

On the Saints, Companions on the Journey

"Each One Should Have a Saint That Is Familiar to Him"

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, AUG. 25, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI gave today during the general audience.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the life of each one of us there are very dear persons, to whom we feel particularly close; some are already in God's arms, others still share with us the journey of life: they are our parents, relatives, educators. They are persons to whom we have done good or from whom we have received good. They are persons we know we can count on. However, it is also important to have "travel companions" on the journey of our Christian life: I am thinking of a spiritual director, a confessor, persons with whom we can share the experience of faith, but I am also thinking of the Virgin Mary and of the saints. Each one should have a saint that is familiar to him, to whom he feels close with prayer and intercession, but also to imitate him or her. Hence, I would like to invite you to know the saints better, beginning with the one whose name you bear, by reading his life, his writings. You can be certain that they will become good guides to love the Lord ever more and valid aids for your human and Christian growth.

As you know, I am also united in a special way to some saints: among these, in addition to St. Joseph and St. Benedict, whose names I bear, and of others, is St. Augustine, whom I had the great gift of knowing, so to speak, up close through study and prayer, and who has become a good "travel companion" in my life and my ministry. I would like to stress once again an important aspect of his human and Christian experience, timely also in our age, in which it seems that relativism is, paradoxically, the "truth" that must guide thought, decisions and behavior.

St. Augustine was a man who never lived superficially. Thirst [for Truth], an anxious and constant search for Truth, is one of the underlying characteristics of his existence; however, [he didn't seek] "pseudo-truths" incapable of giving lasting peace of heart, but that Truth that gives meaning to existence and that is the "dwelling" in which the heart finds serenity and joy. His, we know, was not an easy journey: He thought he found Truth in prestige, in his career, in the possession of things, in the voices that promised him immediate happiness. He committed errors, went through sadness, faced failures, but he never paused, he was never satisfied with what gave him only a ray of light.

He was able to look into the depth of himself and he realized, as he writes in his Confessions, that that Truth, that God that he was looking for with his efforts was more intimate to him than he was to himself. He had always been by his side, had never abandoned him, was waiting to be able to enter into his life definitively (cf. III, 6, 11; X, 27, 38).

As I said commenting recently on a film on his life, in his anxious search, St. Augustine understood that it was

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not he who had found Truth, but that Truth itself, which is God, pursued and found him (cf. L'Osservatore Romano, Thursday, Sept. 4, 2009, p. 8). Commenting on a passage of the third chapter of the Confessions, Romano Guardini affirms: St. Augustine understood that God is glory that puts us on our knees, drink that extinguishes thirst, treasure that makes us happy, [...he had] the pacifying certainty of one who has finally understood, but also the blessedness of the love that knows: this is everything and it is enough for me" (Pensatori religiosi, Brescia, 2001, p. 177).

Again in the Confessions, in the ninth book, our saint gives us a conversation with his mother, St. Monica -- whose memorial is celebrated Friday, day after tomorrow. It is a very beautiful scene: he and his mother are in Ostia, in an inn, and from the window they see the sky and the sea, and they transcend sky and sea, and for a moment touch the heart of God in the silence of creatures. And here a fundamental idea appears in the journey toward Truth: creatures must be silent so that there will be a silence in which God can speak. This is also true in our time: Sometimes there is a sort of fear of silence, of recollection, of reflecting on one's acts, on the profound meaning of one's life. Often preferred is living the fleeting moment, hoping that it will bring lasting happiness. One prefers to live, because it seems easier, with superficiality, without thinking; there is fear of seeking the Truth, or perhaps there is fear that the Truth will find us, will grip us and change our life, as happened to St. Augustine. '

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to say to all, also to those in a difficult moment in their faith journey, those who do not participate much in the life of the Church, or those who live "as if God did not exist" that they not be afraid of the Truth, that they never interrupt their journey toward it, that they never cease to seek the profound truth about themselves and about things with the internal eyes of the heart.

God will not fail to give Light so that one can see, and Warmth to feel the heart that loves us and that wants to be loved.

May the intercession of the Virgin Mary, of St. Augustine and of St. Monica accompany us on this journey.

[Translation by ZENIT]

[The Holy Father then greeted the pilgrims in several languages. In English, he said:]

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims, especially the young altar servers from Malta and their families, and the pilgrimage group from Japan. This Saturday the Church celebrates the feast of Saint Augustine, who found in Christ the fullness of that truth which brings authentic freedom and joy. May Saint Augustine and his mother, Saint Monica, accompany us by their prayers and draw us ever closer to the Lord.

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[In Italian, he added:]

My thoughts go finally to young people, the sick and newlyweds: I invite all to find in Christ the reason for their hope.

[And he made this appeal in Italian:]

My thoughts go to Mogadishu, from where news continues to arrive of cruel violence and which yesterday became the scene of a new massacre. I am [united] with the families of the victims and of all those who, in Somalia, are suffering because of hatred and instability. I hope that, with the help of the international community, no efforts will be spared to re-establish respect for life and for human rights.

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[The Pope also greeted the pilgrims who were unable to enter the courtyard of the apostolic palace:]

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your presence and your enthusiasm. I wish you a good day, good vacations and much joy in these warm days. May the Lord help you and accompany you always. I give you my blessing.

[Translation by ZENIT]

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