

May 4

## MEDITATION ON SAINT MONICA

### 122.1 First Point

In her youth Saint Monica had a special attraction to prayer, and her greatest pleasure was to spend days and nights in prayer, avoiding the company of those who might turn her attention away from God. Having learned some prayers from her mother, she never gave up reciting them. What a blessing it is to be brought up in piety from one's youth! This makes it easier to preserve that spirit throughout one's life. Saint Monica had this advantage, and it contributed a great deal to the conversion of her husband and her son.

Do you take care to educate the children confided to you in a Christian spirit? Do you try above all else to inspire them with recollection in their prayers and with love for this holy practice? You on your part should pray much for them to obtain for them from God the gift of piety, something he alone can give them.

### 122.2 Second Point

Saint Monica's husband had an unpleasant and irritable disposition, and when her neighbors wondered how she could put up with him, she told them that they should not be surprised because from the moment she accepted him as her husband, she had submitted herself to him and respected him as much as she was able. Still, by her prayers and tears she converted him, and led him to become a Catholic and to change his disposition.

This saint teaches us that when we have to live or deal with someone who has a disagreeable disposition, we must do two things: first, arm ourselves with patience and be accommodating; second, often ask God in prayer to give the other person a more accommodating spirit and grant you the grace to put up with him. Is this how you act when you happen to be in such a situation?

### 122.3 Third Point

Saint Monica's son, Saint Augustine, abandoned himself to a dissolute life in his youth, and even fell into the heresy of the Manichees. She did everything she could to withdraw him from his evil ways and to bring him to life in Jesus Christ.<sup>622</sup> He himself says that his saintly mother experienced a much more difficult time giving him birth in the spirit than she had bringing him bodily into this world. She never stopped praying and weeping for his conversion; she even crossed the sea and undertook long journeys to keep him from being altogether lost. Finally, after so much suffering she had the joy of seeing him change his life completely.

When you see those confided to you inclined to a dissolute life, do you do all you can to win them over to God? Is there anything you would not do for them to eliminate in them the evil to which they are inclined? Do you have recourse to God to procure for them a change in conduct? Since you are responsible for their souls, you should use every possible means to put them on the road to heaven.

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Monica (ca 332 - 387) was the mother of Saint Augustine. De La Salle's meditation is based on the facts of her life which Saint Augustine makes known in the ninth book of his Confessions. Her feast was set on May 4 because the conversion of Saint Augustine was celebrated on May 5 by the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine in Belgium, where her body was brought in 1162. The feast of Saint Monica is now held on August 27, the day before the feast of her son.