



# Stronica Proboszcza



## The Pastor's Page

November 18<sup>th</sup>, MMXVIII

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Month of the Holy Souls*

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!  
Praised be Jesus Christ!

### **Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup> – 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.

### **Wednesday, 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.

### **Thursday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> – 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.

## *A Blessed and Bountiful Thanksgiving to All!*

On Thursday of this week the entire nation is invited to pause and give thanks for the blessings we all enjoy. Of course this is a fine opportunity to thank the people around us for the good they do to us, but ultimately this day reminds us all to give thanks to God who has given us everything. Giving thanks to God is at the heart of authentic Catholic worship. It is the ultimate goal of every Mass offered. The very word Eucharist is Greek for Thanksgiving and we all know that the Most Holy Eucharist is the core of our Catholic faith. Thanksgiving to God must be practiced every day of our lives not just on the fourth Thursday of November.

*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
Dzięki składamy Panu Bogu naszemu.*

## THANKSGIVING DAY MASS

*Could you think of any better way to observe thanksgiving day than by going to the Holy Mass and there, in God's own house, offering a humble and heartfelt prayer of thanks to Him, who has given so much to us all? His response to your prayer will be to give to you once again the precious Body and Blood of His Son for your nourishment. How much more this special day would mean to you and your family! Mass will be offered at 9:00 o'clock in the morning on Thanksgiving Day.*

## The Origin of Thanksgiving Day

The Pilgrims, the Calvinist settlers in New England, held the first Thanksgiving Day celebration in the fall of 1621. Many of the English settlers did not celebrate Easter or Christmas. They had abandoned Catholic feast days and seasons, but they were devoted to the Bible. They based their laws and customs on it.

After landing in Massachusetts the Pilgrims had a tragic winter. They found the New England winters far colder than in England, and half the settlers died. In the spring, help came from a Pawtuxet Indian named Squanto, who showed them how to plant corn and other native crops. Because of this, they had a bountiful harvest.

Inviting their Native American saviors to join them, they prepared turkeys and other wild game, seafood, corn, dried berries and vegetables. Their harvest festival lasted three days.

Thanksgiving Day didn't become an annual event until much later. In 1789, President George Washington proclaimed a day of thanksgiving for the new country. For many years after that, some states celebrated on one day, some on another. In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the fourth Thursday of November as the official Thanksgiving Day of the nation.

By the late 1800's, some Catholic priests forbade parishioners to celebrate what seemed to them a public Protestant festival. However, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore allowed it. During the early 1900's, Catholics were marking Thanksgiving Day as many others were, with private family meals and celebrations, and less so, by attending parades or other public events. It was not until 1969 that the American Bishops Committee on the Liturgy prepared and published lectionary readings and prayers for a Mass specifically for Thanksgiving Day.

The Law of Moses calls the people to share their bounty with family, servants, strangers, widows and orphans. Today in America many people have no way to share in Thanksgiving Day because they are hungry, homeless or isolated from family and friends. On Thanksgiving Day we remember them and welcome them with our prayer and our service.

Thanksgiving Day is a fine occasion to nationally thank the dear Lord for all his blessings. It is also a beloved custom for families and dear friends to gather together and enjoy each other's

fellowship. Of course there is the temptation after grace has been said to think only of stuffing ourselves to the point where we cannot move, get sick or have heartburn. Remember that God did not give us the gift of life so that we could eat, He gave us the power to eat that we could sustain life! On Thanksgiving Day, the only thing that should get stuffed is the Turkey!

## 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.

***Vita Mutatur non Tollitur – Życie Zmienia się ale nie kończy –  
Life is Changed not Ended***

