

The background is a dramatic, painterly landscape. It features a figure standing on a rocky outcrop in the foreground, looking towards a distant, hazy horizon. In the distance, another figure with large, white, feathered wings is visible. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

The Fulfillment of All Desire

The Purgative Way

[Part 1]

(pages 1-46; Chapters 1-3)

Series outline

- **Jan 15 - Purgative Way Part 1 (chapters 1, 2, 3)**
- **Jan 29 - Purgative Way Part 2 (chapters 4, 5, 6)**
- **Feb 26 - Purgative Way Part 3 (chapters 7, 8)**

- **Mar 4 - Illuminative Way Part 1 (chapters 9, 10, 11)**
- **Mar 18 - Illuminative Way Part 2 (chapters 12, 13, 14)**

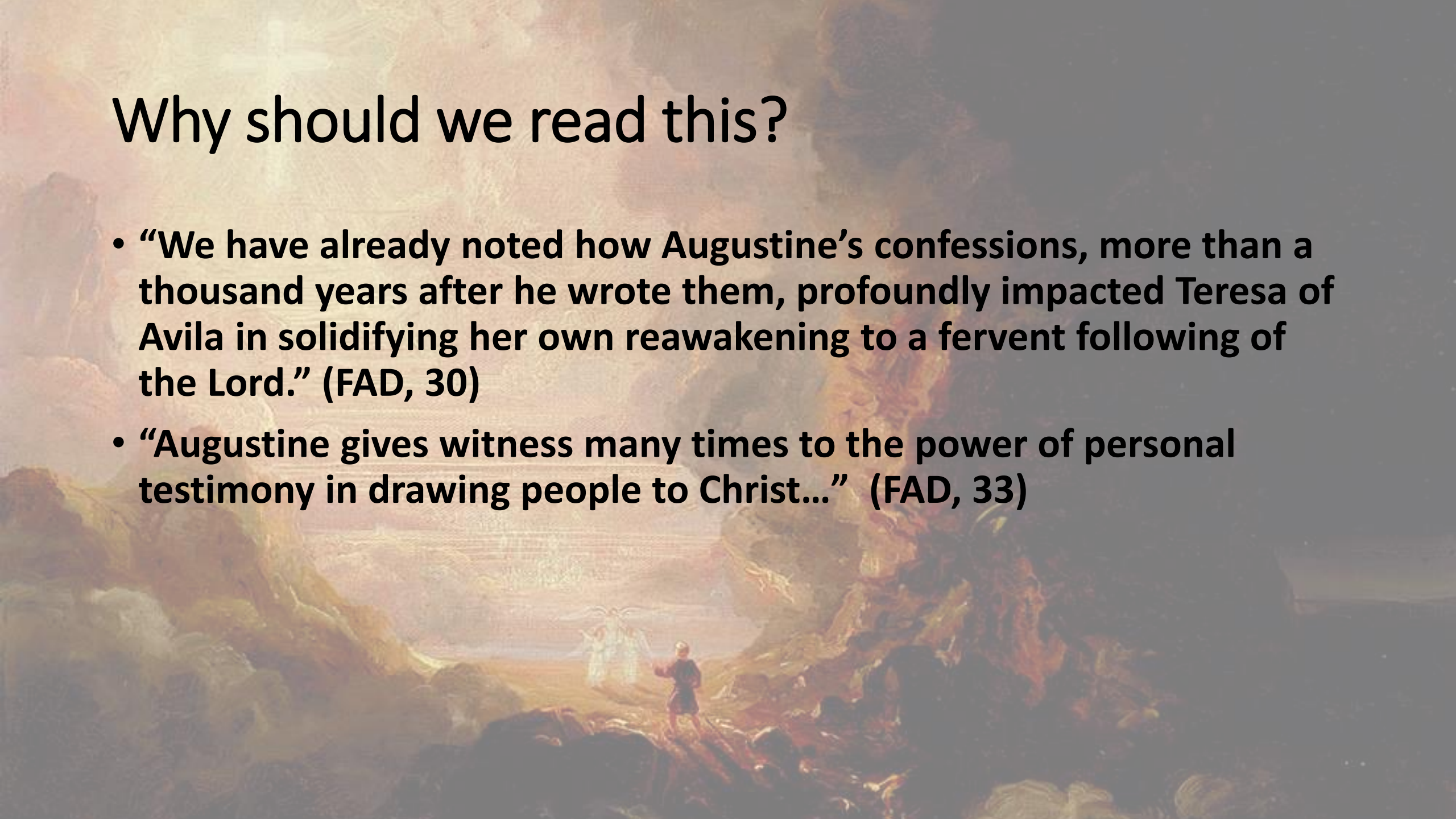
- **Mar 25 - Unitive Way (chapters 15, 16, 17)**

