

PRESENZA AGOSTINIANA



Digital Edition

May/August 2026 - nos 3-4

MOTHERS MONICA



Saint Monica

Life and Spirituality
Example of Prayer
Source of Inspiration

Community of Prayer

Commitment, Solidarity,
and Visual Identity

Christian Mothers Saint Monica

History and Presence
in the Province of the Discalced
Augustinians in Brazil and Paraguay
Testimony of mothers who are part of
the Community





Presenza Agostiniana

Bimonthly Magazine

Order of the Discalced Augustinians
Year LIII (53) - n°s 3-4 (vol. 280)
Digital Edition
May/August 2026

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Members of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Santa Rita dos Impossíveis Parish, Ramos/Rio de Janeiro - Brazil

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Summary

Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves, oad

04. Saint Monica: Life and Spirituality

Inspiring a Community of Mothers

08. Saint Monica: Example of Intercession

Prayer as a Path of Conversion and Trust

11. Saint Monica: Source of Inspiration

Characteristics and History of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica

13. Community of Christian Mothers Saint

Monica in the Province of Brazil and Paraguay

History and Presence among the Discalced Augustinians

23. In Prayer with Saint Monica

Commitment and Solidarity in Daily Life

25. Identification with Saint Monica

Meaning of the Community's Visual Identity and T-shirt

29. Testimonials

Personal accounts from mothers who participate at the Community

34. Some Pictures

Sharing a Bit of Our Life

48. Message from the Prior General

Thank you, Saint Monica, for the holiness of your son Augustine!

Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad



Editorial

Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica: A Prayer Movement for the Faith of the Children



Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves, oad

Dear readers,

the Church has always recognized prayer as one of the most fruitful paths for sustaining faith, strengthening families, and nourishing the hope of the Christian people.

Among the many witnesses of such perseverance, few figures shine as brightly as Saint Monica, a mother who transformed her tears into prayer and her trust in God into an enduring testimony for the whole Church.

In this issue of *Presenza Agostiniana*, we wish to dedicate our attention to the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, an ecclesial reality that, inspired by the life and spirituality of Monica, brings together thousands of mothers in a true community of intercession for the faith of their children and for the sanctification of families.

A large part of the articles in this edition was prepared and supervised by me, Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves, Provincial In-charge for

the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica (Brazil and Paraguay). Through my pastoral experience and close accompaniment of the Communities, we are led to discover more deeply the spiritual richness of this movement, its history, its identity, and its evangelizing mission.

More than presenting a group or an association of the faithful, this issue wishes to recall a biblical truth: no prayer offered with faith is ever lost.

Just as Saint Monica persevered for years until she witnessed the conversion of Saint Augustine, so today countless mothers discover that patient, silent, and trusting prayer continues to be a powerful school of hope.

Enjoy your reading...



Saint Monica: Life and Spirituality

Inspiring a Community of Mothers

1. Brief Biography of Saint Monica

Monica (331–387) was born in **Tagaste** (present-day Algeria, in North Africa).

Information about her **family** is quite scarce. We know only that Monica had other sisters, but we do not know the exact number of family members or the names of her other relatives.

We can say, however, that her family belonged to the middle class. It was not a wealthy family, but it had servants and some property. At that time, having servants was not a privilege reserved exclusively for the wealthiest classes; families of moderate economic means also often had servants.

The **religious environment** in which Monica was born and raised was marked by strong Christian convictions. This is confirmed by her son, Augustine, who describes her origins with these words: *“She was born into a Christian household, members of your Church”* (Conf. IX, 8, 17).

During her childhood and adolescence, Monica remained under the care of an **elderly servant** who, when she was young, had been her father’s nurse. Later, this same servant was given the responsibility of educating the children of the household.

According to the testimony of Augustine, this woman guided Monica’s early years with strictness, but also with prudence and wisdom. He describes her as firm when correction was necessary and very sensible in the moral formation of the children.

Regarding her **intellectual education**, Monica did not go beyond the primary level of instruction. In Rome, the capital of the Empire, women had easier access to culture and learning. In the provinces, however, the situation was quite different; educational opportunities for women were very limited at that time.

In these regions, women’s lives were generally directed toward marriage and household responsibilities. It was within this context that much of the practical formation of young women took place.

This was also the path followed by Monica. She devoted herself diligently to domestic and family duties, carrying them out with great wisdom and dedication.

Over time, her experience and virtues made her a true teacher of **married and family life**, a testimony that would be remembered especially by her son.

Most of her life was spent in North Africa, under the rule of the Roman Empire. Monica also spent time in the city of **Carthage** (present-day Tunisia), which was the great cultural and educational center of the region, where Augustine moved to study and where she sought spiritual guidance from local bishops in her struggle for her son's conversion.

During the final period of her life, Monica was in **Rome** and **Milan** (present-day Italy), crossing the Mediterranean Sea in an attempt to bring her son back to the faith.

In the summer of the year 387, in **Ostia** (present-day Italy), Monica completed her earthly life after nine days of illness, at the age of 56.

In her final moments, she was surrounded by her family in an atmosphere of serenity and faith. She departed in peace, confident that God never abandons those who place their trust in Divine Love.

Augustine expressed the profound meaning of that moment by affirming that his mother

was not dying definitively. For him, the life of faith she had lived was a guarantee of the hope reserved for all those who trust in God.

Thus, her death was remembered not only as a moment of farewell, but also as a **testimony of hope** in eternal life with God.

2. The Spirituality of Saint Monica

The spirituality of Saint Monica was marked by **three fundamental pillars** of Christian life: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These elements shaped her entire existence and sustained her long perseverance for the conversion of her son.

1. **Prayer** was at the center of her life. Dialogue with God was something constant and natural for her. She prayed with faith and trust, even experiencing mystical visions, which she interpreted with prudence and discernment, carefully distinguishing divine inspirations from the simple desires of the heart. Her prayer was persevering, marked by tears and supplications, becoming a true spiritual school for Augustine. Her own son later acknowledged that his conversion was obtained through his mother's fervent prayers and daily tears.
2. Monica practiced **fasting** with simplicity and humility, according to the teaching of the Gospel. She fasted discreetly, with-



out ostentation, and with a great spirit of obedience to the Church. When she arrived in Milan, for example, she immediately adapted to local customs, following the advice of Bishop Saint Ambrose. This attitude revealed her profound communion with the Church and her willingness to obey with a filial spirit.

3. Another very important aspect of her spiritual life was **almsgiving**. What she saved through her practices of austerity was given to the poor. Her charity was concrete and generous, expressed in her care for those in need and in her love for the community.

Thus, the life of Saint Monica can be understood as a true “*permanent Lent*,” lived in prayer, penance, and charity. Through this simple and profound spirituality, she purified herself inwardly and prepared herself for the definitive encounter with Christ, leaving the Church a shining example of persevering faith and complete trust in God.

3. The Perseverance in Prayer for 30 Years

The life of Saint Monica constitutes one of the greatest Christian testimonies of perseverance in prayer and trust in God. For approximately 30 years, she prayed and

wept for the **conversion of her son**, who had turned away from the Christian faith and embraced Manichaeism.

When she realized that her son had abandoned the faith she had taught him since childhood, Saint Monica experienced great spiritual suffering. Saint Augustine himself recalls that his mother wept for him more than other mothers weep over the physical death of their children, because, with the eyes of faith, she saw the serious spiritual danger in which he found himself.

Even in the face of difficulties, Saint Monica did not give up. Sustained by prayer, hope, and signs that she interpreted as coming from God, such as the dream that foretold her son’s future conversion, she continued **to intercede with perseverance**. She sought advice from members of the Church, undertook long journeys, and even crossed the sea in order to remain close to her son.

For years, her life was marked by tears, supplications, and unwavering trust. A bishop, moved by her persistence, spoke to her a phrase that would become famous:

It is impossible that the son of so many tears should be lost.

In 386, in Milan, her prayers were answered: Augustine **converted** and received Baptism,



The Death of Saint Monica,
Ottaviano Nelli, 1410-1420,
Church of Saint Augustine, Gubbio (Italy)

radically changing his way and choice of life. Thus, Saint Monica's **30 years of prayer** reveal a profound spiritual teaching:

- persevering prayer is never useless;
- a mother's love can become an instrument of God's grace;
- Christian hope remains firm even in difficult situations.

For this reason, Saint Monica became a **model of faith** for fathers and mothers who pray for the conversion and the path of their children, reminding the Church that God acts at the right time, but never abandons those who trust in Divine Love.

4. Texts of Saint Augustine that Speak of Saint Monica

The main knowledge we have about the life of Saint Monica comes from the writings of Saint Augustine. It is above all through his works that the figure of this great Christian mother has come down to us.

