1. O Lord, I am your servant, I am your servant and your handmaid's son. You burst my bonds asunder, and to you will I offer a sacrifice of praise. May my heart and tongue give praise to you, and all my bones cry out their question, "Who is like you, 0 Lord?" Yes, let them ask, and then do you respond and say to my soul, "I am your salvation."

But who am I, what am I? Is there any evil I have not committed in my deeds, or if not in deeds, then in my words, or if not in words, at least by willing it? But you, Lord, are good and merciful, and your right hand plumbed the depths of my death; draining the cesspit of corruption in my heart, so that I ceased to will all that I had been wont to will, and now willed what you willed. But where had my power of free decision been throughout those long, weary years, and from what depth, what hidden profundity, was it called forth in a moment, enabling me to bow my neck to your benign yoke and my shoulders to your light burden 0 Christ Jesus, my helper and redeemer? How sweet did it suddenly seem to me to shrug off those sweet frivolities, and how glad I now was to get rid of them —I who had been loath to let them go! For it was you who cast them out from me, you, our real and all-surpassing sweetness. You cast them out and entered yourself to take their place, you who are lovelier than any pleasure, though not to flesh and blood, more lustrous than any light, yet more inward than is any secret intimacy, loftier than all honor, yet

2. See Ps 34(35):10.
4. See Ex 34:6; Ps 85(86):15.
5. See Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36.
6. See Mt 11:30.
7. See Ps 18:15(19:14). Here, so soon after his mention of the crucial text, Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Augustine addresses Christ by this name for the only time in The Confessions.
not to those who look for loftiness in themselves. My mind was free at last from the gnawing need to seek advancement and riches, to wend in filth and scratch my itching lust. Childlike, I chattered away to you, my glory, my wealth, my salvation, and my Lord and God.

Augustine decides to renounce his career

2. I believed it to be pleasing in your sight that I should withdraw the service of my tongue from the market of speechifying, so that young boys who were devoting their thoughts not to your law, not to your peace, but to lying follies and legal battles, should no longer buy from my mouth the weapons for their frenzy; but I thought it better to retire unobtrusively rather than make an abrupt and sensational break. Fortunately there were now only a few days left before the vintage holidays, and I decided to put up with this delay. I would then resign in the regular way, but return no more to offer myself for sale, now that you had redeemed me.

Our plan was therefore kept between ourselves and you, and not made known to other people outside our own company. We had agreed that it should not be divulged to all and sundry, even though as we climbed up from the valley of weeping singing our pilgrim-song, you had armed us with sharp arrows and burning coals with which to fight the guileful tongues of any who opposed our project while pretending to promote it, and devoured us as they might food on pretense of liking.

3. With the arrows of your charity you had pierced our hearts, and we bore your words within us like a sword penetrating us to the core. The examples of your servants, whom you had changed from murky to luminous beings, from dead to living men, were crowding in upon our

8. Probably a trinitarian allusion: Spirit-Word-Father; but also the antithesis of the three temptations of 1 In 2:16.
10. 23 August to 15 October, a holiday period fixed for the imperial law-courts and probably the schools by Theodosius (Cod. Theod. 2.8.19) to provide a respite from the summer heat and an opportunity for gathering autumn crops. This Book IX is Augustine's book of vintage and harvest in the spiritual world.
11. See Ps 83:7(84:6),
12. Pss 119-133(120-134) were traditionally associated with pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.
13. See Ps 119(120):3-4. In his Exposition of the Psalms 119, 5, Augustine explains that the sharp arrows are God's words and the burning coals salutary examples.
14. This imagery inspired the traditional icon for Augustine, a pierced and burning heart.
thoughts, where they burned and consumed the heavy torpor that might have pulled us down again. So powerfully did they ignite us that every breath of guileful opposition blew our flame into fiercer heat, rather than extinguishing us.

We could be certain, however, that there would be some who would admire the course we had resolved to follow, since you had spread the knowledge of your holy name throughout the world. It therefore seemed like boastfulness to refuse to wait for a holiday period so close at hand, and instead to quit a professional post where I was in the public eye in such a fashion that, as everyone's attention was drawn to what I was doing, and they noted how little time was left before the first day of the holidays, which I had nevertheless chosen to forestall, they might have plenty to say about it, concluding that I merely wished to look important. And what was the point of arousing conjecture and contention over my state of mind, and letting this good thing that had come our way provide an occasion for slanderous gossip?

4. It happened by coincidence that in that same summer my lungs had begun to fail under the severe strain of teaching, making it difficult for me to draw breath and giving proof of their unhealthy condition by pains in my chest. My tone was husky and I could not manage any sustained vocal effort. These symptoms had worried me when they first appeared, because they were forcing upon me the necessity of either giving up my professorial career or, if there was any prospect of my being cured and recovering my strength, at least of taking some rest. But now that a wholehearted desire to be still and see that you are the Lord had arisen within me and grown strong, as you know, my God, I began even to rejoice that a genuine excuse lay to hand which I could use to appease those parents who for their children's sake were unwilling ever to allow me freedom. Full of this joy I endured the interval of time until it had run its course—it lasted perhaps twenty days or so yet this took fortitude, because the desire for gain that had customarily helped me to sustain the heavy burden of work had now left me, and had not patience taken its place I should have been crushed by the load.

15. See Ez 36:23.
17. See Ps 45:11(46:10). Augustine evokes the ultimate "letting go," the Sabbath of rest with no evening, in the last chapter of The City of God (XXII, 30).
18. An untranslatable Augustinian pun on liber (children) and liber (free).
It may be that someone among your servants, my brethren in the faith, will judge that I sinned in this matter by allowing myself to remain even for an hour in a professorial chair of lying\textsuperscript{19} once my heart was fully intent on your service. I will not argue. But have you not pardoned this sin, most merciful Lord, along with all the rest of my hideous, dismal sins, in the water of baptism, and forgiven me?

