



ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM

ST. MONICA SODALITY

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Dear Members of the St. Monica Sodality:

As the St. Monica Sodality grew, our staff in Chicago had to adjust, and develop a regular format for our newsletter. I am pleased to announce that our staff now will be able to provide a quarterly newsletter. This newsletter will include articles from our members as well as thoughtful insights for continued support of all our members. We encourage all our members to remain firmly rooted in your Faith as that special anchor to which your children will eventually return. We thank you for your patience and your support.

I wish especially to thank one of our biggest promoters, Father Mitch Pacwa, S.J., who, when he appears on EWTN Live (Mother Angelica's TV program), always mentions the St. Monica Sodality. The next morning after this show, phone calls flood our rectory seeking prayers and information about the St. Monica Sodality. We hope that with this newsletter, we will all keep in better contact. On page two is an excellent article which was in our Chicago Archdiocesan paper *The New World*. Feel free to circulate it among your friends.

Reflections on November. . . the Month dedicated to the Holy Souls:

As she approached death, St. Monica reminded her son, St. Augustine, that it was not important where she was to be buried, but that it was important that she be remembered at the Altar of God during Holy Mass.

There are so many today who forget the souls of the faithful departed, mistakenly thinking that all the souls immediately enter the Beatific Vision of Heaven. Yet throughout the history of the Church, sermons, writings of the great Saints, and experiences of the Saints indicate a different picture. Many souls of the faithfully departed need constant and daily prayer to assist them in a special way of purification.

While we are here on earth, we can provide that solace and comfort to those souls who are most in need of our prayers. We should develop in our daily routine of prayer a special remembrance of the faithful departed, starting with members of our families, clergy and religious, and especially for the souls who have no one to pray for them.

Padre Pio had a special devotion to the Holy Souls and prayed for them constantly in Masses, sufferings, mortifications, and daily prayers. He would remind his Friars that the Holy Souls in Purgatory are our dear friends and are always ready and willing to help us in our daily lives. Many favors can be received through their intercession, and they are only waiting to help us through their sufferings, to intercede with God for us.

The author of the famous *Imitation of Christ* asks us to remember always the dear departed through prayers and good works, and that we should also do many good works for the benefit of our own souls while we have the chance in this life.

We should pay no attention to those who scoff or laugh at us, saying that Purgatory does not exist. Perhaps they even dare to say that it is all in our imagination. If it is in our imagination, then it is also in the imaginations of all those saints who have gone before us and who have left their testimony behind them. There is a serious obligation on our part to pray for the deceased.

May I suggest that during this month of November all members of the St. Monica Sodality call upon our good friends, the Holy Souls in Purgatory, to make intercession on behalf of children and family members who have lost their faith.

Sincerely,

Rev. C. Frank Phillips, C.R., Moderator

PRAYING FOR PRODIGALS

by Heidi Schlumpf, Associate Editor

Nothing pains a parent more than rising early for Sunday Mass while a young adult child sleeps late in the next room. Nagging, cajoling, even threatening often fail to convince a young adult who has left the faith.

But what about prayer?

That's what a group of parents at St. John Cantius Parish is doing. The St. Monica Sodality encourages parents to rely on the power of prayer to guide their adult children back to the Catholic Church.

"The only thing that works is prayer," says one mother, who asked that her name not be used. "I sincerely believe that the only way my loved ones will return to the faith is by way of prayer. I don't think there's any other way."

And who better to pray to than a saint who's "been there, done that"?

St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, is the patron saint of "those who are anxious about the eternal salvation of their loved ones." Tradition says Augustine's mother prayed for more than 30 years before he abandoned the Manichean heresy and his "scandalous" living.

Monica's story inspires many of the parents who gather at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month for Mass, recitation of the rosary and a special novena prayer.

"When you get discouraged, her story can help get you through the day," said one woman at the Oct. 7 gathering. "She believed God can do anything and that sometimes it takes a miracle to turn things around."

The St. Monica Sodality also provides support for the parents who find comfort in discovering that they're not alone, that others are struggling, with similar stories.

Traditional Catholics, they raised their children in the faith sent them to parochial schools and expected that the next generation would carry on the traditions that are dear to their hearts.

"It makes me very sad that they've fallen away from the faith," said Carmen Cruz of her four adult sons who have left the Catholic Church. "My faith is very important to me. It's my fervent wish that they come back to the church."

Several said they believe it's not "normal" or necessary for young people to question the faith. Others blame Catholic schools for not providing solid answers to their children's questions. "Teen-agers are in no position to be challenging the faith," said Mary Lou Mockus. "And the so-called 'Catholic' institutions in a sense defrauded us by not reinforcing the faith."

Resurrectionist Father C. Frank Phillips, pastor of St. John Cantius and the sodality's moderator, taught high school for many years. "Kids do question," he said. "But at the present time there are very few people who can guide them through the questions to greater understanding."

In its short history, the group has claimed some successes, though not all of the sheep who return to the flock are necessarily young. One of the first petitions brought to the group was for a woman who had left the church 60 years ago. "Through the intercession of St. Monica, she returned to the faith, went to confession and received the sacraments," reported sodality member Shirley Cichy.

Ninety-two-year old Josephine DiFranco prayed for 35 years for her husband to convert to Catholicism. Six years before he died, he did. "God bless him, he died a happy death," she said.

