

OTIUM AND NEGOTIUM WITHIN THE ONE CHURCH

Epistula 48

Augustine had already been chosen as bishop of Hippo when he handed over this letter to the monk Andreas. After the death of his fellow brother Eustasius, Andreas returned to his community in Capraria, a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, to the northeast of Corsica. The letter was addressed to abbot Eudoxius and was written after 398¹. The contents of this letter makes us presume Augustine had been consulted by the abbot to give his view on the tricky question whether monks could be obliged to perform pastoral duties when the Church needed them². Augustine's letter doesn't introduce total new ideas about the relationship between active engagement in the Church and contemplation. What we can read in it is a very personal view of a Latin Father on that question. In the introduction we are confronted right away with an evocation of the commotion and the labour a bishop has to deal with. But the bishop considers himself fortunate as he can live in the peace and quiet the monks of Capraria enjoy in Christ. For Augustine this peace is strongly connected with their love in Christ³.

"We are all one body under one head. You can work in us and we can find rest and peace in you. For if one member suffers, all members suffer together, and if one member is honoured all members rejoice together with it (1 Cor. 12,26)."⁴

The calm of a monk's life functions adequately in Augustine's christology, which can be summarized as follows: the sublime humility and the merciful greatness of Christ should live in the spirit of the monks⁵. This attitude will cause their prayers to be more

¹ Epistula 48; CSEL 34/2, 137ff. See A. MANDOUZE, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 1, Prosopographie de l'Afrique du Nord (303-533)*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1982, p. 69, 361, 376 and CH. PIETRI et L. PIETRI, *id. 2, Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313-604)*, École française de Rome, 1999, p. 668.

² L. VERHEIJEN, *Saint Augustin, un moine devenu prêtre et évêque*, in *Nouvelle approche de la Règle de saint Augustin*, Bégrolles en Mauges, Abbaye Bellefontaine, 1980, p. 257.

³ Epistula 48,1; 137: "Quando quietem uestram cogitamus, quam habetis in christo, etiam nos, quamvis in laboribus uariis asperisque uersemur, in uestra caritate requiescimus."

⁴ Ibid.: "Unum enim corpus sub uno capite sumus, ut et uos in nobis negotiosi et nos in uobis otiosi simus, quia, si patitur unum membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra et, si glorificatur unum membrum, congaudent omnia membra."

⁵ Ibid.: "...obsecramus per Christi altissimam humilitatem et misericordissimam celsitudinem..."

wakeful and modest than the prayer of the shepherd which always tempts to be paralysed by the darkness and the tumult of worldly activities⁶. With quotations taken from the New Testament the bishop makes allusions to the burden of his ministry that a.o. includes local jurisdiction (*iudicia saecularia*). Besides all this monks have got different duties among which prayer is the most important.

Then, Augustine tackles the subject of the pastoral care, an activity the Church can impose on everybody when there is a clear and outspoken need for it, even on the monks of the distant island⁷.

"In case our mother the Church should desire you to assume some pastoral activities (*opera uestra*) you shouldn't go into it with greedy pride, nor should you reject it because of conceited laziness, but you should obey God with all due respect"⁸.

The urgent needs of the Church (*necessitates ecclesiae*) should get priority to the contemplative quiet (*otium*) of the monks. It's all about the childbirth, the labour of our Mother-church who requires us as midwives. For without professional assistance the Church is unable to give birth to new believers⁹. The shepherd then explains the kind of assistance monks can give:

"As one has got to choose a middle course between fire and water if one doesn't want to get burned or drowned, likewise we have got to look for a way between the scorching top of arrogance and the sucking swamp of laziness. As it is written: 'Thou shalt not deter, neither to the right nor to the left.' (Dt. 17,11 – Prov. 4,27). There are people who are so afraid to be

⁶ *Ibid.*: "... caligo et tumultus saecularium actionum..."

⁷ Cf. A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*, Patrimoine monastique, Première partie: le monachisme latin, t. II, Paris, Éd. Du Cerf, 1993. When Augustine speaks about deserted islands as "the favourite spots for monks who have given up the attractiveness of this world", he does so under the influence of Ambrose (Hex.) whom he heard preaching in Milan in 387. There also was some influence of Jerome (p. 241).

⁸ *Epistula*. 48,2; 138: "... si qua opera uestra mater ecclesia desiderauerit, nec elatione auida suscipiatis nec blandiente desidia respuatis, sed miti corde obtemperetis deo cum mansuetudine..."

⁹ Cf. A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. I, 1991. Even with Antony we find a tension between monachism and pastoral care. When forced to leave his 'inner mountain' to meet people, even very important people, Antony wants nothing more clearly than to return as soon as possible to his beloved solitude. Athanasius points out that a monk can be obliged to renounce his solitude because of brotherly love which is a service to the church, but not his ascetic lifestyle: "L'inventeur de la retraite au désert est aussi le premier à quitter le désert pour le bien des hommes qu'il a fuies." (p. 72).

pulled into the frightening heights at their right side that they fall into the depths at their left side and drown. And at the other side, there are people who for fear to be devoured by the stunning feeling of quietness, recede from the one side so that they fall into the extreme opposite: they get affected and consumed by the arrogance of success and are lost in the burning ashes and smoke. Therefore, beloved, love your contemplative way of life so much that you protect yourselves against all earthly delight. Remember there is no place on earth where the enemy can't lay a trap to prevent us from ascending to God. For the enemy of all good is afraid that we, who once were his prisoners, one day will become his judges. Let us remember that perfect peace will only come when all injustice is wiped out (Psalm 57,2) and when the righteous receive the power to judge (Psalm 94,15)."¹⁰

The otium of the monastic choice

In guarded terms Augustin talks about his personal life which also was an alternation of contemplation and action¹¹. His conversion, or better: his return to christianity in 386 immediately got a monastic profile. Not without reason the christian aspect and the monastic aspect of Augustin's conversion have been linked together¹². But an

¹⁰ *Epistula* 2; 138: "Sicut autem inter ignem et aquam tenenda est uia, ut nec exuratur homo nec demergatur, sic inter apicem superbiae et uoraginem desidiae iter nostrum temperare debemus, sicut scriptum est: non declinantes neque ad dexteram neque ad sinistram. Sunt enim, qui, dum nimis timent, ne quasi in dexteram rapti extollantur, in sinistram lapsi demerguntur, et sunt rursus, qui, dum nimis se auferunt a sinistra, ne torpida uacationis mollitia sorbeantur, ex altera parte iactantiae fastu corrupti atque consumpti in fumum fauillam que uanescunt. Sic ergo, dilectissimi, diligite otium, ut uos ab omni terrena delectatione refrenetis et memineritis nullum locum esse, ubi non possit laqueos tendere, qui timet, ne reuolemus ad deum et inimicum omnium bonorum, cuius captiui fuimus, iudicemus, nullam que esse nobis perfectam requiem cogitetis, donec transeat iniquitas et in iudicium iustitia conuertatur."

¹¹ L. VERHEIJEN, *Saint Augustin, un moine devenu prêtre*, in *Nouvelle approche...* p. 258: "...comme si souvent (...) saint Augustin parlait en premier lieu à lui-même."

¹² ID., *Théologie de la vie monastique*, in *Nouvelle approche...* p. 33: "... il y a un lien étroit entre sa résolution de devenir chrétien baptisé et celle de devenir religieux." and p. 43: "... on peut dire que toute cette structure théologique est monastique. Dans un sens, saint Augustin a trouvé normal que tout chrétien soit religieux." And finally ID., *Spiritualité et vie monastique chez saint Augustin*, in *Nouvelle approche...* p. 93: "S'intégrer dans le corps ecclésial du Christ et préférer le bien commun aux intérêts personnels, cela concerne à ses yeux tous les Chrétiens sans exception. Saint Augustin 'baptisait' ainsi un principe de l'éthique social de l'Antiquité."

accurate reading of the story of his conversion reveals the presence of a third aspect. At the crucial moment in the garden at Milan, those who were to support the monastic project in the future, were involved in the development of Augustine's conversion. As he received the light of conversion fully it also indirectly fell on Alypius. Finally Monnica was called to join in. Augustine's conversion got a community aspect right from the beginning, which was not only decisive for the number of people involved but also for its contents¹³. This community aspect of conversion and monastic life is explicitly repeated in letter 48, but there it is developed as the totus Christus.

When in 386 the young retreatant and his friends withdrew from the world of ambitions and retired for an indefinite vacation (*uacare*)¹⁴, first in Cassiciacum¹⁵ and later in Thagaste, the *fuga mundi* did not literally mean saying goodbye to the world but was first and foremost an ethical concept. *Saeculum* means the world of the conceited mind which the promising and ambitious Augustine wanted to reject, not temporarily but once and for all¹⁶. In order to cure

¹³ ID., *Nouvelle approche de la règle de saint Augustin*, t. II: *Chemin vers la vie heureuse*, Louvain, Institut Historique Augustinien, 1988, p. 54-59: "Dans le cas d'Augustin, l'éclair tomba sur Augustin et Alypius, sur Augustin frontalement, sur Alypius latéralement. (...) Ça devint même une conversion à trois. Augustin et Alypius entrèrent chez la mère d'Augustin pour la mettre au courant" (p. 55). Also the *Soliloquia* 1,13,12; PL 32, 881 reveals explicitly that Augustine doesn't opt for the solitary way. See A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum des heiligen Augustinus*, Cassiciacum Bd. XI, Würzburg, Augustinus-Verlag, 1968, p. 50: „Bei alledem ist es für Augustinus sehr bezeichnend, dass er bewusst den Bruch mit seiner Umwelt vermied und von Anfang an ein Leben in Gemeinschaft mit Gleichgesinnten suchte.“ In Rome it appeared from his idealization of community life in the monastery there, that he himself was in favour of cenobitism (p. 55). In the *Praeceptum* this dimension of community-living becomes more obvious. A conversion is not an individual happening, and the monastic project as such strives towards living in community.

¹⁴ See J. PINTARD, *Le sacerdoce de Saint Augustin*, Tours, In lumine fidei, 1960, p. 336ff., who describes the withdrawal as an evasion, founded on the otium liberale of the sciences, more in particular on philosophy. Augustine was equally attracted by the pursuit of perfection with Antony as an example. The *negotium* however would have no special attraction: it was only a duty, one had to fulfil. After his ordination Augustine continues, deep in his heart, to prefer the *otium* of study and perfection, and experiences his office rather to be a burden. At that moment he doesn't pay attention to the third possibility: the tension of the double life combining both action and contemplation will be later developed.

¹⁵ A. CAMINO LAMELAS, *La comunidad de Casiciaco su evolución ideológico cristiana* in *Revista Augustiniana* 21 (1980), 189-228, p. 193ff.

¹⁶ L. VERHEIJEN, *Mundus et Saeculum dans les Confessions de saint Augustin*, in *Studi in onore di Alberto Pincherle, Studie e materiali di storia delle religioni*, pubblicati dalla Scuola di studi storico-religiosi dell'Università di Roma (SMSR), 38 (1978), 665-682, p. 682: "Le moine ne quitte pas l'univers. S'il renonce au 'monde du

himself from this ambition which he himself called a tumor, he was considering to withdraw within himself, a retreat into his own deepest self (*retrahere, anachoorèsis eis heauton*)¹⁷. At that time this withdrawal consisted in a turn towards philosophy which would treat Augustine's soul (*curatio animi*) and cure it (*medicina animi*)¹⁸. The withdrawal and the thinking in Cassiciacum was supported by these ciceronean ideas¹⁹. The small community would strive for a moral purification²⁰, as was taught to them by the *Hortensius*, purification of the passions would lead to a happy life and exhort the human being to take care of his inner life, that means himself.

This return to himself made possible by leaving the world of sensory perceptions on the one hand and practising the liberal sciences (*artes liberales*) on the other hand, offered Augustine the opportunity to combine medicine with self-knowledge. The christianising of all those data happened by combining truth (*veritas*) and wisdom (*sapientia*) in Christ²¹. The wisdom which advises to observe its

péché', au 'monde' qui, de façon idolâtre, se replie sur lui-même en oubliant son créateur, le moine ne fait rien qui le caractérise en tant que tel: tous les chrétiens authentiques en font autant. C'est pourquoi le terme *mundus* est peu apte à expliquer ce que fait le moine quand il 'quitte' le monde. (...) il suit le Christ, non pas seulement dans les intentions de la vie du Sauveur – tout le monde doit le faire –, mais aussi dans son état de vie: sans femme ni enfants, sans se faire une 'situation', sans chercher à 'faire carrière', sans possessions. C'est donc à certains aspects de la vie qui s'écoule avec le temps, du *saeculum*, que les moines renoncent." (p. 682); see further p. 677f. Cf. also H.-I. MARROU, *L'ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez saint Augustin*, Paris, J. Vrin, 1950, p. 43f.: "Pour Être de ce qui s'appelle véritablement, pleinement Être, *vere, summe esse*, il faut être affranchi du temps, – ou du moins de la durée telle que l'éprouve la nature présente de l'homme pécheur..."; what does not remain, what slips in time, is linked by Augustine with suffering, decay, failure, sin, aging, death. See also Cl. Lepelley, *Spes saeculi: le milieu social d'Augustin et ses ambitions séculières avant sa conversion*, in *Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione Roma*, 15-20 settembre 1986, Atti I, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987, 99-117, p. 113f., p. 116: "... Monique rompaît elle aussi avec une ambition familiale dont elle avait été, depuis un quart de siècle, l'agente résolue et efficace".

¹⁷ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce*, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1968, p. 200.

¹⁸ D. DOUCET, *Le thème du médecin dans saint Augustin*, in *Augustiniana* 39 (1989), 447-461.

¹⁹ *Tusculanes* III, 3,6 and IV, 28,60.

²⁰ *Soliloquia* I, 9,16-12,21; CSEL 89,24-33 and *Contra Academicos*. I, 1,1-4; CC 29,5.

²¹ D. DOUCET, *Le thème du médecin...* p. 457: "... enfin la foi chrétienne vient non seulement subsumer, mais accomplir l'ensemble de ces métaphores en leur donnant une réalité véritable dans la personne du Fils."

medical prescriptions (*praecepta*) is in fact Christ who wants to initiate the souls in the marital embrace²². Through his incarnation Christ finally teaches the human being the secrets of nature (*praeceptio*). This divine wisdom transcends the healing by the incarnation and accomplishes it²³.

Doing so the retreatant at first only tried to realise the unity in his own soul. Later on he defended the collective meaning of the word *monachos* and he explained the word 'monk' (from *monos*) as the unity of the community, which is one of heart and soul²⁴. With

²² ID., o.c., p. 460: "Le Christ en se faisant homme vient épouser les âmes qui peuvent être en quelque sorte "dotées" par la recherche philosophique. Enfin, cet acte de Verbe assumant la chair, n'est pas seulement une conversion intellectuelle, mais un salut, car la kénose du Fils guérit l'homme de son péché, par la clémence manifestée dans cet acte d'humilité. (...) Si le Christ assume le rôle médical de la philosophie, il revêt alors ses deux dimensions essentielles: il est le médecin (*medicus*) et le remède (*medicina*)."

