

## PETER CANISIUS AND THE “TRULY CATHOLIC” AUGUSTINE

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*Arguably the most influential theologian in the Latin West, Augustine of Hippo conventionally figures as the greatest ally, after the Bible, of Protestantism in Reformation Europe. Roman Catholics, however, also laid claim to Augustine as their chief witness—as the works of Peter Canisius (1521–1597), the most prominent catechist in the early Society of Jesus, attest. His *Large Catechism* adduces the authority of Augustine as “the truly Catholic doctor,” an authority Canisius repeatedly invokes to assert Catholic orthodoxy.*

AUGUSTINE USUALLY RECEIVES no more than an honorable mention in the discussion of the theological origins and underpinnings of the Reformation in surveys of Reformation history, at least those written in English. Discussing the revival of patristic scholarship, Owen Chadwick asserted: “The advance of scholarship put St Augustine in a new perspective. As the colossus among the early expounders of St Paul, he dominated the Reformation. In 1600 or 1630 he was still the greatest of the Fathers.”<sup>1</sup> Steven Ozment expressed Augustine’s significance as grandiloquently as Chadwick: “In the century of Rome’s fall lived the single most influential thinker in the Western intellectual tradition—Saint Augustine (354–430). Augustine was to the intellectual history of the Middle Ages what classical civilization was to its political and cultural history: a creative source, whose

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<sup>1</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964) 218.

recovery and study spurred new directions of thought and controversy down through the Reformation of the sixteenth century.”<sup>2</sup> Ozment, however, was more interested in Augustine’s influence on medieval theology and, to a lesser extent, on medieval piety than in the role he played in the Reformation.

Scholarship has signaled Augustine’s influence on Protestant reformers, especially Martin Luther. His embrace of Augustine compelled him to reject Scholastic theology. In 1517, after formulating the doctrine of justification by faith alone through a reading of St. Paul supported by a study of Augustine, Luther equated his own theology with Augustine’s.<sup>3</sup> Ulinka Rublack not only saw Augustine as Luther’s antidote to Scholasticism; she also reminds us that Luther used both the Bible and Augustine to argue at the Leipzig Debate of 1518 that Christ, not the pope, was head of the church, and that Luther, in his esteem for preaching, “followed an Augustinian epistemology of the senses, which placed hearing above seeing.”<sup>4</sup> James Tracy struck a different note when he observed that Luther’s concept of *sola scriptura* was incompatible with dependence on church councils or the Church Fathers, including Augustine; yet Tracy recognized that Luther was a devoted student of Augustine on the soteriological question of human freedom and divine grace.<sup>5</sup>

Diarmaid MacCulloch’s recent survey is innovative on several fronts, including the prominence it accords Augustine, a feature it broadly shares with Alister McGrath’s treatment of the Reformation’s intellectual origins, although McGrath is more discriminating about the intensity of Augustine’s influence on various Protestant leaders.<sup>6</sup> For MacCulloch, Augustine is an intellectual giant who deserves more than a reverent mention, for it is in “the shadow of Augustine”—the subtitle of MacCulloch’s chapter on nascent Protestantism—that Luther’s theology developed. The “playful optimism” of Renaissance humanism was irreconcilable with Augustine’s theology, which found only one remedy for “the bleak picture of human worthlessness” presented in Paul’s letter to the Romans: the

<sup>2</sup> Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University, 1980) 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Chadwick, *Reformation* 44–46, 77; Harold Grimm, *The Reformation Era, 1500–1600*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1973) 86; and Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004) 45, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *Reformation Europe* (New York: Cambridge University, 2005) 21, 38, 48.

<sup>5</sup> James Tracy, *Europe’s Reformations, 1450–1650: Doctrine, Politics, and Community*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000) 14, 49.

<sup>6</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004) 174–80.

equally Pauline concept of God’s “gracious gift of salvation.”<sup>7</sup> In the introduction to his book, MacCulloch maintains: “The power of ideas explains why the Reformation was such a continent-wide event.” He returns to this theme when he writes that the pre-Reformation church “was immensely strong, and that strength could only have been overcome by the explosive power of an idea. The idea proved to be a new statement of Augustine’s ideas on salvation.” Why did that restatement have to wait until Luther in the second decade of the 16th century? Other aspects of Augustine’s writings, such as his ecclesiology and his concept of sacrament, exercised the minds of theologians. Ultimately, however, the Reformation represented—and MacCulloch quotes B. B. Warfield here—the “triumph of Augustine’s doctrine of grace over Augustine’s doctrine of the Church.” MacCulloch concludes: “So from one perspective, a century or more of turmoil in the Western Church from 1517 was a debate in the mind of a long-dead Augustine.” Protestantism “was the outcome of the Augustinian revolution sparked by Martin Luther in north-eastern Germany.”<sup>8</sup>

MacCulloch does not stop with Luther. Beyond the customary brief references to Zwingli’s debt to Augustine, he aligns Calvin with Augustine, noting, for example, Calvin’s appreciation of “the crisp Augustinian definitions of the sacraments.”<sup>9</sup> The Italian Piermartire (Peter Martyr) Vermigli brooded long enough on Augustine to develop “a predestinarian theology of salvation as thoroughgoing as anything in the Protestant north.”<sup>10</sup> If “the message which Luther took from Augustine’s thought” excited “ordinary people” and “respectable burghers” alike, then it was also “the continuing legacy of Augustine’s theology on sacraments and grace” that contributed to Protestant fragmentation. That legacy “seethed through the preaching of reformers across Europe and made them passionate to defend their vision of truth not merely against the anti-Christian old Church, but also against each other’s misunderstandings.”<sup>11</sup> Augustine’s numbering of the Ten Commandments, in which the prohibition against graven images was subsumed under the first commandment against idolatry, formed the background to the division over the use of images in worship between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, who preserved this numbering, and Reformed Protestants, who did not.<sup>12</sup> Finally, “that towering authority Augustine of Hippo” with his horror of the inherent disorder of postlapsarian sex helped shape the “ancient nonsense” that “Christian theologians asserted about men, women and sexuality.” MacCulloch attributes the “neurotic

<sup>7</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490–1700* (London: Penguin, 2004) 106, 107 (pagination differs in U.S. Penguin ed.).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* xxiii, 111, 114.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 250.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 214.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 171, 172.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 145–46.

attachment to the perpetual virginity [of Mary] among the magisterial Reformers to the general worries about sexuality that, thanks to Augustine, have been especially pervasive within western Christianity.”<sup>13</sup>

Is there room for a Catholic Augustine in MacCulloch’s panorama? Yes, but only on the periphery. Luther was not the first in his day—nor did one have to follow him into schism from Rome—to heed Augustine’s soteriological message of the tragic inadequacy of human beings and the sovereignty of divine grace. MacCulloch lists the French humanist and biblical scholar Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (writing five years before Luther), the Venetian aristocrat and future Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, and Cardinal Cajetan as thinkers profoundly influenced by Augustine’s soteriology. A determined critic of Luther, Bishop John Fisher of Rochester, managed to hold “in balance Augustine’s thought, the authority of the Church and the importance of human works.”<sup>14</sup> Johannes Gropper, an architect of church reform in Cologne in the 1530s, “rediscovered . . . Augustine’s deep pessimism about the human condition” and met Protestant theology halfway with the doctrine of double justification, “squaring the circle of the medieval theology of merit and Luther’s theology of imputed merit by grace through faith.”<sup>15</sup> Later in the 16th and in the first part of the 17th century, the Leuven theologians Michael Baius and Cornelius Jansen returned to the somber Augustine. Jansen wanted “to remodel the Counter-Reformation through a rigorous stripped-down Augustinian reform—a new Reformation, but now pursued within the bounds of the Catholic Church.”<sup>16</sup> Yet the Council of Trent rejected any rigorous application of Augustinian soteriology, including double justification, and Jansenism fell foul of the papacy. Despite its popularity in Netherlandish and French circles, Jansensim never accomplished a Catholic “Augustinian reform.”

