

# Embodying humility in Augustine's *Confessions*

Michael Gladwin

"I wish you to . . . construct no other way for yourself of grasping and holding the truth than the way constructed by Him who, as God, saw how faltering were our steps. This way is first humility, second humility, third humility, and however often you should ask me I would say the same."<sup>1</sup>

Augustine of Hippo

One of the gifts of Jane Foulcher's study of humility has been to alert us to Christians traditions, practices, and individuals that have embodied it—the desert fathers, Benedict of Nursia, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the modern-day Cistercian martyrs of Tibhirine. We are challenged further to consider others who have exemplified humility in their thought and in their ways of being in the world. In this regard, it is difficult to think of a more apposite and interesting example than Augustine of Hippo. This is partly because of his profound theological and psychological insight, but also because he bequeathed to us the world's first autobiography, which is, *inter alia*, a profound and detailed narrative of how a proud, ambitious intellectual discovered the way of humility as a path to God.

Although Augustine's influential conception of humility (Latin: *humilitas*) is not a focus of Foulcher's discussion of humility, her brief survey of Augustine's contribution is nevertheless illuminating. Foulcher suggests that although humility did not find a place in Augustine's influential framing of the virtues—*viz.*, the

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Christian “theological” virtues (faith, hope, and love), to which were added the classical “cardinal” virtues (justice, wisdom, temperance, and courage)—he nevertheless understood humility as “the fundamental underpinning of Christian life,” grounded and exemplified in the incarnation and death of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Augustine is a big fish in any discussion of humility, but Foulcher has plenty of other big (and some lesser-known) fish to deep fry.

The place of humility in Augustine’s theological vision has, however, attracted significant interest during the last two decades after something of a lacuna during the last quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> A common theme in these studies is recognition that the reality and example of Christ’s incarnation and the *via crucis* (the way of the cross) are central to Augustine’s conception of humility. The predominant focus of these studies has been the intellectual, theological, and philosophical dimensions of Augustine’s understanding of, and progress towards, humility.

A striking omission in this scholarship, however, is attention to what Foulcher describes as the “nexus between traditions and practices.”<sup>4</sup> This is an approach that can result in “a fuller understanding of humility,” in part because understandings of humility are “*always* embedded in contexts (traditions) and surrounded by practices.”<sup>5</sup> Here Foulcher draws on Alasdair MacIntyre’s influential observation that virtues “emerge from, and are sustained by, traditions, practices, and narratives,” along with the suggestion of Cistercian theologian André Louf that “‘concrete experience’ offers the most helpful route for exploring both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of humility.” For Foulcher the Christian monastic tradition offers “a particularly fruitful ground for considering the interrelationship among theology, practices, and the lived life.”<sup>6</sup> Taking Foulcher’s cue, it is the contention of this article that there is value in putting on a similar lens with which to view Augustine’s conception of humility, principally through his *Confessions*.<sup>7</sup>

### **Radical dependence: defining humility**

The theme of humility and its necessity for the Christian life runs like a crimson thread through the *Confessions*.<sup>8</sup> In terms of defining Augustine’s conception of humility, particularly as it is construed in the *Confessions*, Kent Dennington has offered a penetrating and comprehensive inductive analysis, albeit one that focuses on the intellectual dimensions of that journey.<sup>9</sup> For Augustine, argues Dennington, humility is “fundamentally the embrace of radical dependence,” which is “the will to receive completely one’s being from the generosity of another and the will to give of oneself completely for the being of another.”<sup>10</sup> The archetype of humility for Augustine, adds Dennington, is “the Trinitarian life of God”, out of which comes the incarnation of Christ. Human humility is “analogous

to divine humility," but because of the distinction between God and human creatures, humility for Augustine consists of components unique to human creatures. These components include the "embrace of *ontological* dependence" and "*moral* dependence," but chiefly the embrace of what Dennington labels "*identity* dependence."<sup>11</sup> Dennington goes on to explicate these three terms:

