuals bound together by the harmony and communion as to the things they look for and they love. In order to discover the character of a community we have only to observe what they love. (*The City of God*, 19, 24)

For the unity of the members is one mind of charity; and that unity speaks as one man once spoke. (*Treatise on Saint John's Gospel*, 32, 7).

A good choir is the result of the consent of many and different singers. If the voice of one of them doesn't fuse with the others, the whole choir can be out of tune and it becomes offensive for the audience and the concert fails. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 149, 4).

In an orchestra there are many different instruments. But all are tuned so carefully and played in harmony that the audience only hears one melody. This must be our ideal: to be an orchestra for the Lord (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 150, 8).

Compete with and emulate each other in good works, in mutual love, because in doing so you don't really compete against each other, but all against the common enemy. Let each one achieve what she can; what one cannot do, is achieved through what another who can do it, if she loves in the other that which personal inability hinders her from doing. This way the weakest among you won't hold back the strongest, and the strongest won't make the weakest feel suffocated. For your conscience is responsible to God; to each other you owe nothing but love. (*Letter* 130, 16, 31).

## Open To The Transcendent

Oh God, you are always the same, let me know myself, let me know you. (*Soliloquies*, 2, 1, 1).

Lord, that I may know myself as you know me. (*Confessions*, 10, 1, 1).

Lord, you made human beings in your own image and likeness. This is something those who truly know themselves discover. (*Soliloquies*, 1, 1, 4).

The image of God is within you, not in your physical appearance; it is not in those ears you can see, nor in the eyes, the nose, taste buds, the hands, the feet. Where your faith is, where your hope and your love are, there God has his image. (*Commentary on the Psalms* 48, 2, 11).

If, then, one is nearer to God the more one is like God. There is no distance from God other than unlikeness to God. (*The City of God*, 9, 17).

If you thirst, you go to the fountain and, to get to it, you need light. If it is at night, you light a lamp. God, on the other hand, is at the same time fountain and light. For the one that thirsts God is a fountain, for the blind, God is light. (*Treatise on St John's Gospel*, 13, 5).

For the moment our life is only hope, but later it will be eternity: the life of this mortal life is the hope of the immortal life. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 103, 4, 17).

Do you want to have God take care of you, hold you in his hand? It is very simple: a will set on good ensures that you stay in God's hand. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 39, 27).

God is everywhere. Therefore, if you don't fall away from God, God will not move away from you. (*Treatise on St John's Gospel*, 34, 6).

The search for God is the search for happiness. The encounter with God is happiness itself. (*The Customs of the Catholic Church*, 11, 18).

We search God out by loving Him; we reach Him, not by becoming entirely what He is, but in nearness to Him, and in wonderful and immaterial contact with Him, and in being inwardly illuminated and occupied by His truth and holiness. He is light itself; we get enlightenment from Him. The greatest commandment, therefore, which leads to happy life, and the first, is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind." For to those who love the Lord all things work unto good. Hence Paul adds shortly after, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor virtue, nor things present, nor things future, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*The Customs of the Catholic Church*, 11, 18).

God wants your love, not that you love him for what you can get from him. Don't forget: God wants to fill your heart, not your pockets. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 52, 8).

When we do the will of God, then God's will is done in us. (*Sermon* 58, 4).

We do not come close to God by any change of place, or distance ourselves from him by any spacial movement. To come closer to God is to resemble Him. To move away from Him is to become unlike him. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 34, 2, 6).

God who made you, doesn't want anything of you but yourself. (*Sermon* 34, 7).

Lord, all my hope rests in your great mercy. Give what you command, and then command whatever you will. (*Confessions*, 10, 29, 40).



## An Augustinian Prayer for a Student or Teacher

God of Truth and Beauty,  
 You give each one of us the desire to seek the Truth.  
 Fire me with a thirst for knowledge and Truth.  
 Let me use that knowledge to build a community of justice and love.

God of Splendour and Glory,  
 You show us your splendour in the heavens, the earth and the mystery of each person.  
 May I see your presence and warming love in the gifts of this earth.  
 May I reverence this presence.

