



The sheep know the voice of the Good Shepherd, who seeks the lost ones, even in the middle of the night. Good moms are similarly attuned, listening for the needs of their child(ren) and sacrificing sleep and comfort for their sake. Motherhood mirrors the unconditional love of God, making personal sacrifices as a sincere gift of self. And, like the Good Shepherd, moms rejoice each time they reconnect with their children and deepen their bonds of love.

Motherhood can often be an under-celebrated vocation. Much mothering is done discreetly—comforting little one’s hurts, serving as tutor, chef, coach, advisor, and launching young adult children into their own lives, separate but ever-connected. In each of these moments of motherhood, women tap into the gifts of their femininity that provide strength and compassion, nurturing and encouragement. Moms find fulfillment in the small moments—a homemade gift, a tight hug, and a quick kiss from kids big and small.

Still, our culture can and must do more to support motherhood, which in many ways is losing social standing. In a world where people are seen as interchangeable, the incomparable bond between mother and child is sometimes sidelined. Yet, as we learn from today’s Gospel, the voice of the Shepherd is unique and unrepeatable. So too the voice of a mother to her children. Newborns already know the voice of their mothers whose bodies have housed them for nine months, and it is mothers who first present children to the world, including to the new father, and teach them about belonging, community, love, and responsibility.

Today, we pray for all moms to receive the grace they need to be the best examples of life-giving, sacrificial love to their children. We show our gratitude for the countless moments of comfort and support that moms give. And we give thanks for all mothers as a visible image of God’s love in the world.

“The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of God is the heart of a mother.” – St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Saint Monica was a devout Christian born in 4th-century Algeria. Married to Patricius, a non-believer, she navigated his emotional abuse and unfaithfulness as best she could. She prayed fervently for his conversion which finally came just a year before his death.

Her greatest struggle was her son, Augustine, who rejected Christianity, joined Manichaeism, lived with a mistress, and fathered a child outside marriage. For nearly 20 years, Monica prayed persistently for his conversion, once hearing from a bishop, “The child of those tears shall never perish.” She practiced tough love but ultimately chose to stay close to Augustine, urging him toward good influences, like St. Ambrose. Her prayers were answered in 387 when Augustine converted to Christianity. Monica died later that year, witnessing her son’s transformation into a theologian and Doctor of the Church. She remains a model of patience and the power of prayer in adversity.

Reflection question: Motherhood is sometimes viewed in our culture as a cross, or worse, a limit on our personal ambitions.

How do the examples of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Monica, and other mothers we know show us the power of motherhood to enter into the love of God and participate in raising saints?

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