Must we conclude, therefore, that when Augustine “dominated the Reformation,” he reigned supreme only in the Protestant camp? Did an unabashed Counter-Reformation simply deflect the power of Augustine’s ideas, leaving a few Catholic thinkers to experiment with them and ultimately to fail? Augustine certainly deserves a more prominent place in the large narrative of the religious changes and divisions of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. But that should not come at the cost of Catholicism. If human potential became obscured in his shadow, from which a largely Protestant soteriology emerged, Augustine became a beacon for Catholic truth and a bulwark against Protestant heresy. In a long treatise on the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist published in 1556 and directed against “the widely spread heresies and sects arisen in this time,” Gropper defended the doctrine of Christ’s real presence by adducing testimonies from the Bible and the Church Fathers “in

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 610, 611, 614.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 229, 230.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 111, 112.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 480, 481–82.

an almost exhaustive fashion.” Augustine alone occupied 55 folios in Gropper’s efforts to refute any symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist.<sup>17</sup>

One year earlier, Peter Canisius, one of the most energetic members of the early Society of Jesus, published his first catechism, the *Summa doctrinae christianae*, and his career and reputation as a leading Catholic catechist in the early modern period was born. Catholics who knew their Canisius had a sound knowledge of their faith. Frequently reprinted and translated into different languages, the *Summa*, Canisius’s Large Catechism, as well as his so-called Small and Smallest Catechisms, circulated widely in Europe during his lifetime and long after his death in 1597. Paul Begheyn has counted 330 editions printed between 1555 and 1597 and a further 753 editions after 1598 until the present day.<sup>18</sup>

In their astounding proliferation, Canisius’s catechisms, which were clearly “statements of confessional bias,”<sup>19</sup> contributed to a widespread confessionalization of Augustine, to an Augustine always ready to testify on behalf of Catholic truth and against heresy. Canisius ranked this early fifth-century African bishop first among the theological witnesses to Catholic truth in ancient Christianity, and he portrayed Protestants as having rejected Augustine’s authority. Calvin’s claim that Augustine stood entirely on his side—*Augustinus . . . totus noster est*—would have struck the Jesuit catechist as absurd.<sup>20</sup> Several editions of Canisius’s Small and Smallest Catechisms employed Augustine as a scourge against heresy and heretics, which would have included all those who in the 16th century renounced the authority of the pope. The Large Catechism presented Augustine as *doctor vere catholicus*, “the truly Catholic doctor.”<sup>21</sup> Cited repeatedly by Canisius, his “truly Catholic” Augustine stands out as an eminent ally of Roman Catholicism.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Lipgens, *Kardinal Johannes Gropper, 1503–1559, und die Anfänge der katholischen Reform in Deutschland* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1951) 183.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Begheyn, “The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History,” *Quaerendo* 36 (2006) 51–84, at 51, 63–83; Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005) 70.

<sup>19</sup> John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1993) 124.

<sup>20</sup> The quotation from Calvin is cited in Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1999) 38.

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Streicher, ed., *S. Petri Canisi doctoris ecclesiae catechismi latini et germanici*, 2 vols. (hereafter *Catechismi*) (Rome: Gregorian University, 1933–1936) 1:43, 142. All translations are my own. In notes 64, 66, 67, and 73, a semicolon separates parallel references between the pre-Tridentine and post-Tridentine *Summa doctrinae christianae*. In notes 68, 69, and 71, a semicolon separates a series of references to the pre-Tridentine *Summa* from a series of parallel references to the post-Tridentine *Summa*.

*AUGUSTINUS, PRIMUS INTER PATRES*

Since the early days of the Reformation, Catholic theologians had recruited the writings of Augustine in their attacks on Protestantism. In 1521, Jacob von Hoogstraaten, the Dominican Inquisitor in Cologne, published his *Colloquies with St. Augustine against the Errors of Luther*. In the following decades, others followed suit, such as Georg Witzel, who became a supporter of Luther only to return to the Church of Rome, and Agostino Moreschini, a theologian at the Council of Trent.<sup>22</sup> The culmination of this effort in the 16th century was arguably the *Confessio Augustiniana*, compiled by Jerónimo de Torres, a Jesuit theologian at the University of Dillingen, of which the Society of Jesus took charge in 1563.<sup>23</sup> This elaborate florilegium of Augustinian texts, arranged according to a detailed system of theological topics, first appeared in print in 1567 in Dillingen. Torres produced a revised edition that appeared both in Dillingen and Paris in 1569, and the substantial volume was reprinted again in Paris in 1570, 1571, and 1580, and in Cologne in 1590, 1610, 1611, 1675, and 1676.<sup>24</sup> The title page promised the Christian reader: "Here you have the confession of his [Augustine's] faith, doctrine, and religion that Catholics have followed everywhere for more than 1,200 years, that is, from the time of St. Augustine, thinking and professing the same thing with Augustine."<sup>25</sup>

Credit for the compilation was due not solely to Torres, however. In 1566, ten years after being appointed head of the Society's Upper German Province, Canisius announced: "We are preparing the *Confessio Augustiniana*, that is, a work composed of passages from Augustine against the Augsburg Confession." As Dirk Canisius, Peter's step-brother and the rector of the University of Dillingen, confirmed, the *Confessio* was the product of the collaborative effort of the Jesuit theologians at Dillingen "in accordance with the decision of the Reverend Father Provincial."<sup>26</sup> Presumably, Canisius also contributed to the editorial work aimed at the Lutherans, that is, the adherents of the Augsburg Confession.

<sup>22</sup> Pontien Polman, *L'élément historique dans la controverse religieuse du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1932) 405 and n. 3, 406.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Rummel, "Die Anfänge des Dillinger Jesuitenkollegs St. Hieronymus in den Jahren 1563 bis 1565," *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte* 25 (1991) 60–74, at 62–64.

<sup>24</sup> Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 8 (Brussels: Oscar Schepens; Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1898) 127; data from the online catalogues of the Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (Munich).

<sup>25</sup> Otto Braunsberger, ed., *Beati Petri Canisii Societatis Iesu epistulae et acta* (hereafter PCE), 8 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1896–1923) 5:818.

<sup>26</sup> PCE 5:216, 817.