God, companion on the journey,  
 You touched the restless heart of Augustine as he searched for you.  
 Help me to support my friends and teachers/students in their quests  
 and seek their help in mine.  
 Remind me that you are within me and them as teacher and friend.  
 Be present to us in the struggles of life as we journey together.

God of Unity, God of Peace,  
 You inspired Augustine to gather friends around him in community.  
 May we always live together in harmony and be of one mind and one heart.

Amen.

# Being an Educator

## Introductory Notes

Before we look at Augustine's own words, a few brief notes are offered to introduce his thinking.

◆It is not accidental that this section is entitled educator rather than teacher. According to Augustine, the educator is not rightly called teacher or 'master', but rather one who serves or ministers to students. The true teacher is "the Teacher within."

◆The primary goal of the professional educator is not that of distributing information, but rather formation in understanding and wisdom; not the transmission of ideas as givens, but rather the offer and promotion of ideals as values and attitudes.

◆The teacher is, fundamentally, a fellow student, a companion in the search. The school is a community where dialogue, interaction and sharing between the different members of the educational community make the educational process work.

◆To continue to be a good teacher, the teacher must continue to be a good student. Teaching is a calling that requires ongoing formation on the part of the teacher.

◆The best lesson teachers can give is their own GOOD EXAMPLE, their own authenticity. Their authority comes, mainly, from their own enthusiasm and competence.

◆According to Augustine there are three types of educators:

Firstly those that "sell words in exchange for a salary." Augustine compares them to PARROTS and THIEVES. Parrots, because they don't do anything more than repeat what they have learned from others by heart. Thieves, because they speak using other people's words. "How can they claim them as theirs if the words of their mouths are denied by what they do? "

Secondly, there are those who are like the signposts on the side of a road. They show you the route but they themselves are at a standstill. They speak but don't act.

Finally, there are those who offer themselves for IMITATION by their students. Not only do they show the way, but they lead the way. They act on what they say.

As a result their role is not one that can be carried out in an anonymous way, but is very personal: personalised and personalising.

◆Education is FOR PEOPLE, with first names and last names, with virtues and faults, with needs and values.

It should, therefore, take account of individual differences, but in the context of UNITY and COMMUNION. To respect equality and justice, but through the principal of PROPORTION: "Not to all the same, but to each according to their needs."

- ◆ Educators need great equanimity and inner balance in carrying out their ministry. Education is both an unfolding process that needs to respond to the demands of the moment as well as a task requiring forward planning and considerable effort.
- ◆ The educators' fundamental points of reference for their activity include:
  - ▶ INTERIORITY:  
 "The TRUTH resides within".  
 To educate is to "take out to the light", to "help give light", to "remember"...
  - ▶ TRANSCENDENCY:  
 "Our heart is restless until it rests in You."  
 "The ideal is always beyond".
  - ▶ COMMUNION:  
 We "need others to be ourselves."  
 "The Truth is neither mine nor yours, so that it can be yours and mine."  
 "One spirit in God and one heart on the way toward God"

These points indicate some of Augustine's key ideas about the role of the teacher. The quotations that follow identify what Augustine believed are some of the key characteristics of the human teacher.

### **Aware Of The Interior Teacher**

We have but one Teacher and, under Him, we are all fellow students. We are not teachers because we speak in front of a class. The true Teacher speaks from within. (*Sermon* 134, 1, 1).

The one that is consulted, the one that teaches, is the Truth of God that lives within each person. We all consult that Truth, but it is only revealed to us according to our inner capacity to grasp it, which in turn depends on our inner disposition towards it. And if somebody, when consulting, makes a mistake, this doesn't happen because of some defect in the consulted truth, just as it is not the result of some defect in external light that leads our physical eyes to frequently falsify reality. (*The Teacher*, 11, 38)

What happens is that, guided by the words which stimulate their questioning within, students can come to understand some realities that they could not initially understand. At the beginning they may have even rejected that knowledge out of hand because, due to weakness of the internal vision or for lack of attention, they were not qualified to embrace the whole reality presented suddenly. Stimulated little by little and questioned by parts, they are driven to an interior encounter with the truth, by means of the words of the one that interrogates them. (*The Teacher*, 11, 40).

