

Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

August 12th, 2018

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Festival 2018

It's time to think FESTIVAL again! Do you realize that exactly two weeks from today we will be surrounded by cheerful Polka music and hopefully many happy guests enjoying our parish festival. I have every hope that this year's festival will be one of the best ever! May the dear Lord be merciful to us this year and grant us perfect festival weather, not too hot, not too cold, a nice breeze to carry the fragrance of the delicious food available everywhere, and most of all NO RAIN!!! After last year's rain storm we have taken the precaution of ordering a very big tent to cover the dance floor, the musicians and the tables and chairs by the music. Folks have been asking for a tent for a long time because of the blazing sun during the day and now because of the ever present possibility of rain. We shall see how this works out. In spite of this, all parishioners should be praying for the intention of no rain even NOW! Everyone should also be doing their very best to insure this year's festival will be as successful as it can be! This means buying and selling raffle tickets. As I have mentioned in church, the sale of tickets is the key to a successful festival. Please buy your share and sell them to your friends and neighbors. All other areas seem to be moving along okay so far. We will of course need many helpers to set up, clean up and take down as well as tend to the various booths. Now is the time to really consider committing yourself to working at the festival. Plans are being made to make sure the festival runs smoothly and efficiently. Without dedicated volunteers this just will not happen. Please take a look at the complete listing of areas needing volunteers and contact the person in charge of that area to volunteer. Your help and work IS after all an offering to God of your time which is precious and ultimately His gift to you! And perhaps you may have other friends or family who would also be willing to give a few hours of their time on this very important weekend in our parish. Please plan now to attend, support and help at this year's annual Polish Festival!

Monday, August 13th – Our Lady of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska

Another Marian feast day found only on the Polish liturgical calendar is that of Our Lady of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is Poland's second largest shrine after Częstochowa. It is located in the Carpathian foothills, southwest of Kraków, very close to Wadowice, the birthplace of Pope John Paul II. It was a much beloved shrine of the late Holy Father, John Paul II. The shrine began in this way. The Governor of Kraków, Michael Zebrzydowski had a castle on Mount Lanckorońska not far from the present shrine. One day his wife looked out one of the castle windows and saw three large flaming crosses on

a hill near the castle. Her husband interpreted this as a heavenly sign and in December of 1602 established a church and monastery on that spot.

At the base of that hill he erected a small chapel where he went to pray and do penance for his sins. Later he built 42 small chapels and shrines all over the hillsides of the property. These were to represent various sacred spots in the Holy Land where pilgrims were no longer able to visit as Jerusalem had been captured by the Muslim Turks. This place became a kind of substitute for pilgrims from all over Europe wishing to visit the Holy Land. The chapels represented places like the Virgin Mary's cottage, the Palace of Herod, the tomb of Our Lord and the hills, valleys and streams of the area were given names like Zion, the Mount of Olives and Golgotha. This shrine became a place to commemorate the Passion of Christ by walking from chapel to chapel and praying. Eventually the Bernadine Franciscans who were given charge of the shrine built a large Baroque Basilica there. In 1641 a miraculous painting of Our Lady and the Child Jesus was given to the monastery. The painting was said to have wept. This image of Mary is known as Our Lady of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. It was solemnly crowned in 1887. This holy place is visited annually by thousands of pilgrims. It is the site of an annual Passion Play during Holy Week as well as an enormous annual funeral ceremony for the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15th.

Tuesday, August 14th – Feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe

In the Nazi concentration camp called Auschwitz, Maximilian Kolbe was known by the number tattooed on his arm – 16670. During the Second World War, more than four million people died at this camp. Before they were killed, they were stripped of everything they owned, including their names. Maximilian Kolbe was born in 1894 in a little town called Zdunska Wola near Łódź, Poland. He was given the name Raymond at his baptism. In 1907 at age 16 he entered the Franciscan novitiate and in 1919 at age 24 he became a Franciscan priest. He decided printing religious magazines and newspapers was a good way to spread God's word, and established a community of 700 Franciscan brothers to print religious materials. They called this community, *Niepokalanów*, the City of the Immaculate.

On September 1st, 1939, Nazi Germany conquered Poland. The city of Warsaw was packed with refugees. Most of them were Jews, afraid for their lives because they were targets of Nazi hatred. The friars in Warsaw were able to assist about three thousand of the escaping people with food and other supplies. Maximilian managed to print and distribute an issue of his magazine, *The Knight of the Immaculate*, that spoke out against the war. Soon afterward, the German secret police came for him. He was taken on a cattle truck to the Auschwitz labor camp, where so many others also would be sent before the war was over.

