



ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM
ST. MONICA SODALITY

825 N Carpenter St, Chicago, IL 60622 312-243-7373 - Fax 312-666-4653

Dear Friends of St. Monica,

As you can see from the pictures our trip to Rome was a success. I say our trip because I know that many of you were truly with us in your thoughts and prayers.

First, I must say that the volume of prayer petitions was far greater than we had for the April journey to the tomb of St. Monica. I can only estimate the number of sheets at about 8,000; with many of you send-

ing far more than one name, the actual number of individuals to pray for was in the tens of thousands. We received petitions from all around the United States and indeed from around the world. Names came to us from Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Samoa in the Pacific and from as far south as Argentina. Different places, different people, different problems, the same sense of loss and grief, and always that sense of hope that is the hallmark of the Christian.



Fr. Frank Phillips, C.R. and Br. Dan Ahearn during an audience with the Holy Father in the Vatican, November 25, 1999. (Photo courtesy of L'Osservatore Romano)

St. Monica, pray for us.

Once again let me assure you all that you are not alone in your pain and suffering at the loss of your loved one's faith. No longer are you alone in praying for your loved ones (the lapsi-Catholics who have ceased to practice their faith). The prayers and Masses every Wednesday night of the Sodality at St. John's are united with yours.

I would especially like to thank the staff of Archdiocese of Denver and Archbishop Chaput for their special efforts on behalf of this pilgrimage. Many new members from the Denver diocese now contribute and unite their prayers and sacrifices through the St. Monica Sodality.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR TRIP TO ROME:

Br. Dan Ahearn and I were privileged to attend the Holy Father's morning Mass on Thanksgiving Day. For us it was truly a special day of Thanksgiving, for we attended the supreme act of Thanksgiving with the Chief Shepherd of the entire Church, Pope John Paul II. There were about 25 people in attendance and as we entered the small chapel, the Holy Father was deep in meditation. At the ap-



Fr. Phillips, C.R. with the new St. Monica Banner made for the Sodality by the monks at the Light of Christ Monastery. Smaller Icons can be purchased from Monastery Icons, 1482 Rango Way, Borrego Springs, CA 92004, (order number 800-729-4952; fax 760-767-0049).

pointed time, he stood and began to vest for Mass. As he raised himself from the appeal chair, he could barely move, his body racked with the burdens of the entire world.

As Mass progressed, the Holy Father seemed to become more and more agile and by the time of Consecration, he seemed to move about the altar with great ease. He had no trouble genuflecting and seemed to receive great strength from celebrating Holy Mass. I would like to point out that the Holy Father, offers Mass away from the people, that is, in the ancient tradition toward God. The Mass was very simple but very moving.

After Mass we gathered in a large hall outside of the Chapel to greet the Holy Father. It was there that we presented the Pope the beautiful Icon of St. Monica, which was produced for this occasion by the good monks of Monastery Icons, at Light of Christ Monastery, on behalf of the Sodality. It was a very moving experience to be able to represent all of the members of the Sodality to the Holy Father on Thanksgiving Day.

My visit to the tomb of St. Monica was very different from my first visit, several years ago. At that time, the Church of St. Augustine was in a state of neglect and was very dark and very lonely. I am pleased to report to you that the church has had a great restoration for the Jubilee Year and the tomb of St. Monica is now set into a side altar that is well lighted and beautifully decorated with flowers and candles. I gave the Augustinian Fathers, who care for the church of St. Augustine and the shrine, a donation from the Sodality to assist in their wonderful work of preserving the tomb of these great saints. I placed all the petitions on the tomb of St. Monica. As has become the custom since our first pilgrimage, the petitions were left with the Fathers at the Church of St. Augustine.

Please be assured of my prayers and the prayers of the St. Monica Sodality this Christmas season and for the coming 2000th anniversary of our Savior's birth. May our Infant King bless you and keep you, and bring you His Peace. Amen.

