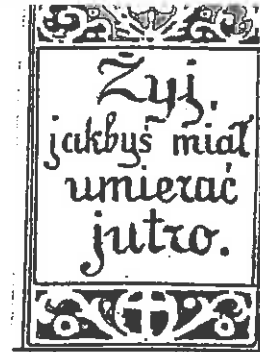


Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

April 22nd, 2018

Fourth Sunday of Easter & Good Shepherd Sunday

Rev. Mark A. Borkowski

Month of the Holy Eucharist

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Monday, April 23rd – Feast of St. Wojciech – Patron of Poland

April 23rd, is the feast of St. Wojciech/Adalbert, who is revered as one of Poland's oldest saints and in fact one of the great patron saints of the Polish nation. He is a saint also of great importance to us, Polish-Americans of the Archdiocese of Detroit, because the very first Polish parish in the city of Detroit was placed from its very beginning under the protection and patronage of St. Wojciech. Wojciech was born of a noble family in Bohemia in 956, ten years before Poland became a Christian nation with the baptism of King Mieszko the first in 966. At the time of his confirmation Wojciech received the name Adalbert from the bishop of Magdeburg. It should also be noted that Adalbert and Wojciech are two different names, not the Latin and Polish equivalents of the same name! The name Wojciech in Slavonic means "Help of the army." The English name of Detroit's first Polish parish, "Albertus," was the name mistakenly given to the church at the time of its dedication. Albertus is the Latin form of Albert. This mistake was never corrected in the 117 year history of the parish, which closed in 1989.

As a child, Wojciech was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin by his parents who feared losing him to sickness. They promised the Virgin that Wojciech would live under her patronage with the clergy. Wojciech received an excellent education at the cathedral school of Magdeburg. In 982 he was ordained a subdeacon by the bishop of Prague. Though only 27 years of age, he was elected bishop of Prague in 983, after the sudden death of the previous bishop. Wojciech entered the city of Prague barefoot as a symbol of his humility. He was received with enthusiasm by Boleslaus II, prince of Bohemia, and all the people of that city. He proceeded to reorganize the diocese but was saddened to learn of the religious state of his flock. Most were Christian in name only. He withdrew to Rome in 990 but returned to Prague in 994 at the insistence of Pope John XV. Again he encountered difficulties and a refusal to accept the true gospel in Prague, which caused him to withdraw from Prague to Rome. Once again the Pope, Gregory V at this time, ordered him back to Prague.

The people of Prague, however, refused to admit Wojciech to the diocese and so he turned his attention to the conversion of Poland (Pomerania) to Christianity as a missionary. He made converts at Gdańsk but later met with scorn as he and his companions were accused of being spies.

On April 23rd, 997, he and his companions were martyred near Krolewiec by being beaten to death with oars. After severing his head and fixing it on a pole which was carried throughout the village, his body was thrown into the Nogat River, a tributary of the Wistula, and washed up on the Polish coast. The body was held for ransom by heathens who received a small fortune, the weight of the body in gold, from Boleslaus, Duke of Poland, for its return. Later in 998 his body was enshrined in Gniezno; some of his relics, however, were returned by force to Prague in 1039. Adalbert was canonized a saint in the year 1000.

When St. Albertus parish in Detroit was organized by the St. Stanislaus Kostka Society (a group of Polish immigrants attending the nearby German St. Joseph Church) they chose the Bohemian born St. Adalbert/Wojciech as their patron. The date of the meeting of organization of the new parish was April 23rd, 1870, the feast of St. Wojciech. He was a fitting choice for patron as many of the early parishioners of the Church had come from that area of Poland known as Pomerania and Poznania where St. Wojciech had ministered. They were known as Kaszubs and spoke a dialect of Polish heavily influenced by the German language.

Wojciech was the first great adopted patron of the Christian Polish nation. He had been venerated for over eight centuries as Protector of the Poles when he was selected to be the patron of Detroit's first Polish parish which was primarily composed of Kaszubs.

When the first St. Albertus Church was dedicated on Sunday, July 14th, 1872, the name of the patron was inadequately translated from the Latin Adalbertus to the English Albertus, thus forever identifying Detroit's first Polish parish by the misnomer Albertus. Such is life! For better or worse, the Mother Church of the Detroit Polonia is known, at least in English, as St. Albertus.