3, 5. Verecundus was racked with anxiety over this good thing that had befallen us, because he saw himself being distanced from our fellowship by the bonds that unbreakably held him. He was not yet a Christian, and though his wife was a believer, it was precisely she who trammeled him most rigidly and restrained him from the path on which we had set out; for he declared that he was unwilling to be a Christian in any way other than that from which he was debarred. In spite of this he kindly suggested that as long as we were there we should stay on his estate. At the resurrection of the just you will surely reward him, Lord\textsuperscript{20}, since you have granted him already his allotted place among the just;\textsuperscript{21} for later on, when we had gone to Rome, he was overtaken by an illness, in the course of which he became a believing Christian in our absence, and in that state departed this life. So it was that you showed mercy not only to him but to us as well, sparing us the unbearable grief of being forced to recall his outstanding kindliness toward us while at the same time regarding him as an outsider to your flock. Thanks be to you, our God! We belong to you. You prove it by the exhortations and consolations you provide for us. Because you are faithful to your promises you are even now rewarding Verecundus for that country house of his at Cassiciacum, where we found rest in you from the hurly-burly of the world.\textsuperscript{22} In exchange for his estate you now endow him with the delights of your verdant paradise for ever, since you pardoned him for his earthly sins by setting him on the mountain of rich pasture, your mountain, the mount of plenty.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19.} See Ps 1:1.
\textsuperscript{20.} See Lk 14:14.
\textsuperscript{21.} See Ps 124(125):3.
\textsuperscript{22.} Rest in God, Augustine's perpetual desire from I, 1, 1 to XIII, 38, 53, was achieved partially and temporarily at Cassiciacum, to which they retired after the end of the vintage holidays. Its exact location is disputed. Some Augustinian dialogues took shape during the following weeks.
\textsuperscript{23.} See Ps 67:16(68:15), Old Latin. The first phrase literally "cheesy mountain"; in his \textit{Expositions of the Psalms} 67, 22, Augustine explains that the mountain is Christ, milk represents grace, and cheese is made from milk. The similarity of sound (\textit{incaseato}) may have reminded him of the name Cassiciacum.
6. Verecundus was therefore full of anxiety at the time of which I speak, whereas Nebridius shared our joy. While not yet a Christian he, like us, had fallen into a pit of very dangerous error,24 believing that the flesh of your Son, who is the Truth, was mere make-believe; but he was beginning to emerge from this error, and was in the position of one who, though not yet initiated into any of the rites of your Church, was a most ardent seeker of the truth.

But not very long after our conversion and rebirth in baptism, when he too was a believing Catholic, when he was serving you in perfect chastity and continence among his own people in Africa, when his whole household had become Christian through his example, you released him from the flesh. And now he lives in Abraham's bosom 25 Whatever that may be, whatever the gospel word "bosom" may mean, there my Nebridius is living, to me a friend most tenderly loved, to you, Lord, a freedman adopted as your son; yes, there he lives on. Where else could such a soul be at home? He is alive in that place about which he used to ask me so many questions, ignorant and paltry fellow that I am. No longer does he bend his ear to my mouth; rather does he lay the mouth of his spirit to your fountain and avidly slake his thirst as he drinks your wisdom to the uttermost of his capacity, in happiness without end. Yet I cannot believe that he is so inebriated as to forget me, since you, Lord, from whom he drinks, are mindful of us.

Such, then, was our situation. On the one hand we sought to console Verecundus who, though saddened by our conversion, continued to be our friend, urging him to be faithful to his own calling, namely married life; on the other we waited for Nebridius to follow us. He was very close to doing so, indeed on the point of making his decision, when the days of waiting expired at last. Slow and tedious they had seemed, so sharp was my longing for leisured freedom in which to sing with every fibre of my being. To you my heart tells its love: I have sought your face, 0 Lord, for your face will I seek.26

To Cassiciacum with his mother, son, and friends

4, 7. At last the day arrived which was to set me free in fact from the profession of rhetor, as I was free already in spirit. And so it was done;

24. See Ps 7:16 (15).
25. See Lk 16:22.
you detached my tongue from that bond whence you had already delivered my heart, and I blessed you as I joyfully set out for the villa with all my company.\textsuperscript{27} The evidence of what I did there in the way of literary work is to be found in the books that record disputation held between those there present, and deliberations alone with myself in your sight; it was work unquestionably devoted by now to your service, but still with a whiff of scholastic pride about it, like combatants still panting in the interval.\textsuperscript{28} What I wrote to Nebridius, who was absent, my letters to him testify.\textsuperscript{29}

When could I ever find time enough to record all your generous favors to us during that period—especially now that I am hurrying onto greater matters still? My memory harks back to our sojourn there, and it is my delight, Lord, to acknowledge before you what inward goads you employed to tame me, how you laid low the mountains and hills of my proud intellect and made of me an even plain, how you straightened my winding ways and smoothed my rugged patches,\textsuperscript{30} and how you also brought my heart's brother, Alypius, to submit to the name of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At first he disdained to admit it into our writings, for he wanted them to give off the tang of those lofty cedars of Lebanon, felled though these now were by the Lord,\textsuperscript{31} rather than the scent of plants grown in your Church and efficacious against snakebite.

\begin{quote}
He lives with the psalms
\end{quote}

8. How loudly I cried out to you, my God, as I read the psalms of David, songs full of faith, outbursts of devotion with no room in them for the breath of pride! Uncouth I was in real love for you, a catechumen on holiday in a country house with another catechumen, Alypius; but my mother kept us company, woman in outward form but endowed with virile faith, uniting the serenity of an elderly person with a mother's love and Christian devotion.

\textsuperscript{27}. The party included Alypius, Monica, Augustine's brother Navigius, his son Adeodatus, two pupils (Licentius and Trygetius), and two cousins.
\textsuperscript{28}. The three dialogues, \textit{Answer to the Skeptics}, \textit{The Happy Life}, and \textit{Order}, and the two books of \textit{Soliloquies} belong to this time.
\textsuperscript{29}. Letters 3 and 4 were written from Cassiciacum.
\textsuperscript{30}. See Is 40:4; Lk 3:4-5.
\textsuperscript{31}. See Ps 28(29):5.
How loudly I began to cry out to you in those psalms, how I was inflamed by them with love for you and fired to recite them to the whole world, were I able, as a remedy against human pride! Yet in truth they are sung throughout the world, and no one can hide from your burning heat.\(^{32}\) I felt bitterly angry with the Manichees, though my indignation was tinged with pity, because they knew nothing of this remedy and ranted against the very antidote which might have healed them. I could wish that they had been somewhere nearby, without my knowing it, and had gazed upon my face and listened to my voice as I read the fourth psalm in that place of peace. \textit{When I called on him he heard me, the God of my vindication; when I was hard beset you led me into spacious freedom. Have mercy on me, Lord, and hearken to my prayer.}\(^{33}\) would that they had heard what these words of the psalm did to me, but heard without my knowledge, lest they think that it was for their benefit that I uttered words of my own, interspersed with yours! I would surely not have spoken, or not in the same vein, had I felt myself exposed to their ears and eyes; and even if I had, they would not have taken those words I uttered for what they were, the intimate expression of my mind, as I conversed with myself and addressed myself in your presence.

