



# ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM

**ST. MONICA SODALITY**

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## From the Director -- April, 1996

I am Father Phillips, pastor of St. John Cantius Church, Chicago, Illinois, and Spiritual Director of the St. Monica Sodality.

We plan to send this bulletin to members each quarter. It is entitled "Encouragement" in the hope that it will continue to inspire members and nonmembers to persevere, as St. Monica did, in prayer and sacrifice for our loved ones who have abandoned the One, True, Holy, and Apostolic Catholic Faith.

During the first year of the St. Monica Sodality about 300 people enrolled. Much of the impetus for these new members came from a TV interview on EWTN in which Father Pacwa, S.J. mentioned the existence of the St. Monica Sodality. Since that time people have written to us from all over the world and our membership has increased five fold.

The Archdiocese of Chicago has indicated that they wish to assist us in promoting the St. Monica Sodality. Articles have appeared in *Our Sunday Visitor* and *The Wanderer*. The *Wanderer* article is reprinted for you on the next page. The article from *Our Sunday Visitor* will be reprinted in the next issue of ENCOURAGEMENT.

I believe that what we are doing with our prayers (OUR TEARS) is vital for the life of the Church. I pray that each of you will be encouraged by the many prayers being said for your loved ones as members of the St. Monica Sodality. St. Monica will not let us down!

May our Blessed Lord preserve you in your Faith.

Sincerely, Rev. C. Frank Phillips, C.R.

## Spread the Word --

This Sodality has been founded by the generosity and charity of several individuals and organizations and has no budget for publicity. Its growth depends on you.

Tell your family, friends, and your parish priest about the St. Monica Sodality, and invite them to join. Invite them to invite others. Ask your parish priest to publicize the St. Monica Sodality in your parish bulletin.

A suggestion was made that an act of charity might be to take copies of our St. Monica Sodality prayer to nursing / hospice homes and ask to distribute them to the sick.

Do you have a suggestion about how the rest of the Sodality might spread the devotion to St. Monica?

Please send us your idea and we will include any suggestions in the next issue of ENCOURAGEMENT.



## Books --

The best information available about St. Monica was written by her son in *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Chapters 8 through 13 are devoted to St. Monica. For 15 centuries people have been reading about the devotion of St. Monica, as a wife and mother. Her steadfast, single-minded, dedication stands out as a beacon down through the centuries.

Please help us develop a library of materials about St. Monica. Write and tell us about your favorite book or article. ✠

## ST. MONICA SODALITY

by Kevin M. Haney

A brilliant son with a promising future leaves his devout Catholic mother for advanced education. The grieving mother soon finds her son given over to loose living. He takes to living in sin with a woman and turns against the faith of his youth. Finally he joins a strange religious cult. The family is ripped apart. The mother is left in tears to pray for the highly unlikely return of her boy.

The story may sound familiar to you. Perhaps it sounds like a lot of families you know, or worse yet, your own family. It is a common story in the last 30 years. It is a theme often heard but rarely given a happy ending.

But the grieving mother of our story lived in the 4th Century in Roman ruled North Africa, and her brilliant son did return to the Church. In fact he became a bishop, founder of a religious order, Saint and Doctor of the Church. The characters in our first paragraph are St. Augustine of Hippo and his long suffering mother, St. Monica.

Certainly the story of St. Augustine and St. Monica was well known to Catholics who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s, but the idea of family members leaving the church, living out of wedlock, and joining cults was uncommon in those days. Today the story is very real, and St. Monica and St. Augustine, especially Monica, provide an example of what can and must be done if we hope to restore health to our families and our Catholic community.

St. Monica provides the inspiration for a new crusade of prayer and self-mortification by the recently formed St. Monica Sodality. The Sodality, which began first Tuesday devotions at St. John Cantius Parish in Chicago on January 3rd, 1995, has now attracted national attention. Its goal, as one member bluntly stated, "is to get our people back to the Church and get their lives straightened out." The Sodality holds its devotions the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in St. John Cantius Church. This parish recently celebrated its centennial and serves as one of several parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago which offers the

Traditional Latin Liturgy. Fr. Frank Phillips, C.R., the pastor of St. John's, serves as chaplain to the St. Monica Sodality.

The Sodality attracted national attention recently when it was mentioned briefly on Eternal Word Television Network. The brief mention drew calls and letters from all over the country. "The letters have been very moving and the stories are just tragic," comments Fr. Phillips "I am very glad that we can offer some hope and comfort to these families and let them know that they are not alone and that our prayers here at St. John's are with them and for them."

The approach of the St. Monica Sodality is not one of despair or of fixing blame for the catastrophic disaffection of so many Catholics since the Second Vatican Council. The Sodality is here to help people find strength, to persevere and to lay the groundwork for an authentic renewal both of family and religious life. It was the very unlikely and wayward Augustine who became one of the most influential religious of all time and a pillar of orthodoxy against the errors of Pelagianism and Donatism. In the end we see that Monica's prayers and labors to bring back her brilliant and promising boy would win struggles beyond her life and her imagination.

Those interested in information about the Sodality may contact Fr. Phillips at St. John Cantius Church, St. Monica Sodality, 825 North Carpenter Street, Chicago, Illinois 60622, Phone: 312-243-7373. Booklets containing Novena prayers and information about the Sodality are available.

