

St. Monica Led Son to God, Says Pope

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Praises Role of Christian Parents in Education of Children

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, AUG. 30, 2009 (Zenit).- During a reflection on St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, Benedict XVI praised Christian parents and the role they play in helping their children in discovering God's will for them in their lives.

The Pope said this today to the crowds gathered at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo to pray the midday Angelus. He noted that on Thursday the Church observed the feast day St. Monica, the model and patroness of Christian mothers.

Young Augustine learned of Christ from his mother, "whose principles would remain with him even in the years when he had hit bottom spiritually and morally."

"Monica never ceased to pray for him and for his conversion, and had the consolation of seeing him return to the faith and receive baptism," the Pontiff continued. "God heard the prayers of this saintly mother, to whom the Bishop of Tagaste had said: 'It is impossible that the son of so many tears will be lost.'"

Benedict XVI noted that Augustine not only converted, but that he "decided to embrace the monastic life and, returning to Africa, found a community of monks."

Augustine, who often said his mother "gave birth to him twice," found Christ through his mother, the Pope affirmed.

Families

"The history of Christianity is spangled with the countless examples of saints and authentic Christian families, who accompanied the life of generous priests and pastors of the Church," the Holy Father continued. "One thinks of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, both from families of saints.

"We think -- much closer to us -- of Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi and Maria Corsini, a married couple, who lived between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th, and who were beatified by my venerable predecessor John Paul II in October of 2001, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the apostolic exhortation 'Familiaris Consortio.'"

Benedict XVI explained: "When the husband and wife generously dedicate themselves to the

education of their children, guiding and orienting them in the discovery of God's design of life, they are preparing that fertile spiritual soil from which vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life grow and mature."

The Pope then drew a connection between matrimony and virginity, noting that they are "intimately connected and mutually illuminate each other" because of their "common rootedness in Christ's spousal love."