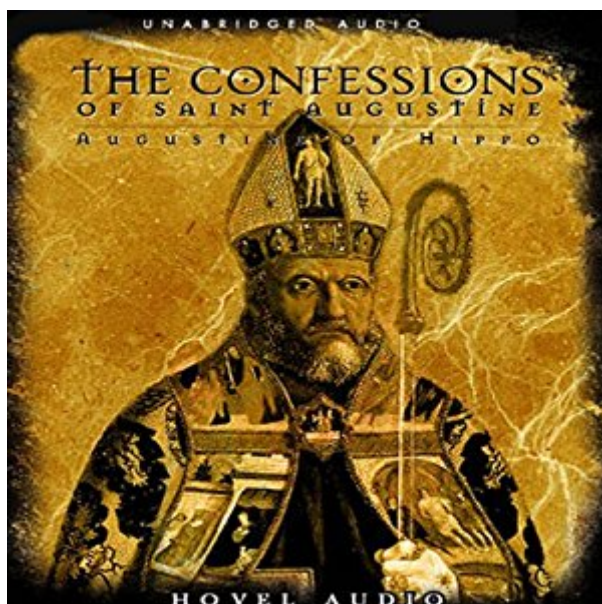


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The Confessions Of St. Augustine



Synopsis

Saint Augustine's contributions to Christian theology are second to no other post-apostolic author in the whole sweep of church history. Yet along side his doctrinal treatises, Augustine tells a story of his life devoted to Christ as his only satisfaction. The Confessions is at once the autobiographical account of Augustine's life of Christian faith and at the same time a compelling theology of Christian spirituality for everyone. Among the most important classics in Western literature, it continues to engage modern readers through Augustine's timeless illustrations and beautiful prose. Augustine's Confessions is a work to relish the first time through and then profoundly enjoy over a lifetime of revisiting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Confessions of St. Augustine is one of the most important literary and spiritual classics in Western civilization. It is a profound and brilliant spiritual autobiography in which Augustine paints a picture of himself, "warts and all." Augustine's honesty about himself is matched by the beauty of his expression, but what is most moving about The Confessions is Augustine's engagement with God. Throughout, you see a soul which God is drawing to Himself, as well as a soul that gradually responds to the grace of God in its life. "The Confessions" is a rare book written by a towering intellect that is matched with a searching and probing heart. The psychological aspects of the book seeming startling contemporary - and not like a book from the 5th century! "The Confessions" is a book that may be read as devotional literature, autobiography, theology, and literature. As Augustine discovered, "our heart is unquiet until it rests in you." Actually, The Confessions are addressed to

God, and this gives them a sense of immediacy and intimacy, as if God has been watching over Augustine his entire life. One of the most compelling aspects of The Confessions is that we are able to see the gradual conversion of St. Augustine's heart. His isn't an instantaneous conversion, as conversions are often portrayed, but a series of steps on the path to God. Along the way we are privileged to experience with Augustine some of the turning points in his spiritual pilgrimage. One of these is the famous story in which Augustine hears a voice say, "Pick it up and read," provoking him to read Romans 13:13-14, after which light flooded his heart and his face was peaceful.

(As a preface, I state that this review was done originally for Frank Sheed's translation of the Confessions, which I consider the best. It is that translation used here for all quotations. However, I wanted to supply a positive review also for this audio version, which I own, which does have limitations as stated by other reviewers, since Sheed's translation has not yet been found in audio. I believe any introduction to Augustine is a step in the right direction.) Sacred Scripture gives us persons like the prophet Isaiah, who cry out, "Woe is me, I am doomed!" He knows he is a sinner, especially realizing that he is in the presence of God. Saint Paul tells us "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am the foremost." Peter, in the gospel, falls on his knees in front of Jesus exclaiming, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." What the three have in common is not simply that they acknowledged their sinfulness. In doing so they began the process of becoming great people, eventually saints. Acknowledging our sins & sinfulness is therefore not a morbid exercise in futility. It is the beginning of true self-understanding. It is an invitation to greatness! St. Augustine was also one of these. Early on in the "Confessions," he recalls when he was an adolescent that he stole pears, not to eat (he had better himself), but only for the sake of stealing, saying the only pleasure in doing it was that it was forbidden: "the malice of the act was base and I loved it--that is to say ... I loved the evil in me--not the thing for which I did evil, simply the evil" (Book 2, 4).

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