Ontological dependence names the fact that the creature is dependent for its existence on the creator . . . Moral dependence names the fact that when the human creature divorces her pursuit of doing good from her relationship to God, she fails to progress in doing good, and so long as she pursues relationship to God, she progresses in doing good . . . Identity dependence names the fact that not only our existence and not only our failure or success in doing good, but also somehow our very identities are dependent upon God in such a way that the "natural" drive to fashion, stabilize, or protect an intelligible, secure, and self-sufficient identity turns out to be a sham, which is to say, turns out in a deeper sense to be unnatural. These components of human humility—the embrace of ontological, moral, and identity dependence—are archetypally displayed in the humanity of Christ. It is especially Christ's revelation of identity dependence that arrested the young Augustine and remained offensive to pagans. As such, it is identity dependence that reconfigured Christian humility beyond even Jewish views of humility.<sup>12</sup>

As with the majority of studies of Augustine's *Confessions*, Dennington's focus is on Augustine's intellectual and moral journey rather than on the traditions and practices that enabled it. Dennington traces Augustine's famous journey towards "radical dependence"—his two-step intellectual and then moral conversion (to catholic Christianity via hedonism, worldly ambition and pride, Ciceronian philosophy and eloquence, Manichaeism, sceptical philosophy of the Academic school, and Neoplatonism). That well-traversed intellectual story needs little rehearsal here and is best approached—in *tolle lege* fashion—through the first nine books of the *Confessions* and secondary interpreters.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, this article focuses on key traditions and practices that nurtured and shaped a journey towards the "radical dependence" of humility—or, as Foulcher puts it, the interrelationship between "theology, practices, and the lived life." To that end, the following discussion is mindful of the fact that Augustine presents that

journey in the narrative form of an embodied, lived reality—echoing the way Christ's incarnation and the Gospels narrate an embodied humility.

### **Liturgy, preaching, and spiritual disciplines**

In the first place, and perhaps most obviously, key practices for Augustine were those traditionally associated with Christian liturgy and the spiritual disciplines: the regular reading and study of Scripture, private and public prayer, catechesis, attendance at worship services, and exposure to liturgy and preaching.<sup>14</sup>

In 384 Augustine began to investigate the Christian religion seriously. He enrolled as a catechumen in Milan, which commenced his continuous exposure and acculturation to Christian liturgy and to the ministry of Ambrose, the celebrated bishop of Milan. The young social climber was attracted initially by Ambrose's political authority, empire-wide reputation, and rhetorical prowess. Ambrose's biblical exegesis, especially his "figurative" and "spiritual" explanations of difficult Old Testament passages—in the mould of Origen's threefold hermeneutical strategy of distinguishing the literal, moral, and spiritual/allegorical senses of Scripture—provided a crucial first step in giving Augustine intellectual permission to pursue Christianity and make spiritual "progress."<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Ambrose's discussions of divine substance in a Christian Neoplatonic key helped Augustine to envisage God in non-panteistic terms as a transcendent, immaterial spirit, without body and parts. Furthermore, Ambrose's discussion of free will located the origin of evil in human beings (*viz.*, in the corruption of their wills) rather than in a Manichean principle of darkness or evil. This was reinforced by Augustine's own reading of Neoplatonists, including Plotinus's *Enneads* in the popular Latin translation of Marius Victorinus.<sup>16</sup>

Prayer is depicted as a crucial practice in these years. No practice better exemplifies dependence on God, modelled most supremely by Christ but also by Augustine's exemplars in the faith and by his account of his own prayers, which represent a growth in maturity and dependence on God. Indeed, the very form of the *Confessions*, addressing God in second-person, is a sustained prose-poetry prayer. Augustine comes a long way, as he concedes in a self-parody of his youthful prayer life: "Lord, grant me chastity and self-control . . . but not yet!" Later he would find himself "groaning" in prayer that God would come to his aid.<sup>17</sup> On the cusp of his famous conversion experience in a Milanese garden Augustine recounts a time of intense prayer with his best friend Alypius, in which "a hidden depth of profound self-examination had dredged up a heap of all my misery." This precipitated a "vast storm bearing a massive downpour of tears" and "weeping in the bitter agony of my heart." Those prayers would be answered after he obeyed the summons to "pick up and read" the Scriptures that lay to hand.<sup>18</sup>