It comes as no surprise that Canisius, "an eminent patrologist,"<sup>27</sup> valued Torres' project. In 1562, five years before the *Confessio Augustiniana*, Canisius published an anthology of letters by Jerome. A second revised edition followed in 1565. With at least 40 editions, the anthology remained in print until the 19th century. Canisius offered readers a decidedly Catholic Jerome.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, disseminating knowledge of the Church Fathers was a life-long endeavor that in particular served Canisius's "battle against the Reformers."<sup>29</sup>

Three years after joining the Jesuits, in 1546, Canisius published his first patristic editions: a collection of the writings of Cyril of Alexandria and of Leo the Great. These are the earliest public expressions of a life-long devotion to the Church Fathers. "Those ancient theologians," Canisius comments in the preface to the edition of Cyril, "might have been deficient in eloquent prose, but their devotion to the gospel and to Christ made up for any lack of eloquence." The Jesuit editor goes on to list admirable ancient Christian writers whose grandeur surpassed their style. He cannot imagine, for example, that "Christianity could possess anything more excellent than Aurelius Augustine," and yet a reader can repeatedly encounter perplexing and obscure passages "in such a great man."<sup>30</sup> In the preface to Leo, the emphasis is on patristic authority *tout court*. Here, as Pontien Polman pointed out, Canisius faults Protestants for an arbitrary reading of the Fathers. He laments contemporary manifestations of impious intellectual conceit, including "an unbridled passion for fabricating new doctrines." The combination of these impieties and "human rashness" produces widespread contempt for "both the dignity and authority of some most holy pontiffs and most esteemed Fathers of the ancient Church," but perhaps the "new teachers," namely, Protestant theologians, may be permitted to abuse that authority "to confirm their own errors"! Yet they would reject Jerome as too harsh, and they would dislike everything about Cyprian. Canisius continues: "Augustine, they say, conceals the corrupt morals of his time since, undoubtedly, he gladly forces the received discipline of the church upon these despisers."<sup>31</sup>

Much later, in the preface to a 1572 edition of a book on the doctrine of justification by the deceased Spanish Franciscan theologian Andrés de Vega (d. 1549), Canisius is far less circumspect. He speaks of Protestant theologians as a group but also identifies them by name. What happens

<sup>27</sup> Polman, *L'élément historique* 402.

<sup>28</sup> Hilmar M. Pabel, "Peter Canisius as a Catholic Editor of a Catholic St. Jerome," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 96 (2005) 171–97.

<sup>29</sup> Hermann Josef Sieben, "Petrus Canisius und die Kirchenväter: Zum 400. Todestag des Heiligen," *Theologie und Philosophie* 72 (1997) 1–30, at 2, 25.

<sup>30</sup> PCE 1:183–84.

<sup>31</sup> Polman, *L'élément historique* 315; PCE 1:216–18.

when they are confronted with “the authority of venerable men of old (*maiores*) or of the Fathers”? They equivocate, insult the *maiores*, pay little or no heed to the Fathers, ridicule bishops, and “spit out the judgment and consensus of the church.”<sup>32</sup> Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor in Geneva, calls Origen “the choice tool of the devil,” and the Lutheran Magdeburg Centuriators think of John Chrysostom as “the immoderate encomiast of good works.”<sup>33</sup>

Even Augustine, “always the supreme authority” on justification, is not safe. “But against him these men”—Canisius had just mentioned the Centuriators—“turn up their noses and furthermore proceed to deprecate his teaching, which can never be praised enough and which sheds the most light on the apostolic writings.”<sup>34</sup> David Chytraeus complains that Paul’s statements about the freely imputed justice of Christ were not good enough for Augustine. Another German Lutheran, Erhard Schnepf, writes: “Augustine never grasped the church’s true and authentic belief about imputed justice.”<sup>35</sup> Johann Bugenhagen, yet another Lutheran, urges: “Deny Augustine so that you do not deny Christ our righteousness.”<sup>36</sup> Gregorius Massovita, Canisius continues, was so crazy that, according to the maverick Italian Reformed Protestant Francesco Stancaro, he held that one Calvin was worth more than one hundred Augustines. Substituting Augustine for Peter Lombard, Canisius thinks it worth quoting a statement from Stancaro: “Augustine is worth more than one hundred Luthers, two hundred Melancthons, three hundred Bullingers, four hundred Peter Martyrs, and five hundred Calvins. If they were all crushed up with a mortar, they would not produce one ounce of true theology.”<sup>37</sup> Canisius’s record of individual criticisms of the Fathers corresponds to one important aim in the Catholic battle to reclaim Christian history: “to dispossess the Protestants of the authority of the Fathers.”<sup>38</sup> If, one by one, Protestant theologians appear in the dock accused of denying Augustine, no alliance can exist between them and him. Augustine becomes a Catholic, not a Protestant, champion.

Catholic bishops should not forget Augustine’s Catholic authority, especially those like Urban Sagstetter, bishop of Gurk, who were prepared to compromise with Protestants. In 1558 or 1559, Canisius wrote to him, insisting that he stand firm against the heretics and not depart from the Catholic Church on any single count. Urban should take as his model “a

<sup>32</sup> PCE 7:68. On Andrés de Vega (1498–1549), see *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*, ed. Quintín Aldea Vaquero, Tomás Marín Martínez, and José Vives Gatell, 4 vols. (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Florez, 1972–1975) 4:2720, s.v. “Vega, Andrés de” by Isaac Vázquez.

<sup>33</sup> PCE 7:69, 70.

<sup>35</sup> PCE 7:71.

<sup>37</sup> PCE 7:72–73.

<sup>34</sup> PCE 7:71.

<sup>36</sup> PCE 7:72.

<sup>38</sup> Polman, *L’élément historique* 310.



man who is both most distinguished in every kind of teaching and most accomplished in the sacred Scriptures—I mean," Canisius reveals, "St. Augustine, who, both as a bishop and as an old man and even from the time he was a one-year-old boy easily took advice." What use is there in reading the works of heretics? Urban should draw water from the river of the Bible and the streams of the Fathers.<sup>39</sup>

Although Canisius reveres all the Church Fathers as instruments for thwarting heresy, affirming Catholic faith, and promoting piety,<sup>40</sup> Augustine, the most distinguished teacher and the most accomplished exegete, is *primus inter patres*. In a sermon on November 16, 1572, at the Innsbruck court of Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria, Canisius justified the worthy practice of frequent confession and communion with reference to "the example of the primitive church," "the judgment of Augustine, who surpasses all preachers," and "the decision of the Council of Trent."<sup>41</sup> In a 1546 letter to a Jesuit studying in Leuven and in another of 1564 replying to the objections of the cathedral chapter of Augsburg, Canisius had already appealed to Augustine's authority for frequent communion.<sup>42</sup> But the passage, attributed to Augustine, that advocated reception of communion every Sunday was spurious, although Canisius and Ignatius of Loyola, who also referred to it, considered it genuine. Gratian's *Decretum* (D. 2 de cons. c. 13) relayed it as a statement by Augustine, but it came from Gennadius's *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus*, written in the fifth century.<sup>43</sup> Yet the Augustine to whom Canisius referred when preaching of Catholic princes' duty to use force against heretics was genuine.<sup>44</sup> We may presume that Canisius was reading or wanted to read Augustine in Erasmus's edition (1528–1529) when in 1561 he requested and promptly received permission from Superior General Diego Laínez to do so.<sup>45</sup> The papal Index of Prohibited Books (1559) had singled out Erasmus for unique censure by condemning his works, religious or not, in a variety of genres.<sup>46</sup>

Canisius never edited Augustine, but he encouraged a priest in Frankfurt to publish an epitome of the *Confessions*. When giving the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius to a priest in Swiss Fribourg, where Canisius spent his last years, he recommended the *Confessions* as a model for pondering the sins committed in a lifetime.<sup>47</sup> He claimed the *Confessions* for his own model as

<sup>39</sup> PCE 2:331–32.

<sup>40</sup> PCE 8:271.

<sup>41</sup> PCE 7:625.

<sup>42</sup> PCE 1:209, 4:558.

<sup>43</sup> PCE 4:558–59 n. 5.

<sup>44</sup> PCE 4:857, 6:634.

<sup>45</sup> PCE 3:114, 125.

