

Biography of St. Monica

St Monica was born in the year 322 in Tagaste, a town in Northern Africa. Although her parents were Christians, they decided to marry her to a pagan official, Patritius.

When Monica entered Patritius' household, she had to contend with not only a husband who was both immoral and unfaithful, but a household full of servants who disrespected her and made rude comments behind her back. These comments, in turn, aided in influencing her mother in law, who lived with her, against her. Through the years of emotional abuse, Monica never complained and even urged other women to respect their husbands.

Because of her meek nature and submission to her husband, Monica was never physically abused by her husband in a time where women who had husbands more gentle in character were regularly seen with marks on their faces from being struck.

Over the course of her marriage, Monica bore her husband two sons (Augustine and Navigius) and a daughter (Perpetua). Although she was not allowed to baptize her children, she prayed for her household frequently. Through her prayers, her husband was eventually converted to Christianity a year before his death, and thereafter constrained himself from adultery.

Monica's son Augustine, later to be known as St Augustine, led a life focused on pleasure and worldly things in his early years. Though Monica despaired of his ever being brought into Christ, she consistently prayed and wept for him, and he, too, was brought into Christ and baptized. In fact, most of what is known of Monica is from Augustine's Confessions, in book nine.

Mother and son were able to share about six months of peaceful times before Monica passed away in the city of Ostia in the year 387. She was fifty six.

St Monica is celebrated on the twenty seventh of August in the Catholic Church and on fourth of May in the Orthodox Church. She is often considered the patron saint of mothers whose children have gone astray, and housewives.

