Voices of Sisters

Religious Life



On this journey of life in which we are all pilgrims, our only task is to trace the missing brushstrokes in the complete picture that we will contemplate in eternity. (Unsplash)



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In the human heart, across all times and cultures, there beats a shared restlessness that drives us toward goodness, truth, peace, joy and eternal happiness. This yearning for the infinite seems to dwell in every person, as if an inner voice constantly reminds us that we are made to live forever. Amid both turbulent and harmonious times, throughout the history of all peoples and civilizations, this desire endures.



I have identified with two phrases of St. Augustine in my journey that have enriched my life and continue to have a great impact. It's amazing how just two brushstrokes can reveal a wonderful spectrum of colors and luminosity. (Unsplash)

Saints, sages and celebrities have illuminated the path of searching, where lasting values become a priority, and the common good emerges as an indispensable condition for this discovery. Every human being seeks lasting peace, though they often err in choosing the right means to achieve it. What is fleeting and transient quickly vanishes, leaving a trace of dissatisfaction deep within us.

This unquenched thirst during our earthly pilgrimage, to which we are all called upon receiving the gift of life, is profoundly expressed by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*:

"You made us, Lord, for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

> Encountering this affirmation of St. Augustine about the order of things and peace as a consequence was key. It became my guiding path, illuminating my whole being after years of religious life.
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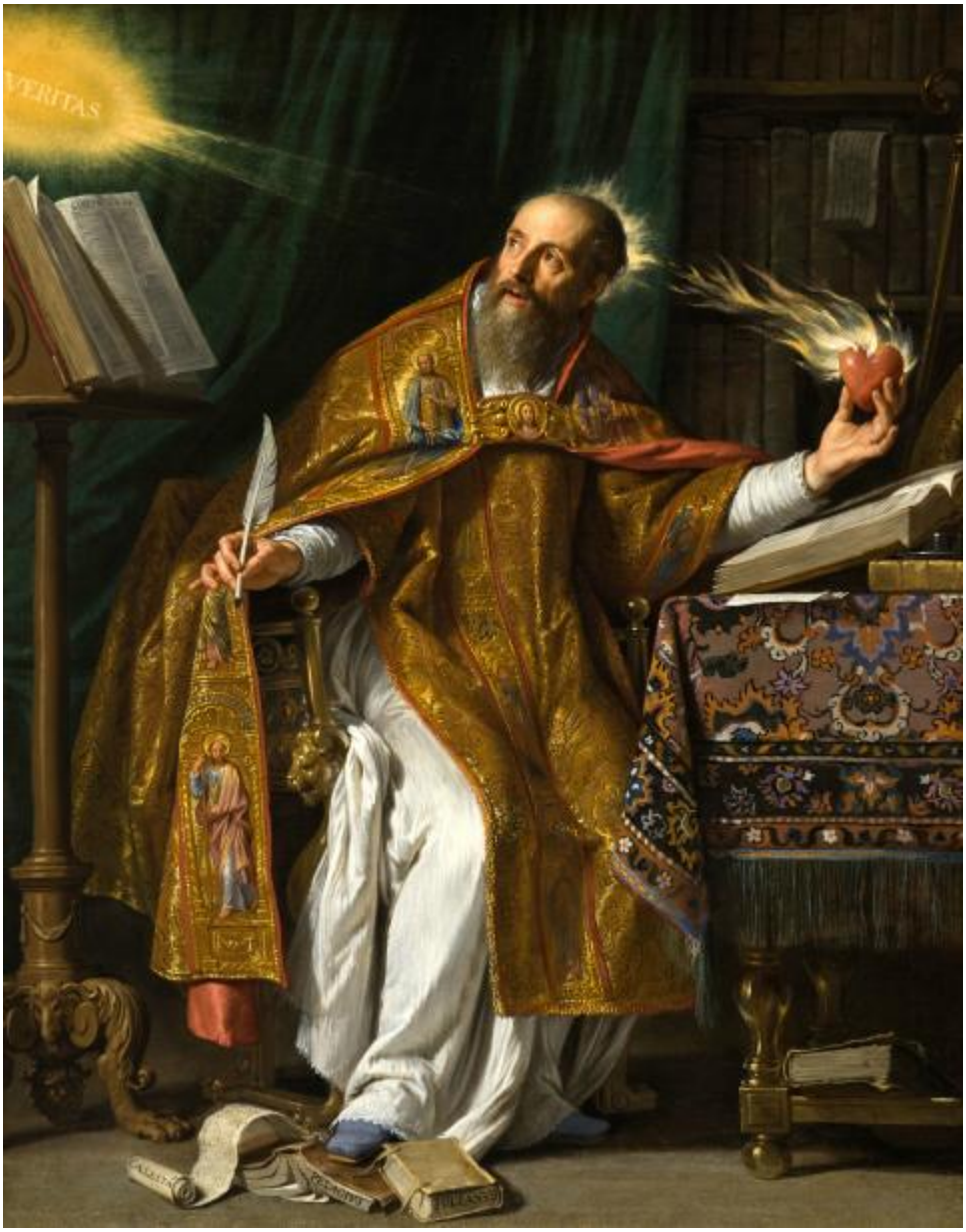
Augustine's life became a guiding light for many when he understood that the truth of his existence, origin and destiny resided in God, with the measure of love found in the Gospel and the certainty of his path in looking toward heaven, fully aware that his interior was inhabited by the Trinity.