As for all those things which we “understand, ” it is not the outward sound of the speaker’s words that we consult, but the truth which presides over the mind itself from within, though we may have been led to consult it because of some words we heard. The one who is able to see them inwardly is a student of the same Truth and is critical of the one who expounds them, that is to say, of their words. (*The Teacher*, 11, 38)

When those called teachers make use of words to explain the subjects they profess, even those that deal with virtue and wisdom, those known as pupils consider within themselves whether what has been said is true. Contemplating according to their own capacities, they ascertain whether what they have heard accords with the truth they find within. It is only then that they learn. And when the inner response is yes and they discover that what they have been told is the truth, they praise their teachers without realising that, more than their teachers, they are praising those who have been taught. However they make the mistake of calling the exterior persons teachers when they are not that at all. They could be forgiven for such a mistake since there is generally no interval of time between the moment of speaking and that of knowing, and because coming to learn from them follows quickly upon the suggestive force of the speakers’ words, they think that they have learned externally from the one who spoke those words. (*The Teacher*, 14, 46).

Let us not attribute to words a greater value than what they actually have. As a result you will begin to understand rather than simply accept with how much truth and authority it has been written, “Don’t call anybody teacher in this world, because the only Teacher is in heaven.” What “in heaven” means is this: by means of our fellow human beings and various other signs, we are led to turn to the Teacher within to be taught. To love Him and to know Him is the happy life that all say they are looking for but few are able to find. (*The Teacher*, 14, 46).

### **Ready To Walk Within**

Do not spread yourself too widely. Concentrate on what is within. The truth resides within the person. (*True Religion*, 39, 72).

Why does it please us so much to speak and please us so little to listen? Are you always out and about? Do you find it difficult to come back inside? Your Teacher is within you. On the other hand, when you undertake the role of teacher, you must go out in order to come close to those who are outside. You need to listen first to what is spoken within you and then speak to those who are without. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 139, 15).

The recognition of one’s own ignorance is the first intelligence test. (*Sermon* 301, 4, 3).

Just as it is not anyone’s advantage to open her or his eyes when in the dark, it is of no purpose to be in the light if we have our eyes tightly shut. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 25, 2, 14).

Do you worry that the tree has some rotten branches? Don’t waste your time worrying: take good care of the roots, and don’t worry about its great size. Let love be within you and what will follow is the fullness of knowledge. What

in fact do you not know if you know love? In fact it is written: God is love. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 79, 2).

Woe is me, Lord, I do not even know what I do not know! (*Confessions*, 11, 25, 32).

### **Knows That Truth Is Shared**

The truth is neither mine nor yours, so that it can be yours and mine. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 103, 2, 11).

This is why we must tremble before your judgments, O Lord, for your Truth is not mine, nor his, nor hers, but belongs to all of us whom you call to share it in communion with him, at the same time giving us the terrible warning not to abrogate truth to ourselves as private property, lest we find ourselves deprived of it. For anyone who appropriates what you provide for all to enjoy, and claims as his own what belongs to all, is cast out from this commonwealth, cast out to what is truly his own, which is to say from the truth to a lie; for anyone who lies is speaking from what is his own. (*Confessions*, 12, 25, 34).

What do I do with someone who pleads for the view of a faction or something that is false or ignores the good of the community as a whole, bringing an action against it? Is it not good for him to lose the case because if he loses he will hold onto the whole, while if he wins he will be left with only a part - or rather if he appears to win, because ultimately only truth conquers. And the victory of truth is love. (*Sermon* 358, 1).

In the school of the Lord we all are schoolmates. (*Sermon* 242, 1).

I don't speak as a teacher, but as a minister. Because I don't speak to pupils, but to schoolmates, not to servants, but to fellow servants. There is but a single Teacher whose school is on the earth and who teaches from Heaven. (*Sermon* 292, 1, 1).

Nobody can judge the truth, but without the light of truth, nobody can judge rightly. The truth allows human beings to judge, not to judge the truth in itself, but other things with the help of truth. (*Free Will*, 2, 12, 34).

