

# CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

## Monica's faith

By Janaan Manternach  
NC News Service

Monica grew up in North Africa in the fourth century. Her family was Christian but her parents decided she should marry a pagan named Patricius.

Monica found life with Patricius difficult. He had a terrible temper. At times he would be so angry he became violent.

Monica also had to cope with her mother-in-law who lived with them. The older woman was not easy to get along with.

Neither Patricius nor his mother could understand why Monica prayed so much. They criticized her for giving things to the poor.

Monica loved her husband and prayed that he would become a Christian. A year before he died Patricius was baptized.

Monica and Patricius had three children. The oldest, Augustine, was about 17 when his father died. He was a quite a teen-ager, always restless and searching. He often did things his mother didn't approve of much. He would not

listen to her advice. He seemed to resent her efforts to get him to lead a more decent life.

Monica was especially upset because Augustine would not pursue Christian practices. Augustine even spoke out against the Catholic Church and its teachings.

For a while, Monica refused to let him eat or sleep in their house. She told him not to come home until he changed his ways. But this approach did not seem to work.

Monica prayed. She decided that love, not fear or threats, would be the only thing that would win her son to a more Christian way of life. From then on she tried to stay close to her son, but didn't harp at him constantly.

One day Augustine told his mother that he was going to the docks to say goodbye to a friend. He went to the docks, boarded a ship and sailed off to Rome.

Monica was heartbroken. But she was determined to be near her son. So she followed him to Rome and then to Milan. She prayed constantly for Augustine to

become a good Christian.

In the city of Milan, Augustine heard a talk by Bishop Ambrose.

Augustine was very impressed and went to Ambrose. The bishop was able to answer Augustine's many questions. He helped the young man find peace.

Monica was overjoyed. She also became a friend of Ambrose. One of the happiest days of her life was when Augustine was baptized by Ambrose.

One day her son told her he wanted to go back to North Africa. They set out for home but Monica died peacefully at the seaport of Ostia, near Rome.



ST. MONICA

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)

### WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the words below. All the words are in this week's children's story. Another word is spelled out in the boxes with the circles.

Example: 1. cainom m o r i c a (monica)

2. rosebam o s t i a

3. aosit o s t i a

4. laimn o s t i a

5. neaustiug o s t i a

6. ritapucis o s t i a

7. icaarf o s t i a

Answers: 2. Ambrose, 3. Ostia, 4. Milan, 5. Augustine, 6. Patricius, 7. Africa

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

Make your own poster to give a message about love. Perhaps you could draw and decorate a picture involving friends, or parents and children. Under the picture complete this thought: "Love means ..."

#### Children's Reading Corner

Children learn about love and relationships within the whole mosaic of family life. In "Creative Learning Activities for Religious Education," Patricia Mathson focuses on "learning activities that help children discover God's presence in their lives through the world and the people around them." The educator writes that the activities directly involve children from 3 to 8 in the learning process by enabling them "to learn through experiences in their own lives." Ideas are provided for parents and educators to help children "learn about God's creation, caring for others as Jesus taught." (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632. Paperback. \$8.95.)



### Love

Making the warmth of God's love manifest to terminally ill patients is important to the ministry of Sister Rosella Molitor, D.C. With funding from the Catholic Church Extension Society she serves the spiritual needs of those living in eastern Oklahoma's home mission territory.

Sister Molitor is one of a team of home missionaries who, in partnership with Extension, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in the United States. But the team is too small to do its job without help. It

needs new members. It needs you.

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