



# Stronica Proboszcza



## The Pastor's Page

May 12<sup>th</sup>, MMXIX

Fourth Sunday of Easter & Mothers' Day

*Month of Our Lady*

Rev. Mark A. Borkowski

FrmarkB@aol.com

---

Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

ON THIS DAY, O BEAUTIFUL MOTHER!

ON THIS DAY WE GIVE THEE OUR LOVE!

The words of this very popular hymn to Our Lady are also most appropriate this weekend as we observe Mothers' Day on the national level. On this Mothers' Day we offer our love to our mothers whether they are still with us or even if they have passed on to the next life. The wonderful maternal relationship we have with our mother is eternal and we are close to them this day in our prayers wherever they may be!

It is my sincere hope that this Mothers' day will be a happy one for all parishioners and their mothers. Our national observance of Mothers' Day was started in the early twentieth century by an American woman named Anna Jarvis. After her mother died, she suggested that a memorial service be held in her church to honor all mothers. The first such service was held in a Philadelphia church in 1908. Those who attended were asked to wear white carnations in memory of their deceased mothers. A colored carnation was worn to honor living mothers.

People were so taken with the observance of such a day that on May 8<sup>th</sup> of 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a joint resolution of Congress recommending that Congress and the executive departments of the Government observe Mothers' Day. The following year, 1915, the President was authorized to proclaim Mothers' Day as an annual national observance to be held on the second Sunday of the month of May. Other countries also adopted the idea.

A mother is a wonderful and important person. She provides life and nourishment to her child by her very nature. A mother gives so much of herself in the care and raising of her children. We need to take time to thank her if she is still with us or pray for her if she has passed from this world. We should prayerfully reflect on the effect that her love and care has had on our lives.

On this day we should also remember all others who are also examples of a mother's love. A woman does not necessarily have to give birth to be a mother to another person. This beautiful day is an occasion for all to joyfully give thanks to God for the blessings we have received from the *Mothers* in our lives!

We honor Mary our supreme and heavenly mother by crowning her image and presenting to her with love and devotion our prayers and good works. May is the month of mothers. It is one of the most beautiful times of the year and the perfect time to honor the mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, godmothers, step-mothers and mothers-in-law who mean so much to us.

## *The Most Important Person...*

on earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honor of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral – a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby's body... The angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God's creative miracle to bring new saints to Heaven. Only a human mother can. Mother's are closer to God the Creator than any other creature; God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation... What on God's good earth is more glorious than this: to be a mother?

- Joseph Cardinal Mindzenty

## *A Blessed and Happy Mothers' Day to all mothers at Our Lady of the Scapular and mothers everywhere!*

### **Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima**

On the thirteenth of May in 1917, ten year old Lucia Santos and her younger sibling Jacinta, age nine, and cousin, Francisco Marta, age seven, were looking after sheep at a location known as the Cova da Iria near their home village of Fatima in Portugal. Lucia described seeing a woman "brighter than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal ball filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun."

Further appearances are reported to have taken place on the thirteenth day of the month in June and July. In these, the woman exhorted the children to do penance and acts of reparation, and to make sacrifices to save sinners. Most important, Lucia said that the lady had asked them to pray the rosary every day, repeating many times that the rosary was the key to personal and world peace. At the time Portugal was fighting in World War I.

Thousands of people flocked to Fatima in the ensuing months, drawn by reports of visions and miracles. The lady appeared again to the children in August and on the thirteenth day of September and October. At the last appearance of the "Lady of the Rosary," as she identified herself, a crowd of 70,000 had gathered at the Cova. During the appearance the sun appeared to change colors and rotate like a wheel. The lady prophesied a second world war and asked that the rosary be prayed so that Russia would turn away from communism and return to the practice of the faith. In 1930 Pope Pius XI gave the Holy See's official approval to the appearances. A great shrine has been built at Fatima in Portugal and it continues to be a place of international pilgrimage.

### **Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> – the Feast of St. Isidore the Farmer**

St. Isidore the Farmer was not educated, but he has something important to teach people living today. He had a deep connection with the earth God gave us. All his life, from the time he was very young, he worked as a farm laborer. He prayed joyfully all day while he worked at plowing, planting and harvesting. All day long, as he walked behind the plow, he was able to commune with his God.

Isidore was born in 1070 and lived near Madrid in Spain. His name in Spanish is Ysidro. He was married to Maria Torribia. The two had one son, who died at a young age. They were poor, but despite these sorrows, Isidore lived a rich life. He was noted for visiting churches on his days off for providing food for those even poorer than himself.

Maria and Isidore also were known for their kindness to animals. All through their lives they

had a special concern that animals be treated with compassion, whether they were beasts that pulled the plow or the birds that twittered in the fields. Isidore is the patron saint of Madrid. Together Isidore and Maria are patrons of farmers and farm communities. He died on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1120 at fifty years of age. His wife survived him for several years and they are both venerated as saints in Spain. He was formally canonized in 1622.

### **Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup> the Feast of St. Simon Stock**

St. Simon Stock was born in 1165 at Kent, in England, of a distinguished family. He was called "Simon Stock" because at the age of twelve he began living a contemplative life in the hollow (the stock) of a great oak tree, which he made his little chapel and home for twenty years. He became a Carmelite monk and hermit, and, in time, was made the sixth General of the Order, in England. It was to St. Simon Stock, on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1251, that Our Lady gave the brown scapular. Our Lady promised to all who wore the brown scapular that she would obtain for the the grace of final perseverance in the Catholic Faith. This moment is portrayed in stained glass in our church. On the parking lot side of the church, the third window from the vestibule shows Mary giving the full Carmelite scapular to Simon stock who kneals in prayer. The window is inscribed: *ofiarowala Tow. Serca Jezusa. gr. 162 Zjed.*, which is translated: offered by the Sacred Heart Society, group #162 of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America.