You who are the Truth, hold sway over all who turn to you for counsel and respond to all who consult you. You respond simultaneously to all, however different their questions. Your answers are clear, however not all hear them with clarity. Everybody consults about what they want, but they do not always hear what they want to hear. (*Confessions*, 10, 26, 37)

When the truth arrives forcefully at the ears and in the hearts of human beings, the moving sands of the bad habits begin to engulf them. Instead of giving in to the truth, they prefer to resist. (*Letter* 98, 6).

The brightness of dazzling light hurts feeble eyes: what is happiness for others, brings pain to them. In the same way, the bread of the truth tastes bitter to those who shun the truth; for that reason they hate the lips of those who speak the truth. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 5, 14, 15).

Why then does truth engender hatred, why does a servant of yours who proclaims the truth make himself an enemy to his hearers, if the life of happiness, which

consists in rejoicing over the truth, is what they love? It must be because people love truth in such a way that those who love something else wish to regard what they love as truth and, since they would not want to be deceived, are unwilling to be convinced that they are wrong. They are thus led into hatred of truth for the sake of that very thing which they love under the guise of truth. They love truth when it enlightens them, but hate it when it accuses them. In this attitude of reluctance to be deceived and intent to deceive others they love truth when it reveals itself, but hate it when it reveals them. (*Confessions*, 10, 23, 34).

Having eyes is not same as looking, nor is looking the same as seeing. Neither is listening the same as understanding. (*Soliloquies*, 1, 6, 12)

### **Our Goal: To Educate The Whole Person**

To achieve maturity, a human being needs a certain balance among these three things: talent, education and experience. (*The City of God*, 11, 25).

Make use of knowledge like scaffolding that is used to help build the building of love; that building will last forever, even when knowledge has been dismantled. (*Letter 55*, 21, 39).

Take this love, therefore, as the end that is set before you, to which you are to refer in all that you say, and whatever you narrate, narrate it in such a manner that he to whom you are discoursing on hearing may believe, on believing may hope and on hoping may love. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 4, 8).

The teacher's function is to develop a gradual approach for the student to the truth, especially for those who, while they may have a love of learning, have yet to develop a sharpness of mind. Without a careful and progressive plan, success cannot be achieved. (*Soliloquies*, 1, 23).

One can rightly say, in a metaphorical way, that a person grows with learning and shrinks with forgetting. (*Dimensions of the Soul*, 33).

In the same way that you choose what you eat, choose carefully what you teach. What you say is food for those who listen. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 51, 10).

It is not the teacher who illuminates with light the student's soul. Just as someone brings light to a house by opening the windows, so it is with the teacher. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 118, 18, 4).

As a mother feeds a small child, not so that it remains small but so that the baby grows, good teachers give their pupils the appropriate food so that the day comes when, having grown, the same pupils now know how to offer food themselves. (*Sermon 23*, 3, 3).

### **A Capacity To Adapt Oneself To The Student**

Nobody is able to lift someone else up to their level if they cannot in some sense descend and put themselves in the situation of the other. (*Letter 11*, 4).

It is preferable that the grammarians criticise us rather than people misunderstand us. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 138, 20).

[For we who teach] Choice of language is made not on the basis of what sounds well, but rather on whether it indicates or suggests to those listening what the speaker wishes to communicate. For that reason, the distinctive mark of a good teacher is to love the truth above everything and words only in as far as they support the truth. As what does it serve to have a key made of gold if it cannot open the door we wish to unlock? Or what is wrong with a wooden key if it completes its task of opening up what was locked? (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 10-11, 24-26).

It also happens frequently that some who at the beginning of instruction listened with pleasure, then tire of listening or of so much time standing, and open their lips not to praise our words, but to yawn, or even to communicate a desire to leave. As soon as we realise this is happening, the right thing to do is to regain their attention by telling something cheerful and entertaining, related to the topic with which we are dealing. We may also take account of their physical concerns by getting them to sit down or stand up ... or we may focus on something which we know relates particularly to the person who is drowsy in order to re-arouse his attention... (*The Catechesis of Beginners*, 13, 19).

