



Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

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Second Sunday of Easter & Divine Mercy Sunday

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Month of the Holy Eucharist

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Wesołego Alleluja!

This Sunday, the last day of the Easter Octave and Second Sunday of Easter's seven, is also the Feast of Divine Mercy. This feast focuses our attention once again on the mercy of Almighty God that comes through the passion and death of His Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The foundation of the devotion is a series of appearances of the Merciful Savior to a humble Polish nun in the early 1930's.

To place the origin of this devotion in the perspective of the history of our parish, Sr. Faustina's first vision took place when Reverend Peter Kruszka had become the eighth pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, and Reverend Casimir Wiercioch was his assistant. Reverend Alexander Szumowski had become the sixth pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka and Reverend Stephen Dzienis was his assistant. Most Reverend Michael Gallagher was the bishop of Detroit. It was not yet an archdiocese! The church building we are worshipping in today was just sixteen years old. And school was conducted in the original combination church and school building built in 1899. The parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was 32 years old and the parish of St. Stanislaus Kostka was just 17 years old.

Back in Poland, the young Helena Kowalska had entered the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and received the name Mary Faustina. She was now 26 years old. On February 22nd, 1931 Jesus appeared to her in her cell in the convent. He was dressed in a white garment and held one hand raised in blessing and with the other He was touching the garment at the breast. From under the garment came two rays of light, one red, the other pale. The Lord requested Sr. Faustina to have a painting made of this image with the inscription: *Jesus I Trust in Thee!*

Along with this sacred image the Lord instructed Sr. Faustina to make known to all humanity God's great love for His creation as manifested through His Divine Mercy. Sister kept a very detailed diary of all of Jesus' words as he appeared to her over and over until she died on October 5th, 1938. From these writings, have been taken the prayers of a very powerful novena, beginning on Good Friday and ending on the Second Sunday of Easter, the Feast of Divine Mercy. Sr. Faustina Kowalska has been canonized a saint by Saint Pope John Paul II.

THE MESSAGE OF MERCY

On February 22nd, 1931, a young Polish nun, Sr. Faustina Kowalska, saw a vision of Jesus with rays of mercy streaming from the area of His Heart. He told her to have an image painted to represent this vision and to sign it, "Jesus, I trust in You!"

Calling her the Apostle and Secretary of His mercy, he ordered her to begin writing a diary so others would learn to trust in Him.

In a series of revelations, He taught her that His mercy is unlimited and available even to the greatest sinners, and He revealed special ways for people to respond to His mercy.

By the time of Sr. Faustina's death in 1938, devotion to the Divine Mercy had already begun to spread throughout Eastern Europe.

In July of 1940, Fr. Joseph Jarzembowski, a Polish Marian priest fleeing from war-torn Poland, prayed to the Merciful Savior to help him escape, vowing to spend his life spreading the Divine Mercy message. He arrived safely on American soil in May 1941; and Marians in Detroit, and Washington D.C. were soon distributing Mercy of God leaflets, prayer cards, and other materials.

In 1944, a group of Marians opened a new house and apostolate on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

By 1953, the apostolate had become the international center for the Divine Mercy devotion, and in 1960 the Marians on Eden Hill completed construction of a shrine to the Mercy of God.

The shrine has now become the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy, and the apostolate has become the Marian Helpers Center, a modern religious publishing house spreading devotion to the Mercy of God and to Mary Immaculate.

On the Sunday after Easter, April 30th, 2000 (Mercy Sunday), Sr. Faustina was solemnly canonized in Rome by Pope John Paul II. The pope also established mercy Sunday world wide.

Our parish observance of the Feast of Divine Mercy will take place this afternoon with Eucharistic adoration beginning just after the noon Mass and concluding with benediction at 2:45 PM. Confessions will be heard beginning at 1:00 PM. A special Mass will then be offered at 3:00 PM. This will be a fine opportunity to be spiritually up-lifted and bathed in the Mercy of God!

The ABC's of Divine Mercy

The message can be called to mind simply by remembering A-B-C. ***Ask for His Mercy.*** God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly. ***Be Merciful.*** God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. ***Completely trust in Jesus.*** God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependant upon our trust.

The Sacred Image

The image that Our Lord asked St. Maria Faustina to have painted is a portrait of Jesus as Merciful Savior. The red and pale rays represent the blood and water that flowed from His pierced Heart as a fountain of mercy for us. The image is a reminder for us to come to Jesus with trust and

to be merciful to others; and it should always carry the signature, "Jesus, I trust in You!"

Many different versions of this image have been painted, but Our Lord made it clear that the painting itself is not what is important: **"Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in my grace** (Diary, 313) So, no matter which version you prefer, you can be assured that God's grace will flow through it.

The Chaplet of Mercy

In 1935, Our Lord taught Saint Faustina a special prayer: **"Encourage souls to say the Chaplet.... Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy.... Through the Chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will"** (Diary, 1541, 687, 1731).

The Feast of Mercy

Jesus also requested that the Sunday after Easter be officially established in the Church as the Feast of Mercy: **"On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy"** (Diary, 699).

