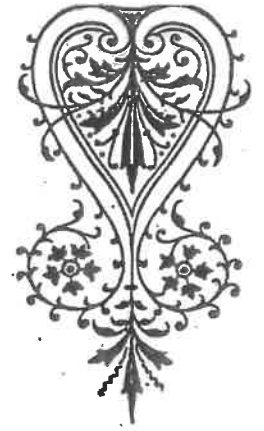


Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

November 24th, MMXIX

Thirty-Fourth and Last Sunday in Ordinary Time

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Rev. Mark A. Borkowski

Month of the Holy Souls

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Today is the last Sunday of the Church year. It is also the Solemn Feast of Christ the King. Next weekend the liturgical year starts anew with the first Sunday of Advent. We close the liturgical year with an image of Christ Jesus that is only foretold in the bible. Never do we see Christ looking or acting like a king in the gospel.

He is born in poverty. He grew up in what would be considered no more than a middle class family. He learned a trade and practiced manual labor with Joseph his foster father to earn a living. Later he roamed the highways and byways of the Holy Land, probably depending on folk's generosity for His survival. He gathered a group of men around Him who were equally as non-royal as He. His life ended in disgrace as He died on the cross and even in death there was no tomb of His own for His burial.

This is not the typical imagery we expect of a King. The glory of Christ's kingship was hidden during His life on earth. There were a couple of moments when it peeked out from its hiding place, like at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor or at the Resurrection. Very few people were privileged to have these glimpses of the majesty of our King and yet today the Church proudly proclaims that Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. And that one day, when He comes again into our world it's going to be very different than the first time He came!

When He comes the second time, at the end of everything, even folks who doubted His kingship will be overwhelmed! He will come as the supreme judge and ruler of us all. He will gather to Himself all power and control of His creation and a new era will begin. This Christ, who truly is King, is what we celebrate today. And with great anticipation we look forward to that royal coming of our King! Until He comes we commit ourselves to always and everywhere conducting ourselves as His loyal followers. We want to be members of that Kingdom and this life and these times are where and when we get ready for His Kingdom. Would it be obvious to a stranger that you were a loyal subject of Christ who is your King?

Monday, November 25th – Anniversary of the death of

Reverend Bernard Żmijewski,

founding pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish.

Pastor 1899-1906

Requiescat in pace.

Wednesday, November 27th – Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

The era of modern Marian apparitions began in 1830, when the Blessed Mother gave the world, through St. Catherine Laboure, both the gift of the Miraculous Medal and one of the first revelations of the Immaculate Conception.

Born in 1806, Catherine entered the convent of the Sisters of Charity in the Rue de Bac, Paris in 1830. On the night of July 18th of that year, a voice awakened Catherine at around 11:00 PM. A beautiful child beckoned her to the chapel, which was ablaze with light. After Catherine had knelt at the communion rail, the child announced the Mother of God. With a rustle as of silk, a lady appeared and seated herself in a chair by the altar. Dressed in a white robe and blue mantle, the lady gathered Catherine's hands in her lap. Catherine experienced what she described as the sweetest joy of her life.

The Blessed Mother told Catherine she would receive a mission from God. She also predicted misfortunes for France: the overthrow of the throne, the death of the archbishop, the trampling of the cross, violence in the streets. But Mary promised to protect the convent. Then she asked Catherine not to reveal the vision to anyone except her confessor, Father Aladel.

He was skeptical of her story. But within days antireligious rioting seized Paris. Churches were pillaged, and the archbishop was forced into hiding. On July 31st the revolt deposed King Charles X and installed Louis Philippe as King. As Mary promised, the convent remained untouched.

On November 27th, during evening prayers in the chapel, Catherine again beheld our Lady, who was dressed in dazzling white and was standing on a globe.

After a moment Mary stretched out her hands. Myriad rays of light extended from the bejeweled rings on her fingers, and she said, "These rays symbolize the graces I will bestow upon all who ask me."

Then an oval surrounded our Lady, and on it was written in golden letters "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you."

Suddenly, Catherine saw the letter M surmounted by a cross, with a bar beneath, and beneath this monogram the hearts of Jesus, surrounded with a crown of thorns, and of Mary, transpierced with a sword. A voice charged Catherine to have a medal struck with these images, promising, "Persons who wear it with piety will receive great graces."

A few days later, as well as in March and September of 1831, our Lady appeared again and repeated her message. The last time, when she expressed disappointment that her request had not been carried out, Catherine's confessor finally went to Archbishop de Quelen. Though incredulous, he nevertheless had a small number of the medals created, since the images reflected Roman Catholic doctrine and encouraged devotion to Mary Immaculate.