The practices of prayer are also exemplified in Augustine's account of his pious, praying mother, Monica. He offers us a tender, though not uncritical, portrait of his devoted mother and her spiritual practices, foremost of which is her indomitable perseverance in prayer—at times in “unhappy and tearful groans”—for the salvation of her son.<sup>19</sup> Here, in the narrated life of Monica, is an embodiment of the fundamentally important practice of intercessory prayer, with its dependence on God and selfless focus on the good of others.

The chanting of hymns and Psalms was also formative. As Augustine notes elsewhere in the *Confessions*, Ambrose and the churches in Milan had, during the famous sit-in protest of Easter 386 against the empress's desire to impose Arian beliefs on the church, introduced hymns and psalms that were “sung after the custom of the eastern Churches.”<sup>20</sup> The practice continued until the time Augustine began attending the church regularly. Augustine later recalled that he had “wept much” at the chants of these hymns. Ambrose's hymns, such as *Deus creator omnium*, also intersperse Augustine's writings.<sup>21</sup>

### People “of much experience and learning”

Augustine's conception of humility as “radical dependence” was embodied in relational webs of dependence on his fellow human beings, whether his mother, his friends, or his mentors. And here Augustine narrates lessons learned by the monastic movement—especially by great exemplars of the previous generation such as Basil and Pachomius—that love for God and humility could only be expressed in the context of community and love for one's neighbour.

Of Augustine's relationships, none evokes dependence more profoundly than that of mother and son, vividly expressed in Augustine's famous metaphor of “piously drinking” in Christian instruction and the name of Christ with his “mother's milk.”<sup>22</sup> Also striking is Augustine's suggestion that an absence of adequate male role models in his youth “to imitate” were a factor in his being “swept along by vanities” and travelling “right away from you, my God.”<sup>23</sup> This gives added force to Augustine's description of Ambrose as receiving him “like a father” who “expressed pleasure at my coming [to Milan] with a kindness most fitting in a bishop.” Augustine added: “I began to like him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth, for I had absolutely no confidence in your Church, but as a human being who was kind to me.”<sup>24</sup> That said, it should be noted that Augustine had relatively little direct contact with Ambrose once he had enrolled as a catechumen. He recalls his earnest desire to pour out to Ambrose his “emotional crisis” and the “abyss” of existential threat he felt, but was “excluded from his ear and from his mouth by crowds of men with arbitrations to submit to him, to whose frailties he ministered.” The hardworking bishop's hospitable

pastoral approach was to receive all who came to him and, when not busy with visitors, to read silently (an uncommon but not unknown practice in antiquity). Consequently, Augustine could not bring himself to burden or interrupt Ambrose in his moments of quietness and study—conversation with Ambrose was confined to “brief interviews.”<sup>25</sup>

It was at this crucial juncture, in the wake of Augustine’s so-called “intellectual conversion” and at the threshold of his “moral” or “complete” conversion, that Augustine found a wiser, older mentor to whom he could open his heart at length. As Augustine puts it, with echoes of the Psalmist and with Pauline qualifications regarding divine guidance, God “put it in my heart, and it seemed good in my sight (Ps. 18:15), that I should visit Simplicianus.”<sup>26</sup> Augustine suggests why he singled out this man rather than others:

It was evident to me that he was a good servant of yours; your grace shone in him. I had also heard that from his youth he had lived a life dedicated to you. By this time he had become an old man, and after a long life of saintly zeal in pursuing your way he appeared to me a man of much experience and much learning. So indeed he was.<sup>27</sup>

Simplicianus’ qualifications as a mentor were enhanced by the fact that he had been a spiritual “father to the then bishop Ambrose in the receiving of grace” and a mentor whom Ambrose “truly loved . . . as one loves a father.”<sup>28</sup> Equally important was that Simplicianus had been instrumental in the conversion of the great Marius Victorinus, a titan in Augustine’s beloved fields of rhetoric and philosophy, and the translator into Latin of Neoplatonic works Augustine had so eagerly devoured.