A.J. Dietze said she has seen results in her own family. "Since I've been coming here, my son started praying before the Blessed Sacrament," she said. "That's miraculous in itself," she said. "I really do credit coming here, praying to St. Monica."

Although people come with their own personal petitions, the group prays for each other's intentions—the names of whom are placed in a basket on the altar.

"No longer is it just one family praying, but everyone who's involved all over the country and the world," explained Phillips.

More than 500 St. Monica sodalities meet for prayer and mutual support throughout the world. When Jesuit Father Mitchell Pacwa mentioned the sodality on Mother Angelica's television show, "the phones rang off the hook," Phillips said. "A lot of people probably feel they're alone in this situation," he said. "Here we find that we're not. And rather than complaining, this is a positive way we can build up the kingdom of God."

from The New World, Chicago, Oct. 17, 1997

REMEMBRANCE IN PRAYER

But now, with a heart healed from that wound, for which afterwards I blamed my merely natural feelings, I pour out to You, our God, in behalf of her who was Your handmaid, a far different kind of tears. These tears flow from a spirit shaken by thought of the dangers besetting every soul "that dies in Adam." She had been made to live in Christ even while not yet released from the flesh, and she had so lived as to give praise of Your name by her faith and conduct. Still, I dare not say that from the time You regenerated her by baptism no word had issued from her mouth contrary to Your commandment. By the Truth, Your Son, it has been said, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." Woe even to such life of men as can be praised if You should set aside mercy and examine that life carefully. But because You are not rigorous in searching out sins, we confidently hope to find a place with You. Yet if a man numbers his true merits before You, what else does he number before You except Your own gifts? Ah, if men would know themselves to be but men, and if he who glories would glory in the Lord.

Therefore, O my praise and my life, O God of my heart, I put aside for awhile her good deeds, for which I give thanks to You with joy, and I now beseech You in behalf of my mother's sins. Hear me for the sake of Him Who is the medicine of our wounds, of Him Who hung upon the tree, of Him Who now sits at Your Right Hand and makes intercession for us. I know that she was merciful to others and that from her heart she forgave her debtors their debts. Do You also forgive her her debts, if she contracted any in so many years after receiving the water of salvation. Forgive her, Lord, forgive her, I beseech You. Enter not into judgment with her. Let Your mercy be exalted above Your justice, for Your words are true, and You have promised mercy to the merciful. Such You made them to be, for You will have mercy on whom You will have mercy, and You will show mercy to whom You will show mercy.

I believe that You have already done what I ask, but accept, O Lord, "the free offerings of my mouth." For when the day of her dissolution was at hand, she did not think of having her body richly clothed or embalmed with

spices. She did not desire a carefully chosen monument, nor did she care for a grave in her own land. Such things she did not enjoin upon us, but she desired only that she be remembered at Your Altar, which she had served without the loss of a single day. For she knew that from it would be dispensed that Holy Victim by Whom "the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us," was blotted out, through Whose sacrifice was vanquished that enemy who counted up our offenses and sought what he could lay against us, but found nothing in Him in Whom we conquer. Who shall pour back into Him His innocent blood? Who shall repay Him the price by which He bought us, so as to take us from Him? By the bond of faith Your handmaid bound her soul to this Sacrament of our redemption; let no one sever her from Your protection. Let neither the lion nor the dragon put himself between You and her by force or fraud. She will not answer that she owes no debt, lest she be convicted and seized by her crafty accuser. She will answer that her sins have been forgiven by Him to Whom no one can return that price which He Who owed nothing returned for us.

Therefore, may she rest in peace, together with that husband before whom and after whom she had no other, whom she obeyed with patience, bringing forth fruit to You so that she might win him also to You. Inspire, O my Lord, my God, inspire Your servants, my brethren, Your sons my masters, whom with voice and heart and pen I serve, so that as many of them as read these words may at Your Altar remember Monica, Your handmaid, together with Patricius, sometime her husband, by whose flesh you brought me into this life, how I know not. May they with devout affection remember them who were my parents in this passing light, my brethren under You our Father in our Catholic Mother, and my fellow citizens in that eternal Jerusalem, which Your pilgrim people sigh after from their setting forth even to their return, so that, more abundantly than through my own prayers, my mother's last request of me may be granted through the prayers of many, occasioned by these confessions. *Translated by John K. Ryan*

**FROM MONICA'S SON,
SAINT AUGUSTINE**

1998 CALENDAR AT ST. JOHN CANTIUS

Jan. 6—The Epiphany—Tues. 7:00 PM
Feb. 3—Tues. 7:00 PM
Mar. 3—Tues. 7:00 PM
April 7—Tues. 7:00 PM
May 5—Tues. 7:00 PM
June 2—Tues. 7:00 PM
July 7—Tues. 7:00 PM
Aug. 4—Tues. 7:00 PM
Aug. 25—Tues. 7:00 PM—Feast Day
Aug. 26—Tues. 7:00 PM
Aug. 27—Tues. 7:00 PM
Sept. 1—Tues. 7:00 PM
Oct. 6—Tues. 7:00 PM
Nov. 3—Tues. 7:00 PM
Dec. 1—Tues. 7:00 PM

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare those souls which are so dear to Thee;
Who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come
to Thee;
To that glorious home where they shall ever
gaze on Thee. Amen.

NOVEMBER 1997

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St. Monica, pray for us.