



ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM
ST. MONICA SODALITY

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Dear Friends of St. Monica,

Welcome to the many new members of our St. Monica Sodality. Your ardent prayers are joined with other members across the country and around the world. The names of your loved ones are added to our prayer lists. When you send in your petitions to St. Monica, we place them on the altar before Mass, and we pray for all of you and yours. (All the petitions are saved, and next year will be taken to the tomb of St. Monica in Rome, to be placed on her altar.)

We also receive a few letters telling of conversions through St. Monica's intercession. I hope for the day when most letters contain conversion stories and only a few are for *lapsi* prayer requests. This day may not be soon in coming. But we are not commanded to be successful; we are commanded to be persistent, determined, and hopeful. That is why you weep and pray for your *lapsi* as St. Monica wept and prayed for her son, even if it means years and years of prayer.

St. Monica was a strong woman with little formal education in the faith. But she had determination and perseverance. Today, St. Monica is not remembered as a great theologian. But she produced one of the greatest theologians of all time.

St. Monica knew that in love, there is pain—in great love, there is great pain. With St. Augustine, she knew the joy and pain of childbirth; the pain of watching her beloved little son struggle with a near fatal illness; the joy of his recovery; the pain of watching his sinful and wasted youth; the joy of his spiritual rebirth.

On her deathbed, St. Monica said, "*Lay this body where you will and let not the care of it ever bother you. One thing only I ask—that no matter where you are you will remember me at the*

Altar of God." St. Augustine never forgot those words. Throughout the remaining years of his life he prayed daily for the soul of his mother at Mass. He instructed those men and women who eventually became Augustinians that their duty to him and to his mother was to remember her at the Altar of God. He made it clear that they were to remember the souls of their family members daily at Mass, and that they were to instruct others to do likewise.

As we shall see in our profile of the great Augustinian saint, St. Nicholas of Tolentine (on the next page), remembering the souls of the departed at the altar of God was a mandate that he followed daily. St. Nicholas, as the spiritual son of St. Monica, obeyed the command of St. Monica's son, to pray daily for the souls in purgatory.

Our members who attend the St. Monica Novena on Wednesday night at St. John Cantius Church, here in Chicago, **DO** remember all of you and your loved ones both living and dead. We **DO** remember at the Altar of God all the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

Father C. Frank Phillips, C.R.
Pastor, St. John Cantius Church
International Director St. Monica Sodality

Remember, O Lord, Your servant, _____, who has gone before us with the sign of faith and rests in the sleep of peace. To him O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, we entreat You to grant a place of comfort, of light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and all the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

ST. MONICA'S OTHER SPIRITUAL SON—ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE

St. Nicholas of Tolentine was an Augustinian priest who lived in Italy from 1240 to 1305, about eight centuries after St. Monica and eight centuries before our own time.

The relationship between Nicholas and his mother could not have been more different than that of Augustine and Monica. Nicholas' mother was older, and wanting a child; she went on a religious pilgrimage and promised that if she could have a child, she would dedicate him to the service of God. As it turned out, getting her son to go along with the program was no problem at all.

Nicholas was one of those boys naturally drawn to God and the priesthood at a very early age—very gifted spiritually and intellectually. A visiting Augustinian preacher drew him to the Order of St. Augustine. After a few transfers, he settled at the monastery in the city of Tolentino. Nicholas worked tirelessly to convert the worst sinners in Tolentino through preaching and offering prayers for their improvement.

A fellow religious describes Nicholas' ministry in these words: "He was a joy to those who were sad, a consolation to the suffering, peace to those at variance, refreshment to those who toiled, support for the poor, and a healing balm for prisoners." Nicholas' reputation as a saintly man and a worker of miracles led many people to the monastery of Tolentino. He was the Padre Pio of the age, to make a contemporary comparison; but without the stigmata.

When in 1884 Nicholas was proclaimed "Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory" by Pope Leo XIII, confirmation was given to a long-standing tradition of devotion toward this saint which is traced to an event in his own life. On

a certain Saturday night as he lay in bed, Nicholas heard Fra Pellegrino of Osimo, a deceased friar whom Nicholas had known, reveal that he was in purgatory and beg Nicholas to offer Mass for him and for the other suffering souls so that they might be set free. For the next seven days, Nicholas did so and was rewarded with a second vision in which the deceased Fra Pellegrino expressed his gratitude and assurance to Nicholas that a great number of people were now enjoying the presence of God through Nicholas' prayers. As this event became known, many people approached Nicholas, asking his intercession on behalf of their own deceased relatives and friends.

Nicholas died in Tolentino on September 10th, 1305. He was declared a saint in 1446—the first member of the Augustinian Order to be canonized.

Though St. Nicholas is separated from us by centuries, we can see that his concern for lapsi was as intense as ours is today.

Twenty-first century man may think himself very advanced, but he can't fax or e-mail his soul into

heaven. Temporal realities may not often reach where spiritual realities do.

