

## Vatican by Ambrosius

### Pope exalts St. Augustine

*Pastoral letter evokes authority of the father of Western civilization and reasserts the Filioque doctrine.*

**P**ope John Paul II has issued a 20-page pastoral letter on St. Augustine, to commemorate the 16th centenary of Augustine's conversion to Christianity. Speaking on Italy's second radio channel, Father Cremona, a speaker at last year's Schiller Institute conference on St. Augustine in Rome, said that the pastoral letter was on the theme, "St. Augustine, the Great African."

"Augustinum Hipponensem" (Augustine of Hippo), was made available by the Pope on Aug. 26 but was officially released on Aug. 28, the saint day for St. Augustine in the Latin calendar. A spokesman in the Vatican office said, "The Pope wishes to commemorate Augustine as a great person and as a great African."

Many of the themes taken up in the pastoral letter had been the themes of the 1985 Schiller Institute conference, the first celebration of the Augustinian Year, as reported in *EIR*'s Nov. 15, 1985 issue. The Pope stressed the *Filioque* doctrine, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son, which has been the basis for the idea of progress in the West, and is today the issue of the cultural warfare between the Russian bloc and the West.

By telling theologians to study St. Augustine, the Pope has sent a pointed message to certain modern theologians who are flirting with a deal with the Russian Orthodox Church in which Western Christians would renounce the *Filioque*.

The pastoral letter concludes with a benediction for all the celebrations

and conferences held in the world on St. Augustine. Some quotations follow:

**St. Augustine on Religion and faith:** "He listened to faith but did not exalt any less reason, giving to each its own primacy, either of time or of importance. He told everyone '*crede ut intelliges*,' (believe that you might understand) but he also imparted '*intellige ut credas*' (understand that you might believe). But faith is never without reason, because it is reason that shows 'in whom one must believe. . . .' Faith which is not thinking is not faith. . . . In his great work on the *City of God* . . . the problem of reason and the divine becomes that of faith and culture. . . . It is very worthwhile to read even today, as an example and stimulus to deepen the encounter of Christianity with the culture of peoples."

**God and man:** "'Man,' writes St. Augustine in *On the Trinity*, 'is the image of God insofar as he is capable of God and can participate in Him. . . . This capacity,' immortally stamped upon the immortal natural of the rational soul, 'is the sign of His supreme greatness; insofar as he is capable and can participate in the supreme nature, man is a great nature. . . .'"

**Christ and the Church:** "St. Augustine undoubtedly spoke at length and egregiously in his great work on the Trinity . . . paving the way for later theology . . . he developed the theology of the Holy Spirit that proceeds from the Father and from the Son. But 'principally' from the Father,

because 'of the whole Divinity or rather of the Deity, the principal is the Father.' He gave to the Son to emanate the Holy Spirit, which proceeds as love and thus is not begotten. . . ."

"Without Christ the Man there is neither mediation nor reconciliation, nor justification nor resurrection nor belonging to the Church of which Christ is the head. . . ."

**Freedom and grace:** "Grace is thus necessary to remove the obstacles that prevent the will from fleeing evil and fulfilling the good. These obstacles are two, 'ignorance and weakness.' They are two obstacles which must be overcome to breathe freedom."

**Augustine to men of today:** "To the theologians who labor worthily to deepen the content of the faith, he leaves the immense heritage of his thought, ever valid as a whole, and particularly his theological method. . . . In the face of the sad spectacle of evil, Augustine reminds them nonetheless to have confidence in the final triumph of good."

"He moreover invites men of science to recognize in created things the footsteps of God and to discover in the harmony of the universal the 'seminal reasons' which God has inserted there."

"To men who have the fate of peoples in their hands, he recommends to love peace above all and promote it not by fighting but with methods of peace. . . . To youth, whom Augustine greatly loves, he recalls . . . his great trinominal: truth, love, freedom, and invites them to love beauty, he who was so great a lover of it. . . ."

"St. Augustine, incomparable man of whom all of us in the Church and in the West feel ourselves to be somewhat the disciples and sons. . . . I express again the strong desire that his doctrine be studied and broadly known and his pastoral zeal imitated. . . ."