9. I shuddered with awe, yet all the while hope and joy surged up within me at your mercy, Father.\(^{34}\) It all found an outlet through my eyes and voice when your good Spirit turned to us, saying, \textit{How long will you be heavy-hearted, human creatures? Why love emptiness and chase falsehood?}\(^{35}\) I, certainly, had loved emptiness and chased falsehood, and you, Lord, had already glorified your Holy One,\(^{36}\) raising him from the dead and setting him at your right hand, whence he could send the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth\(^{37}\) from on high, as he had promised.\(^{38}\) He had sent him already, but I did not know it. Yes, he had sent the Spirit, for already he had been glorified in his resurrection from the dead\(^{39}\) and ascension to heaven. Before that time the Spirit was not given, because

\( ^{32}\) See Ps 18:7(19:6).
\( ^{33}\) Ps 4:2(1).
\( ^{34}\) See Ps30:7-8(31:6-7).
\( ^{35}\) Ps 4:3(2). Not only is this a harvest/vintage psalm, in tune with Augustine's mood in the present peaceful interlude; its structure also corresponds to the stages of his life so far, which explains its powerful appeal to him.
\( ^{36}\) See Ps 4:4(3).
\( ^{37}\) See In 14:16-17.
\( ^{38}\) See Lk 24:49.
\( ^{39}\) See Rom 6:9; 7:4; 1 Cor 15:20.
Jesus had not been glorified. This is why the prophecy cries out, *How long will you be heavy-hearted? Why love emptiness and chase falsehood? Be sure of this: the Lord has glorified his Holy One.* It demands, *How long?* It cries, *Be sure of this;* yet for so long I had been anything but sure, and had loved emptiness and chased falsehood, and so I trembled as I heard these words, for they are addressed to the kind of person I remembered myself to have been. In the fables which I had taken for truth there was emptiness and falsehood; loud and strong I bewailed many an episode among my painful memories. Oh, that they could have heard me, those who still love emptiness and chase falsehood! They might perhaps be so shaken as to spew it out, and then you would hear them when they cried to you, because he who for us died a true death in the flesh now intercedes with you on our behalf.

10. Then I read, *Let your anger deter you from sin,* and how these words moved me, my God! I had already learned to feel for my past sins an anger with myself that would hold me back from sinning again. With good reason had I learned this anger, since it was no alien nature from a tribe of darkness that had been sinning through me, as they maintain who, though not angry with themselves, are accumulating a fund of anger that will overwhelm them on the day of anger, the day when your righteous judgment is to be revealed.

For me, good things were no longer outside, no longer quested for by fleshly eyes in this world's sunlight. Those who want to find their joy in externals all too easily grow empty themselves. They pour themselves out on things which, being seen, are but transient, and lick even the images of these things with their famished imagination. If only they would weary of their starvation and ask, *Who will show us good things?* Let us answer them, and let them hear the truth: *The light of your countenance has set its seal upon us, 0 Lord.* We are not ourselves that Light which illumines every human being, but by you we are illumined,

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40. See Jn 7:39.
41. Ps 4:3-4(2-3).
42. See Ps 4:4(3).
43. Ps 4:5(4).
44. See Rom 2:5.
45. See 2 Cor 4:18.
46. Ps 4:6(5).
47. Ibid.
48. See Jn 1:9.
so that we who were once darkness may become light in you.\textsuperscript{49} Ah, if only they could see the eternal reality within! I had tasted it,\textsuperscript{50} and was frantic at my inability to show it to them; if only they would bring to me those hearts of theirs which lived in their outward-gazing eyes, outside and away from you; if only they would say, \textit{Who will show us good things?} There within, where I had grown angry with myself, there in the inner chamber where I was pierced with sorrow,\textsuperscript{51} where I had offered sacrifice, slaying my old nature\textsuperscript{52} and hoping in you as I began to give my mind to the new life,\textsuperscript{53} there you had begun to make me feel your sweetness and had given me \textit{joy in my heart.}\textsuperscript{54}

As I read these words outwardly and experienced their truth inwardly I shouted with joy, and lost my desire to dissipate myself amid a profusion of earthly goods, eating up time as I was myself eaten by it; for in your eternal simplicity I now had a different \textit{wheat and wine and oil.}\textsuperscript{55}

11. The next verse wrung a cry from the very depths of my heart: \textit{In peace! Oh, In Being itself!} What did it say? \textit{I will rest and fall asleep}\textsuperscript{56} Yes, for who shall make war against us when that promise of scripture is fulfilled, \textit{Death is swallowed up into victory}?\textsuperscript{57} In truth you are Being itself, unchangeable, and in you is found the rest that is mindful no more of its labors; for there is no one else beside you, nor need our rest concern itself with striving for a host of other things that are not what you are; rather it is you, \textit{you, Lord, who through hope establish me in unity.}\textsuperscript{58}

I read on and on, all afire, but I could find no way to help those deaf, dead folk among whom I had once been numbered. I had been a lethal nuisance, bitter and blind and baying against honey-sweet scriptures

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\textsuperscript{49.} See Eph 5:8.
\textsuperscript{50.} See Ps 33:9(34:8).
\textsuperscript{51.} See Ps 4:5(4).
\textsuperscript{52.} See Eph 4:22; Col 3:9.
\textsuperscript{53.} See Col 3:10; 2 Cor 4:16.
\textsuperscript{54.} Ps 4:7.
\textsuperscript{55.} Ps 4:8(7).
\textsuperscript{56.} Ps 4:9(8). The word \textit{idipsum} in the Latin of the psalm ("the selfsame") is for Augustine a mysterious name for God, the infinite, immutable Being. It evokes for him the revelation of the divine name to Moses in Ex 3:14. Parallels within \textit{The Confessions} are VII, 17, 23; IX, 10, 24; XII, 7, 7.
\textsuperscript{57.} 1 Cor 15:54.
\textsuperscript{58.} Ps 4:10(8). \textit{Singulariter} could be an adverb applied to God's action: "You alone establish ... "; but Augustine takes it to be the antithesis of the dispersion, multiplicity, evoked at the end of the preceding paragraph.
distilled from heaven's honey, scriptures luminous by your light; but now to think of the enemies of that scripture caused me anguish.

12. How shall I ever remember all that happened during that holiday? But one thing I cannot forget and will not omit, a harsh chastisement you laid on me, which was followed with amazing swiftness by your mercy. At that time you tortured me with a toothache, and when it had grown so severe that I could not speak, the thought entered my heart that I should urge all my own people who were there to pray for me to you, the God of every kind of healing. I wrote this on a wax tablet and gave it to one of them to read out to the rest. The moment we knelt down and begged this favor from you, the pain vanished. What was that pain? Where did it go? I must admit that I was terrified, my Lord and my God, for I had never in all my life experienced anything like it. It came home to me most deeply that this was a sign of your powerful will, and I rejoiced in my faith as I praised your name; yet this same faith did not allow me to be complacent about my past sins, which had not yet been forgiven me through baptism.

