

St. Monica

August 27



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322–387 • North Africa

Monica was a Christian woman from Roman North Africa and was married to a man named Patricius. Patricius was a pagan, and he thought Monica's Christian care for the poor and love of God were a waste of time. Monica prayed and worked hard to be a good wife. She was gentle, faithful, and kind, even when Patricius lost his temper. Because of this, Patricius was kind to Monica too.

She and Patricius had a son named Augustine. Augustine was raised a Christian but lost his faith and lived a wild life that gave his mother sorrow.

Monica wept and prayed to God that her husband and her son would become Christians. The years went by, and it seemed that God did not hear her prayers. But Monica did not stop sending her prayers and tears to God. Finally, Patricius was baptized and spent the end of his life as a Christian.

But Monica's beloved son Augustine did not want to be a Christian. He had become a brilliant scholar and speaker, but for all his brilliance, he still enjoyed living a sinful life. Monica loved her son and was willing to do anything to bring him to God. She left her home in Africa and followed him to Rome, and later to Milan, so that she could share the Faith with him and bring him to God.

Still, Augustine did not listen. And so Monica went down on her knees, wept, and sent her prayers to God. She prayed and prayed, trusting that God would hear her.

In the middle of Monica's tearful prayer, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to her. She spoke gentle words of comfort to Monica. Then the Blessed Virgin took off her belt and gave it to Monica, telling her to wear it so that she would remember that Mary would always be with her.

After many years of resisting his mother's faith, Augustine finally realized his mother was right and became a Christian. Monica told her son about her vision of Mary, and he, too, wore a black belt around his waist to remember the Blessed Virgin Mary always. Because of Monica's patience and tireless prayer, her son became one of the greatest teachers of the Faith, St. Augustine. To this day, the Augustinian monks wear a black belt around their robes in memory of the belt that the Blessed Virgin Mary gave to Monica.

Shortly after her son's conversion, Monica died on her way home to Africa. She died a holy death with the joy of knowing that God had heard her prayers.

St. Monica, help me to never give up praying to God!