



Saint Prosper of Aquitaine

Feast day June 25

Born around 390

Died in Rome around 456

Venerated in Catholic Church

Prosper was born in Aquitaine, France. He lived during a period of major doctrinal controversy in the Latin Church, especially the debate over how divine grace and human free will relate to salvation. Prosper received a strong classical and Christian education, and later became known for his literary skill and theological precision. He was never ordained a bishop or priest but he wrote with unusual authority for a lay Christian and became one of Saint Augustine of Hippo's most important defenders.

Prosper is most remembered for his extensive objections from critics arguing that salvation begins with a human act of goodwill and that grace merely follows afterward. Prosper defended Augustine's claim that grace is prior, not merely supplementary, to any saving faith or good work and that **salvation is initiated and sustained by God's grace, not earned by unaided human effort.**

Prosper's connection with Augustine shaped his career. By the 420s he had become deeply involved in disputes over grace. After Augustine's death, Prosper continued the same theological work to defend Augustine's teaching. Prosper's greatest significance lies in the way he helped convey Augustine's doctrine into the Latin Church. Prosper's writings influenced the theological direction that would be affirmed at the Council of Orange in 529, especially its emphasis on grace. Prosper spent the last part of his life in Rome where he served as secretary to Pope St. Leo the Great. Through his defense of grace, his literary work, and his role in church controversy, he became one of the most important Christian thinkers of the early Church.

Prosper was a careful interpreter who worked to explain Augustine's ideas in a way that could be used in controversy and pastoral teaching. His work helped make Augustine's thought more accessible and durable in the Western theological tradition. He helped preserve one of the most influential traditions in Western Christian thought at a time when it might otherwise have been diluted or forgotten. His life shows how a single educated layman can have lasting influence on the doctrinal development of the Church. He stands as one of the important Christian intellectuals of the fifth century.