The principal source is the ***Confessions***, in which he tells his own story and, at the same time, presents numerous episodes from his

mother's life. Up to Book IX, the author's journey appears deeply connected with Saint Monica's, so that the spiritual history of the son is intertwined with the presence, prayer, and testimony of his mother.

In addition to the *Confessions*, we also find references to Saint Monica in other writings, especially in the ***Dialogues***, written after his conversion. In these works, we find memories of family life and of the spiritual environment that marked that period of his life.

There are also references in later writings, in which the Bishop of Hippo gratefully recalls the decisive role that his mother's prayers and tears played in his conversion. In some works of a more theological nature, such as ***The Gift of Perseverance***, he uses the example of Monica's prayers to explain the action of God's grace in human life.

Monica's Faith and Her Mission as a Mother

She was given to a husband whom she served as her lord. And she busied herself to gain him to You, preaching You unto him by her behaviour; by which You made her fair, and reverently amiable, and admirable unto her husbando (Conf. IX,9,19).

A Mother's Fulfilled Desire

There was indeed one thing for which I wished to tarry a little in this life, and that was that I might see you a Catholic Christian before I died. My God has exceeded this abundantly, so that I see you despising all earthly felicity, made His servant (Conf. IX,10,26)

The Ecstasy at Ostia

We two now strained ourselves, and with rapid thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom which remains over all (Conf. IX,10,25).

Serenity in the Face of Death

Lay this body anywhere, let not the care for it trouble you at all. This only I ask, that you will remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be (Conf. IX,11,27).

Her Son's Final Praise

On the ninth day, then, of her sickness, the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine, was that religious and devout soul set free from the body (Conf. IX,11,28).

Augustine's Prayer for Monica

Do Thou also forgive her debts, whatever she contracted during so many years since the water of salvation. Forgive her, O Lord, forgive her, I beseech You; 'enter not into judgment' with her (Conf. IX,13,35).



Saint Monica: Example of Intercession

Prayer as a Path of Conversion and Trust

1. The Trust in God's Timing

The story of Saint Monica is one of the most beautiful expressions of trust in God's timing. For three decades, she prayed tirelessly for the conversion of her son. From a human perspective, it could have seemed like too much time, too much silence, too long a delay. But, according to divine wisdom, every tear, every prayer, and every act of perseverance was being **received and transformed into grace**.

Trusting in God's timing is not a passive attitude, but a deeply active one. Saint Monica did not simply wait: she sought guidance, turned to the Word, sought out men of God, and remained steadfast even when everything seemed to be against her. Her suffering did not paralyze her, but led her toward an even more mature faith. The famous phrase attributed to a bishop, *"It is impossible that the son of so many tears should be lost,"* was not a magical guarantee, but a sign of hope that **encouraged her to continue trusting**.

God's timing often does not coincide with ours. Indeed, we want immediate answers, quick solutions, and visible changes; yet God works in what is unseen, in the heart, in silent processes that bear fruit only later. Saint Augustine followed many paths before his conversion, but each stage was permitted by God as part of a greater work.

Trust in God's timing requires great **patience** from each of us, but also courage. Saint Monica traveled great distances, faced dangers, and did not give up on remaining close to her son, even when he seemed to be running away not only from her, but from truth itself. Her perseverance shows that trusting in God does not mean standing still, but walking, struggling, and loving without ever losing hope.

Thus, the life of Saint Monica teaches us that God's time is always fruitful. It may seem long to human eyes, but it is never empty. Every prayer offered with faith, every tear offered with love, and every period of waiting lived with hope is transformed, at the right moment, into abundant grace. To

trust in God's timing is **to believe** that Providence is never late, but prepares the best moment for everything to flourish.

2. Women of Prayer in the Bible

From the first books of Sacred Scripture, we find women whose lives were marked by persevering and trusting prayer.

In the Old Testament, one of the first is **Hannah**, who, suffering because of her infertility, addressed a humble and profound supplication to God: *"She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly"* (1 Sam 1:10). She then made a vow, saying: *"O Lord of hosts! If you will look upon the affliction of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life"* (1 Sam 1:11).

Her prayer was not one of rebellion, but of trusting abandonment into the hands of God. The Lord received her supplication and granted her the son she so greatly desired, Samuel (1 Sam 1:19-20).

More than receiving a personal grace, Hannah demonstrated that to pray well is to place one's own heart before God, ready to accept His will. Her song of thanksgiving reveals this profound trust (1 Sam 2:1-2).

Deborah, prophetess and judge of Israel, also led the people supported by attentive listening and faithfulness to the Lord (Judg 4:4-9). After the victory, she raised a hymn of praise, recognizing that strength came from God (Judg 5:2), showing that prayer sustains not only personal life, but also the mission entrusted by God.

As we continue through the history of the people of God, we also encounter **Esther**, who, faced with the threat of the extermination of her people, turned to fasting and prayer before taking action. The queen turned to God, saying: *"My Lord, our King, you alone are God! Help me, who am alone and have no defender but you"* (Esth 4:17l).

Her trust in the Lord was not intended to make her own life easier, but to understand what God wanted from her at that decisive moment. It was precisely this attitude of faith that opened the way for the salvation of Israel (Esth 7:1-10; 8:3-8).

In a similar way, other women of the Old Testament lived prayer as listening and faithfulness, aware that God does not change His designs, but enlightens and strengthens those who sincerely seek Him.

In the New Testament, **Mary** stands out as the great model of prayer. From her response to the angel's announcement, *"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be*



Esther and Ahasuerus,
Artemisia Gentileschi, 1628 - 1635,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (USA)

done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38), to her silent and faithful presence at the Cross (Jn 19:25-27), the mother of Jesus lived in constant communion with God.

The evangelist Luke also presents her as the one who kept and pondered the events of salvation: *"Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart"* (Lk 2:19).

At the Wedding at Cana, her request obtains from her Son the first messianic sign. Sensitive to the needs of the bride and groom, she simply observes: *"They have no wine"* (Jn 2:3). Although Jesus replies, *"My hour has not yet come"* (Jn 2:4), the mother remains confident and instructs the servants: *"Do whatever he tells you"* (Jn 2:5). Thus, the water is transformed into wine (Jn 2:1-11), revealing that her prayer always leads to the will of God and awakens **obedient trust** in the disciples.

As we contemplate these women, we understand that the purpose of persevering prayer is not to change God, but to transform the human heart. They did not ask for an easier life, but for light to understand God's designs and strength to live them faithfully.

Hannah, Esther, Deborah, and Mary teach us that God always hears those who pray with faith, humility, and perseverance. As the psalmist says: *"The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth"* (Ps 145:18). Their lives bear witness that true prayer is a constant search for God's will, and it is in His will that we find the grace, peace, and strength to continue our journey.

3. The Role of the Christian Mother as an Intercessor

The role of the Christian mother as an intercessor finds a profound expression in the life of Saint Monica. For many years, she accompanied the restless journey of her son, who sought meaning along paths far from God. Even in the face of mistakes, doubts, and distance from the faith, she never stopped praying. Her intercession was not marked by despair, but by a firm trust that God continued to work in her son's heart.

The Christian mother is called to live this same biblical mission: to intercede with perseverance, even when the fruits are not immediate. Like Saint Monica, every mother understands that she cannot control the choices of her children, but she can continually present them to God.

Prayer then becomes a place of surrender, where a mother's heart learns to trust that divine grace is capable of reaching even the most difficult situations. To intercede is to love without imposing, to wait without giving up, and to believe even when everything seems to be against us.

In the journey of Saint Augustine's conversion, we see that the decisive moment was not the result of human effort alone, but of an interior openness to the Word of God. This encounter was prepared, day after day, by his mother's tears and prayers.

Monica's intercession did not change God's plans, but cooperated so that Augustine's heart would be ready to receive the truth when it was revealed to him. The same happens in the lives of many children: **grace comes at the right time**, but finds ground prepared by the persevering prayer of a mother.

In this way, the role of the Christian mother as an intercessor is silent, yet profoundly effective. Inspired by Saint Monica, she learns that her mission is not only to educate or correct, but also to spiritually sustain those whom God has entrusted to her. Her constant prayer does not ask for an easier life, but for the action of God, who enlightens, transforms, and guides. And even when the journey seems long, she remains steadfast, knowing that no prayer offered with faith is ever lost, but that all prayers are received by God, who acts at the right time and in the most perfect way.



Saint Monica: Source of Inspiration

Characteristics and History of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica

1. Name, Mission, and Motto

Under the inspiration of Saint Monica, the movement called **Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica** began, and it is also widely identified by the expression *Mothers who pray for the faith of their children*.

