

# SAINT STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI





**SAINT STANISLAUS**  
**OF JESUS AND MARY**  
**PAPCZYNSKI:**  
**THE LIFE AND WRITINGS**  
**OF THE MARIANS' FOUNDER**



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## PAPCZYNSKI:

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OF THE MARIANS' FOUNDER

Selection of texts by  
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2016

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**Cover:** Portrait of St. Stanislaus Papczynski painted in 2015  
by Wieńczysław Pyrzanowski.

ISBN: 978-1-59614-349-4

**Imprimi potest**

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Mother of Mercy Province

Stockbridge, Massachusetts, USA

May 18, 2016

Feast of now-St. Stanislaus Papczynski

Printed in the United States of America

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## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY



## **The Birth and Early Life of the Saint**

The year was 1631. A woman very close to giving birth was in a boat, crossing the rushing waters of the Dunajec River in the heart of the Sądecka Valley of Poland. A storm suddenly arose and capsized the boat. The woman fell into the water. Miraculously, she escaped with her life. During the night, from May 17 to 18, she gave birth to her son. Grateful for her deliverance and mindful of a promise she had made, the woman offered the child to God and entrusted him to Our Lady.

The child's name was John Papka — the youngest of the eight children of Sophia and Thomas. He was baptized on the very same day in St. James the Apostle Church in the rural village of Podegrodzie in southern Poland. Thus, he began the great adventure of his life dedicated to the Lord to whom he would one day dedicate himself exclusively.

He who would one day be a prominent theologian and philosopher, as well as an esteemed preacher and orator, did not initially show promise as a scholar. He faced great difficulties in learning the alphabet, and there was nothing to indicate that he would make any meaningful academic progress in the future. So his parents took him out of school, and the young John, instead of studying, tended sheep. Yet, after a certain time, one of his father's friends in the country helped John, and unbeknownst to his parents, he returned to school. Thanks to the extraordinary intervention of God's Providence, he was able to master the alphabet in just one day! Thus, his happy parents approved his further education. John finished grammar school with great success.

Then he began his more involved journey in higher education — a time full of trials that brought him through Nowy Sącz, Jarosław, Podoliniec, and Rawa Mazowiecka, where he studied mainly at Jesuit preparatory schools and colleges. In the meantime, he had changed his last name to "Papczynski" as a sign of achieving a higher social status. After finishing his philosophy studies at the age of 23, John returned home to Podegrodzie,

only to discover that his father had been dead for several years, leaving his mother a widow. The family rejoiced at his return and soon found him a suitable woman to marry. But he informed his family of the desire that had shaped his life: to dedicate himself to the service of God.

### **Religious Life**

In July 1654, John entered the Piarist Fathers' novitiate in Podoliniec. It was the beginning of 47 years of religious life. He received the habit and took the name "Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary." After a year, he moved to Warsaw for his theological studies and there, on July 22, 1656, made his religious vows. He took an oath to persevere in the religious community forever. In the same month, he received minor orders and was ordained a sub-deacon. After four years of theological studies and preparation for teaching, he was ordained a deacon, and then a priest on March 12, 1661, by Bishop Stanislaus Sarnowski in Brzozów in the Diocese of Przemyśl.

For a period of time, Fr. Stanislaus taught rhetoric in Rzeszów, according to his own famous manual, *Prodromus Reginae Artium (Precursor of the Queen of the Arts)*, published in 1663 and reprinted in numerous editions. His erudition enabled Papczynski to utilize extensive quotes and examples from classical Greek and Roman literature, the Sacred Scriptures, and Christian classics to teach the young, not only the best of rhetorical techniques, but, above all, social and political values, Christian virtue, and divinely revealed wisdom.

He dedicated himself to preaching, and quickly gained the respect and admiration of many. In 1663, he was transferred to Warsaw where he ministered as a preacher and also a confessor. For a few years, John III Sobieski, the future king of Poland, listened to his sermons. The future monarch would later develop close ties with the Congregation of Marian Fathers. The most famous of Fr. Stanislaus' penitents was the apostolic nuncio to Poland, Antonio Pignatelli, who later became Pope Innocent XII. In Warsaw, the young religious authored books that were the

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fruit of his deep spiritual life and devotion to the Passion of Christ. During his stay in Warsaw, Fr. Stanislaus also served as an instructor at the Piarist College, directed the Confraternity of Our Lady of Grace, and undertook many successful efforts towards the beatification of the founder of the Piarists, Fr. Joseph Calasanz.

### **Initial Difficulties in the Piarist Order**

But the splendid Warsaw years of Fr. Stanislaus became the beginning of the end for his time with the Piarist Order. In order to understand Fr. Papczynski's vocational journey and struggles, we need to look at the history of the Piarist Fathers in Poland. Founded by St. Joseph Calasanz in 1579, the Piarist community grew quickly both in Italy and neighboring regions on account of the popularity of their schools, which offered quality education to the lower social strata. In 1642, king Ladislaus IV, wishing to make such educational opportunities available to his people, invited the Piarist Fathers to come to Warsaw. Prince Stanislaus Lubomirski followed the example of the king and invited them to Podoliniec, where, in 1643, they opened their novitiate and college. Papczynski studied in this newly established school from 1649-1650.

As the Piarists' schools greatly expanded throughout Europe, however, their rapid growth and expansion brought about a period of crisis (1646-1656). Preparing teachers for its expanding schools became more important than proper spiritual formation of its members, which in turn resulted in a certain laxity of religious observance within the order. To rectify the situation, Pope Innocent X revoked the order's right to accept new candidates and receive their vows, and placed all Piarists under the jurisdiction of their local bishops. Perhaps that was why Papczynski did not join their community in 1650, when he completed his secondary education at their school in Podoliniec. It was only in 1653, when the Piarists were given permission to accept new candidates and profess religious vows, that the future saint decided to become a member. He entered the Piarist congregation

the following year, in 1654, after he finished his studies of philosophy at a Jesuit college in Rawa Mazowiecka.

It was during Papczynski's second year of novitiate that Pope Alexander VII, acknowledging the Piarists' positive efforts in addressing their difficulties, restored the order's status as a papal foundation through a document issued on January 24, 1656, titled *Dudum felicitis recordationis*. Six months after the issuance of this brief, Papczynski completed his novitiate, and on July 22, made his first profession in the renovated Piarist Order whose full name is the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools.

When the Piarists established their houses in Poland, they were under the administration of the Polish-German province, which had its headquarters in Nikolsburg, Moravia. Numerous vocations in Poland made possible the formation of the Polish Province, which was erected in 1662. Two years later, the first provincial chapter of the newly formed province took place in Podoliniec, and Fr. Papczynski was elected a delegate representing the Warsaw house. It is worth mentioning that he was responsible for drafting a proposal that would give the chapter body the power to elect provincial superiors and other superiors. His proposal postulated a change in the existing law, which stated that such an election was to be made by the order's superior general and his council in Rome. Papczynski's proposal was accepted by the provincial chapter and sent to the superior general. The superior general approved the request and, during the general chapter of 1665, informed the Polish delegates of his decision. From here on, the Polish province was to nominate three candidates, from whom the general and his council would elect the provincial superior. In this situation of transition and of ongoing adjustments in formation and administration, personal and ethnic conflicts began to erupt, turning later into sharp clashes and strife. These conflicts deepened when Papczynski began to oppose suggestions to mitigate the Piarist rule. He wanted the Piarists to remain faithful to the ideals of poverty and strict religious observance.

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He was accused of making trouble before the superior general, Fr. Cosmas Chiara, who in turn summoned him to Rome. Supplied with letters of recommendation from people faithfully testifying to his religious and pastoral zeal, he started on a strenuous and dangerous journey to the Eternal City towards the end of October 1667. Before he left, he wrote a declaration called *Protestatio Romam abeuntis* ["Declaration upon departing for Rome"] in which he expressed his humble reverence for and obedience to his superiors.

The saintly general of the Piarists received Fr. Stanislaus very cordially and soon became convinced of his innocence. But his accusers — several members of the provincial chapter — did not relent. They demanded that he be punished for being a "firebrand" and the destroyer of peace in the province. When Fr. Chiara received this letter from the provincial chapter, he found himself in a difficult position. He did intend to send Papczynski back to Poland, but now he changed his plans and ordered him to go to Nikolsburg in Moravia, the seat of the German province. Father Stanislaus went to Nikolsburg, but did not stay there very long. With the permission of the German provincial, he moved to Warsaw in May 1668.

After Fr. Stanislaus returned to Poland, he faced new accusations and persecution from several members. Although his confreres from the Warsaw house came to his defense, the dispute became increasingly more public and finally reached the ear of the papal nuncio, Cardinal Marescotti, who demanded an explanation.

Following this, Fr. Opatowski, the superior of the Polish province, conducted an investigation and, on July 20, 1669, prepared a statement signed by him and his two assistants. In this document, he declared that Fr. Papczynski's behavior was not that of a "firebrand," but due to a kind of zeal for greater fidelity in observing the Piarist religious rule. With this statement, the provincial affirmed Fr. Stanislaus's innocence, but it did not change the situation for the better. Wishing to restore peace in his community, Fr. Papczynski decided to leave his order. In

August 1669, Fr. Stanislaus sent a request to the superior general asking to be released from his vows and the oath of perseverance in the Piarist Order.

Meanwhile, an important document was issued by the Holy See, a document of great consequence to the Piarist community and its future. Pope Clement IX, in his brief *Ex iniuncto nobis* of October 23, 1669, restored to the Piarists their previous rights and privileges, and raised their community to the rank of a religious order with solemn vows. After this act, each member was obliged to take vows again if he wished to remain in the community. Thus, Fr. Papczynski and others were offered the opportunity to separate from the order simply by not professing these solemn vows. In light of this provision, on December 20, 1669, Fr. Stanislaus sent another request to be released from the obligations of the simple vows which he had taken. Assured by experts in church law that, in the aftermath of the Pope's document, the simple vows that he had taken were no longer valid and the Piarist superior was no longer his superior, Fr. Papczynski placed himself directly under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Kraków [Bishop Andrew Trzebicki] in whose territory he had resided since September 1669.

### **The Test: Continuing Difficulties and Persecution**

Father Stanislaus' act of placing himself under the protection of the local bishop was misinterpreted by his community and exposed him to a new wave of persecutions. On January 8, 1670, on the orders of the provincial, Fr. Stanislaus was forcibly removed from the Piarists' house at Kazimierz and sent first to Podoliniec, and then to Prievidza in Hungary, where he was confined to the monastery for almost three months.

He was released only on March 22, at the intervention of Bishop Nicholas Oborski, the auxiliary bishop of Kraków, and ten days later was returned to the Kazimierz house. On June 7, 1670, Papczynski submitted yet another request to be released from his simple vows, but this time he sent it to the Holy See. Pope Clement X, in his brief *Cum felicis recordationis* of October 18, 1670,

authorized the superior general of the Piarists to formally release from simple vows those members who had already submitted their requests. Father Chiara, in turn, in his letter to the bishop of Kraków, dated October 24, 1670, released Stanislaus Papczynski from his religious vows and the oath of perseverance. The act of secularization took place on December 11, 1670, and was performed by the vice-provincial of the Piarists, Fr. Michael Kraus.

### Looking For God's Inspirations

It is not possible to determine the exact moment in time, but sometime before December 11, 1670, the day when Fr. Papczynski was dispensed from his religious vows and from the oath of perseverance in the Piarist Order, God inspired the future saint to make a profession of vows in the community that he was to establish: the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. He did not want to renounce the religious life, so he made his *oblatio*, a solemn act of oblation or self-offering, before witnesses, declaring: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified. Amen. I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski [...] dedicate and consecrate to God, the Almighty Father, to the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to the Mother of God, ever Virgin Mary conceived without original sin, my heart, my soul [...], my body, without leaving anything for myself, in order to be from now on totally a servant of Almighty God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Therefore, I commit to serve Them in chastity and ardor to the end of my life in the Society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception — that I want to found with the grace of God." He also vowed religious obedience and poverty, made a profession of faith, and took the "vow of blood" in which he committed himself to defend the honor of Mary Immaculate, even at the price of his life.

Father Stanislaus refused offers of benefices from some bishops and invitations from several religious orders dedicated to Our Lady. Since he saw no possibility of founding the Marian community in the Diocese of Krakow, he went to Lubocza, on

the Pilica River, where he accepted a chaplaincy at the court of the Karski family, a noble family of Poland. In September 1671, Fr. Stanislaus took the white habit to symbolize the immaculate purity of the Mother of God, which he wanted to imitate to the end of his life. He also received the blessing of the apostolic nuncio, Angelo Ranucci. During the two years of his stay with the Karski family, he was able to spread devotion to Mary Immaculate and continuously deepened his own relationship with God. Father Stanislaus experienced many graces and extraordinary signs, such as levitation and the gift of healing. For these spiritual gifts, he was nicknamed “holy priest.”