5. 13. When the holidays were over I announced my retirement. The citizens of Milan would have to provide another word-peddler for their students, because I had made up my mind to give myself to your service, and in any case I was unequal to that profession now that I had difficulty in breathing and pains in the chest. I wrote to the holy man Ambrose, your bishop, notifying him of my past errors and present intention, and asking his advice as to which of your books in particular I ought to read, the better to prepare myself for so great a grace and render me more fit to receive it. He recommended the prophet Isaiah, I think because he more plainly than all others foretold the gospel and the call of the Gentiles. The first part I read of this book was incomprehensible to me, however, and, assuming that all the rest would be the same, I put it off, meaning to take it up again later, when I was more proficient in the word of the Lord.

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59. See Ps 118(119):103,105.
60. See Ps 138(139):21.
61. See In 20:28.
62. See Ps 144(145):2; Sir 51:15.
6. 14. The time arrived for me to give in my name for baptism, so we left the country and moved back to Milan. Alypius had decided to join me in being reborn in you, and was already clothed with the humility that befitted your mysteries. He was also extremely courageous in subduing his body, even to the point of walking barefoot on the icy soil of Italy, a thing few dared to do. We associated the boy Adeodatus with us as well, my son according to the flesh, born of my sin. Very fair had you fashioned him. He was then about fifteen, but surpassed many educated men of weighty learning. I am acknowledging that these were your gifts, 0 Lord my God, creator of all things, who are more than powerful enough to give fair form to our deformities, for nothing did I contribute to that boy's making except my fault. It was you, and you alone, who had inspired us to instruct him in your truth as he grew up, and so it is your own gifts that I acknowledge to you. There is a book of ours entitled The Teacher, in which he converses with me. You know that all the thoughts there attributed to my interlocutor were truly his, although he was only about sixteen years old. Many other things even more wonderful did I observe in him. The brilliance he evinced filled me with awe, for who else but you could be the artificer of such prodigies? Very soon you took him away from this life on earth, but I remember him without anxiety, for I have no fear about anything in his boyhood or adolescence; indeed I fear nothing whatever for that man. We included him in the group as our contemporary in the life of your grace, to be schooled along with us in your doctrine.

And so we were baptized, and all our dread about our earlier lives dropped away from us. During the days that followed I could not get

63. About six months have elapsed since the preceding chapter; they spent the winter of 386-387 at Cassiciacum. We have now reached the early days of Lent, around the beginning of March 387.
64. See Col 3:12.
65. See 2 Mc 1:24; Ambrose, Hymn 1.2; quoted more extensively at IX, 12, 32.
66. They were baptized by immersion, confessing faith in the Trinity, at the Easter Vigil during the night 24-25 April 387. Augustine himself (at least) was baptized by Ambrose, as he later testified. A description of the whole ceremony as observed at that time has survived in two works by Ambrose, On the Sacraments and On the Mysteries. After baptism the white-clad neophytes were led from baptistery to church, where they were present at the full eucharist for the fast time and received communion.
67. That is, from Easter until the following Sunday. During this week the neophytes kept on the white garments received at baptism and attended daily liturgies at which fuller instruction about the faith and the sacraments was given to them. Many of the sermons later preached by Augustine as a bishop to the neophytes in Easter week have survived.
enough of the wonderful sweetness that filled me as I meditated upon your deep design for the salvation of the human race. How copiously I wept at your hymns and canticles, how intensely was I moved by the lovely harmonies of your singing Church! Those voices flooded my ears, and the truth was distilled into my heart until it overflowed in loving devotion; my tears ran down, and I was the better for them.

Use of hymns in liturgy

7, 15. Not long since, the faithful of the church in Milan had begun to find mutual comfort and encouragement in the liturgy through the practice of singing hymns, in which everyone fervently joined with voice and heart. It was about a year earlier, or not much more, that Justina, mother of the boy-emperor Valentinian, had been persecuting your faithful Ambrose, in the interests of the Arian heresy by which she had been led astray. His God-fearing congregation, prepared to die with their bishop, your servant, stayed up all night in the church. Your maidservant, my mother, was among them, foremost in giving support and keeping vigil, and constant in her life of prayer. As for us, we were still cold, not being yet warmed by the fire of your Spirit, yet we too were stirred as alarm and excitement shook the city.68

It was then that the practice was established of singing hymns and psalms69 in the manner customary in regions of the East, to prevent the people losing heart and fainting from weariness. It has persisted from that time until the present, and in other parts of the world also many of your churches imitate the practice: indeed, nearly all of them.70

68. The events are related in Ambrose's Letters 20, 21, and in Paulinus' Life of Ambrose. Justina, from a senatorial family, had married Valentinian I as her second husband and bore him four children. She had, as Ambrose relates, demanded that he make a church available within the walls of the city for the use of the Arian heretics. Ambrose refused; he and the people stayed all night in the church to prevent its annexation, and he introduced hymn-singing to keep up their spirits. This led to its adoption into the liturgy of the Western Church. The siege of the church was in February 386.

69. See Col 3:16.

70. Ambrose explains (Letters 20.24; 21a.34) that by learning to sing hymns to Father, Son and Spirit people who before were scarcely disciples became teachers, that is, they preached the faith to one another by this means. More than ninety hymns are attributed to Ambrose personally, though not all are authentic.
16. At this same time you revealed in a vision to the aforementioned Ambrose, your bishop, where the bodies of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius were hidden. You had for many years treasured them, incorrupt and concealed in a secret place of your own, until the right moment came when you could bring them out into the open to check a certain person's ferocity—a woman's rage only, yet a queen's. When they had been exposed to the light of day and dug up, and were being transported with due honor to the Ambrosian basilica, some people hitherto tormented by unclean spirits were restored to health as confession was wrung from these same demons. But that was not all. A certain citizen of Milan, very well known in the city, who had been blind for several years, became aware of the riotous joy of the people and inquired the reason for it; on hearing what was happening he leapt up and asked his guide to take him there. He was led to the basilica and begged to be admitted, so that he might touch with his handkerchief the funeral bier of your holy ones, whose death was precious in your sight.

He did so, and applied the handkerchief to his eyes: they were immediately opened. The consequences of this were the wide diffusion of the story, fervent praise offered to you, and a change of mind on the part of our enemy, for although she was not brought to the healthy state of believing, her persecuting fury was at least curbed. Thanks be to you, 0 my God!

