

**Augustine and his Ecclesiology in  
the Profession of Faith Part of the  
*Catechism***

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摘要：在《天主教教理》中，引用最多的作者是奧思定。本文試圖探討《天主教教理》卷一「信仰的宣認」所參考的奧思定著作，從而去理解其寫作背景及意義。奧思定雖被譽為「恩寵博士」，《天主教教理》的教義部份所提及的奧思定著作，很多時都是以教會學的角度出發。因此，奧思定對天主教教會訓導最深遠的影響，莫過於他對教會學的貢獻。

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, according to the late Pope John Paul II, “is a statement of the Church’s faith and of Catholic doctrine,”<sup>1</sup> published in response to the desire of the Fathers at the 1985 Synod of Bishops in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the close of Vatican II. Many ecclesiastical writers have been cited by the *Catechism*, but none so profusely as St. Augustine. Augustine was one of the first four—along with Gregory the Great, Ambrose and Jerome—to be officially proclaimed Doctor of the Church by Pope Boniface VIII’s decree *Gloriosus Deus* in 1298.<sup>2</sup> With Ambrose, Athanasius and John Chrysostom, he is depicted as one of the four Church Fathers who uphold the Chair of St. Peter, in the masterpiece in St. Peter’s basilica sculpted by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1659). In what way has this theological giant influenced the doctrinal teachings of the Catholic Church as expounded in the *Catechism*? This is what this essay seeks to explore. It shall argue that it is in the area of ecclesiology that Augustine has most influenced the Profession of Faith part of the *Catechism*.

The index of the *Catechism* shows that the Bishop of Hippo is referenced in 84 of the 2865 paragraphs in this handbook of Catholic doctrine. Even Thomas Aquinas, author of *Summa Theologica*, is referenced in only 57 paragraphs. Irenaeus of Lyons is referenced in 25,

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*, in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1994), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Doctors of the Church: Thirty-Three Men and Women Who Shaped Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), p. 11.

Ambrose of Milan in 20, John Chrysostom in 18, Ignatius of Antioch in 16, and Tertullian in 13 paragraphs. Cyprian of Carthage, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa are referenced in 10 paragraphs, and the other ecclesiastical writers in less than 10. Interestingly, quite a few of the frequently cited authors are closely related to Augustine. Ambrose was his mentor, Cyprian is the most celebrated saint of his North Africa homeland, and Tertullian is the theologian from whom he has adopted much. Certainly, theology is not a statistical discipline. Still, the number of paragraphs referenced is an objective indication of how much a particular ecclesiastical writer helped to shape the teachings of the Catholic Church. Using this measure, the influence of Augustine on Church doctrine is incomparable.

### I) An Overview of Augustine in the *Catechism*

The analysis that follows is based on the 1994 English edition of the *Catechism*.<sup>3</sup> An examination of the 84 paragraphs in which Augustine is referenced helps to put his influence in the *Catechism* into perspective. In 5 of these 84 paragraphs, two different works of Augustine are referenced,<sup>4</sup> so the works of the Bishop of Hippo are referenced a total of 89 times. All but 11 of these 89 are direct

<sup>3</sup> There are slight but non-substantive differences between the Latin and the English editions of the *Catechism*. The texts of the Latin edition used in this essay are from [http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism\\_it/index\\_it.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_it/index_it.htm).

<sup>4</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter referred to as CCC) 230, 311, 1718, 1766, 2001.

quotations.<sup>5</sup> What is more, 42 of them are full block quotations—the most substantial one occupying as much as a total of 15 lines.<sup>6</sup> Besides, 5 of these 84 paragraphs belong to the “In Brief” section,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Indirect references to Augustine include CCC 129, 230, 281, 311, 338, 963, 1156, 1766, 2628, 2539, 2560. While the Augustine reference in the English edition of CCC 129 is not a direct quote, the Latin edition contains an extra phrase “in *Vetere Novum Latet et in Novo Vetus pateat*,” which is a direct quote from Augustine’s *Questions on the Hexateuch* 2, 73. The English CCC 230 quotes Augustine as saying, “If you understood him, it would not be God,” and cites both Augustine’s *Sermon* 52, 6, 16 and *Sermon* 117, 3, 5 as references; an examination of the Latin CCC 230 shows that “*si cepisti, non est Deus*” is a direct quote from *Sermon* 52, 6, 16, whereas the reference to *Sermon* 117, 3, 5, which says “*si enim comprehendis, non est Deus*,” is in fact indirect. CCC 963 is a citation from *Lumen gentium* 53, but it actually includes a direct quotation from Augustine’s *Holy Virginity*. The English CCC 1156 puts the famous saying “He who sings prays twice” within quotes and cites Augustine’s *Expositions of the Psalm* 72, 1, as if it is a direct quote; this reference should actually be in the form of a *confer* (cf.), as the Latin edition has rightly presented as such, for “*qui cantat, bis orat*”—though commonly attributed to Augustine—does not appear in any work of Augustine, as a search using the search engine in <http://www.augustinus.it/ricerca/index.htm> would reveal. The English CCC 2539 gives Augustine’s *The First Catechetical Instruction* 4, 8 as the indirect reference to the phrase “the diabolical sin,” but the Latin CCC 2539 quotes “*diabolicum vitium*” as coming directly from *On Christian Discipline* 7, 7, which in fact says “*vitium diabolicum*.” CCC 2628 says that adoration means staying in silence with the “ever greater” God; the words “*semper... maior est*” is indeed directly quoted from Augustine’s *Exposition of the Psalms* 62, 16, but its meaning in the *Catechism* is so stretched from its original context in its explanation of Ps 63:8 that I have counted it as an indirect quotation. Cf. “*And under the shelter of your wings I shall rejoice.... We are puny creatures; may God protect us in the shade of his wings. What about when we have grown up? It will be good for us if he protects us then too, so that we may always remain like small, young things under him who is greater; for he always will be greater, however big we grow.*” Augustine, *en. Ps. 62, 16*, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/17, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001), pp. 242-243.

<sup>6</sup> This longest block quotation is a citation from Augustine’s *The City of God* on the eschatological communion with God (CCC 2550). A citation of *Sermon* 18 on the last judgement (CCC 1039) occupies 13 lines, and a citation from *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 12 on the benefits of confession (CCC 1458) occupies 11 lines.

<sup>7</sup> CCC 45, 230, 264, 510, 1871.

demonstrating the positive role the *Catechism* gives to the sayings of Augustine as summary teachings. The breadth and depth of the share of Augustine's sayings in the *Catechism* speaks loud and clear about the weighty authority this theological giant has in the teachings of the Church.

Among the 89 instances in which Augustine is referenced, 33 belong to Part I, titled "The Profession of Faith," 11 belong to Part II, titled "The Celebration of the Christian Mystery," 35 belong to Part III, titled "Life in Christ," and 10 belong to Part IV, titled "Christian Prayer." If one considers the four parts of the *Catechism* as focusing on dogmatic theology, liturgy, ethics and spirituality respectively, then it may come as a surprise that the majority of the references to Augustine, who is more often considered a theologian than an ethicist, occurs in Part III. Yet, given that it is in Part III Chapter 3 Article 2 (CCC 1987-2029) that the *Catechism* discusses the doctrine of grace and justification, it is not without reason that Augustine, who is often praised as the Doctor of Grace, plays an important role in that section.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the *Catechism* has chosen to situate grace within the context of the moral life and salvation of Christians.

The most cited work of Augustine in the *Catechism* is the saint's autobiographical work *Confessions*. It is referenced in 11 instances—4 times in Part I, once in Part II, and 5 times in Part IV. Second is *The*

<sup>8</sup> Not counting the "In Brief" section. Augustine is referenced 6 times in 5 of the 30 paragraphs in CCC 1987-2016.

