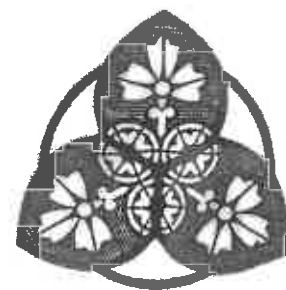


Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

November 11th, MMXVIII

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Month of the Holy Souls

Rev. Mark A. Borkowski

FmarkB@aol.com

Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Polish Independence Day – Narodowe Święto Niepodległości Armistice Day - Veterans' Day – Remembrance Day

This important Polish holiday commemorates Poland's return to the map of Europe as a nation in 1918. Poland had ceased to exist as a nation for 123 years prior to this date. It had been partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria. After the First World War these countries had been defeated and the Polish nation was restored. There would be no returning to a crowned monarch of Poland, but rather General Józef Piłsudski, Commander and Chief of the Polish armed forces would lead the country, under the title of the first Marshall of Poland. Poland would suffer greatly again during the Second World War but it would never again cease to exist as a nation. And so this day is joyfully and patriotically observed in Poland every year on November 11th. One of the main events is the Independence March in the city of Warsaw. It was also on this day in the year 1918 at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month that the ceasefire that ended World War I took place. Today, this is a day to honor and remember all Veterans of all wars of the modern century.

Monday, November 12th – Feast of St. Josaphat, Bishop & Martyr

St. Josaphat was born in 1580 in the city of Włodzimierz Wolyński. His family was middle class, orthodox catholic and subjects of the King of Poland. Josaphat was his religious name. He was born John Kunsevich. When he was in his teens, a council of bishops representing millions of Byelorussians and Ukrainians decided to seek reunion with the Church of Rome in 1595. They had been part of the Orthodox Church, which for several centuries had been separated from the Roman Church. Today these people are called Byzantine Rite Catholics. They have the same rituals as the Orthodox but they are in union with the Pope. Immaculate Conception Ukrainian Church in Hamtramck and St. Stephen Church in Allen Park are Byzantine Rite. At the time of St. Josaphat people were bitterly divided about union with Rome.

In 1604 Josaphat became a Basilian monk and later after studying at the Theological Academy of Wilno he was ordained a priest in 1609. He served the Church in Wilno, now part of Lithuania. Later, at a young age in 1617 he became the archbishop of Polotsk/Vitebsk (now in Russia) and faced a difficult situation. Most religious, fearing interference in liturgy and customs, did not want union with Rome. However, by synods, catechetical instruction, reform of the clergy and personal example, St. Josaphat was successful in winning the greater part of the Orthodox in Lithuania to the union.

But the next year a dissident hierarchy was set up, and his opposition spread the accusation that Josaphat had “gone Latin” and that all his people would have to do the same. He was not enthusiastically supported by the Latin bishops of Poland either.

Despite warnings, in 1623 he went to Vitebsk, still a hotbed of trouble. Attempts were made to foment trouble and drive him from the diocese. On November 12th a priest was sent to shout insults to him from his own courtyard. When St. Josaphat had him removed and shut up in his house to keep him quiet, the opposition rang the town hall bell, and a mob assembled. The priest was released, but members of the mob broke into the bishop’s home. He was brained with an axe, then shot and his body thrown into the Dvina River. St. Josaphat was 43 years old. It was later recovered and buried in Biła Podlaska until 1916 when his relics were removed to Vienna and finally in 1949 they were brought to St. Peter’s in Rome where they remain to this day. Josaphat was the first saint of the Eastern Church to be canonized by Rome. This took place in 1867 by Pope Pius IX. Later Pope Leo XIII extended the observance of his feast day to the universal Church in 1882.

Here in the Archdiocese of Detroit, St. Josaphat parish was founded in 1889. It was the third Polish-speaking parish established in the city of Detroit, and was founded in response to irregularities and disagreements taking place in the neighboring parishes of St. Albertus and Sweetest Heart of Mary. In 1901 the Victorian Romanesque style church we see today was completed. The church also features some gothic and baroque details. The main steeple of the church is 200 feet tall and has become a Detroit landmark. The church was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1982.