This name expresses its fundamental **mission**: to bring together Christian mothers who, inspired by the example of Saint Monica, support the journey of faith of their children through persevering prayer, listening to the Word of God, and trust in the action of divine grace.

Its **motto** expresses the essence of this spirituality, which seeks to live the Gospel at the heart of the family, transforming prayer into a true path of love, hope, and intercession.

2. The Beginning of the Community

The Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica began in **1986** at **Santa Rita de Cássia Parish in Madrid**, Spain, through the

initiative of the Augustinian Recollect **Fr. Lorenzo Infante** (1905-1997). The origin of the Community is connected with the concern of a group of mothers who were seeking an answer to the same question: *what should be done when children lose their faith?*

Inspired by the witness of Saint Monica, Fr. Lorenzo proposed a simple and profoundly Christian path: **personal and communal prayer for families**. The initiative quickly attracted new participants and, already in 1987, it was recognized by the Archbishop of Madrid as a public association of the faithful.

Its purpose is to bring mothers together to pray for the perseverance of their children in the faith and to receive continuous Christian formation.

From the beginning, the Association received a strong **Augustinian identity**. The first prayer, composed by Fr. Lorenzo, was addressed to Saint Augustine, with Saint Monica as the model of a Christian mother, thereby strengthening its spiritual connection with the Augustinian Recollect Family.



Santa Rita de Cássia Parish,
Madrid (Spain)

Fr. Lorenzo Infante, oar

Born in a single Parish, the Community of Mothers gradually expanded to other Dioceses in Spain and later to various countries.

3. The Augustinian Inspiration

The deepest inspiration of the Community is found in **Augustinian spirituality**, particularly in the witness of Saint Augustine and, in a special way, of his mother, Saint Monica.

Saint Monica is presented as a **model of a Christian wife and mother**, whose life was marked by unceasing prayer, patience in the face of difficulties, and unwavering trust in the mercy of God.

Her **perseverance** became decisive for the conversion of Saint Augustine, who recognized in his mother's faith not only the origin of his physical life, but also the path that led him to his definitive encounter with Christ.

Inspired by this witness, the Community proposes its own way of living the Gospel: a spirituality rooted in **family life**, nourished by daily prayer, listening to the Word of God, participation in the sacramental life, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Over the years, the Community went beyond the boundaries of the Order of Augustinian Recollects and was also welcomed by other branches of the wider Augustinian Family.

4. The Community in the Order of Discalced Augustinians

In the Province Santa Rita de Cássia, in Brazil and Paraguay, the reality of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica was welcomed by the Discalced Augustinians and came to be lived as an **ecclesial community**, adapted to the pastoral needs of each place.

Within a few years, the Community became present in all the Parishes, bringing mothers together around persevering prayer for the faith of their children and contributing to the strengthening of the Christian life of families.

The initial presence in Brazil also extended to Paraguay, where the Province maintains two religious Communities, carrying out fruitful work of evangelization and bearing witness to a journey of faith strengthened over the years, always inspired by the example of Saint Monica and by Augustinian spirituality, and specifically by its **"Discalced"** expression, with a strong closeness between the groups and the friars of each religious Community.



Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica in the Province of Brazil and Paraguay

History and Presence among the Discalced Augustinians

1. Brief History

The first group of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica in the Province was founded in **1999** at Santa Rita dos Impossíveis Parish, in the **Ramos neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - Brazil**. From this pioneering experience, the Community gradually began to expand to other Parishes and missionary fields of the Discalced Augustinians in Brazil and Paraguay.

In the following decades, new Communities arose in different regions, **encouraged** by the witness of the mothers themselves and by the support of our confreres. Each Parish, according to its pastoral reality, organized its groups and formed the **Choirs of Mothers**, strengthening the spirituality of Saint Monica and persevering prayer for their children.

Although the Community was already present in several Parishes, it was only in **2024** that the **First Provincial Meeting with the Coordinators** took place, bringing together representatives of the groups of mothers

that existed at that time. From that moment onward, the Community began to experience a new dynamism.

The strengthening of formation, greater integration among the groups, and the establishment of common guidelines fostered greater unity, organization, and identity.

As a result of this work, the Community experienced **significant expansion**, with the creation of new Choirs of Mothers and the strengthening of those already existing, further consolidating the mission of praying for the faith, conversion, and Christian perseverance of their children.

Today, the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is present in all the Parishes of the Province of Santa Rita de Cássia in Brazil and Paraguay, bringing together thousands of women who, inspired by the example of Saint Monica, persevere in prayer for their children and for the sanctification of families.

Cities and Religious Houses
where there are Communities of Christian Mothers Saint Monica
in the Province Santa Rita de Cássia in Brazil and Paraguay

2. Chronology and Number of Choirs

The basic organizational unit of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is the **Choir**. Each unit is made up of **seven mothers** who commit themselves to prayer, Christian formation, and the witness of faith.

Below is the chronology of the beginning of each group and the current number in each Parish and Religious House:

1999, **Rio de Janeiro** (RJ)
Santa Rita dos Impossíveis Parish [Ramos] = 12 Choirs

2006, **Rio de Janeiro** (RJ)
Santo Antônio Parish [Pavuna] = 17 Choirs

2011, **Ampére** (PR)
Santa Teresinha e Santo Agostinho Parish = 56 Choirs

2011, **Bom Jardim** (RJ)
Nossa Senhora da Conceição Parish = 60 Choirs

2014, **Colíder** (MT)
Papa João XXIII Parish = 79 Choirs

2015, **Nova Londrina** (PR)
São Pio X e Santa Rita Parish = 57 Choirs

2016, **Ourinhos** (SP)
Santo Antônio Parish = 14 Choirs

2021, **Villa Elisa** - Paraguay
Santos Arcángeles Parish = 10 Choirs

2022, **Araucária** (PR)
Senhor Bom Jesus Parish = 57 Choirs

2022, **Nova Canaã do Norte** (MT)
Sagrado Coração de Jesus Parish = 29 Choirs

2022, **Toledo** (PR)
Santa Mônica Formation House = 39 Choirs

2023, **Yguazú** - Paraguay
San José Obrero Parish = 13 Choirs

2023, **Ouro Verde do Oeste** (PR)
Nossa Senhora Aparecida Parish = 28 Choirs

2026, **Manfrinópolis** and **Salgado Filho** (PR)
São Francisco de Assis Parish = 8 Choirs

Altogether, these groups comprise **479 Choirs of Mothers**, bringing together approximately **3,350 mothers** committed to prayer and evangelization, making the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica one of the most beautiful expressions of the Discalced Augustinian charism among families and the lay faithful who participate in our Communities.

3. Recent Expansion

During the previous three-year period (2022-2024), the Provincial Council decided to appoint **Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves** as the **religious responsible** for accompanying the lay movements connected with the mission of the Discalced Augustinians.

At that time, the main “organized” lay reality in our Parishes was the Community Christian Mothers Santa Monica. Following this appointment, an initiative was promoted that significantly changed the history of the Community: a meeting with representatives of the groups of mothers existing in the various Parishes and Communities served by the Order.

The **First Provincial Meeting with the Coordinators** took place on **July 27-28, 2024**, in **Toledo (PR)**, bringing together representatives of each group then established. The meeting encouraged the sharing of experiences, strengthened the bonds among the various Communities, and marked the beginning of a more coordinated and unified work throughout the Province.

From this meeting onward, a common path was proposed for all the Parishes and Communities. **Guidelines** were established for the formation of mothers before their admission into the Community, using the ***Manual of the Community of Christian Mothers Santa Monica*** as a basis.

Another important aspect that was emphasized was the importance of knowing the **lives of Saint Monica and Saint Augustine**, models of perseverance in faith, prayer, and the search for God’s will, in order to encourage the perseverance of the Mothers.

The fruits of this meeting were immediate. The representatives returned to their Communities deeply motivated and committed themselves to strengthening the local groups. Unity in formation and spirituality brought new dynamism to the Community, encouraging its growth and expansion.

Since then, the Community of Christian Mothers Santa Monica has experienced **significant development** and has been estab-

lished in all the Parishes of the Province. It is also worth noting that Santo Antônio Parish in Ourinhos (SP) - Brazil, although it is no longer administered by the Discalced Augustinians, maintains close ties with the Community and continues to carry out its work in communion with us.

Another important moment was the **First Discalced Augustinian Pilgrimage** of the Christian Mothers Saint Monica to the **National Shrine of Nossa Senhora Aparecida**, in Aparecida (SP), on **September 28, 2025**. Mothers from different parts of Brazil gathered in prayer for the faith of their children, in an atmosphere of joy at the arrival of the various groups and of fraternal fellowship.

The highlight of the morning was the Holy Mass, presided over by Archbishop Orlando Brandes and concelebrated by the Discalced Augustinian friars, including the Prior Provincial, Fr. José Valnir da Silva.

