

A Mother's Prayer

by Fr. Mark Pavlik ~ August 30, 2009

When one hears the story of St. Monica, whose feast is celebrated on August 27, it is no wonder that she is the patron saint of mothers. After our Blessed Lady, she is perhaps the greatest model of motherhood in the history of the Church.

Monica was raised in a Christian home and eventually married and had three children. Augustine, her eldest son was brilliant, although according to his own account, a lazy and self-indulgent youth. Because of his intelligence, he was sent to Carthage to develop his talents and become a man of culture. He took very easily to learning, but also spent a great deal of time carousing. He became involved in the heresy called Manichaeism, which was contrary to the Catholic faith of his mother. As one might expect, this lifestyle caused a great deal of anguish for his poor mother, who was very devout in her Catholic faith. She prayed daily for her son's conversion and although the years passed with seemingly no effect, she remained diligent in her prayer.

It is said that one day as she was weeping over her son, a figure appeared and asked her the cause of her grief. She answered, and a voice issued from the mysterious figure telling her to dry her tears. She then heard the words, "Your son is with you." Monica related this story to Augustine, and he replied that they might easily be together if she gave up her faith, for that was the main obstacle keeping them apart. Quickly she retorted, "He did not say I was with you: he said you were with me." Augustine was impressed by the quick answer and never forgot it.

Even in the midst of these disagreements, his mother continually fasted, prayed, and wept on his behalf. When seeking advice from a bishop about what she could do for her son, he replied that "the child of those tears shall never perish."

After 17 years of praying, Augustine was baptized in the year 387. Soon after his conversion, Monica died. For centuries, Monica has been revered by mothers because of her tireless prayers for the conversion of her wayward son. She continues to be a staunch example of dedication to prayer, even in the midst of sorrow and seemingly lack of answers, knowing that in God's time, all things are possible.

PRAYER TO ST. MONICA

*Dear St. Monica,
many sorrows pierced your heart during your lifetime.
Yet, you never despaired or lost hope.
With confidence, persistence, and profound faith,
you prayed daily for the conversion
of your beloved son, Augustine,
and with God's grace, your prayers were answered.
Grant me that same fortitude, patience,
and trust in the Lord.
Intercede for me, dear St. Monica,
that God may favorably hear my prayers
and grant me the grace to accept His Will in all things,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.*