



# Stronica Proboszcza



## The Pastor's Page

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Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ/ Corpus Christi/Boże Ciało

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*Month of the Sacred Heart*

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!  
Praised be Jesus Christ!

**T**he Solemnity of Corpus Christi is the last big celebration of the liturgical year before we enter fully into the simplicity of Ordinary Time. This is a special occasion to focus our attention, even more than usual, on the wonderful gift of the Holy Eucharist. We celebrate this gift each Sunday. In fact we are permitted to receive the Holy Eucharist every single day of our lives if we so choose. The Eucharist is the greatest treasure of our faith, always available to us, always present in the tabernacles of Catholic Churches throughout the entire world! We want never to take this treasure for granted, never to become so used to it that we celebrate or receive it routinely without awareness of what we are doing and who is present.

Are we conscious of the fact when we come up to receive Holy Communion, that the small piece of bread placed in our hands or on our tongue is the living Christ? Our Savior Jesus Christ, veiled or disguised as bread. This would seem to be an obvious truth, one that we all learned in our First Communion Catechism, and yet there are so many confused Catholics out there. The Eucharist is not a symbol of Christ. It is not a quaint reminder of Him.

Yes, it goes against common sense that the Lord of all creation could be present in something so insignificant as a little piece of bread, but He is there! Make no mistake about it. He is there because He wants to be there! It is part of God's Master Plan for the Salvation of Humanity – to be able to come to people of every generation and era of history, to be present to them and help them with the grace only God can give. What a fantastic treasure the Blessed Sacrament is!

According to long standing tradition in the Church, on the feast of Corpus Christi our faith in Christ's wonderful presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar culminates in the Eucharistic Procession and Benediction to four outdoor altars. This act of devotion takes our faith to the streets! It is *almost* a moment of *showing-off* our greatest treasure to all those who may not be aware of our faith in the Divine Presence by demonstrating publicly our devotion to Christ. If people should stop and stare at these doings, so odd in today's very secular society, all the better. The Eucharistic Procession has the potential to be a strong form of evangelization! It is also a way of reminding ourselves that the Eucharistic presence of Christ is not simply confined to the church. No, Christ's presence enters into every corner of our lives both inside and outside the parish church.

## *The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbol of Divine Love!*

In June of 1675 Jesus asked Sister Margaret Mary, a nun of the Order of the Visitation, that the first Friday after the feast of Corpus Christi be dedicated to His Sacred Heart, together with reception of Holy Communion and acts of reparation. When her superiors were unwilling to cooperate, Sister Margaret Mary received support and guidance from Jesuit father, Claude de la Colombiere, her confessor. Nevertheless she still had to suffer more when the Lord instructed her to go contrary to her own Visitation community. Finally, however, a friend of hers became superior of the community in 1640 and selected Sister Margaret Mary as an assistant and as mistress of novices. Thus, on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1686, the feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated in the convent for the first time. In 1690 she died at the age of 43. The image of the Sacred Heart was later painted on the standard of King Louis XIV of France and eventually adopted in France, Spain and the Tyrol.

In 1873 France was consecrated to the Sacred Heart and the famous basilica of Sacre Coeur was built in the Montmarte district of Paris. Later, Spain and Brazil also erected statues in honor of the Sacred Heart. In 1856 Pope Pius IX extended the feast of the Sacred Heart to the universal Church and in 1929 Pope Pius XI raised the feast to a solemnity. Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque was canonized in 1920.

A depiction of St. Margaret Mary can be seen in the great window of the north transept in our church. She has been kneeling in prayer before the altar of her convent chapel, when the Lord Jesus appears to her as the door of the tabernacle opens, she drops her rosary and prayer book. Jesus reveals His Most Sacred Heart to her as an angel is seen hovering over the entire scene. The inscription in Polish underneath tells us that this window was offered by the *Heart of Jesus*, Sacred Heart Society of the parish.

Of course the main “shrine” to the Sacred Heart in our church is the north side altar. It is a rather rare thing to have a side altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a church although they can be found. What is even more rare, in fact I have never encountered this, is to have that altar on the left side of the main altar. This altar is almost always reserved for the Blessed Virgin Mary. The idea being, if the tabernacle is Christ’s “throne” and He “sits on it” looking out over the congregation, His Holy Mother would be to His right. The psalm from the Assumption Day Mass confirms this idea: “The Queen stands at your right hand arrayed in gold.”

