

Some Aspects of the fides - ratio Relationship in Saint Augustine

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Abstract

Augustine was never evident in delimiting himself in relation to philosophy (*ratio - Intellige ut Credas*) and theology (*fides - Crede ut Intelligas*). Indeed, for a while, he was a philosopher without being a theologian; then, he was a theologian without being less of a philosopher. The problem cannot be solved by distinguishing too quickly between an *Augustine philosopher (ratio)* and an *Augustine theologian (fides)*. I raise this issue because the present study could displease philosophers and theologians alike. I see the solution in that a theologian cannot talk about Saint Augustine while abstracting from Augustine, the philosopher, just as a philosopher cannot put Augustine, the theologian, in brackets. Therefore, it is not a question of “dividing” Augustine. To do so is both unphilosophical and untheological. Augustine “disseminates” himself! I want to discuss several aspects of this “distribution” in the present study. Only in this way can one understand how *ratio confortata fide*. Augustine, freed from prejudices, did not free himself from the truth.

Keywords: God, Saint Augustine, philosophy, faith, reason, catechesis, authority, revelation

1. Where does it start?

(ut gaudens qui que catechizet)

The principle of catechesis, Augustine is convinced, must be: “but as to the means by which all is to be done, so that every one may have pleasure in his work when he catechises” / *ut gaudens qui que catechizet* (Augustinus 1865a, 312; my transl.) and no care should be greater than this: “to catechize with joy that is what requires the greatest consideration” (*ea cura maxima est*) and Augustine quotes here *2 Corinthians* 9, 7: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him

give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver". At this point, several preliminary Augustinian explanations are necessary: the catechesis will include a *narratio plena*, and the story's purpose is the love of God. We must not get lost in developing the causes; it is not recommended to call on abstract, tiresome terms. This way of catechizing is suitable for *rudes*. Otherwise, the initiated must be catechized discreetly because they know the truths of the faith. In their case, the catechesis must be short, not like for the common man: "not in the character of an uneducated man, as they say, but in that of one who has passed through a finished culture and training in the books of the learned" / *non idiota, ut aiunt, sed doctorum libris expolitus atque excultus accedit* (Augustinus 1865a, 319; my transl.). Augustine states that a pure heart is more valuable and desirable than a skilled tongue. The catechesis will include the exordium, the narrative, and the conclusion, and, with Augustine, *narratio* becomes the fundamental method of the catechesis. Three didactic principles are fixed, and they concern the *choice* of matter, the *arrangement* of the matter, and its *exposition*. The three principles are:

1. *non multa, sed multum*, i.e., give a little, but do it intuitively and thoroughly, "not many, but much" was an older principle of learning. The idea appears in Quintilian in *De Institutione Oratoria*: "[W]e must familiarize ourselves with the best writers only and roust form our minds and develop an appropriate tone by reading that is deep rather than wide" / *et multa magis quam multorum lectione formanda mens* (Quintilian 1922, 35). Pliny the Younger, Quintilian's disciple, emphasizes the point in *Epistle* 9, where he responds to Fuscus, who had asked him for his opinion on the study method he should follow. Pliny's advice is: "[T]hough we should read much, we should not read many books" / *enim multum legendum esse, non multa* (Pliny 1915, 21). Hence, the abbreviated form *Multa, non multum* or *Non multa, sed multum*. And the ergonomic formula becomes: "for in such matters influence is measured not by numbers but by weight" / *non numero haec judicantur, sed pondere*, in fact, a eulogy to quality (Cicero 1928, 254-255). Then Augustine follows Quintilian's precepts: the pupil should

learn Greek to study and interpret Greek literature, to comment on Latin literature, to study linguistic and mathematical problems;

2. the ultimate goal of catechesis is love precisely because the *history of discovery* is the love of God, and the *history of salvation* is the history of God's love. It follows that the story of God's love is also the central theme of catechesis;

3. learn individually, and we find the place of this imperative in that if love is the same for everyone, the cure is no longer the same for everyone.