Those who wish to attend the first Tuesday St. Monica Sodality devotions at St. John Cantius Church are welcome. The next Novena will be (November 7th). Novena prayers and Rosary begin at 7:00 PM followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Confessions are heard before Mass. Inactive Catholics interested in returning to the faith or just curious about what they are missing are also invited.

Please become part of this important effort to bring our loved ones home.

**The preceding article appeared in *The Wanderer Newspaper*, October, 1995.**

## FROM ST. AUGUSTINE - -

*Translated by John K. Ryan*

I omit many things, as I am making great haste. Accept my confessions and acts of thanksgiving, O my God, for countless things, even those I pass over in silence. But I will not pass over whatever my soul brings to birth concerning that handmaiden of Yours, who brought me to birth, both in her flesh, so that I was born into this temporal light, and in her heart, that I might be born into eternal light. Not of her gifts, but of Your gifts in her, will I speak.

She neither made herself nor did she educate herself: You created her. Neither her father nor her mother knew what sort of woman would be made from them. The rod of Your Christ, the rule of Your only Son, in a faithful home, in a good member of Your Church, instructed her "in your fear" But for her training she was wont to praise not so much her mother's diligence as that of a certain age-worn maidservant who had carried her father about when he was an infant, as little ones are usually carried on the backs of older girls. Because of this service and because of her advanced age and excellent habits, she was held in high esteem by the masters of a Christian house. For these reasons also she was put in charge of her master's daughters and she took diligent care of them. When necessary, she restrained them strictly with a holy severity, and she taught them with prudence and sobriety. Outside the hours when they were properly fed at their parents' table, she did not permit them to drink water, even though they were parched with thirst. She thus forestalled a bad habit, and she added these sound words: "You drink water now, because you cannot get at the wine. When you come to be married, and are made mistresses of storerooms and cellars, water will be distasteful to you, but the habit of drinking will persist." By this form of teaching and by her authority to give orders, she restrained the greediness of their tender age and turned the girls' thirst towards a virtuous moderation, so that even then they would not want to do what they should not do.

Nevertheless, there crept on her, as Your handmaid told me, her son, there crept on her a love of wine. For when her parents, according to custom, ordered her as a sober girl to fetch wine out of the cask, she would dip a cup

into the opening at the top before she poured the wine into a pitcher. Then she would take just a little sip with the tip of her lips, since the taste kept her from taking more. She did this not out of a desire for drink, but from a sort of excess of those youthful spirits which blow off in absurd actions and which parental firmness usually suppresses in our childhood years. Thus by adding to that daily little bit each day another little bit—for "he who contemns small things falls by little and little"—she had fallen into the habit of greedily drinking her little cups almost full up with wine. Where then was the wise old woman, and her stern prohibitions? Did anything avail against a secret disease, Lord, unless Your medicine kept watch over us? Father and mother and protectors are absent, yet You are present, You Who have created us, Who have called us, Who work good towards the salvation of souls even through men placed over us. My God, what did You do at that time? How did You cure her? Whence did You heal her? Was it not that You brought out of another soul, a hard and sharp reproach, like a surgeon's knife out of Your secret stores, and by one stroke You cut away all that foul matter.

A maidservant, with whom she used to go down to the cellar, quarreled with her little mistress, the two being all alone, as it so happened. She threw this fault at her with most bitter insults, and called her a winebibber. Wounded through and through by this taunt, she beheld her own foul state, and immediately condemned it and cast it off. Just as fawning friends pervert us, so also quarrelsome enemies often correct us. Yet You repay them, not according to what You did through them, but according to what they themselves had a will to do. For that wrathful servant desired to provoke her little mistress, not to cure her. Therefore, she did this in private, either because the time and place of the quarrel so found them or perhaps because she was afraid that she would get into trouble for reporting it so late. But You, O Lord, Ruler of things in heaven and on earth, who turn to Your uses the deeps of the torrent, and give order to the turbulent flood of the ages, by means of madness in one soul You even heal another. This is to the end that no man who observes this may attribute it to his own powers, when some other man, whom he wishes to correct, is corrected by his words. ✠

*St. Monica, pray for us.*

## 1996 CALENDAR

May 7— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

June 4— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

July 2— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

Aug 6— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

Aug 26— Mon. 7:00 p.m.  
Tridium

Aug 27— Tues. 7:00 p.m.  
Tridium

Aug 28— Wed. 7:00 p.m.  
Tridium

Sept 3— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

Oct 1— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

Nov 5— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

Dec 3— Tues. 7:00 p.m.

*IN YOUR MERCY, LORD, You received the tears of St. Monica as she wept for her son. At the intercession of both mother and son, give us grace to weep for sin and to obtain Your forgiveness. Amen.*

*SAINT MONICA, you know the struggle of those who seek to live by faith. By your example and prayers you led your husband and your son into the way of faith. The difficulties of life did not diminish your confidence in God or your prayer.*

*Pray for me and for all whose faith is tested, that we may trust in God and not be overwhelmed or discouraged by life's bruises, but may live in faith and proclaim your generous love in word and deed. Amen.*

*St. Monica, pray for me.*

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