For just as a speaker who clears up things people want to know is welcome, so too one who drums in things they already know is burdensome - to those listeners, at least whose whole expectation was hanging on the solution of the difficulties in the matters being set before them. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 10, 25).

It is as if the Roman speaker [Cicero] were to say : “That a person will be eloquent who, in order to teach, can talk about minor matters calmly; in order to delight, about middling matters moderately; in order to sway, about great matters grandly.” (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 17, 34).

The good teacher knows what to pass on and what to hold in reserve. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 36, 1, 1).

The one that teaches should avoid words that do not teach. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 10, 24).

Eating and learning have something in common, both are means of subsistence: one for the body, the other for the soul. Because many people are fussy and fastidious, even those foodstuffs without which life cannot be supported need their pickles and spices. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 26).

Due to the lack of capacity or maturity of your students you may decide not to address certain issues or facts at a certain time, but you cannot lie about them or use falsehoods to conceal them. Even when it may seem to lead more directly to their accepting an outcome we know to be the truth, we cannot rely on any falsehood in our teaching. (*Against Lying*, 10, 17).

### **Acts With Authority And Exercises Discipline**

Authority is like a door to education. Learning on the basis of authority may come first in time but ideally, reason should be placed first. Once the student has entered by authority, she or he best goes on to figure out, by means of reason, the principles accepted on the basis of authority. (*Order*, 2, 26).



When we decide to learn something, often what stimulates our enthusiasm is the authority and enthusiasm of those who teach the subject. (*The Trinity*, 10, 1).

In all learning we are guided by authority and reason. Authority comes first in time, but in the formal process of the education, reason is first. (*Order*, 2, 9).

At the beginning, the student is a mere follower, guided and served by the authority, but, little by little, he becomes his own guide. The more mature the person becomes, the more that person will grow in knowledge and in wisdom. (*Order*, 2, 26).

Human authority completes a mission of service. But if it is not linked to the confirmation of good example, it can be deceiving. The good behaviour of those who exercise authority is the best and most effective confirmation of the truths they teach. (*Order*, 2, 9, 27).

Carrying out a position of leadership doesn't consist in being above, but being before. (*Sermon* 340, 2).

God loves discipline. It is a perverse and misguided innocence that accepts the shortcomings of those being educated. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 50, 24).

Let us guard against any excess in the use of punishment, and against any shortcoming in our readiness to pardon. Let us not punish if it is not for the sake of improvement, and avoid all indulgence that may lead to worsening behaviour. Let us consider as our family all those who have been put in our charge. Let us be at their service as if we were embarrassed at having power over them, and use the power in such a way that we enjoy serving them. (*Order*, 2, 8, 25).

There is a mercy that chastises and a cruelty that forgives. It is cruel to leave a boy that obstinately continues to play near a nest of vipers. It is merciful not allowing him to continue to do so, even if you have to resort to punishment. (*Letter* 153, 6, 16).

All should not be given the same medicine, although all need the same love. To some it is necessary to love them with gentleness, to others with severity. Do this with a love that is an enemy to no one, and a mother to all. (*The Catechesis of Beginners*, 15, 23).

It is better to love with severity than to deceive gently. (*Letter* 93, 2, 4)

A silly boy usually loves a schoolmaster who coaxes him and hates one who chastises him. But a sensible boy realises that the teacher is being good to him, both when he is coaxing and when he is chastising him. He coaxes to save the boy from losing heart, he chastises him to save him from going astray. (*Sermon* 15A, 3)

When you love, it's you who profit by it. It will make a deposit for you where it cannot get lost. (*Sermon* 34, 8).



## Learning And Teaching

Remember that absolutely no one can love a thing that is quite unknown. We must carefully examine what sort of love the studious have, that is the people who do not yet know, but still desire to know some branch of learning... Sometimes we are amazed at what we hear or experience about the results of having a certain kind of knowledge and this makes us enthusiastic to acquire by study the means of being able to reach such results ourselves. Suppose someone who does not know about writing is told that it is a discipline by which you can make words in silence with your hand and send them to somebody else a long way away, and by which this person to whom they are sent, can pick them up not with his ears but his eyes; surely when he longs to know how he can do that himself, his enthusiasm is stirred by what he has learnt about writing and what he can do with it. This is the way the enthusiasm and studiousness of learners is enkindled. That of which you are absolutely ignorant you simply cannot love in any sense whatsoever. (*The Trinity*, 10, 1)

As long as I am a good teacher, I will continue being a student. (*Sermon 244*, 2).