From what point, by what path, have you led my memory to this, so that I can include in my confession to you these great happenings, which I had forgotten and passed over? Yet at that time, though the fragrance of your ointments blew so freely abroad, we did not run after you; and that was why I wept the more abundantly later on when your hymns were sung: once I had gasped for you, but now at last I breathed your fragrance, insofar as your wind can blow through our house of straw.

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71. See Lk 6:18.
72. See Ps 115(116):16.
73. These events occurred from 17 to 19 June 386. Ambrose says that the blind man was named Severus and had been a butcher.
74. See Sg 1:3.
75. Contrast the "breath of pride" in IX, 4, 8. For the "flesh is grass" motif see Is 40:6; for the earthly habitation see 2 Cor 5:1. He has now brought the narrative back to his post-baptismal period, April-May 387.
quarreling with her young mistress—a thing that sometimes happens—and flung an accusation against her when the two of them were alone, calling her in the most bitterly insulting language a wine-swiller.\textsuperscript{84} This shaft went home, and my mother took heed to her disgraceful conduct, condemned it and threw it off at once.

Just as flattering friends pervert, so quarrelsome foes may often correct us, though you requite them not for what you effect through their means but for their intention. That angry maid meant to upset her little mistress, not heal her, so she spoke up in private, either because the quarrel happened to break out in a place and at a time when they were alone, or because she might have exposed herself to danger if it emerged that she had delayed so long in reporting the matter. But you, Lord, are the ruler of all things in heaven and on earth, and as worldly events flow on their tumultuous way you dispose them in due order, diverting the course of that deep torrent to serve your purposes. Through one unwholesome soul you brought wholesomeness to another, so that no one who takes note of this episode may ascribe it to his own power if another person, who, in his opinion, stands in need of correction, is put right by some word of his.

\textsuperscript{9}, \textsuperscript{19}. She was thus nurtured in an atmosphere of purity and temperance, and was subjected by you to the authority of her parents rather than by them to yours. When she attained full marriageable age she was entrusted to a husband; she served him as her lord,\textsuperscript{85} but she made it her business to win him for you\textsuperscript{86} by preaching you to him through her way of life, for by her conduct you made her beautiful in her husband's eyes, as a person to be respected, loved and admired. So gently did she put up with his marital infidelities that no quarrel ever broke out between them on this score, for she looked to you to show him mercy, knowing that once he came to believe he would become chaste.\textsuperscript{87} Although he was outstandingly generous, he was also hot-tempered, but she learned to offer him no resistance, by deed or even by word, when he was angry;

\textsuperscript{84}. \textit{Meribibulam.} Many years later Augustine's adversary Julian, the Pelagian bishop of Eclanum, taunted him with this weakness of his mother, of which Augustine had himself used the derogatory word. Augustine replied, "What wonder that you show yourself her enemy, since you are the enemy of that grace of God by means of which, as I stated, she was freed from her childish vice?" (Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian, I, 68).
\textsuperscript{85}. See Eph 5:22; 1 Pt 3:6.
\textsuperscript{86}. See 1 Pt 3:1.
\textsuperscript{87}. See 1 Jn 3:3.
she would wait for a favorable moment, when she saw that his mood had changed and he was calm again, and then explain her action, in case he had given way to wrath without due consideration. There were plenty of women married to husbands of gentler temper whose faces were badly disfigured by traces of blows, who while gossiping together would complain about their husbands' behavior; but she checked their talk, reminding them in what seemed to be a joking vein but with serious import that from the time they had heard their marriage contracts read out they had been in duty bound to consider these as legal documents which made slaves of them. In consequence they ought to keep their subservient status in mind and not defy their masters. These other wives knew what a violent husband she had to put up with, and were amazed that there had never been any rumor of Patricius striking his wife, nor the least evidence of its happening, nor even a day's domestic strife between the two of them; and in friendly talk they sought an explanation. My mother would then instruct them in this plan of hers that I have outlined. Those who followed it found out its worth and were happy; those who did not continued to be bullied and battered.

20. By persevering in devoted service, and by patience and gentleness, she won over her mother-in-law, who had initially been provoked against her by the whispering of mischievous maids, but now of her own accord informed her son of the servants' meddling tongues that had troubled the domestic peace between herself and her daughter-in-law, and demanded that those responsible be punished. Minded to obey his mother, to enforce discipline in the household and to ensure concord between his relatives, he punished those reported to him with beatings, as she who had reported them judged fit; and she promised that anyone who in the future should say anything malicious to her concerning her daughter-in-law, with a view to currying favor, might hope for a like recompense from her. Since no one dared to do so again, the two lived in a remarkably sweet atmosphere of mutual goodwill.

21. There was another great gift with which you had endowed this bondswoman of yours, in whose womb you created me, 0 my God, my mercy, 88 and that was the gift of acting as peacemaker whenever she could if friction occurred between souls at variance. She would hear many a bitter accusation from each against the other, of the kind that lumpy, ill-digested

88. See Ps 58:18(59:17).
discord is wont to belch forth when someone dyspeptic with hatred spews out acid talk to a present friend concerning an absent enemy; but never would she repeat to one anything the other had alleged, except what would be effective in reconciling them. This would have seemed to me a boon of small account, did I not have sad experience of innumerable hordes of people, inspired by what rampant, grisly gangrene of sin I cannot conceive, who not only betray to angry people what their angry enemies have said, but add things unsaid as well, whereas it ought to be easy enough for any who have kindly feelings toward their own kind to avoid provoking or aggravating the enmity of others by reporting malicious gossip, except in, cases where they have made sure they can extinguish it again by peaceable speech. Such was she, because you, her intimate teacher, instructed her in the school of her heart.

22. Eventually she won even her husband for you, toward the end of his life on earth,\(^{89}\) and she had no cause for complaint about anything in him after his baptism that she had tolerated in him while unbaptized. Moreover she was the servant of your servants. Every one of them who knew her found ample reason to praise, honor and love you as he sensed your presence in her heart, attested by the fruits of her holy way of life.\(^{90}\) She had been married to one man only, had loyally repaid what she owed to her parents, had governed her household in the fear of God, and earned a reputation for good works.\(^{91}\) She had brought up children, in labor anew with them each time she saw them straying away from you. Finally, Lord, she took care of all of us who were your servants for by your gift you permit us to speak—who before her death lived together as companions in you after receiving the grace of your baptism; she took care of us all as though all had been her children, and served us as though she had been the daughter of all.

Ostia

10. 23. But because the day when she was to quit this life was drawing near—a day known to you, though we were ignorant of it—she and I happened to be alone, through the mysterious workings of your will, as I believe. We stood leaning against a window which looked out on a

\(^{89}\) Patricius died c. 370/371, as appears from III, 4, 7 above.

