



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

November 17th, MMXIX

Thirty-Third 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!

Sunday, 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.

Monday, November 18th – Feast of the Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome

This feast commemorates the dedication of the basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican in 350 and the dedication of the basilica of St. Paul in 390. The feast day goes back to the eleventh century.

The construction of St. Peter's basilica was begun by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 319 and completed by his sons. It is said that Constantine himself dug the first twelve baskets of earth for the foundation of this church. It was built over what was formerly a pagan cemetery and later a burial place for Christians. St. Peter was buried in this cemetery. Eusebius records in his history that just prior to the year 200 a priest named Caius stated that the relics of St. Peter were on the Vatican hill and those of St. Paul on the Ostian Way.

Constantine's first basilica of St. Peter stood for over a thousand years until, despite numerous restorations, it threatened to collapse. In 1506 Pope Julius II ordered it razed and reconstructed, but this new basilica, the one we are familiar with, was not completed and dedicated for more than two centuries.

In modern times, excavations to discover the ancient basilica built by Constantine extended from 1940 to 1945. In 1950 Pope Pius XII announced the results. It is certain that they discovered the tomb of St. Peter, but it was not possible to make a definitive identification of his relics because there were other human bones in the immediate vicinity. It is also certain that the tomb had been visited after the time of Constantine and that the popes had distributed St. Peter's relics, his head is venerated in the Lateran basilica. Since there are graffiti commemorating the apostles in the catacombs on the Via Appia, there is a possibility that some of the relics of St. Peter were placed there around the year 258. Today, the tomb of St. Peter lies about 300 feet beneath the main altar in St. Peter's basilica. It is a symbol of the unity of the universal Church.

The basilica of St. Paul stands outside the walls of the ancient city of Rome, and is located near the Abbazia delle Tre Fontane, where St. Paul is believed to have been beheaded. The basilica was re-constructed in 1854 by Pope Pius IX because of repairs made after the fire of 1823. Very likely it was constructed over the relics of St. Paul, as Caius maintains. Constantine may have built a small church at this site and it is certain that three emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius and Honorius, constructed a huge basilica on the site, resembling Constantine's basilica on the Vatican hill. It was consecrated by Pope Siricius in the fourth century and later restored by St. Leo. Since the eighth century the Benedictine monks have had charge of it.

Friday, November 22nd – Feast of St. Cecilia – Martyr

St. Cecilia probably was martyred sometime during the third century. The earliest information about her, a writing from the late fourth century, refers to a church that was named after her. The church had been Cecilia's home, so she probably was a person of wealth.

Later legends portray Cecilia as a young woman of a noble Christian family in Rome. Against her wishes she was given in marriage to a young pagan named Valerius, who later, through her influence, became a Christian. She preserved her virginity even though married. Valerius and his brother, Tiburtius, were arrested while burying martyrs, and they too were martyred. Cecilia buried them but was caught. Because she was a noble, the authorities put her under house arrest instead of throwing her into prison. Because of her Christian faith she was condemned to die in her own steam bath, but she survived the boiling steam. An executioner was sent to her home and she was struck three times in the neck with a sword. She lived for three days, and asked the pope to

convert her home into a church.

It was said that on her wedding day, while the musicians played, she “sang in her heart to Christ” in prayer. Perhaps this is why for centuries she has been considered the patron saint of musicians. When the Academy of Music was founded in Rome in the sixteenth century, it was named for her. To this day, many choirs and music societies bear St. Cecilia’s name. Her remembrance day has become a celebration of music and song.

“Remember that nothing important ever happens until someone takes a chance.”

Thursday, November 21st – Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Many of our celebrations honoring Mary began in the Eastern church in the early centuries of Christianity. A church in Jerusalem was dedicated to Mary on this day in the year 543. In the fifteenth century the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary was brought to the West.

That title came from an ancient legend that Mary’s parents, Ann and Joachim, had offered her to God when she was three years old. They brought her to the Temple to consecrate her to God’s service. This was to carry out a promise made to God when Anna was still childless.

For Christians in the East, this day is an important holiday, and it is called “Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple.” Mary herself is called God’s temple, the place where God came to live. The feast turns our thoughts to Advent. When Christ comes in glory, all of us will be God’s temple.

Responding to negative comments about the Church

“My friend keeps making negative comments about the Church. How do I respond?”

Pray. As with most things, it is best to start by bringing this to Christ before addressing it through your own words alone. Give thanks for the opportunity to speak kindly of the Church. Ask for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the courage of the saints.

When you feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit, start by letting your friend know how personally you take the comments since your faith is dear to you. If your friend does not seem to be open to changing his opinion, maybe a request to respect something you love will encourage a stop to the comments.

Invite a conversation. Ask if she has questions she’d like to discuss. Acknowledge the Church is not perfect, and it is rarely Catholics who claim it as such. Anything that is touched by humans is susceptible to corruption, even the Garden of Eden was tainted by sin once humankind was introduced to its perfect beauty.

Be sure not to become defensive and insinuate the Church is the victim. Unfortunate choices have been made and no one is above reproach. It is for this exact reason that Catholics do not go to Church for the priest, but to meet Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Speak with love. Take comfort in the fact that the Catholic Church is stronger than the sum of her parts. With Christ at the center, she will prevail.

The Polish All Souls/Dzien Zaduszny Procession (part III)

The month of November is a good time to go to the cemetery as we pray for our beloved deceased throughout the month. As we gaze upon their final resting places here on earth, we recall the many wonderful moments we had with them in this life and look forward to seeing them again in the next life. Last week some of the prayers that were offered during the Polish All Saints Day procession to the cemetery were presented here. This week we continue with more prayers, those said at the third station of the procession where deceased parishioners are remembered. The priest begins:

In this place let us pray for all our fellow parishioners. Some we knew during their lives, others remained unknown to us. Many of them served Christ by loving and serving their neighbors in Christ. Perhaps some were among those who were unsympathetic to us for a variety of reasons. We forgive them everything, as they have already forgiven all who have wronged them in this life. We also recall our dead neighbors. We pray for all those who accompanied us to our parish church to pray and present their offerings to God. Finally, we remember those of our communities, who perhaps according to human judgment, died in sin. God who knew their faith and good will, may have given them a last moment grace of conversion. Today they all await our prayers.

Those gathered are asked to pray for all the deceased of the parish, all who have loved and served the parish throughout its years of existence, remembering that we shall meet them all again when we too are called to our Father's house.

O God, giver of life and victor over death, hear the prayer of Your Church and grant to everyone buried in this ground, especially those parishioners who spent themselves working for the good of the parish and for the good of society, to build up the Kingdom of Christ, that they might rejoice in the eternal life of heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy water is sprinkled and then that place is incensed and the procession then moves on to the fourth station, which will be presented here next week.

The Adoration Chapel

In the vestibule of the church is located our Eucharistic Adoration Chapel. Have you ever visited it? This chapel, as you probably know, was established in the parish church to replace the chapel that existed in St. Stanislaus Kostka Church. It was my understanding, that the agreement of the merger was that the St. Stanislaus Chapel was to remain open after the church closed until a new chapel could be established here. Moving the chapel here was part of the process of making the church of St. Stanislaus Kostka ready for sale when the time comes. Actually, it is a great blessing to have such a chapel in our church. Unfortunately we are not able to leave the main church open all day. This chapel makes it possible to spend time with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist during the day. The hours the chapel are open every day are from 7:00 AM until 9:00 PM. The front doors closest to the parking lot are unlocked during this time, so as to enter the vestibule of the church. Spending some time in adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament is a very fine way to grow in personal holiness.