



Spiritual aid for meditation, with the words of St. Augustine

Texts edited by the Augustinian cloistered Nuns of the Monastery of the Four Crowned Saints in Rome



Pacification of the Heart

«Establishing peace is the work of education; all that politics can do is keep us out of war» (MARIA MONTESSORI, *Education and peace*)

«Do not accept anything as truth that lacks love. And do not accept anything as love that lacks truth. One without the other becomes a destructive lie» (SAINT THERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS / EDITH STEIN)

You made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.¹

God, who created you, cares for you faithfully and freely. So entrust yourself to His hands, O soul who blesses Him.²

Above me is the protection of Your wings. If You did not guard me—since I am but a chick—the hawk would snatch me away. We are small; therefore, may God shelter us beneath the shadow of His wings. And what shall we say when we have grown? It is still good for us that He protects us then as well—so that we may remain always as chicks beneath the One who is greater than we are.

¹ AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, I,1.

² AUGUSTINE, *Exposition on Psalms*, 102:5.

Without God's protection, you are nothing. Let us desire to remain always under His care, for we shall truly be great in Him if we always remain small beneath Him.³

From the Book of Psalms 131

Lord, my heart is not proud,
nor are my eyes lifted up in pride;
I do not busy myself with great matters,
nor with things too wonderful for me.

I am calm and serene,
like a weaned child in its mother's arms;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
Let Israel hope in the Lord,
now and forevermore.

Within me, there is a skeleton: it is a skeleton that I carry inside, hidden from sight, which You formed and that does not escape Your eyes. This skeleton, formed by You and placed in a secret place, cannot be seen by men, they do not know it; but You, who have formed it, know it well. It is an inner strength, for in the bones we truly see sturdiness and power depicted. Yes, it is an inner strength of the soul that keeps it from breaking apart. Let the most varied torments, tribulations, and adversities rise up against us from every side, stirred up by the world. What God has formed within us and made stable cannot be shattered, it does not give way.⁴

From the Gospel according to Mark 4:35, 37-39

Jesus said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." And behold, there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. He was in the stern, asleep upon the cushion. They awoke Him and said, "Master, do You not care that we are perishing?" He arose, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Consider the world as a sea, a furious wind, and a mighty tempest. If you love God, you will walk upon the sea — the world's pride shall be under your feet. But if you love the world, the tempest will swallow you. When your heart is troubled by desire, call upon the divinity of Christ to conquer it. We tend to call upon God only when the opposing wind blows — in war, disorder, famine, or plague, or when misfortune befalls one personally. Yet when the world pleases us with temporal happiness, we think no contrary wind blows. But do not question the world's calm — question your own greed. See whether there is peace within your heart; see whether no inner wind overthrows you. This you must discern! Remember to put your trust in Christ.⁵

³ *Ibidem*, 62:16.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 138:20.

⁵ AUGUSTINE, Sermons, 76:6,9.

Behold Jesus asleep in the boat tossed upon troubled waters. So too the heart wavers when Christ sleeps. But if Christ is ever watchful, what does it mean that He sleeps? It means your faith sleeps. Why let yourself be battered by the storm of doubt? Awaken Christ — rouse your faith!⁶

If you have heard an insult, it is like the wind; if you are angry, behold the storm. If, therefore, the wind blows and the tempest rises, your ship — that is, your heart — is in danger and is tossed about. When hearing insult, you wish to avenge yourself; you do so, and rejoicing in another's harm, you are shipwrecked. And why? Because Christ sleeps within you. What does it mean that "Christ sleeps within you"? You have forgotten Christ. Awaken Him, remember Him, let Christ be awake within you.⁷

From the Book of Psalms 85:11
Grant me a simple heart.

To understand the mystery of God, one must change the heart — transform it in conduct and in life — by living in chastity, holiness, charity, and faith working through love. The heart is like a tree whose root is the source of deeds: if you plant greed, thorns will spring up; if you plant charity, fruits will grow.⁸

If you wish to be a peacemaker, begin by being at peace within yourself: you must set peace within, where perhaps you daily contend against yourself. If, then, there is within man a certain daily conflict and a noble struggle, the result is that just peace which you must establish in yourself — so that the higher faculty within you may rule over the lower.

That higher faculty is the one in which the image of God dwells. It is called spirit, it is called intelligence; in it faith burns, hope is strengthened, charity is kindled. Let the spirit be subject to Him who is above it, and it shall triumph over what is beneath it; thus shall true and secure peace reign in you, ordered in perfect harmony. What is the order of this peace? God has dominion over the spirit, the spirit over the flesh — nothing more rightly ordered.⁹

From the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in every circumstance make your requests known to God by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁶ AUGUSTINE, *Exposition on Psalms*, 147:3.

⁷ AUGUSTINE, *Sermons*, 63:2.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 91,5,5.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 53/A,12.

From the Gospel according to John 14:1

Let not your heart be troubled.

If in toil we grow faint, let us implore help! He who ordained the trial aids the combatant. For God does not watch your struggle as the crowd watches the charioteer in the race: the crowd may cheer, but cannot help. God does not look upon you as the spectator looks upon the athlete, who can crown him with leaves but cannot grant him strength in the fight — for he is a man, not God. Perhaps, indeed, the spectator grows weary sitting still, while the fighter wrestles. But God, when He beholds His combatants, helps them — if they call upon Him.¹⁰

Why then will you be anxious? For what will you fret? Let Him who made you take care of you. He who cared for you before you were made — will He not care for you now that you are what He willed you to be? He blesses you, helps you, gives what you need, defends you from adversity. By giving He consoles you that you may persevere; by taking away He corrects you that you may not perish. The Lord cares for you — be at peace. He upholds you who made you; do not fall from your Maker's hand. If you fall from the hand of Him who fashioned you, you will be broken. Good will helps you remain in the hand of Him who made you. Say: "My God wills it; He will support me; He will sustain me." Surrender yourself to Him; do not think that emptiness awaits you, as though you were to fall into a void. Never will He fail you — fail not Him, fail not yourself.¹¹

The world is alluring and flatters us with the variety of its many beauties. But manifold love is conquered by a single love. To overcome the love of many goods, one must love the one Good. "One thing have I asked of the Lord." How blessed is the heart that can already utter this within itself, where only He who hears is present. And what is this one thing? To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of the Lord.¹²

Friend, remain united to God, by whom you were created; cling to Him.¹³

«Peace is built in the heart and from the heart, by eliminating pride and vindictiveness and carefully choosing our words. For words too, not only weapons, can wound and even kill»

(POPE LEO XIV, Audience to members of the Diplomatic Corps, 16th May 2025)

¹⁰ AUGUSTINE, *Sermons*, 343:10.

¹¹ AUGUSTINE, *Exposition on Psalms*, 39:27.

¹² AUGUSTINE, *Sermons*, 65/A,2.3.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 97,4.