

draw crowds to themselves or call themselves saints, and draw them from Christ, they promote heresies to their advantage, and likewise schisms, and this is solely through pride... and it was foretold: *That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Mt. xvi. 18)...



Instead, let us run in love and charity; forgetting the things of time. This way calls for the strong; it will not have the slothful. The robbers of temptation abound. At every turn the devil lies in wait: everywhere he tries to enter in and take possession; and whoever he possesses, he recalls from the way, or impedes him... He tempts him through fear or through desire.

First through desire;... and if this door is closed, he begins to tempt him through the door of fear... So be strong in faith (1 Pet. v. 9). Take heed that no man seduce you to evil (Mt. xxiv. 4) through some promise; and let no one force you into deception by any threat. Whatever the world may promise you, the kingdom of heaven is greater; whatever the world threatens, the punishment of hell is worse... Turn then to the Lord our God,... let the power of His mercy strengthen our hearts in His truth, that it may strengthen and give peace to our souls. May His grace abound in us, and may He have mercy on us, and remove all scandals from before us, and before His Church, and from before all those we love... so that we may please Him forever.



**SERMON ON
THE PILGRIMAGE OF THIS LIFE
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
123 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

24TH AND LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 24: 15-35

by: Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor

That this life of ours, is but a pilgrimage, an absence from the home of the saints, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul teaches us very plainly, where he says: *While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord* (II Cor. v. 6). And since every pilgrim has his own country, for no one can be a pilgrim without a country, we should know which is our true country, whither, heedless of all the attractions and pleasures of this present life, we must hasten; towards which we are journeying, and where alone we may yield ourselves to rest. For God has willed that in no other place shall we find true rest, save in that distant home: for should He give us rest here, and peace, there would be no joy in returning there.

And this home of ours He calls Jerusalem; meaning, not the earthly city, *which is in bondage with her children*, as the same Apostle has told us (Gal. iv. 26): For she was given, as a kind of a shadow of the reality, to earthly men upon the earth, who though they worshipped the one God, looked to him for earthly happiness only. It is this other Jerusalem which, he says, is in heaven: *the Jerusalem which is above; which is our Mother*. He calls it a mother; as a metropolis: for a metropolis means a mother-city. It is to this city we must hasten; and we must know that we are pilgrims, and that we are on our way.

Any man who does not yet believe in Christ is not on the way. He is wandering astray. He too is seeking his fatherland. But he knows not which it is; nor where. What do I mean when I say he too is seeking his fatherland? Every soul seeks rest; every soul seeks happiness. No man asked if he desires happiness will hesitate to answer. Every man will cry out that he longs for happiness. But by what way he can arrive at happiness, and where he shall find happiness, this men do not know. And so they wander, straying. He never goes astray who goes nowhere. It is from going on, and not knowing where, that all error comes.

The Lord is calling us to the way. But even when we are numbered among the faithful, and believing in Christ, we have not yet arrived at our home. But we have begun to walk the way that leads there. How we should, mindful that we are ourselves Christians, exhort and encourage those who wander in vain superstition and false beliefs, all most dear to us, to come to the way, to walk in the way; as those already in the way should exhort and encourage one another! For no one reaches the heavenly Jerusalem save he who is in the way: though not every one who is in the way shall reach it. Yet they must be held as in greater danger who are not yet in the way. But they who are now in the way must not feel secure; lest held by the delights of the way, they be no longer drawn with such great love towards that heavenly home where alone true rest is found.

Our steps in this way are the love of God and our neighbor. He who loves, runs; and the more he loves, the more eagerly he runs; the less he loves, the more slothful he moves in the way... What does it avail a man to be a Christian Catholic, if he longs for the world and looks back from the way. He is turning back to where he began. If through some snare of the Enemy, who is tempter as well as thief, he is while on his journey led astray from the Catholic Church, either into heresy, or to some pagan rite, or to whatever other kind of superstition of the devil you wish, he has already lost the way, and returned to wandering.

Let us hasten in the way, because we are Christian Catholics, which is the one Church of God, as was foretold in the holy Scriptures. For it was not God's Will that she be hidden; that no one might plead this excuse. It was foretold that she would be established throughout the whole earth; and she has been made visible to the whole earth...

The beginning of sin is a gate of hell: *For the wages of sin is death* (Rom. vi. 23), and death here beyond doubt leads to hell. And what is the beginning of sin? Let us the Scriptures. *Pride, they say, is the beginning of all sin* (Ecclus. x. 15). If pride is the beginning of sin, then pride is the gate to hell. It gives birth to all heresies;... For when they think much of themselves, and seek to