\(^{90}\) See Mt 7:20; 2 Pt 3:11.

\(^{91}\) All this description closely corresponds to that of an authentic Christian widow in 1 Tm 5:4-10.

\(^{92}\) See Gal 4:19.
garden⁹³ within the house where we were staying at Ostia on the Tiber, for there, far from the crowds, we were recruiting our strength after the long journey, in preparation for our voyage overseas. We were alone, conferring very intimately. Forgetting what lay in the past, and stretching out to what was ahead,⁹⁴ we inquired between ourselves in the light of present truth, the Truth which is yourself,⁹⁵ what the eternal life of the saints would be like. Eye has not seen nor ear heard nor human heart conceived it, ⁹⁶ yet with the mouth of our hearts wide open we panted thirstily for the celestial streams of your fountain, the fount of life which is with you,⁹⁷ that bedewed from it according to our present capacity we might in our little measure think upon a thing so great.

24. Our colloquy led us to the point where the pleasures of the body's senses, however intense and in however brilliant a material light enjoyed, seemed unworthy not merely of comparison but even of remembrance beside the joy of that life, and we lifted ourselves in longing yet more ardent toward That Which Is, ⁹⁸ and step by step traversed all bodily creatures and heaven itself, whence sun and moon and stars shed their light upon the earth. Higher still we mounted by inward thought and wondering discourse on your works, and we arrived at the summit of our own minds; and this too we transcended, to touch that land of never-failing plenty⁹⁹ where you pasture Israel¹⁰⁰ for ever with the food of truth. Life there is the Wisdom through whom all these things are made,¹⁰¹ and all others that have been or ever will be; but Wisdom herself is not made: she is as she always has been and will be for ever. Rather should we say that in her there is no "has been" or "will be," but only being, for she is eternal, but past and future do not belong to eternity. And as we talked

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93. Gardens are significant for Augustine, as in Christian mythology more widely. The conversion of the two court officials occurs in one (VIII, 6, 15) and so does that of Augustine and Alypius (VIII, 8, 19). Now in his supreme mystical experience he and Monica are looking out into a garden. The paradisal overtones are evident.

94. See Phil 3:13.

95. See Jn 14:6; 2 Pt 1:12; Enn. 5.1.4.

96. See Is 64:4; 1 Cor 2:9-10.

97. See Ps 35:10(36:9). The sheer physicality of the language which Augustine uses to describe this mystical experience is noteworthy. Inhiare (gape, gasp, pant, crave, thirst after) and the metaphor of avid drinking recall Monica's youthful wine-bibbing described a few paragraphs earlier: the two scenes, in which she is central, are intentionally paralleled and contrasted.

98. In idipsum, Ps 4:9(8); see note on IX, 4, 11.

99. See Ez 34:14.

100. See Ps 79:2(80:1).

and panted for it, we just touched the edge of it by the utmost leap of our hearts; then, sighing and unsatisfied, we left the first-fruits of our spirit captive there, and returned to the noise of articulate speech, where a word has beginning and end. How different from your Word, our Lord, who abides in himself, and grows not old, but renews all things.

25. Then we said, "If the tumult of the flesh fell silent for someone, and silent too were the phantasms of earth, sea and air, silent the heavens, and the very soul silent to itself, that it might pass beyond itself by not thinking of its own being; if dreams and revelations known through its imagination were silent, if every tongue, and every sign, and whatever is subject to transience were wholly stilled for him —for if anyone listens, all these things will tell him, 'We did not make ourselves;' he made us who abides for ever —

and having said this they held their peace.

102. The expression is directly quoted from Rom 8:23, but with a change of sense; here it means the offering made to God in faith of the highest part of the human spirit, pledge that the whole person will follow.

103. See Wis 7:27. The stress on hearing rather than seeing is significant. Augustine's language in describing this supreme experience is strongly reminiscent of Plotinus (see Enn. 5.1.2 and 1.6.7) and he certainly recognized that the goal of Plotinian ascent through creatures to God, the One, the Eternal, was the same as that to which he now aspired. But the differences between his earlier attempts (see IV, 13, 20; VII, 10, 16; VII, 17, 23) and this experience are vital. In between have come the whole journey of Books VII and VIII, his personal acceptance of Christ in the garden scene and in baptism, and the moral liberation associated with that. The allusion to Philippians 3 strikes a clear Christian note as the description begins. The Word/Wisdom who is the object of their contemplation is he who is incarnate in Jesus Christ. Augustine's earlier experience at Milan was presented within a context of pride, his own and that of the man who gave him the Platonist books (see VII, 8, 12; VII, 9, 13-14; VII, 20, 26), but now he has moved from presumption to confession, from pride to the humility which above all characterizes the incarnate Word. Moreover the experience at Ostia is shared: Augustine and Monica are aware of each other, they are together in it; this would be impossible in Plotinian ecstasy, where the visionary is no longer conscious of distinctions; Augustine's description is a far cry from Plotinus' "flight of the alone to the Alone" (see Enn. 6.9.11). Augustine and Monica discuss "the eternal life of the saints," a shared joy, and one promised to them as their own fulfillment. Monica has no philosophical training and would have been incapable of Plotinian ecstasy, but her faith in Christ gives her access to as full an experience here as Augustine's own, and the inclusion of this episode in the miniature "Life of Monica" in Book IX suggests that it is seen as the earthly culmination of the life of baptismal grace. Finally the body is no longer seen as an obstacle; on the contrary, Augustine looks to the final resurrection of the body as the precondition of permanent enjoyment of what is now transitory.

104. See Ps 99(100):3.

105. See Sir 18:1; Ps 32(33):11; 116(117):2; Is 40:8; In 12:34.
for they had pricked the listening ear to him who made them; and then he alone were to speak, not through things that are made, but of himself, that we might hear his Word, not through fleshly tongue nor angel's voice, nor thundercloud, nor any riddling parable, hear him unmediated, whom we love in all these things, hear him without them, as now we stretch out and in a flash of thought touch that eternal Wisdom who abides above all things; if this could last, and all other visions, so far inferior, be taken away, and this sight alone ravish him who saw it, and engulf him and hide him away, kept for inward joys, so that this moment of knowledge — this passing moment that left us aching for more — should there be life eternal, would not Enter into the joy of your Lord be this, and this alone? And when, when will this be? When we all rise again, but not all are changed?

26. So did I speak, though not in this wise exactly, nor in these same words. Yet you know, 0 Lord, how on that very day amid this talk of ours that seemed to make the world with all its charms grow cheap, she said, "For my part, my son, I find pleasure no longer in anything this life holds. What I am doing here still, or why I tarry, I do not know, for all worldly hope has withered away for me. One thing only there was for which I desired to linger awhile in this life: to see you a Catholic Christian before I died. And this my God has granted to me more lavishly than I could have hoped, letting me see you even spurning earthly happiness to be his servant. What now keeps me here?"