The Divine Mercy Novena

On Good Friday 1937, Jesus dictated the intentions for a Novena that He wanted Saint Faustina to say before the Feast of Mercy. By means of a special prayer, she was to bring to His Heart a different group of souls each day: **"I desire that during these nine days you bring souls to the fountain of My mercy"** (Diary, 1209).

The Hour of Great Mercy

Our Lord asked for a special prayer at the hour that recalls His death: **"At three o'clock implore My mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion.... This is the hour of great mercy.... In this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion** (Diary, 1320).

Works of Mercy

God expects us to let His mercy flow through us to others. His words to Saint Faustina are unmistakably clear: **"I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere"** (Diary, 742).

The Sacraments of Mercy

The Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist are special fountains of mercy which should be received frequently with great trust and love (Diary, 914, 1602). To emphasize the importance of these two great "miracles of mercy," Our Lord made their reception a condition for obtaining His promise for the Feast of Mercy: **"The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment"** (Diary, 699).

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

**KTO RANO WSTAJE, TEMU PAN BÓG DAJE!
GOD GRANTS BLESSINGS TO THE ONE WHO RISES EARLY!**

Pisanki, Kraszanki, Malowanki, Drapanki, Wylejanki, Nalepianki, Easter Eggs!

Beautifully decorated Polish style Easter eggs are very well known. Most people are very familiar with the painted wooden variety – malowanki. Eggs are also decorated with wax and dyes, by scratching designs on them or by pasting straw and paper decorations on them. From the beginning of the nation's history, the egg has had special symbolism among the Polish people. Decorating techniques, patterns and folktales about the decorated eggs origin are passed on from generation to generation.

One interesting tale, taking place about two thousand years ago, involves a good man who was to be put to death. This man was made to carry a heavy wooden cross. While carrying the heavy timber through the city many people mocked him and laughed at him except for a merchant selling eggs in the market. When he saw the poor man struggling, he took pity on him. He covered his baskets and helped the man carry the cross to the place of his execution. The man thanked the merchant for his help, and the merchant returned to the market to take the covered baskets home. When he uncovered the baskets they contained not ordinary eggs, but beautifully decorated eggs of multi-colors. The merchant's name was Simon and the man he helped was Christ.

Fulfilling your “Easter Duty”

Catholics must receive the Holy Eucharist at least once during the Easter season, which for U.S. Catholics is from Ash Wednesday to Trinity Sunday (this year May 22nd). This is known as fulfilling your Easter Duty.

In the Middle Ages, many Catholics, feeling personally unworthy, received the Eucharist only rarely even though the Church never endorsed that they only go occasionally. Pope Saint Pius X (1903-1914), however, felt that Catholics should receive Christ every time that they went to Mass as long as they were without the blemish of mortal sin. This was very unusual at this time in Church history. So Catholics were encouraged and prepared for more frequent reception, which is why this precept was created. This often meant going to confession before receiving Holy Communion and unfortunately the going to confession during the Easter season was often mistaken as being the Easter Duty and not the going to Holy Communion.

The Church also still requires that Catholics fast for an hour before receiving the Eucharist. This means that Catholics can't eat or drink anything besides water or necessary medication for at least an hour before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Receiving the Holy Eucharist once a year during the Easter season is the minimum requirement for Catholics, and receiving it twice a day – if you attend two Masses – is the maximum allowed.

Wednesday, April 11th – the Feast of St. Stanislaus, Bishop, Martyr and Patron of the Polish Nation!

Stanisław Szczepanowski was the only son born of noble parents, Wiesław and Bogna Szczepanowski, who were advanced in age. He was born in the year 1030 on July 26th, in a village called Szczepanów in south Poland near the city of Mielec. Stanisław decided early in life that he wanted to become a priest and was eventually ordained by the Archbishop of Kraków, Lambert Sula after studying first at the cathedral schools of Gniezno, then the capital of Poland and later in Paris. He was then made a canon of the cathedral at Kraków, and designated as preacher and archdeacon

to the archbishop of Kraków.

In 1072, much against his will, but at the order of Pope Alexander II, he was consecrated archbishop of Kraków. He was one of the first native born bishops of Poland. Archbishop Stanisław ruled as a good and much beloved shepherd, having a special concern for the poor and making frequent pastoral visitations of the clergy. The king of Poland at that time was Bolesław II, also known as Bolesław the Cruel or Bolesław the Bold. He was a courageous man who won a glorious victory against the Russians at Kiev, but he was also morally corrupt and unfaithful in marriage. He led his country into unjust wars and often cheated the poor. He was feared by all.

The king had kidnapped a beautiful married woman and lodged her in his palace. Like another St. John the Baptist, Bishop Stanisław rebuked the king and even reached the point of excommunicating him!

King Bolesław attempted to destroy the bishop's reputation by spreading rumors and lies about him and even took the archbishop to court on the charge of stealing land from a citizen of Kraków named Peter, then deceased. The property in question was very valuable land on the banks of the Wistula River near Lublin. There is a pious legend that says after three days of prayer and fasting, the archbishop made his way to Peter's grave, who had been dead for three years, and summoned forth the corpse, who then testified that he had been paid in full before returning to his tomb.