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

HOW TO START A SODALITY IN YOUR PARISH

Many of you have expressed interest in getting a St. Monica Sodality started in your area.

Judging by the outpouring of petitions from around the country **lapsed loved ones** is a tragedy common to many.

It is impossible to know the situation in your individual parishes. But a person who has been active in parish organizations and has a good working relationship with the pastor obviously would have an easier time getting a sodality started than a person who is not involved and has hardly even meet the pastor.

For those of you who are not experienced in operating a parish society, a slow approach would be the best. It would be very unreasonable to expect the parish to open the church for a sodality of one or two people. It is also presumptuous to expect that a pastor or his associates should divert time to drumming up support for a new sodality just because one or two people request it. You need a clear plan before you talk to the pastor.

One approach that some sodality people took in a parish in New York, was to put out a large sheet of paper asking parishioners to list the names of those lapsed loved ones that they wanted prayed for at the tomb of St. Monica. Of course, they explained who St. Monica was and why her intercession was being invoked; and also a little information about the Sodality in Chicago. Many parishioners responded and they filled a number of sheets with the names of lapsi. They then mailed in these sheets and Kevin Haney took them to Rome. This was very encouraging to these New York parishioners, and their Sodality grew. They are now meeting regularly. Other groups have reported similar success with this approach.

Getting a similar project started in your parish may be a very good way of developing interest in the St. Monica Sodality. This is a simple request that does not take much effort on the part of the pastor or his staff. It will also let you know if your pastor is interested at all in working with a St. Monica Sodality and to what extent he is interested.



The tomb of St. Monica in Church of St. Augustine in Rome with some of the petitions placed on the altar

WARNING DO NOT PUT MATERIAL OUT AT YOUR PARISH WITHOUT ASKING PERMISSION.

Several steps to move you along

- Let the pastor know what you are doing and why you feel this is important to the parish.
- Ask him for any ideas he might have about where a good place to put the petitions sheet would be and when he would be willing to let you do this.
- Ask if he would have an announcement made or put a notice in the bulletin.
- Show the pastor the outcome of the petition project, whether it is a success or not.
- If you get hundreds of names from dozens of parishioners be sure to show him the sheet before you mail it to the St. Monica's Sodality in Chicago.
- A strong showing of interest by his people may be the way to spark the pastor's interest in going ahead with a parish.novena to St. Monica.
- If your pastor does have a serious interest, be sure to forward this information to us, or have the pastor write of fax Fr. Phillips so the pastor will get extra materials and information for this project.
- Please let us know of your progress or whatever concerns or obstacles that you encounter in your area.

THANK YOU

from Sodality Members

“Thanks to Our Lord through the intercession of St. Monica for a co-worker away from the Sacrament of Penance for at least 16 years who has recently returned.”

“My sincere gratitude to Almighty God through the intercession of St. Monica, for the return of my daughter to Mass on some Sundays. I will continue to pray for her complete return.”

ST. AUGUSTINE TAPES

“The Confessions of Saint Augustine” (75 minute audio tape)—Leonardo Defilippis recounts the story of St. Monica’s son. This incredibly moving performance is available from Saint Luke Productions, PO Box 761, Beaverton, OR 97075, or call 800-683-2998. Cost: \$8.95 each plus \$2.00 shipping and handling.

ST. MONICA TAPES

The 50-minute audio tape of the St. Monica Novena Prayers and music is available for \$10.00 each, plus \$2.00 for postage. Order a tape to use in your car when you’re stuck in traffic, and increase your prayer life.

THE ST. MONICA SODALITY

The St. Monica Sodality meets 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.

To simplify organizational work, please renew yearly membership on the feast of St. Monica, May 4th of every year. Please send in your \$10.00 annual membership renewal 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, or rule booklets are available by writing to The Saint Monica Sodality, at 825 North Carpenter, Chicago, IL 60622.

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IN MY DISTRESS
I CRIED
UNTO THE LORD

St. Monica, pray for us.