The archbishop took one of the medals to the deathbed of the archbishop of Malines, Monsignor de Pradt, who had fallen away from the church. Immediately, Monsignor de Pradt repented. Hearing of other miraculous favors associated with the medal, Archbishop de Quelen gave permission for an unlimited number of medals to be struck. He called it the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, but because of the number of miracles it seemed to engender, it quickly became known as the Miraculous Medal.

In 1870 Mary's other prophesies came to pass: the Franco-Prussian War and the murder of the archbishop.

Catherine subsequently hid her identity as the visionary until 1876, when she came out to the mother superior to fulfill Mary's request for a statue of Our Lady of the Globe. Pope Leo XIII approved the statue just before Catherine's death, on December 31st, 1876.

Exhumed after her beatification in 1933, Catherine's incorrupt body was placed in a glass reliquary in the Chapel of Apparitions in the Rue de Bac, where it remains. She was canonized in 1947.

This feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of the first vision of the medal. Over the years our Lady has granted many favors to those who are devoted to the medal, which itself has no intrinsic power. It is not a good luck charm. Rather, it is a prayer, invoking the intercession of our Lady, and those who pray it regularly come to know the grace of being in close communion with the Mother of God.

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!

For a happy life you need three things: Someone to love, Something to do and Something to look forward to.

Saturday, November 30th – Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle

St. Andrew lived a quiet and simple life as a fisherman. His name in Greek means, "manly" or "brave." He worked with his brother Simon in the town of Bethsaida in Galilee. One day Jesus walked by as they cast their nets and invited them to become fishers of men. Soon afterward Jesus worked a miracle in Andrew and Simon's house, healing Simon's mother-in-law of a fever. All this is told in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark.

In the gospels, Andrew is often shown bringing others to Jesus. It was Andrew who brought forward the boy with the five loaves and two fishes when food was needed for the crowd. In the Gospel of St. John, Andrew is seen as having been a disciple of St. John the Baptist. After the Baptist points out Jesus to Andrew one day, Andrew runs and tells his brother Simon, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew is considered the first apostle called by Christ and is called the "Protoclete," in Greek meaning the first called. After Jesus marched triumphantly into Jerusalem, Andrew helped some Greek men who wanted to speak with Jesus.

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Andrew brought others to Christ in a new way. He became a missionary. To this day, several countries in far-flung parts of the world claim to have been visited by St. Andrew. However, it isn't known for sure where he preached or where he died. It is believed he was martyred in the year 60 at Patras, on an island in Greece after infuriating Egeas, the Roman governor of Patras by baptizing his wife Maximilla. Tradition says that St. Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross, called a "saltire cross." Because of legends that he preached in Scotland, that country put his cross on its flag. Thistle flowers are worn by the Scots on the feast of St. Andrew, the way shamrocks are worn by the Irish on St. Patrick's Day and the way leeks are worn by the Welsh on St. David's Day. St. Andrew is the patron saint not only of Scotland but of Greece and Russia as well.

This is My Parish

It is composed of people like me. We make it what it is. It will be friendly, if I am friendly. Its pews will be filled, if I help to fill them. It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am a generous giver. It will bring other people to its worship and fellowship if I bring them. It will be a Church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a Church with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these qualities. Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things I want my Church to be.

From a tombstone found in a very old cemetery:

*Fui quod sis, Sum quod eris
– As you are, I once was; as I am you shall be*

The Polish All Souls/Dzien Zaduszny Procession (part IV)

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 fourth station of the procession where all of the faithful departed are remembered.

Now let us pray for all the dead: first of all those resting in this cemetery, and then those souls, resting elsewhere, or for those whose ashes are scattered on the fields surrounding the concentration camps. Our thoughts move lovingly to those, who made an offering of their lives, perhaps in the fight for freedom for our country and other nations. We think also of those who have no one to remember them, and who wait for our prayers. Their names are unknown to us, nor the dates when they departed this world, but God know all of this. Therefore we recommend them to the mercy of God.

Those gathered are asked to pray for all the dead, that God would reward their suffering and death in this life with life eternal.

O God, Who is always merciful and forgiving, bestow mercy upon your servants and forgive them all their sins, that after being liberated from the bonds of earthly life, they might pass into eternal life. Amen.

