

Vocation Reflections December 2021



Blessed Theresa reminds us:

“All the works of God proceed slowly and in pain; but then, their roots are the sturdier and their flowering the lovelier.” - Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger (SSND)



Advent wreath in the chapel at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis.

What we've read:

It is Advent. A time of waiting and believing and hoping and trusting. Blessed Theresa's quote (above) is something to ponder as we move through the foundational steps of discernment – and through Advent too.

Here is an example of the lived reality of the quote from Blessed Theresa. St. Augustine was born in Thagaste, North Nigeria in 354. He is probably more popularly known for what he was converted from than what he was eventually converted to. His youthful sexual wanderings and brash arrogance is more fascinating to most people than his later life as a monk, mystic and bishop. He wrote the book “Confessions” to confess (make known) what he believed about God, to give God praise and to tell his life story to show what God can do with God's humans. In it we read of a soul's struggles to be itself. We see how his inner life, at every step, was linked with his very deep need of God. But time and again, he resisted taking the road that would lead him there because, as he said, he was “led astray by the mists of a befouled heart.”

His deep need to “belong and to be somebody” was finally understood when he recognized he was called by God and belonged to God as a follower of Jesus. His “restless heart” had found its home. He wasn't rejected but was re-orientated so his gifts could be used to build up the kingdom of God. His passionate curiosity was transformed through his conversion into a pursuit of Right Love and Right Will. His ear for eloquence was transformed into a search for Truth. His genius for friendship was transformed into his love for community.

His conversion is marked when he was 32. He was struggling with that since he was 16. His discernment was aided greatly when he met Bishop Ambrose. I believe it was the confirmation for which he was looking. He flowered into one of the Doctors of the Catholic Church.

- Sister Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND

Reflection questions:

- Augustine was guided by the application of Scripture to his life. What is a scripture quote that inspires you?
- In Augustine's life, learning had such a deep impact that he reports on it in “Confessions.” While he was writing the book, he was working out who he really was. He didn't simply have an intellectual conversion; he felt that he was unconditionally loved by God. What may be an example of a learning that manifested itself in a change in your life?
- The story of Augustine's conversion is my story and probably your story, also. To read more about him, check out this site by the Augustinians: <http://www.augnet.org/en/life-of-augustine/growing-up/>.
- To pray with Augustine: For all of you whose spirit is restless and waiting...

