

August 27, 2025

Daily Reflections



MEMORIAL OF SAINT MONICA

By Sister Katherine “Kit” Gray, CSJ

Reflection

Saint Monica was an extraordinary woman. Her influence on her son, St. Augustine of Hippo, was so great and important in the early Church, that upon acclamation of Augustine’s sainthood, Monica was also honored with sainthood.

Monica was born in North Africa, in a city called Tagaste, around the year 330. Her parents betrothed her to a pagan, Patricius, who was a worldly and difficult man, and violent towards her. She gave birth to three children, a daughter and two sons.

Augustine was her eldest, and at the age of seventeen, was a student of rhetoric at Carthage. Rhetoric was an ancient form of analysis in effective speaking and writing, with the aim to teach one how to persuade another to one’s own opinion, one’s way of thinking, one’s “school of thought.” Augustine was not a Christian, and he heartily embraced a dissolute life. Monica prayed for him,

fasted, and kept close to him. She was utterly distressed when she learned that her son had accepted the popular Manichean heresy that “all flesh is evil.” Monica had a very hard time with this, convulsed with rage and despair; but through a dream received the message that in time, her son would come to know Christ. Monica never gave up hope that her son's heart would come to rest in God.

When Augustine was 29, he decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric. He left for the port to bid farewell to a friend and ended up leaving the country without Monica's knowledge. She followed him and, upon her arrival, discovered that Augustine had traveled even further, to Milan. In Milan, Augustine came under the influence of Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan. He instructed Augustine in Christianity and eventually baptized him in the year 387. Augustine and his friends planned to return to North Africa to serve in the ministry, sailing from near Rome; and Monica was with them.

It's been written that Monica's one desire beyond the baptism of her son was to return to African soil before her death. But it was not to be: she became ill and died at the Roman port of Ostia, in 387.

From the website of St. Monica's Parish, Santa Monica



Saint Augustine and his mother, Saint Monica (1846) by Ary Scheffer

For Pondering

St. Monica is invoked as the patron saint of mothers, difficult marriages, and those seeking conversion. What inspiration does Monica's life offer you?

For Prayer

*Dear St Monica,
troubled wife and mother,
many sorrows pierced your heart during your lifetime.
Yet, you never despaired or lost faith.
With confidence, persistence, and profound faith,
you prayed daily for the conversion
of your beloved husband, Patricius,
and your beloved son, Augustine;
your prayers were answered.
Grant me that same fortitude, patience,
and trust in the Lord,
and grant me the grace to accept God's will in all things.
I pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.*

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