



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

May 31st, MMXX

The Solemnity of Pentecost

Month of Our Lady

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus! Praised be Jesus Christ!

We celebrate today one of the *highest* of all Church Holy Days. It is the Solemnity of Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary 50 days after the glorious Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This most important event in the history of our Church occurred after the disciples and Blessed Mother had spent nine days locked away in the upper room where the Last Supper had been eaten. What did they do during those nine days? Of course they prayed! This was in fact the first novena ever prayed!

They had so much on their minds and hearts that it was natural for them to turn to God in deep prayer. They had just witnessed the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into Heaven. He was gone! Certainly they felt His absence from their close-knit group. Most likely their minds were still reeling from the fact that He had truly risen from the dead! And now He is gone, but He made some promises before He left. One was that He would go and prepare a place for them and then some day, come back again to take them. He also promised He would not leave them orphans: "I am with you always until the end of the world!" And finally He promised to send them the Paraclete – the Holy Spirit of God.

They had all had contact with the Spirit before, during their days with Jesus over the last three years. Mary had encountered the Holy Spirit over and over during her 33 years with Jesus. Now this Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Blessed Trinity would be coming to make a permanent dwelling place in their hearts and the hearts of all humanity. The Spirit would be picking up the work of God where Jesus had left off at His Ascension.

This was an earth-shattering event. It was in fact the beginning or *birth* of the Church. Definitely worthy of classification as a Solemnity on the Church's liturgical calendar, and yet... so many Christians and Catholics do not recognize or realize this Pentecost Sunday to be any different than any other Sunday. At Christmas we fill the church with enthusiastic worshippers wishing to prayerfully greet the infant Jesus again. The same is true at Easter. Unfortunately we are still learning to recognize the importance of today's Solemnity of the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Hopefully we are beginning to see that without the Spirit's divine assistance we are just powerless to do anything good and pleasing to Almighty God. Hopefully we will begin to turn more and more to this mysterious person of the Trinity and there find all the strength and power we need to live lives that reflect our Catholic faith. This day let each one welcome into our world, our church and our lives the Spirit of God whose descent upon the apostles and Mary we commemorate today.

Embodying all the other gifts, as charity embraces all the other virtues, Wisdom is the most perfect of the gifts. Of wisdom it is written: *all good things came to me with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. (Wis. 7:11)* It is the gift of Wisdom that strengthens our faith, fortifies hope, perfects charity, and promotes the practice of virtue in the highest degree. Wisdom enlightens the mind to discern and relish things divine, in the appreciation of which earthly joys lose their savor, while the Cross of Christ yields a divine sweetness according to the words of the Savior: *Take up your cross and follow Me, for My yoke is sweet and My burden light. (Mt. 16:24 & 11:30)*

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of that same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Zielone Świątki – Pentecost – the Green Holiday

In Poland the Solemnity of Pentecost is usually better known to the faithful by its folk name – *Zielone Świątki* – the green holiday. This most important religious holiday is known by this folk name primarily because of the time of year it always occurs, and for the way the faithful decorate to observe it. The *Green Holiday* is always in springtime. This year it falls in late spring because its date of celebration is determined by Easter. By this time of year nature is at its deepest green. The brown grass of fall and winter has come alive again in the richest shades of green. Trees that were once bare now are covered with green leaves again. Nature is filled with life again.

Religious people realize that all life comes from God through God's Holy Spirit. Each Sunday in our creed we profess: *We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.* How true this is as nature's greening proves it! And so in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe people decorate for this feast by bringing as much greenery indoors and to their living spaces as possible.

Doors and windows on the outside of a house are trimmed with pine, spruce and cedar. Inside homes and churches, branches of birch and ash are used to decorate altars, porches and gates. In days gone by country folk would even decorate their horses and wagons with greenery. There is something very beautiful and even holy about the beautiful green color of God's creation coming alive around us in springtime. Not only are the fragrances of the blooming apple trees and lilac bushes delightful but also the smell of a freshly mowed lawn! This is the spirit of a Polish experience of Pentecost! Here's wishing all readers an intense experience of the *Green Holiday!*

Monday, June 1st – Feast Day of Mary, Mother of the Church

This title of Mary was officially given to her during the Second Vatican Council in 1964 by Pope St. Paul VI. The title was first used in the 4th century by St. Ambrose of Milan. In 2018 Pope Francis decreed that the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church be inserted into the Roman Liturgical Calendar on the Monday after Pentecost. This seems rather logical as Pentecost is often referred to as the "birthday" of the Church. So on the day after it seems fitting to celebrate the Mother of the Church – *Mater Ecclesiae*.

In saying that Mary is the Mother of the Church, we are saying that Mary is the Mother of every member of the Church, the entire Christian people, both the faithful and their pastors. When Mary gave birth to Jesus she nurtured the beginnings of the Church. When Mary stood by the Cross she took to herself as children those who by the death of Christ are born to heavenly life. When Mary waited with the Apostles in the upper room for the coming of the Holy Spirit she became the pattern of the Church at prayer. When Mary is assumed into heaven she then watches over the Church on earth with a Mother's love, and she waits with us all until the Lord's Day shall come in glorious splendor.

Friday, June 5th – the Feast of St. Boniface of Mainz, Patron of Germany

St. Boniface was born at Wessex in England in 673 during a frightening time. People didn't leave their houses any more than they had to. They were afraid of the Vandals, warrior tribes who were raiding villages. Boniface became a Benedictine monk at an early age, entering the abbey at Nursling. Later, he became a priest. He felt called by God to preach the gospel to the Vandals. At about age 46, he set off for Germany, where many of the warriors had settled.