The Saints (Western Doctors of the Church)

- **St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430)** **The Confessions**
- **St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)** **On the Song of Songs**
- **St. Catherin of Siena (1347-1380)** **The Dialogue**
- **St. Theresa of Avila (1551-1582)** **Interior Castle**
- **St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)** **Dark Night of the Soul**
- **St. Francis De Sales (1567-1622)** **Introduction to the Devout Life**
- **St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)** **Story of Soul**

Why should we read this?

- **“We have already noted how Augustine’s confessions, more than a thousand years after he wrote them, profoundly impacted Teresa of Avila in solidifying her own reawakening to a fervent following of the Lord.” (FAD, 30)**
- **“Augustine gives witness many times to the power of personal testimony in drawing people to Christ...” (FAD, 33)**



The Introduction

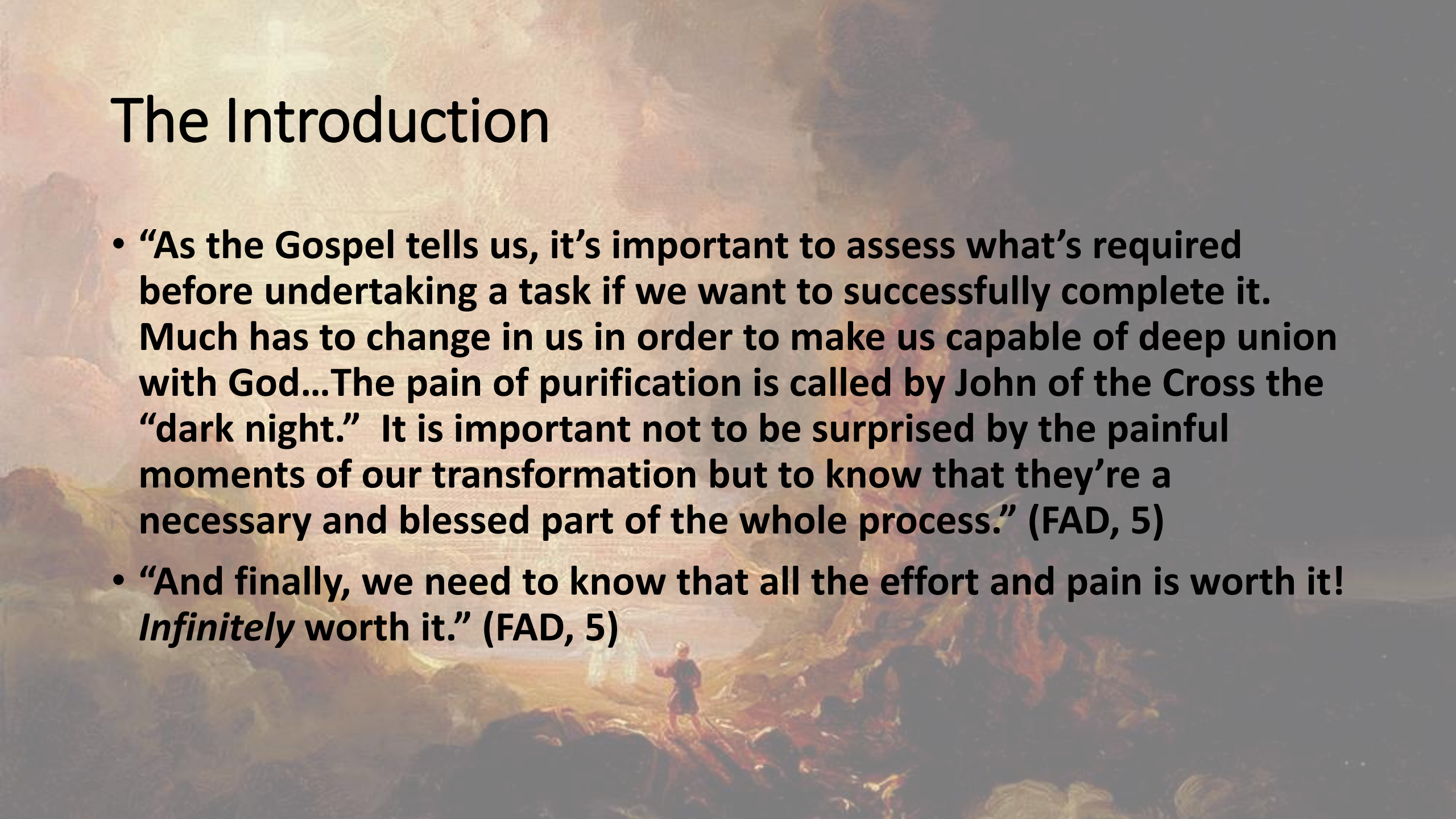
- **The Second Vatican Council and The “Universal Call to Holiness”**
 - **“All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity” (FAD, 2)**
 - **“To be holy is not primarily a matter of how many Rosaries we say or how much Christian activity we’re engaged in; it’s a matter of having our hearts transformed into a heart of love. It is a matter of fulfilling the great commandments which sum up the whole law and the prophets: to love God and neighbor, wholeheartedly. Or as Teresa of Avila puts it, holiness is a matter of bringing our wills into union with God’s will.” (FAD, 2)**

