



Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

January 26th, MMXX

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Month of the Holy Name of Jesus

Rev. Mark A. Borkowski

FmarkB@aol.com

Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Sunday, January 26th – Feast of Saints Timothy and Titus

On the day after the feast of St. Paul's conversion we remember his partners, Timothy and Titus, who traveled with him. Sometimes St. Paul would send one of them ahead as his messenger, or else he would ask one of them to stay behind when he moved on. That helped a new community establish itself.

Timothy and Titus served as St. Paul's representatives when he could not visit a community that needed him. Because they had some Gentile ancestry, both these young men seemed well-suited to bring the gospel to Gentile lands. Also, both were beloved friends of St. Paul.

Timothy's mother was Jewish, so he studied the scriptures while growing up. That early training helped him to understand St. Paul's message when the apostle first preached in Timothy's hometown of Lystra. St. Paul called Timothy a preacher; this was a high compliment.

Eventually Timothy became the first bishop of Ephesus, a city in what is now Turkey. This meant that he carried responsibility for all the churches in the region. He was martyred for protesting the worship of pagan gods.

Titus was probably from Antioch, another city in Turkey. He served as St. Paul's secretary. He was a talented peacemaker, and he was sent by St. Paul to Corinth when there was a scandal in the community. He carried with him a stern letter from St. Paul.

Because Titus showed patience and tact, the Corinthians were able to accept St. Paul's scolding. Titus was so well respected in Corinth that he later returned there to ask for donations for needy members of the church. Eventually Titus was named bishop of the island of Crete. He worked very hard throughout his long life, and he died a peaceful death.

Mark your calendars TODAY! Our last big liturgical celebration of "Polish Christmas" will take place on Sunday February 2nd, at the 12:00 noon Mass

Tuesday, January 28th – the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas

The classmates of St. Thomas Aquinas had a nick-name for him. They called him “the dumb Sicilian ox” because he was big, slow-moving and shy. They didn’t realize until later that their classmate was fantastically intelligent.

Thomas’s family was related to emperors. He was born in 1225 in the family castle at Rocca Secca in Italy. His parents prepared him for a life of importance. At age five he was sent to the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino in his parent’s hopes that he would choose that way of life and later become Abbot. Instead, humble Thomas joined the Dominicans, an order whose friars took a vow of poverty.

His family felt angry that Thomas would be begging for his living. His six older brothers, who were soldiers like their father, held him captive for more than a year while his mother and sisters tried to talk him into changing his mind. During this time, Thomas calmly read and studied. He also learned a great deal of the Bible by heart. Finally his family gave in and allowed him to return to the Dominicans.

Thomas kept quiet in his university classes because he did not like to show off his intellect. However, he was so brilliant that he became a professor at the University of Paris. He was also known as a great preacher.

In those years, just about everyone talked about religion. They got into big arguments over small matters. Some people insisted that the truth of spiritual things is different from the truth of material things and that only spiritual truths really mattered. But Thomas said to look in a mirror. Ask yourself, where does the body stop and the soul begin? How is it possible to separate spirit and matter? In future years the ideas of Thomas Aquinas became the way that theology was taught in much of the Church.

Thomas’s writings fill twenty volumes. Perhaps he was able to produce so much in the midst of a busy life because of his deep prayer life. The Summa Theologica, his last and unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6th, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, “I cannot go on... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me.” Celebrating the Eucharist often moved him to tears. He treated everyone with patience and kindness. During his whole life he was never known to lose his temper or speak sarcastically about another person.

Thomas died at age fifty on March 7th in 1274. Because of his writings, St. Thomas has been honored with the title “Angelic Doctor” (doctor here means “teacher”). By universal consent St. Thomas Aquinas is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church.

Friday, January 31st – the Feast of St. John Bosco

To call others to Christ, John Bosco used everything he could think of, even acrobatic tricks and tightrope walking. His cleverness stood him in good stead. Many young people learned about God because of the care they received from John.

“Giovanni” Bosco was born in 1815 in a small village of the Piedmont region of Italy. His father, a peasant farmer, died when John was only two years old, leaving the family very poor. It was his mother Margaret who provided him with a good humanistic and Christian education. When young John went away to the seminary at age 18, even the clothes on his back had been donated by people from his village. John decided that his ministry would be in Turin, the closest city to his

village. Turin was becoming an industrial town. Teenage boys would leave their poor families in the countryside and come into town searching for work. In the city these teenagers lived in terrible conditions.

Even before his ordination, John began taking a group of boys out to the country every Sunday for sports, a picnic, song and prayer. For their amusement he performed magic tricks. No one else cared about them. After John became a priest in 1846, he housed boys who had nowhere else to live. This home was called the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales. Then he began programs to train them as shoe makers, tailors and printers. The training protected them from a harsh world they were too young to face.

