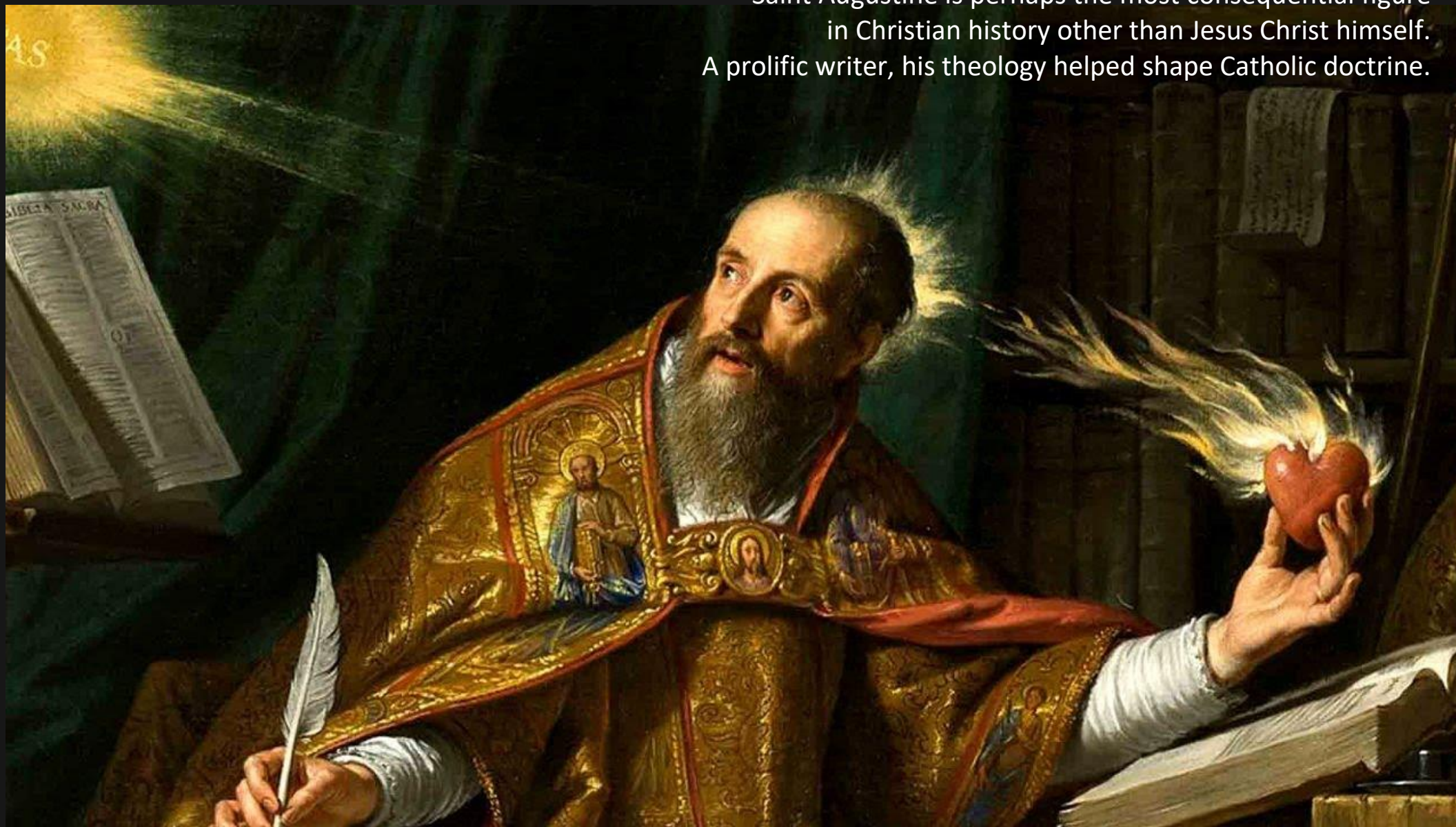


# St. Augustine of Hippo

Saint Augustine is perhaps the most consequential figure in Christian history other than Jesus Christ himself. A prolific writer, his theology helped shape Catholic doctrine.



Along the way he'll commit adultery, father an illegitimate child, care for his dying mother, face off with a heretical Roman empress, and, ultimately, reject all worldly temptations and embrace total devotion to God. His life's spiritual progression is striking: from ambivalence toward religion, to a faith called Manichaeism, and eventually to Roman Catholicism. He would eventually become the famed St Augustine whose writings would heavily influence Catholic doctrine.

# St. Augustine

## Biography



Roman ruins in  
Algeria, near  
Augustine's home  
city

## Philosophy (major ideas)

### Believed in Neoplatonist Theory:

- ↳ Reality and goodness are really transcendent
- ↳ The highest reality was The One
- ↳ Things emanated from this unity in a descending order of reality, worth and integration
- ↳ Evil arose from the unfocused matter at the bottom of the scale, farthest from The One
  - ↳ This meant there was no need for any dualism to describe the nature of evil (unlike for the Manichaeans)
- ↳ Evil is merely the absence of good
- ↳ Evil is the farthest thing from the greatest reality of The One
  - ↳ Here, Augustine's dilemma about evil's dualism was solved, because evil barely existed (this is very similar to the Christian beliefs of the time, but without the Christian God)

### Believed in Manicheism beliefs

- ↳ Manicheism was essentially dualistic. It believed that the world was a product of the conflict between good and evil (light and darkness)

God exists outside time, which started only with the creation of the world.

Posed the question: **What can we possibly know of ultimate reality if it is beyond us in every sense?**

James Muldoon, Augustine/Political Philosophy (15 min)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezBZh\\_60HSI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezBZh_60HSI)

↳ James is a senior lecturer in Political Science at the University of Exeter, southwest England

Youtube from a monk (9 min, 30 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNFpcUp5nBw>

↳ Casey Cole, a Franciscan frier and Catholic priest, from Pennsylvania

↳ Good to have a member of his own faith speaking about Augustine's importance