Any catechesis implies three types of speech corresponding to three types of listening. The types of speaking are: *docere*, *delectare*, *flectere*, and the three corresponding types of listening are called by Augustine *intelligenter*, *libenter*, *oboedienter*. This is how the act of catechesis leads to faith, and Augustine speaks of a triple concomitance in the act of faith: *credere Deum* ("to believe God"), *crede Deo* ("to believe in a God"), and *crede in Deum* ("to believe in God"). In *Sermo* 126, 1, 1, after starting from the fact that *fides intellectum praecedere debet* says that "faith is a step towards understanding" / "faith is entitled to understanding; "understanding is the reward of faith" - *fides enim gradus est intellegendi; intellectus autem meritum fidei* - (Augustinus 1865b, 698; my transl.). Augustine's speeches are *cor ad cor loquitur* / "heart speaks to heart". I must say that the phrase *cor ad cor loquitur*, not always exactly in this form, has a history in four tenses. We find it first in *Psalm* 15, 2: "He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (*qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo*). Then, in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine: *Deus meus, ne tu sileas a me. Tu loquere in corde meo veraciter* / "O my God, that Thou be not silent to me. Do Thou speak truly in my heart" (Augustinus 1841a, 834; my transl.). The phrase *cor cordi loquitur* appears in Francis de Sales – *Treatise on the Love of God* known as *Theotimus* (Francis de Sales 1884, 235). Then, in 1879, when Pope Leo XIII made John Henry Newman – a simple priest at that time, a British theologian converted to Catholicism – a cardinal, the motto adopted by the new cardinal was Francis de Sales' formula slightly modified: *cor ad cor loquitur*.

I return to Augustine after this brief and necessary parenthesis. The style of Augustinian preaching is threefold, as it appears in *De Doctrina Christiana* (Augustinus 1865c, 107; 111; 115; 115; my transl.): *submissae dictionis* (“the calm, subdued style”), *grande dicendi genus* (“the majestic style”), and *temperata dictio* (“the temperate style”). These styles correspond to the division made by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the work *On the Arrangement of Words* (*Peri syntheseos onomaton / De compositione verborum*): the inferior style, the middle style, and the superior style. The use of the three styles is recommended by Augustine, who argues that the expected result must be *non plausus, sed lacryma* (considering that there was a custom for the preacher to be interrupted by applause, a custom that was gradually abandoned). Again, I must state that I have not been able to find the relevant quote, which I also found in the form: *non plausus, sed lacryma et suspiria*. I found bizarre references to this occurrence that I could not identify in any way. For example, in the *Cours d'Éloquence Sacrée* (Guillon 1827, 17), a series of lectures on the bishop of Hippo, we read that the phrase under the form *non plausus sed lacrymae* is from *Sermo* 217 of Augustine. Then, in *Essai sur l'éloquence de la chaire. Panégyriques, éloges et discours*, the reference is also to *Sermo* 217 (Maury 1828, 111), and *Corso di Eloquenza sacra* (Guillon 1830, 54) specifies that *non plausus, sed lacryma et suspiria* is to be found in *Epistle* 34 of Saint Jerome. Similarly, the abbot Henry Augustin (Augustin 1834, 325) also attributes the phrase *non plausus, sed lacrymae* to Augustine without specifying the occurrence. The same situation with Jean-Baptiste Pérennès (Pérennès 1829, 428) who, in *De l'influence des évènements politiques sur la littérature, depuis 1789*, only refers to the rhetorical triumph of Augustine and then repeats the quotation, including the page, in the work *Principes de littérature mis en harmonie avec la morale chrétienne* (Pérennès 1857, 428).

I close the parenthesis and return to Augustine, in whose opinion an orator must instruct, please, and convince. Here, Augustine is influenced by Cicero, from whom he takes the rules of rhetoric and style. Augustine's speeches and the instructions left to the preachers are valid in their entirety,

even today. I especially note the phrase: “If, however, he cannot do even this, let his life be such as shall not only secure a reward for himself, but afford an example to others; and let his manner of living be an eloquent sermon in itself” / *sit ejus quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi* (Augustinus 1865c, 119; my transl.). This is why Augustine asks the preacher to be an “orator” not a “dicator” because “he will succeed more by piety in prayer than by gifts of oratory” / “if you would speak, pray first” / *sit orator antequam dicator* (Augustinus 1865c, 103; my transl.).