In a long conversation, Simplicianus, this man “of much experience and much learning,” recounted how he had challenged and then led the great pagan rhetorician and philosopher to confess Christ publicly at the expense of worldly ambition and praise (which included the unsurpassable honour of a statue in the Roman Forum). Just as Ambrose had before him, Simplicianus helped Augustine to see ways in which Neoplatonism could act as a metaphysical bridge to Christianity; indeed, Simplicianus congratulated the young man that he has not “fallen in with the writings of other philosophers full of fallacies and deceptions ‘according to the elements of this world (Col. 2:8)’”, but instead had engaged with “the Platonic books” where “God and his Word [*Logos*] keep slipping in.”<sup>29</sup> Like Ambrose, Simplicianus encouraged Augustine to engage critically with the best contemporary philosophy, but in his narrative of Victorinus he put flesh on the bones in his attempt to show Augustine that it was only the incarnation that

could exhort and empower a man of unsurpassed intellectual stature and worldly success to adopt “the humility of Christ hidden from the wise and revealed to babes (Matt. 11:25).” It was to this end—“to exhort me to the humility of Christ,” as Augustine put it—that Simplicianus recounted to the Augustine the story of his friendship with, and discipleship of, the great Victorinus. Augustine tells us that once Simplicianus had finished recounting the story of Victorinus, “I was ardent to follow his example. He had indeed told it to me with this object in view.”<sup>30</sup>

Suggestively, for the purpose of this article, Simplicianus had exhorted Augustine to Christlike humility via an act of narrative embodiment. In a similar fashion, Augustine recounted a surprise visitor at his villa one day while he was there with his best friend Alypius. The visitor was Ponticianus, an African compatriot and fellow Christian who held high office at the imperial court in Milan.<sup>31</sup> Ponticianus proceeded to tell astonished Augustine and Alypius of the life of Antony the Egyptian monk, whose biography by Athanasius had been translated into Latin a decade or so before. Not having heard of Antony, Augustine recalled being amazed at God’s “wonderful acts” in the life of Antony and “the greatness of the story.”<sup>32</sup> Augustine and Alypius continued to listen “with rapt silence” as Ponticianus went on to describe the flourishing monastic movement in Egypt and, subsequently, an incident in Trier in which two friends (also of high office in the imperial court and the civil service) had a chance meeting with some nearby monks (servants of God who were “poor in spirit”). The monks showed the two civil servants a copy of Antony’s *Life*. One began to read and experienced a profound conversion—“amazed and set on fire” with a desire to renounce his status and ambitions to be a friend of the emperor and become instead a “friend of God.” His companion joined him.<sup>33</sup> As Ponticianus told the story Augustine was convicted to the very core of his being; it constituted an important catalyst for his conversion crisis.

These “stories within stories” of Simplicianus and Ponticianus provided Augustine with powerful testimonies in narrative form, again putting tangible flesh on the bones of how one might attain a life of humble and complete devotion to God. In the case of the *Life of Antony*, we have a *story within a story within a story* (Athanasius’ story of Antony within Ponticianus’ story within Augustine’s story). In terms of the practices that foster humility, they suggest the importance and power of testimony and bearing witness, not least through the hearing and reading of spiritual biography.<sup>34</sup> The account of Simplicianus also illustrates the value of unhurried conversation, practices of private and public confession, and the mentoring that comes with spiritual direction.