At Lubocza, Fr. Stanislaus dedicated a lot of his time to writing. Among the fruits of these efforts are *Templum Dei Mysticum* (*The Mystical Temple of God*) and his *Norma vitae* (*The Rule of Life*), which would later become the Constitutions of the Marian Fathers, the community that he would found.

### Founding the New Congregation

Taking the advice of his spiritual director and close friend, Fr. Francis Wilga, a Camaldolese at the monastery in Bielany (a district of Warsaw), Fr. Papczynski decided not to ask the Holy See to approve the community that he had founded — or rather, planned — until he had attracted companions to follow his *Rule of Life* and could find a place where they could live in community. Thus, in the fall of 1672, he arrived at the Korabiew Forest, about 40 miles from Lubocza, where he found Stanislaus Krajewski and two other fellows who had been living for several years in a hermitage they had built in the forest. Father Stanislaus hesitated at first, but, after a certain amount of time, invited Krajewski to Lubocza. There, Krajewski expressed his readiness to join the fledgling order, made his *oblatio*, and took the white habit. Then, after having obtained the appropriate permissions, Fr. Stanislaus himself decided to settle in this hermitage with Krajewski and the others. This is how the house in Korabiew Forest (whose name would later be changed to Puszcza Marianska, meaning “Marian Forest”), began in October 1673. It became

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the cradle of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, the first religious community founded by a Pole on Polish soil.

On September 30, 1673, Fr. Papczynski arrived at the hermitage and found that Krajewski's companions were not interested in the way of life proposed by the *Rule*. Disappointed, Fr. Papczynski planned to establish a new house of prayer on the property, but the Lord in His providence offered another path.

Bishop Stanislaus Jacek Świącicki, vicar of Poznan-Warsaw, while making a canonical visitation of the parish, also visited the Korabiew hermitage located within its territory. Seeing the hermits opposed to a regular observance, the bishop obliged them to strictly follow Fr. Papczynski's *Rule of Life* and special statutes regulating spiritual exercises and penances for hermits. He also forbade them from owning money, using hard liquor or wine, or leaving the monastery. Bishop Świącicki made Fr. Stanislaus the superior of these "Marian hermits" and placed them under the authority of the local bishop.

Although the immediate consequences of the visitation were negative, the canonical visitation and the juridical act of October 24, 1673, gave the new Marian Congregation its canonical recognition.

### **Crisis and Hope**

Soon the majority of the "hermits" left. Only Krajewski — who, from the moment of his investiture in the white habit, had taken the new name of "John of the Immaculate Conception" — remained with Fr. Stanislaus. The development of the new community had become difficult, not only because of the lack of good candidates for the community, but also because of the eremitical status given to the new Congregation by Bishop Świącicki. Father Papczynski did not intend to found an eremitical contemplative community that would restrict its members from conducting pastoral work outside the walls of the monastery. His desire had been to free himself and his community from the restrictions imposed by eremitical status and to follow his original heartfelt inspiration

regarding the Congregation's apostolic mission — that is, to aid pastors in their parish work. In order to do so, he needed first to obtain special permission from his superior, the local bishop, which he received. With this permission, he was able to proclaim God's Word, not only from the pulpit, but also through catechetical instruction and parish missions. Especially important for him was performing pastoral work among the poor and the simple in the surrounding villages, where he celebrated Mass, heard confessions, and offered instruction on the life of prayer, holiness, and Christian virtue.

For a Marian hermit to do apostolic work outside the monastery required special permission from the bishop. To eliminate this requirement, it was necessary to make the new Congregation less eremitical and more apostolic in character. To attain this goal, Fr. Papczynski needed to modify the *Rule of Life*. Eventually he was able to accomplish this by incorporating into the *Rule* a paragraph (no. 3) which made pastoral work in the parishes a part of the Marians' mission. It states: "Since the contemplative life is not binding you so strictly, although you are founded in the eremitical status, those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work, if they would be called upon by pastors, and have previously obtained faculties from the Ordinaries and the Superiors."

We know that Fr. Papczynski wished to free himself and his community from all eremitical constraints, but, except for the addition of the third paragraph that gave the Marian Fathers the freedom to pursue active apostolic work, Fr. Papczynski retained eremitical status in the *Rule*. What prevented him from following through? It was on account of the specific legal situation of the newly established Marian community. If the Marians had not been founded as an eremitical institute — a state already approved by the Church — then the Marian community would not have been established, as it was impossible at the time to obtain apostolic approval for a new foundation. It was expedient, then, to establish a new institute that did not require papal approval for its existence, but only that of the local bishop. Thus, removing eremitical status from the *Rule*

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would be tantamount to the suppression of the newborn institute. The Founder understood this dilemma. That is why he kept the references to the eremitical state in the *Rule*: in order to shield the community from its enemies, who wished its destruction and demise, until papal approbation would secure its existence. When the Holy See granted its approval in 1700, the apostolic dimension of the community's mission, according to the Founder's vision, would be more fully articulated in the new Marian Constitutions.

For now, it was the personal holiness of Fr. Stanislaus that began to inspire new vocations to the Congregation. The growing number of brothers allowed the Congregation to open another monastery. Responding to the invitation of Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski, Fr. Stanislaus chose Góra Kalwaria (New Jerusalem) as the place for the new foundation. There, he received St. Martin's Chapel and later the Church of the Lord's Supper (the Cenacle). Shortly after opening the new house (in 1677) at the request of the bishop, Fr. Stanislaus moved to Góra. He would stay there until his death in 1701.

Alas, there were difficulties here as well. In spite of the general hospitality of the majority of the population, Fr. Papczynski himself and some other brothers became the butt of many taunts and jeers. Why? Because Fr. Papczynski, formerly one of the leading preachers and intellectuals in the country's capital, was now living and working with the uneducated, with homeless veterans, with the poor. The early Marians were even assaulted and beaten. Some went so far as to threaten to kill them. But the Marian Fathers patiently put up with everything. After some time, they received the reputation of being holy men — and Fr. Stanislaus was spoken of most highly out of all the Marian Fathers.

### **New Difficulties**

Shortly after his arrival at Góra, the Founder renewed his efforts to obtain papal approval for his Congregation. The first step for accomplishing this was the confirmation of the community by Bishop Wierzbowski, who was well-disposed to the

Marian Fathers. Therefore, the Congregation became an order under diocesan law, fully dependent on the local ordinary. Though Bishop Wierzbowski renewed his approval before his death, difficulties arose with his successor, Bishop John Witwicki. Many objections were being made against the Marian Fathers, and the new bishop considered dissolving the community. He initially sided with the opponents of Fr. Papczynski. But the bishop was won over by the sincerity of Fr. Papczynski's intentions and by one of his writings. He took a more careful look at the accusations and finally found them to be unfounded, rejecting them.

However, Fr. Stanislaus understood well that the Congregation could not feel safe as long as it did not obtain papal approval. Such approval was also necessary in order to have the privilege of taking solemn vows, which would dissuade confreres from leaving the order without a serious reason.

In the late fall of 1690, Fr. Stanislaus left for Rome to seek papal recognition of the order. Like everything else up to this point in his life, his efforts met with further obstacles. Traveling on foot, he reached the Eternal City in February of the following year after a long and difficult journey.

A painful surprise awaited him: Pope Alexander VIII had died a few days before his arrival, and it was evident that the election of a successor would take time.

Father Papczynski made all necessary efforts concerning the planned work, but he could not count on getting papal approval until the election of the next pope. To his chagrin, the conclave was the longest one in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the cardinals unable to reach a decision. Finally, because of his impaired health and a lack of hope of accomplishing his project, he left Rome while the Holy See was still vacant. The day after his departure, the new pope was elected. The cardinals entrusted the office of St. Peter to Cardinal Antonio Pignatelli. He was well known to Papczynski as the former apostolic nuncio to Poland and his penitent. The new Pope chose the name "Innocent XII." But Fr.

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Stanislaus did not know about this and returned to his homeland. Then he sent the appropriate petitions to Rome, one after another, yet for many years they did not bring any results.

### **The Blessing Finally Comes**

In the fall of 1698, Papczynski decided to again attempt to obtain papal approval, but this time he did not go to Rome in person. Instead, he sent Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. Father Joachim stayed in Rome for a long time, but he was still unsuccessful because he had to submit further documents and letters of recommendation again and again. Finally, after long months of effort, the Holy Father Innocent XII announced in *Exponi nobis nuper* that the Marian Fathers would be approved under the Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and joined to the Order of Reformed Franciscans. The main goal had been achieved, though not strictly according to previous hopes, because the Congregation was not confirmed on the basis of the *Rule of Life* written by Fr. Stanislaus.

After almost three years of absence, Fr. Joachim returned to the Cenacle in the spring of 1701 and announced the joyful news. The Founder quickly observed that the rule offered to the Marian Fathers agreed entirely with the one he had written and corresponded fully to his vision of the Congregation. With enormous joy, he accepted it. Then, on June 6, 1701, he made his solemn vows before the apostolic nuncio. Less than a month later, he received the vows of his confreres.

### **His Final Amen**

Many times in his life, Fr. Stanislaus had been seriously ill and in danger of dying, but God's providence rescued him from every oppression and difficulty. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1701, the final suffering came to him, which would bring him to his eternal homeland. Keeping in mind the work he had accomplished, Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary died on September 17. Happy and serene, he was surrounded by the love and prayer of

his spiritual sons. Now he had passed to the Lord to receive his eternal reward, offering his final amen to God's will for his life.

### **A Saint For Our Time**

What can Fr. Papczynski say to our contemporary world? Does this man, who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, have any message for the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century — the century of computers and cell phones, of a global economy and space travel? How should we talk about the Founder of the Marian Fathers? In what ways can we imitate him? What can we learn from him?

If we think about it, we will notice that this holy man has several common elements and connections with our own time.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was extremely important for Poland, but difficult as well. The Poles faced numerous conflicts and fought several wars with different enemies: Sweden, Turkey, Russia, Brandenburg, Transylvania, and the Cossacks. In these battles, many people lost their lives and quite often were not prepared for death. Moreover, there were plagues that decimated the ranks of society.

Simultaneously, the 17<sup>th</sup> century was marked by moral decline, debauchery, and drunkenness — both among the nobility and the lower classes. Father Stanislaus, an astute observer of society, saw all this disorder. He was realistic about the human condition even as he had his mystical experiences.

He founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers to prayerfully come to the aid of the souls in Purgatory. In his pastoral work, he would turn toward the poorest and most neglected. At the same time, he would maintain contact with the great and powerful of this world, including the kings of Poland. He noticed how much the children and youth needed education and how they did not have a chance to obtain it because of their social status. Seeing the enormous threat from alcoholism, he forbade his confreres the use of any strong or “burning” alcohol under the threat of “losing God’s blessing.”

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Is it really so difficult to translate all these things into our times?

Our world's departure from moral values is certainly more pronounced today. Young people drink alcohol in excess, and we all know the tragedy of families broken or heavily burdened by the drunkenness of their members. Perhaps never before are so many people being killed in accidents, cataclysms, wars, and terrorist attacks. Thousands of children are dying from hunger every day in different parts of the world. Children and youth need more educational opportunities, especially those whose parents are not able to provide for them the future that they dream about and desire.

Father Stanislaus is also a model of uncommon social sensibility, of lending a helping hand to the poor of his times — especially to the “new poor,” that is, those persons touched by various addictions and unable to face the difficulties of everyday life. He was a great apostle of sobriety, a promoter of God's mercy, and a model of love towards the Church. His concern was not only for those here on earth in pilgrimage to the house of the Father, but also for those who are undergoing purification. Thus, Fr. Stanislaus is a model of fervent prayer for the souls in Purgatory.

For the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Fr. Pączynski, above all, will always be Father Founder. Without his faith, trust, courage, and careful discernment of God's will, this community would not have existed in the Church, nor would any of the works accomplished by it. He is an important model of how to imitate Jesus Christ — and His Immaculate Mother, too. Father Stanislaus exemplifies the love for Our Lady and Marian devotion that the Marian Fathers practice and teach to the faithful at, among other places, the shrines in Licheń and Stoczek Klasztorny, Poland; Fatima, Portugal; and Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in the United States.

He is a great example of apostolic zeal, working to bring to all people the Good News of God's love for every human being. Father Stanislaus proclaimed the gift of new life through Jesus

Christ, the Son of God, suffering, crucified, and risen, a new life transmitted and sustained by the Sacraments and the Word of God. He proclaimed this new life in Christ, first in its eternal, supernatural dimensions, but also in temporal life, which is fragile and delicate. He understood and appreciated human life as a great gift of the Creator from its first moment in the womb of the mother to its natural end at death.

Nothing that Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski has done and lived is outdated today. Nothing has lost its meaning and ceased to be important. On the contrary, the reality is that the values that were important for the Founder of the Marian Fathers are some of the most essential elements for building a good and wise life for human beings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On September 16, 2007, the Church proclaimed him Blessed, and on June 5, 2016, he was canonized in Rome by Pope Francis.

Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski, pray for us!



*Stanislaus à JESU MARIA Papczynski*

*Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski (1631–1701) and his signature.  
A portrait by an unknown artist from the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries,  
located in the monastery of the Marian Fathers in Skórzec, Poland.  
This is the oldest portrait in existence of Father Founder.*



*Podęgródzie — Baptismal font from 1409,  
where Jan Papczyński (the future St. Stanislaus) was baptized.*



*Image of Our Lady of Gozlin, which, according to tradition, was displayed in the room where St. Stanislaus was born. The image was bequeathed by the Founder of the Marians to the Marian monastery at Gozlin, Poland, when it was established in 1699. Shortly thereafter, people began to pray to Our Lady before the image in the monastery church and to report that they had received special graces.*



*Renowned for its graces, this Icon of the Puszca Mariańska Virgin was a gift from Pope Urban VIII (1624-44) to Jacob Karski, who placed it in the private chapel at his home in Lubocza. It was in 1671, before this miraculous image, that St. Stanislaus Papczynski put on the white habit and declared his intention to establish the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.*



*Puszcza Mariańska: The historic wooden church, which was built — according to the ancient tradition of the Marians — by St. Stanislaus and his first companions. It is considered the birthplace of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. The church was restored after a fire on May 2, 1993.*

*Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski (1616-1687), a great friend of St. Stanislaus and his Institute. He was instrumental in establishing the Marians at Góra Kalwaria.*



*John III Sobieski, King of Poland (1674-1696), savior of Christendom at the Battle of Vienna in 1683. A great protector and benefactor of Fr. Papczynski and his community, he gave his approval for the order on June 2, 1679. It may be surmised that during Fr. Stanislaus's stay in Warsaw (1663-1669), Sobieski, who was a senator at that time, consulted him in various matters and availed himself of his spiritual direction in the confessional. Later, in Nowa Jerozolima, as king, he continued his spiritual relationship with Fr. Papczynski.*



*Church of the Cenacle of Our Lord in  
Góra Kalwaria — Marianki, near Warsaw.*



*Góra Kalwaria — Marianki — The sarcophagus of 1766, which holds the coffin containing the mortal remains of St. Stanislaus. It is located in the Church of the Cenacle.*



*Singers from the small village of Podegrodzie were on hand at the Mass for Beatification. Father Founder was born in 1631 in Podegrodzie, in south-eastern Poland. In Poland, people have long viewed Stanislaus Papczynski as a "saint," a holy man after whom they can model their own life.*



*The miracle that led to Father Founder's beatification involved Ursula and her son Sebastian (shown here at the Mass of Beatification on September 16, 2007, in Lichen, Poland; see page 167 for the details of the miracle). Sebastian is now a healthy teen, an altar server, and a sports fan.*



*Brother Andrew Mączyński, MIC, left, vice postulator for the Marian Causes of Canonization in the Marians' Stockbridge, Massachusetts-based Province, had the great honor of carrying to the altar the relic of Blessed Stanislaus during the Mass of Beatification. Together with Fr. Victor Gumienny, MIC, rector of the Shrine in Licheń, Poland, he hoisted the reliquary upon a pedestal "and, just like that, we presented to the world this holy man, our Founder," he said.*

## 2016 Canonization



L'Osservatore Romano

*Marian Fathers meet the Holy Father! From center left: Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC, the Marian Fathers' Vicar General; Fr. Wojciech Jasiński, MIC, the General Econome; and the Very Rev. Fr. Andrzej Pakuła, MIC, General Superior of the Marian Fathers, present Pope Francis with a canvas image of the Marian Founder on June 5, 2016, the day of his canonization.*



Joe Romagnano

*The recipient of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary's canonization miracle processed in with a relic of the newly made saint.*

Joe Romagnano



*Pope Francis reads the Formula of Canonization, thereby enrolling Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski among the Church's saints.*

Joe Romagnano



*Pope Francis greets Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz, archbishop of Krakow, Poland, former private secretary to St. John Paul II and a long-time friend of the Marians. Several weeks after the canonization, Cardinal Dziwisz hosts World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow.*

Mark Fanders



*On June 5, 2016, in the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, canonized Stanislaus Papczynski in the first such ceremony in the Jubilee.*

Andrzej Hrechorowicz



*Polish President Andrzej Duda was among the hundreds of thousands of attendees at the June 5 canonization. Afterwards, the Marians' Superior General, Fr. Andrzej Pakuła, MIC, presented President Duda with a portrait of the newly canonized saint.*

SAINT STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI'S  
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS



When a blessed is canonized, the faithful are given a new stimulus to sanctity and the assurance that they may attain it by using — in similar circumstances — the means that saint used in his or her pursuit of holiness.

Hence, efforts were made to have the Marian's Founder canonized, because when his example of sanctity is officially approved by the Holy See, he will undoubtedly exert a greater sanctifying influence in the Church.

The canonization of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary is a momentous event. It will be demonstrated that what he has to offer for our imitation and instruction is of great and urgent value to modern-day people; and that his doctrine and example may help the people of God heal their spiritual infirmities and better fulfill their Christian (and sometimes religious or priestly) vocations.

Here are some remedies suggested by St. Stanislaus for some of the grave ills assailing present day society.

1.

*The invasion of atheism, materialism, secularism,  
and consumerism*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: giving priority to the spiritual. He strongly promoted the call to sanctity for everyone (even lay people).

According to the doctrine of Vatican II, all Christians, in whatever state of life, are called to sanctity. In agreement with this doctrine, in his book *The Mystical Temple of God*, St. Stanislaus outlines an ascetical program addressed to all Christians, but especially to the laity, which was rare at that time. Speaking against atheism and secularism — which particularly plague our world today — Fr. Papczynski outlines the life of a Christian (who is a “mystical temple of God”), imbued with faith and the spirit of sacrifice for the love of God.

## 2.

*Purgatory, hell, and resurrection —  
their existence is denied or their concept obscured*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: assisting Poor Souls in Purgatory.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized eschatological realities. Yet today, the very existence of these realities is often denied or at least their true meaning is obscured. Thus, the faithful benefit from the example of St. Stanislaus' zeal in giving the greatest possible assistance to the most needy souls in Purgatory, since the urgency of that task is by no means less in our times. We constantly hear of the growing number of victims of wars, natural disasters, bombings, terrorists' attacks, highway accidents, and plane crashes. The example of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary and his whole Congregation in providing generous, prayerful assistance to these souls inspires us to do the same, while reminding us of our obligation to nurture love and mercy towards our neighbors in Purgatory.

## 3.

*The world is spiritually starved and confused*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: bringing the light of faith to satisfy this thirst for God.

Saint Stanislaus, a zealous "apostle of Mazovia," and his spiritual sons have always been ready to instruct poor and simple folks in the fundamental truths of the faith. They show us a model for evangelizing the modern world, as well as bringing the Word of God and the salvific action of the Sacraments where the need is most urgent, working in close cooperation with the local church.

## 4.

*The significance of wrongdoing/sin is being lost or obscured*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: founding the Congregation of Marian Fathers — the first male religious community (among

those still existing in the Church) under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

Today, the significance of wrongdoing/sin — as perceived by many people — has been greatly diminished or obscured, which leads in turn to serious moral degradation and a loss of faith. We see the need to refresh in the minds of the faithful the reality of original sin and its consequences for our lives, as well as the need to fight against sin (even venial ones) and the devil who incites us to sin. Thus, leading the faithful to become better acquainted with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is very helpful. This may be done by sharing in St. Stanislaus' work of spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception, especially by assisting the mission of his Congregation.

## 5.

### *Moral decline caused by drugs, alcohol, etc.*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: strictly forbidding hard liquor for the Marian Fathers and promoting sobriety among others.

While there are more voices raised in alarm against the drug addiction plaguing modern society, there is also a growing concern about the increasing consumption of alcohol, with all the painful consequences from the material and moral evils that it brings upon individuals, families, and communities.

Admittedly, this may not be true for every country, but due to complex historical and social circumstances in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, Fr. Stanislaus' fatherland, drunkenness had become a problem of exceptional urgency and gravity. Hence, his canonization may highlight his uncompromising rejection of hard liquor and clear-cut opposition to the popular indulgence of drunkenness which may become a sobering factor and warning to modern society.

## 6.

*Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary suffers a downturn*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: promoting Marian devotion.

All recent pontiffs, but especially Bl. Paul VI and St. John Paul II, have stressed the importance of true Marian devotion in the effort to bring about a renewal of Christian life, according to the directives of the Second Vatican Council. Unfortunately, we have observed in these post-conciliar years a considerable decline in Marian devotion, due also to a wrong understanding of ecumenism. In order to counteract this dismal tendency, it would be most useful to give the faithful a new impulse towards a more genuine and filial Marian devotion, as is found in the life, apostolate, and writings of St. Stanislaus.

## 7.

*The need for Conversion and Renewal*

SAINT STANISLAUS' REMEDY: recourse to Divine Mercy

Using Scripture passages describing Christ's sufferings, St. Stanislaus presents the Passion of Christ as a result, on the one hand, of our sins, and on the other, as an act of Christ's love for mankind. This way, St. Stanislaus wishes to move the faithful to repentance and conversion, as well as to show gratitude to the One who suffered so much for us and who — by the example of His Passion — showed us how to mend our ways. The saint encourages us to abide by those counsels with a contrite heart, trust, and love. No sinner, however great, should despair of his salvation, because everyone in this life may have recourse to the Divine Mercy; what is more, they ought to do so. As a true apostle of mercy, St. Stanislaus addresses sinners in those words: "Are you afraid, whoever you are, crushed with the burden of vast sins, at the edge of the abyss of Hell and its punishments, terrible, incurable, and unending? Sigh, flee, and hasten to the scourges of the Savior with true contrition."

A GLANCE  
AT ST. STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI'S  
WRITTEN WORKS



Understanding the charism of the Marian Founder, and therefore the Marian heritage, is not possible without studying his writings. Saint Stanislaus had a creative and important role in shaping the Polish school of spirituality in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He integrated pastoral and literary activities with the Constitution he drew up for the Congregation he would found in such a way as to help the faithful walk the path of holiness. The teaching contained in St. Stanislaus Papczynski's various writings continues to be relevant in the third millennium.

Father Papczynski created his works during an extremely difficult historical situation for his homeland. These times were not favorable either to the Catholic Church or to the development of creative thinking in the field of spiritual life.

In his writings, St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary outlined the road to perfection from the moment of conversion to mystical union with God. Enlightened by Fr. Papczynski's writings, we discover the greatness of God's call and the dignity of every human being — the "mystical temple."

What is it that makes St. Stanislaus' written works so valuable and significant? It is his versatile intellectual and spiritual formation, along with his work in the fields of teaching, education, and pastoral ministry. Thanks to this work, he became permanently inscribed in the history and culture of the Polish Republic and the Catholic Church in Poland. He belongs, without a doubt, among the more prominent humanists and mystics of his age. A zealous educator of youth, a prominent preacher called the "apostle of Mazovia," he pastorally served commoners as well as dignitaries secular and ecclesiastic.

In 1672, Fr. Papczynski finished composing the first version of his *Rule of Life*, which he based on the virtue of charity that defined his entire life, piety, and apostolic work. No wonder, then, that love has become the Marian code of law and deeply informs all of St. Stanislaus' major writings. The Marian Founder teaches about divine charity, the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the human heart, for love is the crown of all virtues.

In his works, Fr. Papczynski emphasized that all followers of Christ are called to evangelical perfection. He wrote that our contemplation of God, not only in eternity, but also here on earth, is hindered by sin, especially mortal sin; and thus persevering in sin is contrary to the ultimate goal of man, which is seeing God “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12).

Saint Stanislaus answers the reality of human sin with the mystery of God’s love, expressed in a special way in the Passion and Death of the Savior. Jesus Christ freed us from death (*The Crucified Orator*). His death on the Cross brought victory over all evil (*The Suffering Christ*). Conversion from sin has to go together with making reparation and finds its external expression in availing oneself of the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance, which is like man’s “second birth” to the interior life of grace. Penance can transform a sinful man into a son of light whom Christ has freed from the slavery of evil. In the process of conversion, a “meeting” of sinful man with co-suffering Christ occurs. Turning to God and cultivating the spirit of penance is an important manifestation of the pursuit of Christian perfection.

Father Papczynski’s writings emphasize that God helps us on the way to perfection. He inspires us to persevere in unity with Him, but those who want to advance in holiness must cooperate with His grace. For this reason, St. Stanislaus assigns great importance to prayer, being mindful of God’s presence, and availing oneself of the Eucharist, which strengthens our spiritual life. Father Papczynski — faithful to the teachings of the Church’s Magisterium — insists on the Christian’s full commitment to the process of self-improvement (*Contemplating With the Heart*), for the virtues that contain luminous and eternal properties prepare for us immortal and infinite radiance (*Prodrumus Reginae Artium*). They are often won through hard work and perseverance in following Christ. Virtue makes us similar to Christ and marks us as disciples of Christ. Therefore, we need to make our lives resemble the life of our Lord, Jesus Christ (*The Crucified Orator*).