<sup>46</sup> J. M. de Bujanda, ed., with René Davignon and Ela Stanek, *Index des livres interdits*, vol. 8, *Index de Rome, 1557, 1559, 1564: Les premiers index romains et l'index du Concile de Trente* (Sherbrooke: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance, 1990) 429.

<sup>47</sup> PCE 6:660, 8:780.

he composed his autobiography in 1596 or 1597. The repeated assertions of his own Catholic faith nicely match Augustine's professions of adherence to the Catholic Church.<sup>48</sup>

Augustine looms large in Canisius's polemical and spiritual works. In 1583, the Jesuit published a two-volume book that comprised his "dogmatic biography"<sup>49</sup> of John the Baptist, originally published in 1571, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, originally published in 1577. The *De verbi Dei corruptelis* was Canisius's response to the Magdeburg Centuriators. According to Otto Braunsberger, Canisius referred to Augustine some 670 times, more than he referred to any other Church Father; in fact, he acclaimed Augustine "the light of theologians" and "virtually the prince of theologians." His last substantial publication was a series of meditations in two volumes on the Gospel readings for every Sunday and major feast days of the liturgical year, the *Notae evangelicae* (1591–1593). The preface to the second volume mounts an extensive apology for the cult of the saints. While Canisius lists Clement of Rome, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius of Caesarea, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nazianzus as witnesses to the antiquity of the cult, only Augustine enjoys the title "the most celebrated doctor of the church." Readers hear only from Augustine as Canisius quotes from *Contra Faustum* (20.21): "The Christian people celebrate together the memorials of the martyrs with religious solemnity in order to inspire imitation, to partake of their merits, and, moreover, to be helped by their prayers." Another attribution to Augustine, the distinction between the worship owed to God alone (*latria*) and the reverence due to the saints, is not a quotation but a construction based on passages from the *City of God* (10.1.2, 10.4, 8.27, 22.10) and *Contra Faustum* (20.21).<sup>50</sup> The senators of Fribourg, to whom Canisius addressed the preface, responded with thanks by giving him an edition of the works of Augustine. Braunsberger infers that this was the ten-volume *opera omnia* printed in Paris in 1586.<sup>51</sup>

### AUGUSTINE THE CATHOLIC DOCTOR IN CANISIUS'S CATECHISMS

Canisius's catechisms contributed to a veritable catechetical renaissance of the 16th century that already by mid-century had inundated Europe with

<sup>48</sup> Hilmar M. Pabel, "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, SJ," *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007) 453–75, at 464–71.

<sup>49</sup> José L. de Orella y Unzué, *Respuestas católicas a las Centurias de Magdeburgo (1559–1588)* (Madrid: Fundación universitaria española, Seminario "Suárez," 1976) 452.

<sup>50</sup> PCE 8:583, 346. For the quoted passage in *Contra Faustum*, see *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (hereafter CSEL) (Vienna, 1866–) 25.562. For the relevant passages in the *City of God*, see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (hereafter CCL) (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–) 47.272, 276, 248–49, 48.828.

<sup>51</sup> PCE 8:352.

Protestant and Catholic catechisms.<sup>52</sup> His catechisms fall into three broad categories, distinguished by length. The rhetoric of question and answer, made popular by Luther's Small Catechism (1529), suffused all of Canisius's catechisms. The Large Catechism was his first. The product of a demand by Ferdinand I of Austria (1503–1564) (and Holy Roman Emperor from 1558) for an exposition of Catholic doctrine in light of the challenge from Protestantism, it appeared anonymously in Vienna in 1555 under the title *Summa doctrinae christianae*. The *Summa* was a Jesuit-sponsored initiative that Canisius took on, much to his anxiety, without any collaboration from his confrères except for some editorial comments on a first complete draft.<sup>53</sup> A revised and enlarged version clearly indicating its author appeared in Cologne in 1566, three years after the Council of Trent. The most conspicuous amplification was a new chapter "on the fall and justification of the human person according to the thinking and teaching of the Council of Trent," a text that relied exclusively on the Bible. The Smallest Catechism, the first offshoot of the *Summa*, initially appeared, also anonymously, as an appendix to a primer in Latin grammar in 1556. Sebaldus Mayer in Dillingen printed a German translation in 1558. Its younger sibling, the Small Catechism, was a more substantial work. Appropriately entitled *Parvus catechismus catholicus*, it was printed in Cologne in 1558, although it gives 1559 as the year of publication; it first received a new name in Kraków in 1561, the *Institutiones christianae pietatis* (a deliberate response to Calvin's *Institutiones christianae religionis?*). Between 1566 and 1588, Christopher Plantin, the celebrated printer of Antwerp, produced several editions of the Small Catechism under the new name. The last edition that he printed (1589) bore the abbreviated title *Institutiones christianae*.<sup>54</sup>

Canisius's invocation of the authority of Augustine against heresy appeared at the end of many editions of the Small Catechism. "Three sayings of Blessed Augustine, most worthy of consideration" follow a section called "Testimonies of Sacred Scripture against the heretics always to be had at the ready." The sayings or *sententiae* are commands all beginning with the formula *Firmissime tene et nullatenus dubites*. You must hold most firmly and by no means doubt, the reader learns, that: (1) they who die outside the church, namely all pagans, Jews, heretics and schismatics, will

<sup>52</sup> Hubert Filser, "Die literarische Gattung 'Katechismus' von Petrus Canisius," in Petrus Canisius, *Der Große Katechismus*, ed. Hubert Filser and Stephan Leimgruber (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003) 25–33, at 26–32.

<sup>53</sup> Begheyn, *Peter Canisius* 20–25.

<sup>54</sup> Otto Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1893) 28, 108 and n. 7, 116, 124, 151; Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:\*98–\*101, 197; Begheyn, "The Catechism" 68–80.

burn forever in the fire “prepared for the devil and his angels”; (2) that heretics and schismatics cannot be saved, no matter how many alms they give or even if they sacrifice their lives “for the name of Christ”; and (3) that not all those baptized in the Catholic Church will be saved but only those who avoid vice and the “lusts of the flesh.” Canisius took the *sententiae* from what turns out to be a spurious work, the *Liber de fide ad Petrum*. When he quoted from it late in life in the *Notae evangelicae*, he attributed its commands to Fulgentius of Ruspe, an African bishop who died a century after Augustine.<sup>55</sup>

In some German editions of the Small and Smallest Catechisms, the *sententiae* appear after two genuine, translated quotations from Augustine. Canisius introduces the first text, taken from *Against the Epistle of Mani* (4.5), as “St. Augustine’s confession and profession against the Manicheans and all heretics.” Augustine explains what keeps him within the bosom of the church: the consensus of peoples; the authority inaugurated with miracles, sustained by hope, augmented by love, and confirmed by the enduring ages; the orderly succession of bishops on the chair of Peter “until this day”; and finally the name of the Catholic Church, its characteristic of universality, which the Church has alone preserved “against so many and various heresies.” The second quotation, taken from the *Psalm against the Donatist Party* (lines 229–31) returns the reader to the chair of Peter. Count the priests on that chair and observe their succession, exhorts Augustine. The same chair of Peter “is the rock that the haughty gates of hell, namely, all the hordes and sects, cannot overwhelm.” The parenthetical explanation of the gates of hell, *alle rotten und secten*, was Canisius’s interpolation.<sup>56</sup>

At least in the German editions of the Smallest Catechism published in Dillingen in 1568, 1573, 1575, 1586, 1590, and 1595 (*Betbuch und Catechismus*), Augustine is the only nonbiblical authority with the exception of Athanasius who is identified as the author of the creed attributed to him. Augustine appears in one more place in German editions of the Small Catechism, such as the *Kurtzer Unterricht vom Catholischen Glauben* (Dillingen, 1560), the *Kurtze Erklärung der fürnemsten stuck des wahren Catholischen Glaubens* (Dillingen, 1563), *Catechismus und Betbuch* (Dillingen, 1564), and editions printed in Ingolstadt in 1563, 1567, 1577, 1580, and 1584 variously as *Der Klain Catechismus*, *Der kurtzer Catechismus*, *Klainer Catechismus*, and *Der kleiner Catechismus*. Justifying the invocation of the saints, Canisius quotes the same passage of *Contra*

<sup>55</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:261; Friedrich Streicher, ed., *S. Petri Canisi doctoris ecclesiae meditationes seu notae in evangelicas lectiones*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Munich: Officina Salesiana, 1957–61) 3:139.