An image of St. Wojciech can be seen in our church in the fourth stained glass window from the vestibule on the south/Superior side of the church. St. Wojciech is depicted preaching to a seated king presumably of Poland while his wife, a daughter a religious and a soldier look on. The window was offered by the St. Wojciech Society of the parish in 1916.

Monday, April 23rd – the Feast of St. George, Martyr

Born in Cappadocia in Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey, St. George may have been a soldier in the Roman army. He died a martyr's death, probably at Lydda in Palestine, after confronting Diocletian, the cruel persecutor of Christians. He was much admired by other Christians of his time.

There are many myths about St. George. The best-known tale tells of a dragon that was terrorizing a town because it wanted meat. When the townspeople ran out of animals to feed it, it demanded to be fed children. The king's brave daughter dressed herself in a wedding gown and went to the dragon's cave to offer herself as its dinner. But George killed the dragon before it could harm her. Then he married the princess and together they barbecued the dragon to serve at their wedding feast.

In the Middle Ages, theatre guilds put on plays about the lives of the saints. The life of St. George became a favorite. The play had a happy ending, even for the dragon, who came back to life. The princess would lead it through the streets with a ribbon tied around its neck, and everyone followed behind singing "alleluia." People loved the play because they knew it was really about the good news of Easter. St. George represents Christ. The princess is the Church, Christ's bride. Whenever we are willing to lay down our lives for one another, death itself dies. In Greece, where today is a holy day, St. George is called the "Great Martyr." St. George is a patron saint not only of Greece but also of England, Portugal, and the Italian cities of Venice and Genoa. He was named patron of England in 1222 during the reign of King Henry III and was proclaimed protector of the English kingdom by Pope Benedict XIV.

Wednesday, April 25th – Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist

The Gospel of St. Mark records a strange detail not told in the other three gospels. In the garden of Gethsemane, when the crowd arrested Jesus, an unnamed young man followed at a distance. The crowd tried to catch the man, but all they could grab was the linen cloth he was wearing. He ran away naked. Some people think the young man was Mark.

St. Mark was not an apostle. He was probably a member of one of the first Christian communities. His mother's house in Jerusalem is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as a center where Christians gathered. St. Mark was baptized by St. Peter. Then they both moved to Rome, where St. Mark served as St. Peter's secretary. St. Mark also traveled with St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Later, during St. Paul's two prison terms in Rome, St. Mark helped him to continue his work.

St. Mark's gospel is the shortest gospel and is simple and direct. It was probably written for Gentile converts in Rome, after the death of Saints Peter and Paul. It challenges the reader to share in Jesus' sufferings. It is filled with details that help us to understand the human side of Jesus.

St. Mark's symbol is a winged lion. The lion is a desert animal, and St. Mark's gospel begins with the story of St. John the Baptist in the desert. St. John the Baptist is described by St. Mark as a "voice of one crying out in the desert", which artists compared to a roaring lion. The wings come from the application of Ezekiel's vision of four winged creatures to the evangelists.

Traditions say that St. Mark went to Alexandria in Egypt. He worked there for ten years before he was martyred. The city of Venice in Italy has St. Mark for its patron saint. His bones are said to rest in the great basilica cathedral there.

In our church a statue of St. Mark along with the other three evangelists can be found above the high altar on brackets between the five stained glass windows of the joyful mysteries of the rosary. St. Mark is second from the left as you face the altar. He holds in his hand a scroll representing the gospel he wrote and at his left foot, obscured by the kneeling angel holding the canopy over the tabernacle, is St. Mark's symbol, the lion.

Thursday, April 26th – the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel

MATER BONI CONSILLI

Our Lady of Good Counsel is a title that describes one of Mary's motherly attributes, for she is to all people a mother who is able and willing to give good advice in times of difficulty. She is also always able to direct people toward God, providing the good counsel that removes doubt and confusion and makes the way to holiness and wholeness stand out clearly. At the same time, and more importantly, the title refers to Mary's motherhood of the Christ, who as the Way, the Truth and the Life is *the* Good Counsel leading people directly to God.

This title of the Virgin Mary was established early in Christian history, but a Renaissance legend served to spread devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel. The Albanian people venerated the Blessed Mother for many centuries, but they were particularly devoted to an ancient icon of the "Virgin of Tenderness," that hung over the main altar in a church built beneath the fortress of Shkodra. This icon was famous for its sweetness and for the protection it affords its devotees.