In the first part of the 20th century the parish conducted an elementary and high school staffed by the Felician sisters. At present the parish has been merged with Sweetest Heart of Mary to create a new parish entitled Mother of Divine Mercy.

Tuesday, November 13th – The Feast of St. Frances Cabrini

Frances Xavier Cabrini was the first United States citizen to be canonized. Her deep trust in the loving care of her God gave her the strength to be a valiant woman doing the work of Christ.

Refused admission to the religious order which had educated her to be a teacher, she began charitable work at the House of Providence Orphanage in Cadogno, Italy. In September 1877, she made her vows there and took the religious habit.

When the bishop closed the orphanage in 1880, he named Frances prioress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Seven young women from the orphanage joined with her.

Since her early childhood in Italy, Frances had wanted to be a missionary in China but, at the urging of Pope Leo XIII, Frances went west instead of east. In 1889 she traveled with six sisters to New York City to work with the thousands of Italian immigrants living there.

She found disappointment and difficulties with every step. She spoke very little English when she arrived in New York City. Tragically the house that was to be her first orphanage in the United States was not available. The archbishop of New York advised her to return to Italy. But Frances, truly a valiant woman, departed from the archbishop’s residence all the more determined to establish the orphanage. And she succeeded.

In 35 years Frances Xavier Cabrini founded 67 institutions dedicated to caring for the poor, the abandoned, the uneducated and the sick. Seeing great need among Italian immigrants who were losing their faith, she organized schools and adult education classes.

As a child, she was always frightened of water, unable to overcome her fear of drowning. Yet, despite this fear, she traveled across the seas more than 30 times. She died in 1917 of malaria in her own Columbus Hospital in Chicago. She was canonized on July 7th, 1946 by Pope Pius XII. She is entombed in a crystal coffin under the altar of the chapel of a girls’ school she founded in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan.

Friday, November 16th – Feast of Our Lady of Ostra Brama

This well known and miraculous image of Our Lady hangs in the “Chapel of the Gate of Dawn” which is at the entrance to the ancient city of Vilnius in Lithuania. Our Lady of Ostra Brama is known in English as Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn. The painting was most likely painted in the first half of the 17th century. It was commissioned by the government of the city of Vilnius or Wilno together with a painting of Jesus entitled “Salvator Mundi” the Savior of the World to decorate the gateway into the city and to protect the city. The image of Mary is unique as she is portrayed without her infant son.

In the year 1655 the city was captured by its enemies and at that time the government gave the two paintings to the Discalced Carmelites for safe keeping as they had set up a cloister near the gate. In 1671 the Carmelites built a chapel for the painting. As the image became known for the miracles associated with it, many costly votive offerings were left at the chapel and the painting itself was ornamented with silver and gold clothes.

The present brick chapel was built in 1720 to replace the original wooden one. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV authorized the chapel of Our Lady of Ostra Brama as a place of public worship. On July 7th of 1927, the cardinal archbishop of Warsaw solemnly crowned the image by permission of Pope Pius XI and the title of Mother of Mercy was added to the name of the image.

Images of Our Lady of Ostra Brama are for some reason rarely seen in the Archdiocese of Detroit. There is however an extremely beautiful mosaic found in the Polish-American Church of Ss. Peter and Paul on the west side of Detroit. It is located in a side chapel of the church together with an equally beautiful mosaic of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Both mosaics are made of Venetian glass colored pieces – no paint is used. Also of interest is the renaming of the parish formed by the merger of Sweetest Heart of Mary and St. Josaphat in Detroit. The parish is called Mother of Divine Mercy and they claim Our Lady of Ostra Brama as their patroness.

Friday, November 16th – Feast of St. Margaret of Scotland

Queen Margaret of Scotland was born in southern Hungary in the village of Mecseknadasda in 1047 and was the granddaughter of the English King, Edmund Ironside. Her name comes from the Greek for pearl and she is sometimes called The Pearl of Scotland. In 1070 Margaret was married to Malcom the King of Scotland and together they transformed the social and cultural life of that nation.