In his writings, St. Stanislaus professes the contemplation of God to be one of the greatest gifts granted to man. It leads to a close union with God — the Ultimate Good. If the happiness of the redeemed in Heaven consists in beholding God and enjoying His presence, then someone already contemplating Him here on earth receives a foretaste of this happiness. The Person of Christ, His life, Passion, Death, and Resurrection, occupy the central place in this contemplation.

Father Papczynski describes the Sacrament of the Eucharist as a transformative encounter with Christ. Christ, who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist, calls us to surrender to Him in faith and love. In the Eucharist, we receive not only the Son of God, but also the Father and the Holy Spirit; thus, the entire Trinity is being given to man. In this way, the Eucharist becomes a mystical nuptial banquet in which Christ the Bridegroom nourishes man. The Eucharist makes possible man's internal change, his deification, that is, his transformation in Christ, which is like the beginning of eternal unity with Him (*Contemplating With the Heart*).

Saint Stanislaus' written works reveal to us other aspects of the Marian charism. They show us the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, as a model of perfection and a spiritual Mother of all believers in Christ. By uttering her *fiat*, the Blessed Virgin fulfilled the will of God in the most perfect way, while the example of her life teaches us the full extent of serving Christ (*The Mystical Temple of God; Contemplating With the Heart*). According to Fr. Papczynski, the highest manifestation of love is prayer and penance for the intentions of the souls suffering in Purgatory (*The Mystical Temple of God; Contemplating With the Heart*).

All this illustrates how St. Stanislaus Papczynski's writings have not lost any of their relevance and still offer effective means for achieving Christian perfection, regardless of the more than three centuries that have elapsed since the day of their publication.

— Text based on the work of Rev. Professor Jerzy Misiurek, PhD  
Catholic University, Lublin



SAINT STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY SPEAKS



## ABOUT GOD'S IMMEASURABLE LOVE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE MERCY

### **The Gift of Creation**

Consider what you have been before God created you; or who He was who created you. It was God, the most absolute of all beings, without any beginning and origin; the most perfect Goodness and Wisdom; infinite Love and Omnipotence.

So it is He-who-is that created you, and you — who were nothing — were created. Know that you were created from nothing, formed from utterly worthless matter. Nonetheless, you were made so beautiful by the sagacity of the Creator God that, except for heavenly beings, you surpass by your appearance all other creatures.

Also ponder the kind of soul that He breathed into you: It was formed in His image and likeness. And indeed, He endowed it with intellect for you to be able to comprehend that God is your Creator. He granted you a heart that you may love. To the same soul He affixed a will, in order to show clearly that you possess freedom, and that you are not subject to anything, and that you are permitted to strive for whatever you might want; to choose whatever you would strive for; and to love and follow whatever you would choose. Finally, to this divine image He added memory, with which to reflect upon the benefits granted to you, and to remember that He is your Creator, and that you were once dust and shall return to dust, as He Himself once declared to the first Parent, saying: "You are dust, and into dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19).

*Inspectio cordis [f.161r]*

### **The Gift of Redemption**

Consider the blessings of Redemption. The Son of God — equal in all things to the Father — was willing to assume human nature in order to bring you, a rebellious man, back to the Father's house and to free you from the prison of everlasting limbo or hell. Being

infinite, He was enclosed in the Virgin's womb; being impervious to suffering, He suffered all His life various persecutions, hardships and misfortunes: the cold at His birth, the knife at His circumcision, the inclement weather and many difficulties during the flight to Egypt; in teaching, He had to bear the evil tongues of the godless, to avoid being pelted with stones, to endure the temptations of hell, and to receive the very worst treatment in return for all His goodness.

And then, when you come to the mystery of the Passion, you will be astounded and filled with wonder, thinking that your mind is unable to grasp the torments, tortures, and sufferings of the God-Man. May it suffice for you to comprehend that He endured countless tortures in order to atone for countless sins. And piously consider that — in order to redeem humankind from hell and eternal death — He sustained more torments, or at least as many as sustained by those condemned in hell.

Revealing His sufferings, He exclaimed: "Whoever loves me, look if there is any suffering like my suffering" (see Lam 1:12).  
*Inspectio cordis [f.161r]*

### **The Incomprehensible Divine Love**

Occupy your mind with reflections on God's love towards humanity, which is so great that no human — nor even angelic — tongue can express it, and our mind is unable to comprehend it. For if we were to forget for a second all of His other acts of love for us, and if God had not shown any other besides the one, in which He decided to offer His Only Son as a sacrifice for the salvation of the entire human race, and, in fact, did do so, this fact alone certainly would be evidence of His infinite charity and inconceivable love.

Consider how many things He does every day out of love for you, and how many things He did at the early stages of the world coming into existence. Out of love for you, He created the vast universe. He affixed to the heavens the bright ornaments, from

which you would have the necessary physical light. Out of love for you, He created so many kinds of birds and reptiles, and such great hosts of fish swimming in the waters. Out of love for you, He adorned the earth with a variety of beautiful trees, flowers, and grasses. What else do your eyes need to be pleased? What else could your heart desire to be satisfied? What is lacking to your soul to be refreshed and comforted?

Undoubtedly, the most gracious Father thought these things, created out of His love for you, still too small and inadequate, if He also wanted His only-begotten Son to be put to death for your salvation. In this way the all-good God loved the world; He loved the human race, and He loved you, who are ungrateful.

Be ashamed and embarrassed, since you have not done anything worthy out of love for Him, you have not accomplished any remarkable deed, and you have not exercised any strong virtue. Indeed, if you would look at yourself more carefully, you would find that you have repaid good things with evil ones: love with hatred, benefits with evil deeds, and favors with ingratitude. This is revealed through your grievous daily faults, which, upon careful examination of your conscience, you will find beyond number.

To action, by the immortal God! Promise at once to bewail not only your evil deeds, but also those of others, and to reconcile yourself with the divine Majesty by giving worthy satisfaction.

*Inspectio cordis [f.58r]*

### **He Offered For Us His Only Son**

Consider how great would be the love of subjects for a king who would offer His Son — His only Son — to die for the preservation of the kingdom, which was about to be totally lost and annihilated forever together with all its provinces. Certainly, such a Prince would earn the endless love and remembrance of His own people, and the lasting admiration of outsiders.

Moses offered himself to receive great disgrace and nearly eternal condemnation before God (who wanted to annihilate the whole of Israel; see Ex 32:10) with these words: “Lord, either forgive this people, or strike me out of the book of life” (see Ex 32:31-32). All mortals admire this act — and quite rightly — for God Himself approved of it.

And you, my soul, with what words will you extol your Creator today? With what praises will you adorn Him, with what gratitude of heart will you remunerate Him, who is so inconceivably good and loves you so intensely that He offered His only Son to be sacrificed on the altar of the Cross for your salvation! In what way indeed will you praise Jesus Himself? With what deed will you repay Him for the death endured for the world in general and you in particular?

Come on! Offer Him in return, as a sacrifice on the altar of obedience, your greatly beloved and only daughter (see Judges 11:29-39), namely: your own will.

*Inspectio cordis [f.58r-58v]*

### **You Shall Love Your Creator and Redeemer**

If our chief reason for loving our friends is that we are loved by them, why will you not love God, who so loved you that He gave His only Son for you (see 1 Jn 4:9-11)? Think, moreover, what you were before He created you: You were nothing, a piece of clay. However, led by His love for you, He made you in His own image. So why would you not love Him?

If vessels knew their makers, if paintings and statues knew their creators, they would know how to talk to them. Certainly, they would greatly love them, if only for the beauty which they received from their hands, and perhaps love them more faithfully than you love your Creator, whom you nevertheless acknowledge, perceive, and contemplate.

*Inspectio cordis [f.83r]*

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### A Praise for Love

O charity, you most excellent leader of virtues and teacher of perfection! O holy charity, eternal ardor, salutary flame, feeder of souls, mother of peace, bond of peoples and minds, the one that unites our spirit to God!

May charity or love for God, the highest Goodness, and for my neighbor never weaken nor die out in my heart! May it be present as my companion everywhere, in my every thought, resolution, intention, and action! May it never depart from me! Let learning, prophecies, revelations go away, but you, O charity, do not abandon me! May I enter with you into the abodes of the Blessed and into the kingdom of charity, from which, O most powerful virtue, you have brought the divine Offspring down to the kingdom of the world. Amen.

*Inspectio cordis [f.166v]*

### Pure, Disinterested Love

Consider that God shows you kindness out of pure love for you. Hence, it so happened that He did not leave you in the world to perish, but called you to the Order; that He did not rightly punish you there while you were sinning, as He usually does with many; that He very patiently waited for your improvement, whenever you fell and deviated from the way of perfection; that He enriched you each day — indeed, each moment — with graces, and He does so out of pure love for you.

Wherefore it is also right for you to do all good things, and to endure all harsh things, out of pure love for God, as did today's Apostle, whose immense hardships, torments, and death were born out of, and soothed by, the love of God alone.

*Inspectio cordis [f. 152v]*

## **The Foundation of Friendship**

Consider that the manner of forming a friendship with God is not unlike the one by which people make friends. People believe someone else to be their real friend who complies not only with their requests, but also with their will. Thus God calls His friends such people whose will He perceives match His own in all things, as we see from the exhortation to the Apostles: “You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you” (Jn 15:14).

How many are those who seek various ways of worming their way into the friendship of princes and other people. As for you, you can easily become a friend of the immortal King if only you do His will. And indeed, what would you not be willing to do to become a friend of God and to win His favor, when you see how even servants do extraordinary — and sometimes lowly — duties in order to gain favor with their lords?

Beware, lest the sons of darkness be more prudent than you, who are a son of light (see Lk 16:8).

*Inspectio cordis [f.152r-152v]*

## ABOUT THE UNFATHOMABLE DIVINE MERCY FOR SINNERS

### **Christ Draws Sinners to Himself**

As the sun draws up from the earth harmful moisture and sometimes makes poisonous reptiles come out, so Jesus, the Sun of Justice, was attracting and continues to attract to Himself the publicans, the sinners, and other wicked people. He did it to such a great extent that if you consider His whole life, you discover that it was spent on deeds of mercy and compassion. Still in His cradle, He attracted the pagan kings; when He was teaching, He attracted Zacchaeus, Matthew, Magdalene, and numerous others; when dying, He attracted a thief, a centurion, and Longinus, who

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pierced His side. What is more: as the head of His Church, He set up none other than a sinner.

And so you, a sinner, come near this Magnet — that is to say, the uncreated Sun — who often and with such great clemency attracts sinners with bonds of charity. And when you see that you have been drawn to Him, having already attained some improvement, try to edify other sinners by your example.

*Inspectio cordis [f.64v]*

### **Christ Receives Sinners**

Consider that divine goodness, clemency, and mercy are infinite; from this it follows that God does not reject any sinner, even if he were the most wicked. Indeed, He says, most sweetly inviting those burdened with many transgressions: “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you” (Mt 11:28). And also, so that they would not fear to draw near, He declares that He did not come to save “the just, but sinners” (Mt 9:13). And this is actually what has happened to you today. Burdened as you were with so many and such great imperfections, He invited you to the sacred table in the friendliest manner; and of course, He did not eat with you, but gave Himself to you to consume.

O, what clemency! O, what grace! From a vessel of abomination you became an ark of God that contains not the bread of offering (see Mt 12:4), but the bread of angels. Ask this Lord, whom you contain within yourself, that He may impart a blessing to your house, which He now inhabits, as He imparted his blessing to the house of Zacchaeus (see Lk 19:5-10) and to that of Obededom (see 1 Par 13:14<sup>1</sup>), houses which preserved only the image of the Sacrament received by you.

*Inspectio cordis [f.65r]*

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<sup>1</sup> Here, reference is made to 1 Paralipomenon 13:14 in the Douay-Rheims American version of 1899.

### **Return From the Brink of Infernal Abyss**

Consider that the most gracious Savior of the world cares for the salvation of all people and takes into consideration the happiness, not only of the just, but also especially of sinners. And He is the one who does it as He converts them to Himself through their frequent participation in the Most Holy Sacrament, through the various inspirations and countless benefits that He pours out upon them. And thus it happens that these sheep, which the evil spirit had already marked with his sign, are led back to the sheepfold of Christ and saved.

Oh, how often He called you back from afar, although we were alienated from Him through quite grave sins! How often He drew you back from the sheepfold of the infernal hireling! How often He was looking for you as a lost sheep and, seeking you out, He found you with greatest effort; and once you were found, He nourished, refreshed, and guarded you. Oh, how often, alas, have you departed through sin from such a good Shepherd!

*Inspectio cordis [f.111v]*

### **Unfathomable Depth of the Divine Mercy**

Contemplate the Divine Mercy! You see that today's tax collector participates in it to such an extent that — as per the testimony of the Son of God Himself — he “went home justified” (Lk 18:14).