Let us therefore search as people who are going to find, and find as people who are going to go on searching. (*The Trinity* 9, 1, 1)

The love of knowledge and truth should invite us to continue learning. The love of others should compel us to teach. (*Answers to the Eight Questions of Dulcitius*, 3).

When it comes to learning, it is not restricted to old or young. While it may be more appropriate that the old should be teaching more than learning, it is preferable that they become pupils rather than remain ignorant concerning something they must teach. (*Letter 166*, 1, 1). [to fellow bishop and scholar Saint Jerome who was older than he was]

Don't hope to receive from me all the answers that you need. I am not a perfect teacher, but rather I continue learning new things every day in the very activity of teaching. (*Letter 266*, 2, 4.) [to a young woman to whom he offers his help as teacher].

If we teach we must always be ready to learn. It is better to be ready to be corrected, than to be so inflexible that we may be shattered. (*Letter 193*, 10).

## Love: "The Great Difference"

Many teach the truth without any sense of calling and without the least bit of honesty. They sell it in the marketplace to the highest bidder. In exchange for what? The advantages that this world can give. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 11, 7).

If we are bored by repeating the same things over and over again, especially if they have been adapted to children, let us join ourselves to our listeners with a brother's, a sister's, a father's or a mother's love so that united with them in heart, these things will seem as new to us as they do to them. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 12, 17).

Instruction is completed by love. (*Customs of the Catholic Church* 1, 28, 56).

Consider yourself happy, not because you exercise authority over those for whom you are responsible, but rather because you have been given the opportunity of serving them with love. They are your brothers and sisters. (*Rule*, 7, 3).

It is worthwhile observing that if the superiors want to be loved by those in their charge and they wish to be happy with their obedience, they become more obedient the more they are appreciated. Those who are their responsibility are more likely to love the person in charge if they are aware of the genuine love that person has for them. It is more pleasing, indeed, that love does not come out of the drought of want but out of the abundance of good feeling. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 4, 7).

Do not be overly worried about making [too difficult] demands of those you seek to teach; worry about your love for them. What kind of love do you have for them if, by being too soft with them in their shortcomings, you encourage them not to improve but get worse? Doesn't the patient hate the scalpel? (*The Usefulness of Fasting*, 9).

It is a cruel doctor that listens to his patient's cries and, to please the sick person, chooses to ignore a festering wound. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 33, 2, 20).

Often we may lack enthusiasm and feel bored when dealing with topics that we ourselves know by heart having dealt with them over and over again, especially if the content is rather straightforward. When this happens, we need to meet our students with a brother's, a sister's, a father's or a mother's love. Once together with them in heart, we find the topics in question as fresh and new as they are to them. For so great a force is the sympathy of the souls and so favorable the family climate generated that our listeners are affected while we speak. And we are affected while they listen. This way, we end up living in each other and, in a certain way, they speak in us who listen to us and we learn in them what we teach. We experience this sensation more vividly in as far as we identify in friendship with those whom we teach. In this way, things that have become routine for us are again new and exciting. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 12, 17). (A shortened alternative version of this quotation is the second quotation in this section.)

### **Promotes A Climate Of Kindness And Understanding**

It is necessary to relax the tension and to eliminate the fear, creating a climate of kindness and understanding. It is sometimes necessary to break the ice with words and exhortations that cause their trust... But it is necessary to do this with fineness and tact, breathing trust and understanding... not hurting or embarrassing the student. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 13, 19).

Give to each according to what they personally need. (*Rule*, 3).

Teach with happiness. Sadness darkens the atmosphere and it withers our words. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 10, 14).

It is relatively easy to list what needs to be taught. What requires the greatest consideration is the means by which it is taught, so that teachers enjoy their work when they teach. The better they succeed in this, the more attractive they will be. (*Catechesis of Beginners*, 2, 4).