The Introduction

- **“Union with God of this depth is totally unattainable by our own efforts; it is a gift that only God can give; we are totally dependent on His grace for progress in the spiritual life.” (FAD, 4)**
- **“At the same time our effort is indispensable. Our effort is not sufficient to bring about such union, but it is necessary. The saints speak of disposing ourselves for union. The efforts we make help dispose us to receive the gifts of God. If we really value something we must be willing to focus on doing those things that will help us reach the goal.” (FAD, 5)**

The Introduction

- **“As the Gospel tells us, it’s important to assess what’s required before undertaking a task if we want to successfully complete it. Much has to change in us in order to make us capable of deep union with God...The pain of purification is called by John of the Cross the “dark night.” It is important not to be surprised by the painful moments of our transformation but to know that they’re a necessary and blessed part of the whole process.” (FAD, 5)**
- **“And finally, we need to know that all the effort and pain is worth it! *Infinitely* worth it.” (FAD, 5)**

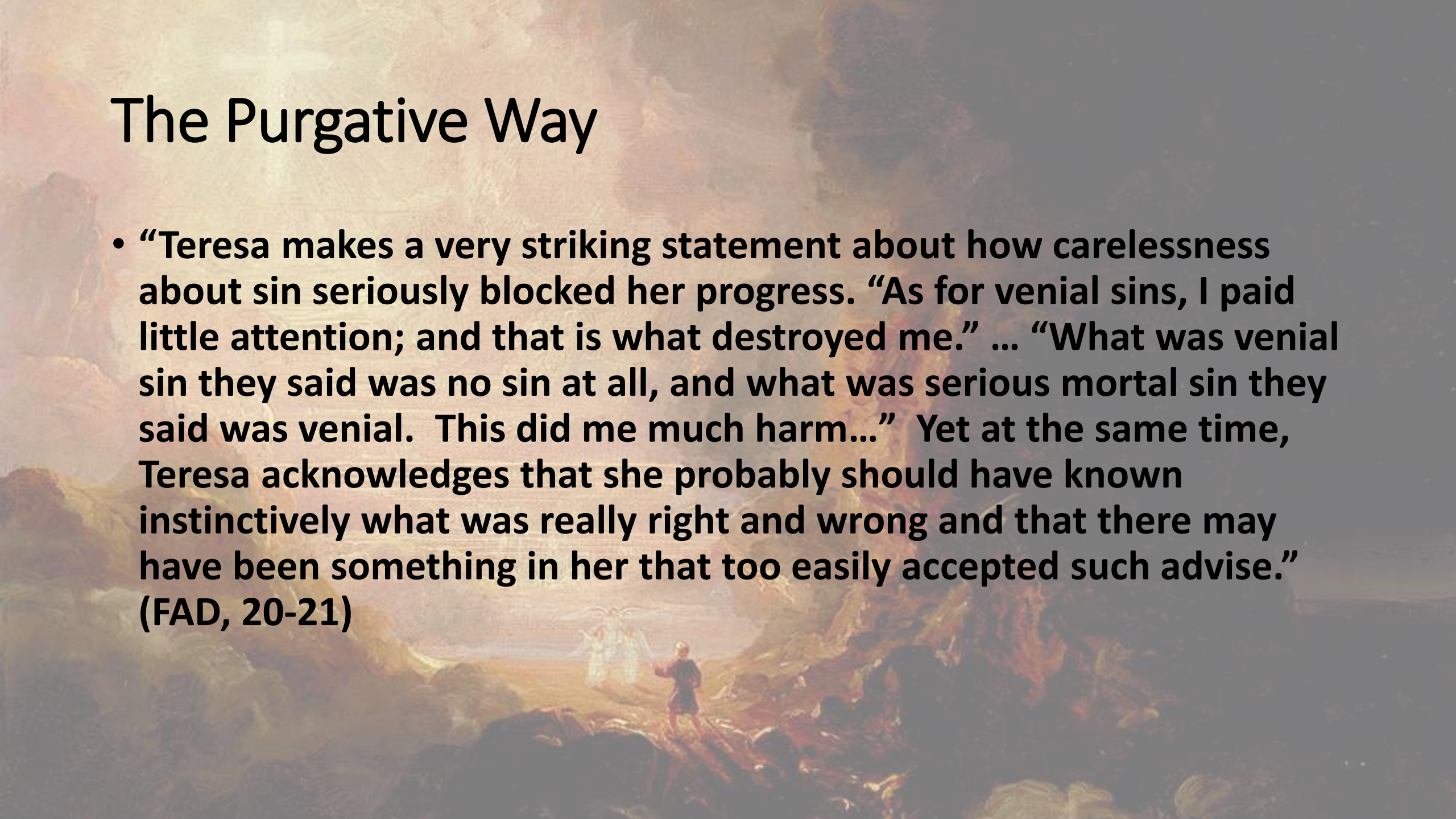


The Introduction

- **Purgative Stage** – coming to conversion: turning away from sin, bringing one's life into conformity with the moral law, initiating the habit of prayer, stable life in the Church
- **Illuminative Stage** – continuing growth: deeper prayer, growth in the virtues, deepening love of neighbor, greater moral stability, more complete surrender to the lordship of Christ, greater detachment from all that is not God, increased desire for full union
- **Unitive Stage** – habitual union with God: deep joy, profound humility, freedom from fears of suffering or trials, great desire to serve God, apostolic fruitfulness (FAD, 11-14)

