

Readings for Thursday, August 28, 2025

Augustine of Hippo – *Bishop and Theologian, 430*

Psalm 87

- 1 On the holy mountain stands the city he has founded; *
the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 2 Glorious things are spoken of you, *
O city of our God.
- 3 I count Egypt and Babylon among those who know me; *
behold Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia:
in Zion were they born.
- 4 Of Zion it shall be said, "Everyone was born in her, *
and the Most High himself shall sustain her."
- 5 The LORD will record as he enrolls the peoples, *
"These also were born there."
- 6 The singers and the dancers will say, *
"All my fresh springs are in you."

Hebrews 12:22-29

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.’ This phrase ‘Yet once more’ indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

John 14:5-15

Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Collect:

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us, following the example of your servant, Augustine of Hippo, so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve you, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Augustine of Hippo

Bishop and Theologian, 430

Augustine, perhaps the most influential theologian in the history of Western Christianity, was born in 354 at Tagaste in North Africa. In his restless search for truth, he was attracted by Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, and was constantly engaged in an inner struggle against sin. Finally, under the influence of his mother, Monica, Augustine surrendered to the Christian faith in the late summer of 386. He was baptized by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, on Easter Eve in 387. After returning to North Africa in 391, Augustine found himself chosen by the people of Hippo to be a priest. Four years later he was chosen bishop of that city. His spiritual autobiography, *The Confessions*, written shortly before 400 in the form of an extended prayer, is a classic of Western spirituality. He famously wrote, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Augustine wrote countless treatises, letters, and sermons. They have provided a rich source of new and fresh insights into Christian truth, and became foundational of later Christian theology as it developed in the Western church.

Much of Augustine’s theology developed in dialogue with those he disagreed with, and his training in rhetoric is on full display. The Manichaeans had attempted to solve the problem of evil by positing the existence of an independent agent eternally opposed to God. In refutation, Augustine affirmed that all creation is essentially good, having been created by God, and that evil is, properly speaking, the privation of good. A rigorist sect, the Donatists, had split from the rest of the church after the persecution of Diocletian in the early fourth century. Against them, Augustine asserted that the church was “holy,” not because its members could be proved holy, but because holiness was a property of the church, to which all its members are called.

Stirred by Alaric the Visigoth’s sack of Rome in 410, Augustine wrote his great work, *The City of God*. In it he writes: “Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God, the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The earthly city glories in itself, the heavenly city glories in the Lord . . . In the one, the princes, and the nations it subdues, are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love.”

Augustine died on August 28, 430, as the Vandals were besieging his own earthly city of Hippo.