²³ ID., o.c., p. 457: "... le médecin ne représente pas seulement la sagesse humaine ou même divine, mais le Christ qui, en son incarnation, vient apporter ses soins aux hommes. Ce thème semble donc presque parfaitement structuré dès les premières oeuvres d'Augustin, mais ne prendra toute sa vigueur que dans la prédication de l'évêque." Cf. A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 49: „Mag Augustinus hier seine entschiedene asketische Haltung auch nur philosophisch motivieren, so zeigt doch der Nachdruck, mit dem er sich in diesen Meditationen der 'Alleingespräche' als 'Diener Gottes' (famulus Dei, servus Dei) bezeichnet, dass es ihm schon um mehr geht als nur um die Verwirklichung des philosophischen Ideals des Weisen.“

²⁴ Zie T. J. VAN BAVEL, *De eerste christelijke commune en het religieuze leven in Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* 35 (1979), 498-524, p. 514ff. Also L. VERHEIJEN, *Spiritualité et vie monastique... Nouvelle approche...* p. 78: "(Augustin) ne pense pas encore au cœur unique de plusieurs personnes, à la 'concorde' qui règne entre elles, mais il pense au *cor simplex*, le cœur unifié" and p. 105: "Les *ascètes* sont devenus des *frères* et – mais c'est dans une autre maison, établie plus tard – les frères sont en même temps des clercs dont la vie a une dimension missionnaire et "apostolique" professionnelle". Augustine proclaims a cenobitic life, inspired by the Bible and a contemplative lifestyle inherited from the philosophic tradition. The *cor unum et anima una* of the first Christians is linked to the *otium* and the *contemplatio* of Greek and Roman philosophers. Neither the *ordo monasterii* nor the *praeceptum* deal with the leisure time of the *otium* or *contemplatio* except in the reference in 8,1 in the *praeceptum*. But in *epistula*. 48 the *otium* is linked to community life. "C'est en communauté que les 'serviteurs de Dieu' vivent à l'écart du monde pour le Seigneur seul." Solitary life is not mentioned in either of the two Rules. This typical Augustinian synthesis is different from what Evagrius traces out in Egypt at about the same time. It also differs from Cassian's exposition to a Latin audience some 25 years later. According to Cassian the anchorites consider cenobitism (the active life) as a service to contemplation which in turn is the culminating point of all monastic life. "En incluant dans son programme communautaire la vie contemplative elle-même, Augustin achève de le grandir et – peut-être sans le vouloir – le rémunère contre l'attraction de la solitude" (A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. III, 1996, p. 244s.). See

Anthony we find the opposite evolution. Community-life lead him to a life in seclusion – which made Anthony the first to make the transition from community-life to the life of the anchorites²⁵.

Although these first steps towards contemplative life were nothing but a vague project²⁶, that only later would assume its fixed outlines, the project certainly didn't appear out of the blue²⁷. It was Ponticianus who had informed Augustine about the existence of christian ascetism of which Anthony had given the luminous example in his retired life. Together with Ponticianus and Antony Marius Victorinus and especially Mallius Theodorus, played an equally important role in the conceptualization of a withdrawal from public life. The latter set the example: he withdrew rather abruptly, be it temporarily, from a worldly career to live an intellectual withdrawal on a country estate²⁸. Also the convents in Milan, supported by Ambrose and the monasteries in Rome which Augustine had visited

finally ID., *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. V, 1998, p. 276f. en 283, who in spite of his preference of the anachoretic life as the height of monastic life, recognizes the specific augustinian synthesis.

²⁵ Zie A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. I, p. 25f. Verder ID., *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. III, p. 211: "Augustin considère ici toute vie monacale, même communautaire, comme une existence "au désert". Le renoncement au monde suffit à créer celui-ci. Quant à vivre complètement seul, à la manière des ermites, cette perspective paraît étrangère à son esprit et à celui de ses auditeurs. Pour lui comme pour eux, il semble qu'il n'y ait de vie monastique qu'en communauté. L'aspiration du psalmiste au "désert" provoque cette question ironique: Et quel désert? Où que tu sois, les autres se rassembleront, chercherons le désert avec toi, désirerons (partager) ta vie, et tu ne peux refuser la compagnie de ces frères (Enarrationes in psalmos 54,9)".

²⁶ L. VERHEIJEN, *Une identité augustinienne*, in: *Nouvelle approche...* t. II, p. 14: "Il s'est converti à l'Église catholique, mais aussi à un projet de vie monastique, projet qu'il est allé réaliser dans son pays natal, à Thagaste d'abord et surtout à Hippone..." Cf. in *Réflexions sur les identités augustinienes* in *Nouvelle approche...* t. II, p. 76 corrects Verheijen his own statement: "Il n'avait encore aucune idée de la forme concrète (...) s'est converti à un projet ascétique..."

²⁷ The very first project discussed in *Confessiones* 6,14,24; CC 27,89 stranded because of the *mulierculae*. See A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...* p. 193, 195. See also D.E. TROUT, *Augustine at Cassiciacum: otium honestum and the social dimensions of conversion*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988) 132-146, p. 136: at the beginning of 386 Augustine declared himself openly for the *securum otium* (conf. 6,12,21) to be able to reflect on the items which occupied his mind. The philosophical dialogues in Cassiciacum would conceptualize and publish this life in otium. Cicero was the example, so was Plinius the younger. Christian authors of this period (Ausonius, Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius) continued to write poems and letters having the withdrawing themselves to the countryside (*otium ruris*), as main subjects.

²⁸ D. E. TROUT, *Augustine at Cassiciacum...* p. 35.

when returning to Northern Africa,²⁹ gave evidence for such a monastic tradition³⁰. Prior to all this was the fact that Augustine had learned about community life with the Manicheans which he remembered with gratitude and some nostalgia. When he sang the psalms of the Catholica for the first time in Cassiciacum, he remembered the warm atmosphere he had enjoyed with the Manicheans when singing together the gnostic psalms. This warmth and friendship was in sharp contrast with the cool attitude in the church of Milan³¹. Moreover, the manichean asceticism must also have

²⁹ *Confessiones* 8,6,14-15; CC 27,121f. See *De moribus Manichaeorum* 20,74; CSEL 90,154f. and A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...* p. 204 n. 3. See further R. LORENZ, *Die Anfänge des abendländischen Mönchtums im 4. Jahrhundert*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 77 (1966) 1-61, p. 39f. Augustine reshaped the inherited monachism; his report about the roman convent deals in fact with a theological programme: the fusion of monachism with paulinism. The paulinian freedom of the law which comes forth from love and the structuring of union in love has to be realized in the monastery. This interpretation of roman monastic life is of course stamped by the personality of Augustine. By his knowledge of the paulinian texts he succeeds in snatching monasticism from pelagianism which is a product of the monastic pursuit for perfection. On p. 41: we read that the combination of the monastic-ascetic pattern of life with philosophy mainly occurred in the East. Especially Clement of Alexandria excelled in it. It is possible too that Augustine who was already familiar with the combination by the Hortensius, learned more in Milan about this alexandrinic range of ideas. R. J. HALLIBURTON, *The Inclination to Retirement – the Retreat of Cassiciacum and the Monastery of Tagaste*, in *Studia Patristica* vol. V, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1962, 327-340, points out that not only the withdrawal from public life but also the philosophical return to his own soul has profoundly influenced Augustine's decision. Withdrawal and return do not necessarily coincide. Of both phenomena there have been profane and ecclesiastical patterns which have influenced Augustine. In Tagaste there remained a predominance of the philosophical model. See finally G. M. COLOMBÁS, *El monacato primitivo I*, Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979, p. 272ff.

³⁰ D. E. TROUT, *Augustine at Cassiciacum...* p. 137: the definite withdrawal of Antony didn't find much response in the elegant Italian world; the moderate Augustine and his friends in Cassiciacum were not impressed either. From the philosophical Dialogues we know that Augustine lived a comfortable life: during such retreat there was time for prayer and reading of the Bible, but also for the classic literary analysis of poetry (Virgil).

³¹ See S. POQUE, *La prière de catéchumène Augustin en septembre 386*, in *Congresso internazionale su s. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione, Roma, 15-20 settembre 1986* Atti II, Roma, Institutum patristicum "Augustinianum", 79-84: "Il n'a pas trouvé dans l'Église de Milan la chaleur des communautés manichéennes de Carthage et de Rome." See also A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...* p. 191f. Finally E. FELDMANN, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius und des Manichäismus auf das Denken des jungen Augustinus von 373*, Münster, 1975, p. 664, 697 who sees in *Confessiones* 9,7, 8-11; CC 27, 137-140 a hidden allusion of Augustine to his past enthusiasm for the manichean psalms.

influenced the development of Augustine's monachism. The antropological model of happiness, wisdom and ethical strenght, passed on to him by the *Hortentius* of Cicero, lead the young Augustine to the Manicheans who respected highly the abstinence of the electi. The asceticism he wanted for his monks was surely based on philosphical grounds, but historically the *electi* have been the first incarnation of the ciceronean model³².

Besides and together with christian asceticism³³ there was also a secular retirement³⁴: people withdrew from public life and spent most of their time in search of truth. Already in that secular tradition *otium* meant creative leisure time and having the material goods (money, a house, etc.) to enable the realisation of such a project. Their stay at the estate of Verecundus indeed showed the features of a Roman *otium*³⁵.

³² E. FELDMANN, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius...* p. 720, n. 66. This asceticism was of course pseudo-christian and as such a deviating archetype of his christian concept of monachism, which anyway was purified by his experience with Manicheism. According to Feldmann the influence of Manicheism on the ideal monachism of Augustine has often been underestimated.

³³ G. FOLLINET, *Le monachisme en Afrique de saint Augustin à saint Fulgence*, in *Il monachesimo occidentale*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 62, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1998, 291-315, p. 291: "Il convient donc de se débarrasser de cette traditionnelle légende présentant l'évêque Augustin comme le père ou le fondateur du monachisme africain..." When speaking about the African monachism Follinet often assumes a rather combative attitude. Cenobitism had already come over from Egypt (p. 314f.). See also *Aux origines de l'ascétisme...* p. 43 and *Des moines euchites à Carthage en 400-401*, in *Studia Patristica*, Berlin, 1957, 386-399, p. 398f. Even for the unity of heart and soul, the community of goods and the ideal of the apostles, we have a previous history with Basil (*Le monachisme en Afrique de saint Augustin...* p. 313).

³⁴ G. MADEC, *Chez Augustin*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1998, p. 42s. Cf. A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. II: Paulinus of Nola recognizes that the contemplative monachism is in a way the continuation of the tradition of the "philosophes célèbres" who dedicated themselves entirely to scientific and literary activities (p. 248) Jerome christianizes Sallustius' statement (Jugurta) who made himself free from political action to write down the history of the Republic. Doing so he did more for society than he could have done as a politician. He also applies this thought to his own situation: maybe he can render a better service to the church as a learned biblicist than he could have done with manual activities. (p.254s.) In general asceticism, the essence of monastic life, looks for antecedents and motivation in the philosophical and religious tradition of paganism. After the attacks by Jovinian, Jerome defends continence and abstinence not only as writers do who are inspired by the two testaments, but also as Porphyry and other profane authors do. Furthermore Jerome also drew quite a lot from Tertullian who in his turn had largely christianized the philosophical tradition.

³⁵ See J.-M. ANDRÉ, *Recherches sur l'Otium romain*, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 52, 1962, who presents an impressive survey of the tradition about *otium* and *negotium* in Roman culture (literature, politics and philosophy). Augustine walks in the footsteps of this tradtion but christianizes them at te same time.

But instead of being a purpose in itself it quickly was turned into a means: *otium* was first and foremost the inner disposition for the quietness of the soul and the peace of mind. Those are the two indispensable conditions for retirement in oneself and for the contemplation of God³⁶. Yet, all the same the first project in Milan resembled strongly the philosophical aristocracy (*totalitarisme aristocratique*³⁷), but the compulsory manual work of the time and the fixed hours for prayer imposed serious limits to the aristocratic *otium*.

How did Augustine consider this *otium* during his retreat in Thagaste? Reflecting with his friends on the true religion, Augustine had learned from Cicero that the search for happiness could be answered in several ways. For there are many objects of happiness and each of them guarantees a typical form of unification with the desired object. He himself had just left behind a few forms of happiness which in the johannean enumeration he had designed as the triple desire (*cupiditas triplex*): the human being can look for happiness in wealth and honour (*ambitio saeculi*), in knowledge and science (*curiositas*) in eroticism and in friendship (*concupiscentia carnis*)³⁸. The unification in those forms of happiness is fragile though and always transitory. Moreover to reach this point of peace and satisfaction such a strain is required that the toil in itself becomes cause of discord and distraction.

In *De uera religione* Augustine explains how truth can be source of rest. Truth is unity and causes the human being to be united

³⁶ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...* p. 193f. See also P. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1967, p. 101ff.

³⁷ ID., *o.c.*, p. 207, n. 3. See also D. E. TROUT, *Augustine at Cassiciacum...* p. 140: what happened was that the *otium honestum* was christianized, what means that it was accepted in the tradition of christianity. In the Dialogues Augustine published the *otium liberale* of philosophy and the aristocratic tradition. At the end of his life he would speak about these Dialogues als the *christianae uitae otium* but this definition is not found in the Dialogues themselves.

³⁸ *De uera religione* 35,69; CC 32, 232: "Serviunt enim cupiditati triplici uel uoluptatis uel excellentiae uel spectaculi. Nego esse quemquam istorum, qui nihil colendum existimant, qui non aut carnalibus gaudiis subditus sit aut potentiam uanam foueat aut aliquo spectaculo delectatus insaniat." See 39,72-45,83; 234-242 about the *concupiscentia carnis* or *uoluptas*, 45,84-49,93; 242-248 about the *superbia*, 49,94-54,106; 248-252 about the *curiositas*. Augustine searches along the traces in these vices, the way back to an ordered sensual experience, to righteous honour and to the right knowledge. This ascending movement from the triple desire is taken up later on by the convert in his *Confessiones* 10,30,41-35,54; CC 27,176-184 about the *concupiscentia carnis*, 35,54-36,58; 184-186 about the *curiositas* en 36,59-39,64; 187-190 about the *superbia*. See I. BOCHET, *Animae medicina. La libération de la triple convoitise selon le De uera religione*, Il mistero del male e la libertà possibile (IV): Ripensare Agostino, Roma, 1997.

with himself. Where is more rest to be found than in the peace of unity? Therefore any religious person should focus on God who is the only and the true unity. Longing for rest and peace is not reserved to monks or clericals but it is the desire of everybody who turns his eyes to the One: the unity. And that One can only be the divine one, the unique one who brings peace to the hearts.

“So after all let’s seek for unity, because nothing is more simple than this. It is in the simplicity of the heart we have to look for unity. ‘Be still (*agite otium*), says God in Psalm 45,11 ‘and know that I am God.’ Not the stillness or the leisure of idleness (*otium*) is meant but the leasure of reflexion (*cogitatio*). This leisure frees us (*uacare*) from space and time. Swelling phantasms do not permit us to see permanent unity. Space offers us something to love but time steals away what we love. That way in our soul crowds of phantasms are left which incite all possible desires. Thus the soul becomes restless and unhappy and it tries vainly to hold that by which it is hold captive (in turn). Yet the soul is still summoned to stillness (*otium*). It should not love the things which cannot be loved without toil. Only then the soul will become master as it will dominate instead of being hold captive. ‘My yoke, says the Lord, is light’. He who is subject to that yoke, has everything else subject to himself. He will not labour anymore and what has been subdued does not resist any more. The friends of this world feel miserable; although they could be masters of this world if they were willing to be the sons of God; for God has given them the power to become his sons. (John 1,12) But the friends of this world are so afraid to be separated from its embrace that nothing is more toilsome to them than to be at rest”³⁹.

The parting with a promising career is still vividly present in Augustine’s mind and clearly resounds in this religious-philosophical text. In the first place leisure (*otium*) refers to the liberation from the enslaving space and time which by their satisfaction never grant us the stillness of permanent unity. The satisfaction spatial beauty offers, is taken away by the flying and fleeting time.

And even when we try to keep the past beauty in our memory, the images we have stored torture us much more than they satisfy us⁴⁰

³⁹ *Id.*, 35,65; 229f.