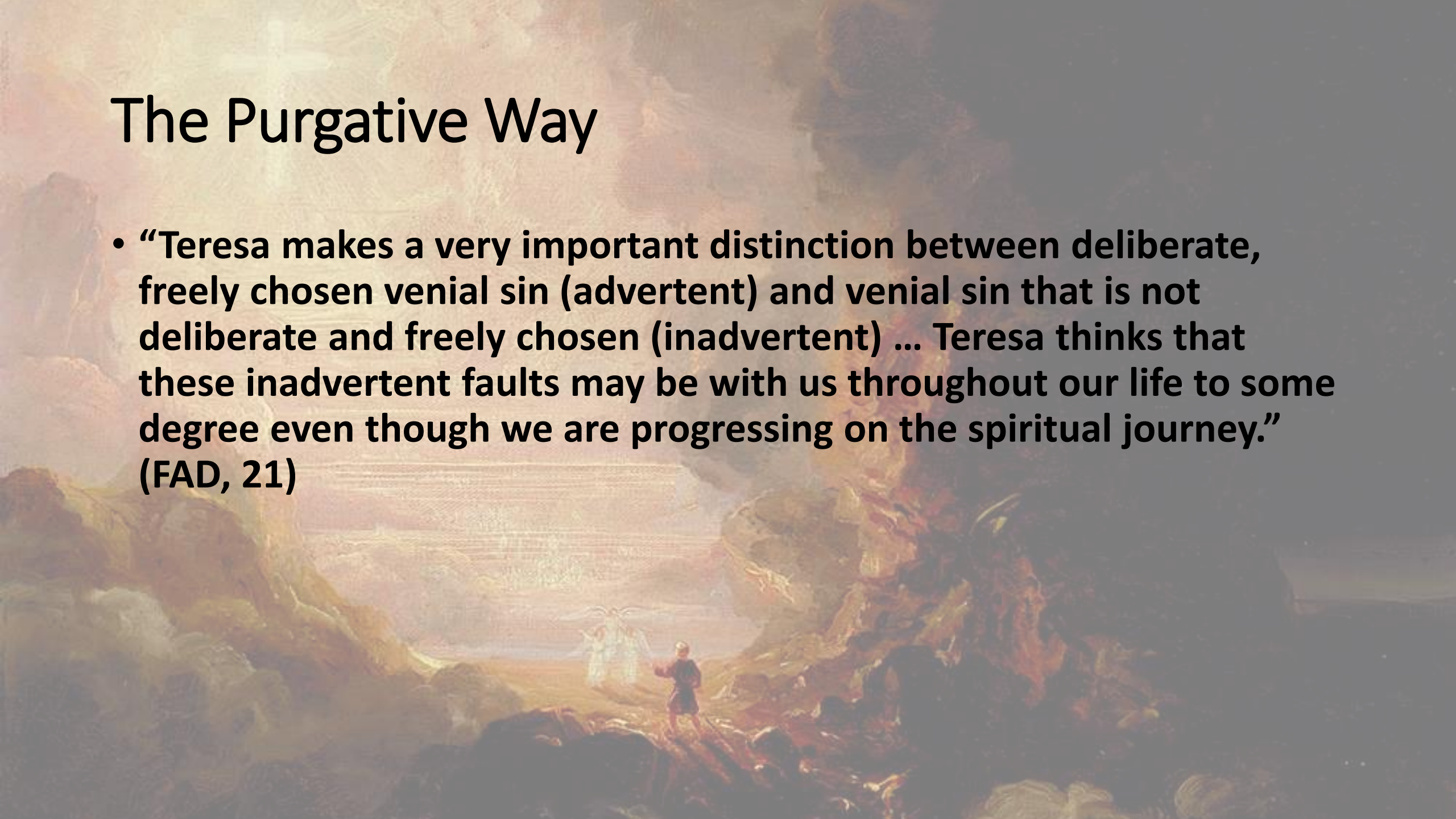
The Purgative Way

- **“Teresa makes a very striking statement about how carelessness about sin seriously blocked her progress. “As for venial sins, I paid little attention; and that is what destroyed me.” ... “What was venial sin they said was no sin at all, and what was serious mortal sin they said was venial. This did me much harm...” Yet at the same time, Teresa acknowledges that she probably should have known instinctively what was really right and wrong and that there may have been something in her that too easily accepted such advise.” (FAD, 20-21)**



The Purgative Way

- **“Teresa makes a very important distinction between deliberate, freely chosen venial sin (advertent) and venial sin that is not deliberate and freely chosen (inadvertent) ... Teresa thinks that these inadvertent faults may be with us throughout our life to some degree even though we are progressing on the spiritual journey.”
(FAD, 21)**