If teachers who speak wisely also wish to teach eloquently, they should so manage their approach that they are listened to with understanding, with pleasure and with assent. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 26, 56).

### **Gives Good Example: The Best Lesson**

Teachers offer themselves for imitation. In many cases this is what we mean by teaching. (*Music*, 1, 6).

The good behavior of those who exercise authority is the best and most effective confirmation of the truths that they teach. (*Order*, 2, 27).

There are teachers that are like milestones: they show the way to others, but they themselves are at a standstill. (*Sermon* 119, 2).

If you are not blessed with great eloquence, at least make your manner of life an eloquent speech. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 29, 61).

The one who teaches well and lives badly is really one who speaks words that do not belong to him. How can they be if he denies them with his deeds? (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 29, 62).

In teaching we give of what we have. It belches forth like something we have eaten. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 15, 32).

Although the way of saying things has great importance, the teacher's own life is the most decisive factor affecting the receptivity of the audience. There is never a shortage of those who, in order to justify their own shortcomings, find an excuse in the faults of their teachers, saying in their hearts if not even to the faces, "Why don't you practice what you preach, if it is as good as you proclaim?" Distracted this way and rejecting the teacher, they end up rejecting the teachings. (*Christian Teaching*, 4, 27, 60).

## *An Augustinian Prayer for a Teacher*

God in heaven,  
Direct me in *what* to teach,  
Direct me in *how* to teach,  
Keep showing me *what* I still need to learn.

Direct me in the art of listening,  
A precious gift more exceptional than eloquent speech.

Place on my life's map, directions for the journey to my inner world.  
Speak truth to me there.  
Give me the gifts of peaceful silence,  
of happiness and mercy.

May I know how to wait,  
Like a farmer who contemplates the furrow,  
His eyes scanning the field with expectation,  
Waiting for the miraculous germination to shoot from the soil.  
Help me to be ready to care for it, to nurture it, take root and grow.

Help me to learn with my students,  
And together may we work for you.

Let my heart not be empty like a deserted city square,  
Let it not be closed in like some forgotten backyard.  
Let it be open and sunlit,  
A place of welcome where friendship shines.

In searching, let me learn.  
In waiting for this, let me love.  
In knowing myself, let me find wisdom.

Let me find you, my source,  
As a beam of light from the window  
leads me to discover the immense sun. Amen.

## Being a Parent

The same responsibility that bishops have shepherding our church is that of parents in the family. In both cases we will be called to give account to God for those who have been placed in our care. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 50, 24).

God loves discipline. There is a perverse and misguided innocence in fathers or mothers who do not call their children to account when they do wrong. Be careful also that the wrong doing that you do not challenge in your child is not one you take delight in vicariously... Although you do not actually do what your child does you may act out of similar motives. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 50, 24).

Pay attention to your mission as parents. Take care of your children like children of God, because you committed yourself to that solemnly at their baptism. And don't let it worry you too much that, sometimes, one of them will ignore your advice until you act with severity. You do your part; leave God to fulfill his in the child's regard. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 50, 24).

The 'father' of every family recognizes in this title a commitment to love those who are his with a truly fatherly love. The 'mother' of every family recognizes in this title a commitment to love those who are hers with a truly motherly love. For love of Christ and of everlasting life, educate all in your family, counsel them, encourage them, correct them with goodwill and authority. To be father or mother is not an occupation, but a service like that of a priest or a bishop, indeed serving Christ to be with him forever. (*Treatise on Saint John's Gospel*, 51, 13).

If you must be high and mighty, be high and mighty against the sin, not against the person. "But penalties must be applied", you might reply. I don't deny it, I don't forbid it; only let it be done in a spirit of love, a spirit of caring, a spirit of reforming. (*Sermon 13*, 8)

Train your son. And begin as soon as it is possible, seeing what a combination of expressing your disappointment and leniency can do to train him so that he will be ashamed of offending his father, instead of fearing him as a harsh judge. Take pride in such a son. But if he turns out to be one who despises such treatment, chastise and punish him but all the time seek his welfare. Many are corrected by love, others by fear, but what they arrive at by fear and trembling is love. (*Sermon 13*, 9).