The six reasons for disgust doubled by how a good mood is obtained are fundamental (“Of the Attainment of Cheerfulness in the Duty of Catechizing, and of Various Causes Producing Weariness in the Catechumen” - *Iam de hilaritate comparanda. Causae sex taedium afferentes catechizanti. Remedium contra causau taedii* (Augustinus 1865a, 320; my transl.).

Sadness appears when “our hearer does not apprehend what we mean” (*auditor non capit* - Augustinus 1865a, 15; my transl.), when our speech contains “uncertain issue” (*incerto exitu* – *ibid.*, 16), when we have to “repeatedly matters” (*repetere fastidimus* – *ibid.*, 17), “when we fail to see our hearer in any degree moved” (*cum moveri non videmus audientem* - *ibid.*, 18; my transl.), when “one who at first listened to us with all readiness, becomes exhausted” (*vel audiendo vel stando fatigatus* - *ibid.*, 19; my transl.), “either to pass by for a time or altogether to omit” (*aut intermittamus, aut omnino omittamus* - *ibid.*, 20; my transl.) and when we have a “troubled soul” (*perturbatus animus* - *ibid.*, 21). And all this following a series of correspondence with deacon Deogratias: “You have requested me, brother Deogratias, to send you in writing something which might be of service to you in the matter of catechising the uninstructed” / *Petisti me, frater Deogratias, ut aliquid ad te de catechizandis rudibus, quod tibi usi esset, scriberem* (*ibid.*, 309; my transl.). Augustine does his duty by understanding, without mistakes in his speech, without repeating trivial things, without his listener remaining impassive (*auditor immobilis*), and without showing signs of fatigue, without being interrupted or with a disturbed soul. Augustine puts himself in the act of catechesis and delivers himself, casually and openly, to

Deogratias (deacon from Carthage and friend of Augustine), who learns from Augustine that he must avoid temptations because the devil, devoid of any power, seeks souls to perish with him. And God, merciful as He is, wants to save people from destruction. But puts a condition: “The merciful God, willing to deliver men from this destruction, that is to say, from everlasting pains, if they should not prove enemies to themselves, and if they should not withstand the mercy of their Creator” / *A quo interitu, hoc est poenis sempiternis Deus misericors volens homines liberare, si sibi ipsi non sint inimici, et non resistant misericordiae Creatoris sui* (ibid., 52; my transl.). And when you are your enemy, you oppose the Creator’s mercy. Augustine knows well what he is asserting. He does not speak from the experience of others!

2. Where does one get to?

(convictio rerum quae non videntur)

The purpose of catechesis (from the Greek verb κατέχειν: meaning “to give a sound”, “to answer”, “to echo”, “to teach orally” or “instruct by word of mouth”) is to create in the catechist the spiritual and rational availability to receive and understand the truth. *Hebrews* 11:1 writes: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” - *Et autem fides sperando rum substantia, rerum argumentum non apparentium*. Augustine relies on this idea to define the purpose of catechesis, which is faith. In *Enchiridion*, 8, he says that *fides esse dicta est convictio rerum quae non videntur* (and he quotes here *Hebrews* 11, 1), this is *catholicae Regulae defensores* (Augustinus 1865d, 235). Faith, as such, engages all the faculties of the soul, primarily reason and will. *Sermo* 63, 3, 4, one of Augustine’s most essential texts regarding the relation between reason and faith, assures us of the following aspects: *Intellige. Omnis homo vult; intelligere; nemo est qui nolit; credere non omnes volunt. Dicit mihi homo: Intellegam ut credam. Respondeo: Crede ut intelligas. Cum ergo nata inter nos sit controversia talis quodam modo, ut ille mihi dicat: Intellegam ut credam, ego ei respondeam: Immo crede, ut intelligas* (“Everybody wants to be understood; there isn’t

anybody who doesn't want to understand; not everybody wants to believe. Someone says to me: let me understand, in order to believe. I answer: believe in order to understand. So when an argument of this sort somehow starts between us, so that he says to me: let me understand in order to believe, and I answer him: on the contrary, believe in order to understand" (Augustinus 1865b, 255; my transl.). Why? Because "no one believes anything unless he has first thought that it is to be believed" / *Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius cogitaverit esse credendum* (Augustinus 1865e, 963; my transl.). The progress of knowledge and faith is reciprocal.