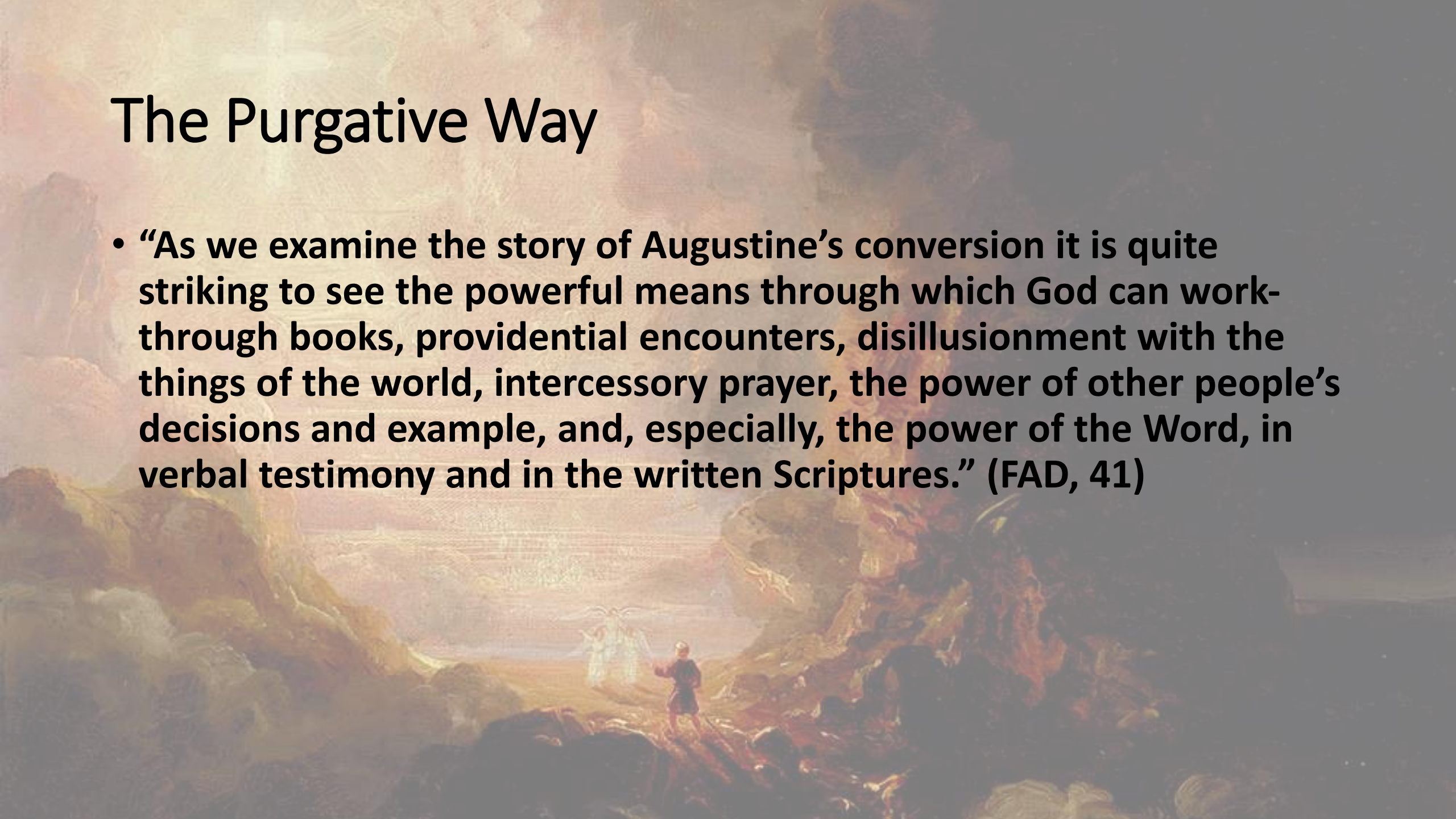


The Purgative Way

- **“It seems to me a sin is very deliberate when, for example, one says: ‘Lord, You see it, and I know You do not want it, and I understand this; but I want to follow my whim and appetite more than Your will.’ It doesn’t seem to me possible that something like this can be called little, however light the fault; but its serious, very serious.” (FAD, 22)**
- **“Not avoiding people, places, or situations associated with sinning may in turn weaker our resolve to avoid sin, and is a reason why many people don’t make progress in the spiritual life.” (FAD, 23)**

