

Wednesday 28 August 2024

St Augustine



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Augustine was born in North Africa in 354 AD. His career as an orator and rhetorician led him from Carthage to Rome, and from there to Milan where the Imperial court at that time resided. By temperament, he was passionate and sensual. He rejected Christianity as a young man but gradually, under the influence first of his mother Monica then St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Augustine began to look afresh at the Scriptures. He was baptised by Ambrose in 387. Not long after returning to North Africa and was ordained priest then became Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He probably died on this day in 430 AD.

Augustine's influence on the subsequent development of European thought cannot be overestimated. A vast number of his sermons and writings has been preserved with the theme of 'the sovereignty of the grace of God' running through all of it.

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Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymns can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Teach me my God and King [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect for the St Augustine

Merciful Lord,
who turned Augustine from his sins
to be a faithful bishop and teacher:
grant that we may follow him in penitence and discipline
till our restless hearts find their rest in you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All Amen.

First reading

A reading from Ecclesiasticus

The one who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients, and is concerned with prophecies; he preserves the sayings of the famous and penetrates the subtleties of parables; he seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs and is at home with the obscurities of parables. He serves among the great and appears before rulers; he travels in foreign lands and learns what is good and evil in the human lot. He sets his heart to rise early to seek the Lord who made him, and to petition the Most High; he opens his mouth in prayer and asks pardon for his sins.

If the great Lord is willing, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom of his own and give thanks to the Lord in prayer. The Lord will direct his counsel and knowledge, as he meditates on his mysteries. He will show the wisdom of what he has learned and will glory in the law of the Lord's covenant. Many will praise his understanding; it will never be blotted out.

His memory will not disappear and his name will live through all generations. Nations will speak of his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise.

Ecclesiasticus 39:1-10

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:11-14

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Christ whose glory fills the skies ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

Matthew 23:8-12

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Augustine was passionate and loved the things of this world. He became obsessed with the idea of holiness from soon after he became a Christian. As happens often, his faith fed on a single phrase from the Bible. In his case it was, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God' (from the Sermon on the Mount) so Augustine prayed to become pure.

Augustine realised that his faith was not growing and asked God what to do. He realised that while he was saying the words, 'Make me pure' deep down he was praying a more honest prayer, 'Make me pure ... but not yet.' Augustine acknowledged the truth and amended his life. And he grew to become a great Christian.

Augustine identified the problem causing his own lack of spiritual growth. He loved something more than he loved God, and that thing was bad. In Augustine's case, it was having sex with a servant girl but it could have been almost anything.

Many of us want to grow spiritually but, like Augustine, we may love other things that we know are wrong. And we may love them much more than we love God. Our love for these 'somethings' is a barrier between us and God. God confronts us with our skewed sense of priorities each time we seek Him. In effect, He's giving us a choice: choose Him or choose the wrong we know is bad but still love?

All of us fail to grow as Christians at some time in our lives as disciples. At each stage, the problem will probably be the same as Augustine's: we're placing something between us and God. Each time, we must recognise that doing so is putting our growth on hold. We're saying 'Not yet' to God. We'll grow in Godliness as soon as we're past any attachment to such obstacles.

Actually, we'll have many such battles as we develop as Christians. Each time God will show us that we're putting something between us and Him, and each time when we pray 'make me yours' we will actually have been praying '... but not yet.'

When we first become a Christian, that 'something' is often physical. It may be an addiction, a relationship, a possession, status and job. As we develop, those somethings are more likely to be an attitude (lifestyle or an -ism) or a misuse of God's gifts (time or money). Then, later still, that something will be more spiritual such as spiritual pride. But whatever it is, we need to cut through the sentiment *as soon as we identify it*.

Whatever it is, we must forget any sense of 'not yet' because our eternal destiny requires nothing less; our time remaining might be very, very short.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession (all come from St Augustine himself)

Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.

All Amen.

O Lord my God, most merciful,
most secret, most present,
most constant, yet changing all things,
never new, and never old,
always in action, yet always quiet,
creating, upholding, and perfecting all,
who has anything but what you have given?
or what can any man say when he speaks about you?
Yet have mercy on us, O Lord,
that we may speak to you, and praise your Name.

All Amen.

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know You, and desire nothing save only You.

Let me hate myself and love You.

Let me do everything for the sake of You.

Let me humble myself and exalt You.

Let me think of nothing except You.

Let me die to myself and live in You.

Let me accept whatever happens as from You.

Let me banish self and follow You, and ever desire to follow You.

Let me fly from myself and take refuge in You,

That I may deserve to be defended by You.

Let me fear for myself.

Let me fear You, and let me be among those who are chosen by You.

Let me distrust myself and put my trust in You.

Let me be willing to obey for the sake of You.

Let me cling to nothing save only to You,

And let me be poor because of You.

Look upon me, that I may love You.

Call me that I may see You, and for ever enjoy You.

All Amen.

Too late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient, O Beauty so new.

Too late have I loved you! You were within me but I was outside myself, and there I sought you!

In my weakness I ran after the beauty of the things you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you.

The things you have made kept me from you—the things which would have no being unless they existed in you!

You have called, you have cried, and you have pierced my deafness.

You have radiated forth, you have shined out brightly, and you have dispelled my blindness. You have sent forth your fragrance, and I have breathed it in, and I long for you. I have tasted you, and I hunger and thirst for you.

You have touched me, and I ardently desire your peace.

All Amen

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Ave verum corpus

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Latin for 'hail! True body'

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Take my life and let it be

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

We, your holy Church, acclaim you.

In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Augustine and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God of truth,
whose Wisdom set her table
and invited us to eat the bread and drink the wine
of the kingdom:
help us to lay aside all foolishness
and to live and walk in the way of insight,
that we may come with your servant Augustine
to the eternal feast of heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.