

April 8

Julian St. Augustine

Good day, good people! May the Lord give you peace!

There is no mincing words here. Our company today is an eccentric. For this reason, he probably would not accept a place at our kitchen tables and we would be disinclined to offer him hospitality. Julian St. Augustine was thought to be peculiar! So extreme were his penitential practices that the order dismissed him.

This, however, did not prevent him from daily returning to the friary to share a meal with the poor. The friars heard his persistent knock on their door and they eventually opened it. He was given a second chance to become a Franciscan and this time he was successful.

No biographer disputes his sincerity to live a gospel life. Perhaps his life was one of "holy madness." Almost all of his spiritual practices were in the extreme and in many instances were inhuman. So harsh were these penitential mortifications that physicians said it was a miracle that he could live and work. *Be more, give more and do more* was his motto. He had no appreciation of moderation or the wisdom that teaches us that "virtue is in the middle."

The Franciscan Order has had a history of spiritual practices that many today would find odd. Much has changed! A person who came to us today and seeks to live as Blessed Julian of St. Augustine would probably never get beyond the stage of initial correspondence. Living a healthy and holy life is scripturally rooted in the words of the minor prophet, Micah, who reminds us that God is compassionate, forgiving and not easily impressed with excessive spiritual practices. "This is what God requires of you: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

This biblically sound spirituality reminds us that the practices of penance and mortification are no less intense today than they were in the life of Julian St. Augustine. Mortification and penance are now understood as striving to see as God sees and doing the strenuous tasks of being honest with ourselves. Living justice, loving tenderly and walking through life with our God is definitely contemporary Franciscan spirituality that will demand our entire selves.

Let us pray.



Lord, I desire to desire you alone and above all other desires. Purify me and free me from my many attachments in this life. Help me to have the courage to make daily sacrifices to you so that my mind and will are more prepared to receive your mercy. Jesus, I place my trust in your saving love. Amen.

Julian St. Augustine is a friend of God, the company we welcome today.