As a result, King Bolesław ordered the bishop's assassination, but when the soldiers failed three times to carry out the order, the king himself killed St. Stanisław as he was celebrating the Holy Mass. There is some question as to whether this martyrdom took place on April 11th or on May 8th of 1079, and whether it occurred while the archbishop was saying Mass in the church at Skalka or in the Wawel Cathedral. The king chased the archbishop from the altar out into the street in front of the church where he hacked him to pieces. St. Stanisław was buried in the Church of St. Michael in Skalka, at that time outside the walls of the royal city of Kraków. Eventually the king fell from power and went into exile in Hungary. He later became a lay brother in the Benedictine monastery at Osjak, where he is buried. Bishop Stanisław was canonized a saint and martyr of the Church in a ceremony at Assisi by Pope Innocent IV in 1253. In 1245 St. Stanisław's relics were moved from Skalka to Kraków and now rest in an ornate silver sarcophagus over the main altar of the Cathedral on Wawel Hill. He is the first native born Polish saint and the first to be officially recognized as a martyr. In Poland his feast day is still observed on May 8th.

In the history of the Detroit Polonia, St. Stanislaus also plays an important role. A parish under his patronage for the growing Polish population of Detroit was established in 1898. It was the sixth Polish parish to be founded in the city of Detroit. In that year some forty families, former parishioners of St. Albertus, the first Polish parish in Detroit, decided to establish a new religious center for the Poles in the area of Medbury and Dubois Avenues. The organizers of St. Stanislaus purchased a church and two buildings from German Lutherans who were in the area previous to the heavy Polish settlement. In 1907 some 800 children were in attendance at St. Stanislaus School, which was then run by the Felician Sisters. Father Franciszek Gzella was the founding pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish. A new beautiful neo-baroque style church was built for the congregation in 1911. It was designed by the same architect that designed the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Wyandotte, Henry Rill. There are a great many similarities between the two church buildings. A high school was established in 1926. The parish schools became one of the largest Polish parochial schools in the nation. During the 1950's the parish began to experience a decline. The I-94 expressway cut through the neighborhood dividing it in half. Many families moved away and in 1968 the schools closed. The parish was unfortunately closed in 1989.

AN APPEAL FROM THE PASTOR

Now that Easter has arrived and we are filled with paschal, and good will, it might be just the right time to exercise those spiritual muscles we have been building during Lent and make a decision to something good and helpful for your parish. How about making a decision to do something to improve the life of your parish? How about deciding to become more active in your parish? There are 860 households in our parish which is roughly 2000 persons. And even though we would be considered a small parish we have a lot going on here. Take the Mass schedule for example. With the size of our church building, it has a seating capacity of at least 700 persons, two Masses per weekend could be plenty, but we have four and that's fine with me. But in order to have four Masses on Sunday, it is necessary to have not only the priest, but also an organist, lectors, servers and ushers. At present we are rather understaffed in so far as servers and ushers are concerned. While it is true that the priest can and does say Mass without servers, a Mass without ushers is a disaster, and not helpful to the parish. Obviously one of the very important tasks of the ushers is to take up the collection. The priest cannot come down from the altar and do this, although I have seen in Poland that the assistant pastor(s) in the parish do usually perform this task. Well, we have no assistant pastor.

Recently, on a major holy day, there was only one usher for the noon Mass. He had quite a task trying to get others to help him perform his duties. We have four Masses every weekend, and each one of them needs sufficient ushers. The able bodied members of the ushers club are decreasing, creating a shortage. Still there are at least 100 persons at every Mass on the weekend. At some Masses there are enough ushers, at others a noticeable lack, and when we have extra Masses at the holidays we can be very shorthanded.

Only four ushers are needed per Mass, though six make it even easier to carry out the necessary tasks. I am appealing here and now for more ushers. It is a very easy way to serve your parish. You are at Mass. The collection part of the Mass takes ten minutes maximum. Why not offer your service? Are there other duties of an usher? Well, it is nice when ushers arrive at least ten minutes before Mass begins and they themselves are ready, and to be of assistance to anyone who might need it. Ushers are considered ministers of hospitality, so they should be friendly especially to strangers. Directing the procession to Holy Communion is an important task of the ushers. Passing out bulletins at the end of Mass is a fine thing for ushers to do and after Mass checking to make sure the church is left tidy is very helpful. Of Course not all ushers do all this, but many do and it is appreciated.

Although the ushers consider their group to be a club, it is not necessary to actually be a member per se of this club nor to attend meetings or anything other than to be of service in church. Of course anyone serving as an usher is welcome to take part in the activities of the ushers outside of Mass. The most important thing is to be present faithfully at Mass and to make the commitment to serve during Mass. Allowing oneself to be scheduled to usher is making a commitment to serve God and his Church, and that is what I am looking for! So I ask those attending Mass regularly in our church to consider becoming an usher. The contact person for volunteering yourself for this service is Mr. Al Adamski and he can be reached at 734-284-9135.

Czas ucieka, wieczność czeka!

Time flies, eternity waits!