⁴⁰ See *Confessiones* 9,4,10; CCL 27,139: “... imagines eorum famelica cogitatione lambiunt”. Meditation flatters the phantasms of memory in an effort to keep firm grip of them.

because they only seduce us and never satisfy us completely. Whoever succeeds in freeing himself from this seduction will not only be able to enjoy the highest unity but in addition he will master the world. For a clear understanding: rather than fleeing from the world of space and time Augustine wants to master the world as it suits a son of God. Rather than to enjoy momentary bliss he frees himself for the highest delight: true freedom. The 'vacation' (*vacare*) aimed at in the contemplation of truth is not a temporary kind of stillness but a permanent and continuous one⁴¹.

In his first works, among which the philosophical dialogues, and also in his first correspondence (especially with Nebridius), *otium* already had this meaning of time made free for the search of truth, for the study of philosophy (*otium philosophandi*)⁴² which is the most necessary and the highest activity (*necessarium ac summum*)⁴³. Apart from this intellectual effort, there are still the daily chores of household on the estate (*negotia domestica*)⁴⁴. Once Augustine had set his mind free the Soliloquy in which he wanted to learn about God and his soul revivified his complete dedication (*totum negotium*)⁴⁵. However impressive the dedication may be, it is continuously aimed at pure philosophy⁴⁶. In some other place the retreatant opposes the *otium* of the search for truth against the *negotium* of the burdening office⁴⁷, which he also calls the *necessaria*⁴⁸. In his correspondence with Nebridius Augustine mainly points at the *otium* of the reflexion⁴⁹ and with his friend he reflects upon deification of the human being during their leisure in Thagaste. The controversial expression *deificare in otio*⁵⁰ should not be misunderstood as if Augustine and his friends should have aimed at an egocentric sanctification of themselves⁵¹.

⁴¹ R. LORENZ, *Die Anfänge des abendländischen Mönchtums...* p. 28: Cyprian spoke already about the *seruae dei* who dedicate themselves freely to God and Christ (*deo et christo uacantes*). Also Basil and Rufinus spoke about *uacare*, they lead a life that is similar to that of the angels.

⁴² *Contra Academicos* 2,2,4; 29,20. See 1,1,3; 5.

⁴³ *Id.* 3,1,1; 34.

⁴⁴ *Id.* 2,11,25; 31.

⁴⁵ *Soliloquia* 1,10,17; PL 32,878 en 1,10,17; 878. Also 1,15,27; 83: where the mind looks for its *otium* (2,14,26; 898) in the *otio transalpino* (897).

⁴⁶ *De ordine* 2,5,16; CC 29,116: the *negotium* for the *germana philosophia*. See 2,1,1; 107 and *De quantitate animae* 1,1; CSEL 89,131 where Augustine surrenders to the *otium*.

⁴⁷ *De libero arbitrio* 2,9,25; CC 29,253.

⁴⁸ *Id.* 3,21,62; 312. In his letter to Valerius, the neophyte shows himself frightened by the haughtiness of the clergy (*periculosa negotia: epistula* 21,3; 51 en 4; 52).

⁴⁹ *Epistula* 1, 2; CSEL 34/1, 2 en 3,4; 8 en 4,1;10 en 10,1; 23.

⁵⁰ *Id.* 10,2; 24 and *id.* 13,1; 30.

How can availability for other people be realised if no preparatory attention for God is created which can only be kept alive by a fit *otium*?⁵² The imposed structure of a religious life with its community of property enables brotherly help and spiritual *communio*⁵³. The leisure time of the christian life (*otium vitae christianae*) called as

⁵¹ G. FOLLIET, "Deificare in otio", *Augustin, Epistula 10,2 dans Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. II (= *Hommage au. R.P. Fulbert Cayré*), p. 225-236, p. 226: "Augustin parle en chrétien converti, mais sa description de l'ascèse à laquelle il vise, et les expressions dont il se sert, laissent soupçonner que son idéal de vie présent est beaucoup plus proche de celui du sage, tel que le présentent les philosophes néoplatoniciens, que celui de l'Évangile...", further p. 227 and p. 235f.: "...la purification, l'assimilation à Dieu par les vertus, sans le secours de la grâce, sont à ses yeux chose possible pour l'homme." Consequently Folliet asserts that the stay in Thagaste is nothing more than a continuation of the philosophic project of Cassiciacum: "La demeure d'Augustin ressemble plus à une maison de philosophes, de lettrés, qu'à un monastère..." (ID., *Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain*, in *Saint Martin et son temps*, Studia Anselmiana 46, Roma, 1961, 25-44, p. 38). Vgl. ID., *Le monachisme en Afrique de saint Augustin à saint Fulgence*, in *Il monachesimo occidentale dalle origini alla Regula Magistri*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 62, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1998, 291-315, 293: "Ces 'servi Dei' ne constituaient pas pour autant un groupement monastique organisé, comme on a trop souvent dit." and p. 295: "... ce qui sera désormais le programme de vie (*propositum*) d'Augustin et des membres du monastère épiscopal d'Hippone, la décision de se conformer au modèle de vie de la communauté chrétienne primitive, programme de vie beaucoup plus parfait que celui qui régit le cénacle de Thagaste." See also F. VAN DER MEER, *Saint Augustin, pasteur d'âmes*, t. I, Colmar-Paris, ed. Alsatia, 1959, p. 325. Cf. G. MADEC, *Le Dieu d'Augustin*, Philosophie et Théologie, Paris, Du Cerf, 1998, p. 37: "Dans la lettre 10, 2, Augustin parle d'une déification dans la retraite, philosophique ou spirituelle... mais il n'a guère exploité la formule dans sa propre doctrine de la divinisation de l'homme." The author doesn't deal with the possibility of a mere philosophical sanctification.

⁵² A. MANDOUZE., *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...*, p. 207.

⁵³ ID., *o.c.*, p. 209. See R. J. TESKE, *Augustine's Epistula X: Another Look at Deificare in otio*, in *Augustinianum*, 32 (1992) 289-299, p. 392f.: "The life which Augustine and his friends have determined to live together in Thagaste and to which Augustine invites Nebridius indicate a commitment to common life that, on the basis of other sources, one can see as the beginnings of monastic life. But apart from such other sources, one would not, on the basis of *Epistula X* alone, find much reason to suppose that Augustine is speaking of a specifically Christian way of life, much less of a form of Christian monasticism." *De vera religione* 35,65 shows clearly that Augustine strived after a christian *otium* in which the god-equal sons of God are not subdued to temporal things but are their masters. Moreover the transformation into deity is not man's work but the fruit of God's grace (293-296). G. FOLLIET, "In penetrabilibus mentis adorare Deum" (Augustin, *Epistula 10,3*) in *Sacris Erudiri* 33 (1992-1993), 125-133 continues defending the dependency of Augustine on Neoplatonism and in particular on Porphyry with this respect that during the Thagaste-period a biblical assimilation hasn't come up yet. Yet in Augustine's answer to Nebridius despite the neoplatonic character, a beginning has been made towards the spiritual

such by the bishop of Hippo when he looked back upon his works, is a form of life, which freed from the obligations of everyday life, was dedicated to study and reflexion⁵⁴. Better than the calm (*in otio transalpino*) it was filled with christian truth⁵⁵.

Negotium

communio, which will become the foundation of the community concept made possible by the *caritas*. When Augustine is not able to leave his friends in Thagaste and live with Nebridius, it is not because they aren't ready yet for the individual self-sanctification by turning to themselves (see ID., *Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain...* p. 37f.); it is because they are not ready yet for the spiritual unity of the community which transcends the necessity of spatial nearness. The complaint of Nebridius about growing loneliness can only be conquered by ascending to spiritual unity which is the foundation of living together: "Tu enim potes et apud tuum mentem suaviter habitare: hi uero ut idem possint, satagitur. Eamne crebro et redeam et nunc tecum, nunc cum ipsis sim? at hoc neque simul, neque ex sententia vivere est." (*epistula* 10,1; CSEL34/1,23). Acquaintanceship with death helps too to transcend the limits of spacial nearness. That's why Augustine can conclude his letter to Nebridius as follows: "Quae cum ita sint, restare unum vides, ut tu quoque in commune consulas, quo vivamus simul" (*id.*, 10,3; 24). Already in letter 9 Augustine invited Nebridius to transcend spatial limits by returning into his soul: "Confer te ad tuum animum et illum in Deum leva, quantum potes. Ibi enim certius habes et nos non per corporeas imagines, quibus nunc in nostra recordatione uti necesse est; sed per illam cogitationem qua intellegis non loco esse nos simul" (9,1; 20). Folliet is not blind for this connection with God, see *La correspondance entre Augustin et Nébridius*, in *L'opera letteraria di Agostino tra Cassiciacum e Milano*, Augustiniana – testi e Studi, II, Palermo, Ed. Augustinus, 1987, 191-215, p. 195: "L'esprit uni à Dieu est bien le lieu idéal où se retrouvent les amis." and further p. 197f.: "... et c'est à cette élévation que Nébridius se trouve convié par Augustin, peu après, dans l'*epistula* 13,2..." These words of Porphyry do not prevent Augustine from ascending with all of them to the unity in God. On the nature of that unity, we read in letter 10, see A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 59: "Was Augustinus dem Nebridius, der über seine Einsamkeit und sein Alleinsein klagt, zum Troste zu sagen weiß, gehört zum Schönsten, was er über Gemeinschaft geschrieben hat." and further p. 64ff.: "Und doch war das 'Deo servire', das Augustinus mit seinen Freunden zu verwirklichen suchte, nicht nur das Otium der Philosophen, sondern trug schon die Grundzüge klösterlichen Lebens."

⁵⁴ *De diversis quaestionibus* 83,35,2; CC 44A,52 pleads for the vacation (*uacare*) of the mind who wants to contemplate truth. When Augustine towards the end of his life had passed his function as a bishop to Eraclius, he fervently wished to engage himself completely to the *otium* of study; no free time he wanted to be lazy, but the *negotium* of the study of the Bible, see *epistula* 213,6; CSEL 57,378. See R. LORENZ, *Die Anfänge des abendländischen Mönchtums...* p. 34: the *lectio diuina* already required by Pachomius, will be the adequate place for intellectual work in the monastic tradition (Jerome, Augustine, Cassiodorus).

⁵⁵ Cf. *Retractationes* 1,1,1; CC 57,7. and *Soliloquia* 2,26; CSEL 89,81 where the leisure time is freed from the fear of death.

Not to the right nor to the left

The sudden change in the *otium* happens in 391 when Augustine is claimed by the local congregation of Hippo to be their bishop. For Augustine it is a dramatic choice between his monastic vocation and the high office of being a bishop⁵⁶. However, it is obvious that Augustine had prepared his answer to the challenging *necessitas ecclesiae* of Hippo in the way he had given shape to his monastic project. Already in *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* in which Augustine expressed his appreciation for the monks who were able to face the dangers of urban life instead of escaping them, the road was smoothened for a link between priesthood and monachism⁵⁷. Augustine was prepared philosophically and theologically to adopt a middle course.

The young theologian connected the quest for happiness and in

⁵⁶ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin, L'aventure de la raison...* p. 212: "... il ne s'agit ni plus ni moins que de la mise en question de la communauté religieuse dont Augustin est moine par la communauté ecclésiastique dont il est évêque. (...) Augustin est littéralement écartelé. (...) un homme qui ne voulut pas renoncer à sa vocation (monastique) ni se refuser aux devoirs de sa charge (épiscopale)." Cf. *Sermo* 355; PL 39, 1568f. Vgl. A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 71: „So stark Augustinus die Spannung zwischen Priestertum und Mönchtum empfand, so fest war doch von Anfang an sein Entschluss, beides mit einander zu vereinen.“ and further p. 236: „Es zeigte sich bald, dass Augustinus die geistige Kraft und Weite besaß, um das hergebrachte monastische Ideal des Zölibatentums mit den priesterlichen Lebenszielen innerlich zu verbinden. Diese Verbindung sollte aber für beide, Priestertum wie Mönchtum, glücklich und fruchtbar werden.“ See P. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo...* p. 135 who doesn't see the transition from the monastic tranquility to the active life of evangelization as a painful rupture. He rather suggests it is an effort to fill the emptiness that came into his life after the death of his son Adeodatus and the death of his friend Nebridius. Brown likes to overshadow the religious motives by hidden psychological influences. He does the same with the effort to profile the initially vague monastic project among the ecclesiastical structures. In his opinion this too was the result of psychological needs. For history's sake it would remain interesting to interpret the moments of silence in Augustine's argument. But this is not always possible, and this is the difficulty in Brown's text: "this double blow is one of the most significant blanks in Augustine's life". There will certainly be an entanglement between the psychological and the religious moments in Augustine's life, but Brown seems to be driven more than a bit now and then by *Entmythologisierung*.

⁵⁷ In the East Athanasius urged the desert-monks to become priests. Western countries would pursue the same course with Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine. See A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique...* t. II, Paris, p. 337. It is true that Augustine elaborated in his own way the combination of monachism and active life, but the synthesis as such would not really go back to Augustine, as asserts A. TRAPÈ in *The search for God and contemplation in Searching for God*, Rome, Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, 1981, 7-29, p. 21: "The revolution he caused consists in this: of having intuited (...) the compatibility, up to that time impossible, of the priestly

particular the difference between good and bad to the preservation or the loss of the middle course⁵⁸. The concept of a midposition for the soul is an outspoken mid- and neoplatonic heritage. The centre of the soul (*medietas*) is first and for all an ontological situation between the divine and the physical existence. But the human forces of intelligence and free will express freedom with all attendant risks. Dependent on the moral conduct of the person, the soul will either keep that central place or slide down to a lower level of existence which is not fit for its appropriate nature⁵⁹. "In nature," Augustine writes in his letter to Caelestinus, "there is an important distinction to be made between the *summum*, the *medium* and the *infimum*." Evil cannot occur in the everlasting *summum*, neither is it present in the mortal *infimum* because real happiness can only be found in God; and in the lowest part of nature, neither happiness nor misfortune are to be found. Only in the *medium* the habitat of the human being we meet happiness and misfortune. That means that the human being is the only creature that strives for misfortune if he has an inclination towards the lowest. On the other hand he can reach out for bliss when he definitely turns towards what is the highest. Put differently and more correctly: only the human being by his faith in Christ is able to keep the middle course between the highest and the lowest.

"Whoever believes in Christ, does not sink his affection in that which is lowest, is not proudly self-sufficient in that which is intermediate, and thus he is qualified for union and fellowship

ministry and the monastic life." See also A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 242: „Wenn er auch nicht der erste war, der die apostolische Tätigkeit ins klösterliche Leben einbezog, so verdankt man ihm doch die religiös-biblische Begründung des neuen Lebensideals.“ and p. 245: „Die apostolische Zielsetzung aber steht bei ihm nicht unvermittelt neben dieser religiösen Grundidee, sondern erscheint in gewisser Weise in sie einbezogen und von ihr getragen.“

⁵⁸ G. MADEC, *La patrie et la voie*. Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin, Collection "Jésus et Jésus-Christ" n° 36, Paris, 1989, p. 291: "Tous les étants sont pris entre deux pôles, l'être suprême et le non-être, au degré qui leur revient (τάξις) suivant leur forme propre (εἶδος). L'homme en son âme est, lui, un être de milieu (μέσση οὐσία), situé entre le haut et le bas qui sont, pour lui, objet de choix volontaire, le haut pour son bonheur dans la plénitude ontologique (πόρος), le bas pour son malheur dans l'indigence (πενία), suivant le mythe d'Éros dans le *Banquet*."

⁵⁹ G. O'DALY, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987, p. 38. And p. 40: "Only if its choices are right will its ethical and ontological positions, so to speak, coincide: that is to say, its behaviour and moral standing will reflect its proper place in the scale of being."

with that which is the highest.”⁶⁰

In this text Augustine doesn't draw a picture of the Fall of the human being, but we know that precisely the fatal attraction to the lowest is the punishment for man's arrogance (*superbia*). At the same time that fatal inclination is responsible for the human being's incapacity of adhering in God. Yet, the human being continues to imitate God, but in his own perverted way and not as a son of God.