PRAYER TO SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE

Saint Nicholas, you who were so attentive to the pleas of many needy souls, and through your prayer and penance, you hastened their enjoyment of the vision of God. Look with compassion on our beloved dead and obtain for them, by your prayers, the full forgiveness of their sins so that they may experience the happiness and peace of the Father's presence. St. Nicholas of Tolentine, pray for us. Amen.



PRAYER FOR THE DECEASED

Lord, God of holiness and light, You do not allow any shadow of darkness or evil in Your sight, and so in Your mercy You grant to those who have left this world burdened with sin, a time of purification, applying to them the spiritual treasures of Your holy Church.

Hear my prayer, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and all Your faithful people bring to an end this time of waiting for our beloved dead, especially _____.

In Your providence You have chosen Saint Nicholas as a special intercessor on behalf of the departed. Hear also his fervent prayer for those whom I recommend to You through his intercession. Amen

FOR FATHER AND MOTHER

○ God, who has commanded us to honor our father and mother, have compassion in Thy mercy on the souls of my father and mother; forgive them their sins, and grant that I may see them in the joy of eternal brightness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOR BRETHREN AND FRIENDS

○ God, Who art ever ready to forgive sins and Who ever seekest the salvation of men: we most humbly entreat of Thy mercy that, through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever a Virgin and of all Thy saints, the brethren, friends, and benefactors of our congregation, who have passed out of this world, may together enjoy that happiness which hath no end.

FOR OUR OWN BELOVED DEAD

Good Jesus, Whose loving Heart was ever troubled by the sorrows of others, look with pity on the souls of our dear ones in Purgatory. ○ Thou, Who “Loved Thine Own,” hear our cry for mercy, and grant that those whom Thou called from our homes and hearts, may soon enjoy everlasting rest in the home of Thy Love in Heaven. Amen.

Eternal rest, grant unto them, ○ Lord. And let perpetual light shine on them. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

All you Angels of Consolation, go and visit those patient sufferers, offer for them the merits of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and obtain their speedy union with Jesus, Whose vision is bliss, and Who yearns to have them with Him.

PRAYER FOR ASSISTANCE

○ sweet brethren, so mightily afflicted, knowing your fear and love of God and your charity for souls, pray for us that we may speedily obtain what we now ask for, what we urgently need and also the grace of a good life and a holy death. Amen.

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD

○ Father of mercies, in the name of Jesus, Thy beloved Son, in memory of His bitter passion and cruel death, in virtue of the wound of His Sacred Heart, and in consideration also of the sorrows of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of the heroic deeds of all the saints and of the torments of all the martyrs; I implore Thee to have pity on the souls of the faithful departed now suffering in purgatory.

To Thy mercy I recommend especially the souls of my relatives, friends, and benefactors, and of all those for whom I have promised to pray. Amen.

TO THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

○ Holy Guardian Angels of the poor souls, you who accompanied them so faithfully during life, who so lovingly guarded them from error, misfortune, and sin, help them now when, escaped from the dangers of the world, they are so near to heaven. Obtain for them from the Most Holy Trinity a full remission of their indebtedness and lead them without delay to the joys of heaven.

VISIT TO A CEMETERY

An indulgence, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, is granted to the faithful, who devoutly visit a cemetery and pray, even if only mentally, for the departed. The indulgence is plenary each day from the 1st to the 8th of November; on other days of the year it is partial.

BACK AGAIN

In June of this year, Kevin Haney and other members of the St. Monica Sodality went to Rome and visited the Tomb of St. Monica at the Church of St. Augustine. Here are a few pictures of the trip, with your petitions placed at St. Monica's tomb.



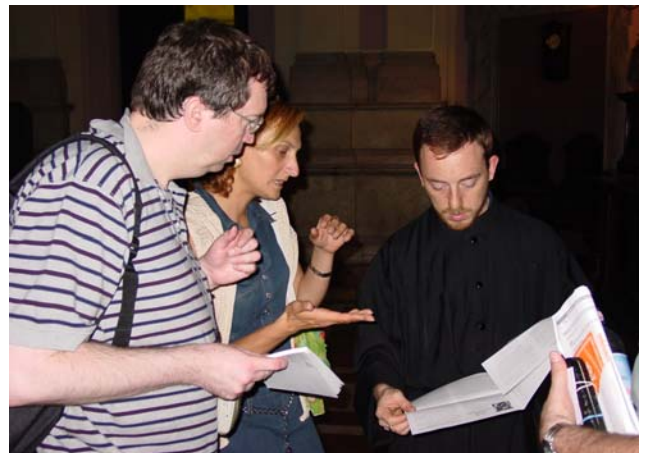
Petitions set before the tomb of St. Monica. The petitions were later entrusted to the Augustinian Fathers at the Church of St. Augustine, which has become customary.



