

Your Monthly Newsletter

WINDOW TO BGST MAY

2021





MONICA & MACRINA

ARE THEIR 4TH CENTURY
TEACHINGS RELEVANT TO
MOTHERS TODAY?

BY GRACIE WOO

Augustine's Mother, Monica, is probably the best-known Christian mother from antiquity. She lived from AD 331 to 387.

Her husband, Patricius, was unfaithful to her in their early years together. Monica was a faithful wife, despite his temper and infidelity. By the grace of God, Patricius became a Christian towards the end of his life. What a wonderful testament to God's faithfulness!

Monica was 23 years old when she gave birth to Augustine in 354. "My mother put great trust in [God] from an early age," Augustine penned, and she "was in greater labour to ensure my redemption than she had been at my birth."

When Augustine was a young man, he delighted in the evil of stealing pears from a neighbour's tree. Later he was zealous in his pursuit of his earthly desires. Erudition was more important to him than holiness. He was swayed by Manichaeism, a dualistic doctrine that opposes Christianity. Monica was deeply concerned about her son's spiritual well-being.

Monica could only pray and weep for Augustine because he paid no attention to her words. Augustine wrote in Confessions of a mother who "wept to [God] for me, crying more tears for my spiritual death than most mothers shed for a son's bodily death."

Philippians 4:6-9 ESV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Monica has been honored by the church as a model of steadfast prayer and motherly devotion. She cared for her son and pursued his conversion from the beginning of his life to the end of hers.

Those who have unbelieving children or prodigals who have strayed from the Lord can draw strength from Monica's story: her steadfast love for her son and unyielding faithfulness to the Lord.

After his beloved mother's death, Augustine felt as if he had lost the immense support Monica had given, "...my soul was wounded, and my life as it were torn to pieces". "A bed of tears shed for an earthly love".

Augustine thanked God for his mother and praised her Christian character several times in his *Confessions*. She was generous in almsgiving, faithful and supportive in serving God's people, going to the altar twice a day in the morning and evening.

Monica also made it a point not to participate in idle gossip, but to give ear to the Word of God and seek the Lord in her prayers. What is noteworthy is that Monica's piety, Augustine came to realise, was not the product of innate goodness or fruitful striving; it was a gift from God—received, not earned.

In the same way that Monica taught Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa refers to his elder sister Macrina as "the teacher." In her words, "we always use the holy Scripture as the canon and rule of all our doctrine. So

we must necessarily look towards this standard and accept only that which is congruent with the sense of the writings."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Macrina was born in the Cappadocian city of Caesarea to Basil the Elder and Emmelia. Macrina the Elder was her grandmother. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as Peter of Sebaste and the prominent Christian jurist Naucratus, were among her nine siblings. Her father arranged her marriage, but her fiancé died before the wedding. She did not marry another, but chose to devote herself to Christ through a life of celibacy and service.

Macrina and her mother grew closer from the time of her father's death until her mother's death about the year 370. Macrina stepped in and successfully raised her youngest sibling, Peter, as her mother's helper and constant companion.

Macrina's influence over the household increased over time. The people who lived on the family estate at Annesi, about a day's journey from Neocaesarea, gradually became more like an egalitarian society, sharing food, work, and worship, and less like a wealthy Roman family whose members were waited on by servants and slaves.

The community's popularity developed over time, and people who were not related to the family began to show up at the door, asking to enter. A famine hit the region in 369, and the community became known for its hospitality. Not only did Macrina and her brother Peter feed anyone who came to them, they also scoured the roads and lanes for abandoned children. They adopted these children into the community. This is a great testament to the love she had for Christ, heeding the warnings of the prophet Isaiah:

We would never have known about Macrina if it hadn't been for her brother Gregory's biography. Her God-honouring life had a great impact on her family and the community. Her devotion to God has influenced and motivated her spiritual children for more than 1700 years.

