

*This material accompanies the live supervision session
Faculty Open Day 28th April 2021*

CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURE: Making Christians: Conversion and Christianization in the Late Roman Empire (A4)

Comment on points of interest for the history of conversion in the following passages:

Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius Augustuses to Florus, Praetorian Prefect. If any madman or sacrilegious person, so to speak, should immerse himself in forbidden sacrifices, by day or by night, as a consulter of uncertain events, and if he should suppose that he should employ, or should think that he should approach, a shrine or a temple for the commission of such a crime, he shall know that he will be subjected to proscription, since We give warning by Our just provision that God must be worshipped by chaste prayers and not be profaned by dire incantations.

Given on the twelfth day before the kalends of January at Constantinople in the year of the consulship of Eucherius and Syagrius.

Theodosian Code, 16.10.7 (December 21, 381)

From the house next door I hear a voice—I don't know whether it is a boy or a girl—singing some words over and over: "Pick it up and read it, pick it up and read it!" Immediately my expression transformed. I started to ask myself eagerly whether it was common for children to chant such words when they were playing a game of some kind. I could not recall ever having heard anything quite like it. I checked the flow of my tears and got up. I understood it as nothing short of divine providence that I was being ordered to open the book and read the first passage I came across. I had heard of Antony, how he had been challenged by a reading from the gospel which he happened to encounter, as if what he was reading was being spoken for himself: "Go, sell everything you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens: and come, follow me!" Straightaway that oracle had converted him to you.

Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.29