Margaret reorganized and reformed the Church in Scotland by calling a synod which brought Lent, marriage customs and Holy Communion practices in line with the Church of Rome. Although extremely wealthy, she regarded herself as merely the steward of riches, looking upon nothing as her own but recognizing that everything she possessed was to be used for the purpose of God.

Her husband, King Malcom was deeply devoted to her and strongly influenced by her religious fervor. Later he was killed in battle. She survived him by only four days and died in 1073.

She has become a patroness of wives, as Queen Margaret stands alone of all the saints canonized by the Church of Rome as the happy mother of a large family, who reared eight sons and daughters to her credit and died surrounded by her children. Her sanctity was not of the other world type, but was achieved through family life, sharing the burden of royalty with her husband and reforming the life of a kingdom. Above all she is remembered for her practical charity, washing the feet of the poor and serving them.

Friday, November 16th – Feast of St. Gertrude the Great

St. Gertrude was born in Saxony of Germany in 1256. We know nothing of her parents. However, they must have realized what a gifted child she was because when she was only five years old they brought her to the Benedictine convent at Helfta in Germany to have here educated under the care of the Abbess, Gertrude of Hackenborn, the sister of St. Mechtilde. She proved to be an excellent student. She became a member of the Benedictine order and probably never left the convent for the rest of her life.

St. Mechtilde was also a member of the convent and eventually she took Gertrude under her wing. In time, the two women worked together as writers. By the age of twenty-six Gertrude was taken seriously as a scholar. She thought this would be her life's work until one day in prayer she experienced the presence of Christ as she never had before. For the first time Jesus became real to her as a person and a friend. She later said it was as though Jesus picked her up and lifted her over a wide hedge of thorns, placing her close by His side.

From then on, Gertrude allowed the Lord Jesus to make his home in her. She abandoned all her earlier studies to focus on scripture and theology. She was extremely devoted to the mystery of the Incarnation, expressed in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Eucharist.

Gertrude lived only to the age of forty-five. In the later years of her life she was ill, but continued to be blessed with deep experiences of Jesus' love. Her most famous work is called *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*. Her visions gave spiritual directors new images that helped them to explain the Trinity and the love of God. She died at the convent on November 17th, 1302.

Saturday, November 17th -- Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Elizabeth was born in 1207 and was the daughter of the King of Hungary, Andrew II. For political reasons, the marriage of Princess Elizabeth was arranged when she was just four years old. The future husband chosen for her was Ludwig or Louis IV of Thuringia, a German prince. Just after she was betrothed she was taken to live in Wartburg Castle to be raised by Louis's family. Some of them didn't care for her because she was so concerned about others and so pious. They tried to talk Louis into sending her back to Hungary, but he refused.

By the time they were married, Louis had become the ruler of three German provinces. Elizabeth was fourteen years old and she deeply loved her husband. Louis was proud of Elizabeth's kindness to the poor and sick, and he understood when she gave away all her rich clothing and jewels. Together they had three children. Once there was a terrible famine while Louis was away. When he returned, members of the court complained that Elizabeth had given away the family's store of corn to feed nine hundred people a day. Louis made it clear that he thought she had done the right thing.

St. Elizabeth treated the poor with respect. If they were capable of working she found ways for them to earn their bread. She was godmother to many children of people she had helped. She encouraged them to keep a Christian home.

Louis died in an epidemic during the Crusades. They had only been married for six years. Elizabeth, who had just given birth to their fourth child, was overcome with grief. She was just twenty years old. Those who opposed her took this opportunity to seize control and have her driven out of the castle. For awhile, she and her children lived in poverty. She refused to marry again.

Later, in 1228, after providing for her children's future, she built a little hospice in Marburg. There, in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, she cared for the sick, the poor and the elderly. She joined the Franciscan Third Order of St. Francis and began to wear the gray habit. She died in 1231 just before reaching the age of twenty-four. She was buried in the Church of St. Elizabeth, built in Marburg to honor her memory. Because she was so beloved by the people she served, she was canonized in 1235, just four years after her death.