Therefore, learn to immerse with great trust all your imperfections in the immense abyss of this Divine Mercy. And never dare to despise like the Pharisee or — what is worse — to condemn any man, even if he should be even more wicked than Judas himself.

Indeed, proclaim that the heart of God is open to all, and attest that the way to salvation is not inaccessible to any sinner as long as he is willing to repent. Do not believe that sinners are to be treated harshly, being always mindful of your own weaknesses and the divine goodness towards you.

*Inspectio cordis [f.75r]*

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## Healing of the Sick and the Handicapped

Ask yourself: Who are those poor, the feeble, the blind, and the lame? Undoubtedly these are the sinners stripped of virtues, wavering in their good resolutions, failing to perceive the path of justice, and not walking rightly before the Lord. Nevertheless, the Divine Goodness orders that such people be invited to the great banquet, to His table. When they begin to repent, He first adorns them there with the garment of innocence, strengthens them for accomplishing good works, illuminates them with the heavenly light, and restores to them the ability to walk, so that they would firmly persevere in striving on the way of perfection. He does this by His efficacious, inspiring, helping, and accompanying grace, which He gives them at the reception of Holy Communion.

Therefore, do not despise sinners, whom God can justify in a flash. Also, do not treat lightly nor occasionally neglect the truly great banquet of the Lord! It is so rewarding that it enriches the poor, strengthens the feeble, enlightens the blind, and makes the lame walk properly.

*Inspectio cordis [f.64r]*

## Blessing of Mercy

Consider that this world would have been annihilated long ago if gentle mercy had not mitigated the harsh severity of divine justice. For when God sees that people have mercy on others, He alters severe decrees and disregards the sins of those who show mercy to their neighbors. He has mercy on those who are merciful, but also on account of the merciful, He also has mercy on others. And thus, while human mercy gains Divine Mercy for humanity, the severity of justice becomes milder, and punishment is transformed into pardon.

As for you, if you do not have anyone to whom you can show mercy, have mercy on your soul, so that you do not morally ruin that which Love redeemed. But you will ruin it unless you lose it. Because the unchangeable statement of the Truth is: "He that finds his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it" (Mt 10:39).

*Inspectio cordis [f.139r]*

### Joy From the Conversion of a Sinner

Consider how the divine word expressed with love influenced St. Magdalene. When she heard Jesus preaching, she was touched with such a passionate love of God that, having taken the most precious ointments and throwing herself at His feet, she washed them with her tears, wiped them with her formerly most cherished hair; and anointed them with a balm, with the no less fragrant and even more precious oil of true nard. And she did all this in a place where many people were gathered — chiefly the Pharisees, Christ's enemies — being mindful of her sin, forgetful of her own honor, thinking nothing of herself, but valuing greatly the Divine Mercy and the liberation of her soul from seven impure spirits, and especially from eternal condemnation.

Oh, how many are the things that you can learn from this public sinner who was already doing public penance! — namely: serious conversion, true self-abasement, self-contempt, reverence and love of God; hatred, abhorrence, and confession of sin, desire of salvation, improvement of life, and penance that is not just perfunctory.

Go, therefore, go to Jesus and, prostrating yourself on the ground, say: Most merciful Savior, I throw myself at Your feet together with Magdalene, and I strike my breast together with the publican (see Lk 18:13). Be merciful to me, a miserable sinner.

*Inspectio cordis [f.125v]*

### Christ's Genealogy

May human magnificence blush with shame here; may privilege lose value; may the tongue of fame, great pedigree, and illustrious birth be silent, when the Son of God enumerates His and His Mother's ancestors, members of the same lineage and relatives, branded with a mark of infamy: David was a king, yet an adulterer; Solomon was a king, yet born from an adulteress, and he was a worshiper of foreign gods; Manasseh was a king, yet he was also a great sinner. O extraordinary clemency of

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God! — In order to prepare for sinners a broad way leading to Him, He wanted sinners to be recounted in His genealogy.

As for you, forget boasting of your ancestors or your pedigree, and do not despise those who commit sins, but with gentleness and kindness — insofar as you are able — call them back to the way of salvation, as you are now about to receive Him who wished to be the creditor of all, so that He might bring all to salvation.

*Inspectio cordis [f.133v]*

### **Patrons of Sinners**

You should also consider that Christ the Lord willed to mention in His genealogy some sinful persons, women and men, perhaps for the reason that none of those who are truly doing penance would fear to approach Him. As for you, therefore, approach Him today with confidence, hoping that the forgiveness of your deficiencies will be granted to you. If you despair of being successful in your cause, assume as your Patroness the Refuge of Sinners. But if you are still not secure, summon the saints — former sinners — from the family of Christ, women and men: They will sponsor your cause. Neither ignorant of evils nor free of faults, they will hasten to help the miserable; they will try to make the fallen rise.

The most holy from among them — David — says, promising help: “I will teach the unjust your ways: and the wicked shall be converted to you” (Ps 50:15).

*Inspectio cordis [f.140v]*

### **He Came to Redeem the Sinners**

Consider that God cannot be sadder than when He sees those for whose salvation He gave His life succumb to perdition of their own accord. Therefore, lest anyone — tossed about in the immense sea of vices and fearful of divine judgment — fall into despair of his salvation, the Savior of the world wanted

openly to confirm that He has come not to call to grace the righteous, but sinners. Since the righteous are certain of salvation, whereas sinners are certain of punishment, He openly declares that He is particularly committed to the salvation of sinners, and makes sure that everyone is saved, provide that they desire it. Therefore, the way to Heaven is not closed to anyone, if only he wants to enter it and someday abandon at last the infernal way of sensual pleasure. Here sinners can congratulate themselves, for the Son of God — coming to call and save them — left the throne of His glory and undertook an earthly life of degradation.

But you shall have a most miserable future if you wickedly destroy the sheep whom the Heavenly Shepherd came to find.

*Inspectio cordis [f.136v]*

### **Many Tax Collectors and Sinners Came**

Consider that not a few tax collectors and sinners still come to Jesus, namely when they come to the Sacrament of Penance. But after the same men recline at table with Jesus and participate in the heavenly banquet, they become just, ceasing to be tax collectors and sinners.

Why would you wonder at people's evil deeds and carp at them with excessive zeal? Some of today's sinners perhaps will be tomorrow's saints; right now they are worse than demons, but soon they will be more just than angels. They do not need to take great pains for this: If only they will come to Jesus, they will recline at the table with Jesus, and already they will be cleansed from their sins and adorned with virtue. Magdalene also approached Jesus as a sinner and went back justified.

Oh! How fortunate it is to come to Jesus, for the release from sin is acquired through it! O Holy Sacrament, which turns a sinner into one who loves, a servant of the world into a servant of God, a son of darkness into a son of light, a slave of the devil into a freedman of Christ!

*Inspectio cordis [f.136r]*

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### **They Came From Afar**

Consider that these, who come from afar off, are converted sinners. They return to Christ, not from the mouths of the Nile, Tiber, or Ganges, but from the gates of hell. He refreshes them, too, by heavenly consolations and seasons their bitter penance with the sweetness of internal delights.

Just as the Prodigal Son was tormented by great hunger, you also journey to your most gentle Father from the distant region to which your imperfections attracted you. O, with what great desire, expecting you, He cries aloud: "Come, come, and do not hesitate!" To what a sumptuous banquet he is going to welcome you! — "a large dinner"! (see Lk 14:16).

*Inspectio cordis [f.68v]*

### **Pride of the Pharisees**

Do not be too surprised that the pride of the Pharisees was thus agitated and raged against the tax collectors. The Pharisees were servants of the devil; therefore, perfectly imitating their master, they persecuted not only the Son of God, but also those sinners who wanted to be converted and obtain God's mercy. Oh, how most grievous is the vice of pride! Truly the proud envy the others even their salvation; perhaps because they cannot attain it themselves, since they do not want to ask humbly for it.

You, on the contrary, rejoice at the conversion of sinners and seek for it, as did St. Matthew, who — after Christ converted him — invited the tax collectors to the banquet, so that they, too, might be converted by eating together with Christ.

*Inspectio cordis [f.136r]*

### **Elevation of the Converted**

Consider that David is mentioned here before Abraham, the sinner before the righteous, so that you may know that sinners, if they will do a worthy penance, are not only restored to grace, but afterwards are not held in the lowest honor, and are seated

on high thrones in Heaven. For as the will of the proud angels, obstinate in their evil deed, deserved and obliged them only to be plunged into the deepest hell, thus, on the contrary, a humble Confession by contrite sinners carries them up to the lofty thrones of heavenly glory.

Believe that this happens so that you, burdened with evil deeds, do not despise the remedy of penance, considering God as an excessively severe Judge, while He mercifully calls everyone to Himself; He does not want to be the cause of anyone's condemnation; He desires that everyone be saved; He helps those who strive for perfection and becomes more merciful to those who return to their right mind.

*Inspectio cordis [f.141r]*

### **Sick People Need a Doctor**

Behold, the heavenly Teacher Himself answers the question of the Pharisees, asserting that — since He is the Doctor of souls — He was sent not to the healthy (that is, to the saints), but to the sick, to ailing sinners.

Indeed, you have experienced this yourself; since both at another time and today, you approached this most clement Doctor with your wounds, and you were completely healed by the much proven medicine of His Blood and Body.

O how blessed you are! You always have with you this Doctor who can cure at every moment even the many illnesses of your soul!

*Inspectio cordis [f.136r]*

### **Guiding Star of Hope**

O the happiness of that soul, which has already crossed the sea, which has already reached the heavenly port, and arrived at the shore of eternal beatitude. You, my soul, are still tossed in the very dangerous open sea of the world, and you are being smashed

against so many Scyllas<sup>2</sup>, rocks, and sandbanks of the sea. O how often you had been near Mount Etna, near the Sicilian rocks, driven to the gate of hell by the storms stirred up by the evil one. And you would have been lost, engulfed by the grave darkness of your sins and in the waves of temptations, if the very bright lodestar, the Divine Mercy, did not shine for you and did not direct you — as you were wandering away from the right path — into the way of truth, namely to the rules of perfection, and did not restore you, who were wounded and weak. Indeed, you were already totally devastated by frequent faults and crashes against the Charybdis of sensual pleasure, against the rocks of lust, against the sandbanks of unbridled licentiousness, to which you were driven after the sails of the fear of God were torn, after the mast of charity was broken, after the ropes of other virtues were torn asunder; by which faith and hope — very strong sails indeed — were held up.

Therefore, ask Jesus the Artisan that He remedy in the most Holy Communion everything that impedes your voyage to the port of a happy eternity.

*Inspectio cordis [f.84r]*

## **Defender of Sinners**

Consider that, having defended the penitent sinner from the cutting remarks of pharisaic tongues, our Savior also liberated her from seven demons (to be understood as seven principal sins), and finally let her go in peace, and provided for her all kinds of safety for the future.

Things worked out no differently for you today. For what else did you bring to the divine table besides countless sins? And behold, from there you return freed from them, as if from cruel fetters. What did your heart bring besides bitterness? And behold, already it has been filled with sweetness. You were going there wrapped in the darkness of many defects; you come back clothed with the sun, as if with a mantle. You went to Holy Communion

<sup>2</sup> Scylla — a rock at the entrance to the straits between Sicily and Italy, opposite Charybdis, a dangerous whirlpool (CNLD).

agitated by internal struggle; after receiving it, you were filled with the sweetest peace.

Oh, what thanks you should give to God for such a great gift! Love Him whole-heartedly, love Him perfectly, and love Him with utmost loyalty!

*Inspectio cordis [f.126v]*

### **Kindness Towards Others**

Consider that the Pharisees, prompted not by admiration but filled with envy, raised this question about Christ and sought to know who He was. For He did what they were not able to do: He forgave sins, and they did not have the authority to forgive them. Nay, rather, being very wicked, they themselves needed the remission of sins.

You, on the contrary, decide to praise and not to undermine the admirable deeds of all, and to pity sinners, according to what St. Paul said: "Bear one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Since you are also in need of divine mercy, to obtain it today approach the Majesty of God hidden under the species of bread.

*Inspectio cordis [f.125v]*

### **The Violent Take Heaven by Force**

I have no intention of denying that the truest saying of all is what the Truth Himself announced: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force" (Mt 11:12). However, this did not happen before, that is, during the era of Giants,<sup>3</sup> because at that time — as we have been instructed — Heaven was closed even to the righteous. Therefore, what can this violence inflicted upon Heaven refer to? Only to virtue. For the stars are attainable to those who have it, and the planets themselves suc-

<sup>3</sup> The author described in detail and closely examined the stories about Giants in the IV Ed. of *Prodromus*, pp. 33-50.