This unique arrangement has caused many “discussions” during weddings about which side the bride should be seated on. The standard tradition is that the bride is on the left and the groom is on the right. However it has also been a custom that the bride sits on the side of the church where the Virgin’s altar is in “solidarity” with the Blessed Mother. At this point we leave it up to the couple. It is enough to point out that it is rare to have an altar to the Sacred Heart and equally as rare to have the Lady altar on the right. But thanks be to God we have them, as many churches today do not have side altars or even statues of the holy ones, within them!

*O Jezu cichy  
i pokornego serca,  
Uczyń serca nasze  
według serca Twego.*

*O Jesus, meek  
and humble of heart,  
Make our hearts  
like unto thine.*

## Boże Ciało in Poland

In the Old Country of our ancestors the Eucharistic procession on Corpus Christ was one of the biggest events of the year from both a religious and social perspective. In Europe the Solemnity is always celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which is a legal holiday! Why Thursday? This day was chosen to commemorate the day, Holy Thursday, when the Last Supper was held during which the Holy Eucharist was instituted.

After Mass the procession takes place in cities along the streets passing houses and shops and through the town square. The priest carries the monstrance with the Eucharist under a canopy as young children scatter flowers along the way. In villages and rural areas the procession is from house to house. As the procession moves along the Eucharistic hymn sung by all present is *Twoja cześć chwala* which is translated, *Yours is the honor and glory, our eternal Lord! May this never cease, unto the end of time!*

Four altars are set up along the path of the procession. They are decorated with an abundance of late spring flowers, candles and statues of favorite saints. As the procession of crosses, banners, statues, icons, altar boys with bells and children dressed in ethnic costumes or their Sunday best, arrives at each altar, the priest reposes the Sacrament there for prayers and Benediction.

The first altar commemorates the Eucharist as a Sacrifice or Offering. At the second altar it is recalled that the Eucharist is food for the soul. The Third altar commemorates the Eucharist as the foretaste of eternal life and the fourth altar celebrates the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity of the Church.

This solemn celebration of the loving presence of the Body and Blood of Christ always comes at that time of the year when nature itself is bursting into bloom and joins in the joy of all creation in realizing God's Divine presence with us always in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist!

### A PRAYER FOR THE WHEAT ON THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Dear Lord, in many broad fields of this vast country of ours, the wheat is growing now. Some is still young and green, some is headed out, and all, before very long, will be golden ripe.

Most of it, dear Lord Jesus, will go to feed the hungry. In countless loaves of bread and cereals, it will find its way to tables in city and country almost all over the world.

Some of it will be used at another table. It will be ground into fine flour and used to make hosts, the altar-breads for Holy Mass. Priests will take it into their anointed hands and pronounce over it the words of consecration, and it will cease to be ordinary bread, and will become the Bread of Angels. It will look as it did before, but we know and believe that it will be the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of You, Lord Jesus Christ, there really present, under the appearances of bread.

O Jesus, bless the broad, rich fields of wheat in our whole land. Protect them from hail and beating rains, from blight and rust, from windstorms and drought. Let them be full and rich, so that the hungry may be fed, and may praise You and thank You as You deserve. And may all the Holy Masses that will be said with hosts made of this wheat hasten the day when at last there will be enough reapers working in Your harvest, which is ripe and ready now, waiting only to be gathered home. Amen.

### Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> – Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

During the great cycle of the Christian year, there are three festivals in celebration of a person's birth. We celebrate the births of John the Baptist, of Mary, and of Jesus. These are the holy ones who were filled with the Spirit even before their birth.

Keep in mind that, in the liturgy of the church, a "nativity" is not a birthday. Birthdays are anniversaries of a birth. Instead, a nativity is the birth itself. Today is not John the Baptist's birthday. Today John is born. That's what we sing in the liturgy today. Rejoicing at John's birth is a commandment of the gospel. Even the angel Gabriel tells us to rejoice (Luke 1:14). The Gospel of John records that Jesus himself praises John the Baptist.

The feast of John's birth was established very early in the Church's history, at about the same time as the feast of Christmas. Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel announced the conception of Jesus six months after announcing the conception of John. So the date of this feast is six months before Christmas. The old customs that centered around the summer solstice became ways to honor John. In Europe and other parts of the world, some people stay up all night to burn St. John's fires. And the celebration goes on all day as well.

In Poland, wreaths lit with candles-which look like Advent wreaths-are tossed into streams to float downriver. Young unmarried girls weave the wreaths of flowers and herbs, each girl trying to make her wreath as distinctive as possible. Lining the sides of the river bank or pond, the girls would attach lighted candles to their wreaths and then cast them into the water. In former times so plentiful were the wreaths and flowers on the waters that the saying arose that "on St. John's the water blossoms."