*City of God*, which is referenced 10 times, 7 of which are in Part III, once in Part I, and twice in Part II. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* is referenced 6 times, thrice in Parts III and IV respectively. 18 different *Sermons* are referenced, a majority of 12 in Part I; 9 different *Expositions of the Psalms* are referenced, 4 of which are in Part I.

## II) Augustine in Part I of the *Catechism*

Without prejudice to the other parts of the *Catechism*, this essay shall focus on Augustine's influence in Part I of the *Catechism*. There are two sections in Part I of the *Catechism*. The first section is an elucidation on the human assent to God. The second section is essentially an explanation of the Nicene-Constantinople Creed that each Catholic professes at every Sunday Mass.

### a) The God-Man Relationship

Already in the first chapter of first section titled "Man's Capacity for God," a block quotation of the entire beginning paragraph of *Confessions* I, 1, 1 is cited in the *Catechism* (CCC 30) to show that praising God is but the natural desire of man, and the human heart cannot find its rest until it rests in God.<sup>9</sup> In this autobiographical work, Augustine details the journey of his wayward youth, his conversion experience and eventual baptism into the Catholic Church. His decades of search for happiness found their fulfilment in life in the Church. This

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Augustine, *conf.* I, 1, 1, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford, 2008), p. 3.

also is the journey the *Catechism* wants to lead its readers through, from acknowledging the fundamental yearning of human beings for God, to understanding the Catholic faith through its Creed, to living the Catholic faith by participating in the sacraments, following the commandments and praying as Christians. The *Catechism*, after all, is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Life in the Catholic Church cannot not be the essential aim of this text.

Augustine is next quoted in the *Catechism* in CCC 32. His *Sermon 241* exclaims that the beauty of changeable things like the earth, sea, air and sky confesses the grandeur of their also beautiful yet unchangeable creator.<sup>10</sup> Augustine is cited to demonstrate how one may come to know God through the majesty of nature. Nevertheless, the beauty of nature is hardly the main theme of *Sermon 241*. The sermon is in fact one on the resurrection of the body. Pagan philosophers believe in the immortality of the soul and tend to demean the body. They claim that souls, “after long periods of time,... start wanting to be returned to bodies.”<sup>11</sup> But the reincarnation of souls in different perishable bodies goes against Catholic faith. Augustine says that “blessed souls are always going to inhabit imperishable bodies.”<sup>12</sup> Even Plato recognizes that the gods whom God has made were assured that “they will not have to leave their bodily globes,” so the neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry

<sup>10</sup> Augustine, s. 241, 2, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/7, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993), p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, s. 241, 4: WSA III/7, p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Augustine, s. 241, 7: WSA III/7, p. 75.

is wrong in saying that every sort of body is to be shunned.<sup>13</sup> The same almighty God who created the beauty of the world can also provide blessed human beings with imperishable bodies at the resurrection. For Augustine, knowing God is much more than an awareness that there is a power greater than us; knowing God means seeing him face to face (1 Cor 13:12) at the resurrection and spending eternity in communion with Him.

The “In Brief” of Chapter 1 indeed states that “Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness” (CCC 45). It quotes Augustine’s claim that his life would be complete and without pain when he adheres himself wholly to God,<sup>14</sup> a claim which follows immediately from the famous “Late have I loved you” paragraph in *Confessions*. It can therefore be seen that Augustine’s *Confessions* has an important part to play in the opening chapter of the *Catechism*, as an illustration that God is man’s innate desire as well as final fulfilment.

In Chapter 2, Augustine is only quoted in Article 3—the article on Sacred Scripture. The *Catechism* situates Christ as the unique word of Scripture. Augustine is the perfect Church Father to illustrate this point. He is known to have made his expositions on all of the 150 Psalms based on Christ. The Psalms are part of the Old Testament, its corpus formed before the time of Christ. But Christ is the Word of God. Thus CCC 102 quotes Augustine’s *Exposition 4 of Psalm 103* to illustrate the coherence between the Old and New Testament. “There is but one

<sup>13</sup> Augustine, s. 241, 8: WSA III/7, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Augustine, *conf.* X, 28, 39, p. 202.

single utterance of God amplified throughout all the scriptures.”<sup>15</sup> This sentence quoted in the *Catechism*, which best sums up Augustine’s exegetical principle, is the opening sentence of the exposition. The theme of the exposition, on the other hand, is on how one ought to fight against the devil by hanging onto Christ through confession. In Ps 104:26, the Psalmist says to the Lord, that along with the creatures in the vast ocean he created, there are “the ships going to and fro and Leviathan whom you made to amuse you” (Ps 104:26). Interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New, Augustine understands the ships as the churches, and Christ as the pilot on his wooden cross. “The ships must not be afraid nor be preoccupied about their course but rely on their pilot.”<sup>16</sup> Leviathan the dragon, though being the arch-enemy of the Church, is not allowed to undermine our salvation, for “he is only the dragon God *made to play with*.”<sup>17</sup> The ecclesiological element of this exposition ought not be overlooked. Augustine urges us to adhere to Christ, who is the pilot or head of the ships or churches. “You have Christ as your food; if you forsake Christ, you will be food for the dragon.”<sup>18</sup> This Christ is also the Word. “If you do not want God to hand you over to the dragon..., do not turn your back on the word of God.”<sup>19</sup>

15 Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (4), 1, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/19, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2003), p. 167.

16 Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (4), 5: WSA III/9, p. 171.

17 Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (4), 10: WSA III/9, p. 177.

18 Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (4), 11: WSA III/9, p. 178.

19 *Ibid.*

While Augustine advocates a canonical interpretation of Scripture, it is the Church that determines the scriptural canon. Augustine exclaims in *Answer to the Letter of Mani known as The Foundation*, “I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Catholic Church did not move me.”<sup>20</sup> CCC 119 quotes this frequently cited utterance of Augustine to show that the Church has the ultimate authority over scriptural interpretation. To Augustine, this authority of the Church is freeing rather than suffocating. Prior to his conversion, Augustine had spent nine years as a Manichaean hearer. Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, claimed himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ and “wanted to be thought to have been assumed by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>21</sup> But Scripture shows the sending of the Paraclete, not Mani.<sup>22</sup> As Catholic, Augustine finds the dualistic Manichaean cosmology abhorring. “We see that the land of darkness is touched by the land of light on two sides.... Then, how ugly the shape of the land of light appears, like a cloven hoof with a kind of black wedge inserted from below....”<sup>23</sup> This Manichaean system had once made sense to him in his search for an answer to the origin of evil. But then the Church liberated him from asking the wrong questions. “I profess the Catholic faith, and I am confident that through it I shall come to certain knowledge.”<sup>24</sup> And it is in the Catholic Church that he discovered the answer he long desired.

20 Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 5, 6, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, I/19, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2006), p. 236.

21 Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 6, 7: WSA I/19, pp. 237-238.

22 Cf. Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 9, 10: WSA I/19, p. 240.

23 Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 22, 23-24: WSA I/19, p. 249.

24 Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 14, 17: WSA I/19, p. 244.



The Church bases its interpretation of Scripture on tradition. Tradition deems that God has revealed himself throughout human history, and the incarnation of the Son has been foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. Augustine says in *Questions on the Heptateuch*, “the New is hidden in the Old and the Old is revealed in the New.”<sup>25</sup> CCC 129 uses this statement to support its claim on the unity of the two Testaments. *Questions on the Heptateuch* is Augustine’s exegesis on the first seven books of the Old Testament. He makes the assertion referenced in the *Catechism* as he interprets Ex 20:19, which recounts the Israelites beseeching Moses not to let God speak to them lest they would die. The Israelites had just received the Ten Commandments from God, and they were trembling with fear and standing at a distance. Augustine acknowledges that “it is often and firmly indicated that fear belongs to the Old Testament just as love does to the New,”<sup>26</sup> but it is also important to understand the mutual relevance that the two Testaments bear to each other. The unity of the two Testaments is his conviction, as he also makes a similar statement in *The First Catechetical Instruction*. “Therefore, in the Old Testament the New is concealed, and in the New the Old is revealed.”<sup>27</sup> It was when Augustine understood that the Old Testament ought to be interpreted in light of the New that he was able to break away from his Manichaean past and embrace the Christian faith.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *qu.* II, 73, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, I/14, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard and Sean Doyle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2016), p. 125.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *sat. Pud.* I, 4, 8, in *Ancient Christian Writers* (hereafter referred to as ACW), no. 2, trans. Joseph P. Christopher (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1946), p. 23.

