

## Reflection Saturday Week 21 St Augustine of Hippo 2021

**St Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430)** was born in Thagaste, Africa, of a Berber family. Although brought up a Christian by his mother, Monica, he left the Church early and spent time seeking the truth, first with the Manichaeans, which he abandoned for being nonsensical, and then Neoplatonism. Through the prayers of his mother and the teaching of St Ambrose of Milan, he was converted to Christianity and baptized in 387, shortly before his mother's death. Augustine had a brilliant legal and academic career, but, after his conversion, he returned home to Africa and led an ascetic life. He was elected Bishop of Hippo and spent 34 years looking after his flock, teaching them, strengthening their faith and protecting them from the errors of the time. He wrote many books and left a permanent mark on both philosophy and theology. His *Confessions*, as dazzling in style as they are deep in content, are a landmark of world literature. He was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Boniface VIII in 1308.

The Assumptionists follow the Rule of St Augustine, called the rule of love. The same rule was adopted by the Dominicans and Congregations of Religious Sisters. His writings had a great influence on the growth of the church.

### Reflect on his words:

- If you would attain to what you are not yet, you must always be displeased with what you are. For where you are pleased with yourself there you have remained. Keep adding, keep walking, keep advancing.
- Late have I loved you, O Beauty, so ancient and so new, late have I loved you! And behold, you were within me and I was outside, and there I sought for you, and in my deformity, I rushed headlong into the well-formed things that you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you. Those outer beauties held me far from you, yet if they had not been in you, they would not have existed at all. You called, and cried out to me and broke open my deafness; you shone forth upon me and you scattered my blindness. You breathed fragrance, and I drew in my breath and I now pant for you. I tasted, and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for your peace.
- Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.