<sup>56</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 2:85, 169–70, 249–50. For the passages from Augustine, see CSEL 25.196; 51.12.

*Faustum* (20.21), reproduced above, which he later offered in the *Notae evangelicae*.<sup>57</sup>

Braunsberger rightly observed that the *Summa* was “a tissue of statements from the Scriptures and elucidations of the Fathers.” Maintaining that Canisius joined battle against error while sparing those in error, Braunsberger stated that Canisius refuted the new doctrines primarily by confirming “Catholic truth from the Scriptures and the witness of Christian antiquity.”<sup>58</sup> More recent scholarship has reinforced this assessment. Canisius’s patristic research was, Karlheinz Diez observes, a product of “humanist impulses” that, coming from the 15th and 16th centuries, laid the groundwork for the Protestant and Catholic recourse to ancient Christian writers. Whereas Protestants measured the opinions of the Church Fathers against the testimony of the Bible and accused Catholics of abandoning earliest Christianity, Catholic controversialists emphasized the Fathers as guarantors of an unbroken tradition that connected the Catholic Church with the Apostles. For Canisius “the *sensus et consensus Patrum* underwrite the truth of the faith.”<sup>59</sup> Reviewing the *Summa*’s teaching on faith, God, the incarnation and redemption, Mary, the church, the sacraments, and prayer, Hubert Filser concludes, albeit without any investigation of the catechism’s deployment of patristic sources, that Canisius grounded Catholic faith and his response to the critique of Protestant theology in tradition.<sup>60</sup>

The Fathers make their presence felt in the *Summa* in two places: at the periphery and center of the text. They march down the margins of the printed pages, leaving behind their names and abbreviated references to their works. Of the more than 400 marginal patristic testimonies in the *Summa* of 1555, Augustine dominates all the Fathers with some 150 references. In the revision of 1566, Canisius augmented the patristic support in the margins to about 1,200 references. A fellow native of Nijmegen and a younger confrère stationed in Cologne, Peter Buys produced a new edition of the *Summa* in four volumes (1569–1570), translating the marginal references to the Bible, Fathers, and church councils into full-blown quotations that propped up the answers to every question in the *Summa*.<sup>61</sup> The discrete and complete transcription of the references would assist readers and preachers, Canisius felt.<sup>62</sup> The Fathers’ presence was more than

<sup>57</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 2:47, 135.

<sup>58</sup> Braunsberger, *Entstehung* 38, 42.

<sup>59</sup> Karlheinz Diez, “Petrus Canisius als Theologe,” in *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche*, ed. Julius Oswald and Peter Rummel (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 1996) 178–93, at 183, 187 (quotations).

<sup>60</sup> Hubert Filser, “Glaubenskonninuität auf der Basis der kirchlichen Tradition,” in Canisius, *Der Große Katechismus 277–307*, at 278–79, 306.

<sup>61</sup> Braunsberger, *Entstehung* 38, 85, 141.

<sup>62</sup> PCE 6:323.

paratextual, however. They spoke from within the text of the *Summa*, regularly assisting Canisius in his responses.

Augustine speaks first and almost last. In the *Summa*'s second question, Canisius asks how Christian teaching can be summarized. Christian knowledge and practice relate to both wisdom and justice. According to Augustine, wisdom involves the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love by which God is worshipped in this life. Canisius has in mind Augustine's comment in the *Retractations* (2.63) about his *Enchiridion*, a treatise on faith, hope, and love addressed to Laurentius. Justice refers to avoiding evil and doing good, Canisius continues. He quotes Scripture for support: "Turn away from evil and do what is good" (Ps 35:15).<sup>63</sup> At the end of the *Summa* of 1555, Canisius recapitulates. The guiding principles of the catechism are Christian wisdom and Christian justice. To the former belong faith, the Apostles' Creed, hope, the Lord's Prayer, charity, and the Ten Commandments. Augustine noted, as Canisius again paraphrases the passage from the *Retractations* (2.63), that "faith, hope, and love are those virtues by which Holy Scripture sums up true human wisdom." Canisius repeats the quotation from Psalm 35, linking it to Jerome, or rather Pseudo-Jerome—the last reference to an ancient Christian authority in the *Summa* of 1555—who "rightly wrote" that Christians must fulfill both parts of the epitome of justice. In 1566, Canisius has John Chrysostom take over the function of teaching that Christians must not only avoid doing evil but also act virtuously.<sup>64</sup>

Augustine is conspicuous among a phalanx of Fathers assembled by Canisius to reinforce a particular teaching. He is part of the answer when Canisius asks, what do the Fathers have to say about the traditions of the church, the confession of sins, the satisfaction for sins, or the sacrament of holy orders? Canisius demands: "Provide examples of apostolic traditions that Christians must observe." He knows where to find these examples: "so that truth may remain beyond doubt, we look for examples from the holy Fathers, who for even more than one thousand years have deserved public trust." Tradition becomes the warrant for belief as Origen and Augustine teach that small children should be baptized; Dionysius and Tertullian show that it is fitting to pray for the dead; Jerome and Epiphanius demonstrate that the church's rules about fasting, especially in Lent, must be obeyed; Ambrose and Chrysostom stress the dignity of the actions that are solemnly performed in the Mass; John Damascene and the Fathers cited by the Second Council of Nicaea bear witness that it is fitting to venerate the images of Christ and

<sup>63</sup> All references to the Psalms are to the Vulgate, not the Hebrew, numbering.

<sup>64</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:6, 83; 74–75, 195. For the passage from the *Retractations*, see CCSL 57.140.

the saints; and Basil the Great "wants the holy chrism and the other solemn ceremonies, used with the most holy sacraments, to be retained on account of tradition."<sup>65</sup>

Given "the public trust" enjoyed by the Fathers, Canisius proceeds in the *Summa* with a rhetoric of respect. Basil wrote or spoke admirably, John Damascene made an excellent statement, and Ambrose beautifully supported Paul's preference for virginity over marriage.<sup>66</sup>