106. See Ps 76:18(77:17); Ex 19:19; In 12:29.
107. See 1 Cor 13:12; Num 12:6-8.
108. See Phil 3:13.
110. See 1 Cor 15:51.
111. The episode may have some literary affinity with the last meeting of Aeneas with his aged father Anchises in Aen. 6. The garden here recalls the meadow of Hades (Aen. 6.679, 703); Ostia is not far from Virgil's entrance to the underworld, and the name "Ostia" is itself suggestive.
20

SAINT AUGUSTINE — CONFESSIONS

Monica's death

11. 27. What I replied I do not clearly remember, because just about that
time five days afterward or not much more—she took to her bed with fever.
One day during her illness she lapsed into unconsciousness and for a short time
was unaware of her surroundings. We all came running, but she quickly
returned to her senses, and, gazing at me and my brother112 as we stood there,
she asked in puzzlement, "Where was I?" We were bewildered with grief, but
she looked keenly at us and said, "You are to bury your mother here." I was
silent, holding back my tears, but my brother said something about his hope that
she would not die far from home, but in her own country, for that would be a
happier way. On hearing this she looked anxious and her eyes rebuked him for
thinking so; then she turned her gaze from him to me and said, "What silly
talk!" Not long afterward, addressing us both, she said, "Lay this body any-
where, and take no trouble over it. One thing only do I ask of you, that you
remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be." Having made her
meaning clear to us with such words as she could muster, she fell silent, and
traveled as the disease grew worse.

28. But my thoughts were upon the gifts you implant in the hearts of your
faithful, 0 invisible God, 113 and the wondrous fruits they produce. I was
rejoicing and thanking you114 as I recalled what had earlier been well known to
me: her constant preoccupation with the grave she had provided for herself
beside the body of her husband. Since they had lived together in such harmony,
she wanted this blessing also to be added to their happiness (so inept is the
human mind at grasping divine reality), a blessing people would remember: that
when her pilgrimage overseas was done, it had been granted to her that the earthly
remains of husband and wife115 should be covered by one same earth. When this
frivolous wish had by your generous goodness left her heart I did not know, and
I was filled with wondering joy that its departure had been signaled to me in this
fashion; although in our conversation at the window her words, "What still keeps
me here?" did not suggest that she desired to die in her own country. Later I heard
that already during our stay at Ostia she was one day talking with motherly
openness with some

112. Navigius.
113. See Col 1:15.
114. See Col 1:3.
115. See Gn 2:7.
of my friends, in my absence, about contempt for this life and the blessing
of death. They were amazed at such courage in a woman—for it was you
who had given it to her and asked whether she was not afraid to leave her
body so far from her own city. "Nothing is far from God," she replied.
"There is no danger that at the end of the world he will not know where to
find me and raise me up."

So on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, in
my thirty-third year, that religious and godly soul was set free from her
body.

Augustine's grief

12. 29. I closed her eyes, and a huge sadness surged into my heart; the
tears welled up, but in response to a ferocious command from my mind
my eyes held the fount in check until it dried up, though the struggle was
intensely painful for me. But as she breathed her last the boy Adeodatus
burst out crying; he was restrained by all of us and grew quiet. By this
means something boyish in myself, which was sliding toward tears, was
also restrained by the man's voice of my heart, and it too grew quiet. We
judged it unsuitable to mark this death by plaintive protests and laments,
since these are customarily employed to mourn the misery of the dying, or
death as complete extinction. But she neither died in misery nor died
altogether. The evidence of her virtues and her sincere faith gave us
good reason to hold this as certain.

30. What was it, then, that gave me such sharp inward pain? She and I
had grown accustomed to living together; an exceedingly gentle and dear
custom it was, and its sudden disruption was like a newly-inflicted
wound. I found some solace in her commendation of me, for in that last
illness she would at times respond with a caress to some little service I
rendered her, calling me a devoted son, and with deep affection would
declare that she had never heard from my lips any harsh or rough
expression flung against her. But what is that, 0 my God, who have made
us? What common measure is there between the respect with which I
lreated her and the service she did to me? Being now bereft of her

116. See 1 Thes 4:12.
117. See 1 Tm 1:5.
118. See Ps 99(100):3; Bar 4:7.
comfort, so great a comfort, my soul was wounded; it was as though my life was rent apart, for there had been but one life, woven out of mine and hers.

31. As soon as we had persuaded the boy to stop weeping, Evodius took up the psalter and began to sing a psalm. All of us in the house joined in: *I will sing to you of your mercy and justice, O Lord.*¹¹⁹ Many brethren and religious women assembled when they heard what was happening, and while those whose business it was prepared the body for burial, according to custom, I withdrew to where I could suitably engage in disputation on subjects appropriate to this occasion with those who felt I should not be left alone. With this salve of truth I soothed the agony that was known only to you; they were unaware of it, and though they listened attentively to my words, they believed that I felt no pain. Yet in your ears, where none of them could hear me, I chided myself with weakness for feeling as I did, and dammed up the flood of grief, so that for a little space it receded from me; but then a fresh wave swept over me, and though it was not enough to bring on an outburst of tears or even a change of expression, I knew myself what I was suppressing in my heart. And since I was gravely displeased to find how powerfully I could be affected by these human experiences, which in the due order of things and as a consequence of our natural condition are bound to occur, the woe I felt over my woe was yet another woe, and I was distressed by this double sadness.

32. Now came the moment when the body was borne away. We followed it, and returned again dry-eyed; for not even in the course of those prayers we poured out to you when the sacrifice of our redemption was offered for her beside the grave, where the body had been laid prior to burial, as is the custom there no, not even during those prayers did I weep, but all day long I was secretly weighed down by sorrow, and in my mental turmoil I begged you as best I could to heal my hurt. You did not, and this because, as I believe, you were reminding me that any sort of habit is bondage, even to a mind no longer feeding on deceitful words.

I thought it a good idea to go and take a bath, because I had heard that baths derived their name from the Greeks, who called a bath *balaneion*

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¹¹⁹. Ps 100(101):1. The mention of the opening verse evokes the whole psalm, which could have been recited truthfully by Monica, and was doubtless chosen as particularly apposite in the circumstances.
because it banishes worry from the mind. This too I must confess to your mercy, 0 Father of orphans, that I bathed, and afterward was quite unchanged, for I had not sweated the bitter sorrow out of my heart. But then I went to sleep, and on awakening felt a good deal better. As I lay in bed alone I remembered some lines by your servant Ambrose, which rang true for me:

Creator God, 0 Lord of all,
who rule the skies, you clothe the day
in radiant color, bid the night
in quietness serve the gracious sway
of sleep, that weary limbs, restored
to labor's use, may rise again,
and jaded minds abate their fret,
and mourners find release from pain.