As the girls watched their wreaths, they sang songs to the boys who either jumped directly into the water or skimmed over it in small boats to retrieve the wreaths of their choice. For some, marriage matches were made on this night and if not, young maids went to sleep thinking of the man they would like to marry, for it was believed that dreams dreamed on midsummer night were likely to come true.

The most outstanding feature of St. John's Night in Poland however, were the bonfires. Country people would travel up into nearby hills and mountaintops, or to large clearings in the forests. Once there, they would ignite huge bonfires by the traditional, primitive method of rubbing two sticks together, or by striking flint in order that the fire be "live" or "new." The darkening horizon would be fiery with hundreds of bonfires while young and old gathered around the flames. The religious understanding of the bonfires was that once Jesus had called St. John the Baptist "a burning and shining light," and so it was believed that the fires were a symbol perpetuated in memory of St. John the Baptist.

## **Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup> – the Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Najświętszej Maryi Panny Nieustającej Pomocy**

### **MATER DE PERPETUO SUCCURSU**

The Mother of Perpetual Help story begins in the fifteenth century, when according to legend, a merchant stole a miraculous painting from a church on the island of Crete and set sail across the Mediterranean. Nearly shipwrecked in a wild storm, he made landfall and eventually brought the stolen painting to Rome.

There he became ill. Upon his deathbed he revealed the secret of the painting to a friend, begging that the icon be placed in a church for public veneration. The merchant died, the friend having promised to fulfill his wish. But the friend's wife so loved the image that she refused to part with it.

After the friend died the Blessed Mother herself intervened, appearing to the couple's six-year-old daughter. Referring to herself as the Mother of Perpetual Help, Mary asked the child to tell her mother and grandmother to have the icon venerated in a church between the churches of St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. At the time the Church of St. Matthew the Apostle was found in that location, and with much reluctance, on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1499, the child's mother obeyed Mary's request.

Over the next three hundred years, the icon's beauty and wonderworking powers attracted the devotion of the people. When in 1798 Napoleon's troops nearly destroyed the Church of St. Matthew, the icon moved with its Augustinian caretakers to a nearby monastery. Then in 1819 the Augustinians took the painting with them to the Church of St. Mary in Posterula. As Our Lady of Grace was already venerated there, the Mother of Perpetual Help was placed in a private chapel, forgotten by all except Brother Augustine Orsetti, who ensured that one of his altar boys, Michael Marchi, knew the icon's story.

In 1855 the priests of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known as the Redemptorists, acquired the lands of the Villa Caserta, which included the spot where the Church of St. Matthew the Apostle had been located. There they constructed the Church of St. Alphonsus. Becoming interested in the history of their land, the Redemptorists turned up the story of the Mother of Perpetual Help icon. Michael Marchi, then a Redemptorist novice, remembered what Orsetti had said and directed his confreres to the image. Pope Pius IX granted the Redemptorists custody of the painting, telling them to make the Mother of Perpetual Help known throughout the world. Thus in 1866 the icon was returned, cleaned and installed in the very spot between St.

Mary Major and St. John Lateran that the Mother of Perpetual Help had chosen as her sanctuary centuries before. Her feast day was established on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

With help from Mary herself the Redemptorists have indeed made her known throughout the world, and Our Mother of Perpetual Help now has shrines in Boston, New York and St. Louis; Haiti, where she is the country's patron; Santiago, Chile; Curitiba, Belem and Manaus, Brazil; Tequisquiapan, Mexico; Belfast and Limerick, Ireland; Torun and Kraków, Poland; Singapore; and Manila, Philippines. The perpetual novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, which was first established in St. Louis in 1927, has spread the devotion and attracts hundreds and thousands of people.

The painting itself depicts the Madonna and Christ child, with Saints Michael and Gabriel in attendance. All are identified by Greek lettering. The two angels are holding the instruments of the Passion: the cross, the spear, the crown of thorns and the sponge. The child, having been shown this vision of His future, has in His fright rushed into Mary's lap. He is still staring at the cross with fear, and his sandal has fallen off His right foot, a detail that emphasizes how quickly He has run to His Mother. Though she has taken hold of His hand to comfort Him, she is staring out of the image at the observer, her sorrowful eyes drawing all her children into her perpetual care and protection. The star on her forehead emphasizes her role as Mother of God and Mother of All People. At the same time, she directs the observer to focus on Jesus, the Son of God. As always, Mary guides the faithful to her Son, her mission being to bring all people to Christ, the source of all salvation.