The gathering continued in the Noé Sotillo Auditorium, on the lower level of the Basilica, where songs, talks, reflections, and moments of sharing marked the morning. The talk was given by Márcia Hamond Regua Motta, an augustinian recollect mother, who offered a profound reflection on faith and hope based on her own experience.

Alongside the expansion of the Community, the drafting of its **Statutes** is currently underway, as a result of the maturation of the journey undertaken in recent years and the need to provide a common structure for the entire Province.

The purpose of this work is, first of all, to obtain the canonical and official recognition of the movement, then to proceed with the approval of the *Statutes* and, finally, with its affiliation to the Order of Discalced Augustinians.





Ramos/Rio de Janeiro (RJ)



Pavuna/Rio de Janeiro (RJ)



Ampère (PR)



Bom Jardim (RJ)



Colider (MT)



Nova Londrina (PR)



Ourinhos (SP)



Villa Elisa - Paraguay



Araucária (PR)



Nova Canaã do Norte (MT)



Toledo (PR)



Yguazú - Paraguay



Ouro Verde do Oeste (PR)



Manfrinópolis (PR)



Salgado Filho (PR)





In Prayer with Saint Monica

Commitment and Solidarity in Daily Life

1. The Dynamics of the Mothers' Groups

The Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is organized around the so-called **Prayer Choirs**, which form small living cells within the Community.

Each Choir is made up of **seven mothers**, corresponding to the seven days of the week. Each mother chooses a specific day on which to intensify her prayer for the children.

The following may be part of these Choirs:

- biological mothers;
- adoptive mothers;
- mothers of the heart, such as godmothers or persons who assume a maternal responsibility in someone's life.

In addition, mothers whose matrimonial situation has not yet been regularized before the Church may also join the Community, provided that they have a sincere desire to live this mission and to grow in faith.

In this way, the Prayer Choir expresses a profound **spiritual communion**, in which each mother prays not only for her own children, but also for the children of the other mothers in the group.

Each Parish has a **General Coordinator** responsible for accompanying the entire Community. In addition, each Choir has its Local Coordinator, who assists with organization, faithfulness to commitments, and communion with the other Choirs of the Parish.

Upon joining the Community, each mother receives a leaflet containing the names of the mothers in her Choir and of all their children, strengthening the spiritual bond and the shared responsibility in prayer.

2. The Commitment to Prayer

The main commitment of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is **daily and persevering prayer for the children**, both their own and those of the other mothers in the Choir.

This commitment to prayer is carried out in a concrete way:

- **Every day**, at a time chosen by the mother herself, she prays at **home** the prayer of the Community that she received when she joined the group. This prayer is offered in the home where the children live or grew up. Faithfulness is essential: in health or in sickness, whenever circumstances allow, the mother remains steadfast in this daily commitment.
- In addition, on the **day of the week** entrusted to her, the mother seeks to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament, in the **church** of her choice. On that day, the mother prays twice: once at home, as usual, and once before the Lord, intensifying her intercession for the faith of the children.

3. The Formation Meetings

To join the Community Christian Mothers Santa Monica, an **initial formation** journey is essential, and it has **two dimensions**.

- The first consists in becoming familiar with the ***Manual of the Community of Christian Mothers Santa Monica***, which guides the entire life of the Community: its organization, dynamics, commitments, and spirituality. This *Manual*, adopted by the Discalced Augustinians based on the experience of the Augustinian Recollects, is given to each mother when she joins the group. This formation helps the mother to understand what she will live as a member of the Community.
- The second dimension of formation is centered on the **lives of Saint Augustine and Saint Monica**. Since Saint Monica is the patroness of the Community, which is rooted in Augustinian spirituality, it is essential for the mothers to become familiar, even initially in a simple way, with the witness and experience of faith of these great Christian models.

Furthermore, formation does not end upon joining the Community. The Community promotes **ongoing formation**, encouraging: continuous growth in faith; participation in

the sacramental life, especially Sunday Mass; frequent Confession, when necessary; living the Christian faith in everyday family life, as a mother and wife; a constant desire for conversion.

One of the purposes of the Community is precisely to provide mothers with a continuous and progressive path of spiritual growth.

4. The Community and Solidarity Dimension

First of all, **spiritual solidarity** stands out. When a mother faces difficulties such as illness, family problems, or situations requiring prayer, the others unite in a special way, intensifying their intercession. In fact, there is constant communication among them, strengthening the bonds of fraternity and faith.

Furthermore, although it is not the primary purpose of the Community, there is also **concrete solidarity**. When needs arise, such as a lack of food, medicine, or other difficulties, the mothers seek to help one another according to their possibilities, living out charity in a simple and effective way.

In this way, the Community becomes not only a place of prayer, but also a true sign of communion, mutual support, and the living expression of Christian love.





Identification with Saint Monica

Meaning of the Community's Visual Identity and T-shirt

1. The Symbolic Meaning of the T-Shirt

The T-shirt of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is much more than a simple garment. It is a **visible sign** of faith, belonging, hope, and spiritual commitment.

Each element on it carries a profound meaning, connected with the Augustinian tradition and with the mission of mothers who pray for the faith of their children.

The **pink color** recalls tenderness, maternal love, and the gentleness of a mother’s heart which, like Saint Monica, never ceases to intercede for her children. It is the expression of a motherhood enlightened by faith and strengthened by Christian hope.

At the center of the T-shirt is the traditional image of **Our Lady of Consolation**, a Marian title especially dear to the Augustinians. Since the seventeenth century, Our Lady of Consolation has been venerated as the one who brings relief, comfort, and hope to afflicted hearts. An ancient tradition of the Order tells that Mary appeared to Saint

Monica amid her tears and suffering over the spiritual situation of Saint Augustine, consoling her and giving her a cincture as a sign of protection, perseverance, and trust in God.

For this reason, the traditional iconography of Our Lady of Consolation depicts Mary with the **Child Jesus in her arms**, offering the cincture to Saint Augustine and Saint Monica. This scene reminds us that true consolation comes from God and that Mary leads her children to encounter Christ, the true Consoler of humanity.

The inscription “**Mothers Monica**” (*Mães Mônica*) identifies a group of women inspired by the perseverance and trust of Saint Monica.

The phrase “**Mothers who pray for the faith of their children**” (*Mães que oram pela fé dos filhos*) expresses the fundamental mission of this movement. Mothers desire the well-being of their children, but they know that there is an even greater good: friendship with God and a life of faith. For this reason, they offer their prayers each day so that their



children may walk in the ways of the Gospel and seek the things that are above.

The logo of the **Province of Brazil and Paraguay** reinforces the connection of this initiative with Augustinian spirituality, marked by the search for God, a life of prayer, and trust in divine grace.

On the back of the T-shirt is the **Parish logo**, reminding us that each Community participates in this great network of prayer and can personalize the T-shirt with its own identity. In this way, the same mission is lived in different places, uniting mothers around a single purpose.

The back also bears one of the most beautiful phrases associated with the story of Saint Monica. In the face of her tears and her persistent prayer for the conversion of Saint Augustine, a bishop told her: **“Continue to pray, for it is impossible that a son of so many tears should be lost”** (*Continue a rezar, pois é impossível que se perca um filho de tantas lágrimas*). This phrase became a symbol of Christian hope and trust in the power of persevering prayer. It reminds us that no prayer offered with love is useless and that God acts at the proper time.

Thus, this T-shirt becomes a true testimony of faith. It proclaims trust in Our Lady of Consolation, honors the perseverance of Saint Monica, strengthens the identity of Christian mothers, and proclaims to the world that a mother’s prayer possesses extraordinary strength. Each time it is worn, it reminds us that there are mothers who pray, hope, and trust, certain that God never abandons those who are entrusted to Him through a mother’s tears and love.

2. The Meaning of Belonging to the Community

Mônica Monteiro de Melo Takemura, from Toledo (PR), shares her experience of belonging to the Community:

Among the most beautiful missions God has entrusted to me, motherhood is undoubtedly one of them. Being a mother is a precious gift, but also a great responsibility. Today, raising a



daughter and passing on Christian values to her has become an increasingly challenging task. We live in a world full of proposals and paths that often lead away from the Gospel. For this reason, I feel that it is not enough simply to care for the human growth of my children; it is also necessary to help them grow in faith and in the love of God.

As a mother, I understand that this mission cannot be lived by my own strength alone. It is necessary **to cultivate a deep spiritual life**. To be nourished by the Word of God, to participate in Mass, to receive the Sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, to dedicate time to personal and communal prayer, and to live charity and mutual love: all of this strengthens my heart so that I may fulfill the mission God has entrusted to me.

