

Dear Parishioners,

Next week we observe the feasts of several saints whose holy lives and example are relevant and inspiring for us 21st century Catholics. **Thursday, August 27, and Friday, August 28 are the memorials of St. Monica and St. Augustine, mother and son.** We learn about St. Monica mostly from Augustine's autobiography, known as "The Confessions of St. Augustine." It is really the story of his search for truth and his conversion from sin and error to the Catholic faith. Augustine relates how his mother Monica prayed relentlessly for her son to turn from his wayward path and embrace the true faith, to be baptized and saved. Of course, Augustine eventually professed Christianity and was baptized by St. Ambrose. Augustine became a bishop, a great theologian, and a Doctor of the Church. And St. Monica is the model and exemplar for all parents who worry about their wayward sons and daughters who have strayed away from the practice of the faith and pray for them ceaselessly that they may return to the church. St. Monica's example teaches us to never give up and to keep praying!

**On Saturday, August 29, we celebrate the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist.** John the Baptist was beheaded because he witnessed to the sanctity of marriage. He had told King Herod, "it is not right for you to have your brother's wife." Herod had "married" Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. Herodias resented John's interference and criticism and wanted to kill him. She eventually succeeded with the help of her daughter, whom she convinced to ask for the head of John the Baptist when Herod offered to give her anything she asked for. John the Baptist is thus the model and exemplar for those who teach and witness to the sanctity of marriage in our society today, and who risk suffering hostility, insult, and persecution for doing so. The solemn teaching of Jesus on this subject in his own words establishes the principle that marriage is a union of one man and one woman which is indissoluble. Jesus himself says "what God has joined, let no human being separate," and "a man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mk 10:9-12). Many people today – even those who profess to follow Christ – reject this understanding of marriage. It is risky to witness to the Lord's and the Church's teaching on marriage, but the example of John the Baptist inspires us and gives us courage.

I want to encourage all of you this week in your pursuit of holiness to follow the example of the saints. May you be blessed in these August days!

Your Pastor,  
Msgr. Stephan Moloney