You should not love innocence such that you abandon discipline. It is written: "The one that hates the discipline is an unfortunate one" (Wisdom, 3, 11)... Just as those who hate discipline are unfortunate, those who do not impose it when they should, are cruel. Do you want an example of compassionate punishment? None better than that of a father who for love of his son ends up punishing him. He does not want his child to suffer, but loving him as good and always loving him as such, he prefers him to suffer than for his son to lose his way and lose all that will come to him from a good life. Do you want an example of cruel carelessness? The same cast of characters serves us: if an undisciplined and spoilt son pursues a self destructive way of life and his father, meanwhile, pretends not to notice, if his father spares him, if the father is afraid of offending his son, isn't he cruel in his softness? (*Sermon 13*, 9).

It is better to love with severity than to deceive gently. (*Letter 93*, 2, 4).

To sow the wheat, to cultivate the harvest, to worry while it ripens and to be happy with the fruit of your labour is the task of a few, but anyone can in an instant, with a single match, set fire to the whole harvest. In a similar way, only a few complete the

task of raising children properly: having them, feeding them properly, educating them as it suits each one, guiding them to maturity. Again, in a similar way to the field of wheat, it takes but an instant for one of them to be killed and it can be done by any demented person in a moment. (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 51, 7).

For the teacher, education is a work of love. The labours of people doing what they like doing, are never burdensome but a pleasure in themselves. (*The Excellence of Widowhood*, 21, 26).

There is another kind of friendship which is based on wishing the other well in which sometimes we offer gifts to those we love. But what if there is nothing to give [because they are in need of nothing]? For those who truly love each other there is no need to do more for each other than wish each other well. (*Treatise on the First Letter of Saint John*, 8, 5).

Love is the only debt that, once you have paid it, is still owed. It is to be paid when it is owed, but it should still continue being paid later, since a time when it is not owed doesn't exist. And you lose nothing when it is paid but rather your fortune multiplies as you pay a debt of love since when it is paid it is also kept, it is not handed over. (*Letter* 192, 1)

Happy the one that loves you, and loves friends in you and enemies for your sake. That person alone loses no one dear to him or her, for all are dear in the One who is never lost. And who is that but our God. (*Confessions*, 4, 9, 14).

There are several ways of exercising leadership illustrated in the parable of the Good Shepherd: true authority, simple power and power that has been usurped. The true authority gives life and helps growth, as is the case with the Good Shepherd. Simple power without commitment leads to fear, as is the case with the hired hand. And usurped power that leads to injustice and death, as is the case with the thief. (*Sermon* 137, 5, 55).

Often the need to give [in teaching another] is what merits us to receive [understanding]. (*Letter* 266, 1).

The blessing of the parents is not to simply produce children, but rather to have them responsibly, not as an accident of promiscuity, and to educate those children by bringing them up soundly and with perseverance in the context of their fidelity to each other. (*Holy Virginity*, 12, 12).

Just as the good children of adulterers are not a justification for adultery, the bad children of married parents are not reason to reject marriage. (*The Goodness of Marriage*, 16, 18)

## An Augustinian Educator's Creed

LEADER *Augustine believed in educating the whole person and this is achieved not simply through the gaining of knowledge but by uniting the efforts of mind and heart - a search of the mind for the God who is Truth - a search for the God who is love.*

LEFT SIDE: *An Augustinian education involves both a search for knowledge and a learning to love with the heart.*

ALL: *This I will pursue and promote.*

RIGHT SIDE: *An Augustinian education challenges teachers to search out truth together with their students.*

ALL: *This I will pursue and promote.*

LEFT SIDE: *An Augustinian education involves teachers and students looking inside themselves so that they can discover truth through self-knowledge.*

ALL: *This I will pursue and promote.*

RIGHT SIDE: *An Augustinian education relies on interaction and sharing with others in community. It gives a central place to friendship.*

ALL: *This I will pursue and promote.*

ALL: *God in Heaven, we recognise that our students need us to convey to them your love for all. We pray your blessing that within this community we may be supported to continue our search for you and to grow evermore in wisdom and love. We make this prayer through Christ our brother. Amen.*



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