The following idea is obvious: although no one believes in God if he does not understand something, nevertheless, by the very faith with which he thinks he is healed to understand the great things. Because there are some that if we do not understand, we do not believe, and others that if we do not believe, we do not understand! However, in the field of faith, authority is essential: "What we understand, then, we owe to reason, what we believe to authority" / *quod scimus igitur, debemus rationi; quod credimus, auctoritati* (Augustinus 1841b, 607; my transl.). The idea can be found in *De utilitate credendi*, XI, 25: "What then we understand, we owe to reason; what we believe, to authority" / *Quod intellegimus igitur, debemus rationi: quod credimus, auctoritati: quod opinamur, errori* (Augustinus 1865f, 83; my transl.).

God is the material, formal, and final object of faith. "Faith is the lowly door by which the «heart», bowing to enter, is cleansed in order that at length the whole mind may apprehend the universal abiding Truth-may see God. The faithful shall at last see God by the instrument of reason; but reason cannot attain the vision of God uncorrected and unguided by faith" (Cushman 1950, 273). *De Trinitate* reports a similar thought: "For contemplation is the recompense of faith, for which recompense our hearts are purified by faith" / *Contemplatio quippe merces est fidei, cui mercedi per fidem corda mundantur* (Augustinus 1865g, 832; my transl.). Faith leads us to certainty "not by human reasoning, but by divine authority" / *non argumentatione humana, sed divina auctoritate* (Augustinus 1865g, 1023; my transl.). From this perspective,

the literati who need to be catechized have to learn not to dislike the firm language of Scripture just because it is not emphatic. Augustine recalls how disappointed he was when he first tried to read the Scripture, and his case is not unique. Jerome, Arnobius, Lactantius do not say of themselves that they suffered in any other way. Let the literati overcome their prejudices. The excessive cult of form is a reprehensible vanity. The idea is above the word, as the soul is above the body (Marrou 1997, 381-382, 396, 414). It must be reached not only by knowledge of *res* but also by a master of *verba*. Augustine states the two sources of knowledge immediately after conversion: reason and authority. This conclusion is imposed on him since *Contra Academicos*: “But no one doubts that we are incited to learn by the double weight of authority and of reason” / *nulli autem dubium est gemino pondere nos impelli ad discendum, auctoritatis atque rationis* (Augustinus 1841c, 957; my transl.).

Chronologically, faith precedes reason. To understand something, we must first admit *credo ut intelligam*. Several times, Augustine pinpoints the primacy of faith:

- *De Ordine*: “Authority comes first in time, reason in the reality of things” / *Tempore auctoritas, re autem ratio prior est* (Augustinus 1841d, 1007);

- *De Trinitate*: “Wherefore, since we desire to understand the eternity, and equality, and unity of the Trinity, as much as is permitted us, but ought to believe before we understand” / *Quamobrem quonian Trinitatis aeternitatem, et aequalitatem, et unitatem, quantum datur, intellegere cupimus, prius autem quam intellegamus, credere debemus* (Augustinus 1865g, 952; my transl.);

- In *Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus*, *Tractatus* 40 starts from *John* 8, 32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” / *Et cognoscetis veritatem, et veritas liberabit vos*. Augustine says: *Quid promittit credentibus fratres? “Et cognoscetis veritatem” [...]. Credimus enim ut cognoscamus, non cognoscimus ut credamus* / “What, brethren, does He promise believers? «And you shall know the truth» [...]. They believed, not because they knew, but that they might come to know” (Augustinus 1864, 1690; my transl.).

All these passages, however, concern the intimate understanding of revealed truths. Regarding the preparation for faith, Augustine clearly marks the role of reason that precedes and accompanies the adhesion of the spirit. This is the order of the relations between reason and faith (Portalié 1931, 2337-2341). I will list several examples below.