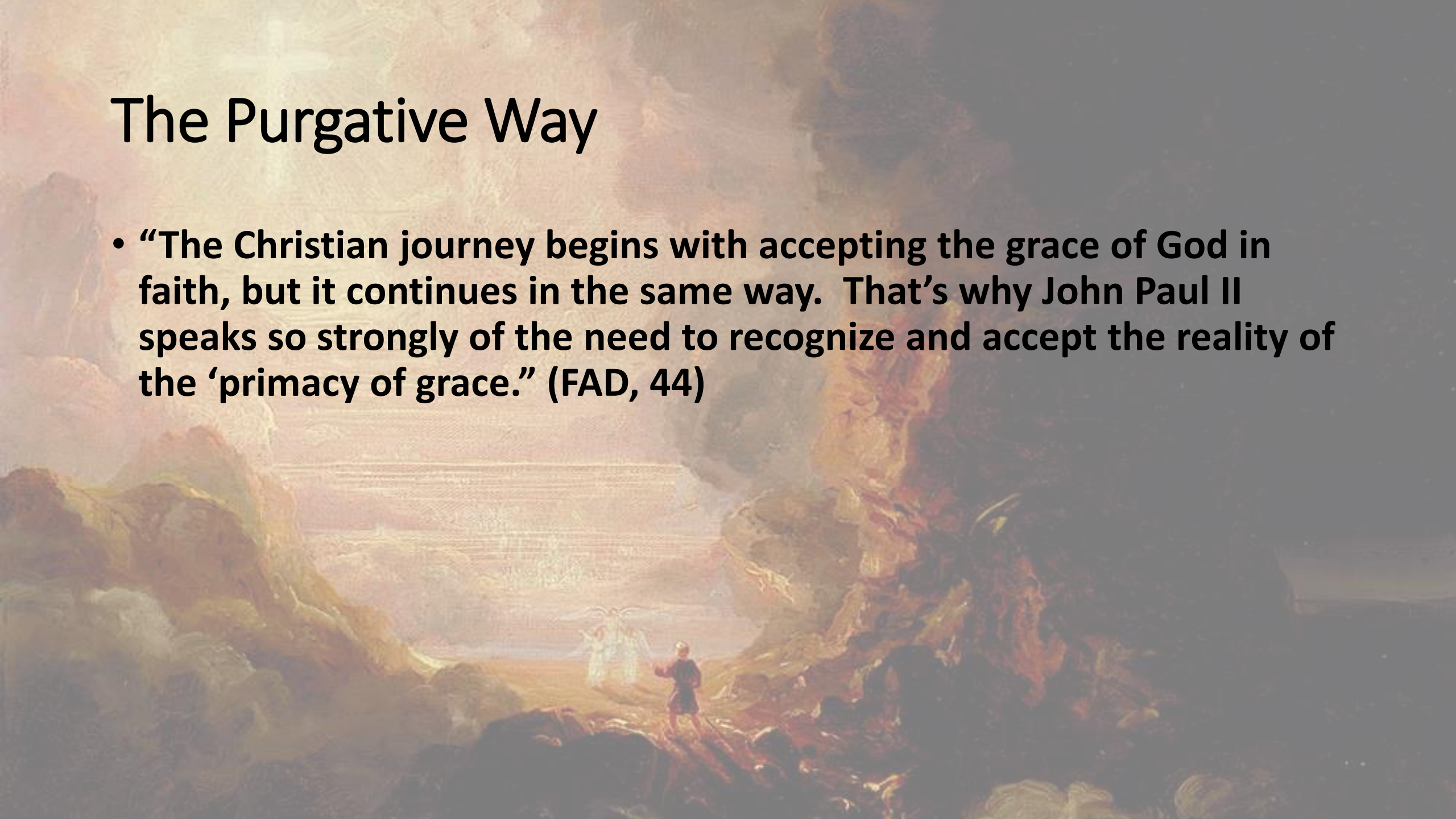
The Purgative Way

- **“As we examine the story of Augustine’s conversion it is quite striking to see the powerful means through which God can work—through books, providential encounters, disillusionment with the things of the world, intercessory prayer, the power of other people’s decisions and example, and, especially, the power of the Word, in verbal testimony and in the written Scriptures.” (FAD, 41)**