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cumb out of their natural spontaneity to those entering the Emyrean premises. The city gates and the places that stayed empty after the fall of the angels invite you to enter themselves. Faith is the most useful catapult for conquering the city; the best ladder is hope, and the best missile is love. As soon as you arrive with it, He will command His Capitol to open before the winner and will crown the meritorious one with an immortal laurel wreath.

*Prodromus Reginæ Artium, pp. 42-43.*

### **The Fate of Magdeburg**

I empathize with the fate of the people of Magdeburg. But I believe that there is no other way that we can conquer that heavenly City which had been shown to the prophet of Revelation as the New Jerusalem. Behold, the brave leader St. John the Baptist calls us to this by his words and deeds! With his face emaciated by fasting, his eyes sunk deeply into his head, [clothed] in camel hide, barefoot, pale, exhausted, but filled with an abundance of the Holy Spirit, he preached the Baptism of repentance. He provides the battering ram for storming Heaven. He shows that it [Heaven] must be seized by great violence: by beating it with sighs, breaking into it with fasting, and purchasing release from its guards through pious almsgiving. If such a holy stratagem fails, it is necessary to gain access through the emaciation of our bodies, that is, through the mortification of those body parts that fight against our souls.

He who brings worthy fruits of penance enters the Kingdom of Heaven as a violent conqueror; nor does God Himself dare to nor can oppose him, because He obliged Himself under such an oath [recorded] in Ezekiel: "As I live, says the Lord God, I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live." Therefore, "Turn, turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, house of Israel?" (Ez 33:11).

O sinners, for whose sake the Son of God became incarnate, suffered, was crucified, and died! Why do you wish to be damned

rather than to be saved? If your sins forbid you access to Heaven, take up the battering ram of penance and you will shatter these bolts. You will open up for yourself by force access to the empty seats of the angels who were banished from there. Do not hesitate, for you will obtain it, since one from the clan of thieves has already obtained it.

*The Crucified Orator, pp. 31-32.*

### **The Penitent Thief Finds Mercy**

He was hanging on the gibbet to the right of our crucified Savior, and perhaps he heard Him beseeching the Eternal Father for His enemies. Thus he began to think and consider within himself: "That One is without blemish, free from sin,"<sup>4</sup> entirely just and innocent, and nevertheless is afflicted with dreadful punishment. Thereafter, with this stronger light having come upon him, he acknowledged his worst crimes, for which he had been condemned to a temporal death, although [he would also have been] condemned to an eternal one. Despite having agreed with the Hebrews, with whom he briefly had hurled blasphemies against the kindest Jesus, yet meanwhile, being changed by the sudden effulgence of the neighboring Sun, he recanted what he had earlier said. Boldly, he criticized his companion in punishment and blasphemy, reprimanding him: "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal" (Lk 23:40-41).

Thief! Have the courage to say even more! This innocent one whom you defend is God: He is your Redeemer; for you He undertakes willingly these sufferings that you admire. In fact, why do you not rather reconcile with Him by a mighty supplication? Do this by saying: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). Was he [the thief] not able to conquer by these words the most humble heart of the Lord? Indeed, he conquered! The good Lord granted the guilty one [pardon] of his sin. "Amen, I say to you, you will be with me in Paradise."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Horatio, Song I, 22:1: *Integer vitae scelerisque purus.*

Hearing these words, St. John Chrysostom,<sup>5</sup> filled with much admiration, explains: “That Thief<sup>6</sup> bought the salvation of the world from the Cross; this thief steals the heavenly kingdom and inflicts violence upon the Divine Majesty.” How does he do this? [He does this] through sincere, though belated, penance. Recognizing his own sins, he feels contrition and, being filled with humility, he confesses to Jesus, the High Priest, crucified with him. Therefore, the aforementioned Doctor encourages us again in similar words: “Did you see the thief and the captor of paradise, who did not forget his trade even on the cross, but stole the Kingdom through his own confession?” Thus St. Cyprian of Carthage,<sup>7</sup> bishop and martyr, considering him [the thief] to be the most fortunate, says: “Through his confession, the thief merited on the cross not only forgiveness, but he became a friend of Christ. He was sent to Heaven before others and was made a sharer in the kingdom. Through his confession he has been made His companion in martyrdom.”

This thief taught us that penance unseals or rather conquers Heaven: He taught us to steal, to rob, and to snatch the immortal riches. And so, I conclude with Augustine: “For we know that it [i.e., this grace of complete pardon] was granted not only to him. For when Christ the Lord graciously released such a guilty offender, He gave a pledge for the human race so that the absolution of one in despair might be the comfort and hope for all people, and so that the personal gift might spread for the benefit of all.”  
*The Crucified Orator*, pp. 32-34.

<sup>5</sup> Saint John Chrysostom (c. 350-407), patriarch of Constantinople, renowned as a preacher, was persecuted by the Empress Eudoxia and died in exile. He is one of the great Doctors of the Church in the East.

<sup>6</sup> The author is using the word “thief” in reference to Jesus and to the thief crucified with Him. He has in mind a double analogy: both are on the cross and both acquire salvation — Jesus for the entire world, the thief for himself.

<sup>7</sup> Saint Cyprian (ca. 200 or 210-258), bishop of Carthage, martyr. Combating heresy, he was an advocate for the unity of the Church. He wrote, among other works, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* (*De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate*). He is the author of the famous quote, “One cannot have God as Father who does not have the Church as mother.”

## Plea For the Healing of the Soul

Consider that we should ask for health, prosperity, and other things of this kind under the condition shown by the leper: When desiring to be cleansed from leprosy, he submits himself to the divine decision, saying: "If you wish." However, the healing from leprosy of the soul and the gift of graces necessary for salvation are to be requested categorically, not conditionally. Indeed, they are to be obtained by force of prayers, as per our Savior's exhortation that the Evangelist quotes: "Knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Mt 7:7). Naturally, if the door is not opened at once, one may knock twice or three times in an urgent situation, so you, too, should continue to beseech, ask, and insist so that the Lord — who, perchance, might have been delaying granting you the grace which is in the highest degree necessary for either your improvement of life or for attaining greater perfection — may be prevailed upon by your persistent knocking with prayer to hasten to help you in your cause, to change your conduct, and to renew a steadfast spirit within you (see Ps 50:12). For "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mt 11:12) and capture it.

*Inspectio cordis [f:17v]*

## ABOUT THE IMMACULATE MOTHER OF GOD

### Precursor of Eternal Day

O eternal Son of God! Upon what kind of work are You embarking? What admirable venture are you taking upon Yourself? Behold, out of love for men, You intend to be a man and to clothe Your divine majesty in human lowliness. I am uncertain whether You did this to conceal or to make it more clearly visible. Today that perfect Ark, in which You are going to remain for nine months, already appeared under the sun. Today the Sanctuary, which Your presence will sanctify more, was erected in the middle of the

Church. Today the work of the right hand of the Most High, the most excellent work of all, filled the heavens, limbo, and the people waiting for the Messiah with admiration and joy.

O my soul! I do not know where you shall direct your joy: whether to the future Mother of God born today? Or to the future Savior still to come? Choose the former, and — joining the angels, who surround the newborn Virgin in the cradle — compose a thankful congratulatory song for her on the day of her birth and say: “Hail, Morning Star, most bright forerunner of the eternal day! Hail, most brilliant Moon, which illuminates the long night. Hail Mary, the greatest adornment of the heavens and the earth, you shall bear the true Savior! In addition to other titles, I greet you with the title of Refuge of Sinners. O what a great number of sinners await you, the City of Refuge, whom you shall preserve from eternal death! Among them, I, the first of all, fly to you.”

*Inspectio cordis [f.133r]*

### Mary’s “Anguish”

Consider that there were two reasons why the Most Blessed Virgin was troubled in her spirit. First, she was worried because she feared demonic deception and was on her guard against it. Secondly, she was troubled because she heard the heavenly messenger praising her, and she did not want to hear those praises, because in her deep humility she saw only her lowliness.

Behold the spiritual teaching that you learn from this wisest Virgin! Her fearing the Angel teaches that you ought to be afraid and cautious at the sight of such a figure, even if it seems to be a holy one. She teaches you to avoid the infectious sound of public praise and entirely to detest praising yourself.

If she, who surpasses all creatures by her singular endowments of grace, fears hearing praises of herself, however well-deserved — although there was nothing in her that did not correspond with angelic praises — then how is it possible that you seek praises; by what right shall you be carried by the wind of vain glory, and

personally enjoy somebody else's accolade, when, in fact, nothing can be found in you that would be deserving of even a little praise. *Inspectio cordis* [f.108v]

### Mary as the Instrument of the Divine Mercy

Yet it is also for the benefit of sinners that the Virgin Mary is not only "as beautiful as the moon," but also as "bright as the Sun." Richard of Saint-Laurent<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that "The sun is so generous that it never turns its rays away from any creature, however foul and filthy, if only it be exposed to its action ... Similarly, Mary will not divert her tender gaze even from the most wretched sinner who faithfully calls upon her." And why would she turn away, since each individual sinner was entrusted to her as a son in John: "Woman, behold your son?" [see Jn 19:26].

Come here, despairing sinner! You who already are sinking to the bottom of hell under the weight of your sins and think that your salvation has been lost; come here, hasten to the feet of Mary: "Behold your Mother." Why do you hesitate? What do you fear? Why do you fall into fright? Do you hear John Baptist Spagnoli,<sup>2</sup> known for his holiness, the Virgil of Mount Carmel, singing of her tenderness?

In adversities she is our communal Haven, She grants you the grace even before you ask her. She extends her maternal arms to the miserable.

God, the Father of mercies, desires that — after Him — we place all our hope of eternal life in this Mother of ours. For He has already spoken about this to St. Catherine of Siena,<sup>3</sup> that prodigy

<sup>1</sup> Richard of Saint-Laurent, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian and theologian.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed John Baptist Spagnoli from Mantua (d. 1516) entered the Carmelites and gained a reputation as an excellent poet due to his seven books, *Parthenicae*, devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. One of the imitators of Virgil in the time of the Renaissance.

<sup>3</sup> Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) is a Doctor of the Church, author of *The Dialogues*, and a mystic. She took an active part in the public affairs of the Church and belonged to the Third Order of the Dominicans.

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of sanctity, the illustrious star of the Dominican Family: “Out of My Goodness and respect for the Incarnate Word, it was granted to Mary, the glorious Mother of My only Begotten Son, that no one, whether righteous or sinner, who flies to her in devout veneration would be plundered or devoured by the infernal demon in any manner. For she has been chosen, prepared, and ordained by Me as the sweetest bait for catching men and especially sinners.”

Therefore, I conclude with the words of Fulbert of Chartres<sup>4</sup>: “Let sinners come to her, beating their sinful breasts with interior weeping; and they also will receive the forgiveness they long for, if they truly repent.”

*The Crucified Orator, pp. 42-43.*

### **Grace Annihilates Fear**

Consider how the Archangel encourages the most holy Virgin and exhorts her not to fear any deceit and fraud. On what basis? “For you have found grace with God” (Lk 1:30), he says. Hence, know that those people who are in the state of grace should fear nothing, not even hell itself. They can say with Paul: “If God be for us, who is against us?” (Rom 8:31). Truly “he rides quite safely, who is carried by the grace of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, having praised the Most Blessed Virgin for her supreme and singular graces, ask her to obtain for you a continuous state of grace, that you may not fear the world, death, and hell.  
*Inspectio cordis [f.109v]*

### **Pondering the salutation**

Consider that the Most Blessed Virgin does not immediately assent to the angelic salutation, but ponders it first to discern

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<sup>4</sup> Fulbert of Chartres (ca. 960-1028) was a bishop, an author of Marian sermons, theological and literary treatises, and poetic songs. He renewed the famous theological school at the cathedral in Chartres, which was the cultural center of France.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas à Kempis, TKIC, book II, Ch. 9, § 2.

whether that vision is heavenly and good, or rather a demonic temptation and evil deception.

For this reason, you should similarly take note of all internal inspirations and — prior to putting them into action — consider whether they truly come from God. Since the Most Blessed Virgin was not unaware of the fact that the angel of darkness quite often takes on the guise of an angel of light, she realized that she should not immediately believe that envoy, lest she be either deceived or act rashly in matters of great importance.

Wherefore, think first before carrying out any such suggestions. Test spirits and discern whether they are from God, and do not readily follow an internal command, mindful of the countless examples of those who were thus deceived.

*Inspectio cordis [f:109r]*

### **The Handmaid of the Lord**

O sublime lowliness! O profound disdain of self! O inexplicable humility of the Most Blessed Virgin! The angel addresses her as the Mother of God, and she declares that she wants to be God's handmaid, or even a handmaid of God's Mother. She is called "full of grace" (see Lk 1:28), and she proclaims herself to be most lowly. She is declared to be the abode of the Holy Spirit (see Lk 1:35), and she lowers herself beneath everything. At least with respect to creation, any man can call himself a son of God, yet this most humble Virgin asserts that she is only a handmaid of the Lord: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

How then will you deal with proud or presumptuous thoughts about yourself from now on, when you hear that the most noble of virgins, indeed the most excellent of all creatures, thought so humbly about herself?