Faith in God and his word seeks understanding. CCC 158 uses Augustine’s *Sermon 43* to show that one believes in order to understand, and one understands in order to believe.<sup>28</sup> In this sermon, Augustine mentions that someone had said to him, “Let me understand, in order to believe.” Yet Christ had not chosen an orator, a senator or an emperor but Peter, a fisherman, to be his mouthpiece, so that it would be obvious that it is God behind the work. Given that Peter says “you will be right to depend on prophecy” (2 Pet 1:19), Augustine would rather follow the prophet Isaiah in asserting that one should believe in order to understand, for “unless you believe, you shall not understand” (Is 7:9).<sup>29</sup>

#### b) Belief in God the Father

“Faith means believing what you don’t yet see.”<sup>30</sup> So CCC 230 quotes Augustine’s *Sermon 52* to show that God is a mystery beyond comprehension. “For if you have fully grasped what you want to say, it isn’t God. If you have been able to comprehend it, you have comprehended something else instead of God.”<sup>31</sup> Given that Augustine

<sup>28</sup> Augustine, *s.* 43, 7; 43, 9, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/2, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990), pp. 241-242.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine, *s.* 43, 5-7: WSA III/2, p. 241. “Unless you believe, you shall not understand” is the Septuagint rendition of Is 7:9. The Jerusalem Bible translates this warning of Yahweh to Lord Ahaz as: “If you do not stand by me, you will not stand at all.”

<sup>30</sup> Augustine, *s.* 43, 1: WSA III/2, p. 238.

<sup>31</sup> Augustine, *s.* 52, 16, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/3, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), p. 57.

says this in the middle of *Sermon 52*, which is a sermon on the Trinity, it is obvious that he has made this statement to affirm the primacy of faith rather than to commend blind faith. If the Trinity is to be blindly believed, it would not call for any explanation. Nevertheless, Augustine details in this sermon how the three divine persons are distinct but inseparable in action. He uses Scripture to illustrate how the Father brought about the birth, the passion as well as the resurrection of the Son.<sup>32</sup> He also uses his psychological “trinity” of memory, understanding and will—“three somethings which can both be separately presented and also operate inseparably”<sup>33</sup>—as an analogy of the Trinity. “This word, which belongs to memory alone, was the work in you both of memory, for you to retain what you were saying, and of understanding, for you to know what you were retaining, and of will, for you to utter what you were knowing.”<sup>34</sup>

**CCC 230** also made a reference to *Sermon 117*, which says, “if you can grasp it, it isn’t God.”<sup>35</sup> The sermon is an explanation of Jn 1:1-3 against the Arians, who deny the coeternity and coequality of the Son with the Father. Augustine employs the coequality of fire and its brightness as well as that of a bush and its mirror image over water as analogies of the coeternity of the Father and the Son.<sup>36</sup> He uses the

<sup>32</sup> Augustine, *s.* 52, 9-12: WSA III/3, pp. 54-55.

<sup>33</sup> Augustine, *s.* 52, 17: WSA III/3, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> Augustine, *s.* 52, 20: WSA III/3, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 5, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/4, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1992), p. 211.

<sup>36</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 10-12: WSA III/4, pp. 215-217.

example of a human being generating a human being to demonstrate that God does generate God.<sup>37</sup> Yet, he admits that these comparisons are not perfect. Coequality is time-bound, but coeternity is not. “You couldn’t find coeternals begotten of eternal begetters.”<sup>38</sup> When a human being generate a human being, there are two human beings, but “Father and Son are one God.”<sup>39</sup> After all, God is “unutterable.”<sup>40</sup>

Particularly beyond comprehension is the immanent Trinity. **CCC 264** states the procession of the Son and the Holy Spirit using Augustine’s *The Trinity*: “The Son is born of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father principally.”<sup>41</sup> While Augustine maintains the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, he at the same time asserts that the Holy Spirit proceeds principally (*principaliter*) from the Father. “I added ‘principally,’ because we have found that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son. But this too was given the Son by the Father.... He so begot him then that their common gift would proceed from him too, and the Holy Spirit would be the Spirit of them both.”<sup>42</sup> This way, the equality of the Father and the Son is acknowledged on the one hand, and the Father as the principle of the entire Trinity is heeded to on the other.

<sup>37</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 14: WSA III/4, pp. 218-219.

<sup>38</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 12: WSA III/4, p. 217.

<sup>39</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 14: WSA III/4, p. 219.

<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *s.* 117, 7: WSA III/4, p. 213.

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *trin.* 15, 26, 47 in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, I/5, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 2012), p. 439.



The Triune God created heaven and earth, though creation is often appropriated to the Father—an image much reinforced by Michelangelo’s famous paintings at the Sistine Chapel, which portray the creator as an old bearded man. CCC 281 points out that “according to ancient witnesses, the instruction of catechumens for Baptism begins with creation.” One of its two references is Augustine’s *The First Catechetical Instruction*,<sup>43</sup> which is the saint’s answer to deacon Deogratias from Carthage, who seeks Augustine’s advice on catechetics. Augustine responds with a discussion on the theory as well as practice of catechesis. He asserts that catechetical instruction “is complete when the beginner is first instructed from the text: *In the beginning God created heaven and earth*, down to the present period of Church history.”<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, Augustine does not aim to instruct the catechumens on creation for its own sake. Instead, his goal seems entirely ecclesiological. He maintains that the purpose of all things written in the Old Testament is to announce the coming of Christ and to prefigure the Church, which is his body.<sup>45</sup> This makes sense, for after all, the catechumens are preparing themselves for baptism into Christ, who is the head of the Church which the catechumens seek to become members of. Augustine explains that Christ, as head, is prior according to the order of nature, though he came later in time, not unlike Jacob,

whose hand was born before his head, but his head is prior in power and dignity compared to other members of his body.<sup>46</sup>

In his sample catechesis, Augustine narrates Old Testament history from the perspective of how various events serve to prefigure the Church. In the Flood, “the just were saved by the wood (of the Ark), the Church to be was foreannounced, which Christ, her King and God, by the mystery (of the wood) of his Cross, has buoyed up above the flood in which this world is submerged.”<sup>47</sup> Regarding Abraham, “from him was born a people who should worship the one true God.... In that people, without doubt, the future Church was much more clearly figured.”<sup>48</sup> Through the ages of the patriarchs and prophets, “all the just who were on earth before the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, though born before Him, nevertheless were united beneath the head to that universal body of which He is the head.”<sup>49</sup> In leading the people of God across the Red Sea, “the mystery of the wood was not lacking. Moses struck the sea with a rod that this miracle might be wrought. Both are symbols of baptism, whereby the faithful pass over into a new life but their sins like enemies are totally blotted out.”<sup>50</sup> In the land of promise, “Jerusalem was built, the most illustrious city of God, which in her bondage was a type of that free city which is called the heavenly Jerusalem.”<sup>51</sup> Christ is the King of this heavenly city, and King David

<sup>42</sup> Augustine, *trin.* 15, 17, 29: WSA I/5, pp. 422-423.