For prisoners, a dreaded event in the camp was the escape of a fellow inmate. When this happened, ten other prisoners were selected at random to die as punishment. One day during the summer of 1941, a prisoner disappeared. The guards assumed he had escaped, but later he was found dead on the prison grounds. One of the ten men chosen to be killed, Francis Gajowniczek, cried out in despair, "I'll never see my wife and children again!" Maximilian stepped forward and asked to take the condemned man's place. His request was granted. He was herded into an underground cell with the other nine men to be starved to death. Over the next two weeks, all except three of them died. Those remaining, including Maximilian, were killed by lethal injection of carbolic acid on August 14th, the vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady. He was 47 years old. His body was burned with all the others. St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982.

Wednesday, August 15th – Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Masses at 8:00 AM, 12 noon and at 7:00 PM

August 15th is celebrated in the Catholic Church as the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is the day we commemorate Mary the Mother of Jesus being taken up to Heaven, body and soul, at the time of her death. Although only declared a dogma of the Church as recently as 1950 by Pope Pius XII, it is a tradition which can be traced back to the early Church.

Scripture does not give an account of Mary's Assumption into heaven. Nevertheless, Revelation 12 speaks of a woman who is caught up in the battle between good and evil. Many see this woman as God's people. Since Mary best embodies the people of both the Old and New Testament, her Assumption can be seen as an exemplification of the woman's victory. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 15:20 St. Paul speaks of Christ's resurrection as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Since Mary is closely associated with all the mysteries of Jesus' life, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit has led the Church to belief in Mary's share in his glorification. So close was she to Jesus on earth, she must be with him body and soul in heaven.

This day in Poland is known as *Matki Boskiej Zielnej* or *Mother of God of the Herbs*, as it is the day flowers and herbs are brought to the church by the faithful for blessing by the priest. This feast is the most important day for gathering from gardens, fields and forests in Poland. The Polish people have been closely bound to the earth for over a thousand years, and the Pole's close communion with the earth, trees, flowers and herbs are reflected in his life.

Flowers and herbs are gathered from gardens, meadows and forests the afternoon before the feast by Polish housewives. They are taken to the church the next day for special blessing by the priest in honor of Our Lady. Favorite flowers of the Poles for this feast are the poppy(*mak*), and the peony(*piwonia*). Favorite herbs grown in the typical Polish garden and taken for blessing are sage(*szalwia*), thyme(*macierzanka*), dill(*koper*) and caraway(*kminek*). Polish tradition says that as the housewife enters the garden to make her selections to take to church: *Każdy kwiat woła –weź mnie do kościoła!* That is: *Every plant calls this day – take ME to the church.*

Herbs are very important in the Polish household. Before doctor's offices were common every Polish mother was also expected to be a sort of doctor herself. Homemade recipes were passed down for hundreds of years. Herbs were also a staple for Polish cooking and baking. Some herbs and dried flowers were also woven into small wreaths and used to decorate holy pictures in the old Polish homes.

Flowers are vital to a Polish home. They are well-loved and the pride of every Polish gardener. They are an important theme found represented in all Polish Folk Art and decorations. The Pole loves to surround him or herself with the beauty of God which brings joy to the Polish heart. The Church blesses this day these natural and God-made symbols of health and joy as She rejoices in Mary's victory over death through her glorious Assumption into Heaven, to sit at her divine Son's right hand. At her entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom, Mary is crowned this day by the Holy Trinity with virtues as if with so many flowers. The flowers and plants we bless today serve as a reminder to us of the beauty of Mary's virtues that we must imitate.

Don't forget to bring flowers and herbs from your own garden to Mass on Wednesday, August 15th for the special Assumption Day Blessing!

Thursday, August 16th – Feast St. Stephen of Hungary

St. Stephen was a Magyar. He was born in Pannonia in 975 and his pagan name was Vaik. The Magyars were a wandering tribe of fierce pagans from western Asia. In the ninth century they settled in central Europe near the Danube, in the land now called Hungary. Stephen's father Geza was their chief. He was baptized with his family when Vaik was ten years old. At that time he took the Christian name of Stephen. At age 20 Stephen married Gisela, sister to the future King of Germany and Roman Emperor St. Henry. When Stephen was 22, his father died and Stephen became the new leader. But even at that young age he was well prepared for leadership. He set out to unite Hungary by making it Christian.