Also in Eden there was a centre⁶¹, as the young exegetist notices, which was symbolised in a dual way in the story of Creation. There was the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. To make our point we are especially interested in the tree of life.

That tree planted in the centre of the garden means the wisdom that teaches the soul that it has been placed in the centre of all creatures. On the one hand the human being has to rule every corporal creature and subject it; on the other hand wisdom must make clear that God ranks above the nature of the human being. As a result the mind may not turn to the right and presume what it is not - namely God - neither may it turn aside to the left by neglecting what it really is, because the mind is destined to be the master over all creatures beneath itself (Dt. 17,11; Prov. 4,27)⁶².

This place of the human being between God and creation which

⁶⁰ *Epistula* 18,2; CSEL 34/1,45: "... Qui in Christo credit, non diligit infimum, non superbit in medio atque ita summo inhaerere fit idoneus." At this stage Augustine doesn't bring up the road of humility (*via humilitatis*) which will teach us to live free of arrogance in medio. But what else could be meant by 'faith in Christ'?

⁶¹ Augustine doesn't deal yet with happiness as the right middle, but the context is paradise that is called the place of bliss. It's a place of quiet (*quies*) that refers to the spiritual delight (*gaudia spiritualia*) of the blessed life (*De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2,9,12; CSEL 91,131f.); a bit later he speaks about the middle that the human being should not forsake.

⁶² *Id.*; 132f.: "Lignum autem vitae plantatum in medio paradisi sapientiam illam significat, qua oportet ut intellegat anima in medio quodam rerum se esse ordinatam, ut quamvis subiectam sibi habeat omnem naturam corpoream, supra se tamen esse intellegat naturam dei et neque in dexteram declinet sibi arrogando, quod non est neque ad sinistram, per neglegentiam contemnendo, quod est..." In his main commentary Augustine does not any longer elaborate the central position of the tree of life; but there he associates the tree allegorically with the wisdom in Proverbs 3,18 and with Christ who refreshes the thirsty ones at the tree of life, and whose wisdom is a rock for them, etc. Cf. *De Genesi ad litteram* 8,4,8; CSEL 28/1,235s. Augustine often repeats the theme of deviation either to the right or to the left as mentioned in Deuteronomy and in the Proverbs. As far as Deuteronomy is concerned A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE gives in her *Biblia Augustiniana* no exact references where the text can be found. But she does in *Le livre des Proverbes*, Paris, 1975, p. 204s. And from those lines it gets obvious that Augustine does not quote the text of the Proverbs anymore to illustrate the Fall of Adam.

is dealt with in letter 48 is also supported by the same verses in the Bible. There too we heard the warning not to leave this middle, neither to the left nor to the right, although Augustine does not talk about the middle (*medietas*) but about the road (*via*) between the fire of excessive dedication and the water of laziness. As Adam was not allowed to lay hands on what belongs to God, likewise the monk who assumes pastoral care should not take the place of God; but just as the human being stands in the middle between the creator and the creation to be master over nature, likewise the monk should not recoil from his duty to assist the church in labour. The monks of Capraria should resist a dual temptation: on the one hand the ascent to heaven as the fire that strives to stay on the heights of arrogance and vanish there into the air. On the other hand there is the lazy descent as water does that looks for a bed in the lowest part. Conform to the arrangement of right and left thus corresponds the disposition of high and low.

In his second comment on Psalm 31 Augustine wants to clarify the deviation either to the right or to the left (Prov. 4,27) with the biblical concepts of justice and mercy: he who sins and doesn't repent but has made up his mind to continue his sinful life unpunished because it is his nature to be weak, abuses of God's mercy; however he who fears the judgement of God to such an extent that he thinks he is able to live in justice by his own means, falls into arrogance. The divine regulation summons people to stay away from the altitudes and the depths as well. If you want to ascent by your own means, you'll plunge into the ravine; if you collapsed here, you'll sink. Augustine advises: stay in the middle of the road. Let nobody be haughty far from the way, let nobody be lazy on the way (*Nemo sit superbus extra viam, nemo piger in via*)⁶³. Applied to the monks of Capraria we could say: there should be no laziness which hands over the sinners to God's mercy and on the other hand there shouldn't be any over-confidence that takes conversion in one's own hand.

Somewhere else Augustine reflects on the road between the right and the left. He reflects on the fact that Christ is the road and He keeps us from deviating either to the right or to the left. With regard to the mousetrap (*muscipula*) in Psalm 90,3, the preacher says he is not afraid of the pitfalls laid by the devil on both sides of the road, because as long as we stay on the road which is Christ himself, those snares

⁶³ *Enarrationes in psalmos* 31 s. 2, 1; CC 38,224f.: "ne declines in dexteram aut sinistram (Prou. 4,27)" warns against both: "Ne praesumas ad regnum de iustitia tua, ne praesumas ad peccandum de misericordia Dei." One shouldn't deviate from the road. Who's on it should stay there by perseverance.

have no effect⁶⁴. But in this comment Augustine doesn't elaborate the ideas of right or left as he does in his commentary on psalm 141 speaking about the *muscupula* in line 4. When we find ourselves on the road which is Christ, the mousetrap can't be any threat for believers because it is at the side of the road. For the unbeliever however who is beside the road, the crucified Christ is a scandal. In his arrogance he laughs at the remedy of the cross. The traps to the left and to the right consist in denying that cross when we are touched by the worldly prosperity on the right or by the earthly misfortune on the left and when we can't believe anymore that the promise is not meant for the present but for the future⁶⁵.

Only once Augustine calls that road the 'middleroad' (*via media*) between the left side of despair (*desperatio*) and the right side of presumption (*praesumptio*). Keeping the middleroad is quite difficult (*difficillimum*) unless Christ says: "I am the way, and the truth and the life." (John 14,6) To the question, "by which way?" the answer is: "I am the way!" To the question "where to?" the answer is "I am the truth! To the question: "where shall we stay?" The answer is: "I am the life!" Let us safely stay on the road (...) In the middle of the traps you will proceed (Eccl. 9,20). The traps aren't situated on the road but beyond and aside⁶⁶. The antipelagian tone fully resounds when Augustine quotes two verses from the Proverbs in his letter to abbot

⁶⁴ *Id.* 90 s. 1,4; CC 39,1256f.: "...circa uiam ponit, in uia non ponit. Via autem tua Christus sit, et tu non cades in muscupulam diaboli. Aberranti a uia, iam ibi est muscupula. Hinc atque hinc ponit laqueos, hinc atque inde ponit muscupulam; inter laqueos ambulas.." Do you want to walk safely? "Noli declinare in dexteram neque in sinistram; et sit tibi uia ille qui tibi factus est uia, ut perducatur te ad se per se, et non timebis laqueos uenientium."

⁶⁵ *Id.* 141,9; CC 40,2051-2053: "Non eos Christus sinit ponere in uia, ne non sit qua eamus; sinit tamen eos ponere iuxta uiam, ut de uia non declinemus. (...) nec promissio te capiat, nec terror elidat." In the next verse (10; 2053) Augustine does no longer see the right and the left side as the ambushes along the road but as the direction into which we keep our eyes during the ordeal of the persecutions; someone who regards the future (*futura*) and looks down on the present (*praesentia*), looks to the right (*in dextram*) and in the light of the future he is able to endure everything. Augustine adheres firmly to the *futura*, for if someone keeps searching for humane praise during his ordeal he looks to the left and disregards God's promises.

⁶⁶ *Sermo Wilm.* 11,1 (MA 695). The image of the way equally appears in the ascending movement of contemplation and the descending movement of preaching. See M.-F. BERROUARD, *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication. Le thème des anges qui montent et qui descendent*, in *Recherches Augustiniennes II, Études Augustiniennes*, Paris, 1962, 447-501, p. 481: "... en descendant pour imiter l'exemple du Christ, le prédicateur trouve, dans cette humilité même et à la suite du Christ encore, le chemin de son ascension."

Valentine of Hadrumetum (426/427) to discuss the difficult question (*difficillima questio*) of the relation between the free will and God's grace.

"Make the roads straight for your feet. Do not swerve to the right or to the left. Turn your foot away from evil. God knows the paths on your righthand side. Those on your left hand are perverse. But God himself straightens your paths and brings them out in peace (Prov. 4, 26-27)"⁶⁷.

The first verse proves the existence of a free will which has to keep the middle between left and right. The second verse puts in evidence the necessity of God's grace. At a first reading there seems to be a contradiction between both verses, for why are men not allowed to deviate neither to the right nor to the left whereas the paths to the right are approved of and those to the left are rejected? In Psalm 1,6 and Mt. 25,15; 7,23 Augustine finds confirmation that God knows the paths to the right and disapproves of the paths to the left, for the paths of the unjust get astray. God also 'knows' the wicked but in the context of "As you are now, I have not made you." (*tales vos ego non feci*). The straight ways, the ways of the righteous and the good works have been made by God (*quae praeparavit deus ut in illis ambulemus*) (Eph. 2,10)⁶⁸. The explanation of the first verse why no deviation to the right is allowed now becomes obvious: one shouldn't credit oneself with the good works, neither should anybody rely on personal strength⁶⁹. Deviating to the left is not permitted as ungrateful sinners (*ingratus*) often pretend that God's grace shines more brightly when it has the occasion to turn a bad will into a good one⁷⁰. This is an inverted representation and a perversion that puts God's grace to the test and negates its transcending characteristic so that only the earthly desire in the sinner remains (*terrena cupiditas*).

Not to the right, nor to the left

⁶⁷ *Epistula* 215,5; CSEL 57,391s.: "Rectos cursus fac pedibus tuis et vias tuas dirige, ne declines in dexteram neque in sinistram. Auerte autem pedem tuum a via mala. Vias enim, quae a dextris sunt, novit deus; peruersae uero sunt, quae a sinistris sunt. Ipse autem rectos faciet cursus tuos, itinera tua in pace producet."

⁶⁸ *Id.* 6; 392v.

⁶⁹ *Id.* 7; 394: "...sibi uult adsignare non deo...". To prevent that deviation the text goes on with: "Ipse autem rectos faciet cursus tuos... non confidens in uirtute tua..." for God is strength.

⁷⁰ *Id.* 8; 395: "...nec sic defendatis liberum arbitrium, ut ei bona opera sine dei gratia tribuatis, nec sic defendatis gratiam, ut quasi de illa securi mala opera diligatis, quod ipsa gratia dei auertat a uobis." Also in his commentary on Deuteronomy Augustine treats v. 28,14 that imposes us not to go to the right nor to the left, following the false gods. He is surprised that going to the right side is connected with false gods, for the right side is usually an object of praise. The answer comes very quickly: what is

but to the right side.

God 'knows' the ways of the just as they are the right side and represent the eternal goods they have put their minds on. Opposite to this right side (*dextera*) there is the left side (*sinistra*). Earthly happiness (*felicitas*) is often called *dextera*, with its money, its cattle, its fortune and children ... This earthly wealth is permitted, for it was also the part of Abraham and Jacob; but after all it is the left side because it's temporal, corporal and mortal. Nobody should flee from wealth as if it were something improper but one shouldn't take it for the right side (*dextera*). He who does so belongs to the perverted people (*maligni*) quoted in Psalm 143,8 "whose mouths speak vanity (*vanitas*) and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood." God, the eternal whose years never end Ps. 101,28) belongs to the right side (*dextera*) and this is where our desire should be. We are allowed to make use of the left side, if only our desire is turned to the eternal of the right side (*sinistra utamur ad tempus, dexteram desideremus in aeternum*). When wealth pours into us we may not be devoted to it with our hearts (*ne apponatis cor*) because then we turn left into right⁷¹.

In a comment on the 5th verse of Psalm 120: "The Lord is your protection; the Lord is your shade at your right hand." (*Dominus tegumentum super manum dexterae tuae*), Augustine points out that God is not only the strength of our right hand but even protects that right hand⁷². He quotes three other texts from the Bible to elucidate *dextera*.

a) Mt. 6,3

"Do not let your left hand know what

disapproved of is not what is on the right side but the one who deviates to the right of the way of life (*declinare*), that means who arrogates what belongs to God (*adrogare*). Then comes Prov. 4,27. God knows the good right side as he knows the ways of the just. (Psalm 1, 6). God straightens our steps with his mercy. In 3, 303f. Augustine examines the meaning of the right or left of false gods; one shouldn't look for them on the right to get happiness or on the left to avoid the damage of misfortune. This happiness can happen to the good ones as to the bad ones as well. It's vanity and that is why the right side of injustice (*dextera iniquitatis*) is not God who is the right side of justice (*dextera aequitatis*).

⁷¹ *Enarrationes in psalmos* 143,18; CC 40, 2085f.: "Quorum os luctum est uanitatem, et dextera eorum dextera iniquitatis."

⁷² *Id.* 120,11; CC 40,1796f.: "...quamuis iam manus dexterae nostrae sit in nobis, protegit nos Deus super manum dexterae nostrae. Non nobis sufficit habere manum dexterae, nisi ille et ipsam manum dexterae protegat." Cf. *id.* 72,30; 39,1001 where Augustine refers to a special grammatical construction in v. 24 'tenuisti manum dexterae meae'. Normally one might expect to read, 'manum dexteram meam'. He founds his opinion on several quotations from the Bible when he explains that hand (*manus*) means strength (*potestas*). So one should read: the strength of my right hand, and this refers to God who is always with you (cf v. 23). Opposed to this there is the earthly desire (*concupiscentia terrena*) which is represented by the left hand.

your right hand is doing.”

(*Nesciat sintra tua quid facit dextera tua.*)

b) Song of Songs 2,6:

“O, that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embrace me!”

(*Sinistra eius sub capito meo, et dextera eius complectetur.*)

c) Prov. 3,16:

“Long life is in his right hand, in his left hand are riches and honour.”

(*Longitudo dierum et anni vitae in dextera eius; in sinistra autem eius divitiae et gloria.*)

a) He who looks for complete happiness in earthly possessions, which – as he recognizes – come from God, makes of his left hand the right hand. But earthly bliss sometimes happens to be the part of the just as it was the case with Job; but this just man didn’t make right from left. Therefore his left hand could be hit, his right hand was enough to him. Thus his left hand was only help and comfort and in no way the foundation of his happiness⁷³.

b) Christ supports his church as a bridegroom comforts and supports his bride, with his left hand, that means with the temporal which is granted not by the devil but by God. But at the same time Christ is the Head that calls to the right. That is why the left hand should remain left under the Head to give faith a dwelling place. The right hand should have its residence above the left where Christ is. Only when the left hand is under the head, the bridegroom will embrace the bride with his right hand⁷⁴.

c) “Length of days” for us here on earth means “old age”. In the land of the living that length means eternity. So the true length is the right hand; riches and honour, so dear to the human being, are the left hand. If someone gives you a cuff on the right ear because he wants to deprive you of your faith, offer him your left ear. So did Paul who claimed to be a Roman; he knew they couldn’t be afraid for his right

⁷³ *Id.* 120,8; 1793f. “...sed Iob pro sinistra illam (felicitem) habebat, non pro dextera; nam dexteram non habebat nisi apud Deum perpetuam et sempiternam felicitatem. ... Sinistra uero erat pro adiutorio consolationis, non ad firmamentum felicitatis. Nam felicitas eius uera atque germana Deus erat.” Next is Psalm 143,15: ‘Happy are the people whose God is the Lord’.