Holy water is sprinkled and then that place is incensed and the procession then moves on to the final station. At the fifth station prayers are offered for all the living present in that cemetery for the procession. The priest begins:

Now we must consider ourselves, as we stand around this cross near the graves of our dear ones. Near is that time when our bodies will be laid in the grave, perhaps here, perhaps elsewhere. There is no need to be frightened of departing from this world. Of what should we be frightened? We should be frightened of our sins, of a lack of penance and of the justice of God. We should fear the Judgment of God, which might find us unprepared. But let us turn with confidence to Jesus Christ, who lives always, and intercedes for us.

Those gathered are asked to pray for themselves, that God would give them time to do penance before death and that those standing in that group who would be called first to the Judgment of God would be given the grace of reconciliation with God especially through the Sacrament of Penance.

Almighty and eternal God, who extends your power over the living and the dead, and who shows mercy to all, who through their faith and good works belong to you, humbly we beseech you, that these, for whom we pray, - these who still live on this earth, and those who have already departed to eternity, may because of your holiness and grace be granted the forgiveness of all their sins. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy water is sprinkled and then that place is incensed. The procession and devotion concludes with prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Brothers and sisters, let us now turn to the most holy mother of Jesus Christ and to our mother, greeting her and asking her that she would show us her son in heaven, to whom we all cry out; the prayer Hail Holy Queen is now sung. And then the service concludes with the final prayer: Almighty and eternal God, who brought the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the mother of your Son, to heavenly glory, both body and soul, grant we beseech you, that by asking for her continuous intercession in heaven for all our needs, we may share in her glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Niech odpoczywają w pokoju. Amen.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

November – The Month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory

Dante Aligheri (1265-1321) wrote a famous poem, *La Divina Commedia*, The Divine Comedy, made up of three shorter poems, the *Inferno* (hell), *Purgatorio* (purgatory), and *Paradiso* (heaven). Dante described purgatory as a suburb of hell – close enough to smell the stench and feel the heat but still far enough away for hope. And he described those in hell as never getting out of the torment they deserved for their evil.

Although not a theological work – and never meant as theology – Dante’s poem greatly influenced the Medieval and Renaissance mindset. Many people felt that what Dante described was what purgatory really was – hell with parole or a suburb of hell.

According to the Church, however, purgatory is more like a suburb of heaven. It’s close enough to hear the laughter and singing, smell the sweetness in the air, and feel the warmth nearby, but far enough away to remind everyone that they haven’t yet arrived.

Or, as some people would like to think of it, it’s like being stuck in traffic on the day before Thanksgiving. You know for certain that you’re on your way home, but you just don’t know when. And it’s the not-knowing part that causes the anxiety and purgative pain.

Or, it may help to think of purgatory in terms of a major operation to save a life. Say a doctor performs surgery on someone’s heart or brain and removes a cancerous tumor. The surgery achieves the main objective, but the wound needs to heal, and the incision needs to be cleaned and rebandaged. Purgatory is like that secondary part of recovery – the healing, cleaning, and bandaging; the belief is that the evil of sin is revealed to the person so he or she can totally and absolutely reject even the most venial and smallest of sins.

Some Additional Thoughts about the Souls in Purgatory

The Cure d’Ars, St. John Vianney, once told a fellow priest that if people only knew how great is the power of the souls in Purgatory and how many graces we can obtain from God through their intercession, they would not be so forgotten. Let us pray well for them, so that they may pray for us!

One of the pre-eminent Doctors of the Church, Saint Thomas Aquinas, went so far as to say: “Of all our prayers, those that we pray for the dead are the most agreeable to God, because such an exercise includes within itself works of both corporal and spiritual charity.”

“When it happens that a few souls,” said Our Lord to St. Gertrude, “are given their freedom through the assistance of your prayers, I feel the same joy as if I was being freed from captivity; moreover, I will not forget to reward you at the appropriate time.”

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Because an unmarried Jew in His early thirties spoke for the first time the mystic words of Consecration at a farewell banquet in a city of the Near East over two thousand years ago, and then knowingly went out to let Himself be killed like a common criminal the following afternoon, over one million men, women, and children, all over the earth, today in the Mass, share the secret of life everlasting.

For the young Jew was also Almighty God. In every age since the moment of His shameful public execution, not a day has dawned, which did not witness that death repeated. Through all ages, what He did is done again, somewhere, always. Through His death – and the burst tomb which followed it by three days – men and women live again and come once more to God. We who share in re-enacting this ancient secret, bear the name of Catholics. We call it the Mass