## Friendship and “contemplative leisure”

Also striking is the way in which Augustine and his peers made space, in the midst of demanding careers, for serious intellectual and spiritual pursuits—what Augustine describes as the carving out of “contemplative leisure.”<sup>35</sup> The charismatic orator had gathered around himself a group of like-minded Milanese gentlemen, several of whom were young Christian intellectuals on a quest to deepen their understanding of the Christian mysteries with the aid of Neoplatonism—and all at the same time busy with burgeoning careers and expressing “detestation for the storms and troubles of human life.”<sup>36</sup> They proposed, somewhat idealistically, a contemplative community (with a maximum number of ten) in which some would take turns earning a living and pooling resources, thereby freeing up several at a time for “withdrawing from the crowds and living a life of contemplation.”<sup>37</sup> The plan foundered and collapsed, however, on the eventual realisation that this arrangement would probably “not be acceptable to the wives whom others among us already had, and which we ourselves wanted to acquire.”<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it was among this coterie of serious, intelligent young seekers of truth that Augustine was able to more fully unravel the hints thrown out in Ambrose’s sermons.<sup>39</sup> Here it is also worth noting that although notions of “contemplative leisure” initially aimed at monastic models, the exigencies of life meant that such leisure had to be found amid the quotidian realities of busy, professional, secular lives.

A closer friendship circle of like-minded peers also remained vital, especially Augustine’s beloved long-time friends Alypius and Nebridius, with whom he continued to discuss spiritual and philosophical matters, and to pray with great earnestness.<sup>40</sup> Augustine notes that a bright light amid the existential gloom prior to his conversion was “the flow of delightful conversation with friends.” He remarked that “without friends I could not be happy . . . My friends I loved indeed for their own sake; and I felt that in return they loved me for my sake.” And yet Augustine at this time did not yet fully grasp “from what fountain”—*viz.*, a divine source—came this precious gift of friendship.<sup>41</sup>

Augustine saw friendships, like salvation, as providential gifts of God’s grace. He had come to understand that although friendship had been “sweet to me beyond all the sweetness of life that I had experienced,” it could not be “true friendship” unless God bound together “those who cleave to one another by the love which is ‘poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us’ (Rom. 5:5).”<sup>42</sup> The bond of friendship was, therefore, a gracious gift of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, friends such as Nebridius and Alypius embodied and

nurtured to a significant extent the posture of humility towards which Augustine was bending his neck.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

In her study of humility, Foulcher draws on Joan Chittister's evocative definition of humility as "a proper sense of self in a universe of wonders."<sup>44</sup> As we have seen, the greatest wonder for Augustine, namely the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, induced in him a "proper sense of self" that can be framed in terms of "radical dependence"—ontologically, morally, and in terms of identity. What is particularly striking in the *Confessions*, and in light of Augustine's stress on the incarnation as the supreme embodiment and example of humility, is the way in which form follows substance in the *Confessions*. The whole structure of the *Confessions* reflects the incarnational reality that God has communicated to us about humility in the form of a human life rather than in abstract propositions. Furthermore, as Dennington points out, the form of the *Confessions* is "meant to challenge the notion that we can truthfully tell the story of who we are—of our identities—abstracted from God. Thus the *Confessions* exemplifies Christian humility in its refusal to speak of the self except in the mode of prayer."<sup>45</sup>

Augustine's narrative discloses the importance of traditions and practices that foster humility: exposure to the liturgy, catechesis, the study and exegesis of Scripture, and to preaching; earnest personal prayer alongside the intercessory prayers of others; and the chanting of hymns and Psalms. The kindness, mentoring, and testimony of spiritual directors who embodied humility along with "much experience and learning"—in this case Ambrose and Simplicianus—was formative for Augustine. Likewise, the friendship of Alypius, Nebridius, and a wider circle of like-minded peers embodied and bore witness to the way of humility, encouraging one another in the making of space ("contemplative leisure") for unhurried conversation, reading, testimony (both personal and that of spiritual biography), and a serious intellectual and spiritual pursuit of God. Augustine understood all of these traditions and practices as gracious, providential gifts that, like much in our lives due to our creaturely and epistemic limitations, had to be accepted with a dependent trust and a faith that seeks understanding. Indeed, this fundamental human condition of createdness, and the humility it should provoke, is a theme that Augustine takes up in the final three books of the *Confessions*.<sup>46</sup> Here he acknowledges the limitations of memory, language, and our time-bound material natures. Augustine goes on to observe that he, humanity, and all creation were all utterly dependent upon God—for their very existence as well as for their ability to love him, turn themselves toward him, and find their rest in him.<sup>47</sup>

