



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

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Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Month of Our Lady of Sorrows

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Tuesday, September 12th – Feast of the Holy Name of Mary

In accordance with Jewish custom our Lady's parents named her eight days after her birth, and were inspired to call her Mary. The feast of the Holy Name of Mary follows that of her Birthday, September 8th, as a Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus follows Christmas. The feast originated in Spain and was approved by the Holy See in 1513; Pope Innocent XI extended its observance to the whole Church in 1683 in thanksgiving to our Lady for the victory on September 12th, 1683 by John Sobieski, king of Poland, over the Turks, who were besieging Vienna and threatening the West. This day was commemorated in Vienna by creating a new kind of pastry and shaping it in the form of the Turkish half-moon. It was eaten along with coffee which was part of the booty from the Turks. The Hebrew name of Mary, Miriam, in Latin Domina, means lady or sovereign; this Mary is in virtue of her Son's sovereign authority as Lord of the World. We call Mary our Lady as we call Jesus our Lord. When we pronounce her name, we affirm her power, implore her aid and place ourselves under her protection. The name of Mary brings grace, hope, and sweetness to the hearts of men.

Wednesday, September 13th – Feast of St. John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Church

St. John was born at Antioch, which is in Turkey, around the year 349. His father was of the Latin Rite while his mother was of the Greek. He was educated by his mother, who was widowed at the age of twenty, and by the famous Greek master Libanius. At the age of eighteen he was baptized a Christian and at the age of thirty-two he was ordained a priest, after having lived the monastic life for six years. He spent twelve years as a preacher at Antioch, where his sermons, which sometimes went on for two hours, won the admiration of the faithful, largely because he was able to incorporate both exegetical, or dogmatic content with moral application, "Chrysostom" means "golden-mouthed."

It was largely because of his fame as a preacher that St. John Chrysostom was elected patriarch of Constantinople, but it was also because of his preaching that he aroused the hostility of the imperial court. Angered by one of John's sermons against pomp and luxury, the empress

Eudoxia prevailed on Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria and an adversary of John Chrysostom, to have John sent into exile in 403. He was soon brought back by the emperor Arcadius, but two months later the empress had him exiled once more, first to the frontier of Armenia and then to the Black Sea. He died en route at the little town of Comana, in Turkey, at age 52, saying: "Glory be to God for everything. Amen." It was the feast of the Holy Cross, September 14th, 407. His body was transferred to Constantinople in 438. In 1909 Pope Pius X proclaimed him the heavenly patron of preachers.

Thursday, September 14th – Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The most common symbol of the Christian religion is what used to be a device for murdering criminals. The Romans set up crosses outside the city walls. Criminals were nailed or tied to them and left there to suffocate slowly. After they were dead, their naked bodies were left hanging as a warning to anyone who passed by.

Since then, many writers of the Church have reflected on the meaning of the cross on which Jesus died. A sign of shame has become a sign of honor. In dying on the cross, Jesus became one of the poorest, the outcast, the least among us.

A beautiful legend is told about the cross: When God sent Adam and Eve out of paradise, they carried with them a seed from the tree of life. After they died, their children buried them with the seed. From their bodies grew a new tree, which in time was cut down to make the wood of Jesus' cross, a new tree of life. The cross spread its four beams to wrap around creation, to join earth and heaven.

We Christians make the sign of the cross when we enter or leave a church, when we eat our meals, when we go to sleep at night and when we awake in the morning. The cross is our protection in danger and a constant reminder of God's love. Before we were baptized, we were marked with the sign of the cross. That stamped each of us as a Christian.

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross began in the year 335, when churches in Jerusalem, built on the sites of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, were dedicated. It became a major feast, and any Christian who could make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem would try to be there for the celebration. The whole 40-day period between the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th) and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross became a time of pilgrimage to welcome the autumn season.

Christians in Ethiopia have a special love for this day. Crosses are put on poles and decorated with wild flowers. Every household sets one up outdoors. People sing and dance around the holy cross. But they do not feast. Today is a strict fast day, like Good Friday, on the Eastern Christian calendar. In the presence of the tree of Paradise, no one eats. Adam and Eve's sin of eating the fruit of the tree will not be repeated this day.

Early in the fourth century, St. Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the Temple of the Goddess Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher over it. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman.

The cross immediately became an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head. Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the

Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered it from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614, 15 years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he put off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

The cross is today the universal image of Christian belief. Countless generations of artists have turned it into a thing of beauty to be carried in procession or worn as jewelry. To the eyes of the first Christians, it had no beauty. It stood outside too many city walls, decorated only with decaying corpses, as a threat to anyone who defied Rome's authority – including the heretic sect which refused sacrifice to Roman gods. Although believers spoke of the cross as the instrument of salvation, it seldom appeared in Christian art unless disguised as an anchor or the Chi-Rho until after Constantine's Edict of Toleration.

