

In the month of August, we celebrate many great saints... a cloud of witnesses that intercede for us...who help us on our pilgrimage on earth. Today (Tomorrow), for example, we would usually celebrate the great Saint John Vianney, the patron saint of priests. Towards the end of the month, we celebrate the dynamic duo of mother and son saints, St. Monica and St. Augustine. I think for many in our generation St. Augustine becomes a bright light for us because he is a saint for sinners. In living his life far from God as a sinner, he begins a quest that brings him to a realization which he relates in his *Confessions*: That God was always present in his heart...always near and in Him alone was a joy and happiness that the world cannot offer. Rather than living in that moment...in that grace...he went searching for God in all the things that God created - "You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you." But God calls, shouts and breaks through and leads St. Augustine to His Son, where he finds joy and peace.

The author of the book of Ecclesiastes takes us on a similar quest. He is looking "at the world almost exclusively from the standpoint of human reason, experience, and observation" and having excluded man's relationship with God concludes that everything is vanity...everything in this world is meaningless. Not very uplifting: "Meaningless... meaningless...everything is meaningless." The tone that the author of the book uses is pessimistic, and there is a reason that this book is only used sparingly in the liturgical year. Yet, the author is on to something...a deeper truth. He is revealing that our life without God...our life based solely on the things that the world offers is meaningless. What St. Augustine was searching for and found and what every human heart is searching for and hopefully will find is Christ. Only in Christ do we find meaning to our life...only Christ can satisfy the inner most desires of our heart.

This truth, that only Christ can satisfy our heart's desires, is not quite the reality that is being shaped in our city and our society. Fr. Darrin Gurr, a priest from Winnipeg, writes that every ad, every billboard "impresses upon us a particular inadequacy in our lives. Blatantly or subtly, these send the message that we can gain emotional, physical or spiritual happiness only by possessing a particular product or using a certain service." The goal of advertising, which feeds the consumerist culture, is to "create a state of unhappiness so we will seek to purchase or pursue what the ad suggests." When we do not have the means to be able to purchase or pursue what the ad suggests, we settle on what we have which creates a sense of failure and even resentment toward ourselves, to those around us and even God.

The culture of consumerism is the effect of sin in our life:greed...it leads to envy... and feeds our pride and ego. This consumerist culture is the reality being shaped not just in our city, but everywhere we go. Because this culture can imprison us in our sinfulness if we consider it the supreme good, restricting our vision, Our Lord in today's Gospel warns us of the dangers in putting one's faith in ones possessions. We have to look beyond just the practical needs and values of this life.

As St Paul exhorts in his letter to the Colossians, *we are to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.* As disciples of Christ, we

recognize that only He can satisfy our hearts desire. In its exhortation *Gaudium et Spes*, the second Vatican council fathers write that this seeking and relishing in the things above...setting our mind and our hearts on Christ "involves not a lesser but a greater commitment to working with all men to build a world that is more human." It is here where we are not transformed by society, but transforming the society...shaping a reality that does not reduce the human person to be solely a consumer thirsting for power and possessions but one that is refreshed...renewed by Our Lord, who satisfies our heart's desires... To go to Him...To live for him... being directed and moved by Him in all things. St. Augustine having come to this realization for himself writes that we are to build the City of God within the City of Man.

In the Eucharist we find the "bread given from heaven, that satisfies every desire." Nothing in the world can come close to what we are given in the Blessed Sacrament: The God who created all things wants to satisfy the longings....the desires of our hearts, and makes himself food for us to do it. St. Augustine writes, "I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more." Going forward into the world, being filled by God himself, may we bring others who are starving for life and love to this banquet...to thirst for God, and Him alone.