Much more could be said about post-conversion practices that sustain a life of humble wonder. This is, of course, why studies like Foulcher's are so valuable. Additionally, care needs to be taken not to set up Augustine's practical journey towards humility as a normative template for the way of humility. Nevertheless, its embodiment in narrative form means that it yields to us a richly textured and suggestive account of how one of the greatest, proudest and restless-hearted intellectuals of his time could practically discover and embrace humility as a path to peace with his God.<sup>48</sup> This helps to explain why, in AD 410 (around ten years after writing his *Confessions*), the master rhetorician would offer another aspiring young intellectual and orator named Dioscorus a riff on the conventional three secrets of good rhetoric (first delivery, second delivery, third delivery): the way to "grasping and holding the truth," Augustine contended, was "first humility, second humility, third humility."<sup>49</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 Aurelius Augustine to Dioscorus, Letter 118.3.22, in *The Fathers of the Church*, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari and trans. Wilfrid Parsons, vol. 18 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 282. The letter is dated AD 410. I am grateful to Professor Raymond Canning and Associate Professor David Neville for comments on earlier drafts of this article and for suggestions for further reading.
- 2 Jane Foulcher, *Reclaiming Humility: Four Studies in the Monastic Tradition* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 26–27. So John Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2007 [1938]), 72; Deborah Wallace Ruddy, "The Humble God: Healer, Mediator, and Sacrifice," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 7, no. 3 (2004): 87–108 (at 88).
- 3 Gerald W. Schlabach, "Augustine's Hermeneutic of Humility: An Alternative to Moral Imperialism and Moral Relativism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22, no. 2 (1994): 299–329; John C. Cavadini, "Pride," in *Augustine Through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, eds Allan Fitzgerald and John C. Cavadini (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 217–18, canvasses Augustine's concept of humility by focusing on "pride," the mirror image of humility in Augustine's *oeuvre*. Deborah Wallace Ruddy focuses on Augustine's Christology in the context of the Christian tradition of virtue ethics, but with particular emphasis on the soteriological implications of humility for Augustine's thought: "A Christological Approach to Virtue: Augustine and Humility," PhD diss., Boston College, 2001; Ruddy, "The

Humble God: Healer, Mediator, and Sacrifice"; Notker Baumann, *Die Demut als Grundlage aller Tugenden bei Augustinus*, Patrologia: Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2009); Stephen T. Pardue, *The Mind of Christ: Humility and the Intellect in Early Christian Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), has framed humility in the context of human limitations, but more specifically engaged Augustine as an interlocutor in his "Kenosis and its Discontents: Towards an Augustinian Account of Divine Humility," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 3 (2012): 271–88. Here Pardue considers the complex relationship of *kenosis* to divine humility via Augustine's explorations of humility and language. Joseph J. McInerney, *The Greatness of Humility: St. Augustine on Moral Excellence* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2016), surveys ideals of greatness in ancient philosophy such as Aristotle's *megalopsychia* ("magnanimity," or "great-souledness"); ideals of Stoic virtue; Ciceronian *Gloria*; and the Plotinian ascent to "the good." McInerney contrasts these with Augustine's acknowledgment of dependence and a consequent receptiveness to God's grace. In so doing, Augustine suggests that we become like the incarnate Jesus Christ who humbled himself, "even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). McInerney then asserts this ideal as a paradigm for leadership in a context challenged by post-Humean ideals of greatness. For a popular Australian study with a general focus on humility as a virtue to be reclaimed for modern leadership paradigms, see John Dickson, *Humilitas* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011). Finally, Jaclyn L. Maxwell, *Simplicity and Humility in Late Antique Christian Thought: Elites and the Challenges of Apostolic Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021) considers the social implications of belief in the virtues of humility and simplicity by contrasting the modest backgrounds of Christianity's founders (the apostles) and the virtues they exemplified with the social values of upper-Christians in Late Antiquity (especially John Chrysostom and the Cappadocian Fathers, although not Augustine).

