

Morning Prayer

The Fifth Tuesday of Easter

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Monica, *Mother of Augustine of Hippo*, 387

Psalms Appointed

Psalms 61 & 62

Readings

A period of silence will follow each reading.

First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 10:1-21

A Reading from the book of Wisdom.

Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when he alone had been created; she delivered him from his transgression, and gave him strength to rule all things. But when an unrighteous man departed from her in his anger, he perished because in rage he killed his brother. When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood.

Wisdom also, when the nations in wicked agreement had been put to confusion, recognized the righteous man and preserved him blameless before God, and kept him strong in the face of his compassion for his child. Wisdom rescued a righteous man when the ungodly were perishing; he escaped the fire that descended on the Five Cities. Evidence of their wickedness still remains: a continually smoking wasteland, plants bearing fruit that does not ripen, and a pillar of salt standing as a monument to an unbelieving soul. For because they passed wisdom by, they not only were hindered from recognizing the good, but also left for humankind a reminder of their folly, so that their failures could never go unnoticed. Wisdom rescued from troubles those who served her. When a righteous man fled from his brother's wrath, she guided him on straight paths; she showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him knowledge of holy things; she prospered him in his labors, and increased the fruit of his toil. When his oppressors were covetous, she stood by him and made him rich. She protected him from his enemies, and kept him safe from those who lay in wait for him; in his arduous contest she gave him the victory, so that he might learn that godliness is more powerful than anything else.

When a righteous man was sold, wisdom did not desert him, but delivered him from sin. She descended with him into the dungeon, and when he was in prison she did not leave him, until she brought him the scepter of a kingdom and authority over his masters. Those who accused him she showed to be false, and she gave him everlasting honor. A holy people and blameless race wisdom delivered from a nation of oppressors. She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord, and withstood dread kings with wonders and signs. She gave to holy people the reward of their labors; she guided them along a marvelous way, and became a shelter to them by day, and a starry flame through the night. She brought them over the Red Sea, and led them through deep waters; but she drowned their enemies, and cast them up from the depth of the sea. Therefore the righteous plundered the ungodly; they sang hymns, O Lord, to your holy name, and praised with one accord your defending hand; for wisdom opened the mouths of those who were mute, and made the tongues of infants speak clearly.

Gospel Reading

Luke 8:1-15

A Reading from Luke.

Soon after being anointed by the woman who was a sinner, Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources. When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.' Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance."

A Reading from The Church Fathers

Monica Mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387

Collect of the Day

The Officiant then says

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Monica

Deepen our devotion, O Lord, and use us in accordance with your will; that inspired by the example of your servant Monica, we may bring others to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayers of the People

A Prayer in Time of Great Sickness and Mortality

O most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee unto thee for succor.

Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Oppressed

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Monica, Mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387

Monica's life story is enshrined in the spiritual autobiography of her eldest son, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Born in North Africa about 331, of Berber parents, Monica was married to a pagan Latinized provincial of Tagaste named Patricius. Early in their marriage Patricius could be violent and abusive, although over the course of their life together he seems to have worked to improve his temper. In Monica's earlier years she was not without worldly ambitions and tastes, and in particular she struggled with a tendency to drink too much wine—a temptation that she gradually overcame. Over time, she grew in Christian maturity and spiritual insight through an ever-deepening life of prayer.

Her ambition for her gifted son was transformed into a passionate desire for his conversion to Christ. She had longed for all three of her children to be baptized, but her husband insisted that nothing be done until they were adults and could decide for themselves. Augustine took a particularly slow and circuitous path to Christianity, but Monica never gave up hope for his conversion. After his baptism in Milan in 387 by Bishop Ambrose, Augustine and his mother, together with a younger brother, planned to return home to Africa. While awaiting ship at Ostia, the port of Rome, however, Monica fell ill.

Augustine writes, "One day during her illness she had a fainting spell and lost consciousness for a short time. We hurried to her bedside, but she soon regained consciousness and looked up at my brother and me as we stood beside her. With a puzzled look, she asked, 'Where was I?' Then, watching us closely as we stood there speechless with grief, she said, 'You will bury your mother here.'"

Augustine's brother expressed sorrow, for her sake, that she would die so far from her own country. She said to the two brothers, "It does not matter where you bury my body. Do not let that worry you. All I ask of you is that, wherever you may be, you should remember me at the altar of the Lord." To the question of whether she was afraid at the thought of leaving her body in an alien land, she replied, "Nothing is far from God, and I need have no fear that he will not know where to find me, when he comes to raise me to life at the end of the world."

Recent excavations at Ostia have uncovered her original tomb. Her mortal remains, however, were transferred in 1430 to the Church of St. Augustine in Rome.