

MEDITATION: DIVERSION

There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Hebrews 4:9-10

In the name of Jesus:

St. Augustine, also known as Augustine of Hippo, was a Catholic theologian who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries. He was probably the most influential theologian in the history of the Christian Church.

Martin Luther read Augustine and was influenced by his writings.

Augustine's was not always a Christian. His mother was a faithful Christian and he was raised to be a Christian, but when he grew into adulthood he lived a life apart from the Christian Church and the Christian faith. When he was seventeen he lived with a woman and had a child out of wedlock. He lived a life of sin and excess for almost fifteen years. Throughout his early life Augustine lived a life to please himself. But he found in all of his pursuit for the pleasures of the world that he remained an empty man. He finally despaired of the futility of trying to find fulfillment in the things of the world that he cried out in despair: "How Long, O Lord, how long?" With that cry of desperation, Augustine sought a relationship with God, and found that in the reading of Scripture that God's love for Him in Jesus Christ was all a person needed for happiness and fulfillment. Augustine was then baptized into the

Christian faith and became a life long follower of Jesus, dedicating his life to serving Christ and His Church.

Ten years later Augustine wrote an autobiography, of sorts, called *The Confessions*. In this book Augustine writes of prayer, meditation, and a life of fulfillment found only in God. He begins his work by writing: "Great are you, O Lord, and greatly to be praised. Great is Your power and Your wisdom is infinite." Augustine then explores man's relationship with God. Human beings are such a small part of creation but every human being feels a need to reach out to his Creator.

When pondering this phenomena, Augustine then writes what is probably his most famous, well-known phrase: "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find rest in You."

God has made each of us in His image. God desires that every human being, though sinful, have a relationship with Him. We can't find fulfillment, we can't find rest for our souls, unless and until we find that rest in Him.

There was another theologian who came along centuries after Augustine. His name was Blaise Pascal. He is known more for being a math whiz, scientist, and the inventor of the calculator. He converted to Christianity when he was an adult and became one of the great

defenders of the faith. He too, like Augustine, knew of the frailties of human nature, and he, like Augustine, came to the conclusion that human beings were by their very nature restless, that they continually sought to have their attention diverted from the reality that they faced. Pascal wrote: "I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber. Men seek rest in a struggle against difficulties, and when they have conquered the difficulties, rest becomes impossible. Man is so frivolous that, though he is full of a thousand reasons for weariness, the small thing such as playing billiards or hitting a ball is sufficient to amuse him." Pascal hits the nail on the head, so to speak. Human beings, in order to avoid facing themselves and reality that would lead them to recognize a need for God, seek the pleasures of the world all in an attempt to keep their mind off of God."

In the end, both St. Augustine and Pascal say something that all of us need to hear. We need to face the realities of the day, the realities of our life, and the reality of our need for God.

Now, in our current situation, we are all about to become stir crazy. We are tired of staying at home. We are restless. We are bored. We want some type of diversion. But all of our diversions have

been taken away. No movies, no sports, no entertainment, and so we look for a way to get our mind off our present reality. A long walk. Play solitaire on the computer. Perhaps we can immerse ourselves in a good book, but even then the libraries are closed. Where can we turn?

Remember what Augustine wrote: Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. God is our refuge and strength. He loves you with an everlasting love.

There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. His name is Jesus. If you are restless, anxious, or afraid, go to Jesus. He loves you and wants you to cast your cares on Him for He cares for you. He invites you to turn to Him, to listen to His voice speaking to you in the Bible. He wants to listen to you as you bring your concerns to Him. He says: ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Amen