Before faith, reason must show us not the intimate truth of the statements but the quality of the one who wants to be taken at his word. *Epistle* 120, which is a reply given in 410 to Consentius, a novice in theology who asks Augustine for clarification on the mystery of the Trinity (Saint Augustine 2003, 131; Fatal 2016, 9-11), also dwells on the relation between the status of reason in its connections with faith, authority, knowledge, and truth and, after proclaiming the principle: *cum etiam credere non possemus, nisi rationales animas haberemus* / “Heaven forbid, I say, that we should believe in such a way that we do not accept or seek a rational account, since we could not even believe if we did not have rational souls”, explains the priority of reason: *fides praecedat rationem, qua cor mundetur, ut magnae rationis capiat et perferat lucem, hoc utique rationis est* [here is the reference to *Isaiah* 7, 9 to which I will return]. *Ubi procul dubio discevit haec duo, deditque consilium quo prius credamus, ut id quod credimus intelligere valeamus* / “faith precedes reason so that the heart may be purified in order that it may receive and sustain the light of the great reason, which is, of course, a demand of reason! [...]. There he undoubtedly distinguished these two and gave the counsel that we should believe first in order that we may be able to understand what we believe” (Augustinus 1865h, 453; my transl.). In summary, Augustine argues as follows: God cannot hate in us what He Himself put there (reason) and made us superior to other living beings. If we have to believe, it is not to prevent us from receiving or seeking reason, since we could not believe if we did not have souls endowed with reason (Madec 2003, 237-238). In the very act of faith, reason defends the authority of testimony. Augustine point out in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*: *non enim omnis qui cogitate, credit; cum ideo cogitent plerique, ne credant: sed cogitat omnis qui credit, et credendo cogitat, et*

cogitando credit / “For it is not every one who thinks that believes, since many think in order that they may not believe; but everybody who believes, thinks, both thinks in believing and believes in thinking” (Augustinus 1865e, 963; my transl.). For the intimate understanding of the mystery, faith precedes reason. Once the divine testimony is known, reason stops at the edge of the mystery. Augustine summarizes his position in two formulas: *intelligam, ut credam* [...]; *crede ut intelligas* / “to understand so that you might believe, to believe so that you might understand” / “understand in order to believe, believe in order to understand” (Augustinus 1865i, 258; my transl.) and *nisi credamus, non intelligimus*. Conclusion: *intellige, ut credas verbum meum; crede, ut intelligas verbum Dei* (Augustinus 1865i, 258).

Augustine is the first, at least in the Western space, who felt the need to rationalize his faith, which is the same thing as saying that he puts it in line with reason. To understand so that you might believe, to believe so that you might understand means that I, before believing, need to establish, with the help of discursive reason, the reasons for credibility or the foundations of my belief. In the same way, once a believer, one must always exercise reason to penetrate the harmony of dogmatic truths between them or their concordance with reason. Only in this case will a believer experience the truth of Christianity. We believe in order to know, we do not know in order to believe (*credimus enim ut cognoscamus, non cognoscimus ut credamus*)! Therefore, faith precedes reason (*fides antecedit / praecedat rationem*). This does not entail any disregard for reason; Augustine considers all those who follow faith blindly to be heretics. As faith precedes reason, the latter can also precede faith without finding any contradiction herein. According to Augustine in *De Magistro*: “Hence, what I understand, that I also believe, although I do not also understand everything I believe. Also, everything I understand, I know, though I do not know everything I believe” / *Quod ergo intelligo, it etiam credo: at non omne, quod credo, etiam intelligo. Omne autem quod intelligo, scio; non omne quod credo, scio* (Augustinus 1841e, 1216; my transl.). This statement is based on *Isaiah 7:9: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* (“If ye will

not believe, surely ye shall not be established”); that is, it seems consistent with reason that faith precedes reason. In fact, “The Septuagint rendering of the text is of capital importance for Augustine’s teaching on the primacy of faith and on the role of reason to penetrate the meaning of revealed truth. In a letter to Consentius (*Ep.* 120), he presents a summary of the relation between faith and reason” (Augustine 1990, 50, n.2).

