

**Life**

St. Monica was the mother of St. Augustine. In addition to being a good mother, she was also a good wife.

Monica was born in Tagaste, North Africa in 332. She belonged to an upper-class family in the Roman Empire. After being baptized, she was a model church member. When she was 22 years old, her parents betrothed her to Patricius, a man of equal social status who was twenty years older than her. Patricius was a pagan with a violent temper and promiscuous behaviour. Rome at that time was a patriarchal society, and women were regarded as the property of their husbands. As long as there was a "reason", it was not illegal for a husband to be violent to his wife. Although Patricius often lost his temper with yelling, he never hit her. He didn't understand Monica's religious enthusiasm and philanthropic spirit, but he didn't stop her. Monica was in great pain because of her husband's violence and philandering, and she could only pray constantly. When he was angry, she never answered back, but only watched him tenderly. Patricius respected her attitude of being neither arrogant nor humble, and gradually felt ashamed. Monica endured for a long time and with her virtuous and gentle character, finally influenced her husband. Patricius repented and converted. He died shortly after his baptism. After that, Monica worried for her eldest son Augustine, who was 17 years old.

Augustine lived a dissolute life at that time. He not only lived with a woman of low status, but also gave birth to an illegitimate child. He also believed in Manichaeism's heresy, which made Monica, a devout believer in God, very sad. She cried day and night and prayed to the Lord. She asked a bishop to persuade Augustine, but the bishop felt that Augustine was rebellious and would refuse to listen. He asked her to continue praying and predicted: "While you live, the son of these tears of yours shall not perish." Monica continued to cry, persuade and pray patiently. Later, Augustine really changed his ways. In 386, Monica finally saw Augustine being baptized in Milan, and she died the next year at the age of 56. She is a patroness of housewives and victims of domestic violence.

**Reflection**

Monica grew up more than 1,700 years ago in a society that ignored domestic violence and must have suffered a certain amount of verbal violence. Fortunately, her husband later repented. In modern society, the problem of women suffering from some form of intimate partner violence is still quite serious. According to data from the Canadian government in 2018, overall, 44% of women experienced some kind of abuse in the context of an intimate relationship. In 2002, the United States Bishops' Conference issued a pastoral document on domestic violence against women, stating: "The Catholic Church teaches that violence against another person in any form fails to treat that person as someone worthy of love. Instead, it treats the person as an object to be used. When violence occurs within a sacramental marriage ... The person being assaulted needs to know that acting to end the abuse does not violate the marriage promises." When Christians encounter or know about domestic violence, in addition to praying, they must also protect the safety of the victims and use resources such as police, social workers, help hotlines, and shelters to stop the abuse.

**Prayer**

After the Angelus prayer on August 30, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI praised St. Monica as the model and patroness of Christian mothers, pointing out that we know about Augustine from his autobiography "Confessions" that he "drank in the name of Jesus with his mother's milk, and that his mother brought him up in the Christian religion whose principles remained impressed upon him even in his years of spiritual and moral dissipation. Monica never ceased to pray for him and for his conversion and she had the consolation of seeing him return to the faith and receive Baptism." St. Monica prayed in tears for her son for 31 years. Let us learn from her persistence and pray with perseverance for our relatives and friends who have not yet known God or have left God.

May we learn from St. Monica's persistence and perseverance in prayer.

We pray especially for victims of domestic violence. Saint Monica, pray for us.