

# Activity Details

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| Title:                | Prayer and Sacrifice (P & S)   |
| Submitted by:         | Molloy & Taylor  |
| Subject:              | Meatless Friday: for sins against life   |
| Grades appropriate:   | Sixth -- Eighth  |
| Activity time:        | Forty-five minutes   |
| Objectives:           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To see the power of P &amp; S</li> <li>2. To see the need for P &amp; S</li> <li>3. To make a commitment of P &amp; S</li> </ol>   |
| Description:          | <p>Begin by reading the story of Saints Monica and Augustine. This is a wonderful example of the power of prayer and sacrifice.</p> <p>The powerful story of Sarah Smith is a testimony of each person's call for conversion and advocacy for life.</p> <p>“What our Catholic faith provides...” is critical. We are called not to despair, but to recognize the power that is our through prayer and sacrifice.</p> |
| Additional Materials: | <p>Sarah's story is also available on video and you can contact Peggy Dunn at <a href="mailto:mdunn@diosteub.org">mdunn@diosteub.org</a></p> <p>Cryptogram<br/>Double Puzzle</p>   |



## *Saint Monica & Saint Augustine*

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*Woman of great faith, your tears will not go unnoticed.*

Born into a devout Catholic family residing in Roman Africa, St. Monica was baptized as a young girl. In the household was a virtuous servant woman who helped her parents raise the children in strict conformity to Christian moral teaching in preparation for responsible Christian adulthood.

St. Monica was given in marriage to Patricius, a pagan to whom she bore four children, one of them the future St. Augustine. Although kindly, Patricius had a ready temper and was unfaithful to his wife. But “her patience was so great that [even] his infidelity never became a cause of quarreling between them,” and she “never ceased to try to gain him for Thee as a convert, for the virtues with which Thou hadst adorned her, and for which he respected, loved, and admired her, were like so many voices constantly speaking to him of Thee.” Those voices spoke to her difficult mother-in-law as well, for her son tells us that “she won the older woman over by her dutiful attentions and her constant patience and gentleness – and the two women lived together in wonderful harmony and mutual goodwill.” Ultimately both pagan husband and pagan mother-in-law were converted as a result of St. Monica’s good example.

Neighbors as well as family benefited from her virtues. “Whenever she could,” writes her son, “she used to act the part of the peacemaker between souls in conflict over some quarrel,” never tale-bearing “except for such things as were likely to reconcile them”; she did her best, he continues, “to put an end to their quarrels by kind words. This was my mother’s way, learned in the school of her heart, where Thou wast her secret teacher.” St. Monica brought up her children to know and love Our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Augustine writes that “from the time when my mother fed me at the breast my infant heart had been suckled dutifully on His Name, the Name of Thy Son, my Savior. Deep inside my heart His Name remained, and nothing could entirely captivate me, however learned, however neatly expressed, however true it might be, unless His Name was in it.”

But it is in repeated references to the incessant tears and prayers which she poured forth for his conversion during the long years of his spiritual peril that St.

Monica's great son waxes most eloquent: "Night and day my mother poured out her tears to Thee and offered her heart's-blood in sacrifice for me"; "Thou didst rescue my soul from the depths of this darkness because my mother, Thy faithful servant, wept to Thee for me, shedding more tears for my spiritual death than other mothers shed for the bodily death of a son."

He admits, however, that despite her great love for him – "words cannot describe how dearly she loved me" – her love for Catholic truth was greater. When at age of 19 he embraced the errors of the Manicheans, she refused to let him live under the same roof with her or eat at her table.

But then – oh, then! – St. Monica had one of the most famous dreams in history. "She dreamed," he writes, "that she was standing on a wooden rule, and coming towards her in a halo of splendor she saw a young man who smiled at her in joy, although she herself was sad and quite consumed with grief. He asked her the reason for her sorrow and her daily tears, not because he did not know, but because he had something to tell her, for this is what happens in visions. When she replied that her tears were for the soul I had lost, he told her to take heart for, if she looked carefully, she would see that where she was, there also was I. And when she looked, she saw me standing beside her on the same rule."