O my soul! I implore you: Do not ever boast that you are a friend of God, nor call yourself even His handmaid, but only the dust to be trodden upon by everybody's feet. If God wants you to do something, then you will be allowed to say: "Behold the hand-

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maid of the Lord.” Nothing, in fact, impedes you from using these words in today’s Holy Communion. However, when you see yourself unworthy in every respect of receiving such a great Lord, when He really wants — nay urges you — to hasten to receive Him, say then from your innermost heart: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Your word.”

Do you want me, O Lord, to give You a dwelling in my heart? But it is impure and full of diverse filth; nevertheless, You urge and call: “Give Me your heart” (Prov 23:26). “Behold the handmaid of the Lord;” “My heart is ready for you” (see Ps 107:2); “be it done to me according to what is pleasing to you.”

*Inspectio cordis [f.109v]*

### **She Gave Birth to the One Who Is the Light**

Grasp and piously ponder that the Most Blessed Virgin contributed considerable help to the rising of the uncreated Sun, so that the people who had walked in darkness might see a great light (see Is 9:1). Undoubtedly she had prayed to God that He would bestow the promised Messiah as soon as possible, and that He would send a “Light of revelation to the Gentiles” (see Lk 2:32).

Oh, if by her prayers she would obtain for you today that the unceasing light might rise within you; that the darkness of injustice might never overwhelm you after the Son of Justice has been given access to your heart, but that your good works may shine before men forever, so that they may glorify your Father, who is in Heaven (see Mt 5:16).

*Inspectio cordis [f.145r]*

### **Life-Giving Guard Against the Infernal Heat**

O salutary mist, through which the most desired Dew came down on earth. This mist protects and wonderfully irrigates the entire world, since not only does it turn the darts of divine anger away from it, but also provides many good things for it.

To her Son she shows her maternal nursing breast; and the Son shows His wounds to the Father: thus the Father forgives those who sin; thus He heaps his gifts onto the ungrateful; thus — expecting our improvement on account of the merits of the Son and the entreaties of His Mother — He transforms punishment into forgiveness. Oh, how many of the condemned would burn at the stake if this most propitious mist did not shield them!

As for you, therefore, having received the Son, pray to the Mother, since she protects the whole earth, that she would be willing to shield you too under the shadow of her wings and preserve you from the eternal fire.

*Inspectio cordis [f.145r]*

### **She Can Obtain a Lot for Us**

Who, being oppressed by the burden of sins or worn out by a multitude of worries, would fear to approach today the most gracious Queen of Heaven? Behold, she extends her hands and calls out: “Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened” (Mt 11:28).

She compares herself to a terebinth tree stretching out its branches that are indeed the branches of honor and grace, so that you may hasten to her with greatest trust, and she will obtain for you every kind of divine grace and the honor of eternal blessedness. For what would she not obtain from her Son for mortals, especially on this day, on which by a unique privilege she was exempted from the common lot of all mortals; on which she was conceived without the original stain; on which she was adorned and crowned with countless gifts of grace and raised entirely above all creation?

*Inspectio cordis [f.144v]*

### **Exalted Like a Cedar of Lebanon**

Consider that the Most Blessed Virgin is compared to a cedar, and not without good reason. Just as the cedar is the most

splendid among the trees, so the Most Blessed Virgin is the most splendid among all beings. Moreover, you know the value which Solomon, the richest and wisest of all people, attributed to the cedar timbers that he chose for decoration of the interior of that first and most famous temple on earth (see 1 Kgs 6).

Therefore, why would not the Most Blessed Virgin be called a cedar, since she, likewise, is a temple? Greeting her by this name, a certain most pious servant said: "Hail (Virgin) Mother! Temple of the Trinity."

As for you, proceed to this temple today with great haste, certain that you will obtain whatever you ask.

*Inspectio cordis [f.144r-144v]*

### **Like Jacob's Mother**

Consider that as Jacob, son of Isaac, fled before Esau, his brother [see Gen 2:41-43], thus you should convince yourself that you must flee before the tempter, whom you would not be able to vanquish. As his mother, Rebecca, greatly helped Jacob in receiving his father's blessing (see Gen 27:4-29), so you should beseech and seek God's blessing through none other than the Rebecca of the New Testament, that is, the Mother of God, the Most Holy Virgin. Follow the example of that man who gave us somewhere this prayer: "Through you, (O Mary!), may we have access to your Son, O blessed are you that have found (grace, you who brought forth) Life, Mother of salvation! that through you, He may receive us, who through you was given to us."

*Inspectio cordis [f.141v]*

### **Through the Work of the Holy Spirit**

The wives of the ancient pagans pretended that they bore (children) from gods. This is false, impious, a pagan deception. The Most Holy Virgin Mary is with child, the Son of God, through the Holy Spirit. It is a mystery, a grace, an article of faith. And in-

deed, it is justly said that she — who was full of grace, full of the Holy Spirit — conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Oh, if only this could be affirmed about your actions: that they proceed from the Holy Spirit, that they are made perfect by the Holy Spirit! Truly, it is a great happiness to possess the Holy Spirit — greater still to act according to the Holy Spirit — and the greatest of all to finish one's days in the Holy Spirit. What shall I say or think about her who carries in her virginal womb the Son conceived by the Holy Spirit? O happiest of virgins! O most blessed of mothers!

With most profound feeling I congratulate you, Mary, on such a privilege, granted to you alone, the one and only from the entire procession of holy women. Pray that we may live and die according to the Holy Spirit.

*Inspectio cordis [f.107r]*

### **Sanctifying Conception of the Son**

Consider that, having conceived the Son of God, the Most Blessed Virgin was filled with greater gifts and favors, and adorned with greater sanctity than before. As trees are adorned primarily by their fruits, so she received an ineffable beauty, grace, and sanctity from the holy fruit of her womb.

You also should hope for similar effects from the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist. And while the humble, obedient, steadfast, and patient Jesus is a guest in your inmost heart, do not hamper your growth in becoming more humble, more obedient, more steadfast, and more patient than you have ever been before.

*Inspectio cordis [f.109v]*

### **Ever More Happy**

Consider that the Most Holy Virgin was blessed indeed from her very conception — even being conceived in a blessed way — but became ever more blessed as she conceived the Son of God,

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the Author of all blessedness. Hence, rightly the woman from the crowd proclaims in a raised voice: "Blessed is the womb that bore You!" It is as if she were saying: "O fortunate one! O blessed that Mother whose womb You — who are so holy — sanctified still further, although it was already holy before it carried You!"

Your heart is also blessed because it contains today the Son of God. Beg that He may remain in it always, so that you may be blessed always.

*Inspectio cordis [f.129r]*

### **Consequences of Receiving the Lord**

It was not only in the opinion of that woman, much enlightened by the Lord, but was also confirmed by pious Christian teaching that the Blessed Virgin was adorned with a greater sanctity and a greater number of graces after the incarnation of the Son of God than she was before. If it is so, mind that you do not create any obstacle for the Lord in coming down to you, thus impeding Him from enlightening you more than you have been before, sanctifying and making you purer, more obedient, devoted to discipline, humble, poor, meek, and more mortified.

Although it is proper to all sanctity — and especially to the holiness of this Saint of Saints — to make His companions holy, yet it is well known that sometimes people themselves create such obstacles and impediments that God — although He would like to make them holy and save them — just cannot, due to their own fault.

At least today, may you not fall into this misfortune!

*Inspectio cordis [f.129r]*

### **Mary's Dignity Comes From Her Son**

Consider the dignity of the Mother, which she received from the eminence of the Son. Due to the very fact that she became the Mother of the Son of God, the Lord of the angels and the King of the universe, she became not only the Bride of God, but at the

same time the Mistress of the angels and the Queen of all creation. Therefore, all the Virgin's honors, favors, prerogatives, privileges, and exemptions depend solely on her Maternity, just as your whole salvation and the means of salvation depend solely on the redemption accomplished by her Son, whom you have received today.

Thus, congratulate the Virgin Mother on such a remarkable Maternity. Moreover, on your part, rejoice in such a fortunate, salutary, and excellent redemption. Give thanks to the Mother, that she provided her purest blood for creating and shaping the body of your Savior. Moreover, ceaselessly give thanks to the Son who poured out for you the abundant streams of the holy blood from His most sacred body.

*Inspectio cordis [f.134r]*

### **Mother of the Redeemer and Our Advocate**

Congratulate the Most Blessed Virgin on this privilege, namely of becoming the Mother of God, the Savior, with the flower of her virginity completely unspoiled.

In a perfect disposition of submission and trust, commit to her all your needs, not doubting that they will turn out in the best way. Learn also to take refuge in her in cases of doubts, anxieties, and difficulties, and to give continuous thanks to the Lord, that He chose and made her His own Mother and our Advocate.

But desire this, as a most important thing: that you may avail yourself to the full of her powerful and most effective aid in that difficult, dangerous, and last struggle, in which you are going to migrate from this life.

*Inspectio cordis [f.141v]*

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### Suffering Leads to Glory

Consider that Christ's humanity truly acquired omnipotence and obtained power over all creation after He was lifted up on the Cross and put to death by unspeakable torments. Similarly, the Most Blessed Virgin was named the Queen of Heaven after the resurrection of her Son. Nevertheless, she was not adorned with this title by the heavenly envoy when he promised her a pure maternity, revealing only the fullness of grace. Undoubtedly, it seems that she obtained the scepter of the heavenly Kingdom through the pains she endured during the Passion of Christ the Lord.

Hence you may learn: The heavier are the crosses that you endure on earth, the greater shall be the rewards that await you in Heaven. Indeed, we are led to the heavenly Kingdom through afflictions.

*Inspectio cordis [f.135r]*

### Consoler of the Afflicted

This is what the orthodox Church professes when, addressing the Most Holy Virgin as "clement" and "loving," it also adds "sweet."

Oh, you are truly sweet, Virgin Mary! Was there anyone filled with bitterness who ever had recourse to you and went back without a most sweet consolation? Or someone filled with worry who approached you and was not immediately comforted? Did ever someone tormented by bitter temptations not experience sweetness in your care? You console, refresh, help, and lift up the disheartened, the groaning, the tempted, and the depressed. You are gentle to all, sweet to all.

If only I could express how sweet you are as I comprehend your sweetness! The entire Christian world experiences and tastes your sweetness and draws from it, but cannot express it. Therefore, O clement and loving and sweet Virgin! Show unto us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, united with us today and gracious in the hour of death.

*Inspectio cordis [f.144v]*

### **After God, Our Most Holy Hope**

Our singular Patrons, who are to be revered by us with unique honor, are: the most August and Supereminent Virgin, the Mother of God, our guardian angel, and the saint whose name we have received.

Who could adequately explain the care the most Holy Mother has for us? I would like to do so, if I could. Yet I know that she is concerned for us in the same way that she was concerned for Christ the Lord, her only and most beloved Son, since she recognizes that we are His members. I can mentally grasp almost all the good that she does for us, but I lack the words with which to set them forth for others to consider. And so I say briefly: We have all things through Mary, and, after God, it is in her that we live, move, and have our being. “After God” (as Albert the Great<sup>6</sup> thinks) “she is the source of all grace in us” (in the book Mar. 1. Gen. n. 12). Hence Bernard, who was most devoted to her, says: “We venerate Mary with all the depth of our hearts, with all the ardor of our hearts, and with our desires: because such is the will of Him who wished us to have all through Mary.”

*The Mystical Temple of God, p. 97.*

### **Take the Son and His Mother**

Consider that God wants you to be a zealous servant not only of His Son, but also of the Mother of God. He respects the Mother so much that He does not want her to be without the Son, nor the Son without the Mother. Hence, He commands Joseph to take the Mother together with the Son away from danger, and to lead them to Egypt, a place of safety.

Wherefore, according to your devotion, as you are going to let the Son into the inner dwelling of your heart today, remember also the Mother and give thanks to her for having fed at her breast this Lord and Redeemer of yours, who will support you by His wounds, will nourish you by His flesh, and will give you His blood to drink.  
*Inspectio cordis [f:150v]*

<sup>6</sup> St. Albert the Great, Doctor of the universal Church; born ca. 1200, died in 1280; teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas.

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### Love For the Immaculate Mother

Consider that St. Casimir already enjoys to the full the beatific vision and immerses himself in the consolations of the glory of the heavenly fatherland, whereas you are still waiting for face to face contemplation of God, whom you are about to receive under the species of bread. Truly, this happiness of yours will not be of little account if only you try to prepare yourself to receive Him worthily.

Oh, if only you had a little bit of that ardor with which this saintly prince was burning for the Holy Sacrament! Oh, if only you possessed even the smallest spark of love with which he was glowing towards the Mother of the Lord, whom you are about to receive! He gave witness to that love in a splendid hymn which he personally composed and which was buried with him, and then found on his chest, completely intact, many years after its author's death!<sup>7</sup>

Ask through the intercession of St. Casimir that God might pour into you this ardor and love, and entrust into his protection your earthly fatherland.