"How splendid the cross of Christ! It brings life, not death; light not darkness; Paradise, not its loss. It is the wood on which the Lord, like a great warrior, was wounded in hands and feet and side, but healed thereby our wounds. A tree has destroyed us, a tree now brought us life." *Theodore of Studios*

**We adore Thee O Christ and we bless Thee,
for by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.**

Friday, September 15th – Our Lady of Sorrows

This memorial comes the day after we honor the cross of Christ. On this day we continue the feast of the cross in company with Mary, the sorrowful mother.

Mary lived in a country oppressed by the Romans. She knew how it felt to be an unwed mother, a refuge, the mother of a political prisoner and criminal. She experienced poverty and she was a widow. Her sufferings have been shared by many people of our times, especially in places around the world that endure political oppression and war.

In Italy in the thirteenth century, Jacopone da Todi wrote a "sequence" song in honor of this day. This song is often sung when people pray the Stations of the Cross. Here are a few verses:

*At the cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful mother, weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.*

*Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.*

*Christ, when You shall call me hence,
be Your mother my defense,
be Your cross my victory.*

What words can ever describe the indescribable anguish that rent the sacred heart of Mary as she looked upon her Divine Son hanging on the cross! Every wound in Jesus' body was also a wound in the heart of Mary: every fiber, every nerve throbbing in agony. Every pang He suffered re-echoed in her heart. She endured, by her compassion, a share in all the anguish of His Passion. Why did Mary suffer all this? That she might be our Mother, the Mother of mankind. She who brought forth her Divine Son without a pang suffered many a piercing pang when from the cross her dying Son commended to her the sinful sons of men. That was indeed a motherhood of sorrow she suffered for our sins: for yours, for mine.

Dożynki – The Harvest Festival

That wonderful time of year is finally here, when almost all of the good things we have planted in our gardens, and have been planted in fields on farms throughout our nation, are ripe and ready to be harvested! Nature is really at her best these days and all the fresh and delicious foods that come with the harvest bring a great deal of joy with them! In the Polish tradition this time of year has its own name and its own customs that go along with it. It must be remembered that Poland has been an agricultural country for most of its history. That together with its deeply Catholic roots come together in what is known as Dożynki, a harvest festival to thank God for the bounty of the earth and to celebrate the gift of life itself.

In old Poland the Dożynki celebration was held by the owner of a large estate for the people who had worked during the reaping. On a beautiful afternoon after the crops had been harvested, a deputation of the farmers from the village, in their colorful folk costumes, went to the church, singing and playing their violins. The group always included the best workers.

They carried great wreaths made up of all kinds of grain, flowers, fruits and vegetables. These were brought to the church to be blessed as a thanksgiving for the gifts of the harvest. Then everyone would march off to the nobleman's estate to present him with the wreath. The master of the house greeted the people in front of the house, and praised them for their hard work. The people then sang songs in praise of God, the lord of the estate, and the harvest. When the music was finished, the host thanked them and invited them to a dance and supper and a day of fun and games and rest from their work.

Today Dożynki is a festival of praise and thanksgiving to our most merciful God for the goodness He has given to us. It is also a time to enjoy the gifts God has given us. In Poland extremely creative works of folk art are still prepared at this time of year made from grain, flowers, fruits and vegetables. There are even competitions to see who can create the most elaborate decorations. Everything created is blessed by the priests and many are brought to church to adorn God's house and remind the faithful to be truly thankful for what God has provided.

As we enjoy these days of bounty from our own gardens, and from the many farmer's markets around us, it would be good to call to mind the graciousness and generosity of God and to remember that the very food we depend upon for our lives is a gift from His hand. Let us not take for granted or waste what God has given and let us be thankful for His goodness to us!

The New Boilers

By the end of the last winter season it was clear that the heating system in our church was on its last legs. Over the last months we have begun gathering estimates for replacing the boiler. We have already had the brick walls to the semi-underground room for the boiler repaired and very soon the roof on the room will be replaced. The terrible disrepair of these things definitely has contributed to the demise of the old boiler over the years. These preparations have already cost \$12,000. The first estimate for boiler repair that we have obtained is for \$118,353.00. I would suspect that the other two we are waiting for will be of a similar amount. We must have heat in our church in winter. That is a fact. This boiler also provides heat for the high school building. We do have some money saved for this project but not much. And so I am appealing once again to the generous parishioners who already have made it possible to restore the façade of the church for a similar price. Please make your donations for the new boiler, to the restoration fund. Those green envelopes are found at the vestibule entrances. It is difficult to think about heat in the church now when the weather is so warm, but I assure you soon enough we will all be in the cold again. We need to be ready for that.