What he found there concerned him greatly. Some people had heard the Christian message, but their Christianity was mixed with paganism. He realized that people needed education in their faith. Fortunately, many Benedictine nuns and monks from England were willing to follow Boniface and to help him teach people. He was ordained a bishop in 722 and given jurisdiction over all of Germany. He set up prayer-houses, churches and seminaries and held councils to help the bishops there feel more connected with the church far away in Rome. Later in 732 he was given a new missionary territory of Bavaria and was made an archbishop.

By the time Boniface was 73, he had accomplished a tremendous amount. But his missionary spirit wouldn't let him rest. He set off for Holland. Many people wanted to be baptized after Boniface and his team of missionaries began preaching there. On the eve of Pentecost, June 5th, 754, Boniface was preparing for the baptisms during a mission to the Frisians. Suddenly he and 53 companions were seized and murdered by bandits. He was buried at the famous monastery of Fulda in western Germany that he himself had established. St. Boniface is the patron of the German people. Because of the legend about his using an evergreen tree as a symbol of God's faithfulness, St. Boniface is credited with beginning the custom of the Christmas tree.

Saturday, June 6th – the Feast of St. Norbert

St. Norbert's parents were German nobles. He was born in Lorraine in about 1080. As a young man, Norbert held office in the emperor's court, where he lived a life of luxury and high status. He was horseback riding one day when a thunderstorm came up and he was struck by lightning. He lay on the ground unconscious for almost an hour. When he came to, he must have remembered the story about the apostle Paul being thrown to the ground, because his first words were the same. "Lord," he said, "what would you have me to do?" the answer seemed to be, "Turn from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it.

Norbert's life took an about-face. He went home fast, to pray and to examine his life. Soon he sold everything he owned and gave the money to the poor. He wanted to warn people about the dangers and responsibilities of wealth and power, so he began to live on a very small income as a wandering preacher. Most people thought he had lost his mind. But others wanted to follow him. He was ordained a priest in 1115 and then in 1121 began an order of 40 white-robed priests, called canons, who followed his strict way of life.

Norbert's monasteries were built in remote places. His first was built at Premontre in France. Eventually his canons were called the Premonstratensian Order. Usually he provided a hospice for travelers and sick people nearby. Later Norbert took another challenge. He became archbishop of Magdeburg in southern Germany, where the local churches had many problems. He was able to bring about a number of needed reforms. He died at Magdeburg on June 6th in 1134. St. Norbert was canonized in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII and is the patron of Bohemia, where his relics are kept in Strahov. Bohemia is part of the Czech Republic.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Before ascending into heaven Our Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit to finish the work He had begun in the souls of His Apostles and Disciples. The Church has identified seven spiritual gifts with which the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind, strengthens the will and inflames the heart of a Christian with love of God. Each day we should think of these gifts that have been bestowed on us at the time of our Confirmation and need to be continually strengthened by the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts.

The Gift of Fear of the Lord/Dar Bojaźni Bożej – Timor Domini

Fear of the Lord fills us with a sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread nothing so much as to offend Him by sin. It is a fear that arises, not from the thought of hell, but from sentiments of reverence and filial submission to our heavenly Father. It is the fear that detaches us from worldly pleasures that could in any way separate us from God. *They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls. (Ecclus. 2:20)*

The Gift of Piety/Dar Pobożności – Pietas

Piety begets in our hearts a filial affection for God as our most loving Father. It inspires us to love and respect for His sake persons and things consecrated to Him, as well as those who are vested with His authority, His Blessed Mother and the Saints, the Church and its visible Head, our parents and superiors, our country and its rulers. He who is filled with the gift of piety finds the practice of his religion, not a burdensome duty, but a delightful service. Where there is love, there is no labor.

The Gift of Fortitude/Dar Męstwa – Fortitudo

By the gift of Fortitude the soul is strengthened against natural fear, and supported to the end in the performance of duty. Fortitude imparts to the will an impulse and energy which move it to undertake, without hesitancy, the most arduous tasks, to face dangers, to trample under foot human respect, and to endure without complaint the slow martyrdom of even lifelong tribulation. *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved. (Mt. 24:13)*

The Gift of Knowledge/Dar Umiejętności – Scientia

Knowledge enables the soul to evaluate created things at their true worth in their relation to God. Knowledge unmask the pretense of creatures, reveals their emptiness, and points out their only true purpose as instruments in the service of God. It shows us the loving care of God even in adversity, and directs us to glorify Him in every circumstance of life. Guided by its light, we put first things first, and prize the friendship of God beyond all else. *Knowledge is a fountain of life to hi that possesses it (Prov. 16:22)*

The Gift of Understanding/Dar Rozumu – Intellectus

Understanding, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, helps us to grasp the meaning of the truths of our holy religion. By faith we know them, but by Understanding we learn to appreciate and relish them. It enables us to penetrate the inner meanings of revealed truths and through them to be quickened to newness of life. Our faith ceases to be sterile and inactive, but inspires a mode of life that bears eloquent testimony to the faith that is in us; we begin to *walk worthy of God in all things pleasing, and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col. 1:10)*

The Gift of Counsel/Dar Rady – Consilium

Counsel endows the soul with supernatural prudence, enabling it to judge promptly and rightly what must be done, especially in difficult circumstances. Counsel applies the principles furnished by Knowledge and Understanding to the innumerable concrete cases that confront us in the course of our daily duty as parents, teachers, public servants, and Christian citizens. Counsel is supernatural common sense, a priceless treasure in the quest of salvation. *Above all these things, pray to the Most High, that He may direct your way in truth. (Ecc. 37:19)*

The Gift of Wisdom/Dar Mądrości – Sapientia