According to the legend, when Turks invaded Albania in the fifteenth century, two of the defenders sought refuge in Shkodra to beseech the Lady for deliverance. During the prayers they noticed that the icon was moving through the air. They followed it – all the way to Rome! There it disappeared. But the two men soon heard that a miraculous image had appeared suddenly in Genazzano, a small town thirty miles southeast of Rome. They went there immediately and upon seeing the miraculous painting recognized their Blessed Lady!

Previously in Genazzano, a widow named Petruccia de Geneo had contributed money to renovate the fifth-century Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, which had fallen into disrepair. Her funds fell far short of what was required, and the legend recounts how the Lord made up the difference. On April 25th, 1467, the entire city was enjoying the yearly festival in honor of St. Mark. At about four o'clock, a mysterious cloud descended upon the decrepit church. When the cloud evaporated, a fragile portrait of the Madonna and Child was found to be suspended in midair above an unfinished wall. The portrait was on paper-thin plaster, and the legend relates that a thread could be passed entirely around the painting without disturbing it.

The painting became an immediate sensation. From April 27th to August 14th of that year, no less than 171 miracles were attributed to the image, which became known as *Madonna del Buon Consiglio*, or the Madonna of Good Counsel. The number of pilgrims was so great that their donations completely funded the renovation of the church.

Though much of the church was destroyed in World War II, the painting was undamaged. Reportedly, it is still suspended in the air, as it has been for more than five hundred years. The church has been rebuilt and is now a vibrant center of pilgrimage. Because of her great love, Our Lady of Good Counsel

has a large following. Many churches and institutions throughout the world are named after her, and Pope Leo XIII authorized the insertion of Mater Boni Consilli/Mother of Good Counsel, into the Litany of Loreto in 1903. She continues to favor those who appeal to her, giving counsel about God and obtaining the light of truth for all those who ask in her name.

The Spinkling Rite * Ritus Aspersioinis * Obrzęd Pokropienia

On Sundays the Penitential Act may take the form of a Rite of Sprinkling with Holy Water. Holy water is sprinkled on the faithful as a memorial of Baptism. This practice is very appropriate during the Easter Season but may take place on any Sunday of the liturgical year. In times past it was the custom to sprinkle the congregation every Sunday before the principal Mass in every parish church. This ceremony was called the Asperges. This word comes from the Latin word *aspergere* which means to sprinkle and was the first word of the hymn that was sung during the ceremony.

In some places, according to ancient custom, blessed salt is added to the holy water to be used when it is blessed. The prayer said as the salt is added explains the custom: We humbly ask you, almighty God: be pleased to bless this salt you have created, for it was you who commanded the prophet Elisha to cast salt into water, that impure water might be purified. Grant, O Lord, we pray, that wherever this mixture of salt and water is sprinkled, every attack of the enemy may be repulsed and your Holy Spirit may be present to keep us safe at all times.

The custom of sprinkling the faithful with holy water goes back to the tenth century in the church. In those days water was blessed each Sunday not only to be sprinkled on the people but for them to take with them to be used in their homes.

After blessing the water for the ceremony, the priest blesses the altar itself, then himself, then those present as ministers in the sanctuary and finally the choir and congregation. The bucket containing the holy water is called the aspersionarium and the instrument used to sprinkle the people is called the aspergillum. In Polish churches a small "broom-like" instrument may be used to sprinkle the people.

There is a definite theme of preparation for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and cleansing ourselves of our sinfulness in this beautiful rite. When the priest has sprinkled those present in the church for Mass he concludes the rite with the prayer: May almighty God cleanse us of our sins, and through the celebration of this Eucharist make us worthy to share at the table of his Kingdom.

During the Easter Season this hymn is sung during the sprinkling:

I saw water, coming forth from the temple, from the right side, alleluia: And all those were saved to whom that water came, and they shall say: Alleluia, alleluia. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for his mercy endures forever. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen. I saw water ...

Widziałem wodę, płynącą z prawej strony świątyni, Alleluja. I wszyscy, do których doszła ta woda zostali zbawieni i mówią; Alleluja alleluja. Dziękujcie Panu, bo jest dobry, bo miłosierdzie Jego na wieki. Chwała Ojcu i Synowi, i Duchowi Świętemu. Jak było na początku, teraz i zawsze i na wieki wieków. Amen. Widziałem wodę...

Vidi aquam egredientem de templo, a latere dextro, alleluia: et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista, salvi facti sunt, et dicent, Alleluia, alleluia. Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus: quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen. Vidi aquam...