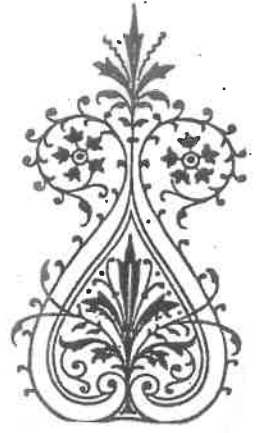


Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

May 24th, MMXX

The Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord

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Month of Our Lady

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Once again today we are instructed to observe the Solemnity of Christ's ascending into heaven on a Sunday rather than on the 40th day after His glorious resurrection. The bishops of Michigan have made this decision in order to insure Mass attendance on this important commemoration of an event of our salvation history. The thought was, that asking the faithful to attend Mass on a Thursday was asking too much of them and that those who were not able to participate in Mass on Ascension Thursday would forget about this important tenet of our Catholic Faith. And so... for better or worse, we now observe the Ascension of Our Savior on the Seventh Sunday of the Easter Season.

After His resurrection Christ spent some quality time with His disciples and His mother. His teaching continued during this time and certainly their emotions ran high with excitement and joy having Him back again after His brutal crucifixion and death. In this world, however every good thing must come to an end. When Jesus judged that day had come, He went with the disciples and His mother to Mount Olivet, a little over a mile from Jerusalem, and from that place He ascended by His own power into heaven. He went back to that place where it had all begun 33 years earlier, when He left Heaven and was conceived in Mary's womb and then born in the stable of Bethlehem. There could not have been a grander exit!

So much of Christ's glory as the Son of God had been veiled during His life on earth. He was born in obscurity and died in poverty, but now His human followers were beginning to get a glimpse of the majesty of the Son of God. Peter, James and John had glimpsed it before on Mount Tabor during the Transfiguration of Jesus.

Now after enduring so much pain and suffering in this life, Jesus takes possession of the heavenly reward which is rightly His. But Jesus does not retire now to a heavenly throne removed from interaction with the people He loved so much, left behind on earth. No, He goes as to send the Holy Spirit down upon the infant Church He has left below, and He takes His place as THE Mediator between us and His Father. For these reasons, the Solemnity of the Ascension is a great celebration of the Victory of Christ and the Glory of God and it is good, very good and fitting that we should all be here in Church this Sunday to fervently celebrate it!

God has gone up amidst shouts of joy, the Lord to the sound of trumpets!

Our Lady Help of Christians

AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM

FEAST DAY — SUNDAY MAY 24TH

“Spread devotion to Mary, Help of Christians, and you will see miracles.” So advised Saint John Bosco, whose reverence to Mary as Help of Christians, or *Auxilium Christianorum*, led him to construct the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Turin in 1863 and has helped make this title one of the Blessed Mother’s most popular.

Bosco had two dreams that prompted his devotion. In the first, he faced a menacing crowd of cursing and fighting youths, whom he attempted unsuccessfully to subdue with his bare fists. A “majestic” man pulled him out of the fracas, then ordered Bosco back in to take charge “not with blows but with kindness.”

Bosco objected: “Why do you ask impossible things of me? Who are you, anyway?”

The man replied, “Ask my Mother. I will give her to you as your teacher and guide, and she will make it all possible.”

Suddenly, a woman stood beside Bosco and reassured, “In due time you will understand.”

In the second dream, Bosco saw two pillars arising out of a storm-tossed sea to anchor Peter’s bark (the Church). The taller pillar, surmounted with the host, bore the inscription “The Salvation of Believers.” The shorter pillar had a statue of Mary on top and was inscribed “Help of Christians.”

Bosco was not the first to profess devotion to Mary as Help of Christians. In 1576 Bernardino Cirillo, archpriest of Loreto, published a litany, approved by Pope Clement VIII in 1601, that invoked Mary as *Auxilium Christianorum*. This invocation may have arisen out of the victory at the Battle of Lepanto, which many attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Mother. Because of her aid, Pope Pius V hailed her as Our Lady of Victory, Help of Christians.

Also, when Pope Pius VII was freed from captivity after the Battle of Waterloo, in thanks to God and Mary he instituted the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, to be celebrated on May 24th.

In *The Glories of Mary*, Saint Alphonsus de’Liguori (1696-1787) recalled even earlier references: Saint John Damascene’s (c. 676-eighth century) description of Mary as “the prepared and always ready help of Christians, by which they are all delivered from dangers” and Saint Cosmas of Jerusalem’s (third century) depiction of Mary as “all-powerful to deliver us from sin and hell.” Saint Alphonsus also related how Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) addressed Mary; “Thou art an invincible warrior in defense of thy servants, fighting against the devils who assail them.” Historical writings are replete with references to Mary’s helping her children in times of need, including the *Sub tuum praesidium*, the oldest prayer addressed to Mary. It was found on a papyrus dating from the end of the third century, a time of great danger for Christians, and prizes Mary for her assistance given in time of conflict.

Scripture also speaks of the feminine strength that will conquer evil and protect dependents. Genesis prophesies a woman whose seed will crush the serpent’s head (3:15), and Revelation tells of a woman whose son will “rule all the nations with a rod of iron” (12:5). Mary is held to fulfill these prophecies.

As Help of Christians, Mary becomes for all Christians a model of the active, providing assistance to her children and moving heaven and earth to correct evil and bring about God’s will.