Augustine invokes the formula *from Isaiah* in many instances. For example, in *Epistle* 120, he writes: *Et ideo rationabiliter, dictum est per prophetam: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* / “Unless you believe, you will not understand” (Augustinus 1865h, 3; my transl.). Interestingly, *Sermo* 43 has the following title: *De eo quod scriptum est in Isaia: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*. Also, *Sermo* 43, 6, 7 (place summarized in the formula *Fides praecedat intelligetis*) reads: *Tu dicebas: Intelligam ut credam. Ego dicebam: Ut intelligas crede. Nata est controversia, veniam ad iudicem, iudicet propheta, imo verus Deus iudicet per prophetum. Ambo taceamus. Quid ambo dixerimus, auditum est. Intelligam, inquis, ut credam. Crede, inquam ut intelligas. Respondeat propheta: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* / “You said: I understand in order to believe. I said: I believe in order to understand. A dispute has arisen, I will go to the judge, let the prophet judge, let the true God judge through the prophet. Let’s both shut up. What we both said was heard. I understand in order to believe, you say. I believe in order to understand, I say. Let the prophet answer: Unless you believe, you will not understand” (Augustinus 1865i, 7; my transl.). And *De Doctrina Christiana* clarifies things once and for all, and here is what it highlights about the place in *Isaiah* mentioned before: *Item illud ejusdem Isaiae prophetae: Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis, alius interpretatus est: Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis* / “Likewise the words of the same prophet: Unless you believe, you will not understand; another interpretation is: If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (Augustinus 1865c, 43; my transl.; Gilson 1949, 36-46). The first reference (*Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*) is to the LXX, the second (*Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis*) to the *Vulgate*, from which it can be seen that Augustine knew very well that there

were two different translations of this verse and three variants of it, the original version from the Masoretic Text that does not appear anywhere in Augustine (“If you will not believe, you certainly shall not last”), the version from the LXX (ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύσητε, οὐδὲ μὴ συνήτε / *Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* / “Unless you believe, you will not understand”) and the *Vulgate* version (*Si non credideritis, non permanebitis* / “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established”). I find the reference to *Isaiah* 7, 9 and in *De Fide et Symbolo*, I, 1 (LXX variant), in *De Libero Arbitrio*, I, 2, 4 (LXX variant); II, 2, 6 (LXX variant), in *De Trinitate*, VII, 6, 12 (LXX variant), as well as in *De Agone Christiano*, XIII, 14 (LXX variant), likewise in *De Symbolo ad Cathecumenos*, II, 2 (LXX variant). It can be noted that Augustine refers only once to the *Vulgate* version and never to the Masoretic Text. Eugen Munteanu offers a suitable comment on this somewhat obscure occurrence: “St. Augustine’s formulation, *nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*, reflects [...] the tradition of the Septuagint. The original Hebrew text contains an untranslatable word game, based on the radical ’MN, which can lead, through vocalization, to the verbs (’âman) «to support» or (’ăman) «to believe» [...]. In the BIBLE. HEBREW. The discussed verse is presented as follows: [...] - *’im lo’ tha miynû kîy lô’ thê’ omanû*. In VULG., the formula is close to the original Hebrew text (*Si non credideritis, non permanebitis*). It differs from St. Augustine’s option, which he quoted and commented in *De Doctrina Christiana*” (Munteanu 1997, 225-226).

3. Some conclusions

Faith / *fides* (*Crede ut Intelligas*) appropriates its truth by adhesion; reason/ratio (*Intellige ut Credas*) intimately realizes its truth through science. The two types of truth do not exclude but complete each other since their basis is only one – God. Moreover, rational truth is a confirmation of faith because, according to Augustine, science sometimes precedes faith, and other times follows it. *Precedes* because the truth of faith is made intelligible with the help of science concepts; *follows* because the truth of science leads to the deepening of the truth embraced by the revealed doctrine. Let no one see here two

