1st Sunday of Lent

GLUTTONY

"Oh, how shameful is this vice! How it degrades us! See, it puts us below the brutes: the animals never drink more than to satisfy their thirst: they content themselves with eating enough; and we, when we have satisfied our appetite, when our body can bear no more, we still have recourse to all sorts of little delicacies."-St. John Vianney

ST MONICA

When Monica was a girl, it was her duty to go down to the wine cellar and draw forth the wine needed for the household meals. She began taking sips secretly and before long was drinking cups at a time. A slave observed her and, during an argument, accused her of this secret vice. Greatly ashamed, young Monica vowed never again to give into this temptation because she realized she was becoming an alcoholic.

Although Monica was a Christian, her parents gave her in marriage to a pagan, Patricius, who lived in her hometown of Tagaste in North Africa. Patricius had some redeeming features, but he had a violent temper and was licentious. Monica also had to bear with a cantankerous mother-in-law who lived in her home. Monica and Patricius had three children. One son and daughter entered the religious life, but her son Augustine gave way to the ways of the world. St. Monica knew the pain of being married to an alcoholic and having a son who was an alcoholic.

Monica's long years of prayer, coupled with a strong, well-disciplined character, finally led to the conversion of her hot-tempered husband, her cantankerous mother-in-law and her brilliant but wayward son, St. Augustine, who later became a Doctor of the Church. St. Monica is the Patron Saint of Alcoholics, married women and mothers.

Gluttony is the deadly sin where we have an inordinate desire for food or drink. The false God of gluttony is the desire to fill ourselves with food or drink instead of God. When St. Monica was a girl she was curious about wine and started to desire that it would fill her. She discovered that it numbed her pain and helped her to forget hurts. We often go to food, drink or drugs to fill the empty places caused by pain like St. Monica once did. St. Monica came to realize that the only one who could fill her heart was God. Have you ever had a moment when you allowed food or drink to fill you instead of allowing God to fill you?

For your prayer

St. Monica would have prayed with Matthew 4:1-11. Use your imagination as you slowly read Matthew 4:1-11. Please reflect on how you can allow yourself to be filled with food, drink, or drugs instead of allowing God to fill you. Let his word fill those empty spaces of your heart now.