⁷⁴ *Id.* 9; 1794f.: “...supponens sinistram ad consolationem, imponens dexteram ad protectionem... supra illam sit fides tua, ubi habitat Christus.”

ear because they did not believe in Christ yet. That's why he frightened them with his left ear. Augustine tells us that goodness which is of a different order shouldn't be mixed with evil; saying so he respects Mt. 6,3 ('Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing') which now corresponds with the Songs of Salomo 2,6: one should only do good for the sake of eternal life. Don't let the desire for the temporal life (*cupiditas vitae temporalis*) slip in by pursuing earthly reward⁷⁵. His comment on Psalm 120 is greatly influenced by the fact that on that specific day (december 5, 412) the church celebrated the commemoration of the death of the martyr Crispina. It shouldn't surprise anybody that two years later Augustine in his comment on Psalm 137 v.7 "You stretch out your hand over the wrath of my enemies and your right hand makes me healthy". (*Super iram inimicorum meorum extendit manum tuam et saluum me fecit dextera tua*) states that Crispina did not get her left health (*salus sinistra*); that means her temporal and corporal health (*temporalis et carnalis*) – but she did get her right health with the angels on the right side (*salus dextera cum angelis in dextera*). At that right hand of God, Christ resides in immortality. Strictly spoken God has neither a right nor a left hand but the right side of God (*dextera Dei*) is the happiness nobody has ever seen; and for that reason gets called as such. It happens only now and then that God heals the body of his saints (*salvat in sinistra*) but He always restores them on the spritual level (*semper salvat in dextera*)⁷⁶.

The 5th verse of Psalm 136: "If I forgot you Jerusalem, let my right hand forget me." (*Si oblitus tui fuero, Jerusalem, obliviscatur me dextera mea*) makes Augustine reflect again on the tension between right and left. Again both are mingled when you do the good things for the sake of human honour and when the left hand knows what the right hand does. (Mt. 6,3) The right hand in that case is not damaged, because it leaves them behind and forgets about them⁷⁷. The citizens of Babel search for their happiness in temporal goods but they do not

⁷⁵ *Id.* 10; 1795f.: "...ut hic aliquid retribuatur, miscet se sinistra operibus dexterae."

⁷⁶ *Id.* 137,14; CC 40,1987f.: "Non illam fecit saluam (Crispina) in sinistra, sed fecit in dextera". The persecutors of Crispina were healthy as far as their body was concerned and Crispina is dead. But their health (*salus*) is to the left side (*in sinistra*), her health is to the right side (*in dextera*).

⁷⁷ *Id.* 136,15; 1973f. "...concupiscentia uitae temporalis, aut laudis humanae, aut alicuius commodi saecularis... uita aeterna manet in se; illi remanent in delectatione temporali, et faciunt sibi dexterum quod sinistrum est." Cf. *In Ioannis euangelium tractatus* 6,3; PL 35,2021 in which the right hand of Mt. 6,3 is called the pure cons-

know about real happiness. It is not because they do not want to know or want to forget, but because Jerusalem forgets about them. Not temporal happiness is the sin, but turning your left hand into your right hand is. When you enjoy earthly happiness, so the preacher says, don't boast upon it and do not appropriate because then you would resemble people who eat left-handed. When you correct a guest who's eating left-handed at your table because that is an insult to the host, likewise it is an insult to eat left-handed at God's table⁷⁸. In Jerusalem the danger of confusion does not exist any more. "There every essential need will disappear, there the highest form of happiness will emerge"

⁷⁹.

Uno otioso negotiosum

Is the happiness of Jerusalem not the truth for which monks have freed themselves? Haven't they chosen their leisure (*otium*) for the sake of that city, her quiet (*quies*), her vision of peace (*visio pacis*)? Does this mean that the essential needs (*necessitas*) of the monks have been defeated or that they are dead? The monastic quiet is definitely linked to the substantial rest about which Augustine has written on various occasions. In the Bible we mainly find references in the story of creation (Gn. 1,2) and in what happened on the Sinai on the occasion of the proclamation of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20, 8-11).

In his letter to Januarius Augustine charges the Jews because they misunderstand the rules of the sabbath and apply the exemption (vacation) to this worldly lifetime whereas it should be understood on a spiritual level⁸⁰. On different occasions he instructs that the vacancy

science (*pura conscientia*) and the left hand the worldly desire (*cupiditas mundi*). How do we know if earthly desire (*cupiditas saeculi*) was involved when we did something out of love for the good? Stand before God and look into your heart: what were you after? your salvation or the volatile praise of man?

⁷⁸ *Id.* 16; 1974: "...si habueritis sinistram, nolite de sinistra praesumere... Si mensae tuae iniuriam putas fieri manducante conuiuia de sinistra, quomodo non fit iniuria mensae Dei, si quod dexterum est, sinistrum feceris, et quod sinistrum est, dextrum feceris?"

⁷⁹ *Id.* 17; 1975: "Moriatur ibi omnis necessitas, oriatur ibi summa felicitas." That we are not dealing with a strict opposition between left and right in which earthly happiness from the left side would be rejected, becomes also clear from another comment on Psalms. In it Ester proves that inhabitants of Jerusalem who have their heart turned to heaven, are at the same time excellent managers of the Babylonian state affairs (*negotia Babyloniae*). On the contrary, some people who claim to follow Moses, but whose hearts are turned to 'worldly matters', prove that heavenly state affairs (*negotia caelestia*) can be betrayed. *Enarrationes in psalmos* 51,6; CC 39,627.

which makes them free for trifles and parties has nothing to do with the promise of future rest. Those people take a rest to be able to work afterwards, says Augustine, but we work in order to be able to repose in the future. Here on earth not a real rest is at stake (*in re*); but a rest that we hope for (*in spe*)⁸¹.

In the Old Testament people, of course, took a physical rest (*in otio corporaliter*) but this rest was only a prefiguration (*figura*) of sanctification in the quiet of the Holy Spirit⁸². It is this Spirit who poured out love in the heart of the human being (Rom. 5,5) and enabled him to act rightly, what wouldn't have been possible without the divine help. For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil. 2,13) Once all this is accomplished the soul will be able to rest in the satisfaction of the seventh day which is nothing else but the rest of God Himself. "Liberate yourself and see that I am God." (*Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.*) (Psalm 45,11) When God rests after He made the good things (Gn. 1,31;2,2) then He also rests after the excellent work He accomplished in us. And we enjoy in Him the eternal rest which He grants us⁸³. God does not rest after His work because he needs that rest. This idea does not apply to God (*carnalis cogitatio*). The main point is the rest 'after' the good deeds which He accomplished in us. So in order to be able to rest, the good deeds have to be done first. The human being shouldn't strive for a corporal but for a spiritual exemption that consists in the tranquility of the heart (*tranquillitas cordis*) and the serenity of a good conscience (*serenitas bonae conscientiae*). He who does not sin, definitely knows the sabbath and performs no menial labour (Lv. 22,7) because he is no slave to sin (John 8,34). As the seventh day explicitly mentions the Ghost so in other places in the Bible the number seven refers to the Holy Ghost. Isaiah mentions the seven gifts along which wisdom descends on the human being and then lifts him up to bring him to the wisdom of the Ghost⁸⁴. With good reason the Ghost is told to be the pledge for the

⁸⁰ *Epistula* 55,3,5; CSEL 34/2,174f.

⁸¹ *Sermo* 9,3; CC 41,110f.: the Jews honour the sabbath, but to them it is a kind of corporal relaxation (*carnali otio*) filled with trifles (*nugae*) and dancing. "Tu autem ad hoc uis requiescere ut labores, cum ad hoc debeas laborare ut requiescas." Cf. *Enarrationes in psalmos* 91,2; CC 39,1280: they celebrate the sabbath *otio corporaliter languido et fluxo et luxurioso*.

⁸² *Epistula* 55,10,18; CSEL 34/2,188.

⁸³ *Id.* 10,19.12,22; 190.192f. See *Confessiones* 12; CC 27,217ff. and *De Genesi ad litteram* 4; CSEL 28/1,93ff.

promise made to us. (2 Cor. 1,22). Through it we are growing peaceful in our Lord and our God, gentle, patient to be once in Him who is the house of our rest (*sabbatum sabbatorum*)⁸⁵. When the prescribed rest on the sabbath is the third of the three first commandments, which are related to God only and not to the neighbour, then this means that in all the good things we do our attention (*intentio*) should exclusively be directed to the future and eternal rest. For the sake of those good deeds, only the third of the commandments should be observed not literally but in a metaphorical sense (*figurate*)⁸⁶. One could wonder if the remaining seven commandments, which regulate our relation with the neighbour, aren't inspired by this third commandment which is in fact a transition to the activities expressed in the remaining commandments. From there they steer us to the eternal rest in God's goodness.

Thanks to the Ghost who lives in us there is this growing rest in our heart. It enables us by doing good works to get ready for the eternal sabbath (*sabbatum sabbatorum*), which shall be free from labour and burden. Through Christ's suffering there is already in this present life a transition (*transitum*) to the quiet which is no lazy sluggishness (*desidiosa segnitia*) but an unutterable calm of an effective action (*tranquilitas actionis otiosae*). At the end of our lives, with all the works finished (*opera*), we shall take a rest in order to rejoice in the action (*actio*) of the future life. But this action which is effective in the praise of God, has nothing to do with the labour of the limbs or the pressure of worries of all kind. This activity doesn't ensue the labour because the rest will be without end and continue in the activity which is itself part of the rest⁸⁷. Here already on earth people don't work any longer for love of this world (*saeculum*) but for the

⁸⁴ *Sermo* 270,5; PL 38,1242f.: "... insinuata est nobis quies post bona omnia opera nostra, sicut insinuata est Dei quies post omnia bona opera sua..." Lev. 22,7: *Omne opus servile non facietis* and John 8,34: *Omnis qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati*. Isaiah 11,2 with the seven gifts: *Implebit eum Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, consilii et fortitudinis, scientiae et pietatis, Spiritus timoris Dei*. The spritual grace which descends upon us, starts with the wisdom and ends with the fear; vice versa we rise from down to high and start from fear to end at wisdom; the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Psalm 110,10). The sanctification by the Spirit of God in the *uacatio* of the heart, as we can read in Isaiah 66,2: my Spirit is on the humble and contrite in spirit, on him who trembles at my word. Cf. *Enarrationes in psalmos* 91,2; CC 39,1280. The *uacatio* should be free of the bad works and not of the good ones as the Jews pretend: "...si homo christianus in sabbato cordis sui, id est, in uacatione et tranquillitate et serenitate conscientiae suae non perturbatus." See also s. 8,6; CC 41,84f.

⁸⁵ *Sermo* 9,6; CC 41,118-120.

⁸⁶ *Epistula* 55,11,20-12,22; 190-192f.

⁸⁷ *Id.* 55,9,17; 187f.: "...permanet in actione quod ad quietem pertinet, nec in opere laborare nec in cogitatione fluctuare..."

sake of the eternal rest which is God⁸⁸. There will be a different kind of effort (*negotium*): that of the Alleluia or the praise of God (*laudare Deum*). There will be the dwelling-place of the happy, because in them lives God who is everything in all of them. There nobody will carry the burden of the activity to satisfy the primary needs (*opera necessitatis*) as there are plowing, sowing and doing business. Nobody will have to concentrate on the works of charity either (*opera misericordiae*) like feeding the hungry, dressing the naked, because the first necessities (*necessitas*) will be dead and no longer misery (*miseria*) will exist any more. In that house everybody will be happy because of the relaxation through the Unique who will never cause boredom as earthly pleasures do (*uno otioso negotioso*)⁸⁹. Some people hate that kind of relaxation (*otium*) in the house of God and want his house to become a place of business (*domus negotiationis*) (Mt 21,13), that means that they only want to boast upon their own realisations. They are not willing to learn from Psalm 45,11 teaching them that God works in them and lifts them up out of their occupations. They are the hardworking merchants (*negotiatores actuosi*) who, as becomes clear in the word *negotium*, deny the *otium*⁹⁰.

Not yet *necessitas mortua* for the monks

⁸⁸ *Sermo* 9,13; CC 41,133.

⁸⁹ *Enarrationes in psalmos* 86,9; CC 39,1206f.: "Habitabimur et habitabimus; subiciuntur illi omnia, ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus. ... Hoc uno beati otioso negotioso. ... mortua necessitate, peribunt opera necessitatis..." Often Augustine refers to the happy one's in God's house (Ps 83,5) Cf. *Id.* 148,8; CC 40,2170: blessed are those whose activity it is to praise the Lord (*laudare Deum*), who don't have to work to satisfy corporal needs (*opera necessitatis*) as there are plowing, sowing ... They also are protected from the works of injustice (*opera iniquitatis*) like robbery, looting, adultery... The works of mercy (*opera misericordiae*) are no longer necessary: breaking bread, dressing the naked... Cf also *id.* 147,3; 2141: "...illius uitae negotium otiosum... non fluctuabit negotium nostrum, otiosum negotium plenum solius dulcedinis, nulla interpellatum molestia, nulla fatigatione sauciatum, nulla nube perturbatum. Our duty will be one of loving and praising (*amare et laudare; laudare in amore, amare in laudibus*). See further 6; 2143f. For the *opera necessitatis* and the *opera misericordiae*. Also *id.* 110,1; 1622: "Beati qui habitant in domo tua... (ps. 83,5), hoc erit otiosorum negotium, hoc opus uacantium, hoc actio quietorum, haec cura securorum." See finally s. 255,1,1; PL 38,1186.

⁹⁰ *Id.* 70, s. 1,18; 955f.: "Negotiatio et in graeca lingua ab actu dicitur, et in latina a negato otio; sed siue ab actu, siue a negato otio, discutiatur quid sit. (...) Haec requies contra negotiatores praedicatur, haec requies contra eos qui oderunt otium praedicatur, agendo et iactando se de operibus suis, ut non requiescant in Deo, et tanto longius a gratia resiliant, quanto magis de suis operibus extolluntur." In 19; 956-958 Augustine points out how close the Pelagians come to the Jews and their literal interpretation (*littera*) of the Law.

The monks of Capraria are not incited to engage in manual labour; obviously there are different forms of negotium. In *De opere monachorum* Augustine makes a plea to convince the *servi Dei* of the primary needs which are inevitable (*necessaria*) in this life. Relying on a literal reading of Mt. 6,25-34 (Look at the birds of the air and the flowers of the field) they refused to occupy themselves with corporal and temporal needs (*indigentia*). The quotation of Paul in 2 Thess. 3,10 (Anyone unwilling to work should not eat) should only be applied to spiritual nourishment. (Supported as they were by 1 Cor. 3,5 -10: I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the growth...) and should be understood as "spiritual works" (*opera spiritualia*), which nourishes by the reading of the word of God and by prayers. This nourishment fosters the development of other people⁹¹. For the sake of the gospel and its gratuitous character, Augustine defends the corporal works (*opera corporalia*): the preaching of the gospel shouldn't involve one single material advantage. The monks concerned are not willing to assume pastoral duties; they do want to feed themselves spiritually on the gospel and they expect the others to take care of their corporal nourishment. Augustine points out that only the apostles and the ministers of God (*ministri Dei*) are allowed to live from the gospel, because the bread they eat is free as the grace they preach is free of charge too (*gratuita gratia*)⁹². Their reward should be the equivalent of what people owe them. The ministers are soldiers (*miles*) who are paid by the people of God (*provinciales*) a stipendium on the corporal level (*carnalia*) after they themselves have sown on the spiritual field (*uerbum, ministerium sacramenti*). Saint Paul renounced this legitimate reward by working for his living, which makes him similar to the Samaritan who promises the publican to repay whatever is spent (Luke 10, 35). If Paul wants to spend more of his own wages (*stipendium*) for the Church, that means: if he intends to fight for her he does so to take away every possible suspicion of taking profit from

⁹¹ *De opere monachorum* 1,2; CSEL 41,532-534. See A. SÁNCHEZ CARAZO, *La comunidad en el "De opere monachorum"*, in *La comunidad en San Agustín*, Mar-cilla 1984.

