

## The Confessions, X, 69-70: Conversion in Communion

by St. Augustine of Hippo

**H**ow you have loved us, O Good Father, *who did not spare your only Son, but handed him over for us evil men* (Rom 8:32)! How you have loved us, for whom, *not deeming equality with you something to be clung to, he made himself subject even to the death of the cross* (Phil 2:6, 8), he, the one man *free among the dead* (Ps 87:5), *possessing the power to lay down his life and possessing the power to take it up again* (Jn 10:18), for our sake your victor and victim, and a victor because a victim, for our sake your priest and sacrifice, and a priest because a sacrifice, making sons for you out of us slaves by being born from you and serving us! Rightly is my sure hope in this, that you will cleanse all my weaknesses through him who sits at your right hand and intercedes with you for our sake: otherwise I would despair. For many and great are my weaknesses, many and great indeed; but your medicine is greater still. We could think that your Word was far removed from being joined to man and could despair over ourselves, had he not *become flesh and dwelt among us*.

Terrified by my sins and by the weight of my misery, I was troubled at heart and had contemplated flight into solitude, but you forbade me and comforted me, saying: *Christ died for all for this reason, that also those who live might not live for themselves, but for him who died for their sake* (2 Cor 5:15). Behold, O Lord, I cast all my care on you, that I might live, and *I shall meditate on the marvels of your law* (Ps 118:18). You know my lack of skill and strength: teach me and heal me. Your only Son, *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col 2:3), has redeemed me by his blood. *Let not the proud scorn me* (Ps 118:22), for I ponder my price and I eat and drink and I beg and, poor as I am, I long to quench my thirst with it among those who eat and are satisfied: *they shall praise the Lord who seek him* (Ps 21:27).

Quomodo nos amasti, Pater bone, *qui Filio tuo unico non pepercisti, sed pro nobis impiis tradidisti eum!* Quomodo nos amasti, pro quibus ille *non rapinam arbitratus esse aequalis tibi factus est subditus usque ad mortem crucis, unus ille in mortuis liber, potestatem habens ponendi animam suam et potestatem habens iterum sumendi eam, pro nobis tibi victor et victima, et ideo victor, quia victima, pro nobis tibi sacerdos et sacrificium, et ideo sacerdos, quia sacrificium, faciens tibi nos de servis filios de te nascendo, nobis serviendo!* Merito mihi spes valida in illo est, quod sanabis omnes languores meos per eum, qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis: alioquin desperarem. Multi enim et magni sunt idem languores, multi sunt et magni; sed amplior est medicina tua. Potuimus putare Verbum tuum remotum esse a coniunctione hominis et desperare de nobis, nisi *caro fieret et habitaret in nobis*.

Conterritus peccatis meis et mole miseriae meae agitaveram corde meditatusque fueram fugam in solitudinem, sed prohibuisti me et confortasti me dicens: *ideo Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, ut et qui vivunt iam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est*. Ecce, Domine, iacto in te curam meam, ut vivam, et *considerabo mirabilia de lege tua*. Tu scis inperitiam meam et infirmitatem meam: doce me et sana me. Ille tuus unicus, *in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi*, redemit me sanguine suo. *Non calumnientur mihi superbi, quoniam cogito pretium meum et manduco et bibo et erogo et pauper cupio saturari ex eo inter illos, qui edunt et saturantur: et laudabunt Dominum qui requirunt eum*.