Augustine too deserves praise. He "best reveals from the Scriptures" the superiority of the Christian sacraments to signs of the Mosaic law. As Canisius offers patristic opinions about satisfaction, he writes: "And Augustine said most famously (*clarissime*): 'It is not enough to improve moral behavior and to abstain from evil deeds unless through humble sighs and the sacrifice of a contrite heart in combination with almsgiving one makes satisfaction to God certainly for those deeds already committed.'" Canisius could rightly consider this passage from the *De utilitate agenda poenitentiae* (Sermon 352.5.12) a *locus clarus*, since Gratian had deployed it while considering in the *Decretum* whether human beings could make satisfaction to God for their sins privately without an oral confession (D. 1. de pen. c. 63).<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere Canisius appreciates Augustine's clarity in a saying from Prosper of Aquitaine's *Sententiae ex Augustino delibatae*, a line from Augustine's commentary on Psalm 42, and a passage from a sermon misattributed to Augustine. Thus Augustine sustains (1) Canisius's idea of justice by clearly pointing out that it is not enough to refrain from evil unless one does what is good; (2) the good works inherent in Christian justice by clearly stating that "in this life human justice consists of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer"; and (3) Canisius's definition of evangelical counsels by clearly distinguishing between a counsel and a precept.<sup>68</sup> On a rare occasion, Canisius enhances the reputation of an ancient Christian writer with a title of respect. He mentions "Cyprian that most holy martyr and most important witness" and "that great Ignatius [of Antioch]." Yet he bestows three different titles on Augustine: "the most reliable interpreter of Scripture," "the most worthy witness" who can speak for many with the same faith, and, of course, "the truly Catholic doctor."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 1:19. In 1566, Canisius shortened the introduction to his recital of patristic witnesses: "Exempla satis multa apud patres extant et eos quidem, qui vel ante mille annos fidem publicam meruerunt" (Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:106–7).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 1:23, 113; 27, 118; 72, 108.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 1:26, 116; 39, 136. For the quotation from Augustine, see Migne, PL 39.1549.

<sup>68</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:60, 61, 70; 169, 171, 186. For the passages quoted by Canisius, see PL 51.439, CCSL 38.481, 39.2258.

<sup>69</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:39, 44, 26, 40, 43; 136, 143, 116, 137, 142.

Augustine's Catholic authority resonates throughout the *Summa*. Canisius asks, "How, apart from God, do we venerate and invoke the saints?" In the *Summa* of 1555, Canisius begins his response by quoting the highly useful sentence from Augustine's *Contra Faustum* (20.21) about the Christian practice of celebrating the memorials of the martyrs. In his revision of 1566, Canisius commences with the observation that Paul frequently calls all Christians saints, but by saints "we understand," Canisius continues, those who have obtained their heavenly reward. Paul refers to them when he writes "through faith they have conquered kingdoms, made justice their business, and received the promises" (Heb 11: 33). Augustine's testimony from *Contra Faustum* returns at the end in order to defend the invocation of the saints and the days established in their honor.<sup>70</sup> Before and after the Council of Trent, Canisius begins his catechesis on sin, envy, fasting, and mercy by citing Augustine. He quotes definitions of sin from the anti-Manichean treatise *On Two Souls* (11.15), of envy from the *Literal Commentary on Genesis* (11.14), of fasting from the *Commentary on John's Gospel* (17.4), and of mercy from the *City of God* (9.5).<sup>71</sup>

Augustine dominates the answer to the question: "Why is the authority of the church necessary for us?" First, the authority of the church distinguishes the canonical Scriptures from apocrypha. After a quote from Pseudo-Jerome that ties the canon of the Bible to "the authority of the holy Catholic Church," Canisius supplies the more famous statement from *Against the Epistle of Mani* (5): "In truth, I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Catholic Church did not compel me." Second, the church's authority stabilizes the true sense of Scripture and its appropriate interpretation to prevent endless debate. As Augustine wrote in the *De trinitate* (1.3.6): "Indeed, all heretics try to defend their deceitful and false opinions from the Sacred Scriptures." Third, the church acts as judge and moderator "in the more serious questions and controversies about faith." Canisius completely agrees with Epiphanius who commented in the *Panarion against Eighty Heresies* that not everything can be taken from the Scriptures. The Jesuit catechist proceeds to a quotation that he attributes to Augustine: "It is evident that in a doubtful matter the authority of the Catholic Church prevails (*valeat autoritas ecclesiae catholicae*) for the sake of faith and certainty."

Here is an indication that Gratian's *Decretum*, which served as a compendium of authoritative opinions culled from the Church Fathers, might have been one of the sources in which Canisius read Augustine. After a series of canons attributed to Augustine in the context of his discussion of

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 1:15, 100–101.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 1:49, 51, 61, 64; 150, 155, 171, 177. For the passages from Augustine, see CSEL 25.70, CSEL 28.346, CCSL 36.172, CCSL 47.254.



the relationship between law and custom, Gratian reproduces the following text from what he calls Augustine's *Book against the Manicheans*: "It is evident that in a doubtful matter for the sake of faith the authority of the Catholic Church prevails, which is confirmed by the succession of bishops from those very solid foundations of the sees of the Apostles to the present day and by the consensus of so many peoples" (D. 11, c. 9). The canon is derived from *Contra Faustum*. In an argument about the ultimate authority of a text, Augustine tells the Manichean Faustus that if he tries to make himself the basis of credibility, "you will get nowhere (*nihil ualebis*), and you will see in this matter why the authority of the Catholic Church prevails (*quid ecclesiae catholicae ualeat auctoritas*), which is confirmed by the succession of bishops from those very solid foundations of the sees of the apostles to the present day and by the consensus of so many peoples" (*Contra Faustum* 11.2).

After appealing to Augustine's assertion of the church's authority, Canisius invokes Augustine a fourth time. The church's authority is necessary so that the obstinate may understand and be corrected and restrained by the power of coercion and excommunication established by Christ. In this respect, Augustine states: "To those through whom the church is governed, without violation of the peace, belongs the power of exercising discipline against reprobates and criminals." This quotation from Augustine's treatise *On Faith and Works* (5.7) also appears in the *Decretum* (C. 23, q. 4, c. 18), although Gratian supplies the entire sentence of which the passage provided by Canisius is only a part. Indeed, the sentence is the last of a long quotation from *On Faith and Works* incorporated into Gratian's consideration of the punishment or toleration of the wicked. The statement quoted by Canisius is the final patristic testimony for the church's authority.<sup>72</sup>

Along with the Roman Church's authority, Protestants rejected its various practices, including prayers for the dead. Canisius addresses the topic in a question under the heading of the sacrament of penance: "Is there also a place for satisfaction after death?" Relying on the *Enchiridion* (sec. 110), Canisius notes that, according to Augustine, some who have died are neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly bad. These people did not complete the penance for their sins. The *locus classicus* in the Bible for supporting the existence of purgatory and for the earthly service to the dead comes from 2 Maccabees, a book that Protestants did not consider canonical, in which Judas Maccabeus says that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead so that they might be freed from their sins" (12:46). Consequently, Canisius explains, Judas was praised for ensuring that "not

<sup>72</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:22–23, 112–13. For the passages from Augustine, see CSEL 25.197, CCSL 50.34, CSEL 25.315, CSEL 41.43.

only prayers but also a sacrifice would be offered for the sins of the dead” (see 12:43). The actual passage from the Vulgate relates that Judas, “thinking devoutly about the resurrection,” sent money to Jerusalem “for a sin offering.” The synods and Fathers, “who have handed down the true teaching of the church,” have treated this passage with respect. Augustine, “the most faithful witness” speaks for them all: “In the second book of Maccabees, we read of a sacrifice offered for the dead. But even if this were nowhere at all read in the Old Testament, not inconsiderable is the authority of the universal church that shines out in this custom when, in the prayers of the priest poured out to the Lord God on his altar, the commendation of the dead also has its place.” Canisius follows this quotation from *On Caring for the Dead* (1.3) with another from the *City of God* (21.16): “One should not suppose that there will be any purifying punishments (*purgatoriae poenae*) except prior to that final and dread judgment.” Surely, he thinks, no words could be more admirable than these. Canisius proceeds with more words from Augustine: “Indeed, there is no doubt that the dead are helped by the prayers of the holy church and by the saving sacrifice and by the alms that are obtained for their spirits so that the Lord might treat them with greater mercy than their sins deserve. This, indeed, the Fathers have handed down and the universal church observes” (Sermon 172.2.2). This is, Canisius continues, what Augustine said more than 1,200 years ago, and so, in full agreement with this teaching, did Cyprian, Origen, Dionysius, and Clement before him. After quoting from Chrysostom, Canisius ends his answer with brief references to Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 37 (section 3) and his *Enchiridion* (section 110). Against the Aërian heretics (to be distinguished from the Arians) “the church, the faithful interpreter of Scripture, has constantly taught the existence of a certain purifying or, as Augustine calls it, correcting fire and that there the faithful departed in Christ must make up for and expiate the offences of sinners, unless, as Augustine says, they find relief in the piety of their living relatives.”<sup>73</sup>