⁹² *Id.* 7,8; 544: "... ex euangelio uiuentes panem gratuitum manducarent ab eis, quibus gratuitam gratiam praedicabant." Augustine takes an example from the holy community life (*sancta communio vitae*) in Jerusalem. See 16,17,560 ff: the abundance (*abundantia*) which some enjoy, should take away the shortage of others (preachers ...) the latter are able to share their spiritual profits with those who experience a spiritual shortage, so that a kind of equality (*aequalitas*) is the result. The preachers should use the gifts sacredly (*sancte uti*); that means they should only be used to meet the essential needs and not to feed their laziness (*non ad pascendam pigritiam*).

the gospel⁹³. Why does Paul suffer with the weak? (*in Christo conpatiens infirmis* ...1 Cor. 9,15). Out of charity he wanted to weaken himself (*infirmaretur*) with the weak, who indeed could suspect the preachers of the gospel to do so for the sake of profit (*mercimoniorum nundinas*)⁹⁴.

Which advantage has the minister of God (*seruus dei*) to abandon his former activities in the world and to convert himself to the spiritual life of the military service (*militia*) if he still has to do with the efforts (*negotio*) of manual labour or craftsmanship? The example of Paul, who followed the Lord, should be an answer. (Phil. 2,16) The monks too should weaken themselves with the weak in order not to be suspected of taking profit and living in idleness.

Somebody who was rich before and now is not hindered by any physical weakness to perform manual duties, would indeed lose his wisdom of Christ if he wasn't cured from the tumour of his arrogance when cut from his abundance and reduced to humility by the not too big essential physical needs (*modica necessaria*) of this life. The latter is as a matter of fact the obvious reason why he has to work skillfully.

Somebody who was poor before should notice that he is no longer preoccupied with the increase of his private possessions (*res priuata*), but on the contrary becomes concentrated on the love for community life (*caritas uitae communis*) where people live in oneness of heart and soul, no longer selfcentered anymore, but focused on the interests of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2,21). He who realizes things with his own hands, doesn't consider them to be his own, but knows they belong to the community; also when someone is in need it is the same community which will provide the things he needs (*de communi suppleat*). Augustine here repeats Paul's words "as having nothing and yet possessing everything" (*quasi nihil habentes et omnia possidentes*, 2 Cor. 6,10)⁹⁵. Their example is not only in their own profit but also the weak take profit from it: they can see now that the monastic leisure time (*otium*) is not after an easy way of earning their living; on the contrary it is on the lookout for God's kingdom along the narrow and

⁹³ *Id.* 539-541 en 8,9; 544v.

⁹⁴ *Id.* 10,11; 549: "sumptuosum euangelium... quasi uendere" and 11,12; 550f.: "... portans utique eorum infirmitatem in compassionis similitudine..."

⁹⁵ *Id.* 25,32; 577. See also 27,35; 585: in our military service we are not preoccupied with tomorrow, because we have not to prove ourselves to Him because of temporal goods which only have a tomorrow, but because of the eternal goods which belong to an eternal present (*semper hodiernus*). As a result it is perfectly possible to rejoice in Him and at the same time to avoid being entangled in everyday affairs (*negotia saecularia*) (2 Tim. 2,4).

difficult way of the life they have chosen (*propositum*). In this way the weak do not run the risk of being suffocated by the stench of evil monks; on the contrary they will rather recover by the perfume of the good monks. The monks themselves will escape from the traps (*insidia, laquei*) of the enemy who intends to destroy the odour of sanctity⁹⁶. In his turn Augustine will not withdraw from his task as a secular magistrate (*iudicia saecularia*) which is one of his main preoccupations besides his ecclesiastical duties (*ecclesiasticae curae*). There is no workless rest free from work for himself nor for his monks, the bishop concludes, for we take the small road of labour and fatigue, but the yoke is soft and the burden light through the hope we have that He'll call us to the rest⁹⁷.

With manual labour Augustine wants to protect the loved relaxation against the schemes of the enemy. Likewise he will encourage the monks of Capraria not to lose their otium because of an earthly benefit (*terrena delectatio*) that refuses to meet with the essential needs of the Church (*necessitas ecclesiae*). In fact there is no perfect rest yet; there is only hope here⁹⁸. We may presume the monks of Capraria had no problems with working for their basic needs (*opera neccesitatis*) nor with the works of charity (*opera miseriae*) to which they could only partly oblige themselves; as it happened, by giving alms to the poor. But apart from the works of mercy and the secular administration of justice the Church was responsible for at that time, there was also the necessity of preaching God's word. Augustine urges his monks not to resist this effort (*negotium*) and this because of the two lives in the totus Christus which he has referred to in the beginning of his letter⁹⁹.

Augustine had discussed these *duae uitae in Christo* before, at

⁹⁶ *Id.* 28,36; 585s. In 30,38; 589 Augustine points out that the error about the workless rest in the monastery applies to the weak (*infirmiores*), their being set free (*uacatio*) is too easy and is wrongly called sanctity. Compare with the odour of Christ in *Praeceptum* 8,1 (L. Verheijen, I, 437).

⁹⁷ *Id.* 29,37; 586-589.

⁹⁸ This eschatological perspective of monastic life was already exposed by Cassian. See R. A. MARKUS, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 175f.: "And what the Church could not be in the world, that the monastery could not be in the Church. There was no place for a spiritual elite in the body of the faithful, any more than for a Christian elite in the late Roman world. The monastery could not embody a utopia for the Church, or for Roman society, to aspire to: no social group could be that (...) The monastery was no less subject to this necessity than any other society; but it was a permanent reminder of the eschatological City. (...) The distance between the heavenly Jerusalem and any historical society was infinite."

⁹⁹ A similar phrasing is found with Cassian, in which action and contemplation are two moments of one unity. See R. A. MARKUS, *The End of Ancient Christianity*.

first elaborately in *Contra Faustum*, then more concisely in *De consensu Euangelistarum*¹⁰⁰. Both lives are symbolised in Leah and Rachel: the first is devoted to the labour (*laborans*), the second beholds the Principle (*uisum principium*) or beholds the Word through which she sees the Principle (*verbum ex quo videtur principium*). Leah represents the action of the human and mortal life in which we work hard because of our belief, while we remain uncertain about the result of our efforts. This is what explains the weak eyes of Leah. (Wisd. 9,14). "The thoughts of the mortals are hesitating, our expectations uncertain". Rachel represents the hope (*spes*) for the eternal contemplation (*contemplatio*) of God, which shall be the splendid intelligence of the Truth. This explains why Rachel is so goodlooking. As Jacob we love Rachel, but first we have to practise the seven prescripts of the Decalogue, in the works of justice (*iustitia*) which are a real pain (*labor actionum et passionum*) and which nobody can love for their own sake; people only tolerate them (*tolerantia laboris*) because through them they get access to the delight of wisdom. When Jacob has learnt after seven years that the work of justice comes first and precedes the delight of the insight in truth, when he finally wants to embrace Rachel, Laban, whose name means purification from sins (*dealbatio*) tells him that another seven years are waiting for him to make him poor in spirit, meek, sad, hungry and thirsty for

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p. 194f.: "Monastic contemplation was the process of acquiring what would be imparted to others in the active life of teaching outside. (...) Reading and teaching – especially the Bible – came to be attached to the idea of the monastic life, exemplifying its contemplative and active aspects; and reading and teaching integrated the monastic with the clerical ideal."

¹⁰⁰ In *De consensu euangelistarum* I,5,8; CSEL 43,7f. Augustine writes about the two powers of the human soul (*uirtutes*), represented by Leah and Rachel: "...una activa, altera contemplativa; illa que itur, ista qua pervenitur; illa qua laboratur, ut cor mundetur ad videndum Deum; ista quae vacatur et videtur Deus: illa est in praeceptis exercendae vitae huius temporalis, ista in doctrina vitae illius sempiternae. Ac per hoc illa operatur, ista requiescit; quia illa est in purgatione peccatorum, ista in lumine purgatorum. Ac per hoc in hac vita mortali illa est in opere bonae conversationis; ista vero magis in fide, et apud perpaucos per speculum in aenigmate, et ex parte in aliqua visione incommutabilis veritatis. Hae duae virtutes in duabus uxoribus Jacob figuratae intelliguntur..." See F. CAYRÉ, *La contemplation augustinienne*, Paris, 1954, p. 37: "le mot *vie* (...) répond le mieux à la pensée complexe exprimée par *virtus*." One can distinguish between the power of contemplation in heaven and the powers of action here on earth, which joins the four moral *virtutes* (*prudencia, iustitia, temperantia, fortitudo*) in one active *virtus*: "Multae virtutes, sed hic necessariae; et ab his virtutibus imus in virtutem. Quam virtutem? Christum, Dei virtutem, et Dei sapientiam. (...) Ergo ab his virtutibus huius actionis ibimus in virtutem illius contemplationis, qua

righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peaceloving (Mt. 5,3 ff.). At night in his bed and thinking of Rachel he embraced Leah, who represents the labour (*labor*) of the just and who gives birth to many children for the Kingdom of God. Rachel however remains infertile, as she is not willing to adapt the leisure time (*otium*) to the habits of weak people who in their distress ask for understanding. However, the *otium* wants to give birth to children too and teach the others from its wisdom. Therefore Rachel will prefer to appeal to images and similarities which evoke the divine rather than giving up her assignment to teach. She proposes Jacob to take her slave¹⁰¹, but at the same time she wants to get some of Leah's fertility and she tries to get hold of some of Leah's mandrakes (*mandragora*). They will provide her with fame (*fama bona*) and reputation (*fama popularis*) and attract the good people outside the church who could assist the human race with their advice. In this way the active and effective working people (*actuosi et negotiosi*) testify of Rachel's life through the mandrakes of Leah's son¹⁰². But Leah gets annoyed at the fact that quite intelligent people who are perfectly fit for the administration and the rule of ecclesiastical affairs stick to their leisure time (*otium*), to study and teach. Doing so they keep themselves far from the inconvenience of every action (*actio*) while they only pursue recognition (*gloria popularis*) with their life filled with zealous study. Leah protests and asks, "Isn't it enough for you to have taken my husband away that you now are greedy for the mandrakes of my son?"¹⁰³ Rachel shows herself yielding towards her sister and allows her husband to sleep with Leah that night. Those who had freed themselves for science can get more experienced by learning from the temptations and worries in the service of the community. Equipped that way they can provide the doctrine of wisdom (*doctrina sapientiae*) with an excellent reputation necessary to stimulate those who are still learning. But it is obvious

¹⁰¹ *Contra Faustum* 22,52; CC 25/1, 645-647 and 54; 648-650. In other places Augustine is inspired by Job 39,30 where the eagle ('his eyes spy the prey: they see it from far away, and its young ones suck up the blood') is the image of the preacher who at the one side feels torn apart by the desire to contemplate things from above through the extasis of the mind and who at the other side longs to guard the things on earth from below. This is the measure that's the best adapted to human occupations. This expectation makes the contemplative fly up high in the sky to eternal life while the result of the preaching is unsure because of human weakness and doubt. See M.-F. BERROUARD, *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication...* p. 457f.

¹⁰² *Id.* 56; 652: "...uitae propter studium conquirendae et contemplandae ueritatis otiosae..."

¹⁰³ *Id.* 57; 653.

that they will have to be forced to take up that responsibility as Leah did with Jacob returning from the field, when she said to him: "You must come into me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes" (Gen. 30,16). So, no fame is favourable to any doctrine (*doctrina*) without helpful labour (*labor officiosus*)¹⁰⁴. Augustine does not refrain from stressing the prophetic effect of those Scriptural passages. People all over the world, so he says, quit their worldly career (*spes saeculi*) to dedicate themselves to the search for truth. But rather unexpectedly they are claimed by the church in need (*ecclesiastica necessitas*). Labour is assigned to them as if Leah were saying: "You shall come into me..." They share the mystery of God in a pure way (*caste*) to give birth to the children of faith in the dark of this world. They were taken away from the chosen way of their contemplative life (*professio*) to the mercy with the people, as Jacob who didn't reject Leah that night so that Rachel would be able to eat sweet-scenting and exquisite apples. Rachel too, by the mercy of God, brings forth a child herself, but unexpectedly. For it seldom happens that there is a sound, though only partial, apprehension, without fleshy ideas, of the Word from which the Principle is seen (*uerbum ex quo videtur principium*, cf. John 1,1)¹⁰⁵.

So Augustine seems to reprimand those who want to get rid of every strain (*negotium*), which does not mean that he disapproves of their zeal for wisdom. He surely wants to set things right: first there is the faith that strenghtens the good deeds (the seven commandments, *uirtus laboriosa*). Only then this faith will reach its goal and rest (third commandment) in the glorious wisdom (*luminosa sapientia*). Once that wisdom is reached in this world one can enjoy the splendour of

¹⁰⁴ G. FOLLIET, "Otiosa dignitas" in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 17 (1971), 59-67, p. 63 recognizes in the good reputation (*fama*) of the doctrine a remembrance of Cicero's *dignitas* which leaders need to succeed in their assignment. This popular fame reflects on the people who, on account of their profession, are dedicated to the *otium*. It's among them that men will be chosen who will be useful for the organization of the state and the church. Augustine himself chooses for the double life of the mixed way: "Le loisir dont le but est la recherche de la vérité demeure, aux yeux de l'Évêque d'Hippone, l'idéal auquel doit revenir dans toute la mesure du possible l'homme d'action. Bien que favorable à la vie mixte, Augustin ne cache pas les difficultés de sa réussite..." (p. 65) Living a double life is extremely difficult for the bishop.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* 58; 653s.: "...ut hanc curam suscipiant, ut coguntur... uenire omnes ex operibus saeculi et ire in otium cognoscendae et contemplandae ueritatis tamquam in amplexum Rachel..." Cf. M.F. BERROUARD, *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication*... p. 483: "... c'est le même contemplatif, en tout cas, qui s'attache à saisir les deux états du Verbe et qui (...) pénètre d'autant plus la profondeur du mystère de son incarnation qu'il comprend mieux sa puissance et sa gloire."

the intellect together with the effective justice (*laboriosa justitia*)¹⁰⁶.

In his opus magnum *The City of God* Augustine pleads in favour of this mixed way. Against the background of the two cities closely intertwined as long as we are on the road as pilgrims, the earthly city and the city of God, Augustine develops three possible ways of life: the relaxed leisure time, the tense time of work and effort and the mixture of both¹⁰⁷. All three only make use of the earthly city, Babel, because this city can never be the final destination of a christian believer. It is striking that none of the three patterns of life can completely get rid of this earthly city because on account of his mortal existence, the human being has to rely on Babel for the sake of his physical needs. The first pattern of life, focused on knowledge and the search for truth, aims mainly at the city of God. Therefore it has only a limited interest in the earthly city. The second pattern will have to appeal frequently on the earthly city because those people want to work in the service of those who anyway are quite dependent on this city. The third pattern, which combines the preceding two, moves on the axe where both cities get in touch with each other¹⁰⁸. From the way Augustine describes that combined way of life, and apart from the fact that he himself had chosen for it, it becomes clear that in fact this combined form is after all the most obvious. The bishop points out that the contemplative people are not to lead a lazy and selfish life because for them there is the duty to inform people who have no time for study available, about what they have learned. Those who are

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* 53; 647s.

¹⁰⁷ G. FOLLIET, "*Otiosa dignitas*"... p. 66 thinks that the 'combined life' is the alternation of *actio* and *otium* in one and the same life. This mingling is clearly not a fusion of both. Augustine however has a preference for the *otium* which nobody can disregard because it conditions the action: "c'est à lui qu'il faut revenir lorsque le devoir de charité ne s'impose plus." Absolute harmony between *otium* and *negotium* can't possibly be found in this world. Beyond this world the works of mercy cease, but does this mean that then also the work of love ceases so that the tension between both continues to exist in eternal life too? Already Plato wished to combine *actio* and *contemplatio* in one life. How could philosophical views flourish without being applied in a righteous state? And how could action progress without the return to the study in seclusion? See A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon*, Bibliothèque de Philosophie II, Paris, J. Vrin, 1950, p. 373ff. These three formes of life are common knowlegde in Antiquity (see G. J. P. O'DALY, *Actio – contemplatio*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, Basel, Schwabe, 1986-1994, vol. I, p. 58f.), Varro was the nearest source consulted by Augustine (see L. VERHEIJEN, *Actio – contemplatio*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*... p. 62).

