



## QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING & REFLECTION

### *Awakenings and Conversion* (pp. 17-46)

1. What are the dangers of a “lukewarm” faith?
2. What is the difference between deliberately chosen venial sin and inadvertent venial sin? How can venial sins become a serious obstacle to holiness?
3. How can too much self-reliance discourage us from pursuing holiness?
4. How does St. Francis de Sales define the “devout life”? How can appreciating the graces God gives us help us to lead that sort of life?
5. In what ways can an incorrect understanding of God become an obstacle to faith?
6. Why was personal witness and testimony important to St. Augustine’s conversion? Who were some of the witnesses who helped him? What made their testimony so powerful?
7. What was the primary obstacle that prevented St. Augustine from embracing Christ?
8. According to St. Therese, whom does God forgive more: those who have committed serious sins or those who have never committed serious sins? Explain.

9. What do St. John Paul II and St. Teresa say is a constant temptation for people as they progress in the faith? How does that temptation impede true holiness? How should we see all occasions for serving God and doing good?
  
10. Have you always had a strong faith or did you embrace a relationship with Christ through and awakening or conversion? What do you see as an advantage of having the other experience?
  
11. Reflect upon the four obstacles that impeded St. Teresa's growth in holiness. Have you encountered those same obstacles? Which ones? Which of those obstacles do you still struggle with? Explain.
  
12. Who are some of the witnesses that have helped you move closer to God? What did they say or do that helped you?
  
13. St. Augustine delayed embracing Christ because he couldn't bring himself to renounce serious and habitual sins. Is there any sin in your life right now that is holding you back from fully and freely living the faith? If so, how have you excused or justified your behavior? How are those excuses harming you?
  
14. When it comes to pursuing the virtues and pursuing sanctity, do you ever find yourself relying more on yourself than on God? If so, why do you think that is? What needs to happen to change that?