<sup>43</sup> The other ancient writer referenced is Egeria, who is much less well-known compared to Augustine.

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* I, 3, 5: ACW 2, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* I, 3, 6: ACW 2, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 19, 32: ACW 2, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 19, 33: ACW 2, p. 63.

<sup>49</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 19, 33: ACW 2, p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 20, 34: ACW 2, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 20, 36: ACW 2, p. 66.

was a prefiguration of him in the earthly kingdom. Augustine concludes his catechesis asserting that “all things that you now see happening in the Church of God, and in the name of Christ throughout the whole world, were already foretold ages before.”<sup>52</sup> That the Church should span the whole world and be ridden by schism and heresies has also been foretold. But the Church needs to bear the chaff both outside and within her “with utmost patience until the final winnowing.”<sup>53</sup>

Beginning a catechesis with creation is certainly not unique to Augustine. For instance, Ambrose’s *On the Mysteries* preached to those expecting baptism also begins with God’s creation of heaven and earth.<sup>54</sup> But Ambrose uses the stories of creation, the Flood, the Exodus and Naaman as prefigurations of the mystery of baptism, unlike Augustine, who uses the Old Testament episodes as prefigurations of the Church. It is therefore particularly worth noting that the *Catechism* has chosen to reference Augustine’s *The First Catechetical Instruction*, which begins with creation, moves on immediately to an ecclesiological interpretation of salvation history, and ends with an eschatological note. It reflects the tendency of the *Catechism* to favour an ecclesiological interpretation.

God created the world and has not left it orphaned. **CCC 300** uses Augustine’s statement in *Confessions* to demonstrate God’s presence not only in the world but in each of us. Augustine cried out to God: “You were more inward than my most inward part and higher than the highest

element within me.”<sup>55</sup> He made this comment soon after he expressed his lack of satisfaction in reading the Scriptures, which he deemed “unworthy in comparison with the dignity of Cicero.”<sup>56</sup> Augustine was then still at a stage at which he “followed not the intelligence of the mind, ... but the mind of the flesh”<sup>57</sup> in seeking God. The quote in the *Catechism* thus shows how intimately God is present in every single individual regardless of one’s state of mind or circumstance.

Given that God cares so much for human beings, he could not possibly wish us harm. Therefore, God could not possibly be the cause of moral evil (**CCC 311**). The *Catechism* referenced Augustine’s *The Free Choice of the Will*, which states that “to do evil is nothing else than to stray from the path of learning.”<sup>58</sup> In this early work against Manichaeism, Augustine, through the mouth of his interlocutor Evodius, concludes that “we do evil from the free choice of the will.”<sup>59</sup> Refuting the Manichaean attempt to blame the origin of evil on the evil principle or the God of the Old Testament, Augustine stresses that evil comes not from God but results from the sins of human beings. “Evil consists

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* 3, 9, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter referred to as NPNF), II/10, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. H. de Romestin (reprint, Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), p. 318.

<sup>55</sup> Augustine, *conf.* III, 6, 11, p. 43.

<sup>56</sup> Augustine, *conf.* III, 5, 9, p. 40.

<sup>57</sup> Augustine, *conf.* III, 6, 11, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> Augustine, *lib. arb.* I, 1, 2, in *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (hereafter referred to as FC), vol. 59, trans. Robert P. Russell (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), p. 74.

<sup>59</sup> Augustine, *lib. arb.* I, 16, 34: FC 59, p. 106.

<sup>52</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 27, 53: ACW 2, p. 84.

<sup>53</sup> Augustine, *cat. rud.* II, 27, 53: ACW 2, p. 85.

rather in the will's turning away from the changeless good and in its turning to goods that are changeable."<sup>60</sup> Evil is but a lack of the good. "All good is from God and, consequently, there is no nature that is not from God. Hence, that movement of the soul's turning away, which we admitted was sinful, is a defective movement, and every defect arises from non-being. Look for the source of this movement and be sure that it does not come from God."<sup>61</sup>

**CCC 311** then continues with a block quote from *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity*, a work often referred to as the *Augustine Catechism*. "Nor would Almighty God,... since he is supremely good, in any way allow anything evil to exist among his works were he not so omnipotent and good that he can bring good even out of evil."<sup>62</sup> In other words, the good God not only is not the cause of evil, he could even turn evil into good. This, in fact, is the theme of the *Enchiridion*. Among the three theological virtues, the work focusses primarily on faith. Rather than directly explaining the Creed, which is the profession of faith, the *Enchiridion* examines the sin of Adam, the grace of Christ the redeemer, and the role of the pilgrim Church before the final judgement of the good and the wicked. The notion of the *felix culpa* resonates throughout. "God does good even when he permits evil things

<sup>60</sup> Augustine, *lib. arb.* II, 19, 53: FC 59, p. 162. Cf. Roland J. Teske, "De Libero Arbitrio," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 494.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine, *lib. arb.* II, 20, 54: FC 59, p. 163. Cf. Roland J. Teske, "De Libero Arbitrio," p. 494.

<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *ench.* 3, 11, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, 18, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Michael Fiedrowicz (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2005), p. 278.

to happen."<sup>63</sup> "He judged it better to bring good out of evil than to allow nothing evil to exist."<sup>64</sup> The sins of human beings have led Christ to his death for us, "a good so great that when the apostle Peter did not wish it to happen, he was called Satan by the very one who was on his way to be killed."<sup>65</sup> While God is omniscient enough to know that Adam would sin, he is omnipotent enough to allow him to act according to his free will, for nothing—including turning evil into good—is impossible for God.<sup>66</sup> (But the salvation brought about by Christ would only be realized within the Church. It is only within the Church that sins would be forgiven. "Indeed, outside the Church they are not forgiven, for it is the Church that has received the Holy Spirit as her own as a pledge without which no sins are forgiven."<sup>67</sup> The context from which the Augustine quote is taken is once again ecclesiological.

The *Catechism* affirms that there are angels within the heaven and earth God has created. **CCC 329** affirms their existence with a quote from Augustine's *Exposition 1 of Psalm 103*, which tells that angel is the name of their function while in terms of their nature they are spirits.<sup>68</sup> It is indeed fascinating that the *Catechism* has chosen to

<sup>63</sup> Augustine, *ench.* 24, 96: WSA I/8, p. 327.

<sup>64</sup> Augustine, *ench.* 8, 27: WSA I/8, p. 290.

<sup>65</sup> Augustine, *ench.* 26, 101: WSA I/8, p. 331.

<sup>66</sup> "But because God foreknew that [Adam] would make evil use of his free will, God prepared his design to bring good even out of one who did evil, so that man's evil will might not be made of no effect but nevertheless the Almighty's good will might be fulfilled." Augustine, *ench.* 28, 104: WSA I/8, p. 333.

<sup>67</sup> Augustine, *ench.* 17, 65: WSA I/8, p. 312.

<sup>68</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 15: WSA III/19, p. 125.

explain who the angels are with an exposition from Augustine that is hardly about angels at all. In this work, Augustine defines the angels only in passing, in his spiritual interpretation of Ps 104:4. “How are we to take this: *He makes spirits into his angels, and blazing fires into his servants?* ‘Spirits’ here means spiritual persons. God makes spiritual persons into his messengers, to announce his word.”<sup>69</sup> Augustine interprets Ps 104:1 with an ecclesiological approach. He understands the members of the body of Christ as the singer of the Psalm. “*Bless the Lord, O my soul.... All of us who believe in Christ, whoever we are, form one single person in virtue of the unity of his body.*”<sup>70</sup> He interprets the object to whom the Psalm speaks as the Church. “*You have clothed yourself in confession and seemliness.... We must understand that the Church is in view here, for in the Church there was from the beginning but one soul and one heart intent on God, and to the Church our psalm speaks.*”<sup>71</sup> Augustine then explains Ps 104:2, “*wrapped in a robe of light! You stretched the heavens out like a tent,*” also using an ecclesiological perspective. The robe or garment is the Church, the heavens or sky is Scripture, and God stretching out the heavens like a tent is a reference to Scripture. “*God established the authority of scripture in his Church, first of all, and from it other things flowed.*”<sup>72</sup> The sky is stretched out because “*the authority of the scriptures has been extended over the whole earth.*”<sup>73</sup> Augustine continues his ecclesiological

<sup>69</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 16: WSA III/19, p. 125.

