

St. Augustine. First Letter of St. John. 4: 7-16. Matthew 21: 8-12.

I think that today's Readings and Gospel are very aptly chosen by the Church. Today we can learn a lot about both the power of prayer and, more specifically, the importance and power of love.

Augustine was born in North Africa in 354. Many parents might understand, the anguish of his mother who, having a son gifted with intelligence, saw him go 'off the rails', as a young man. But, through love and determined prayer, she saw his life transformed to become Bishop of Hippo and one of the greatest theological and spiritual writers of the Church. We might do well to repeat the opening prayer of today's mass.

"Lord, renew in your Church, the Spirit you gave St. Augustine. Filled with this Spirit, may we thirst for you alone as the fountain of wisdom and seek you as the source of eternal love."

The word 'Love' is mentioned fifteen times in the Reading from St. John. Particularly pertinent is his reiteration of the fact that, 'God is Love.' A love, "Revealed when he sent his son into the world that we might have life through him." Because God is the source of all love and, because we come from God, we were made to love also. For us, a love spoiled by sin but redeemed, "When he sent his son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away." As the Apostles, "Knew and put their faith in God's love towards themselves" We are assured that, "Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him."

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that we are to take his life as a model for how we are to love. "You have only one teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant." Jesus was certainly that to all, and he shows us how to be the same.