St. Monica's tears and prayers did not diminish as a result of this heavenly reassurance, however: "This chaste, devout, and prudent woman, a widow such as is close to Thy heart, never ceased to pray at all hours and to offer Thee the tears she shed for me. The dream had given new spirit to her hope, but she gave no rest to her sighs and her tears."

Resolutely determined to see her son a Catholic before she died, St. Monica did not even hesitate to pursue him across the sea, first to Rome and then to Milan, in hopes of achieving her goal. In the latter city those 17 long years of tears and prayers finally earned for her that joy, for she saw her son baptized by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, having been converted by means of the angelic kindness and convincing sermons of that great Father and Doctor of the Church.

When St. Augustine, by then Bishop of Hippo in Roman Africa, wrote his Confessions ten years later, he could not too highly praise the saintly mother whose tears and prayers had saved him from hell. To him she was the epitome of Catholic womanhood. Accounts of her pious activities and praise for her endearing virtues pervade the work. He pays tribute to "the contrite and humble heart of that chaste and gentle widow, so ready to give alms, so full of humble reverence for Thy saints, who never let a day go by unless she had brought an offering to Thy altar, and never failed to come to Thy church twice every day, each morning and night." He expresses his admiration of her wise and edifying conversation. He records that St. Ambrose himself expressed his high regard "for her truly pious way of life, her zeal in good works, and her regular churchgoing. Often, when he saw me, he would break out in praise of her, congratulating me on having such a mother."

This model of mothers lived to see not only the conversion of her brilliant son – her dream come true – but also his fixed resolve to lead henceforth a life of strict continence in retirement from the world. “My son,” she said to him shortly before her death, “for my part I find no further pleasure in this life. What I am still to do or why I am here in the world, I do not know, for I have no more to hope for on this earth. There was one reason, and one alone, why I wished to remain a little longer in this life, and that was to see you a Catholic Christian before I died. God has granted my wish and more besides, for I now see you as His servant, spurning such happiness as the world can give. What is left for me to do in this world?”

On her deathbed, St. Monica asked of her son one thing only, that wherever he might be he would remember her “at the altar of the Lord” – that very altar to the honors of which she and her son have both been raised by the Catholic Church.

Saint Monica’s feast day is August 27<sup>th</sup>

### *Prayer for the Unborn*

*Heavenly Father, in Your love for us, protect against the wickedness of the devil, those helpless little ones to whom You have given the gift of life.*

*Touch with pity the hearts of those women pregnant in our world today who are not thinking of motherhood.*

*Help them to see that the child they carry is made in Your image - as well as theirs - made for eternal life.*

*Dispel their fear and selfishness and give them true womanly hearts to love their babies and give them birth and all the needed care that a mother can give.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.*

## **Abortion Survivor Sarah Smith: Speech at 1996 international pro-life conference in Rome.**

**Opening Prayer:** The Glory Be

### **Abortion Survivor Sarah Smith**

<http://www.prolife.com/SARAH2.html>

Pictured here are Sarah Smith and her mother Betty. In 1970, Betty tried to abort Sarah in Los Angeles. At the time, Betty did not know she was pregnant with twins. One baby was aborted, but miraculously, Sarah survived. Sarah has forgiven her mother -- and for five years they traveled the world speaking together about the pain and suffering caused by abortion.



### **Sarah's Speech In Rome**

On April 24, 1996, Sarah Smith gave the following speech at an international pro-life conference in Rome. The conference was called, "**A Congress for Life.**" It was organized to celebrate the first anniversary of Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter **Evangelium Vitae - The Gospel of Life.** The conference was held at the Legionaries of Christ seminary in Rome and was attended by approximately 500 men and women including; pro-life leaders, political leaders, media representatives, priests and seminarians.