In our parish the novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help was begun by Fr. Bogusław Parzych in the late 1930's during his time as administrator of the parish for the sickly Fr. Kruszk. The Perpetual Help shrine was a gift to the parish from the altar boys in 1942.

## **Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup> – Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**

In the Middle Ages the third Friday after Pentecost was celebrated among Roman Catholics in some places as a feast of the wounds of Christ. It became a kind of echo of Good Friday, the same way Corpus Christi was an echo of Holy Thursday.

Devotion to the passion of Christ often was very strong in the church of the Middle Ages. Remembering the suffering of Jesus helped people make sense of their own troubles. St. Gertrude the Great, who lived in the thirteenth century, said that Jesus appeared to her the way he had appeared to St. Thomas the Apostle. He showed her his wounds. He taught her his love, which shone from his heart.

In the seventeenth century a false idea called Jansenism was becoming popular. People believed that human sinfulness was overpowering. No one was worthy of God's love, and few people would receive it.

Also at this time the devotion to the heart of Jesus grew strong. People said that Jesus wanted them to know his love. God's love was stronger than sin.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque said that she was chosen by Christ to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart. St. John Eudes preached about the loving heart of Jesus. He composed a liturgy for a feast of the Sacred Heart. In the year 1765, seventy-five years after St. Margaret Mary died, Pope Clement XIII approved this devotion and set the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the church's calendar.

A depiction of St. Margaret Mary can be seen in the great window of the north transept in our church. She has been kneeling in prayer before the altar of her convent chapel, when the Lord Jesus appears to her as the door of the tabernacle opens, she drops her rosary and prayer book. Jesus reveals His Most Sacred Heart to her as an angel is seen hovering over the entire scene. The inscription in Polish underneath tells us that this window was offered by the *Heart of Jesus*, Sacred Heart Society of the parish.

On the wall above our Sacred Heart altar can be seen the words in Polish: *Przyjdź Królestwo Twoje*. This is translated: Thy Kingdom Come, which is of course a citation from the Lord's Prayer. The painting just below it is a combination of images of Christ the King and the Sacred Heart. The enthroned Savior wears a crown and holds a scepter. His loving Heart is exposed as His right hand is raised in benediction. He is surrounded by adoring angels. The Kingdom which is to come, the kingdom for which we must pray and work, is a Kingdom of Love and Mercy. It is the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! May it come!

## **The Twelve Promises of Jesus to All Who Honor His Sacred Heart**

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all in death.
5. I will pour abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in my Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall grow fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall speedily rise to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place where a picture of My Sacred Heart shall be set up and honored.
10. I will give to priests the power to touch the most hardened hearts.
11. Those who propagate this devotion shall have their name written in My Heart, and it shall never be removed.
12. I promise you in the excessive Mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful Love will grant to all those who communicate on the First Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final penitence, they shall not die in my displeasure nor without receiving the Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

### **Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Feast of Saints Peter & Paul**

This feast day celebrates two of the greatest saints of our Catholic Faith. After the Blessed Virgin Mary, there probably were not two other disciples of the Lord Jesus who were more devoted to the mission and to Christ's gospel. These apostles were very different from Mary, who always did God's will and the will of her divine Son perfectly, 100%! They struggled with their discipleship. Saints Peter and Paul had their moments when their own ideas and dreams took them in the exact opposite direction from what Christ was doing and saying.

St. Peter did not want to let Jesus go to Jerusalem to give up his life. Later he renounced the Lord publicly, saying he did not even know Him. In spite of this, Jesus called Peter the Rock upon which he would build his Church and eventually all the other disciples of Christ recognized St. Peter as their leader. In a dream Peter came to understand that the gospel message was for everyone on earth, not only for the Jews like himself. St. Peter was probably imprisoned three or four times before being martyred around the year 64 during the persecutions of the emperor Nero. According to legend, he asked to be crucified upside down, since he did not feel worthy to die in the same way Jesus died. His tomb is under the High Altar of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

St. Paul went around actually rounding up and killing early Christians until the time of his conversion. After his vision of Christ and change of heart, he became a great missionary. He was well equipped for this with a bright mind and a good education. He was familiar with the scriptures because he had studied to be a rabbi. St. Paul was the first to write of Christ, in letter form. This preceded even the gospels. Like St. Peter, St. Paul was martyred by Nero, perhaps around 67. His tomb is located in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls of the old city of Rome.

God took the very human characters of these two thoroughly diverse persons and made them great and made them holy. Christ built His Church on them and that Church endures today. Both gave up their lives as martyrs for the One True Faith in Rome.