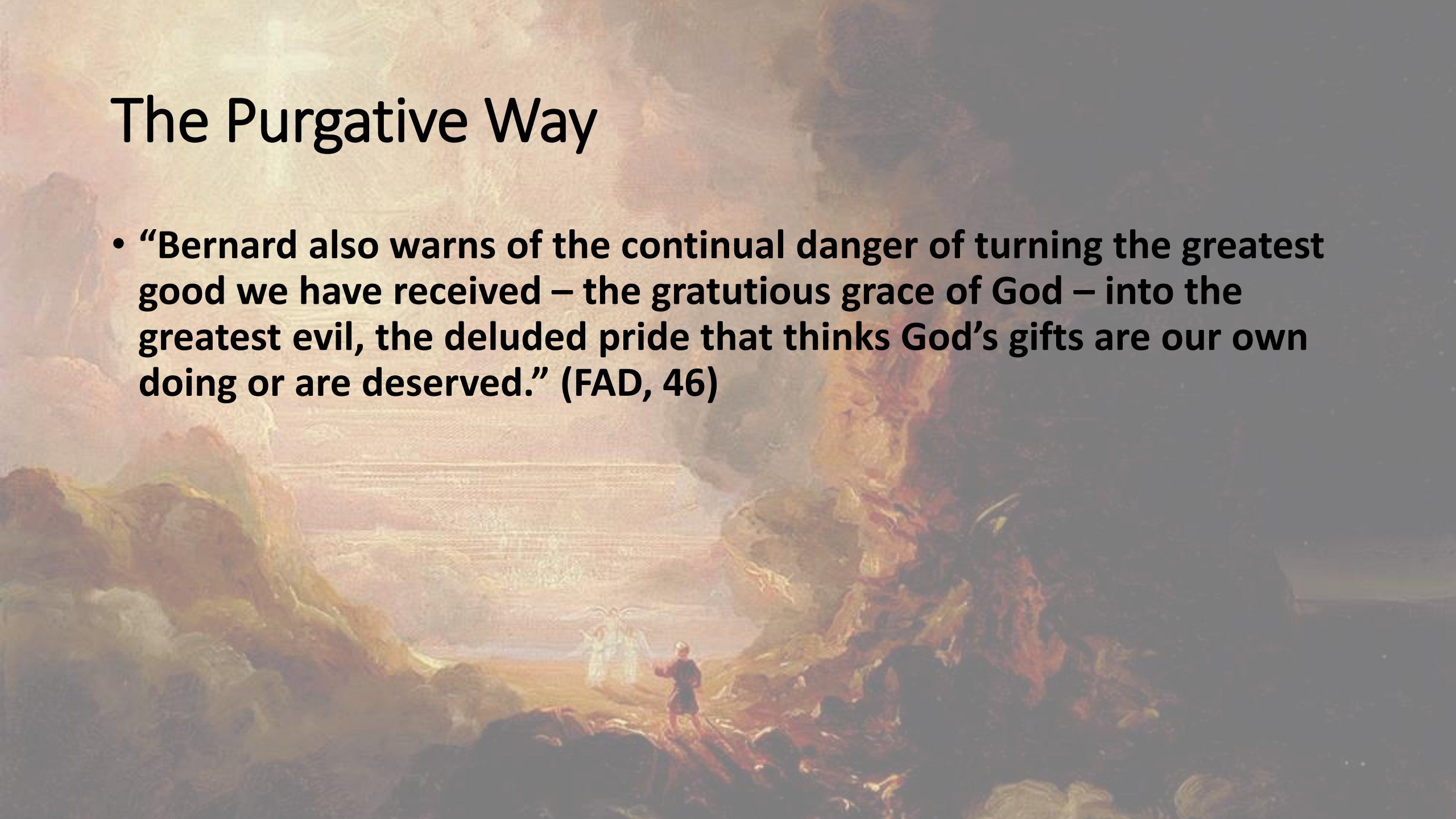
The Purgative Way

- **“The Christian journey begins with accepting the grace of God in faith, but it continues in the same way. That’s why John Paul II speaks so strongly of the need to recognize and accept the reality of the ‘primacy of grace.’ (FAD, 44)**



The Purgative Way

- **“Bernard also warns of the continual danger of turning the greatest good we have received – the gratuitous grace of God – into the greatest evil, the deluded pride that thinks God’s gifts are our own doing or are deserved.” (FAD, 46)**



Conclusion

- **Next time:**
 - **The Purgative Way [Part 2 of 3]**
 - **(pages 47-118; Chapters 4-6)**
- **Small-Group Discussion Questions**
 - **1. What do you think is going to be the hardest thing about this study series?**
 - **2. Do you struggle to believe that it's possible for you to be "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"? Why or why not?**
 - **3. Do you think you are well disposed to receive the graces God has in store for you?**
 - **4. Do you ever find yourself putting off the pursuit of holiness for a "better time"? How do you rationalize the delay? What excuses do you make? What obstacles in life are hindering you from the pursuit of holiness? How can you overcome them?**
 - **5. Who are some witnesses that have helped you move closer to God?**