I also believe that one of the greatest gifts we can offer our children is our witness. When parents love and respect one another and seek to live Christian values within the home, they offer their children an immense treasure.

The witness of married love lived with fidelity and generosity is as valuable as the gift of life itself.

For this reason, participating in the Community Christian Mothers Santa Monica has a very special meaning for me. Here I find **support, formation, friendship, and spirituality that strengthens my mission as a mother**. Inspired by Saint Monica, we learn to trust in God's action and to persevere in prayer for our children, even in the face of difficulties and concerns.

Saint Monica is a shining example for us. She knew that her son Augustine possessed many talents, intelligence, and prospects for human success. However, her mother's heart understood that none of this would be enough without a true encounter with God.

For this reason, she never stopped praying, hoping, and trusting. Her perseverance was rewarded when Augustine found true happiness in Christ and completely changed his life.

Saint Augustine's own words express this truth admirably: "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." Saint Monica knew that God alone could fully satisfy her son's heart, and this same certainty inspires my mission as a mother today.

Belonging to this movement means being part of a great communion of mothers who share the same hope and the same mission. We are united not only by human concerns, but by a greater cause: to lead our children to God. We pray not only for their material well-being, their studies, work, or health, but above all that they may **live in faith, discover their vocation, and experience the joy of walking with Christ**.

To be a Christian Mother Santa Monica means believing that no prayer offered with love is ever in vain. It means trusting that God continues to work in the lives of our children, even when we do not see immediate results. It means learning, with Saint Monica, to transform tears into hope, concerns into prayer, and maternal love into a path of holiness.

For this reason, I feel deeply happy and grateful to belong to this movement. Here I find strength to continue my mission and the certainty that, united with so many other mothers, I walk under the protection of Our Lady of Consolation and following the example of Saint Monica, always praying for the faith and salvation of children.

3. Visibility and Mission

Liana Marujo de Souza Moura, from Ramos/Rio de Janeiro (RJ), speaks about the mission of the Community of mothers:

The mission of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica is becoming increasingly relevant and necessary in the life of the Church. Born in Spain within the context of Augustinian spirituality, this movement grew, finding its place within Christian communities and reaching various countries where the Augustinians carry out their pastoral work.

4. The External Signs of Communion and Witness



In Brazil, within our reality connected to the Discalced Augustinians, the initiative began in a simple way, but as it was embraced and structured as a mission of the Order, it became a significant presence in the various Parishes.

The initiative has been warmly welcomed because it responds to a profound need in the hearts of mothers: to pray for the faith of their children and to find spiritual support in living their mission of Christian motherhood.

*The strength of this apostolate lies in the communion among the mothers, who unite in prayer, in sharing their faith, and in trusting in the intercession of Saint Monica. Each mother prays for her own children, but also for the children of the other participants, creating a true **fraternity of intercession and hope**.*

The growing participation of mothers from different places demonstrates the relevance and visibility that this mission is achieving. Many of them travel considerable distances, including from neighboring Parishes, to join the groups already established, a sign that this initiative responds to the concrete challenges faced by families today.

The great challenge for the coming years is to expand this presence even further, bringing the spirituality of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica beyond the Parishes entrusted to the Discalced Augustinians. Everything indicates that this mission has enormous potential for evangelization, offering mothers a solid path of prayer, formation, and perseverance in faith. In a society marked by so many uncertainties, the mission of the Community Christian Mothers Santa Monica makes the strength of a mother's prayer visible and reminds the Church that faith transmitted within the family transforms lives.

External signs have always had great importance in the living of the Christian faith. Although God's action in the Church takes place in a spiritual way and is received through faith, the human person also relates to the sacred through **visible and tangible realities**. For this reason, the Church values symbols, images, medals, garments, prayer books, and other elements that help the faithful remember and express their belonging to Christ and to the ecclesial community.

Within this great Community of mothers, external signs have a special meaning. The **T-shirt**, the **medal of Saint Monica**, the **Manual** received upon joining, and other symbols are not merely ornaments or badges. They express a common identity, strengthen the bonds of fraternity, and help each mother to feel part of a shared mission.

These signs foster communion, not in the sense of mere external uniformity, but as a visible expression of the unity of faith, purpose, and spirituality that unites all the participants.

Furthermore, external signs have an important **evangelizing dimension**. When they are used at gatherings, celebrations, and pastoral activities, they become a public witness of faith and awaken the curiosity and interest of others. Often, a T-shirt, a medal, or another religious symbol can create an opportunity for dialogue, for the proclamation of the Gospel, and for an invitation to discover the spirituality of the local community.

In this way, when lived with balance and authenticity, external signs help to strengthen the identity of the group, promote communion among its members, and offer a public witness to God's action in the lives of families. They are simple but effective instruments that help make visible the faith that dwells in the hearts of Christians.



Testimonials

Personal accounts from mothers who participate at the Community

1. The Spiritual Growth

Priscilla Pereira da Silva, from Bom Jardim (RJ)

Participating in this movement has been a true experience of faith and spiritual growth. Each day, I am touched by the beauty of its purpose: mothers united in prayer, presenting one another's children to God.

This chain of intercession strengthens our bonds of communion, nourishes hope, and allows us to experience, in a concrete way, God's love and providence in our families.

*Throughout this journey, I have witnessed not only the graces poured out upon my family, but also a very significant inner change. I have found greater **clarity, serenity, and trust in the face of challenges**. I have felt doors opening, paths being guided, and God's care revealing itself in details that perhaps would previously have gone unnoticed.*

Inspired by the example of Saint Monica, this group strengthens us in faith, perseverance, and hope. Knowing that my beloved daughter is presented daily in the prayers of other

*mothers, and that I can do the same for their children, is an immense gift and a true source of **spiritual support**.*

I am deeply grateful to be part of such a beautiful mission, a safe haven that welcomes, strengthens, and renews the spirit of so many mothers. May God continue to abundantly bless this Community and all those who dedicate themselves to it, allowing more and more families to receive this grace and have their lives transformed.

If you are a mother seeking a place of welcome, support, and faith, come and join us! Do not face your battles alone; there is a Community of mothers ready to intercede with you for your children.

Experiencing the power of prayer within a Community of mothers renews your strength in the love of God!



2. My Domestic Church

Verônica da Silva dos Santos, from Ramos/Rio de Janeiro (RJ)

I thank God with all my heart for having come to know the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, who pray for the faith of their children, through the Discalced Augustinians of Santa Rita dos Impossíveis Parish. I already knew the story of Saint Augustine, but my knowledge went no further than knowing that Saint Monica had spent more than 30 years praying for his conversion.

Through reading the material I received and the formation with Fr. César de Souza Gonçalves, I embraced my identity as a Mother Monica and, at the same time, as an Augustinian Mother. I was deeply moved by Saint Monica's life story and by her perseverance in prayer for the conversion of her family.

*This made me reflect on the need to devote myself more deeply to prayer and to the conversion of my **domestic Church**. Being part of a Prayer Choir for the faith of our children is like having my arms securely held by my other six sisters, all united in the same purpose.*



When I began participating in the movement and was able to welcome the little devotional shrine into my home, I invited my husband to pray the Rosary with me, but he responded harshly and refused. I felt hurt, and while I was preparing the place for prayer, the idea came to me to write the words

“Saint Monica, pray for us!” and place them on the wall.

30

When my husband passed through the room, he was delighted by it and told me that it deserved a photograph. I replied that I had already taken one. Soon afterward, he sat down to pray the Rosary.

Through the intercession of Saint Monica, I received a great grace: Antônio Ernani, my Patricius, had been away from the Church since the pandemic. During the meetings of the Baptismal Ministry, I emphasized the importance of the domestic Church; however, mine was, as a friend used to say, like “potatoes thrown from the top of a hill, rolling downhill, each one going in a different direction.”

Little by little, my husband returned to participating in the celebrations, and I was filled with joy that we could participate together!

*During a Corpus Christi Mass, my husband shared with me that he had been deeply moved by the music ministry and by the homily; in other words, he felt “touched” and called to return to active participation in the life of the Parish. I remained silent, hardly believing what my ears were hearing. **Everything was happening so quickly!***

In September 2025, Antônio Ernani returned to the Father's House. Despite the pain of saying goodbye, my heart remained at peace, because he had already committed himself to his journey of faith, was attending Sunday Mass, and had celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I found consolation in the certainty that he had fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. Thus, his passing was surrounded by Christian hope and trust in the mercy of God.

3. The Hope in Suffering

Eliane de Lima Barros Silva, from Pavuna/Rio de Janeiro (RJ)

*My name is Eliane, I am 47 years old, and I am part of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica. Seven months ago, **my only daughter** returned to the Father's House, at the age of 23 years, 10 months, and 20 days.*

It is important to say that it was Cyndi who led us to Catholicism. We were Protestants and, before our daughter was born, we had drifted away from church. During a Philosophy class, she began reading about Saint Augustine, and it was from that point that our journey of faith began.