Many of the boys and young men John assisted were troubled. Often they had experienced abuse or neglect. Somehow, "Don Bosco" as he was known, called forth the best in them by affirming them and treating them kindly. This was considered a very unusual approach to teaching. "Reason, religion and kindness," was his motto. Most teachers in those days thought that children must be forced to learn and punished severely when they didn't. The number of young people in John's care grew even larger. By 1856 he had 150 boys under his care, by 1868, 800! He had trouble finding assistants who understood his gentle teaching methods. In 1859 he began an order of priests called the Salesians and an order of sisters called the Daughters of Mary Auxiliatrix. He also started a group of laypeople called Cooperators. All were trained especially for this work. Today these orders serve in schools, colleges, seminaries, hospitals and missions all over the world.

Saturday, February 1st – Feast of St. Brigid of Ireland

Many incredible and some unbelievable legends are told about St. Brigid. One of the loveliest is that she helps chase away the winter and usher in the spring. Another story tells that, when she was only ten, she would give food and clothing from her household to poor people. She worked as a dairymaid and would give milk, butter and cheese from her master's cows to the needy. Her generosity made her much loved.

Brigid was born near Kildare in Ireland in 453. Her mother, Brocca, a sickly woman, was a Christian and a slave. She had been baptized by St. Patrick, himself. Brigid's father, Dubhthach, was a pagan chieftan or king of Leinster, and Brocca and Brigid's master. When Brigid was young, she persuaded her Druid master to set her mother free. Brigid felt she could then follow her heart's desire and give her life to God.

Brigid made her profession as a nun to the bishop St. Mel. At this time there were no convents in Ireland, so Brigid founded one, near Kildare. Actually she founded a convent for women and a monastery for men there. She became the Abbess of these religious houses. Here, and at the other communities she would begin throughout her life, providing for the poor was the most important work. "What is mine is theirs," she said.

St. Brigid's simple life of prayer and penance influenced the growth of the church all over Ireland. During her lifetime, her reputation for holiness spread through Europe. When she died in 524, she was buried in Downpatrick, very close to the graves of St. Patrick and St. Columba. This was considered a great honor.

St. Brigid is one of the patron saints of Ireland. Irish farmers pray to the former dairy worker to protect their cattle from harm. Many Irish cottages and barns display St. Brigid's crosses, made of straw. In Ireland she is sometimes called St. Bride, or Mary of the Gael.

An Old Fashioned Polish Winter Custom

With the passing of our celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, the liturgical observance of the Christmas season officially ends. However the joy and gaiety of Christmas continues on as the period called “Carnival” begins and lasts right up to Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. It is a time of much merrymaking and many parties; as people enjoy the few weeks of freedom before the rigors of Lenten restrictions.

The continuous snowfall of this time of year makes possible one of the most colorful winter custom of Poles called *Kulig*. In rural areas of the country it is the most loved social event of the winter season, consisting of sleigh parties and warm visits to neighbors throughout the countryside.

Kulig is a family event, involving whole households traveling by sleigh to the home of a neighbor for a surprise visit, usually in the evening after dark. The crisp air, bright moonlight and deep drifts of pure white snow provide an enchanting setting for a night of visiting and merry making.

The surprised host or hostess who receives a *kulig* party of visitors is obliged to offer the best of the house in food and drink. Often after feeding the group they join them on their way to the next home on a sleigh ride through the dark night.

Kulig is a good opportunity for young people to meet and provide a romantic setting for becoming acquainted with other eligible young men and women. It is also a time of mending any neighborly feuds or conflicts. With so much joy and merriment abounding it is impossible to conceive of arguments or misunderstandings not being drowned in brotherly handshakes and embraces.

Although heavy snowfall is a burden to us who live in the city and makes travel difficult for us by car or by foot, we should not overlook the great natural beauty of the season. It seems as if God covers our grimy world with a layer of glistening pure white beauty for a short period. Don't let the snow get you down! Winter will pass us by before we know it, but its beauty should not be taken for granted. Fresh white snow is a reminder to us of how clean and bright God desires to make our souls when He washes our sins and failings away.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Because an unmarried Jew in His early thirties spoke for the first time the mystic words of Consecration at a farewell banquet in a city of the Near East over two thousand years ago, and then knowingly went out to let Himself be killed like a common criminal the following afternoon, over one million men, women, and children, all over the earth, today in the Mass, share the secret of life everlasting.

For the young Jew was also Almighty God.

In every age since the moment of His shameful public execution, not a day has dawned, which did not witness that death repeated. Through all ages, what He did is done again, somewhere, always.

Through His death – and the burst tomb which followed it by three days – men and women live again and come once more to God.

We who share in re-enacting this ancient secret bear the name of Catholics. We call it the Mass.