truths, but only one. However, in the end, the essential condition for the collaboration of reason with faith lies in the primacy of faith; respecting this requirement, a Christian can make use of reason, and only, in this case, can reason make us understand what we believe. The law itself was written on stone because people had stopped reading it in their hearts, where they already had it written. Revelation guarantees the objectivity of reason, not vice versa. Faith does not demonstrate; it proposes; it does not impose; it is not demonstrative but indicative. Reason demonstrates, and in this act, it must not forget what it owes to Revelation. And reason is indicative only as far as goals are concerned, but it can no longer provide us with the means to achieve these goals. This inability becomes operative only with faith that does not give birth to pride, as reason does. Faith provides us with the truth; reason deepens it. It is clear that reason is given one of the most critical roles and, later on, in Saint Thomas, the rule of agreement between reason and faith will be: *ratio confortata fide* / “reason strengthens faith”. *De Doctrina Christiana* states the following about philosophers and philosophy: “Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said anything that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it” / *Philosophi autem qui vocantur, si qua forte vera et fidei nostrae accommodata dixerunt, maxime Platonici, non solum formidanda non sunt, sed ab eis etiam tanquam injustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda* (Augustinus 1865c, 63; my transl.). Augustine’s opponents are not the philosophers, but the heretics. Augustine writes to Dioscurus that if we are to investigate the doctrines that are contrary to the truth, we have to deal with heretics rather than with Anaxagoras or Democritus. To philosophize is good, but in moderation, philosophers deserve more respect than idols!

On the other hand, faith is nothing more than a thought to which one has consented. God gave us reason; therefore, He cannot hate reason in us. There is much in us that we believe without knowing, but nothing that we know without believing. Not all who think ponder, but all who believe ponder. Faith is

the foundation of human life; friendship is founded on it because the thoughts of a friend cannot be seen and yet are believed. “Although it can be said that God’s commandments pertain to faith alone, if it is not a dead [faith], but rather understood as that live faith, which works through love” / *Licet recte dici pussit ad solam fidem pertinere dei mandata, si non mortua, sed viva illa intellegatur fides, quae per dilectionem operator* (Augustinus 1865j, 223; my transl.), for those who do not have love, faith is of no use, and those who love anything but the truth are mistaken. The places in the New Testament to which Augustine refers are *Jacobi* 2:20: “faith without works is dead” (*fides sine operibus mortua est*) and *Galatians* 5:6: “but faith which worketh by love” (*sed fides, quae per dilectionem / caritatem operator*).

Augustine’s philosophy “develops entirely within faith, being nothing more than an effort to find through reason the truth received in the soul on the path of authority” (Marrou 1997, 155). So that “I believe in order to understand” (*credo ut intelligam*) is, for Augustinianism, an essential requirement that involves adherence (faith) and participation (reason and faith). And Augustine resumes and reinforces in *Sermo* 139 an idea from *Sermo* 126, namely that faith must precede understanding so that understanding is a reward for faith (*fides enim debet praecedere intellectum, ut sit intellectus fidei praemium*) (Augustinus 1865b, 770; my transl.). A thing cannot be loved unless it is known. Faith must be thought of and related to consent: if consent is set aside, faith is set aside because one cannot believe at all without consent. Accepting the Revelation, reason does not humble itself and ceases to search. The recognition of differences does not oppose the evidence of convergences. Faith is the requirement without which one cannot reach reason. Faith precedes because it is the first manifestation of grace in us; the first gift that we have received is the gift of faith, and Augustine is conscientious to show how his thinking on these matters evolves. Yes, the first gift received is the gift of faith, but faith, by which we believe in God, is not a gift from God, but it is in us through us - *putans fidem qua in Deum credimus, non esse donum Dei, sed a nobis esse in nobis* (Augustinus 1865e, 964). The principle is: you

have to wish now to be satisfied later! Grace gives us the will to believe, in which case it does not compel us to believe. God's action is exerted directly on the will. It leads man to faith, and this means "to think with assent", therefore *Credere nihil aliud est quam cum assensione cogitare* / "to believe is nothing else but to think with consent" (Augustinus 1865e, 963; my transl.). "Faith and reason are required one of the other. They are co-implicates; and it is error, in Augustine's view, to divorce them. Faith presupposes reason; reason urgently requires the correction of faith" (Cushman 1950, 294). Blind faith is foreign to Augustine and he, among the first, understood that authentic dialogue is not a dialogue *about something* but a dialogue *in something*. "Therefore, except a man have faith, he shall in no wise understand" (Cushman 1950, 294).

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