*First came a request to attend Mass; shortly afterward, she expressed the desire to enroll in **youth catechesis**. All of this also awakened the interest of my husband and me. In 2023, Cyndi received Baptism, and the following year, my husband and I received all the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.*

In January 2024, the desire to become a Carmelite was born in Cyndi's heart. She began her first vocational accompaniment, which did not take place as she had imagined. That same year, my daughter and I consecrated ourselves to Our Lady.

In 2025, a new opportunity for vocational accompaniment arose. The positive response allowing her to begin this process again made her very happy and eager to start her vocational journey.

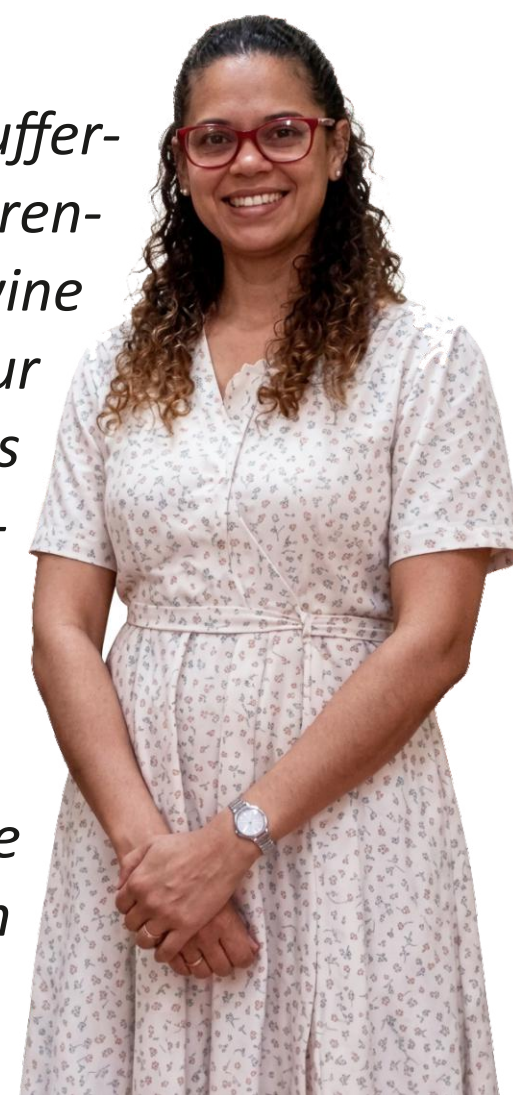
However, very suddenly and unexpectedly, our girl became ill and, in just one week, her health deteriorated greatly. She was admitted to the hospital and never returned home. She spent almost thirty days in the intensive care unit, until her eternal rest.

*I believe that our girl's mission was **to lead us to conversion** and that, once this mission had been fulfilled, she returned to the Father's House.*

Her desire to die to the world and live for God in Carmel went even further: she went to live with God, leaving this world to enter eternity.

The Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica was a safe haven for us. All the mothers united in prayer. Santo Antônio Parish mobilized, and through it, other parish communities also joined in intercession for Cyndi's recovery. There were many, many prayers and petitions, but God's will was different.

*Thus, even in the midst of suffering, my husband and I surrendered ourselves to the divine will. We made **God's will** our own and embraced this cross as the path to our sanctification here on earth, while we await the day when God will call us back Home, where we will be able to live together again, reunited in the Kingdom of Heaven.*



4. A Shared Journey

Cibele Arruda, from Ourinhos (SP)

Being part of the movement is a gift from God. The apostolate teaches us that a

***mother's mission** goes far beyond daily care: we are called to intercede, to love, and to entrust our children to the Lord, following the persevering example of Saint Monica.*

One of the greatest joys of this journey is realizing that I do not walk alone. I find welcome, friendship, sharing, and strength in



***community prayer.** Every gathering, every Rosary prayed, and every testimony renews my hope and strengthens my faith.*

It is also a source of great joy to see God at work in so many families. Even when answers do not come at the expected time, I have learned to trust more deeply in divine Providence and to recognize the signs of God's love along this journey.

*The apostolate of the Mothers Monica makes us **instruments of evangelization**, bringing peace, faith, and perseverance into our homes. It is a mission of love that transforms our lives and draws us ever closer to Jesus and Our Lady.*

5. Challenges and Gratitude

Silvia Castanheiro, from Nova Londrina (PR)

In our daily prayer to Saint Monica, we pray: "You have shown that holiness is an achievement and a duty of each day." This phrase profoundly expresses the mission we embrace as members of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica.

*Amid the many responsibilities of family, professional, and community life, **persevering in daily prayer** and remaining faithful to the weekly visit to the Blessed Sacrament constitute some of the **greatest challenges of our journey**. We live in a world marked by haste, concerns, and the constant demands of everyday life. For this reason, setting aside time for God requires discipline, commitment, and love.*

Nevertheless, strengthened by the example and intercession of our patroness, Saint Monica, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of holiness, aware that every small act of faithfulness brings us closer to Christ and strengthens our families.

*Another challenge we face is **keeping the Choirs of Mothers complete**. Along the journey, some participants eventually leave for various reasons, which requires from all of us a constant effort of welcome, encourage-*

ment, and perseverance. We also seek to foster participation in the monthly Masses and in the weekly visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Although there is significant participation by the mothers on these occasions, we know that we can still grow greatly in community life and spiritual commitment.

*Despite the difficulties, we joyfully contemplate the fruits that God brings forth in the lives of those who embrace the mission of prayer with love, dedication, and responsibility. It is a reason for **gratitude** to witness the transformations that take place within families, the signs of conversion, the strengthening of faith, and the renewal of hope.*

For this reason, we continue our journey with confidence, certain that perseverance in prayer and community life remains a powerful instrument of evangelization. In the light of Saint Monica's example, we believe that no prayer offered with faith is in vain and that God, in His time, works wonders in the lives of those who trust in Him.



6. Perseverance and Spiritual Fruits

Eleuses Carneiro, from Bom Jardim (RJ)

*Being part of the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica has been an abundant source of graces and blessings in my life. Throughout this journey, I have experienced the **spiritual fruits** that God grants to those who persevere in prayer and trust in His providence.*

Life is a constant struggle between persevering and giving up. However, perseverance, sustained by prayer, usually prevails. Daily prayer has the power to strengthen me in times of discouragement, renew my strength, and allow me to embrace the promises and dreams that God inspires for my life.

*The fruits of this perseverance become **visible in everyday life**. The daily struggle is faced with greater courage; the fear of failure gives way to hope; the burdens and difficulties of relationships become lighter when they are entrusted to the grace and mercy of God.*

*By putting God first, every difficulty can be faced with serenity, because His mercy is present in every **circumstance of life**. God's presence does not eliminate challenges, but strengthens me to overcome them.*

*The constant practice of perseverance also enables me to make **wise and right choices**. Little by little, negative thoughts are overcome by divine strength, which fills the heart with faith and hope. These virtues*

need to be cultivated daily, with the same care and dedication with which I cultivate a small plant so that it may grow strong and bear good fruit.

Spiritual wisdom and the fruits received from God are manifested through joy, love, peace, patience, kindness, perseverance, and many other virtues that the Holy Spirit brings to blossom.

As Christians, we are all called to bear witness to these gifts in our daily relationships, living with humility, charity, and fidelity to the Gospel. The challenges of life thus become lighter when we learn to love God, ourselves, and our neighbor. It is this love that helps us understand who we truly are and what our mission is in this world.

*As the Apostle Paul teaches in the Letter to the Galatians (5:22-23), **the fruits of the Holy Spirit are signs of divine action in our lives**. For this reason, I thank God for the spiritual fruits received throughout this journey in the Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, which has strengthened my faith, renewed my hope, and helped me grow each day in the pursuit of holiness.*





Some Pictures

Sharing a Bit of Our Life

Collegno – Italy

April 29 – May 3, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, accompanied by the Secretary General, Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, carried out the Canonical Visit of the San Massimo

Community. During the Visit, the confreres met with the Archbishop of Turin, Cardinal Roberto Repole, and with the groups of the Madonna dei Poveri and Santa Chiara Parishes. They also visited Pessinetto, the birthplace of our missionary, Msgr. Ilario Costa.



Toledo – Brazil

May 4-8, First Provincial Retreat

The Santa Monica Community welcomed the retreat of the first group of confreres, guided by Fr. Luís Carlos. Lived in an atmosphere of prayer, recollection, and fraternity, the retreat was a privileged moment of encounter with God, fostering spiritual renewal and strengthening the vocational journey of each religious.