Saint Simon Stock was one hundred years old when he died. During his life he visited Mount Carmel, which is located in the Holy Land. It is the great mountain dedicated so especially to Mary, the Mother of God, and where the first chapel ever built in her honor was erected in the year 33 AD.

### **Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> – the Feast of St. Felix of Cantalice**

St. Felix was born on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1515 to peasant parents in Cantalice, Italy, in the central Italian region of Lazio. He was third of four sons. His parents were poor peasant farmers. At the age of ten, Felix was hired out first as a shepherd to a family at Cittaducale, where he later worked as a farm hand. Until the age of 28 he worked as a farm laborer and shepherd. He developed the habit of praying while he worked. In 1543, Felix entered the newly founded Capuchin friars as a lay brother in the friary in the town where he had been working. In 1547 he was sent to Rome where he spent the remaining 40 years of his life begging alms to help the friars' work of aiding the sick and the poor.

In Rome, Brother Felix became a familiar sight, wandering barefoot through the streets, with a sack slung over his shoulders, knocking on doors to seek donations. He received permission from his superiors to help the needy when he met them, especially widows with many children. His custom was to greet everyone he met and bless all his benefactors with a "Deo Gratias!" (Thanks be to God!), causing many to refer to him as "Brother Deo Gratias." Though a simple and unlettered man, his holiness and wisdom were so great that saints, like St. Charles Borromeo and St. Philip Neri, consulted him, and many learned theologians went to him for advice.

St. Felix died in Rome in 1587 on his 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday and was buried in the Church of Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini. In 1625 he was the first Capuchin friar in the history of the Order to be canonized. This took place in Rome on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and was done by Pope Urban VIII. There is a church in Rome dedicated in his honor. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland, the Felician Sisters, a religious congregation of Franciscan Sisters of the Third Order Regular, was founded by Blessed Angela Truskowska. Since 1855 they have been caring for the poor under the protection of St. Felix, whom they adopted as their patron saint.

# Madonna della Strada

## The Madonna of the Streets

The image of the Madonna of the Streets is familiar to many people. Seeming very modern, she has become a favorite illustration for Christmas cards. But few people know that there are at least two Madonna's of the Street and that together they have inspired Christians for centuries.

The first Madonna of the Streets, known as Santa Maria della Strada, or Saint Mary of the Wayside, is an icon dating from the fourteenth century. It was originally placed in the Astalli family's small Church of Our Lady of the Wayside. In 1541 Pope Paul III gave this neighborhood chapel to Saint Ignatius of Loyola to use as the headquarters for the newly formed Society of Jesus. Though conveniently located in Rome, it was much too small for the expanding order. So a larger church was commissioned, to be called Il Gesu; it was finally consecrated in 1584, after Ignatius's death. Within Il Gesu was constructed an intimate chapel for the Santa Maria della Strada, which is still its main altarpiece.

The icon is located between an altar dedicated to Saint Ignatius and one dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus. This location symbolizes the Blessed Mother's characteristically intercessory role. Il Gesu itself is dedicated to God, the Virgin and Jesus – again emphasizing Mary's important relationship with the Divine.

The icon depicts our Lady holding the child Jesus. Both are crowned with gold, with other decorations in gold and precious gems. She wears a golden sunburst on her right shoulder, and Jesus makes a gesture of blessing with his right hand. Although extremely ornate, the icon was considered a representation of poverty, symbolizing the humble origins of our Lord and the simple life of the Holy Family.

The second Madonna of the Streets is a contemporary depiction and is, to the modern eye, more evocative of our Lord's love of the poor. This is the image with which most people are familiar. It was actually titled La Madonnina, or Little Madonna, and was first exhibited in Venice in 1897. It is believed that the artist, Robert Ferruzzi, used as models a peasant girl, Angelina Cian, age eleven, and her baby brother. The painting came to be known as the Madonna of the Streets because the image suggests hardship and poverty, and the little Madonna seems to be standing on a doorstep, pleading for food and shelter for herself and her sleeping, trusting baby. The painting offers observers a direct and personal challenge, and modern sensibilities, easily imaging Mary and Jesus in such a scene, feel compelled to reach out and offer help to those in need.

The concept of the Madonna of the Streets goes beyond the details of poverty or physical need. Certainly, there are many street people who lack the necessities of food, clothing, shelter, a job. But other people lack necessities, too: kind words, friendly gestures, loving acceptance. In a sense, all people are street people – all are on their way from the here and now to an unknown time and place. All need guideposts, and all need someone to reach out in charity to help them along. That is the Madonna della Strada's enduring message.

### A Prayer to Our Lady of the Streets

O cara Madonna, when I feel myself hungry or thirsty, remind me of those who are hungrier and thirstier. When I think I need a fancy new jacket or a pair of designer sneakers, remind me of those who have no coat or shoes. When I begin to make plans to buy a bigger house, remind me of those who have no house or apartment. When I despair of ever paying off my credit cards, remind me of those who have no job. And when I begin to drown in all my anxieties, lift me out of my funk and push me out into the streets among those whose needs are life threatening, and show me what I can do to help them. Then let them guide me to what's important. Amen.