As we reflect on Monica and Macrina, there is much to learn from and emulate, whether we have been given “fruit of the womb” or otherwise, women in the church who are called to be spiritual mothers.

Isaiah 40: 1-3

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?

SOURCES

[https://
www.cslewisinstitute.org/
webfm_send/1546](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/1546)

[https://
www.christianitytoday.com/
history/issues/issue-93/faith-
of-our-mothers.html](https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-93/faith-of-our-mothers.html)

[https://equip.sbts.edu/
publications/journals/journal-
of-discipleship-and-family-
ministry/jdfm-41-spring/so-
many-voices-the-piety-of-
monica-mother-of-
augustine/](https://equip.sbts.edu/publications/journals/journal-of-discipleship-and-family-ministry/jdfm-41-spring/so-many-voices-the-piety-of-monica-mother-of-augustine/)

[https://
www.reformation21.org/
mos/housewife-theologian/
complementarian-
cappadocian-brothers](https://www.reformation21.org/mos/housewife-theologian/complementarian-cappadocian-brothers)

[https://
sciencemeetsfaith.wordpres
s.com/tag/st-macrina-the-
younger/](https://sciencemeetsfaith.wordpress.com/tag/st-macrina-the-younger/)

[https://myocn.net/macrina-
younger/](https://myocn.net/macrina-younger/)



At the Heart of the Family

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CORLISSA

BY GRACIE WOO

Corlissa is a 33 year old mother of three who lives with her husband and their three children in the North West of Singapore. She comes across as a cheerful and sporting young woman with a delightful smile. Here's her story...

When did you decide to be a stay-at-home mum?

It was when we were expecting our first child.

What were some of the thought processes behind that decision?

Actually, my husband and I had already talked about this prior to getting married... we agreed that it is important that children have a constant care-giver in the home in their growing years. While I do not believe that the children are the centre of my universe, I am committed to caring and supporting them. In addition, I personally would find it very challenging to work outside the home and take care of the children at the same time, I am not sure if I could manage that!

Have there been any intentional life choices that you (and your husband) have made for the family? How has that been working out for all of you?

Prior to getting married, we decided to find an affordable place to live in, having borne in mind that we would most likely have only one income. Having grown up in the condo-environment, being in the heartlands has been an enriching immersion experience for me.

Our children are also not enrolled in any enrichment classes. This has enabled us to free up finances and time to meet up with friends, visit church family, elderly relatives, and have more family time.

What do family devotions look like in your household?

We would usually watch a video, read the Bible, pray... Currently, we are praying for the unreached. Sometimes one of the children will say a prayer too. It's the child-like faith which is very encouraging.

Are you connected to other mothers like yourself for support and mutual encouragement?

It does get lonely sometimes without having regular adult conversations. We have a church mum's group meeting, mostly on zoom, and I do chat with my neighbours now and again.

What do you do for self-care?

It does get lonely sometimes without having regular adult conversations. We have a church mum's group meeting, mostly on zoom, and I do chat with my neighbours now and again.

Can you share a portion of Scripture that you have always turned to on this journey of motherhood?

John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

It reminds me of keeping healthy communication practices with my kids. They are disciples too and I often reflect on what I can do to facilitate and encourage their obedience to Christ.

What are some of the biggest challenges in this season of life?

I worry about the times when I scold my children, and they have to witness my hot-temperedness. I feel guilty and dwell on it, wondering if they would want to follow Christ given my poor example.

Do you have any encouragement for other mothers with young children?

Jim Elliot: "God's work done in God's ways will never lack its resources."

What is the one thing that you would like your children to remember about you?

That I'm a sinful mum who trusted in the words and actions of a wonderful Saviour who is worth following.



It is indeed encouraging to hear about Corlissa and her husband's conviction, that during their courtship days, they had already been resolute about where God was leading them, and their choices are a testament to that. Such is intentional and wise living. Having to stay on track and be focused on caregiving for three young children is no easy task. It is easy to get side-tracked by the pressure to find self-fulfilment outside the home, amongst other distractions.