<sup>70</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 2: WSA III/19, p. 108.

<sup>71</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 4: WSA III/19, p. 110.

<sup>72</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 8: WSA III/19, p. 115.

<sup>73</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 11: WSA III/19, p. 121.

interpretation with Ps 104:5. With spiritual persons as his messengers, the Church is firmly established, with Christ as its sure foundation.

*He has founded the earth,* I understand this to mean the Church.... Now what is the firmness on which it is established? Its proper foundation must be meant. And what is this foundation? *No one can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus,* says scripture (1 Cor 3:11).... *The Church will never be dislodged; it is the predestined pillar and bulwark of the truth.*<sup>74</sup>

Augustine’s *Exposition 1 of Psalm 103* is quoted in the *Catechism* to illustrate who the angels are; but Augustine has read this Psalm in light of the New Testament to show what the Church is.

In creation, God made heaven and earth out of nothing. **CCC 338** makes this claim referencing Augustine’s *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees*.<sup>75</sup> In Book I of this work, Augustine goes through the Genesis account of creation verse by verse to refute the Manichees’ literal interpretation of Scripture. He compares the six days of creation spiritually to the six ages of the world as well as the six stages of life, from infancy to childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age. In Book II, Augustine reads the creation of Adam and his fall figuratively as the spiritual journey of a soul. The four rivers of paradise represents

<sup>74</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 103 (1), 17: WSA III/19, pp. 126-127.

<sup>75</sup> Augustine, *Gn. adu. Man.* 1, 2, 4, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, I/13, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), p. 41.

the four cardinal virtues—prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. The serpent represents the devil, and the Manichees are “manifestly foreshadowed in that serpent.”<sup>76</sup> Adam and Eve are understood by Augustine as prophetically representing Christ and the Church.<sup>77</sup> In speaking against the Manichees, who hold a very negative view of the Old Testament God, Augustine asserts emphatically with four repeated assertions in the concluding section of this work that “the nature which God made out of nothing” is in a sunk state not because “God’s nature is sunk,” but because human beings have sinned by their own will, and thus require repentance to receive God’s pardon.<sup>78</sup> If God could create even before any material existed, he must be omnipotent. The fact that God did create the world *ex-nihilo* is the strongest proof that God is good and unlike what the Manichees have imagined.

In his search for truth, Augustine had not only sought refuge in Manichaeism, he also tried to find his answer in astrology, but with the same futility. “I was seeking the origin of evil and here was no solution.”<sup>79</sup> CCC 385 uses this expression of disappointment of Augustine in *Confessions* to introduce the question of where evil comes from and hence the Fall. It then stresses that the question of evil must be approached with eyes fixed on God. Augustine’s response to himself is in essence the same, yet with greater stress on its ecclesiological aspect. “In Christ your Son our Lord, and by your scriptures commended by

<sup>76</sup> Augustine, *Gn. adu. Man.* II, 25, 38: WSA I/13, p. 97.

<sup>77</sup> Augustine, *Gn. adu. Man.* II, 24, 37: WSA I/13, pp. 96-97.

<sup>78</sup> Augustine, *Gn. adu. Man.* II, 29, 43: WSA I/13, p. 102.

<sup>79</sup> Augustine, *conf.* VII, 7, 11, p. 119.

the authority of your Catholic Church, you have provided a way of salvation whereby humanity can come to the future life after death.”<sup>80</sup>

God reveals himself and speaks to human beings through Scripture, and Scripture is the deposit of faith of the Church. Augustine’s quest for the origin of evil has achieved its teleological purpose of leading him to his way of salvation, through Christ, and in the Catholic Church.

### c) Belief in Christ the Son

Christ, whom Augustine found only after many years of search, is without doubt the very foundation of his faith. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that Augustine is not referenced in Chapter 2 Article 2 of the *Catechism* on the belief in “Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.” This is not surprising, for Augustine is far better known for his Trinitarian theology than for his Christology, though for the Bishop of Hippo himself, the two fields could hardly be separated or clearly delineated. On the other hand, the *Catechism* does use Augustine to explain Article 3 on Christ being born of the Virgin Mary. CCC 506 cites Augustine’s claim in *Holy Virginity* to put Mary’s virginal motherhood in context. “It was a greater blessing for Mary... to receive Christ’s faith than to conceive his flesh.”<sup>81</sup> Virginal motherhood is a miracle and gift of God bestowed on Mary, but “being his mother would have been no benefit to Mary, if she had not carried Christ in her heart.”<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 3, 3, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, I/9, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Ray Kearney (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), p. 69.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*



Spiritual affinity to Christ is more important than physical closeness. In the Church, which “too is both virgin and mother”<sup>83</sup> like Mary, we too could have the same spiritual affinity to Christ as Mary has had. Christ is the head of the Church and the faithful its members. “Mary gave birth physically to the head of this body; the Church gives birth spiritually to that head’s members.”<sup>84</sup> The context of this reference to Augustine in the *Catechism* is—as often found to be the case—ecclesiological. The work *Holy Virginity* thus underscores how virgins should not pridefully consider themselves as superior. The special joy of the virgins is “the joy of the virgins of Christ, in Christ, with Christ, following Christ, through Christ, because of Christ.”<sup>85</sup> Married people too may follow Christ, and martyrdom ranks higher than virginity according to Augustine.

In the “In Brief” of Article 3, **CCC 510** attests to the perpetual virginity of Mary by quoting from Augustine’s *Sermon 186*. Mary is “a virgin in conceiving, a virgin in giving birth, a virgin when with child, a virgin on being delivered, a virgin for ever.”<sup>86</sup> Here too, Augustine presents Mary’s virginity as having an implication that lies beyond its physical significance. *Sermon 186* is actually a Christmas sermon. It celebrates the birth of “the same one God who is man, the same one man who is God;... the one who as Son of God is coeternal with his

begetter”<sup>87</sup> and “equal to the Father in the form of God.”<sup>88</sup> The virginal birth, more than a testimony to Mary’s blessedness, is a testimony to the power of the Son and his equality with the Father. “How could he cease to be God on beginning to be man, when he enabled his mother not to cease to be a virgin when she gave him birth?”<sup>89</sup>

The power of Christ as the Son of God equal to God is also manifested in the Transfiguration. Instead of using the event to highlight the might of Christ, **CCC 556** cites Augustine’s *Sermon 78* to show how persecutions are in fact “prerequisites” for entering God’s kingdom. At the end of the sermon, Augustine conjures up an imaginary speech of Christ to Peter: “‘Go down to labour on earth, to serve on earth, to be despised, crucified on earth.’ Life came down, to be killed; bread came down, to go hungry; the way came down, to grow weary on a journey; the fountain came down, to experience thirst; and are you refusing to endure toil?”<sup>90</sup> Peter was supposed to embrace present toils in order to “possess in charity what is to be understood by the Lord’s white garments.”<sup>91</sup> The garments of Jesus, which have become white at the Transfiguration, are interpreted allegorically by Augustine as the Church, for Scripture says: “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Is 1:18).<sup>92</sup> So it is through suffering

83 Augustine, *uirg.* 2, 2: WSA I/9, p. 69.

84 *Ibid.*

85 Augustine, *uirg.* 27, 27: WSA I/9, p. 85.

86 Augustine, s. 186, 1, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/6, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993), p. 24.

