



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

February 10th, MMXIX

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Month of the Passion of the Lord

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Sunday, February 10th – Feast of St. Scholastica

When St. Scholastica was alive, the Roman Empire was falling apart. But Scholastica and her twin brother St. Benedict spent their lives showing others how to live as Christians in a chaotic world. They did such a good job that even in the chaotic world of today people are still living by the ways they taught.

Scholastica and Benedict were born at Norcia in 480 of wealthy parents. Norcia is at the border between Umbria and Sabina in Italy. After studying in Rome, St. Benedict founded the abbey of Monte Casino in Italy, where he wrote a rule of life for monks. The rule taught people how to treat each other with gentleness and respect, as he and Scholastica had always treated each other. Scholastica decided to become the first woman to live under the rule. In about 540 she established a convent, Plombariola, about five miles south of Benedict's abbey.

Saints Scholastica and Benedict allowed themselves one day a year to talk about God together. They would meet at a little house halfway between the convent and the abbey.

At one such meeting, Scholastica sensed that this would be their last visit. When Benedict got up to leave, she prayed for rain. Immediately such a downpour began that they had to stay up all night waiting for the sky to clear. They talked all the while about God, to Scholastica's delight. Three days later Scholastica died. It was the year 547.

Monday, February 11th is the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

On February 11th, 1858, 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous was gathering wood with two other girls at a small rock cave, near the town of Lourdes, in the Pyrenees Mountains of southern France. Suddenly she saw what she described as "a girl in white, no taller than I, and beautiful."

The young woman spoke to Bernadette in the dialect used in her little village. She addressed Bernadette with great courtesy. This made a tremendous impression on Bernadette, who was a below-average student and the daughter of poor parents. She was not used to being treated with such respect.

Bernadette saw the vision 18 times. When she asked the woman who she was, she responded, "I am the Immaculate Conception," using a term Bernadette had never heard. During

one of the later appearances the woman in the vision told Bernadette to dig for water with her hands. When the girl did so, she uncovered a spring. The spring still flows, at the rate of 27,000 gallons daily. Many people have come to Lourdes in the years since the appearances to bathe in the spring and to pray for healing from all kinds of diseases. Bernadette never wanted the fame that the appearances brought her. She retired to a convent where she spent her days living as simply and as humbly as possible. She was very ill throughout her short life, and she died in 1879 at the age of 35. She was declared a saint in 1933. The French and the Canadians remember St. Bernadette Soubirous on April 16th.

Our Lady appearing to St. Bernadette at Lourdes is portrayed in one of the stained glass windows of our church. The young Bernadette, in peasant clothes kneels offering her rosary to the Virgin. At the feet of the Blessed Virgin, who appears before her, is the miraculous stream of spring water of Lourdes. The Virgin's feet are adorned with golden roses as Bernadette described them in the vision. This is the great window in the transept on the Superior side of the church. It was offered by *Jakub i Rozalia i Weronika Michalaki*. The cave in which Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette is called a grotto and in the Archdiocese of Detroit, life-sized versions of the grotto can be seen on the grounds of the Orchard Lake Schools, in the cemetery at Assumption Grotto Parish in Detroit, and the vestibule of Old St. Mary's Parish in Greektown.

HAPPY SAINT VALENTINES DAY!

There probably were at least two or perhaps even more St. Valentine's. Two were both martyred around the year 269. One of them may have been the bishop of Terni, Italy. In those days of persecution, Christians met secretly and hid their faith to protect their lives. Bishops were unable to hide and were often the first Christians in their communities to be tortured and killed. Often a bishop died in the hope that other Christians would not be hunted out.

The other St. Valentine was a priest and physician in Rome. A legend says that he sent letters of love and encouragement to the people of his community who lived in fear of persecution. From that legend the practice of sending valentines on his feast day may have begun.

But there is another explanation for the custom of sending valentines. In the Middle Ages people believed that on February 14th, the day St. Valentine died, birds began choosing their mates for the springtime. So this day came to be thought of as the perfect day to choose a sweetheart.

There is yet another St. Valentine who is rather significant yet quite unknown. He is the Polish St. Valentine or Walenty as he is known in the Polish language. This rather obscure Polish saint was known to be a priest in the southern or Galicia region of Poland. He is known for his generosity to the poor and his love for children especially those suffering from epilepsy. His prayers are reported to have cured many children and even adults suffering from this malady.

Valentine's Day has become a day for most people to think about the place of love in their life. "Love" the song says, "is a many splendored thing!" It is also a very misunderstood thing and the word itself is so often misused. What exactly does it mean to love? Well, when I was in the seminary we learned the philosophical meaning of the word love, which is: to want the very best for another person.

You see we only "love" persons. We do not love things. We like things but love is such a special and lofty thing that it can only be directed toward persons. And the definition goes further to say that in wanting the very best for another person we put our own wants and needs second so as to give to, or do for, that person only what is best for them. This is also known as "agape" a kind of sacrificial love, so rarely seen today.

It is the love of Christ for us. His love for us, His desire for what was and is best for us is so strong that it caused Him to be willing to give up his very life out of love for us. When Valentine's Day comes we see hearts decorating everything. The heart has become a symbol of love. For me when Valentine's Day comes and I see those hearts everywhere I do think about what a beautiful thing it is to love and to be loved. Yes, sometimes it is quite painful but a life without authentic love in it would not be worth living. The source, my dear friends, of every kind or true love we celebrate on Valentine's Day is the love of God, a love which is so perfectly manifested by Christ and symbolized by His Sacred Heart! Happy Valentine's Day!