Corlissa also brought up a type of mother's guilt that many mothers face. We are worried that the display of our sinfulness is a bad testimony in the eyes of our children. However, these are very humbling and teachable moments – we are indeed sinners in need of God's grace through the righteousness of Christ!

2021

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BGST.EDU.SG/EVENTS

22 May

CONVOCATION

BGST'S 30TH CONVOCATION

Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church

Time: 11:00am - 12:00pm

5 June

BOOK LAUNCH

"PEN & PAPER CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS" BY KENNY TAN & WENDY WONG

ZGM Star Auditorium. 114 Lavender Street, #13-71, CT Hub 2 S338729

Time: Gallery Viewing starts at 3:45pm. Book launch commences at 4:30 pm.

This is a livestreamed event. Onsite attendance is strictly by invitation only.

15 June

BOOK LAUNCH

"A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON CHINESE MEDICINE"

Hosted by Seminari Theologi Malaysia.

Time: 8:00 pm

Register at bit.ly/Christian-ChineseMeds

CONSIDERING
THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION?

STUDY WITH



Flexible Learning Solutions

- Evening and Weekend classes
- BGST Online → Take one of a growing number of BGST courses online
- Blended learning → Watch or listen to lectures on your own time and use class time for discussion.
- Part-Time → There is no need to put any area of life on hold. Simply take one course at a time.

Personalised to fit your needs

While some BGST students are training for ministry, most are marketplace practitioners. What all of our students have in common is a lack of time, but we believe theological education is too important for time to be a barrier. That is why we are always innovating to provide solutions that fit your schedule.

Contextualised and Enriched Christianity

Learn about Traditional Disciplines

(Scripture, Traditions, Spiritual Formation, Church History)

and Contemporary Topics

(Culture, Marketplace, Ethics)

Equip yourself to live out your faith in all areas of life.

Get started

CONSIDERING A PROGRAMME?

BGST has curated innovative programmes just for you. Visit

bgst.edu.sg/programme

I WANT TO TAKE A COURSE FIRST

BGST offers courses in a wide variety of traditional subjects, such as biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, coupled with courses in contemporary topics, like vocation, popular culture and marketplace ministry. Visit

bgst.edu.sg/courses

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BGST OPERATING HOURS

UPDATE!

Due to the recent spike in the Covid-19 cases, BGST will now operate from 10 am - 4 pm. This will come into operation from Monday - Friday with effect from 8 May 2021 till 31 May 2021.

For visits after these hours, please call so that we can serve you at your appointed times.

Sorry for the inconvenience, and thank you for your patience.

BGST Gift Vouchers

Valid till 31 December 2021

Available in \$200, \$100, \$50, and \$20

To purchase, email yap_foon_lyn@bgst.edu.sg



may-jun

FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

MR QUEK TZE-MING



16
MAY

ZION BISHAN BP CHURCH

At Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-52)

DR PHILIP SATTERTHWAITE



16
MAY

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Wedding and A Battle (Rev 19)

23
MAY

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Eternal Blessedness of the Saints (an Anti-Millennial View) (Rev 20)

MR LEOW WEN PIN



1
MAY

SINGAPORE LIFE CHURCH

Sermon on Deuteronomy 17

27
JUN

ZION BISHAN BP CHURCH

Sermon on Inclusion

23
MAY

BETHANY EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

Sermon on Phil: 2:12-18

30
MAY

YIO CHU KANG CHAPEL

Sermon on Inclusion



DONATE

CONSIDER DONATING TODAY

Help BGST grow to achieve its vision of
training the whole people of God!

DONATE NOW

2021

WINDOW TO BGST



Biblical Graduate School of Theology

www.bgst.edu.sg

50 Kallang Pudding Road, #07-01, AMA Building

Singapore 349326

Tel: 065-6227-6815

Follow us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/BGST1989

Follow us on Instagram

@BGST1989