87 *Ibid.*

88 Augustine, s. 186, 3: WSA III/6, p. 25.

89 Augustine, s. 186, 1: WSA III/6, p. 24.

90 Augustine, s. 78, 6: WSA III/3, p. 343.

91 Augustine, s. 78, 6: WSA III/3, p. 342.

92 Augustine, s. 78, 2: WSA III/3, p. 340.



that Peter would attain the kingdom of God. Augustine underlines that “the kingdom of God is in the Church.”<sup>93</sup> And this kingdom is achieved through Christ, for the gift of resurrection has been promised symbolically when he stretched out his hand to raise his apostles up from the ground at the Transfiguration.<sup>94</sup> Augustine does not directly say that Peter would enter the kingdom of God; he says that Peter would possess the white garments, which is the Church. This is still another instance in which the *Catechism* has chosen to quote from a work of Augustine that is loaded with ecclesiological overtones.

#### d) Belief in the Holy Spirit

By the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are perfected to reach the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13). CCC 695 points out that Augustine calls this “the whole Christ.” The English edition of the *Catechism* places this paragraph number next to the name of Augustine himself in the *Index of Citations* at the end of the book, rather than make any reference to the works of Augustine.<sup>95</sup> Augustine’s notion of the *Christus totus* is in fact predominantly mentioned in *Dolbeau Sermon 22*. A search of the *Indice Analitico Generale* of the *Opera Omnia di Sant’Agostino* under “*Cristo totale*” would readily

<sup>93</sup> Augustine, *s.* 78, 4: WSA III/3, p. 342.

<sup>94</sup> Augustine, *s.* 78, 5: WSA III/3, p. 342.

<sup>95</sup> The Latin edition of the *Catechism* puts “*totum Christum*” within quotation marks and cites Augustine’s *Sermon 341*, 1, 1. In the augmented version of this sermon, known as *Dolbeau Sermon 22* and only newly discovered in the nineties, “*totus Christus*” is mentioned in *s. Dolbeau 22*, 2 and 22, 19.

show this.<sup>96</sup> Hence, it is of immense interest that the paragraph number is displayed—in bolded text—in the *Catechism* index under Augustine’s name. It seems to suggest that *Christus totus* is the very crux of Augustinian theology. At least, it appears to represent the core symbol of the theme of salvation through Christ in the Catholic Church, which recurs throughout the references to Augustine in the *Catechism*. In *Dolbeau Sermon 22*, Augustine preaches that there are three ways of understanding Christ in Scripture. First, before he assumed flesh, he is coeternal with the Father. Second, after he assumed flesh, he is both God and man. “The third way is how the whole Christ is predicated with reference to the Church, that is as head and body. For indeed head and body form one Christ.”<sup>97</sup> As an example, Augustine reads the story of Jacob placing three striped rods in the water to create a breed of striped animals in Gen 30:31-43 allegorically. Jacob prefigures Christ, all the nations belong to him. The variegated animals represent the various nations which the gospel has eventually reached, even though the first evangelists were all Jews.<sup>98</sup> So it is from Christ that the Church, which encompasses people of God from all nations, is built. Christ is the head, and the faithful from various nations are the members of the *Christus totus*.

<sup>96</sup> Franco Monteverde, ed., *Opera Omnia di Sant’Agostino: Indice Analitico Generale (C-F)*, XLIV/2 (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 2008), pp. 348-349.

<sup>97</sup> Augustine, *s. Dolbeau 22*, 19, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/11, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1997), p. 298.

<sup>98</sup> Augustine, *s. Dolbeau 22*, 23: WSA III/11, p. 302.

Nonetheless, the Church instituted by Christ is a pilgrim Church. **CCC 769** quotes Augustine's *The City of God against the Pagans* to show that the Church would journey on "amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God."<sup>99</sup> Augustine wrote this grand piece of work after the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, against the pagans' accusation that the Christian God had failed to protect the Roman Empire. In the chapter from which the quote is taken, Augustine bids Catholics to view persecutions positively as trainings. "Indeed, all the enemies of the Church, however blinded by error or depraved by malice, train the Church in patience if they are given the power of inflicting bodily harm; whereas, if they oppose her only by their wicked beliefs, they train her in wisdom."<sup>101</sup> But even in "these evil days," which began at the time when Abel was slain by Cain, to the eschaton, the pilgrim Church would not be without her moments of joy: "Above all, great consolations come when those who err are corrected; for those consolations flood the souls of the pious with a joy as great as were the pains that tormented them at the thought that those who erred might be lost."<sup>101</sup>

The destination of the pilgrimage is eternal communion with God. During the journey, unceasing communion with God in the Church is Augustine's deepest desire. Naturally, it is also the theme that ties together all the references to Augustine in the Profession of Faith part

<sup>99</sup> Augustine, *ciu.* XVIII, 51, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1998), p. 900.

<sup>100</sup> Augustine, *ciu.* XVIII, 51, p. 898.

<sup>101</sup> Augustine, *ciu.* XVIII, 51, p. 900.

of the *Catechism*. Christ, the head and the foundation of the Church, is the very mystery of salvation. **CCC 774** makes this claim citing from Augustine's *Letter 187*, that "there is no other *mystery of God*... but Christ."<sup>102</sup> This letter of Augustine to Claudius Postumus Dardanus, a lay Catholic official in Italy, is also called *The Presence of God*. In the letter, Augustine responds to Dardanus' two questions, including how Christ on the cross could be in paradise with the right thief that day, and how John the Baptist as a fetus could exult in the womb of Elizabeth at the visitation of Mary. To the first question, Augustine argues that Christ's divinity does not "remove the reality of his body," and his human form "should not be thought to be spread out everywhere," so "it does not follow... that what is in God is everywhere, as God is."<sup>103</sup> To the second question, Augustine deems it a miracle willed by God.<sup>104</sup> The Holy Spirit is present in baptized infants and acts in them in a hidden way though they could not yet have any knowledge of Him.<sup>105</sup> Human beings make progress in righteousness as they mature. But "human beings... are transferred into the frame of the body of Christ as if into the living structure of the temple of God, which is his Church, not because of works of righteousness... but by being reborn through grace."<sup>106</sup> Since God is omnipresent, he could act miraculously even through people

<sup>102</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 11, 34 in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, II/3, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004), pp. 246-247.

<sup>103</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 3, 10: WSA II/3, p. 235.

<sup>104</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 7, 24: WSA II/3, p. 241.

<sup>105</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 8, 26-27: WSA II/3, p. 242.

<sup>106</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 10, 33: WSA II/3, p. 246.

who do not belong to Christ, like the man who cast out demons in Mk 9:37-39. And Christ, as the Son of God, “is as God present whole everywhere.”<sup>107</sup> Therefore, with Christ being the only mystery of God, even the saints in the Old Testament—at the time when Christ was not yet fully revealed—were saved by the same faith.<sup>108</sup> Augustine uses the presence of God everywhere to demonstrate the gratuitousness of Christ’s offer of salvation to all, and to a certain extent even the omnipresence or universality of the Church, whose head is Christ. The difference between a member of this temple and its head is that “*all the fullness of divinity does not dwell in him as it does in the head.*”<sup>109</sup>

CCC 795 quotes from Augustine’s *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 21 to teach that the *Christus totus* is Christ and the Church, the head and its members. In the homily, Augustine bids the members of this body of Christ to be thankful for having been made Christ.<sup>110</sup> It is a homily on Jn 5:20-23, the response of Jesus against the accusation that he cured the sick man at the pool of Bethzatha on the Sabbath. Jesus says that the Father shows everything he does to the Son (Jn 5:20). Augustine stretches the meaning of the Son in this verse, and argues that “when the Father shows something to the members of Christ, he shows it to Christ,” thus the curing of the sick man is a miracle “shown

<sup>107</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 13, 41; WSA II/3, p. 249.