Throughout these days, the confreres dedicated themselves to listening to the Word of God, to personal and community reflection, as well as to fraternal life, essential elements for consecrated life and for deepening Discalced Augustinian spirituality.



San Gregorio da Sassola – Italy

May 5-8, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, accompanied by the Secretary General, carried out the Canonical Visit to the Santa Maria Nuova Community, in the hills near Rome.

During these days, the Visitors met with the Bishop of Tivoli and Palestrina, Msgr. Mauro Parmeggiani, and also held moments of personal dialogue with the religious, examined the Community *Registers*, and visited the Cemetery of San Gregorio da Sassola. The program concluded with a fraternal lunch with the collaborators of the House, the Zonal Vicar, and the Parish Priest.



Rome – Italy

May 17, Solemn Profession

During the 6:00 p.m. Mass at the Church of Gesù e Maria, Fra Princewill Neba and Fra Jude Chinedu made their Solemn Profession. The rite was presided over by the Prior General, Fr. Nei Marcio Simon, in the presence of the members of the General Curia, numerous friars from the Province of Italy and Cameroon, as well as friends and acquaintances who took part in the celebra-

tion. The liturgy was marked by particularly significant moments, especially during the perpetual profession of vows, pronounced by the two religious with their hands placed on the *Constitutions*, as a sign of their full adherence to the charism and to Discalced Augustinian religious life. The celebration concluded in an atmosphere of fraternity and joy, with the sharing of traditional Asian and African dishes, an expression of the cultural richness of the Order.



Rome – Italy

May 23, Catalogue of Artworks

Renske de Vries presented to the community the fruit of her art-historical research, entitled *Artworks at the Church of Gesù e Maria in Rome: an Introductory Catalogue*. The volume presents the principal works of

art preserved in our Church of Gesù e Maria, examining their subject matter, iconography, style, attribution, and dating. Illustrated with photographs taken by the author, the work is based on her bachelor's thesis, previous studies by Fr. Ignazio Barbagallo, and new research conducted by the author.



Sacrofano – Italy

May 27-29, 105th Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG)

The Assembly was held at the Fraterna Domus, bringing together the Superiors General of Religious Institutes to reflect on the theme “*Transmitting the Charism in the Service of Governance.*”

The Assembly was an important opportunity for dialogue and deeper reflection on the current challenges of consecrated life and on the transmission of the charismatic heritage in the responsibilities of governance. The Prior General, Fr. Nei Marcio Simon, participated in the Assembly.

37



Antipolo City – Philippines

June 3, Priestly and Diaconal Ordinations

The Our Lady of Fatima Parish experienced one of the most solemn and significant moments of its ecclesial life: the Priestly Ordination of our confreres: Fr. Reynoso Perez, Fr. Patrick Geneblaza, Fr. Vu Van Linh, Fr. Nguyen Van Quoc, and Fr. Agustinus Koli Wuhung; and the Diaconal Ordination of

Fra Dinh Van Dinh and Fra Nguyen Duc Trong. The Ordinations were conferred through the laying on of hands and the consecratory prayer of Msgr. Ruperto Santos, Bishop of Antipolo City, as a sign of hope for the Church and a testimony of consecrated life.





Pasig City and Antipolo City – Philippines

June 6, Celebrations of the Discalced Augustinian Lays

A day of particular joy for the various Discalced Augustinian Lays in the Philippines, marked by important celebrations dedicated to the formative and spiritual journey of the members of the Lay Fraternities.

Fr. Dennis Ruiz, General Director of the Secular Fraternities, presided over the Mass at Saint Augustine Parish in Palatiw, Pasig City, with the rites of Solemn Consecration, Simple Consecration, and Investiture of several Discalced Augustinian lay members

Bafut – Cameroon

June 7, Simple Profession

At Saint Joseph Parish, the Simple Profession of three young religious took place: Fra Muh Peter Paul, Fra Bongvi Rounaet Chituh, and Fr.a Mberebe Galdou Moise.

The Mass was presided over by the Prior General, Fr. Nei Marcio Simon, during the Canonical Visit. He received the vows of the candidates and exhorted them to live with fidelity and generosity the call they had received from the Lord within the Discalced Augustinian charism.

Confreres, family members, friends, and lays participated in the celebration, joyfully sharing this important moment in the lives

belonging to different Lay Communities. The celebration represented a significant moment of growth and renewal in the commitment to live the Discalced Augustinian charism in the lay state, in fidelity to the Gospel and in service to the Church.

In the afternoon, at the International Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage (Antipolo City Cathedral), Fr. Dennis also presided over the Rite of Simple Consecration, Investiture, and admission of new aspirants, in the presence of numerous faithful, family members, and members of the various Fraternities.

of the newly professed and of the entire religious Community in this mission land.

With their Simple Profession, the three young religious begin a new stage in their journey of consecration, committing themselves to live the evangelical counsels according to the *Constitutions* of the Order. At the end of the celebration, sincere gratitude was expressed to all those who accompanied their vocational journey with prayer and fraternal support.

The newly professed will now continue their formation at the Fra Luigi Chmel International College in Rome, where they will continue their studies and their religious, human, and pastoral preparation.



Bafut – Cameroon

June 4-8, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Marcio Simon, accompanied by the Procurator General, Fr. Airton Mainardi, carried out the Canonical Visit to the only Community of the Order on the African continent. The Visit began, which began with a welcome by the Parish youth group and a visit to the parish

school. In the following days, the Prior General dedicated ample time to personal conversations with the confreres, the examination of the *Registers*, and the verification of information concerning the religious and apostolic life of the house. The Prior General also met with the novices and aspirants, the Pastoral Council of Saint Joseph Parish, the Archbishop of Bamenda, Msgr. Andrew Nkea Fuanya, and the members of the Third Order.



Araucária – Brazil

June 19-23, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, began the Canonical Visits to the Communities of the Province of Santa Rita de Cássia, in Brazil and Paraguay.

The first stage was the Fra Luigi Chmel Community, with moments of community and personal dialogue with the religious, the

examination of the *Registers* and the various areas of the house and parish church, as well as meetings with representatives of pastoral life.

The Canonical Visit was a significant moment for the life of the Province: an occasion for listening and discernment, intended to accompany the life and challenges of the Communities.



Pavia – Italy

June 20, Meeting with Pope Leo XIV

The Holy Father made a pilgrimage to the Basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, where the relics of Saint Augustine are preserved. Eleven confreres from the Communities of Northern Italy and the General Curia also took part in the celebration, united with the

Augustinian family in this important moment of faith and ecclesial communion.

For the occasion, the urn containing the mortal remains of the Holy Bishop of Hippo was exposed for the veneration of the faithful, and a new votive lamp was blessed. It will remain constantly lit beside the Ark of Saint Augustine.





Colíder and Nova Canaã do Norte – Brazil

June 24-29, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

Continuing the Canonical Visits to the Communities of the Province of Santa Rita de Cássia, the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, accompanied by the General Secretary, visited the religious Community that carries out its pastoral mission in the State of Mato Grosso.

The Visit began on June 24 with a meeting with the Bishop of Sinop, Msgr. Canísio

Klaus, and was marked by the participation of the Prior General in the celebration of the feast of Saint John the Baptist, Patron Saint of Colíder.

After the opening rite, ample time was dedicated to community and personal dialogue with the religious, the examination of the *Registers*, and visits to the various areas of the houses and churches entrusted to the Community. Particularly significant were the meetings and celebrations with the groups of Mothers Monica, as well as the Sunday Masses in the two Parishes.

Puertobello – Philippines

July 2, Religious Investiture

Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, Prior Provincial, presided over the Mass in the chapel of the Novitiate House, during which fourteen young men received the religious habit and began their year of Novitiate: Fra John Joseph

Vicor, Fra James Tran Gia Loc, Fra Joseph Vu Kim Han, Fra Amal Michael Raj, Fra Joseph Pham Mong Quoc, Fra Sandipamu Yohanu, Fra Paulus Edward Powel Gero, Fra Jerald Dosado, Fra Arun Raj Madanu, Fra Vincent Villocino, Fra Melvin Martinez, Fra John Nguyen Ngoc Thai, Fra Marianus Rusbyanto Hanoë, and Fra Michael Vincent.



Villa Elisa – Paraguay

July 4-8, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, accompanied by the Secretary General, visited the first of the two religious Communities in Paraguay, dedicated to our confrere Fr. Antonio Desideri.

The time spent with the Community was marked by celebrations in the Parish and its chapels, as well as by moments of fraternity and closeness with the faithful. Among the most significant moments were the visit to the Virgen del Rosario Parish School, the meeting with the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, and with the Augustinian groups of the Mothers Monica and the Consecrated Women of Consolation.



