

The Arians appealed to many high position leaders, but Ambrose was able to stay one step ahead. The Arians increasing strength proved troublesome for Ambrose. They even influenced the emperor and his mother along with many other people, including clergy, laypersons, and military, -- they all accepted Arianism.

These people during the time of Bishop Ambrose demanded some of the churches in Milan be dedicated to them, one in the city and one in the suburbs. Ambrose refused of course and appeared in front of the council, where he then spoke eloquently in defense of the Church.

He is quoted with stating the following: "If you demand my person, I am ready to submit; carry me to prison or to death, I will not resist; but I will never betray the church of Christ. I will die at the foot of the altar rather than desert it. The tumult of the people I will not encourage -- God alone can appease it."

As time went on, Bishop Ambrose was credited to keep the Catholic Faith alive and strong in Milan. Ambrose died on April 4, 397 of natural causes.

Ambrose was known for taking Scripture into his heart and meditating on it profoundly. He had a new method, already beginning to become popular in the east, that he helped to introduce to the western world. It's called *Lectio Divina*. *Lectio Divina* is Latin meaning: prayerful listening.

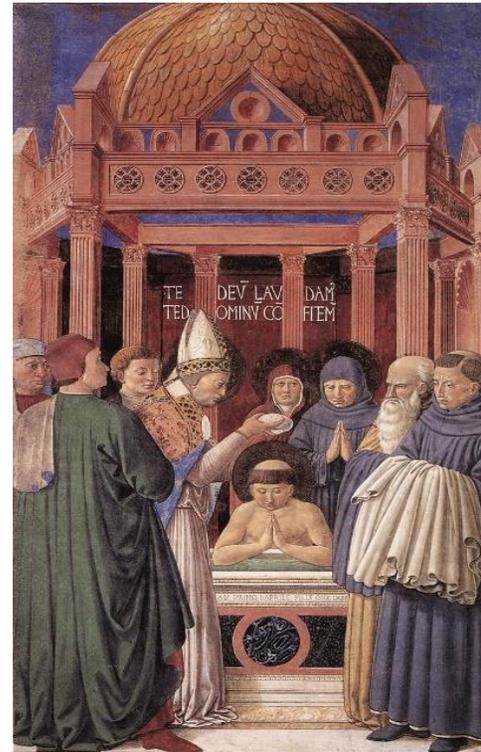
St. Ambrose was a committed intellectual. He said, "In all people there lies ... a desire to search out the truth which leads us on to have a longing for knowledge and learning and infuses into us a wish to seek after it. To excel in this seems a noble thing."

The Pope designated him the first Doctor of the Church.

Sources Include: catholic.org, st.mauriceparish.org, ewtn.com, augnet.org

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St. Ambrose *Doctor of the Church*

Feast Day: December 7

Born: 340

Died: April 4, 397

Patronage: Beekeepers,
Learning & Milan

Ambrose pronounced AM-broh-z, a name meaning "immortal"; was born around 340 AD to a Roman Christian family. He grew up with his siblings, Satyrus and Marcellina, in Belgic Gaul (present-day Germany).

It is believed by many that when Ambrose was just an infant, a swarm of bees landed on his face near his mouth and left behind a drop of honey. To his father, this was a sign that Ambrose would become someone great with a wonderful sense for speaking.

Saint Ambrose, also known as Aurelius Ambrosius, is one of the four original doctors of the Church. He was the Bishop of Milan and became one of the most important theological figures of the 4th century. Ambrose is remembered as the teacher who converted and baptized St. Augustine of Hippo, the great Christian theologian, and as a model bishop who viewed the church as rising above the ruins of the Roman Empire.

Ambrose was made Bishop of Milan on December 7, 374 at 34 years old. In his new role in the church, he acted decisively. He spoke out against errors in belief, converted pagans, built churches, and wrote books of instruction about the faith. After the former Bishop of Milan died, Ambrose attended the election. While giving an address, the assembly began calling for him to become the next bishop. They

knew Ambrose believed in the Catholic Church and he fought against one of the major heresies at that time which was Arianism.

Arianism was a heresy that seriously threatened the Church. It was started by a man named Arius in the year 319 A.D. It denied the Divinity of Christ. Arius while at a Catechetical School in Alexandria proposed a problem: If the Son of God is begotten of God the Father, then the Father existed before the Son. Since the Father existed before the Son, the Son is unlike the Father. The Son is not co-eternal with the Father. According to Arius, the Son was created by the Father and not Divine as the Father. Arius' main error was that he imposed time on the eternal (timeless) nature of God.

The truth is that God, the Father gives His spiritual, divine, timeless nature to His only begotten Son. This is also explained in the first chapter of Hebrews.

Unfortunately, Arius failed to understand this fundamental point and refused to accept the Divinity of Christ. Arius took his debate from the academic circles to the streets. He quickly gained a large following. After being excommunicated in Alexandria, he fled to Caesarea where Bishop Eusebius helped him spread his errors.

Six years later, in 325, the Council of Nicaea was called to deal with the Arian crisis. The Council excommunicated Arius and declared that the Son is "of the same substance") as the Father. This became part of the Nicene Creed. But the Arians continued to gain power and political influence. They remained a serious threat to the Church for another half century. St. Athanasius was the great defender of the Faith against this heresy. As well as St. Ambrose.

Ambrose composed religious hymns and wrote books on Scripture, dogma, and morality. He continued his studies in theology. Using what he learned and his knowledge of Greek, he took the time to study the Old Testament and Greek authors. He used all of this while preaching. In fact, his abilities and knowledge impressed Augustine of Hippo, who previously thought poorly of Christian preachers.

When Ambrose spoke, he showed charity in theological matters, this attracted those who followed Arianism. The way Ambrose preached

the Scriptures swayed Augustine. Ambrose showed Augustine how to appreciate the Bible in spiritual terms. His sermons were quite mystical and touched the soul.

After meeting Ambrose, Augustine reevaluated himself and was forever changed. In 387, Ambrose baptized Augustine at the age of 33. Ambrose had a great influence on St. Monica, Augustine's mother. She was so appreciative of Bishop Ambrose; she called him "a messenger of God who uprooted her son from his former ways and led him to his convictions of Christ."

He continues to write about how his desire for worldly success fades leaving him with an inner absence of peace. But then continues his search and finds the Christian faith. His conversion and flourishing new life in Christ are included in his writing. Titled *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*.

The Confessions is divided into 13 "books", which we would call chapters. Augustine recounted his life in a book he wrote titled *The Confessions*. Starting with his early life, education, and youthful indiscretions, and following his search for truth, Augustine is quite honest about his proud and ambitious youth.

In his book, he wrote about his encounter with Bishop Ambrose. He wrote how he was so attracted to his eloquent discourse and his deep charity towards him. He expresses how much he began to love Bishop Ambrose for who he was as a Man of God and uses these words: *I was slain spiritually*.

He continues with how convinced he was through Bishop Ambrose' eloquent preaching, reminding Augustine of the Catholic Faith given to him by his parents. Augustine becomes a priest at 36 and a five years later, a Bishop. A sinner turned saint.

Ambrose continues his office as Bishop of Milan and trying his best to put an end to Arianism in Milan. He often attempted to theologially dispute their propositions.