After the mass Kevin Haney meet with the sacristan of St. Augustine's. During the meeting Kevin presented the young priest with some recent issues of Encouragement as well as the petitions. The lady in the middle of all the discussion is our tour guide who served as translator.



Father Burns Seeley SSJC offered the mass before the tomb. It was a very moving experience.



BACK AT SAINT MONICA'S SIDE

By Kevin Haney

This June 1 again found myself on the way to Rome and the tomb of St. Monica. Long time readers may recall that this is my second pilgrimage to St. Monica. The first trip was in April of 1999 just after the terrible killings at Columbine High School. This time I was going along with a group for the Canonization of Padre Pio. On a mundane level the two trips have taught me one thing—it is a lot smarter to go to Rome in April—June is very hot.

This trip was less dramatic for me than the first. This time it was my second time in Rome, and thanks to the fine work of our tour group leader and St. Monica Sodality member Amos Miller, everything at the tomb had been arranged well in advance. Also, since petitions have been taken to St. Monica's Tomb once or twice a year, the number of petitions was not as great.

The visit to the tomb however, was as moving as my first visit. This time we had a group of about fifty, and thanks to Fr. Burns Seeley from St. John Cantius Parish in Chicago, we had Mass right in front of St. Monica's Tomb. I like to think that these are indications that God is blessing the Sodality with growth and graces. I hope so.

The entire group seemed very impressed by the visit to the tomb. It was a moving experience to consider the physical presence of our own Saint Monica. During the rest of the trip we visited the tombs of several other saints, St. Padre Pio, St.

Marie Gorretti and St. Philomena, but visiting St. Monica was different. It was more personal, more intimate. I almost felt that she was there for us.

Her tomb is tucked away and is not visited by the crowds that visit some of the other shrines. But it is more than that. It is as if St. Monica lay there for centuries, quiet and out of the way, waiting for her message of perseverance to be needed again. When Fr. Phillips first visited the tomb in 1996, soon after founding the St. Monica Sodality, he was struck by how desolate and unnoticed her resting place was. That is not the case anymore. The Augustinian Fathers who care for the tomb have transformed the Church of St. Augustine into a warm and beautiful shrine well worth a visit.

Saint Monica's shrine is in bloom. Her resting place, her mission, and her message of unflinching confidence in the face of overwhelming odds is fresh and strong and very suited for our time. Thousands who look to her for inspiration, guidance and help now feel her private pains, trials and discouragements. She really is there for us in Rome and in heaven as well.

PRAYER TO SAINT MONICA

O holy and loving Saint Monica, your tears and persistent prayers moved God to convert your son, Augustine, from his pagan and heretical ways. In the same way, add your tears and prayers to mine as I pray for the conversion of (*name relative, friend, sinner or enemy*) who is not living a life according to God's Will and whose salvation may be in grave danger. Thank you dear Saint Monica. Amen.



Thanks to the graciousness of the Augustinian Fathers who staff the Church of St. Augustine, our group was able to have Mass offered before the tomb of St. Monica. These pictures show: the long view of the Tomb area; and a group shot of the fifty plus pilgrims who attended Mass.

DO YOU HAVE *LAPSI* IN YOUR FAMILY?

Lapsi is a Latin word used to refer to persons who have lapsed from the practice of the Catholic Faith. (*Lapsi* is a collective plural. Singular is *lapsus* for a male and *lapsa* for a female.) If you do, here is what we suggest: Send their names to: St. Monica Sodality, 825 N Carpenter St, Chicago, IL 60622-5499.

From Pennsylvania

PRAY WHILE YOU DRIVE— USING ST. MONICA TAPES

A 50-minute professional audio tape of the St. Monica Novena Prayers and music is available for \$10.00 each, plus \$2.00 for postage. The “Seraphim Vocal Ensemble” provides the inspirational hymns. Order a tape to play in your car when you’re stuck in traffic—increase your prayer life—decrease tension. Order from St Monica Sodality, 825 N Carpenter St, Chicago, IL 60622-5499.

SODALITY MEMBERSHIP

Saint Monica Sodality members meet every Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm at St. John Cantius Church. Novena prayers and Rosary are followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

On the feast of St. Monica, May 4th of every year (in the Traditional calendar), please renew your membership by sending **\$20.00 U.S. funds (outside U.S.—\$30.00)** along with any change of address information, or letters of gratitude to St. Monica. New members are accepted at any time and prayer booklets, petition forms, medals, and rule booklets are available from: Saint Monica Sodality, 825 N Carpenter St, Chicago, IL 60622-5499. Phone: 312-243-7373 - Fax 312-243-4545. E-mail: stmonicasodality@yahoo.com Website: www.cantius.org.

PAST ISSUES of *Encouragement* and more information about the St. Monica Sodality are available on the website, www.cantius.org. under Parish Life Activities, St. Monica Sodality.

OCTOBER 2002

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IN MY DISTRESS
I CRIED UNTO
THE LORD

St. Monica, pray for us.