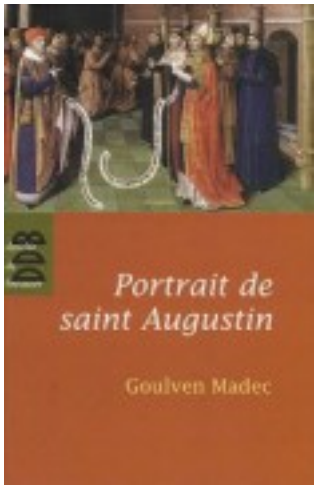


PROMINENT ASSUMPTIONIST Fr. GOULVEN MADEC, A.A. (1930-2008)

A LIFE AT THE SCHOOL OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Goulven Madec died on April, 2008 in Layrac, France at the age of 77. As one recent commentator wrote, "If the Western world has rediscovered the work of St. Augustine, it is in good part due to this specialist, known throughout the world. In fact, he spent his life discovering St. Augustine, one of the greatest 'Fathers' of the Church, and getting others to love him. Moreover, he brought the works of Augustine out of the shadows of scholarly circles. His daily conversation with Augustine enabled him to bring sound answers to several critical questions, such as the evolution and conversion of Augustine or the influence of Neo-platonism, while rejecting the medieval distinction between philosophy and theology which, by its anachronism, seemed to him to have often distorted Augustinian studies."



Among his many activities, Fr. Madec was, beginning in 1976, the co-editor of *Augustinus-Lexikon*, sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the University of Giessen, Schwabe-Verlab, in Basel. As such, he was responsible for, in addition to personal articles he wrote, the redaction of philosophical entries and all articles published in French. He was responsible for the *Bulletin Augustinien* of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*

. He was also responsible for the collection «
Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Œuvres de saint Augustin
». He collaborated on the
Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike
, under the direction of professors R. Herzog and P.L. Schmitt. He likewise collaborated on the
Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana
.

Fr. Madec was born in Brélès (Finistère) on October 31, 1930. His family's situation was a modest one. He completed his secondary studies at the Assumptionist minor semiaries of Saint-Maur (Maine-et-Loire) and Cavalerie (Dordogne) and then philosophical, theological and literary studies at the Assumptionist house of studies in Layrac, France. In 1948, he entered the congregation and was ordained in Rome in 1957. In 1958, he obtained a licentiate in theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas, known as the *Angelicum*, located in Rome. As of 1958, he became a member of the Institut d`Études Augustiniennes (where he was the backbone) and remained so throughout his life. This very same year he began his collaboration with the
Bulletin Augustinien
. After his licentiate he went on to earn a licentiate in ancient literature at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1961. He also earned a teacher degree here and a certificate in the history of the philosophy. In 1963 he received a diploma of higher education in classical literature and the following year a licentiate in philosophy from the Institut catholique de Paris. In 1965, he began teaching phiolosophy at the Institut catholique de Paris. From June 1967 to 1978, he was granted the status of « technicien » at the Center for Research in Medieval Thought (CNRS ---- National Center for Scientific Research). On December 19, 1972, he successfully defended his doctoral thesis on St. Ambrose at the Sorbonne. In 1974, he was the recipient of the award given by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres and won the Prix Bordin for his work,
Saint Ambroise et la philosophie
(Études Augustiniennes). In 1977, he earned a doctorate in philosophy from the Institut catholique de Paris. Likewise in 1977, he was promoted to the grade of « ingénieur » at the CNRS. From 1979 to September 1983, he was responsible for research at the CNRS. In 1982, he assumed direction of the
Bulletin Augustinien
, where he published many articles. From 1983 to 1992 he worked as "a master of research" at the CNRS. In 1987, he published
Augustin. Le message de la foi
(Desclée de Brouwer). This publication dealt with talks he gave on Radio Notre-Dame, on the occasion of the 16
th
centennial of the conversion of St. Augustine. In 1989, while he held the prestigious Cardinal Mercier Chair at the Université de Louvain-la-Neuve, he published
La Patrie et la Voie. Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin
(Desclée de Brouwer).
In 1992, he was promoted to the highest level of research at the CNRS. In 1997, his work
Saint Augustin et la philosophie

(Brepols) appeared. Then in 1998, it was
Le Dieu d`Augustin
(Cerf) and in 2008
Portrait de saint Augustin
(Desclée de Brouwer).The latter was an attempt to portray Augustine's spirituality and spiritual ideal.

One of the highlights of his later years was the invitation he received by the Algerian government to speak at a conference in Augustine's hometown of Tagaste in 2001 on the topic of Augustine and the family.

Time and again Fr. Goulven would comment that it was his aim and his joy to be able to bring Augustine's thought to the widest possible audience because, as he said, "Augustine always tried to bring the truths of the gospel to the least of his flock of Hippo." In 2002 on the occasion of a series of lectures at a parish in Paris, he summarized his understanding of Augustine. Augustinian spirituality is centered on three fundamental values: 1) the spiritual sense of the Scriptures; 2) interiority; 3) community. But, this values are not somehow disconnected but united in the person of Christ who is the fullest meaning of the Scriptures, the Teacher Within, and the Whole Christ: the Head and the Body, the King and the Priest of the City of God."

His massive work includes more than 120 titles, of which 22 are books. It has been an inspiration for his students and followers as well as his colleagues and friends. They dedicated a festschrift to him in 1997 entitled *Chez Augustin*.

In his memory, one of his former students wrote, "In fact, if Fr. Goulven was able to introduce others so profoundly and yet so simply to Augustine, it's not simply because he was such an expert but because he lived the spirit of Augustine. By becoming an Assumptionist, he chose to live according to the *Rule of St. Augustine*, that is to say, to live in a community of brothers that aims at 'having but one soul and one heart set on God.' Those who knew him well know how much his brothers meant to him and how much they counted on him. They know how willing he was to let himself be disturbed by anyone who came to ask him for a favor or service. They know how much he himself lived what he called, not without audacity, 'a spiritual communism.'"