¹⁰⁸ *De ciuitate Dei*. 19,19; CC 48,686: "Ex tribus uero illis uitae generibus, otioso, actuoso et ex utroque composito, quamuis salva fide quisque possit in quolibet eorum uitam ducere et ad sempiterna praemia peruenire..."

leading an active life, on the other hand, shouldn't be presumptuous either because of the power of their profession, but they should be at the service of their citizens. At the same time they shouldn't abandon completely the study and the quiet enjoyment of truth because they might collapse under the burden of their office¹⁰⁹. How else can we avoid the dangers on the contemplative and the active way of life than by steering a middle course between the two? Moreover the combined way of life corresponds to the complex relation, in fact the mixture, between the earthly and the celestial city¹¹⁰. The effort on which the active way of life is based, called *negotium*, corresponds not only to the necessities (*necessitas*) of the mortal life in the temporal city, but also to the necessity of preaching. The latter often makes use of the earthly city and its culture to prepare the people of God for the celestial city. When the preacher does not keep his eyes on the otium of the celestial peace, he risks to be taken in by the temporary character of earthly peace¹¹¹.

According to Augustine the simultaneity of both forms is possible and apparently inevitable. Wasn't he himself taken away rather abruptly from his cherished otium? In *Contra Faustum* he says he is afraid not to be able anymore to contemplate truth in a pure way because in his active life (*negotium*) images and representations are to be used which are borrowed from the physical order (*carnale*). The answer to that fear is however expressed with determination: Leah has rights. The purity of the doctrine (*doctrina sapientiae*) is the aim, but it shouldn't take the first place. The strenght of the intellect should equally be in service of the management and the administration of the goods of the church. Here Leah has rights too, be it finally in the interest of Rachel. After the seven years of the decalogue there are still the seven years of the Sermon on the Mount. The world is not bad but we still have a long way to go.

In letter 48 the monks are not in the first place afraid of losing the pure study or the pure truth; they are especially frightened by the arrogance and laziness which stain the ideal¹¹². In his comment on the gospel of saint John Augustine examines the reason some monks utter

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*; 687: "Quam sarcinam si nullus inponit, percipiendae atque intuendae uacandum est ueritati; si autem inponitur, suscipienda est est propter caritatis necessitatem; sed nec sic omni modo ueritatis delectatio deserenda est, ne subtrahatur illa suauitas et opprimat ista necessitas."

¹¹⁰ *Id.* 19,26; 696f.: "... quamdiu permixtae sunt ambae ciuitates, utimur et nos pace Babylonis; ex qua ita per fidem populus Dei liberatur, ut apud hanc interim peregrinetur."

¹¹¹ *Id.* 19,27-28; 697-699.

to reject the ministry of preaching. The risk of daily contamination with pride is not only probable, it even is inevitable. The pure in the church often quote the line from the Song of Songs, "I have bathed my feet; how could I soil them?" (5,3) to escape from the stain of arrogance. But how can they meet Christ when He knocks at the door and says: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." (5,2), without treading on the ground again and soiling their feet? There is a link of blood between the Head and the limbs of Christ's body; an inadequate supply of blood chills the limbs. Why wouldn't the limbs, still warm with passion, the contemplation, help restore the supply of blood to the chilled limbs of the Totus Christus? The head addresses the limbs: "You have been set free (*uacas*) and you keep the frontdoor locked for me; you apply yourself to the rest (*otium*) of a few, while increasing iniquity chills the love of many..." The night represents the iniquity, the dew and the drops are those who bring chillness into the head, which is the reason why God is no longer loved. The cold christians can be compared to the hair; they are tolerated in the visible sacraments but these christians don't feel anymore the inner life of the church because of their numb *sensus interior*. The bridegroom awakens the resting saints (*otiosus*), the contemplatives, from their rest (*quies*) and he cries out to them: "Open to me, sister through my blood, nearest through my approaching (*de accessu meo proxima mea*), dove through my spirit, perfect one who has learnt more fully through the rest (*otium*), open me, preach me. How shall I come in if there is no one to open the door? How will they hear when there is no one to preach?"¹¹³

The monks feel safer when they can listen to the word of God rather than to preach it themselves, because in doing so they believe to stay humble. But he who preaches, scarcely escapes from a certain ostentation (*iactantia*) which soils the feet¹¹⁴. To those who listen and learn in this way, who lead a life full of rest (*vita quieta*) made possible by the sweet and wholesome study, the Church may say: "I

¹¹² Cf. ARTAMENDI P., *Acción y contemplación. Una carta de San Agustín a los monjes de la isla de Cabrera*, in *Augustinus*, 25 (1980), 23-27.

¹¹³ In *Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 56,5; CC 36,468f. and 57,4; 471. Cf. BERROUARD M.-F., *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication...* p. 404: through Christ the preachers go from the Christ in his head to the Christ in his limbs because He condescended to become the way which links heaven and earth, the mysterious ladder which Jacob saw in his dream.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* 57,2; 470ff. Augustine draws an ironical portrait of the monks who would prefer to bring back the deceased apostles to do the preaching, rather than quitting their *otium* of the fine studies (*bonorum studiorum*) and having to carry the burden of painful efforts (*laboriosum molestias actionum*).

am asleep and my heart stays awake" (Song of the Songs 5,2). We can understand this saying only in this way: hearing in order to rest (*quiescere*). My *otium* is not there to feed laziness but to get an insight in wisdom. "I am asleep and my heart stays awake," I am set free (*uaco*) and I see you are the Lord (Ps 45,14)"¹¹⁵. Augustine comforts the frightened monks and asks who has not done anything wrong in the abundance of iniquity? It is better to get up and open the door for Christ. He himself shall wash their feet and forgive them. Augustine too roots up the earth to open the door for Christ. He too feels he gets dirty feet each time a reprimand brings him into confusion or whenever praising words make him feel puffed up¹¹⁶. To conclude he tells the monks that it is better for a preacher to fall into the arrogance of praise than to withhold wisdom from the people¹¹⁷.

Supposed the monks are allowed to stay away from pastoral care there is still the work of sanctifying themselves. Augustine does not call this *negotium* but *actio* (*alacriter agitis et in pigre operamini*), which is as demanding as the ministry of a preacher. But in the third paragraph of letter 48, the text suddenly shifts to another dimension in the relation of action and contemplation. The two patterns of life not only appear in the one Totus Christus, but both the active and the contemplative moment are the poles of one and the same christian action¹¹⁸. This action is not only meant for the monk who exercises in sanctification but it is meant for every christian¹¹⁹, who is neither to be burnt in the fire of arrogance nor to be drowned in the swamp of laziness. By keeping the eyes on the Lord the christian action shall not

¹¹⁵ *Id.* 57,3; 470f.: "... ego requiesco a negotiosis actibus, et animus meus diuinis se intendit affectibus." Cf. Enarrationes in psalmos 4,9; PL 36,82: "*In pace, in idipsum obdormiam et somnum capiam* (v. 9). Recte enim speratur a talibus omnimoda mentis abalienatio a mortalibus rebus et miseriarum saeculi huius obliuio, quae nomine obdormitionis et somni decenter et prophetice significatur, ubi summa pax nullo tumulto interpellari potest." and Confessiones 9,4,11; CC 27,139f.: "...tu es id ipsum ualde, qui non mutaris, et in te requies obliuiscens laborum omnium, quoniam nullus alius tecum nec ad alia multa adispiscenda, quae non sunt quod tu, sed tu, domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me."

¹¹⁶ *Id.* 57,6; 472.

¹¹⁷ *Id.* 58,3; 473. Also 57,2; 470.

¹¹⁸ Zie A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 241: "... ist gerade bei unserem Kirchenvater spürbar, wie die neuen christlichen Gedankengänge das der griechischen Philosophie entlehnte Begriffspaar *contemplatio* und *actio* zu sprengen drohen; denn auch die Beschaulichkeit ist für Augustinus ein Tun, höchstes Tun des Menschen vor Gott, wie umgekehrt in der Aktion die Kontemplation fort dauern soll."

¹¹⁹ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison...* p. 239: "Ce qu'il désire faire entendre partout autour de lui, c'est que l'idéal de perfection pour lequel il milite n'est en principe interdit à personne et qu'on ne saurait d'avance le refuser sous le prétexte fallacieux de ne pas se sentir invinciblement attiré par une vocation du type de celle d'Antoine."

deviate neither to the right nor to the left¹²⁰. The christian action should keep the correct track and not deviate to the left, that means the lazy resignation, nor to the right where the trap of hectic haughtiness is set.

The christian action for the monk as for the bishop as well is in any case the work of the holy Ghost who brings about all in all (*operatur*). Doing so is always directed towards the God of peace (the right hand) who however is still coming.

“‘Keeping the eyes always toward the Lord’ is the action of the right way for all of us ‘as He will pluck our feet out of the net’ (Psalm 25,15). This action does not burn up in pastoral activities, nor does it get chilled in quiet contemplation. It will not accept to be speeded up neither will it be washed-out. It is not too energetic, neither is it shy. It does not rush into things, but it is not powerless either. So, act like this, and the Lord of the peace will be with you (Phil. 4,9)”^{121a}

In the preceeding paragraph the bishop had exhorted the monks to resist to the tricks of the enemy. Now he shows them, in a carefully worked out programme, which effort is needed to realise that resistance and he adds that it demands as much hard work as the fieldwork in the church. For that matter the monastic programme is continuously spoken about in words which underline the doings and dealings of the monastic enterprise¹²¹. On the right the fallen angel will seduce by putting that we can realise everything by our own strength, on the left there is the thought that we are not capable of doing anything¹²². On the right there is the risk of over-confidence which burns up in the passion of extravagance. On the left we may not allow ourselves to drift away on the lake of rest, the sleep of self-satisfaction. Excess is harmful, because it leads us to rely completely

¹²⁰ Cf. *De agone christiano* 28; CSEL 41, 128s.: “... dextera patris est beatitudo perpetua quae sanctis promittitur, sicut sinistra ejus rectissime dicitur miseria perpetua quae impiis datur...” and 31; 133: “...non audire quod dextrum est, id est, domini gloriam per catholicam ecclesiam latissime peruagatam, sed audire sinistram humanae inflationis errorem...”

^{121a} *Epistula* 48,3; 139: “Ipsa est enim actio recti itineris, quae oculos semper habet ad dominum, quoniam ipse euellet de laqueo pedes. Tallis actio nec frigitur negotio nec frigida est otio nec turbulenta nec marcida est nec audax nec fugax nec praeceps nec iacens. Haec agite et deus pacis erit uobis cum.”

^{121b} *Actio, agere, operari*.

¹²² It seems as if the Pelagians with their exaltation of the self-governing will, are on the right and the Manicheans on the left, for the latter don't see any power anymore in human nature as it is paralysed by evil.

on ourselves and leaves no place for trust, neither in the neighbour nor in the Creator. The two forms of life in the church are exposed to both seductions; both should keep the middle between the extremes and go straightforward, with only the purpose in mind.

But Augustine offers something more than a mere description of the art of walking the right way of life that keeps the middle between two extremes. He intends to bring together the active and the passive element of the extremes in one and the same attitude, in such a way that the relaxation of the contemplation will come in the middle of the turmoil of all efforts. The action of the right way of life exists in making it possible to experience the rest of the relaxation right in the centre of agitation. For, in the absence of rest, overstrain is likely to develop. In reality relaxation should direct the effort; if not, the latter will lose direction and destination. And is not aimlessness precisely the characteristic of overstrain? Exhausted people lie down listlessly and aimlessly and lacking resilience. They resemble the broken spring of an alarm which was wound up too much and is now feeble for lack of the right tension, and without orientation. The rest (*otium*) is not the absence of tension; in that case there would be no action anymore, but inside the action (*negotium*) relaxation is the *conditio sine qua non* for every productive effort¹²³.

This effort should be made by the monk who wants to heal his soul of arrogance and wants to become perfect in a relaxed way. This same effort should also be made by the bishop who's concerned about his flock but who knows for sure the divine Shepherd keeps watch over them too. He who is assigned to the pastoral care should know that efforts which make the healthy limbs grasp for the sick ones will not persist without the relaxation (*otium*) which is the healing strenght of the inspiring Spirit. Not the shepherds heal but the Spirit of Christ of whom they are the instruments. Not the abundance of work is the cause of overstrain, but exaggerated expectations about what has to be done. Ministers who help those who are in need of both material and spiritual food, should take care to put themselves first in the rest (*otium*) of the contemplation where we hear Christ say:

"There is only one person who speaks and this is Christ (...) If we are his limbs, his voice will be ours (...) Christ preaches

¹²³ A similar tension Augustine had already understood in his letter to Nebridius: "cur tanto euenit crebrius, quanto quisque in mentis penetralibus adorat Deum? Cur in actu etiam humano plerumque ista tranquillitas manet, si ex illo adyto ad agendum quisque procedat?" (*epistula* 10,3; CSEL 34/1,24) See A. ZUMKELLER, *Das Mönchtum...* p. 60.

himself in those who already belong to Him so that others who are not yet limbs of Him can be brought to Him”¹²⁴.

The concerned bishop is not the only one to be confronted with the ambiguity of *otium* and *negotium*; the entire Church is confronted with the tension of a double life¹²⁵: there is Rachel with in her eyes the shining light of the contemplation, and there is Leah who thanks to her work gives birth to children (*voluptuosa et laboriosa*). Rachel is the symbol of contemplative life while Leah represents the diligent preacher with all the powerful effects of this profession but also with the risks and difficulties, and with the advantages for those who can reap the benefits of his work. In *Contra Faustum*, Augustine had already spoken about Leah who, because of the incertitude she lived in, had no sparkling eyes (Gen 29,17) and about Rachel and her right insight¹²⁶. And then there is Mary, the one who listens; she is also a symbol of the contemplating church, whereas Martha who serves and is distracted by her tasks, represents the active church. When the industrious Martha protests, Jesus does not minimize her task, but He makes clear to her that He prefers the better part Mary has chosen: the contemplation. Martha who is overbusy preparing a meal for Jesus, is the symbol of the active church engaged in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Mary on the contrary, who has liberated herself from these chores, is the symbol of the contemplating church whose members feed themselves with Jesus’ word¹²⁷. Mary has clearly chosen the better part which will not be taken away from her and which will last forever in the other world, whereas the part of Martha will be

¹²⁴ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 74,4 ; CC 39,1027.

¹²⁵ Compare with the interesting conference by M. PELLEGRINO, *Saint Augustin, a-t-il réalisé l'unité de sa vie...* In it he refrains from discussing the tension in Augustine’s double life (being a human being in search for truth and a bishop concerned about his people) from the point of view *otium / negotium*.

¹²⁶ See note 101ff.