Wednesday, February 14th, Memorial of Ss. Cyril & Methodius

Cyril and Methodius were brothers. Born in Thessalonika, Greece, they were the sons of a senator. Methodius was born in 815 and Cyril in 826. Cyril was actually his religious name as a monk. He was born Constantine and Methodius was actually born, Michael. As young men, both held important posts. Cyril taught philosophy at the University of Constantinople where he was also ordained a priest. Methodius was a governor. But both felt a hunger for a life of prayer, so they retired to a monastery. Methodius entered first and Cyril followed.

Soon afterward they were asked to bring the Christian faith to the Khazars, a tribe of people in what is now southern Russia. Before beginning their mission, the brothers learned the Khazar language. Their hard work and study helped them to bring many people to Christianity.

Then, at the request of the Duke of Moravia they traveled west to that country, which is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Again their ability to speak the native language, Slavonic, helped them to win many new Christians. Up to this time Slavonic had no written characters, so nothing could be recorded in that language. Cyril and Methodius used Greek letters to invent an alphabet for the Slavic people. The "Cyrillic" alphabet, a later version of their invention, is still used in Russia and several other countries. Now the people could write down their stories and poetry for the first time. Cyril and Methodius began to translate the Bible and liturgical books into Slavonic. In fact together they composed a Slavic liturgy, highly irregular then.

The brothers traveled to Rome because they were having trouble with certain German bishops, who complained about the use of the "barbaric" Slavonic language. However, Pope Adrian II blessed the work of Cyril and Methodius. During their stay in Rome, Cyril, who had long been an invalid died on February 14th in 869 at age 43. At that time he had only been a monk officially for 50 days! He was buried in the basilica of St. Clement in Rome. Methodius was made a bishop and was sent back to Moravia, which became his diocese. Unfortunately, out of spite, the hostile bishops imprisoned him for two years. He used that time to continue the translation of scripture that he and Cyril had begun. He died a few years later on Tuesday of Holy Week, April 6th in 884 at age 69.

Eleven centuries have passed since that time. Ss. Cyril and Methodius are especially honored by Central and Eastern Europeans. The bright and energetic brothers represent common ground between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. With St. Benedict they were proclaimed in 1980 by Pope John Paul II, co-patron saints of the continent of Europe.

In the Archdiocese of Detroit there is a parish in Sterling Heights under the patronage of Ss. Cyril and Methodius. It was originally established in 1918 on Detroit's east side just south of Hamtramck to serve immigrants coming to Detroit from what was then Czechoslovakia in Eastern Europe. The Slovak language was and still is used in the parish which later in 1989 moved to the suburbs.

Perhaps better known within the territory of the Archdiocese of Detroit is the seminary at Orchard Lake under the patronage of Ss. Cyril and Methodius. Also known as "the Polish

Seminary,” it was established in 1885 in the area of the first Polish residents of Detroit on the east side of the city in the territory of St. Albertus parish. The idea for an exclusively Polish seminary originated with Fr. Joseph Dąbrowski, a Polish-born priest who arrived in Detroit in 1882. Fr. Dąbrowski convinced Bishop Borgess that such a proposal was justified given the shortage of Polish clergy in Detroit and in U.S. cities that witnessed substantial increase in their Polish population. Fr. Dąbrowski assured the bishop that the costs of such an ambitious plan would be borne in small increments by the many different dioceses that hoped to secure the services of those ordained. The bishop approved the plan in 1884, and the facility opened the next year.

The “Polish Seminary” proved a major success. It produced clergy not only loyal to the diocese but also steeped in Polish culture and tradition. Fr. Dąbrowski served as the seminary’s rector until his death in 1903. In 1910 the facility was relocated to suburban Orchard Lake. At present the seminary continues to prepare men for service to the Church as priests. However these days the majority of its candidates are not American born men of Polish descent, but rather young men born in Poland eager to be of service to the Church in the United States that has a great need for priests. Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary has been functioning now for over 125 years and the spirit of its patrons of missionary service to the Church is still very strongly felt there. I myself am proud to be a graduate of the venerable institution, though I remind you, I am a fourth generation Polish-American

Do You Know the Precepts of the Church?

The Precepts of the Church are a description of the **absolute minimum** actions required of Catholics regarding the Church. The Church uses these precepts to remind us that Christian life requires a commitment to prayer and active participation in the liturgy and sacraments. If we fall below this bare minimum level, we cannot rightly consider ourselves to be in full communion with the Catholic Church. Each of these precepts of the Catholic Church is a requirement. Together with the Ten Commandments, they represent the **minimum level** of moral living. Intentional violation of the precepts or the Commandments is a grave matter, meaning a mortal sin.

- #1. A Catholic must attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and avoid unnecessary labor on the Lord’s day, a day of rest.
- #2. A Catholic must go to confession at least once a year.
- #3. A Catholic must receive Holy Communion at least once during the Easter Season.
- #4. A Catholic must observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
- #5. A Catholic must contribute towards the material needs of the Church.
- #6. A Catholic must obey the laws of the Church concerning Marriage.

Of course people who have a living and true faith do not live their Christian lives according to the minimum but rather strive toward the maximum as a sign of their love of God.

Czas ucieka, wieczność czeka!

Time flies, eternity waits!