<sup>108</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 11, 34; WSA II/3, pp. 246-247.

<sup>109</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 187, 13, 40; WSA II/3, p. 249. Cf. Col 2:9.

<sup>110</sup> Augustine, *Io. eu. tr.* 21, 8, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/12, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2009), p. 379.

to Christ through Christ”—shown to Christ the head through Christ the members of the body.<sup>111</sup> While the central theme of the homily is in fact the inseparability of the work of the Trinity, it is its message about the *Christus totus* that enters into the *Catechism* and becomes part of the official teaching of the Catholic Church.

Christ is not only the head, he is also the bridegroom; the body of Christ is the bride, distinct from the bridegroom, but “one through being joined in wedlock.”<sup>112</sup> CCC 796 uses this message of Augustine in his *Exposition of Psalm 74* to speak about the intimate union between Christ and his Church, which is his bride. Psalm 75 begins with a confession to God and an invocation of his name. Augustine interprets this opening verse in light of the New Testament, for “in the Old Testament the New lies hidden.”<sup>113</sup> He claims that “when we have confessed and invoked [Christ], and he has begun to take possession of us, then is formed the whole Christ.”<sup>114</sup> It is in this context that the image of Christ and the Church as bridegroom and bride is mentioned. Here too, *Christus totus* is not the central message of Augustine’s exposition. Rather, Augustine aims to urge the audience to stay humble and refrain from being proud, for God would cut off the horns of the wicked while exalting those of the righteous (Ps 75:10). He argues that the Jews are proud sinners who

<sup>111</sup> Augustine, *Io. eu. tr.* 21, 9; WSA III/12, p. 380.

<sup>112</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 74, 4, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/18, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), p. 42.

<sup>113</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 74, 12; WSA III/18, p. 50.

<sup>114</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 74, 4; WSA III/18, p. 42.

have consumed the dregs in the mixed wine; the Gentiles, on the other hand, are humble sinners who would confess their sins, invoke God, be inebriated in the pure wine of the Lord, and be justified (cf. Ps 75:8).<sup>115</sup>

The Church is not only betrothed to Christ, she has an inseparable bond with the Holy Spirit as well. According to Augustine, “what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church.”<sup>116</sup> The Church, being the body of Christ, is enlivened by the Holy Spirit, just as a human body is enlivened by the soul. *CCC 797* uses this teaching in Augustine’s *Sermon 267* to highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. In this short Pentecost sermon, Augustine attempts to answer a question that would interest even the unlearned audience. “So why is nobody speaking with the tongues of all nations, as people spoke who were filled with the Holy Spirit at that time?”<sup>117</sup> Instead of trying to explain defensively the lack of miracles at the present time, Augustine cleverly chooses to answer the question positively from an ecclesiological perspective. “What else can it signify but that this great Church... is speaking with the tongues of all nations? Now is being fulfilled what was then being promised.”<sup>118</sup> The Holy Spirit is the soul of this great Church. Heretics cut off from the body of this Church would be without the Holy Spirit—the one who leads us to life everlasting.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Augustine, *en Ps. 74*, 12: WSA III/18, p. 51.

<sup>116</sup> Augustine, *s. 267*, 4: WSA III/7, p. 276.

<sup>117</sup> Augustine, *s. 267*, 3: WSA III/7, p. 275.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Augustine, *s. 267*, 4: WSA III/7, p. 276.

Hence, “the Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation,” *CCC 845* teaches. The *Catechism* then quotes Augustine’s phrase in *Sermon 96* saying that the Church is “the world reconciled.”<sup>120</sup> In this sermon, Augustine’s main aim is to explain Christ’s command in Mk 8:34. Augustine asserts that the call to deny oneself to follow Christ applies not only to virgins or monks but to all Christians. It is in this context that he adds, “the universal Church, the whole body, all its members distinguished from each other by the various offices they have been properly allotted, they all ought to follow Christ.”<sup>121</sup> While Christ bids each individual who would follow him to take up his cross, Augustine has turned Christ’s command into one that is made to the Church as a collective, which has to endure persecution from the “world condemned.”<sup>122</sup> It is worth mentioning that once again the *Catechism* takes from Augustine the part of his work with the strongest ecclesiological overtone.

While Augustine teaches in *Sermon 96* that all must follow Christ, he particularly urges the virgins of God to “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” in *Holy Virginity*.<sup>123</sup> Given that the virgins have already abstained from licit love, they should not just love Christ a little.<sup>124</sup> *Holy Virginity* is a treatise that celebrates holy virginity and exhorts consecrated virgins to stay humble. Yet, this work is being used in

<sup>120</sup> Augustine, *s. 96*, 8: WSA III/4, p. 33.

<sup>121</sup> Augustine, *s. 96*, 9: WSA III/4, p. 33.

<sup>122</sup> Augustine, *s. 96*, 8: WSA III/4, p. 33.

<sup>123</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 52, 53: WSA I/9, p. 70.

<sup>124</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 56, 57: WSA I/9, p. 105.

another direction by (CCC 963). Augustine's claim that Mary is the mother of the members of the body of Christ "since she has cooperated with charity for the birth of the faithful in the Church,"<sup>125</sup> cited in *Lumen gentium* 53, is in turn cited by the *Catechism* to introduce the paragraph on Mary being the mother of the Church. Augustine asserts that Mary is both a mother and a virgin, both in body and in spirit, though not the mother of Christ spiritually; the Church as a whole, by doing the will of the Father, is both Christ's mother and virgin spiritually (cf. Mt 12:50), though not physically.<sup>126</sup> The Church is also the mother of the consecrated virgins, for it is from the Church—the spiritual virgin betrothed to Christ—that consecrated virgins are born.<sup>127</sup> It appears that Augustine has mentioned the ecclesiological dimension of Mary's motherhood to highlight the ecclesiological dimension of consecrated virginity, which is the subject matter of the treatise. On the other hand, the *Catechism* has used it to emphasize the role of Mary in the assembly of the people of God in general.

"The Church as a whole is holy both physically and spiritually,"<sup>128</sup> but this hinges on the sins of the people of God being forgiven. Quoting from two different sermons of Augustine, both preached at the handing over of the Creed (*traditio*), the *Catechism* affirms the power given to the Church in the forgiveness of sins. In these sermons, Augustine

<sup>125</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 6, 6: WSA I/9, p. 70.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 11, 12: WSA I/9, p. 73.

<sup>128</sup> Augustine, *uirg.* 2, 2: WSA I/9, p. 69.

explains the Catholic faith as delineated in the Creed to those soon to be baptized at Easter. CCC 981 quotes from *Sermon 214* to assert that the Church has received the power of the keys to forgive sins "through the blood of Christ" and "by the working of the Holy Spirit."<sup>129</sup> CCC 983 quotes from *Sermon 213* to stress that there would be no hope without the forgiveness of sins in the Church.<sup>130</sup> In both sermons, Augustine situates the forgiveness of sins within the Church. Though it is God who forgives, it is in the Church that the soul once dead to sin receives new life.<sup>131</sup> Though it is God that we should thank, it is the Church to which God has given this gift of forgiveness.<sup>132</sup> Note that in the text of the Creed, the clause on the belief in the forgiveness of sins is not explicitly tied to—though it comes immediately after—the clause on the belief in the Church. In fact, in Augustine's *Sermon 212*, a sermon preached at another *traditio*, Augustine explains the forgiveness of sins without mentioning the Church. He preaches that one must hope with faith for the grace by which our sins are forgiven, for this grace is a gift of God that we could not earn for ourselves by work.<sup>133</sup> It very much gives the same message as that in *Sermon 213*, but the *Catechism* has chosen instead to use *Sermon 213* and *Sermon 214* to speak about the forgiveness of sins in relation to the power of the keys given to the Church. The viewpoint of what the *Catechism* has chosen to quote from Augustine is, consistently, ecclesiological.