When he revised the *Summa* for publication in 1566, Canisius strengthened his teaching with more patristic testimonies. He amplified his discussion of the definition of the church by stressing the importance of papal primacy. Several Fathers recognize the Roman Church: Jerome, Optatus,

<sup>73</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:39–40; 137–38. For the passages from Augustine, see CCSL 46.108, CSEL 41.623, CCSL 48.783, PL 38.936, CCSL 38.384, 46.108. Augustine in *On Caring for the Dead* (1.3) writes “in the books of the Maccabees” (CSEL 41.623), not “in the second book of Maccabees.” He devotes a chapter on the Aërians in the *De haeresibus* (CCSL 46.323–34). The followers of Aërius denied the efficacy of prayer for the dead. See *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 11 vols., 3rd ed., ed. Walter Kasper (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1993–2001) 1:185, s.v. “Aërios,” by Hanns Christof Brennecke.

Cyprian, Ambrose, and Irenaeus. Augustine joins the patristic chorus when "he plainly writes that the leadership of the apostolic chair has always flourished in the Roman Church."<sup>74</sup> The reference is to a letter in which Augustine criticizes the Donatists (ep. 43.7). Canisius adds only Augustine's voice to his treatment of the question: "Through whom at last does the Spirit teach us the truth in the church?" These intermediaries are bishops, prelates, pastors, teachers, and also synods. They deserve obedience, but not everyone is willing to obey. Canisius accuses those who do not submit to church leaders of "a great crime." They

openly dare to tear up and attack first, indeed, the sacred laws of the supreme pontiffs, who have always enjoyed the supreme power of making decisions in sacred matters, and then, to be sure, the venerable constitutions of the general councils, "whose authority in the church," as Augustine says, "is most wholesome," and finally the definite statements about matters of faith by the Fathers. In fact, together, their common understanding and, moreover, consensus constitute a strong witness of Christian truth.<sup>75</sup>

Canisius plucks a phrase from one of Augustine's letters (ep. 54.1) to have him defend the authority of church councils. In another letter (ep. 23.2), the Catholic doctor serves, we may assume, as a doughty opponent of the Anabaptists. Canisius ends his discussion of baptism by asserting that "it is absolutely execrable" to be baptized more than once. "With the Council of Constantinople," Canisius continues, "we must say: 'I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.' And with Augustine: 'To rebaptize a heretical person is entirely a sin, but to rebaptize a Catholic is a most monstrous crime,' which, consequently, imperial laws in fact forbid."<sup>76</sup> Against the adversaries who clamor against the church's rule to administer the Eucharist to the laity in only one kind, Canisius insists that neither faith nor sacraments can effect salvation "except for those who persist in the unity of the church." That is why Augustine said: "Without unifying love (*sine charitate unitatis*) all the sacraments of Christ entail judgment, not salvation" (*Against the Letters of Petilian* 3.40.46). Elsewhere Augustine said: "What does either a sound faith or perhaps the salutary sacrament of faith profit a person when the wholesomeness of love is destroyed by the fatal wound of schism" (*On Baptism against the Donatists* 1.8.11).<sup>77</sup>

When it comes to the sacrament of marriage, Canisius asks: "May everyone marry?" In 1555, Canisius uses Augustine, among other Fathers, to build his case for a negative answer, another subject of controversy between Catholics and Protestants. Certainly nuns, monks, and priests

<sup>74</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:109.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 1:110.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 1:119

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* 1:130. For the passages from Augustine, see CCSL 31.172, 226, 62, CSEL 52.200, CSEL 51.156.

may not marry. Canisius quoted from Augustine's commentary on Psalm 83 (section 4): "A virgin, if she marries, does not sin; if a nun marries, she will be considered to have committed adultery against Christ." In 1566, he adds Augustine to his treatment of the next question: "Does the church therefore force anyone into celibacy?" The church, "a pious and provident mother," does not exercise compulsion in this matter, but she does require those who of their own free will took on the law of celibacy not to violate their undertaking. Tertullian calls these celibates "voluntary eunuchs." Canisius proceeds in 1566 to consider two errors: that marriage is either equal or superior to celibacy and that Christians are virtually incapable of celibacy and therefore should not promise solemnly to live as celibates. Those who advocate the latter error "do not understand the abundant grace of the gospel" offered by Christ "for so many centuries" and also today to those who seek it. Paul affirms that a faithful God will not allow anyone to be tempted beyond his or her ability (1 Cor 10:13). Similarly, expounding in his commentary on Psalm 75 (section 16) the command, "make vows and pay them to the Lord, your God" (v. 12), Augustine writes: "Do not be slow to make your vows, for you will not fulfill them with your own strength. You will fail if you trust in yourself, but if you trust in him to whom you vow, make your vows and you will surely fulfill them." An assertion from Augustine terminates the discussion: "Fortunate is the necessity that compels us to better things" (ep. 127.8).<sup>78</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In June 1546, Canisius praised Johannes Gropper in a letter to Bishop Friedrich Nausea of Vienna. Then a young and recent recruit of the fledgling Society of Jesus as well as a student at the University of Cologne, Canisius, who loved Gropper as if he were his father, commended him for bravely upholding the Catholic cause in Cologne, where the archbishop, Hermann von Wied, had embraced Protestantism. Gropper had also written "with utmost devotion and skill short treatises . . . for the pious instruction of the youth."<sup>79</sup> Canisius must have been thinking of two works published in 1546: Gropper's catechism, *Capita institutionis ad pietatem ex sacris scripturis et orthodoxa catholicae ecclesiae doctrina et traditione excerpta in usum pueritiae*, and prayer book, *Libellum piarum precum ad usum puericiae*. The *Capita* were not Gropper's first effort at catechesis. In 1538, his *Enchiridion christianae institutionis* appeared anonymously, appended to the reform decrees drawn up two years earlier by the council

<sup>78</sup> Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:46–47, 147–48. For the passages from Augustine, see CCSL 39.1149, 1048; CSEL 44.28. The quotation from Tertullian is from *To his Wife* (1.6.2); see CCSL 1.380.

<sup>79</sup> PCE 1:204–6.

of the ecclesiastical province of Cologne. Originally intended as an instruction for clergy, Gropper's *Enchiridion* was initially well received and circulated widely as an appendix to the decrees and as a separate publication. Reform-minded Italian churchmen, such as Cardinals Gasparo Contarini, Marcello Cervini, Giovanni Morone, Jacopo Sadoleto, and Bishop Matteo Giberti of Verona, welcomed the book. In the 1540s and 1550s, printers in Venice, Verona, Lyon, Paris, and Antwerp ensured its popularity with readers. The book was a printing success particularly in Paris.<sup>80</sup> We can imagine that Canisius, while a student at Cologne, might also have known of the *Enchiridion*.<sup>81</sup> Gropper produced a third catechetical work, the *Institutio catholica*, which appeared in Cologne in 1550.