33. Little by little I recovered my earlier thoughts about your hand-maid, remembering how devout had been her attitude toward you, and how full of holy kindness, how willing to make allowances, she had been in our regard; and now that I was suddenly bereft of this I found comfort in weeping before you about her and for her, about myself and for myself. The tears that I had been holding back I now released to flow as plentifully as they would, and strewed them as a bed beneath my heart. There it could rest, because there were your ears only, not the ears of anyone who would judge my weeping by the norms of his own pride.

And now, Lord, it is in writing that I confess to you. Let anyone read it who will, and judge it as he will, and if he finds it sinful that I wept over my mother for a brief part of a single hour—mother who for a little space was to my sight dead, and who had wept long years for me that in your sight I might live—then let such a reader not mock, but rather, if his charity is wide enough, himself weep for my sins to you, who are Father to all whom your Christ calls his brethren.

13, 34. But now that my heart is healed of that wound, in which I was perhaps guilty of some carnal affection, I pour out to you tears of a very

120. A fanciful etymology from ballo, throw, and ania, grief.
121. See Ps 67:6(68:5).
122. From Ambrose's evening hymn, Deus, Creator omnium, which may have been a favorite with Augustine. It is quoted elsewhere in The Confessions, and in a dialogue at Cassiciacum (The Happy Life IV, 35) Monica quotes another line from it. The verses quoted here are obviously suited to Augustine's immediate need, but also bring Ambrose to mind in association with Monica for a last time.
different kind for this servant of yours, O our God; they come gushing forth from a mind struck by the perils besetting every soul that dies in Adam. True, she had been brought to new life in Christ, and even before her release from the body she so lived that her faith and conduct redounded to the glory of your name. Yet all the same I dare not assert that from the time you brought her to new birth in baptism no word contrary to your commandment escaped her lips. And by the Truth who is your Son we are warned, If anyone says to his brother, "You fool!" he will be liable to hellfire, so woe betide anyone, even one whose life is praiseworthy, if you should examine it without mercy! But since you are not ruthless in searching out our faults, we trustingly hope for a place in your house. If anyone were to give you an account of his real merits, what else would that be but a list of your gifts? If only humans would acknowledge that they are human, and anyone minded to boast would boast in the Lord!

35. This is why, O God of my heart, my praise, my life, I will for a little while disregard her good deeds, for which I joyfully give you thanks, and pray to you now for my mother's sins. Hear me through that healing remedy who hung upon the tree, the medicine for our wounds who sits at your right hand and intercedes for us. I know that she dealt mercifully with others and from her heart forgave her debtors their debts; do you then forgive her any debts she contracted during all those years after she had passed through the saving waters. Forgive her, Lord, forgive, I beg you, and do not arraign her before you. Let mercy triumph over judgment, for you, whose utterances are true, have to the merciful promised mercy. Since their very power to be merciful was

123. See 1 Cor 15:22; Eph 2:5.
124. See Ti 3:5.
125. See Mt 12:36-37.
126. See In 14:6.
127. Mt 5:22.
128. See Ps 129(130):3.
129. See 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17.
130. See Ps 72(73):26.
131. See Ps 117(118):14; 21:4, 26 (22:3, 25); Jer 17:14; Ex 15:2; Is 12:2; Dt 10:21.
133. See Ps 109(110):1; Rom 8:34.
134. See Mt 6:12; 18:35.
135. See Num 14:19.
136. See Ps 142(143):2.
137. See Jas 2:13.
138. See Mt 5:7.
your gift to them in the first place, you will be showing mercy to those with whom you have yourself dealt mercifully, and granting pity to those toward whom you have shown pity first. 139

36. I believe you have already done what I am asking you, but look favorably, Lord, on this free offering of my lips. 140 On the day when her release was at hand 141 she gave no thought to costly burial or the embalming of her body with spices, nor did she pine for a special monument or concern herself about a grave in her native land; no, that was not her command to us. She desired only to be remembered at your altar, where she had served you with never a day's absence. From that altar, as she knew, the holy Victim is made available to us, he through whom the record of debt that stood against us was annulled. 142 He has triumphed over an enemy who does keep a tally of our faults and looks for anything to lay to our charge, but finds no case against him. 143 In him we win our victory. Who will reimburse him for that innocent blood? 144 Who will pay back to him the price he paid 145 to purchase us, as though to snatch us back from him?

To the sacrament of that ransom-price your handmaid made fast her soul with the bonds of faith. Let no one wrench her away from your protection. Let no lion or dragon 146 thrust in between by force or guile; for she will not claim that she has no debts to pay, lest she be convicted by the crafty accuser and fall into his power; she will reply only that her debts have been forgiven by him to whom no one can repay what he paid for us, though he owed us nothing.

Peace

37. May she then rest in peace 147 with her husband. She was married to no other man 148 either before or after him, and in serving him she

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139. See Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15.
140. See Ps 118(119):108.
141. See 2Tm 4:6.
143. See Lk 23:4; In 14:30; 18:38; 19:4.
144. See Mt 27:4.
145. See 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23.
146. See Ps 90(91):13.
147. Peace is the keynote at the end of the narrative part of The Confessions, as it will be at the close of the whole work, XIII, 15, 50.
148. See 1 Tm 5:9.
brought forth fruit for you by patience,\textsuperscript{149} to win him for you in the end. Inspire others, my Lord, my God,\textsuperscript{150} inspire your servants who are my brethren, your children who are my masters, whom I now serve with heart and voice and pen, that as many of them as read this may remember Monnica, your servant,\textsuperscript{151} at your altar, along with Patricius, sometime her husband. From their flesh you brought me into this life, though how I do not know. Let them remember with loving devotion these two who were my parents in this transitory light, but also were my brethren under you, our Father, within our mother the Catholic Church, and my fellow citizens in the eternal Jerusalem, for which your people\textsuperscript{152} sighs with longing throughout its pilgrimage, from its setting out to its return. So may the last request she made of me be granted to her more abundantly by the prayers of many, evoked by my confessions, than by my prayers alone.

\textsuperscript{149} See Lk 8:15.
\textsuperscript{150} See In 20:28.
\textsuperscript{151} This is the only mention of her name in Augustine's writings. The spelling here given has the best manuscript support.
\textsuperscript{152} See Heb 11:10,13,14.