

~Other Speakers A-F: St. Augustine:

21. This same memory also contains the feelings of my mind; not in the manner in which the mind itself experienced them, but very differently according to a power peculiar to memory. For without being joyous now, I can remember that I once was joyous, and without being sad, I can recall my past sadness. I can remember past fears without fear, and former desires without desire. Again, the contrary happens. Sometimes when I am joyous I remember my past sadness, and when sad, remember past joy.

This is not to be marveled at as far as the body is concerned; for the mind is one thing and the body another.[338] If, therefore, when I am happy, I recall some past bodily pain, it is not so strange. But even as this memory is experienced, it is identical with the mind--as when we tell someone to remember something we say, "See that you bear this in mind"; and when we forget a thing, we say, "It did not enter my mind" or "It slipped my mind." Thus we call memory itself mind.

Since this is so, how does it happen that when I am joyful I can still remember past sorrow? Thus the mind has joy, and the memory has sorrow; and the mind is joyful from the joy that is in it, yet the memory is not sad from the sadness that is in it. Is it possible that the memory does not belong to the mind? Who will say so? The memory doubtless is, so to say, the belly of the mind: and joy and sadness are like sweet and bitter food, which when they are committed to the memory are, so to say, passed into the belly where they can be stored but no longer tasted. It is ridiculous to consider this an analogy; yet they are not utterly unlike.

22. But look, it is from my memory that I produce it when I say that there are four basic emotions of the mind: desire, joy, fear, sadness. Whatever kind of analysis I may be able to make of these, by dividing each into its particular species, and by defining it, I still find what to say in my memory and it is from my memory that I draw it out. Yet I am not moved by any of these emotions when I call them to mind by remembering them. Moreover, before I recalled them and thought about them, they were there in the memory; and this is how they could be brought forth in remembrance. Perhaps, therefore, just as food is brought up out of the belly by rumination, so also these things are drawn up out of the memory by recall. But why, then, does not the man who is thinking about the emotions, and is thus recalling them, feel in the mouth of his reflection the sweetness of joy or the bitterness of sadness? Is the comparison unlike in this because it is not complete at every point? For who would willingly speak on these subjects, if as often as we used the term sadness or fear, we should thereby be compelled to be sad or fearful? And yet we could never speak of them if we did not find them in our memories, not merely as the sounds of the names, as their images are impressed on it by the physical senses, but also the notions of the things themselves--which we did not receive by any gate of the flesh, but which the mind itself recognizes by the experience of its own passions, and has entrusted to the memory; or else which the memory itself has retained without their being entrusted to it.