

# Vocation Reflections

December 2024



School Sisters of Notre Dame

**“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 Foundress  
(from Letter #2277, written in 1856)*

## Advent and St. Augustine

by Sister Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND

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 Algeria 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.

## Reflection questions

- Augustine was guided by the application of Scripture to his life. What is a scripture quote that inspires you?



*Advent wreath in the SSND chapel at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, Missouri, USA.*

- 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...

## Prayer

*Lord, I’ve prayed for a cure, but none has come. I’ve prayed for understanding of “why,” and haven’t received that, either. I sit, stand, and wait, Lord, for your wisdom and word, but O, Lord, my spirit is restless.*

*Inside of me is worry, and it is growing stronger. Disappointment, and it festers. My courage is flagging. My patience is falling away. And, even more, my spirit is restless.*

*So, Father in Heaven, instead of praying more for a cure or understanding or a release from pain, I turn to you with another supplication: Please, Lord, be with me and help me. Help me in my frustration and disappointment. Help me in my fragility.*

*And, most of all, Lord, help me in my restlessness so that I may be still and quiet and truly listen and truly hear. For I love you, Lord, with all my heart. And my restless spirit does, too.*

– [Maureen Pratt](#)

## Monthly vocation resource

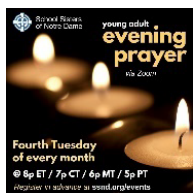
Don’t see yourself becoming a religious sister? Think again: [Six myths about becoming a nun](#)

## DID YOU KNOW?

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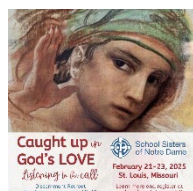
Stay up-to-date with SSND Vocations at [flow.page/ssnd](http://flow.page/ssnd) or scan the code below.

## Looking ahead



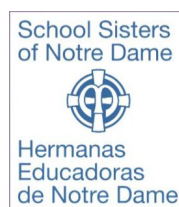
### Young Adult Evening Prayer

*For young adults ages 18+*  
 December 17, 2024  
 January 28, 2025  
 8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT



### Discernment Retreat for Single Women

February 21-23, 2025  
 St. Louis, MO



*God's cause  
 is the only concern  
 of  
 our hearts*



*Vocation Reflections is a monthly newsletter for those interested in learning more about discernment, prayer, and other topics related to the consecrated/vowed life. For questions, comments and subscription information, please contact [sisters@ssnd.org](mailto:sisters@ssnd.org).*