Saint Augustine
(354-430)
Feast Day: August 28

After St. Paul, perhaps one of the most compelling stories of conversion to faith in Christ must be that of Saint Augustine. Born of a pagan father, who became a Christian only on his deathbed, and of Saint Monica, who was born and raised in the Christian faith, Saint Augustine was blessed with great intelligence and burdened with an unruly heart.

Although raised in the faith of his mother, Saint Augustine was not baptized and drifted away from belief in God to follow the world. By the time he was 15, he was living with a woman outside of marriage, with whom he later had a son. Saint Augustine's keen mind led him to the famous academic centers of the pagan Roman Empire, where he taught with great success. Unsettled in his understanding of the meaning of life, Saint Augustine followed the philosophy of the Manichaeans for a time, which saw the world as a great struggle between good and evil and life in the body as something to be scorned.

The turning point in the saint's life finally came when, inspired by the mysterious words of a child to "take and read," Saint Augustine opened up the Bible and his heart was opened to God. Baptized by Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan, Italy, Saint Augustine fought against the heresies of the day—including Manichaeism—and became one of the most prolific writers on the Christian faith the world has ever known. Perhaps the most quoted of his sayings is the one that best describes the profound faith of Saint Augustine: "Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in You."