- 4 Foulcher, *Humility*, 33.
- 5 Foulcher, *Humility*, 33 (emphasis mine).
- 6 Foulcher, *Humility*, 32–33.
- 7 Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Quotations from *The Confessions*, unless otherwise noted, are from this translation.
- 8 See, for example, Augustine, *Confessions* 5.9.17, 6.4.6, 6.5.8–9, 7.9.13–14, 8.18.24, 7.18.27, 8.2.3–4, 8.4.

- 9 Kent Dennington, "Humility: An Augustinian Perspective," *Pro Ecclesia* 25, no. 1 (February 2016): 18–43.
- 10 Dennington, 27.
- 11 Dennington, "Humility," 27–28 (emphasis mine).
- 12 Dennington, "Humility," 28.
- 13 For key studies in a vast scholarship, see the intellectual biography of Burnaby, *Amor Dei*; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 2nd edn (Berkeley, California: University of California, 2000 [1967]); John O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (London: Longman, 1954 [1980]); and Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- 14 Regarding catechesis, I am grateful to Raymond Canning for loaning me an MS copy of his forthcoming article, "Mark God's Humility. The Humility of God and the Humility of the Teacher: Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus*."
- 15 Augustine, *Confessions* 5.14.24.
- 16 Augustine, *Confessions* 5.14.24.
- 17 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.7 (my translation of "*da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo*"). Chadwick renders this as "chastity and continence." See also Augustine, *Confessions* 6.3.3.
- 18 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.12.28–29.
- 19 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.12.30.
- 20 Augustine, *Confessions* 9.7.16.
- 21 Augustine, *Confessions* 9.7.16.
- 22 Augustine, *Confessions* 3.4.8. See also Margaret R. Miles, "Infancy, Parenting, and Nourishment in Augustine's 'Confessions,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50, no. 3 (1982): 349–64.
- 23 Augustine, *Confessions* 1.18.28.
- 24 Augustine, *Confessions* 5.13.23.
- 25 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.3.3–4.
- 26 Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.1.1.
- 27 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.1.1.
- 28 Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.2.3.
- 29 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.2.3.
- 30 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.5.10.
- 31 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.6.14–15.
- 32 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.6.13.
- 33 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.6.15–16.
- 34 For Augustine's epistemic justifications for holding beliefs that rest on the testimony of others, alongside a belief in the testimony of Scripture and the Church that were "validated by their historical reliability and by miracles,"

- see Scott MacDonald, "Augustine, Saint (354–430)," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, eds Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 33–34.
- 35 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.14.24.
- 36 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.13.23.
- 37 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.14.24.
- 38 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.14.24.
- 39 Cavadini, "Pride," 218.
- 40 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.16.26.
- 41 Augustine, *Confessions* 6.16.26.
- 42 Augustine, *Confessions* 4.4.7. For the full passage of Augustine's famous meditation on friendship, see 4.4–7.
- 43 See, for example, Augustine, *Confessions* 6.12, 7.7, 7.10, 8.8, 8.13.
- 44 Joan D. Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages* (New York: Crossroad, 1992; reprint, 1997), 61–62, quoted in Foulcher, *Humility*, xix.
- 45 Dennington, "Humility," 28.
- 46 Augustine, *Confessions* 11–13.
- 47 See especially Augustine, *Confessions* 13.1–4.
- 48 Augustine, *Confessions* 1.1.1.
- 49 Augustine to Dioscorus 118.3.22.