

What Sts. Monica and Augustine Teach Us About Prayer

by Lindsey Kettner

Saint Augustine of Hippo wasn't always an outstanding Catholic bishop and theologian. In fact, he didn't convert to Catholicism until he was 31 years old. Not only that, but he was a bit of a "wild child" in his early years. He isn't a patron saint of brewers for nothing.

Augustine's mother, St. Monica, prayed fervently for his conversion. For seventeen years she prayed and never gave up hope. "St. Ambrose, a holy bishop of Milan, Italy, told her that such prayers, which are watered by tears, that these could not go unheeded by God. God could not ignore such prayers with tears," said Fr. James Kubicki, regular contributor to Morning Air® on Relevant Radio®.

"I'm sure St. Ambrose told her, you know, you might not see it while you're still alive, but don't ever feel that your prayers are wasted or have gone unheeded," said Fr. Kubicki. Thankfully, St. Monica did see the fruit of her prayers within her lifetime. After his mother's persistent prayers and St. Ambrose's poignant preaching, Augustine turned away from his former lifestyle and embraced the Catholic Faith.

When the Church decides on a feast day to celebrate a particular saint in the liturgical calendar, it's often the day that they were born into eternal life. It's no accident, therefore, that the feast days of St. Monica and St. Augustine are celebrated one after another. It wasn't by design that the Church placed them next to one another—it was Divine Providence.

St. Monica died on August 27, 387. Forty-three years and one day later, St. Augustine died on August 28th. "These two people, who were so closely connected ... it's no accident that they ... would be celebrated one feast day right after another," said Fr. Kubicki.

The story of this saintly mother and son is one that brings hope and peace to so many parents and grandparents across the world. "I think it's a great reminder to us of the power of prayer, of persevering prayer, of prayer that is combined with sacrifice—the tears, the penance that she did—and also, a prayer with confidence and hope that God will answer those prayers. Maybe not in a way that we know or can see, but God will never let any prayer go unanswered."

If you, like St. Monica, are desperate for your family to return to the Catholic Church, turn to her intercession. Like she prayed for her own son, she will also pray for your loved ones.

