



Essential Evangelization

St. Monica

Do you have a wayward child? The chances are if you are a mom, the most likely answer is yes. And if that answer is yes, have no fear, because you have a great saint in your corner, Saint Monica. She lived in the North Africa town of Tagaste, which is in modern day Algeria. Although she was a Christian, Monica's parents gave her in marriage to a pagan, Patricius. Her husband was a man of violent temper and an adulterer and teased his wife for her piety and charity. To make matters worse, her mother-in-law, lived in the same house with them! But instead of being a despairing wife, Monica prayed fervently for both of them and also her wayward son. Her prayers did not go unanswered, and through her patience, respectfulness and determination, her husband and mother-in-law converted to Christianity! At this time, her son, was a bright young rhetoric student in Carthage, but much to his mother's dismay, was living an immoral life. For a while, she practiced tough love and would not let him return to her house, yet she stayed close to him and prayed and fasted for him.

When her son was 29, he decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric, and Monica was determined to follow him there. One night he told his mother that he was going to bid farewell to a friend at the town dock and he instead set sail for Rome without her. Monica was heartbroken and yet was determined to follow him to Rome. Although she followed him, she did not find him there and had to chase him on to Milan. Although travel was difficult for her, she did not give up in prayer and pursuit. Miraculously, on Easter, Sunday 387 in Milan, St. Ambrose baptized her son at the age of 33 along with several of his friends. Monica's life soon came to an end, and she exclaimed, "All my hopes in this world are being now fulfilled."

Almost all we know now about St. Monica is included in the writings of her son, *Confessions*, written by a most famous author and father of our Catholic Church, St. Augustine. Monica is the patron saint of Alcoholics, Married Women and Mothers. Her feast day was this Friday, August 27th. Thank God for the prayers of moms!!!

This is one of a series of articles
on *Evangelization from the
Evangelization Committee*