#### ***Following is the speech given by Sarah Smith:***

"My name is Sarah Smith and I wish to thank you all... I did not know of the abortion until I was 12 years old. I grew up feeling that I was the same as my friends, except for having numerous surgeries and physical complications. The only difference I felt was an incredible loneliness and a knowledge that something was missing. I never felt whole. I battled with severe depression and found myself dying of anorexia nervosa at age 12, when my mother knew it was time to tell me the truth. She sat next to me and took my hand and looked me in the eyes and said, "Sarah, you are a twin. I aborted your twin brother and tried to abort you. Please know I did not know what I was doing and I pray someday you are able to forgive me. I love you and need you to know that you are a welcome part of our family." At that moment I knew what I had been missing all my life and that I was called to something much greater than I had knowledge of. Immediately I felt the overwhelming pain of the knowledge that I should be dead. As I stand before you today I am painfully aware that this is only possible because my twin brother took a scalpel for me, and I stand in his place and

memory, giving him honor and a face. We have become bombarded with statistics in our fight for life. Thirty-two million babies are killed in the United States alone. Yet every one had a face, a life, a creator who loved them and created them in His image. As you look at me today, you realize that I am no different than you, yet I stand before you today a representative of the dead -- a representative of the innocent lives who today may lose their lives. Who will speak for them?

**Discussion:** Have the students discuss the Sarah's story (10 minutes)

### **What our Catholic Faith provides to help fight the sin of abortion:**

#### **Friday Abstinence** *by Grace Mackinnon*

“From the beginning of Christianity, Friday has always been recognized as a day of fasting and abstinence in memory of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died on that day of the week. The manner in which it has been observed, however, has undergone some change. In current church practice in the United States, all those fourteen years of age and above are bound to refrain from eating meat on all those days prescribed as “penitential” – Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and the Fridays of Lent.

In a statement, titled “Penitential Practices for Today’s Catholics,” the Committee on Pastoral Practices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated the following: “Recalling our Lord’s Passion and death on Good Friday, we hold all Fridays to have special significance. Jesus’ self-denial and self-offering invite us to enter freely into his experience by forgoing food, bearing humiliations, and forgiving those who injure us. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of all spiritual transformation, this can be done-and done with a spirit of quiet joy. For Christians, suffering and joy are not incompatible.”

#### **Bishop Conlon’s request:**

It is no surprise then that our Bishop R. Daniel Conlon would ask us to use the spiritual weapon of denying ourselves of meat on Fridays, even after Lent has ended. This practice is rooted in Scripture and the history of our Catholic Church. We join Christ in His suffering and death to make amends for the sins against life, the sin of abortion. We ask for God’s mercy and the conversion of the hearts of those who seek and commit abortion.

Not eating meat on Fridays is a small sacrifice compared to the sacrifice of the Cross, but the story of St. Monica teaches us that our prayers and sacrifices are not only seen and heard by God, but through them hearts and lives can be saved.

# People of Prayer and Sacrifice

## Cryptogram

DIRECTIONS: Each number 1-26 represents a different letter of the alphabet. Try to crack the code to uncover the special message!

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|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A  | B | C | D | E  | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| 14 |   | 6 |   | 13 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

E A E C A E E  
 11 13 14 8 13 6 14 21 21 13 25 19 12 12 24 24 13 8 10 7  
 E A A C C E A E  
 7 13 8 26 12 20 14 21 26 14 6 8 2 24 2 6 13 26 14 20 25 10 20 2 19 13  
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 19 1 13 3 11 2 19 1 6 1 8 2 26 19 26 26 14 6 8 2 24 2 6 13  
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 E E E E C E .  
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# **People of Prayer and Sacrifice**

## **Cryptogram Solution**

We are called to offer up personal sacrifices and unite them with Christ's Sacrifice for the conversion of all people to respect life.

