



Memorial of St Monica



Date: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 139:7–12b | **Response:** Psalm 139:1

Gospel Acclamation: 1 John 2:5

Gospel Reading: Matthew 23:27–32

Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Today we celebrate the feast of Saint Monica — a mother who loved deeply, prayed constantly, and waited patiently. She didn't preach in public, but her life was a sermon of quiet, persistent faith. Her love for her son Augustine wasn't loud or dramatic — it was steady and full of trust in God. She lived her faith in small, faithful steps, over many years.

As we walk through this 21st Week in Ordinary Time, the Church asks us to think about what it really means to follow Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks about the narrow door — about effort, choice, and staying faithful. Monica's life is a clear example. She didn't give up, not because she was strong on her own, but because God's grace carried her.

In the first reading, Saint Paul reminds the Thessalonians how he worked hard day and night so the Gospel could be shared freely. He didn't want praise or payment. He wanted to be a witness. But Paul knew his work wasn't enough without God. As Pope Benedict said, "the real initiative always comes from God." Monica understood that too. Her prayers weren't about pushing God or controlling her son. They were about staying close to grace, trusting God to work in hidden ways.

Paul and Monica weren't working alone. Their love and effort were part of something bigger. The prophet Isaiah reminds us this week that God wants to gather people from every nation. Jesus says people will come from all directions to sit at God's table. Paul's mission and Monica's prayers both show us that God's mercy reaches far and wide. Everyone has a place.

Psalm 139 reminds us that God knows us fully. “You knit me together in my mother’s womb.” Monica held onto this truth. Even when Augustine turned away, she believed he was still known, still held, still loved. She didn’t just see his mistakes — she saw the person God had made. Her faith didn’t panic in the dark. It trusted the One who holds the light.

She also knew that returning to God isn’t quick or easy. Augustine struggled. He tried many paths. Monica saw that his unrest wasn’t failure. It was part of the journey. The letter to the Hebrews tells us that God trains those He loves, and that even painful times can lead to peace and growth. Monica waited through it all, trusting that God was still working.

Then we hear Jesus say in the Gospel: “You are like whitewashed tombs.” He isn’t just angry. He’s urging people to be honest. The danger isn’t having problems — it’s pretending we don’t. Jesus wants us to be real. To let grace reach the inside, not just fix the outside.

Monica shows us how. Her faith wasn’t about appearances. It was about love — shown in quiet prayer, steady hope, and deep trust. Her home was her mission. Her son was her prayer. She didn’t force outcomes. She trusted God. She believed the words of a bishop who told her, “The son of these tears shall not perish.” And she held that as a promise.

Her trust didn’t depend on signs or results. It stayed firm even when nothing seemed to change. Her faith was like an underground stream, flowing quietly, softening the hard soil of her son’s heart. Many mothers and fathers know this kind of waiting — praying year after year for faith to return, for a heart to change. Monica is a companion on that journey, showing us what steady love looks like.

She couldn’t see the full picture, but she believed God was still weaving. Even the knots and delays were part of something greater. We often see the underside of the tapestry — messy and unclear. But God sees the whole design.

And she knew faith isn’t about looking perfect. We are not finished products. We are clay in the potter’s hands. Monica didn’t try to impress anyone. She let God shape her through prayer, waiting, and love. That’s what Jesus means by the narrow door. Not being perfect, but staying faithful. Letting grace shape us, even when it’s slow or hard.

So we ask: what kind of soil are we? Are we letting God's Word take root? Are we willing to stay close to others while they grow, even if it takes time?

This week, take these questions to prayer:

- Where in my life am I holding on too tightly, instead of trusting in God?
- Who is God asking me to walk with — gently, patiently, without pressure?
- Where is Jesus inviting me to be more honest and open to grace?

Saint Monica, woman of hope, woman of prayer, woman of tears — pray for us.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.