Did Gropper teach Canisius to rely on the Church Fathers in catechesis? References to their writings, crowding the margins of the substantial *Enchiridion*, sustain Gropper's exposition of Christian doctrine. Augustine, as the most prominent of the Fathers in the *Enchiridion*, accounts for almost half the patristic references and appears in both the text and the margins.<sup>82</sup> The margins are less busy in the briefer *Capita* and the bulky *Institutio*, but the presence of the Fathers is unmistakable. In a section on the veneration of the saints and their images, Gropper insists: "The church does not adore the saints for the sake of religious worship (which it forbids) but honors them for the sake of imitation. It honors them out of love, and not in servitude." A printed *marginalium* directs readers to the last chapter of Augustine's *De vera religione*, where Augustine wrote of the pious departed: "They should be honored for the sake of imitation, not adored for the sake of religious worship" (55.108). Gropper incorporates the same Augustinian reference into his text as he begins the discussion of the veneration of the saints and their relics in the *Institutio* in the same way as he did in the *Capita*.<sup>83</sup>

For Gropper as for Canisius, the Church Fathers in general and Augustine in particular help establish the tradition of the church that nourishes the instruction of piety. Tradition played a role too in the Catechism of the Council Trent also known as the Roman Catechism, which appeared in

<sup>80</sup> Johannes Meier, "Das 'Enchiridion christianae institutionis' (1538) von Johannes Gropper: Geschichte seiner Entstehung, Verbreitung, und Nachwirkung," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 86 (1975) 289–328, at 294, 299–306, 316–28.

<sup>81</sup> James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935) 45.

<sup>82</sup> Braunisch, *Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung im "Enchiridion"* 51. I consulted the following octavo edition of 310 folios: *Enchiridion christianae institutionis* (Antwerp: Joannes Steelsius, 1552).

<sup>83</sup> *Capita institutionis ad pietatem* (Nijmegen: Pieter van Elzen, 1551) E1r; *Institutio catholica* (Cologne: Jaspas von Gennep, 1550) 66. For the quotation from Augustine, see CCSL 32.256.

1566, the same year as the revised *Summa doctrinae christianae*. Although the Roman Catechism subordinated tradition to Scripture, it nevertheless frequently appealed to the authority of the Fathers, of whom Augustine was the clear favorite.<sup>84</sup>

Like the Roman Catechism, Canisius's catechisms deserve to be called European catechisms.<sup>85</sup> The *Summa* of 1554 appeared with a preface of Ferdinand I, ordering its exclusive use in the schools of Austria. In an ordinance of 1557, King Philip II of Spain prescribed the *Summa* for the schools of his Netherlandish territories.<sup>86</sup> These decrees lent a political dimension to the *Summa* as an agent of confessionalization. The Society of Jesus also contributed to the widespread use of Canisius's catechisms as instruments of pedagogy. The curriculum that Diego de Ledesma devised for the Collegio Romano in 1564–1565 assigned Canisius's Small Catechism to students at the earlier and intermediate levels of instruction and the Large Catechism to advanced students.<sup>87</sup> When the Jesuits opened their college in Würzburg in 1567, they decided that on Fridays the *Summa* "will be carefully explained" to advanced students, while the other students learned the Small Catechism. Similarly, Friday was the day for catechetical instruction at the Jesuit college in Ingolstadt. A curriculum of 1568 mandated teaching Canisius's *Catholic Catechism* (no doubt the Small Catechism) in Latin to advanced students and in German to the others. This catechism was also the basis of exercises for all students every day around noon.<sup>88</sup> In France, the *Summa* and the Small Catechism successfully competed in Jesuit colleges with the catechisms of the French Jesuit Émond Auger (1515-1591).<sup>89</sup> The *Ratio studiorum* of 1586, an elaborate plan of Jesuit education, recommended what it called the "shorter catechism" (Canisius's *brevior catechismus*—a reference to the Small Catechism?)

<sup>84</sup> Gerhard Bellinger, *Der Catechismus Romanus und die Reformation: Die katechetische Antwort des Trienter Konzils auf die Haupt-Katechismen der Reformatoren* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1970) 83, 85–86.

<sup>85</sup> Jean-Claude Dhôtel, *Les origines du catéchisme moderne d'après les premiers manuels imprimés en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1967) 65.

<sup>86</sup> Braunsberger, *Entstehung* 33, 81–82.

<sup>87</sup> Ladislaus Lukács, ed., *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu*, vol. 2, 1557–1572 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974) 572, 581, 589, 601, 614.

<sup>88</sup> G. M. Pachtler, ed., *Ratio studiorum et institutiones scholasticae Societatis Jesu per Germaniam olim vigentes collectae concinnatae dilucidatae*, vol. 1:1541–1599 (= vol. 2 of Karl Kehrbach, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica: Schulordnungen, Schulbücher, und pädagogische Miscellaneen aus dem Landen deutscher Zunge* [Berlin: A. Hofmann, 1887]) 208, 211, 214. Several editions of the Small Catechism appeared under the title of *Catechismus catholicus*. See *Catechismi* 1:129–32.\*

<sup>89</sup> Dhôtel, *Les origines* 271–74.

"since we have nothing more clear, organized, well-written in Latin, safe, and, moreover, complete."<sup>90</sup>

Recommended by princes and taught to children in Latin or in the vernacular throughout Catholic Europe, Canisius's catechisms shaped the belief and religious mentality of generations of Catholics. Especially the *Summa* functions "as the chief *Feldzeichen* or field-badge of the Counter-Reformation."<sup>91</sup> Its "strong emphasis on the works and precepts of the church lets us sense the dawn of the Counter-Reformation."<sup>92</sup> These precepts along with all its teachings were anchored in both the Bible and Christian tradition as mediated by the Church Fathers in the many selected references to and quotations from them.

As with the other Fathers, Augustine reassures Catholics of the antiquity and thus the veracity of their faith and worship. Canisius's Augustine speaks from a variety of genres: epistolary, exegetical, and polemical. Anti-Donatist writings, in which Augustine upheld the authority of the Catholic Church, figured prominently in Canisius's selection of texts. Canisius neglected the anti-Pelagian works, in which Augustine emphasized the primacy of grace in salvation. Perhaps we can say that his catechisms represent the triumph of Augustine's doctrine of the church over his doctrine of grace. We cannot be sure where Canisius read Augustine. One clue suggests Gratian's *Decretum*. Braunsberger imagines that Canisius drew on patristic *catenae*,<sup>93</sup> but this first Jesuit patrologist could also have consulted editions of individual Fathers. In the end, his choice of texts, genuine or spurious, and their location were textually and conceptually subordinate to the repeated assertion of the authority of Augustine. Molded by Canisius, the "truly Catholic doctor" became an object and agent of confessionalization. If a revived Augustine led a Protestant revolution in ideas, then Canisius's catechisms replied within a Roman Catholic Augustinian counterrevolution.

<sup>90</sup> Ladislaus Lukács, ed., *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu*, vol. 5, *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu (1586, 1591, 1599)* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1986) 142.

<sup>91</sup> Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 251.

<sup>92</sup> Paul Drews, *Petrus Canisius, der erste deutsche Jesuit* (Halle: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1892) 46.

<sup>93</sup> Braunsberger, *Entstehung* 41.