¹²⁷ *Sermo* 103,2,3; PL 38,613: “... Suscepit eum Martha, sicut solunt suscipi peregrini.” and *id.* 3; 614: “Martha Dominum pascere disponens et praeparans, circa multum ministerium occupabatur: Maria soror ejus pasci a Domino magis elegit. (...) et vacans audiebat verbum ejus. Auris fidelissima audierat: ‘Vacate, et videte, quoniam ego sum Dominus’. Illa turbabatur, ista epulabatur: illa multa disponebat, ista unum aspiciebat. (...) Maria causam suam tanquam otiosa judici maluit committere, nec in respondendo voluit laborare.” Cf. *Id.* 104,1,1; 616: “Intenta erat Martha quomodo pasceret Dominum: intenta Maria quomodo pascetur a Domino.” Cf. *id.* 179,3,3; 967f.: “... sedebat ad pedes Domini, et otiosa verbum ejus audiebat.” and 5,5-6,6; 968f.: “Pars vero Mariae non transit. (...) De isto fonte, de isto herreo justitiae sancta Maria sedens ad pedes Domini, quasdam esuriens micas accipiebat. Tantum enim Dominus tunc dabat quantum illa capiebat. Totum autem tantum quantum in illa sua futura mensa daturus est...” and *id.* 255,6,6; 1189: “Maria ergo sedebat, hoc est vacabat, et audiebat, et laudabat: Martha vero circa plurimum ministerium occupata erat.

taken away when the needs of the body have vanished¹²⁸. In both women we are given the symbol of a twofold life, simultaneous and inseparable, active and undisturbed, not boisterous nor lazy. Both lives are fed by the same source. In Martha we see the image of the present world, in Mary the image of future things. In what Martha realised we are now; in what Mary did we hope to get. So, let us do the good in this life to possess it fully in the later one¹²⁹. It reminds us also of John resting at Jesus' breast and Peter soiling his feet in the action¹³⁰.

The monks of Capraria can help Augustine to rest in the One as

(...) Unum verum: multa non erunt necessaria. Antequam perveniamus ad unum, multis indigemus. Unum nos extendat, ne multa distendant et abruptant ab uno." See finally *De trinitate* 1,10,20; CC 50,56: "Hujus gaudii similitudinem praesignabat Maria sedens ad pedes Domini, et intenta in uerbum ejus; quieta scilicet ab omni actione, et intenta in ueritatem secundum quemdam modum, cujus capax est ista uita, quo tamen praefiguraret illud quod futurum est in aeternum. Martha quippe sorore sua in necessitatibus actione conversante, quamuis bona et utili, tamen, cum requiem sucesserit, transitura ipsa requiescebat in uerbo Domini."

¹²⁸ *Id.* 103,4,5; 615: "Multa sunt, diversa sunt, quia carnalia sunt, quia temporalia sunt: etsi bona sunt, transitoria sunt. (...) A te auferetur aliquando onus necessitatis: aeterna est dulcedo veritatis. Non auferetur ab ea quod elegit. Non aufertur, sed tamen augetur. In hac autem vita augetur, in alia vita perficeretur, numquam auferetur." Cf. *id.* 104,2,3; 617: "...unde meliorem? Quia tu circa multa, illa circa unum. Praepositum unum multis. Non enim a multis unum, sed multa ab uno. Multa sunt quae facta sunt, unus est qui fecit. (...) Attendamus igitur occupationes nostras circa multa. Necessarium est ministerium corpora refecturis. Quare hoc? Quia esuritur, quia sititur. Misericordia miseris necessaria est. (...) Transit labor multitudinis, et remanet charitas unitatis. Cf. *Sermo* 169,14,17; 925: "... quod tu elegisti, transit. (...) Erit tempus ubi nemo esuriat, nemo sitiatur, nemo dormiat. Ergo cura tua auferetur a te. 'Maria meliorem elegit partem, quae non auferetur ab ea' 'Non auferetur': contemplari elegit, verbo vivere elegit. (...) Modo ista vivebat de Verbo, sed sonante verbo. Erit vita de Verbo, nullo sonante verbo. Ipsum Verbum vita est." Cf. *id.* 179,4,4; 968: "Cum enim transierit ipsa necessitas, nullum erit ministerium necessitatis. Auferetur labor, sed reddetur merces." and *id.* 255,2,2; 1186: "Magnum opus, sed transitorium. Numquid esurire et sitire semper erit? Quando inhaerebimus purissimae illi et perfectissimae bonitati, non erit quare servire necessitati." Cf. *De bono coniugali* 8,8; PL 40,380.

¹²⁹ *Id.* 104,3,4; 618: "...in duabus feminis duae vitae, ambae innocentes, ambae laudabiles: sed una laboriosa, altera otiosa: nulla facinorosa, nulla desidiosa. Ambae innocentes, ambae, inquam, laudabiles: sed una laboriosa, altera otiosa: nulla facinorosa, quam cavere debet laboriosa; nulla desidiosa, quam cavere debet otiosa. Erant ergo in illa domo istae duae vitae, et ipse fons vitae. In Martha erat imago praesentium, in Maria futurorum. Quod agebat Martha, ibi sumus: quod agebat Maria, hoc speramus. Hoc agamus bene, ut illud habeamus plene." See further *id.* 255,2,2; PL 38, 1186: "Istam partem suauissimam sibi Maria elegerat, quae uacabat, discebat, laudabat: Martha uero soror ejus, circa plurima fuerat occupata. Equidem agebat rem necessariam, sed non permansuram: agebat rem uiae, nondum patriae: agebat rem peregrinationis, nondum possessionis." and 5,6; 1188: "Duae sunt uitae: una pertinens ad delectationem, altera pertinens ad necessitatem. Quae ad necessitatem, laboriosa est: quae ad delectationem, uoluptuosa est." Also see *sermo Guelf.* 29,6-7; *Miscellanea Agostiniana* I, 548f.: "Non est ista beatitudo laborantium. *Vacate et uidete*: quid? *quoniam ego sum Dominus*. Magna uisio, felix contemplatio. (...) Si vis in eis implere

Mary did, because their prayer is not disturbed or weakened by the darkness and the turmoil of secular occupations. He has to go a thousand steps and another thousand with those the Lord has entrusted him (Mt. 5,11). But in enjoying the One the bishop will be able to bear the weight (*sarcina*) of the ministry¹³¹ aware as he is that "we only shall see the Unique when we have kept peace among each other"¹³². Augustine again goes ahead with the striking inversion: the true unity with God, which is the aim of contemplation, can only be reached in the unity of peace, which is nothing less than what a minister is after¹³³. And he adds: "by loving your neighbour you purify your eyes to see God."¹³⁴

In the conclusion of this letter Augustine answers once more that the absolute truth of contemplation is not to be reached on earth.

officium Marthae, adsit modestia, adsit misericordia: modestia in temperando, misericordia in erogando. Transit labor, et veniet requies; sed ad requiem non nisi per laborem. Transit navis, et venit in patriam; sed ad requiem non nisi per navem. Navigamus enim, si attendamus fluctus tempestatesque huius saeculi. Nec dubito quod idea non mergimur, quia crucis ligno portamur. *Explicit tractatus de Martha et Maria significantibus duas vitas.*" See A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, *Les deux vies, Marthe et Marie*, in *Saint Augustin et la Bible* sous la direction de A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, Bible de tous les temps 3, Paris, Beauchesne, 1986, 411-425, p. 414: "Il est remarquable, d'ailleurs, qu'en tous ces textes saint Augustin oppose les deux vies beaucoup plus sur le plan ecclésial, communautaire que sur le plan individuel." Nevertheless the author stresses the fact that the personal experiences of Augustine are the historical background for the origin of the texts quoted before: "Ce n'est peut-être pas un effet du hasard si une partie des textes que nous étudions ici ont été écrits par Augustin à l'époque de son ordination et de son élévation à l'épiscopat." (p. 424) Why shouldn't these texts refer equally convincingly to the double life of Augustine as *epistula* 48 and *Contra Faustum* suggest?

¹³⁰ In *Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 124,5; PL 35,1974: "Duae itaque vitas sibi diuinitus praedicatas et commendatas nouit ecclesia, quarum est una in fide, altera in specie (...) una in labore, altera in requie; una in uia, altera in patria; una in opere actionis, altera in mercede contemplationis (...) Ista significata est per apostolum Petrum, illa per Joannem." See further *id.* 101,5; 1895: "Hunc totius laboris sui fructum ecclesia nunc parit desiderando, tunc est paritura cernendo (...) ad istum fructum contemplationis cuncta officia referuntur actionis."

¹³¹ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison...* p. 219, n. 4: "sans cesse soutenu et entretenu l'action de l'évêque. Exigé tout d'abord par la recherche de la vérité, l'exercice de l'otium lui avait fait contracter un 'gout de la vérité' capable de surmonter toutes les aigreurs de la *sarcina episcopatus*."

¹³² *Sermo* 23,17.18; PL,162.

¹³³ A. MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison...* p. 239: "C'est la réalisation de nouvelles 'communautés apostoliques' qui est bien l'idée fixe de l'apostolat augustinien, et le moyen d'illustrer l'idée, ce sont ces communautés au nom symboliques, ces communautés 'monastiques' dont les membres – à commencer par lui-même – avaient dû subir l'épreuve du temps pour se rendre compte que leur mission était précisément de porter ce témoignage."

¹³⁴ In *Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 7,8; CC 36,174.

"I hope you will not think I am imposing myself upon you because I wanted to communicate all this with you in a letter. I have reminded you of all this not because you were failing; but I have written because I hoped you would recommend me to God when doing your duty and moreover you'd do it while remembering my exhortation. Then already before, the fragrance of Christ (2 Cor. 2,15), which was spread by your holy lives, has reached us. And so did your brothers Eustasius and Andreas who came to see us. Eustasius has gone before us to the land where no heavy waves break the rest. And he does not regret Capraria because he no longer wants to wear a garment of goats' hair"¹³⁵.

The fragrance Augustine is referring to reminds us undoubtedly of the fragrance of contemplative life praised by Augustine in his Rule by way of conclusion. The deceased Eustasius already enjoys fully that contemplative rest as no monk is able to on this earth, because here his rest is fragile and because, he still can get confused by the waves of the sea in spite of the solid ground of the island. More than once Augustine saw in the sea the image of the restless stream of time in which everybody without exception has to live. The contemplation of eternal truth provides, right in the commotion of time, a steady base for our feet, even when the seduction of compelling time continues to exist. On this earth the monk still has to protect himself with a garment of goats' hair. Abstinence will help him to resist the seductive streaming of time which is felt first in the own body. Eustasius has put on a new garment that can no longer be affected by the pounding sea.

Conclusion

The combination of active and contemplative life, sometimes

¹³⁵ *Epistula* 48,4; 139f.: "Nec importunum me existimet caritas uestra, quia uobis cum loqui uel per epistulam uolui. Non enim hoc uos monui, quod uos non arbitror facere; sed credidi me non parum commendari deo a uobis, si ea, quae munere illius facitis, cum adlocutionis nostrae memoria faciatis. Nam et ante iam fama et nunc fratres, qui uenerunt a uobis, Eustasius et Andreas bonum Christi odorem de uestra sancta conuersatione ad nos adtulerunt. Quorum Eustasius in eam requiem praecessit, quae nullis fluctibus sicut insula tunditur, nec Caprariam desiderat, quia nec cilicio iam quaerit indui."

called the Augustinian way of life, is the inevitable conclusion of the view Augustine has developed on Christ and the church. When the monks of Capraria have to feel allied inside the *Totus Christus* with every other limb of the corpus which is unlimited in space and time, then as good christians they can't but hasten to help the church in need. If they don't do so they won't belong to the body anymore. How could it be that healthy limbs are not concerned about the fate of the sick? But after all the healing power of their pastoral care is not their merit but it is entitled to the Head.

Augustine's call to assume without further delay the nursing of the sick limbs is an opportunity to circumscribe both the pastoral care and contemplation. If the rest of leisure should be first and chiefly an exercise in hearing and listening, the same goes for the active engagement in pastoral care. Here the same receptive attitude will be needed if the engagement shouldn't be cut off from the source of life that inspires it. The contemplatives as well as the pastors represent each in their own way, the two moments of that one life in the church. Even if it is true that they themselves do not completely succeed in bringing action and contemplation into harmony with each other inside the straight way of life. By tracing out that middle way between the two extremes in which the seducer wants to catch us, Augustine shows how the wide vision of the church in her complementary forms of life, is reflected in the soul of every christian¹³⁶. In his heart the human being is driven forward by the fertile tension of both action and contemplation, of effort and relaxation. There too can be felt that the soul has no impetus anymore without the Head in which it rests and contemplates.

In letter 48 Augustine didn't raise the question of the *negotium otiosum*, but the *otium* is already effective in the *negotium* through the

¹³⁶ Cf. R. HOLTE, *Béatitude et sagesse*, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1962, p. 386: "...Chez Augustin la notion classique de la vie contemplative est soumise à une refonte et à une réinterprétation qui l'élargissent considérablement: grâce et charité en deviennent les mots-clés, en sorte qu'elle exprime la relation fondamentale du chrétien avec Dieu. (...) Augustin peut parler de la vie active et de la vie contemplative comme de deux vies, que chaque chrétien a à vivre: l'une appartient exclusivement à la vie terrestre, l'autre n'est parfaite que dans l'éternité."

good deeds which are the work of the Spirit who descended upon us. The *negotium otiosorum*¹³⁷ will look quite differently: Leah will have reached a new destination, or more correctly, she has reached her final destination in Rachel. The two lives of the one Christ are reconciled in the *negotium otiosum*. Surprisingly Augustine, diligent and engaged as he was, does never mention the *otium negotiosum*. This rest that exists in enjoying God, can't be reached here¹³⁸. An *otium actuosum* is the rest of the resurrected existence in which the original rest is restored (*re-quiēs*)¹³⁹. This rest is the everlasting day on which the praise of God "will be the occupation of him who no longer has occupations, this is the work of him who is at rest from all work, this is the activity of him who exists in quietness, this is the preoccupation of him who lives without preoccupation"¹⁴⁰.

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¹³⁷ *Contra Faustum* 15,11; CSEL 25/1,438: "'Beati, qui habitant in domo tua; in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te'. Finita quippe omni indigentia et nouissima inimica morte destructa perpetua dei laus erit otiosorum negotium..." See further *Enarrationes in psalmos* 86,9; CC 39,1206: "Ibi totum negotium nostrum non erit, nisi laudare Deum, et frui Deo... 'Beati qui habitant in domo tua: in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te'. Hoc uno beati otioso negotio...", *id.* 110,1; 39,1621: "'Beati qui habitant in domo tua: in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te', hoc erit otiosorum negotium", *id.* 147,3; 40,2141: "...otiosum negotium plenum solius dulcedinis (...) Negotium nostrum quod erit? Laudare Deum amare et laudare; laudare in amore, amare in laudibus. 'Beati qui habitant in domo tua: in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te.'", *Sermonum fragmenta P.-P. Verbraken, Revue Bénédictine* 84 (1974), 261: "Hoc negotium, otium est. Otiosum negotium, quid? Laudare Dominum." Cf. noot.

¹³⁸ Zie G. FOLLIET, "*Otiosa dignitas*"... p. 66, in which he uses *otiosum negotium* and *otium negotiosum* as alternative concepts for the heavenly dwelling. In Folliet's quotation however *otium negotiosum* is not found.

¹³⁹ B. COLOT, *Otium et quies dans les Confessions d'Augustin*, in *Bulletin de l'association Guillaume Budé* 1994, 169-186, p. 180: "L'*otium* n'est plus seulement le contraire d'une *iners uacatio*, il est un véritable *otium actuosum*, une expérience mixte, mêlée." and p. 185: "Le repos absolu, *quies* ou *requies*, n'est pas accessible: il ne pourra l'être qu'après la mort, dans la vie éternelle. La forme de *requies* qui peut en revanche s'exprimer doit être rattaché au sentiment de la foi chrétienne elle-même, qui se vit comme l'expérience d'un retour, reprenant le passé de manière à l'instaurer en quelque sorte dans le sentiment de la quiétude originelle. Le sentiment de la vie originelle dans les *Confessions* comme esquisse de la vie éternelle."

¹⁴⁰ *Enarrationes in psalmos* 110,1; CC 39,1621: "Hoc erit otiosorum negotium, hoc opus uacantium, haec actio quietorum, haec cura securorum."