Monday, May 25th – Memorial Day

In 1868, a national day was held to remember the dead of the Civil War and to pray for reconciliation. The idea had come from Southern women who visited battlefields in late spring to decorate the graves. Some people still call Memorial Day by its original name, "Decoration Day." Memorial Day now honors all United States citizens who died in war. Every city and town has its war dead. Often they are remembered with a parade to a cemetery or war memorial. With bouquets strewn over the waters, coastal cities honor those who died at sea.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is the site of a Civil War battle where many thousands died. On Memorial Day schoolchildren in that town will decorate the tombs of soldiers who could not be identified after their deaths. A service will be held at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington D.C. In recent years Congress has proclaimed this as a day when the nation should strive for peace. As we honor those who have died, we look forward to the day when we will be willing to settle our disagreements without war.

As Christians, we also pray today for all the innocent victims of war. Across the world, millions of people are homeless because their countries are ravaged by fighting. Those people are called refugees. Many of them are orphaned children. Some are hungry. All are suffering. A day of sorrow and mourning is hard to keep. We probably would rather celebrate the beginning of summer. But Memorial Day can bring with it much needed sorrow and forgiveness and peacemaking. Enjoy this national holiday with family and friends but keep in mind the dear price that has been paid for the gift of freedom. Jesus has said there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for another. Remember also that, peace on earth and good will to men, was the message God's angels proclaimed on the night of Christ's birth!

Tuesday, May 26th – the Feast of St. Philip Neri

St. Philip Neri was born in 1515 in Florence, Italy, into a family of modest income. As a young man Philip Neri came to Rome in 1536, where he went out to the squares, shops and banks. There he challenged the other young men he met, asking them when they meant to begin doing good. Many of them, rich and poor alike, soon joined him. They volunteered in the hospitals of the city to care for patients. They did the dirtiest jobs. In the afternoon, they met with Philip for prayer, song and study at a place called the Oratory. Philip was good at guiding those who wanted to grow in their prayer. Pilgrims who came to Rome to visit its holy places attended his teachings in such great numbers that a large room had to be built to hold them all. This room was called the Oratory. People in trouble felt calmed just by being in the same room with him.

He was ordained a priest at age 36 in 1551. Many people came to him for spiritual direction. Some of them also became famous saints, including Ignatius of Loyola, Francis de Sales and Camillus de Lellis. Palestrina was one of Philip's followers and composed music for services at the Oratory. Through his apostolate in the confessional and his spiritual conferences, he attracted a group of followers who ultimately formed the Congregation of the Oratory in 1575. Yet Philip never took himself seriously. He wore old clothes and once shaved off half his beard just because people were saying how saintly he looked. When the pope wanted to honor Philip by appointing him a cardinal, the pope hung a cardinal's hat on Philip's door. A cardinal's hat is flat, so Philip tossed it in the air like a Frisbee. One of the people Philip guided, Francis de Sales, said that "a sad saint would be a sorry saint." Philip's joy was convincing to so many people that he would come to be called the second apostle to Rome. By the time he died at age 80, the whole city had been transformed by the spirit of the Oratory.

Wednesday, May 27th – the Feast of St. Augustine of Canterbury

St. Augustine was an Italian monk of the Benedictine Order, who was living a quiet life as the prior or head of the monastery of St. Andrew in Rome. All that changed when in 596 his friend, Pope Gregory the Great, decided that Augustine was just the person to take leadership of the Christian faith in Britain.

Augustine and his missionary team of thirty monks started from Rome on their journey. When they got as far as Provence, in southern France, they heard some frightening tales. Britain, they were told, was still a place of uncivilized tribes and the English Channel was said to be treacherous. The monks convinced Augustine to tell Pope Gregory the trip was a bad idea. But the Pope said he wished he could join them himself, and he was sure that the time was right.

It turned out that Pope Gregory was correct. In 597 King Ethelbert of Kent in England was baptized. He had already married a Christian. The king set up a residence for Augustine and his missionaries in Canterbury. After being consecrated a bishop in France, Augustine returned to Canterbury and set up the first diocese in England. He constructed a cathedral church and a monastery and many of the British people were baptized. As the faith spread, additional dioceses were established at London and Rochester. In 601 Augustine became the first archbishop of England. Before long the English people would themselves be sending out missionaries. St. Augustine worked among the English for eight years before he died in 605. He is honored as the apostle of England. Because the Archdiocese of Canterbury is the oldest diocese in England, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury is the religious head of the Church of England, while the Archbishop of Westminster in London is the Primate or head of the Roman Catholic Church in England.

Friday, May 29th – the Feast of Pope St. Paul VI

The feast day of Pope St. Paul VI is a new feast day on our liturgical calendar. He was only canonized a saint in 2018. He was born in 1897 in the village of Concesio, in the province of Brescia, what was at that time called the Kingdom of Italy. He was born into a well to do family of the Lombardy region of the country. His family name was Montini and his baptismal name was Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria. He grew up a rather frail and sickly child. He entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in Brescia in 1920. He was immediately sent for further studies in Rome. He worked in the Vatican offices of the Secretary of State from 1922 to 1954. In 1923 he was sent to Poland as a Papal nuncio. In 1954 he was made archbishop of Milan. He was named a cardinal in 1958 by Pope St. John XXIII. In 1963 at the age of 66 he was elected the 282nd pope and at that time took the name Paul. During his pontificate he completed the Second Vatican Council in 1965 which had been begun by his predecessor in 1962. His pontificate was marked by an attempt to make the ancient church relevant to the times which were quickly changing. During his pontificate one of the most striking changes to the church was the ability to worship in the spoken languages of the faithful. Church services in general were simplified. The Pope also made apostolic visits to various countries including the United States in 1965. His most memorable encyclical was *Humane Vitae* on the sanctity of human life. He died in August of 1978 at the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo in Italy at the age of 80. He insisted upon being buried in the ground under the basilica of St. Peter.