

Dear Friends,

Well, here we are, at the tail end of the summer; it's been a beautiful summer filled with outings and beautiful celebrations. After my visit in Eastern Washington, my daughters and I continued on to Oregon. We stopped along the way and visited with friends and places that were recommended to us. During our trip we had an opportunity to attend Mass at several of the churches that we visited. That's one of the many beauties of our Catholic faith, no matter where we are, we can always feel at home when we attend Mass.

With the end of summer approaching, my own children are already dreading the return to classes. I, myself, am looking forward to getting back into the swing of things, but at the same time it's a bit bittersweet since my oldest child will be entering his senior year in high school. Summer seems to be the time of transition for families with children in school, in talking to a few families, a couple are sending their children off to college, some are starting high school or middle school, and some are barely starting out in preschool or kindergarten, all in some sort of transition.

Parenting is one of the most demanding and rewarding jobs, it doesn't end even after they leave home. As parents, we need all the help we can get, whether it's from the other parent, our own parents, other family, friends. It's all hands-on deck, no matter what age our children are. I'm most grateful for all the folks that have helped me, have encouraged and offered advice to my children and myself over the years. As a parent, there have been many joyous occasions and some painful ones in my 17 years of parenting. The joyous ones sure outweigh the painful ones, but just the same, they've been learning experiences for my children and me. As I mentioned before, we need all the help we can get. I forgot to mention earlier our Saint friends in the list of people to look for help. We can always learn so much from these friends and there's a couple of saints this week that are sure examples of this.

St. Monica was the mother of none other than St. Augustine. St. Monica was a Christian that was married to a pagan man who often came home drunk and had a violent temper. Regardless of this, St. Monica prayed constantly for the conversion of her husband and always showed herself to be kind and compassionate to her husband. St. Monica was granted the grace to see her husband convert a year before his death. St. Augustine was an intelligent young man who left home to study. Right away, he gave in to a life of sin and pulled away from his mother. St. Monica was relentless in praying for her son and even followed him to Milan to keep an eye on him in hopes of helping him leave the life of sin. St. Augustine befriended a bishop in Milan that happened to be his mother's spiritual guide. St. Monica's constant prayer finally paid off and St. Augustine was baptized and changed his ways. St. Augustine went on to do great things and I encourage you to read his confessions to learn more about St. Augustine and St. Monica.

It can be frustrating and even painful when we, as parents, or even when we see someone that's not our child doing something that we know will lead them to trouble down the road. We'll try to teach them to the best of our ability to be their very best because we see their gifts and talents. Because we've seen them stumble their first steps, score their first goal, been at their bedside in sickness, heal their first heartbreak, and so on. We've helped them learn to get back up, to heal and work hard, and no matter what our children do or don't do, we still love them and worry about them. I imagine God like the best Father, always there, always close, yet giving us our space to mess up and stumble, maybe sometimes frustrated at our stubbornness to do things "our way" when He's trying to lead us to His way, through love and mercy.

I wish you all a blessed rest of your summer and here I share a prayer to St. Monica.

Prayer to Saint Monica

*Exemplary Mother of the Great Augustine, you perseveringly pursued your wayward son
Not with threats but with prayerful cries to heaven.*

Intercede for all mothers in our day, so that they may learn to draw their children to God.

Teach them how to remain close to their children,

Even the prodigal sons and daughters who have sadly gone astray.

Dear St Monica, troubled wife and mother, many sorrows pierced your heart during your lifetime.

Yet, you never despaired or lost faith.

*With confidence, persistence, and profound faith, you prayed daily for the conversion
of your beloved husband, Patricius, and your beloved son, Augustine; your prayers were answered.*

Grant me that same fortitude, patience, and trust in the Lord.

Intercede for me, dear St Monica, that God may favorably hear my plea.

(mention your intention here)

*Grant me the grace to accept His Will in all things, through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen*

In God's Love,



Dulce Casanova

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