



**ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE PARISH BULLETIN August 02, 2020**

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**Congratulations to Resela & Joseph Wong-Sing on your 50th Wedding Anniversary!!!**

**A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated at St. John the Apostle on August 1.**

**May the Lord continue to bless them in the years to come.**

**Augustine defends Faith through writings**

St. Augustine was born in 354. His mother was St. Monica. His father, Patricius, was converted to the Catholic Faith by his wife shortly before his death. St. Augustine was a catechumen and had not been baptized.

Augustine studied rhetoric in Madaura and Carthage. He was a brilliant student, but idleness led him into the vice of lust and he also followed a heretical sect— Manichees. His mother, St. Monica prayed night and day with tears for the conversion of her son.

In 384, Augustine went to Milan to be a professor of rhetoric. He was influenced by the preaching of St. Ambrose. Augustine began to experience conversion of the mind and saw the reasonableness of the Catholic Faith. But he still needed the conversion of heart, for he was still enslaved by lust and would pray: “Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.”

One day Potitianus came to visit Augustine and his friend Alipius. Potitianus saw a book of St. Paul’s Epistles lying on the table, and took the occasion to speak to them about the life of St. Anthony the Great. The life of St. Anthony touched the heart of Augustine. He threw himself under a fig-tree and wept over his own life.

Suddenly, he heard a voice of a child singing, “Take up and read”. Augustine took the book of St. Paul Epistles and read Romans 13:13-14. Touched by divine grace, Augustine felt that all his hesitation and doubt disappeared.

The conversion of Augustine took place in 386, and he was baptized by St. Ambrose on Easter eve in 387. Augustine returned to North Africa for a life of solitude in fasting, prayer, and meditations.

In 391, Augustine was ordained a priest. He became a powerful preacher and Valerius, the bishop of Hippo, made Augustine to be his coadjutor in 395. Augustine succeeded Valerius the following year.

During his 35 years as bishop of Hippo, Augustine guided his flock, wrote against different heresies, and took a leading part in the activities of the Church in Africa. Augustine died on August 28, 430.

St. Augustine wrote more than 100 books, which include his *Confessions* (a book about his youth and conversion), *City of God* (a grandiose defense of Christianity against paganism) and a rule for religious community. He was a popular preacher and his sermons were simple and deeply spiritual.

During his life, Augustine fought and wrote against heretics and schismatics: first, the Manicheans, then the Donatists, and finally the Pelagians. The Manicheans believed in two ultimate sources of creation, the one good and the other evil. They believed that physical matters are from the evil one. Against the Manicheans, Augustine taught that evil is the absent of good, the material world was created by God, and marriage is good.

The Donatists believed the validity of the Sacraments depends on the moral character of the minister. Against the Donatists, Augustine taught that there is but one Church of Christ, and outside the Church there is no salvation. He also taught that the Sacraments receive their validity, not from the minister, but from the invisible head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It is Christ who baptizes, confirms, etc., through his ministers.

Augustine’s answer to the Donatists in Africa, “securus judicat orbis terrarum”—“the whole world (the whole church) judges safely”—helped St. John Henry Newman in his conversion to Catholicism.

The Pelagians believed man can merit eternal life by his natural power without the aid of grace. From 412 to 427, Augustine refuted Pelagianism by writing about the fall, original sin, grace, and free will. These writings won him the title, Doctor of Grace.