<sup>129</sup> Augustine, *s.* 214, 11: WSA III/6, p. 157.

<sup>130</sup> Augustine, *s.* 213, 9: WSA III/6, p. 145.

<sup>131</sup> Augustine, *s.* 214, 11: WSA III/6, p. 157.

<sup>132</sup> Augustine, *s.* 213, 9: WSA III/6, p. 145.

<sup>133</sup> Augustine, *s.* 212, 1: WSA III/6, p. 137.



The last clause of the Creed is on the belief of the resurrection. CCC 996 quotes Augustine's statement in *Exposition 2 of Psalm 88* to suggest how this belief of Christians require a leap of faith. "On no other point is the Christian faith so vehemently contradicted as it is on this teaching about the resurrection of the body."<sup>134</sup> It is in the context of explaining Ps 89:37, which says that David's throne will endure for ever like the sun and the moon that Augustine makes the comment. He interprets this to mean that "God will make us perfect in both soul and body" at the resurrection—the sun represents the soul, and "the scriptures generally use the moon as a symbol of the mortality of our flesh... because it waxes and wanes."<sup>135</sup> Though even pagan philosophers attest to the immortality of the soul, they adamantly reject the resurrection of the flesh. But the fundamental theme of the exposition is not so much about resurrection or even about the everlasting life of an individual, but more about the lasting quality of the *Christus totus*. Augustine asserts that "God never withdraws his mercy from Christ in his members, never withdraws it from Christ's body, which is the Church."<sup>136</sup> The Psalmist asks rhetorically in Ps 89:48: "What man can cling to life and not see death?" To Augustine, this man is Christ, who cleanses human beings from their sins.<sup>137</sup> By saying that Christ would not see death, Augustine actually means that the Church would live on. Christians suffered persecutions in the early days of the Church; by the time of Augustine, no one would openly insult the Christians, and "the

<sup>134</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps. 88* (2), 5: WSA III/18, p. 293.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps. 88* (2), 3: WSA III/18, p. 290.

<sup>137</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps. 88* (2), 9: WSA III/18, p. 298.

Church has grown and spread abroad to right and to left."<sup>138</sup> Christians must therefore love the Lord God as our Father and the Church as our Mother.<sup>139</sup> The fundamental theme of the exposition is ecclesiological, though what enters into the *Catechism* from this exposition is the paragraph on the resurrection.

The whole Christ would endure, but not every person would enjoy everlasting life. CCC 1039 quotes a long paragraph from Augustine's relatively short *Sermon 18* to show that God keeps account of what people have done in their earthly life. The wicked may not be aware of it, but what they have done is recorded. Because they have given nothing to the members of the *Christus totus*, they belong to the group on the left at the last judgement. "Had you given to my members, what you gave would have also reached the head.... You placed nothing in their hands, that's why you found nothing with me."<sup>140</sup> This is Augustine's understanding of how God would not keep silence when he comes (Ps 50:3). He urges Christians to repent, to take out the bad deeds deposited in the account with God and replace them with good deeds. God would be faithful to his promises. While a man who deposits in the bank would not be sure about his gain, "if we deposit anything in the heavenly bank we can be absolutely sure about the Lord keeping it safe."<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps. 88* (2), 12: WSA III/18, p. 299.

<sup>139</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps. 88* (2), 14: WSA III/18, p. 302.

<sup>140</sup> Augustine, s. 18, 4, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, III/1, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990), p. 376.

<sup>141</sup> Augustine, s. 18, 4: WSA III/1, p. 375.



Augustine is not suggesting that Christians should be calculating with God. Instead, he is encouraging them to be generous in their good deeds by assuring them that the good they have done would not be lost. If the *Catechism* were to quote anything about the last judgement from Augustine, one might deduce that it would come from *The City of God*. The *Catechism* has instead chosen to cite from a sermon that uses an ecclesiological approach, one that uses the language of the members and the head.

Before Part I of the *Catechism* ends with the final doxology of the Eucharistic prayer, it explains the final “Amen” in the Creed. CCC 1064 quotes from Augustine’s *Sermon 58*, which exhorts those about to be baptized to treat the Creed as one’s personal mirror.<sup>142</sup> The main content of this sermon is an explanation of the Lord’s Prayer, which Augustine’s audience had to “give back” the next week, on the day before Palm Sunday. The Bishop of Hippo took the opportunity to urge—particularly the catechumens who did not give back the Creed well on the previous *redditio*—to know the Creed by heart so that they could give it back well at the Easter Vigil when they would be baptized.<sup>143</sup> Augustine bids his audience to observe oneself in that mirror of the Creed; the *Catechism* says the Christian life is the Amen to the Creed. In other words, the Creed is not merely to be recited, it is to be lived. In *Sermon 58*, there is no mention of the notion of *Christus totus*. Yet, in the context that his audience would shortly be baptized

into this whole Christ, the ecclesiological point of view so frequently taken by the *Catechism* from Augustine is no longer merely one to be discussed. Like the faith professed in the Creed, life in the *Christus totus* is one to be lived, experienced and reflected upon.

### III) Why Augustine’s Ecclesiology?

Augustine has practically written in all fields of dogmatic theology. *The Trinity* and *The City of God* have been considered his signature theological works. Yet, the aforesaid discussion evidently demonstrates that many of the texts of Augustine referenced by the *Catechism* come from works with strong ecclesiological implications. It is thus remarkably interesting why it is his ecclesiology and not his Christology, Trinitarian theology or eschatology that has been more significantly enshrined in the *Catechism*.

One may conjecture that the Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is the reason behind the predominance of Augustine’s ecclesiology in the *Catechism*. The Pope Emeritus himself says: “my doctoral dissertation was about the notion of the people of God in Saint Augustine.”<sup>144</sup> In fact, his dissertation is titled *People and House of God in St. Augustine’s*

<sup>144</sup> *Self-Presentation of His Eminence Card. Joseph Ratzinger as member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/biography/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_bio\\_20050419\\_self-presentation.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/biography/documents/hf_ben-xvi_bio_20050419_self-presentation.html) [accessed 27th June, 2017].

<sup>145</sup> *Biography of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/biography/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_bio\\_20050419\\_short-biography.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/biography/documents/hf_ben-xvi_bio_20050419_short-biography.html) [accessed 27th June, 2017].

<sup>142</sup> Augustine, s. 58, 13: WSA III/3, pp. 124-125.

<sup>143</sup> Augustine, s. 58, 1: WSA III/3, p. 118.

*Doctrine of the Church.* <sup>145</sup> Moreover, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he was the man behind the *Catechism* project. He was the chair of the commission of twelve Cardinals and Bishops delegated by Pope John Paul II in 1986 to direct and oversee the drafting process. <sup>146</sup> It is only reasonable that issues dear to this future Pope would find their way into a project that he had overseen for so many years.

Short of asking the Pope Emeritus himself, it would be difficult to ascertain whether or not it was the Cardinal Ratzinger back then or some other member of the commission or the editorial committee of the *Catechism* who has suggested the insertion of those particular quotations of Augustine. After all, the *Catechism* is the fruit of a group effort working under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The identity of the person who lies behind the numerous references to Augustine is hardly as important as the function the completed *Catechism* now stands to serve—as a “reference text” for “renewing the whole life of the Church, as desired and begun by the Second Vatican Council.” <sup>147</sup> In this monumental work that would serve as the handiest reference text on the teachings of the Catholic Church for many more years to come, Augustine would stay and shine as the voice that helped shape and best represents what Catholic heritage is.

<sup>146</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*, p. 3.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*