



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



Prayer

«Education must teach how to live, how to coexist, how to share and how to become»

(EDGAR MORIN, *Seven Areas of Knowledge for the Education of the Future*)

«Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself»

(JOHN DEWEY, *Democracy and Education*)

It is hard to discern Christ amid the crowd. Our soul needs solitude. In solitude, if the soul is attentive, God allows Himself to be seen. The crowd is noisy; to see God one must be silent.

Seek not Jesus among the crowd, for He is not one of the crowd: He has gone before it in every way. He sits in heaven, interceding for us — He alone, as the great High Priest, has entered the Holy of Holies beyond the veil, while the crowd remains outside.¹

¹ AUGUSTINE, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 17:11.

From the Gospel according to Luke 19:2-5

And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and rich. He sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was short of stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house."

Return to your heart! Why go wandering far from yourself? By going afar you lose yourself. Why take desolate roads? Return from your erring path that has led you astray; return to the Lord. He is ready. First enter into your own heart, you who have become a stranger to yourself by straying outside. You do not know yourself, and you seek Him who made you! Return, return to your heart. ... Enter your heart: there examine what you perhaps perceive of God, for there dwells the image of God; in the interior of man Christ abides.²

From the Book of Revelation 3:20-21

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To the one who conquers, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.

He alone will be your teacher who is the inner teacher of the inner man.³

Awaken Christ; remember Christ; let Christ be awake within you: consider Him.

When temptation arises, it is as the wind; you are troubled, there is a tempest. Awaken Christ — let Him speak with you.⁴

Hear my prayer and my supplication; lend ear to my tears. Be not silent toward me, lest I become deaf forever. Be not silent toward me — I will hear You. For God speaks in secret; to many He speaks within the heart, and great is the sound in the great silence of the heart when with a mighty voice He says: I am your salvation. Desire, then, that this voice never fall silent — that voice by which God says to the soul: I am your salvation. Be not silent toward me.⁵

From the Gospel according to Luke 12:2-3

Nothing is hidden that shall not be revealed, nor secret that shall not be known. Whatever you have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light.

² *Ibidem*, 8:7.

³ AUGUSTINE, *Letters*, 266:4.

⁴ AUGUSTINE, *Sermons*, 63:2.

⁵ AUGUSTINE, *Exposition on Psalms*, 38:20.

My Lord and my God, my only hope, hear me, and let me not grow weary in seeking You; grant that I may ever seek Your face ardently. You have given me strength to seek, You who have willed to be found, and have given me hope to find You more perfectly. Before You stand my strength and my weakness: preserve the one, heal the other. Before You stand my knowledge and my ignorance: where You have opened, receive me as I enter; where You have closed, open to me as I knock. Grant that I may remember You, understand You, love You. Increase these gifts within me until You have wholly reformed me. When at last we shall come into Your presence, these many words we speak without reaching You will cease; You alone will remain, all in all, and without end we shall utter one word only, praising You with a single voice and ourselves made one in You.⁶

Therefore, direct your prayer within yourself, pouring it out before Him. There are His ears.⁷

From the Gospel according to Matthew 6:6

When you pray, enter your chamber, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

Let your desire be before Him, and the Father, who sees in secret, shall hear it. Your desire is your prayer; if your desire is unceasing, your prayer is unceasing. There is an inner prayer that knows no interruption — it is desire. Whatever you do, if you long for that Sabbath rest, you never cease to pray. If you would not interrupt your prayer, never cease from desire. Your continuous desire will be your continuous voice.⁸

Desire prays always, even when the tongue is silent. If you always desire, you always pray. When does prayer slumber? When desire grows cold.⁹

From the Song of Songs 5:2; 6:3

I slept, but my heart kept watch. A sound!

My beloved is knocking: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one."

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.

⁶ AUGUSTINE, *On the Trinity*, XV:28b.

⁷ AUGUSTINE, *Exposition on Psalms*, 141:4.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 37:14.

⁹ AUGUSTINE, *Sermons*, 80:7.

What secret intimacy is this, from which one is never estranged? Wondrous intimacy and sweet solitude! O secret without weariness, untouched by idle thoughts, untroubled by temptations or pain! Is it not that innermost sanctuary ¹⁰

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 55:1-3

All you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
you that have no money, come, buy, and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear and come to Me; hear, that your soul may live.

Now I love You alone, follow You alone, seek You alone, and am ready to be subject to You alone, for You alone rule with justice, and I long to belong rightfully to You. Command and decree what You will, I pray; but heal and open my ears that I may hear Your voice. Heal and open my eyes that I may see Your signs. Remove from me unreasoning impulses, that I may recognize You. Tell me where I must look that I may see You... but I know not where the path begins that leads to You. You, instruct me; You, show me the way; You, provide what is needful for the journey.¹¹

«School is sacred to me, like an eighth sacrament»

(DON LORENZO MILANI, *Pastoral Experiences*)

«Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools. This vocation demands special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and to adapt»

(SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Declaration on Christian Education
Gravissimum educationis, 5)

¹⁰ AUGUSTINE, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 25:14.

¹¹ AUGUSTINE, *Soliloquies*, 1:1.5.