This radical transformation led him to dedicate his life to building what he called the City of God, always in the company of those whom God placed in his path and who shared the same call in their hearts.

The reason for his conversion was the emptiness he found in pursuing the earthly happiness he once coveted, the fleeting satisfaction of pleasure, the pride in fame that does not last, and the disappointment in human frailty. Ultimately, he discovered the greatness and meaning of all creation in his Creator.

I have identified with two phrases of St. Augustine in my journey that have enriched my life and continue to have a great impact. It's amazing how just two brushstrokes can reveal a wonderful spectrum of colors and luminosity.

The first phrase of St. Augustine with which I identify is: "Peace is the tranquility of order."



St. Augustine, once driven by passion, pleasure, and the ambition for knowledge and fame, came to recognize that only the true love discovered in the Scriptures — the love of God who humbled himself to become man — can give us true peace. (Wikimedia Commons)

Although everything in creation is ordered, as Genesis tells us, the question arises from the depths of our hearts: How can we arrange everything to achieve that longed-for peace, which always seems incomplete and imperfect in the time and history of this world?

Just as elements in nature have their place according to their weight, density and state, so too does each human being find their rightful place, driven by love. When everything occupies its proper place within a person, at the center of the family, in the heart of society, and throughout the world — because each has a space and a mission that nothing and no one can replace — then true peace and harmony will be achieved in all creation, from the smallest to the greatest.

This phrase resonated deeply with me at a crucial moment in my life, when, with a group of sisters, I began a new experience of community life aimed at accompanying those in search of God and sharing with others what we had contemplated in faith. Offering that opportunity in our house, whether through theological or religious preparation, brought new situations and challenges that we had to face.

For me, encountering this affirmation of St. Augustine about the order of things and peace as a consequence was key. It became my guiding path, illuminating my whole being after years of religious life.

At that moment, when we began a new journey within the Order of St. Augustine, amid uncertainties and certainties, I realized that many worries, anxieties, struggles and frustrations dissipated like fog, effortlessly, by simply placing myself before God and allowing his grace to pacify my entire being. It was as if I surrendered my whole existence completely to the one force of love, and everything aligned according to the action of that force within me.

Then, like water springing from a fountain, the longed-for peace manifested itself through sharing concerns, practicing true listening and forgiveness, and praying together for the light of the Spirit.

The second phrase of St. Augustine that has enriched my life is: "My love is my weight, and by it I am carried wherever I go."

St. Augustine, once driven by passion, pleasure and the ambition for knowledge and fame, came to recognize that only the true love discovered in the Scriptures — the love of God who humbled himself to become man — can give us true peace. Just as Jesus himself said, "My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives," finding peace means finding our rightful place in the world, listening to the voice that sends us on a specific mission.

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Love became the compass of St. Augustine's existence, guiding him to respond to the call to walk with others through history and to live the Gospel. Once St. Augustine experienced love, he could no longer resist it.

In my journey of religious life, I discovered that finding my identity, my place and my mission is not an easy task. The Augustinian charism speaks a great deal about unity in diversity, but living it out day to day is challenging.

When I heard, "My love is my burden, and by it I am carried wherever I go," amid these difficulties, I experienced the power of God's love revealing my unique gift to serve my sisters, my place within my community, and how I am called to give of myself in it. Along the way, I have found unmistakable signs pointing to the direction I should follow.

This phrase has thus become my staff, guiding me along the path of life. While I do not yet believe I have reached the end, these words have been my constant guide.

Today, God's love continues to call. There are witnesses who, after encountering this love, can proclaim to the whole world that they have found their place, their mission, and that they do not walk alone. In responding to this call, the word is fulfilled, and peace — true peace — arrives, even if it is not yet complete and full. The "peace without sunset" will be possible if everyone who hears God's voice follows it, and if all of us, finding ourselves on the same path, help each other reach that horizon where we can glimpse the light without night.

My joy lies in knowing that God, in his infinite mercy, has given every human being a name, a place and a mission. On this path of life, where we are all pilgrims, our only task is to trace the missing brushstrokes in the complete picture that we will one day contemplate in eternity.

This column was originally published in Spanish.