Stephen was gentle and compassionate with the poor. He was tireless in his efforts to bring Christian civilization to the land. Most of his people couldn't read, so he built churches that were filled with statues and mosaics. People could study the art to learn the stories of their faith. Stephen established Sunday and religious holidays as days of worship. He also invited teachers from other countries to teach the people to read, to sew, to farm – even to cook.

Under Stephen's leadership the Magyar people were united into a nation. Hungarians became

enthusiastic Christians who adapted the Western alphabet and customs. In 1001 Stephen sent to Rome to ask the pope to confer the title of king upon him. Pope Sylvester II sent Stephen a crown, and it was placed on his head on Christmas Day. This "Crown of St. Stephen" still exists and is considered a national treasure.

In 1031 his son Emeric was killed in a hunting accident. Plans had been made for Emeric to succeed his father as King of Hungary. The rest of Stephen's days were embittered by controversy over his successor. His nephews attempted to kill him. After reigning for 42 years, Stephen died in 1038 at Szekesfehervar and was canonized, along with his son, in 1083.

The Hungarian Parish in our archdiocese is Holy Cross Church in Delray. The parish was established in 1905. The present neo-gothic church was built in 1924-25. It is the only Hungarian Catholic Parish in the State of Michigan.

Friday, August 17th – Feast of St. Hyacinth/Jacek Patron of Poland

August 17th is the feast of Saint Hyacinth or Święty Jacek! Hyacinth or Jacek in Polish is a form of the name Jan or John. This great Polish saint was a Silesian, born in 1185 in the village of Kamień na śląsku located in the diocese of Wrocław, southwestern Poland. He was from the noble Odrowąż family.

After studying in Paris and Bologna he was ordained a priest and made a canon of the cathedral of Kraków. In 1217, St. Hyacinth traveled to Rome with his cousin the Blessed Czesław and his uncle Ivo Odrowąż, then Bishop of Kraków. In Rome Hyacinth and Czesław continued their religious studies and in 1220, in the church of St. Sabina, they received the habit of the Dominican's from the Order's Founder – St. Dominic himself.

St. Hyacinth was sent by St. Dominic to Kraków to organize a cloister for the order connected with the church of the Holy Trinity. This became the center in Poland from which the Dominican Order sent out its preachers all over Poland and to the neighboring regions of Prussia, Lithuania and Russia that had still not heard the good news preached to them. St. Hyacinth is believed to have journeyed extensively in his order's missionary endeavors. It is for this reason that he is referred to as the Apostle of Poland. He is always portrayed holding the Holy Eucharist and a small figure of the Blessed Virgin, which he is said to have rescued from a church in Kiev just before it was burned by infidel Tartars. He died on the Assumption, August 15th, 1257 and is buried in Kraków in the Dominican Church of the Holy Trinity.

St. Hyacinth Parish in Detroit was founded in 1907. It was the ninth Polish Roman Catholic Parish to be organized in the city of Detroit, being broken off from Saints Albertus and St. Stanislaus Parishes. The founding pastor was Rev. Sylvester Kolkiewicz. The present church was built 1922-23 by the second pastor, Fr. Francis Baweja for \$300,000. It is built in a very unique Byzantine-Romanesque style. From its very beginning St. Hyacinth parish conducted a grammar school staffed by the Felician Sisters. Like all the other parishes in the old Polish section of Detroit, St. Hyacinth Parish has faced many challenges including the closing of its school, still the unwavering devotion and fidelity of its parishioners keeps the parish going strong!

Saturday, August 18th – Feast St. Helena

There is no more loved or remembered royal woman among the saints than Saint Helena (also called Helen, Eleanor, Ellen, Eileen, or Elaine) who was an empress and the mother of Constantine the Great. She became a Christian in 313. It was Saint Helen who discovered the True Cross in Jerusalem in 326, four years before she died. She built churches on Mount Calvary, at Bethlehem, and in the little town of Fostat in Egypt where the Holy Family went in flight when Jesus was a Child. St. Helena is also the patroness of the third Polish-American Parish to be established in Wyandotte in 1925 under her name. The parish endured until 2008. Her statue can be found in the alcove between the confessionals on the north side of the church.