The Visitors were also received by the Archbishop of Asunción, Cardinal Adalberto Martínez Flores, in a meeting that expressed ecclesial communion and the closeness between the Order and the local Church.

Yguazú – Paraguay

July 9-12, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The days of the Visit were dedicated to gaining a deeper knowledge of the fraternal, religious, apostolic, and pastoral life of the Community dedicated to Saint Ezequiel Moreno.

Among the activities carried out, the Prior General and the General Secretary visited the San Agustín Catholic Educational Center, where they had the opportunity to meet

with the students and, afterward, with the teachers. The program also included the examination of the *Registers* and the various areas of the religious House and the church, attention to liturgical life, and personal meetings of the Prior General with each religious.

The ecclesial and pastoral dimension of the Visit was highlighted by the meeting with the Bishop of Ciudad del Este, Msgr. Pedro Collar Noguera, by the closeness to the group of the Mothers Monica, and by the celebrations in the Parish and the chapels.



Toledo and Ouro Verde d’Oeste – Brazil

July 13-16, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Santa Monica Community welcomed the Canonical Visit of the Prior General. The program began with the opening rite, followed by moments of fraternal dialogue with the religious, the examination of the Community *Registers*, personal meetings with the Prior General, and a visit to the various areas of the religious house and the

church, with attention to the liturgical life of the Community.

The Visit was also marked by meetings with the groups of the Mothers Monica and the Ritiens, with the men in formation, and with the Parish Pastoral Council (CPP) of Ouro Verde d’Oeste.

A particularly significant moment was the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Priestly Ordination of the Prior General, on July 15.



Nova Londrina – Brazil

July 17-20, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

Nossa Senhora da Consolação Community welcomed the Canonical Visit of the Prior General. In addition to the various moments with the members of the Community, the Visit was also marked by a meeting with the

Bishop of Paranavaí, Msgr. Mário Spaki, and by significant moments of encounter with the Parish Pastoral Council (CPP), the group of the Mothers Monica, the Seminary Support Group, young people in vocational discernment, and the Augustinian Sisters Servants of Jesus and Mary.



Ampére and Salgado Filho – Brazil

July 22-25, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The Santo Agostinho Community welcomed the Canonical Visit of the Prior General. During the days spent in the Community, the Prior General and the Secretary General were able to closely follow the activities of the religious house and the two Parishes entrusted to the Order.

The Visit was also enriched by their presence at the LUTI Project and by the celebration of Holy Mass for the glorification of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Carù, at the Municipal Cemetery. Also significant were the meetings with the Parish Pastoral Council (CPP), the group of the Mothers Monica, and the Vocational Ministry, as well as the meeting with the Bishop of Palmas-Francisco Beltrão, Msgr. Edgar Xavier Ertl.



Porac – Philippines

August 2, Laying of the Foundation Stone of the *Civitas Dei* Project

On a splendid day, a crowd gathered for the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the *Civitas Dei: Little City of God* project, the future spiritual and retreat center of the Order of Discalced Augustinians in Porac, Pampanga.

The ceremony began with words of welcome and the blessing of the site by the friars of the religious Community. The participants then carried out the symbolic act of laying the first stone, also placing symbolic baskets filled with offerings as a sign of gratitude to the family that donated the land and will also contribute to the construction.

Bom Jardim – Brazil

August 1-4, Canonical Visit of the Prior Genera

Nossa Senhora da Conceição Residence welcomed the Canonical Visit of the Prior General.

Among the most significant moments of the Visit were the meeting with the group of the Mothers Monica and the Vocational Ministry at the parish church, the personal meetings of the religious with the Prior General, and the visit to Colégio Resolve, formerly Colégio Santo Agostinho.

The Visit was also enriched by a fraternal meeting with the Bishop of Nova Friburgo (RJ), Msgr. Pedro Cunha Cruz, with whom



the Visitors shared a fraternal lunch in the Diocesan Seminary.



Puertobello – Philippines

August 8, Simple Profession

The Community of the Saint Rita Novitiate House experienced a moment of profound joy on the occasion of the celebration of the Simple Profession of religious vows of nine confreres from various countries where the Order has Communities in Asia.

The Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Novitiate House and was presided over

by Fr. Myzon Camay, Vicar Provincial. The following confreres made the Simple Vows: Fra Dominic Dang Quang Vinh, Fra Nicholas Nguyen Van Chieb, Fra John Mark Mangitngit, Fra Mario Valerianus Alexandro Taus, Fra Nasario Putra Diding, Fra Joseph Ngo Van Tam, Fra Jonard Cosmo, Fra Francis Le Van Tuyen, and Fra Raimundus Ike Hera.

After their Simple Profession, the friars will continue their formation with theological studies.



Rio de Janeiro – Brazil

August 5-9, Canonical Visit of the Prior General

The last Community to receive the Canonical Visit of the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, and the Secretary General, Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, was the Seat of the Province of Santa Rita de Cássia.

The Visit began at the Ramos Residence and, throughout the following days, meetings with the Prior General were held, along with the

examination of the Community *Registers*, the updating of personal files, as well as the visit and inspection of the facilities of the two religious residences, the churches, and the liturgical life of the parish Communities.

In both places, the Visitors met with the Parish Pastoral Councils (CPP) and the groups of the Mothers Monica. The Canonical Visit was also marked by a fraternal lunch at the Pavuna Residence and by the examination of the Archives and the Financial Office of the Provincial House.

Ho Chi Minh City – Vietnam

August 15, Solemn Profession

Msgr. Ilário Costa Community welcomed with great joy the Solemn Profession of two

Vietnamese confreres: Fra Francis Nguyen Van Thang and Fra Martin Nguyen Mih Thien. The Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the religious House and was presided over by Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, Prior Provincial.





Philippines

July–August, Visits of the General Director for Studies and Formation

Fr. Renan Ilustrisimo visited several Formation Houses of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino: Cebu City, from 20 to 23 July; Puertobello, from 25 to 27 July; and Butuan City, on 6 August. The visits provided an important opportunity to meet with our

formandi at the different stages of their formation journey, with the aim of encouraging and promoting the study, knowledge, and application of the *Ratio Generalis Institutionis*. During the meetings, efforts were made to help the formandi understand that each of them is called to take responsibility for their own formation journey in the light of the *Ratio*.

Cimahi - Indonesia

August 28, Priestly Ordination

On the Solemnity of Saint Augustine, three confreres were ordained priests by the Bishop of Bandung, Msgr. Antonius Subianto Bunjamin: Fr. Tiberius Rangka Bedi, Fr. Felerianus Tapehen and Fr. Silvanus Tapehen. The ordination took place at Saint Ignatius Parish. The rite unfolded through particu-

larly significant moments, such as the calling and presentation of the candidates, the questions posed by the Bishop regarding their willingness to undertake the ministry, and finally the central moment of the ordination: the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. Afterwards, the three confreres were vested in priestly garments and received the anointing of their hands.





Message from the Prior General

Thank you, Saint Monica, for the holiness of your son Augustine!

Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad



As we come to the end of this issue of *Presenza Agostiniana*, our gaze turns, with gratitude and hope, toward the new reality of lay association that emerged a little more than two decades ago around the Communities of the Discalced Augustinians.

In a particular way, I refer to that which has taken shape in Brazil and Paraguay, under the title: Christian Mothers Saint Monica.

It is a precious shoot, brought forth by the Spirit, which manifests the desire of so many women to share more deeply in Augustinian spirituality, prayer, and service to the Church. In this communion between religious and laity, we recognize a sign of the times and an invitation to walk together, with one heart and one soul turned toward God.

On this journey, Saint Monica accompanies us, a woman of persevering faith, a mother capable of waiting, hoping, and praying without growing weary: thank you, Saint Monica, for the holiness of your son Augustine! The great fruit of her tears and supplications was the conversion of her son Augustine: not merely the return of a man to

God, but the gift to the Church of a father, teacher, and tireless seeker of the Truth. Augustine himself continues to inspire us, reminding us that every authentic conversion is born from an encounter with grace and becomes communion, mission, and service.

Let us therefore entrust this new lay family to the intercession of Saint Monica and Saint Augustine, so that it may grow in unity, formation, and charity, joyfully bearing witness to the beauty of the Gospel. Following this luminous path, we hope that this may soon become a reality not only in Brazil and Paraguay, but also in other nations where we are present.

To all readers, to the Religious Communities and to the lays of the Discalced Augustinian family, I extend my most heartfelt good wishes for the Solemnity of Saint Augustine, this giant of the Catholic Church. May his holy restlessness keep alive our desire for God and make our common journey fruitful.

Long live Saint Augustine and Saint Monica!