*Inspectio cordis [f.106r]*

### Imitation of Mary

Members of the Marian Sodalties! I do not know how, but we have escorted the Virgin Mary to the heavenly sanctuary: The spirit is eager to follow her and yearns to remain there, where the sweetest decoration of Heaven and earth rests. But none of these would see Mary in the heavenly fortress who did not imitate her during his stay on earth and always serve her with utmost love. So, at the end of this laudatory speech, I will quote the words of St. Ambrose: "May the virginity and life of the Blessed Virgin show themselves to you as an image. In her — as in a mirror — are reflected the grace of purity and beauty of virtue."

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<sup>7</sup> Rabikauskas P., *Casimiro (Kazimieras, Kazimierz) rincipē [...] sancto*, Bibliotheca Sanctorum, Roma, 1961-1970, III, 903.

Members of the Marian Sodality! Draw from this the examples by which you should live. These examples — as a paragon teaching the righteous way of life — indicate everything that you should improve and everything that you should avoid. The longing for learning depends primarily on the teacher's dignity. And who is more dignified than the Mother of God? Who is grander than she, who was chosen by the Light? Who is purer than she whose body gave birth without carnal intercourse? Such was Mary, and her life's example has become the school for us all. So, if the author does not raise any objections, let us make sure that everyone who seeks his reward imitates this example.

*Prodromus Reginæ Artium, pp. 69-70.*

### **New Book For Reflection**

My soul, until now you studied books on various branches of learning. Today look into the new, recent, unseen book: the Most Holy Mother of God, the book, so to speak, composed, written, and embellished by God Himself. What could you find somewhere else that you would not have in Mary? Will anyone offer you anything more than what Mary embraces? This is the book of virtues and of all perfections: It is divided into as many chapters as it is filled with virtues. Oh, turning pages of this book, devote yourself whole-heartedly, therefore, to studying it, and gather from it the little flowers greatly needed for your religious state.

*Inspectio cordis [f.140v]*

### **From the Dynasty of the Most Obedient People**

Both Jesus and Mary were descendants of two ancestries: royal and priestly. She is the daughter, he is the Son of Abraham and Isaac; they are the most obedient from among the very obedient. He always followed the will of the Father; she never followed her own, but did only the will of God. And of this she gave evidence, even to the very messenger of the Savior's incarnation, saying: "Be it done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Undoubtedly it was only fitting for these, who were to renew the

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whole world through their obedience, to be offspring and members of the dynasty of the most obedient parents and ancestors.

Try to be born again with the Virgin coming into the world and to obtain from her at least this obedience! It belongs among the great virtues; beseech it humbly from the little infant Virgin Mary, because she — still in her cradle — generously endows mortals. If you have obtained obedience, believe that you have obtained all the virtues. Do you ask for the reason? Obedience is the mother of all the virtues.

*Inspectio cordis [f.133v]*

### **Striving For the Acme**

Mary rose up, intending to be on her way to Elizabeth, for this reason: to help her, the weaker one, and to render to her cousin the most necessary assistance of charity.

As for you, likewise rise up to help your soul, for nothing should be closer and dearer to you than your soul. Therefore, visit it as quickly as possible, examine it and see what it needs, and at the same time, provide for its needs. But if you notice that it is filled with good desires — as if pregnant with them — ask Jesus, coming to you in Holy Communion today, to sanctify, as He sanctified the holy infant in the womb of Elizabeth, your desires, and to help and increase those already born. In fact, ask that He purify and pardon you from all your sins with the same grace that He freed John from original sin.

*Inspectio cordis [f.123v]*

### **Under St. Joseph's Protection**

Let us leave the virginal abode and go to the Virgin's purest bedroom. The Virgin has been wed to the virginal bridegroom. Yet she — who married Joseph out of obedience to her elders — has no fear for her virginity under Joseph's protection. Having placed her trust in God, she delegated to a man the safeguarding of the greatest treasure. She — who had dedicated the flower of

virginity to God earlier in a solemn ceremony — had no doubt that she would have a virginal spouse. She trusted that the One to whom she had vowed her chastity would care for it as for His own. And what did He do? He combined the intact virginity with motherhood. The Virgin becomes the Mother; yet, having become a mother, she still remained a virgin. What is to be admired more: that from being the Father's daughter she becomes the Mother of the Son, or the Bride of the Holy Spirit, or the tabernacle of the entire Holy Trinity? Oh, happy is the Virgin, decorated with many titles and endowed with many goods and gifts!

*Prodromus Reginæ Artium, pp. 65-66.*

### **A Virgin Wedded to a Virginal Bridegroom**

It is not up to you to inquire into the profound mystery of virginity connected to maternity and maternity to virginity. Instead, you should be overwhelmed with astonishment that this was done for your salvation.

What is this? What does this mean? The Virgin remains unbroken, and yet she is a Mother; she has a Spouse, and yet she is a Virgin. Both the Husband and the Wife manifest the incorrupt lily of virginity, and yet — between them — the Son appears in their midst and is adored. O most wonderful mystery, full of wonder and worthy of admiration! The Virgin did not know man, and yet she carried in her womb God and Man together; Man and God together. He is God, born before the ages of the Father without a mother; He is a Man, created in time in the Mother without a father, by the action of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, there is no other mystery that we could revere and admire more, and which would amaze us more. None of the divine works is more grand.

And you — dust and clay — do you see what God did for your sake? — To what extent the Son abased himself? — How far the omnipotence of the Father reached? Shall not you love Him for this?  
*Inspectio cordis [f.107r]*

## The Righteous Man

Even the saints may easily become suspicious of the saints, especially if there is an external reason. Who was holier than Joseph? Who was purer than the Most Holy Virgin? And yet he wanted to leave her secretly. But how prudently and righteously he wanted to do it! He did not want to separate from her openly, lest she be defamed, but clandestinely, that she may preserve her good name.

You ought to learn from this holy and just Man: although the deeds of others may seem evil [f.107v] to you and are said to be imperfect, you should judge them secretly, not openly, and judge in such a way that neither your conscience nor their good name be hurt. If you do so, you will not be lacking the light, so that you may judge rightly; as the righteous husband of the Most Holy Virgin did not lack light for comprehending the truth about how she had conceived.

*Inspectio cordis [f.107v]*

## ABOUT MUTUAL LOVE

### The Love of God and the Love of Your Neighbor

Consider that loving is a sure method of attaining eternal life. Nobody is nearer the divine glory than God's own friends. But do not think that you should abundantly love God alone, and that only those delight in the fruit of charity whose hearts are continuously fixed on God. The Lord says that loving one's neighbor is much like loving God (see Mt 22:39). Indeed, it must be asserted that one cannot exist without the other.

For how could you say that you burn with the love of God if you burn with unrestrained hatred towards your neighbor? How could you say that you serve God truly, if you refuse the smallest services to your neighbor? Don't you sometimes either neglect or carelessly do things that concern his salvation?

In fact, the love of neighbor does not consist only in that you serve him; but also in that you excuse and endure his faults and consider them worthy of pardon. "Bear you one another's burdens; in that way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) speaks of the perfect lover of his neighbor.

Hence, earnestly ask the Lord, present on the altar, for the first and second kind of love as most indispensable for you.

*Inspectio cordis [f.83r]*

### **Close Relation Between Two Kinds of Love**

Consider that he who does not abound in love for his neighbor does not abound in love for God. In some way, the love of God depends on love for human beings. For if we have no love for a human being whom we have before our eyes and whom we see shaped in all respects in the same image as we are, how can we love God whose likeness we do not see (see 1 Jn 4:20), nor comprehend His essence? Hence, rightly a certain man exhorts: "All people should be loved with a true love. And there is no reason for you to hate someone else on account of some unpleasant words said to you that caused your dissatisfaction," for the heart that holds no love for his neighbor holds none for God, either.

*Inspectio cordis [f.152r]*

### **A Condition For Reconciling With God**

Consider that here it was stated by the heavenly Master that he who does not burn with love of neighbor is unworthy of the love of God, and that he who is not reconciled with his brother and is not favorable to him, does not merit reconciliation with the Savior or to receive His favor.

Woe to you if, returning from the altar and carrying within your heart the same self-love, you again irritate somebody and fill him with sadness! Believe that the Lord wants you to be reconciled again with your brother. For love and hatred cannot get on well together, or linger in one heart.

*Inspectio cordis [f.68r]*

### To Give One's Life For Others

Note that nothing pleases the divine Majesty more than charity towards your neighbor, which enables us to endure all inconveniences, slanders, and even fights out of the love for neighbor. Just as Christ's greatest virtue was His willingness to suffer death on the Cross out of love for us, so likewise there will be no more excellent act of virtue for us than to endure something for the sake of our neighbor. "Greater love than this no man has" — says the eternal Word — "that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

Oh, if only you would lay it down for your enemies, who definitely are your neighbors! If you could die praying for them at this moment in the sight of divine Majesty.

*Inspectio cordis [f.116v]*

### Being of One Heart With the Others

Secondly, consider that the word "brother" means any neighbor, but mostly those of the household of the faith (see Gal 6:10). Consider, therefore, whether you have one heart and one soul with all (see Acts 4:32); whether you are troublesome to someone; whether you blame or accuse somebody with more zeal than is appropriate. Consider why you interfere with someone else's promotion; why you do not rejoice in the qualities and talents of others; why you do not favor their progress in perfection; why you are ill-disposed toward some; why you address them with stern and harsh words.

Consider whether all this proceeds from a just zeal, or rather from your angry disposition, lest you be punished by a very severe verdict of the Judge, who comes to you today.

*Inspectio cordis [f.67v]*

### The Greatness of Apostolic Love

Think how bad is the state of one's intellect when one does not recognize or grasp the good things done or proposed by someone

else, and even rejects them. The Apostles, who were afflicted by this mental darkness, did not understand the Lord speaking at length about His torments and His impending death. And there was no other cause for this than the virtue of charity, with its obligation and perfection still concealed from them, namely the will to undergo suffering for another — whether a friend or foe — the torments, calamity, and vicissitudes of adverse fortune.

If you still do not feel a desire to help your neighbor, and to endure for the common good things most painful and contrary to your disposition, know that you still don't understand the perfection of charity and are still in total ignorance of all the virtues by which we ascend to Heaven.

Plead with God for light so that you may understand how great is the importance of each virtue, all that He wants you to do, and how He wants you to advance in perfection. Ask and pray: "Give me understanding, and I shall live" (Ps 118:144); "Open my eyes, and I will consider Your wonders" (see *ibid*, 18).

*Inspectio cordis [f.28r]*

## ABOUT THE LAST THINGS

### **The Delusions of the Proud**

What, then, shall we believe to be true when speaking about the Giants than the fact that they were a haughty and proud people, the likes of which abound in all ages? They were enflamed and distended by earthly desires; they were godless and wicked, without any religion or virtue. They were people to whom every right was based on weapons, and who saw all the good in terms of sensual use. They believed they were given only one life — the temporal one — and did not expect to see another, happier life. Deceived by unwise opinions, they convinced themselves that there is nothing after a person's death, no universal judgment of all people, no punishments, no rewards. They ascribed every-

thing to nature, and nothing to God. Moreover, they believed that there is no God. They recognized no authority over themselves, and each of them became his own prince, his own god.

*Prodromus Reginæ Artium, p. 46.*

### **The Certainty of Death**

Consider that every man was created from perishable matter, and therefore, he shall decompose. And therefore we are called mortals, because we are subject to death, according to this saying: “We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth” (2 Kgs 14:14). Hence, it is impossible to find someone so powerful, or rich, or expert in law and all sciences, who could break that law, remove himself from under it, or evade it by means of some argument. It is the law that the Creator of all things personally laid down in times past for our first parent, and at the same time for every man without exception: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return”(Gen 3:19).

Besides being unable not to die, a human cannot even manage to prolong his life in a natural manner for a single moment. Therefore, be it a king, an emperor, a pope; or a lord, or an ordinary person; be it a rich or a poor person; learned or ignorant; young or old; healthy or sickly, he should bear in mind that the end of his life may come at any moment. And as for you, ponder, expect, and fear the same.

*Inspectio cordis [f.176v]*

### **The Moment of Our Death Is Unknown**

Consider that no mortal can know in a natural way the day or hour of his death, as Ecclesiastes teaches: “Man does not know his own end” (Eccl 9:12). So that we would be mindful of the end of our life, the eternal Wisdom exhorts us in these words: “Watch” (Mt 24:42) and “Be you also ready, for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come” (Lk 12:40), namely: the same one who will judge every human being immediately after their death.

Wherefore, since you surely are not able to promise yourself an additional morrow — indeed, not even to the end of this hour in which you ponder these things — pay close attention to your every thought and deed; seriously improve your life; adopt more holy conduct, and apply yourself more assiduously to perfection. *Inspectio cordis [f.176v]*

### **The Circumstances of Our Death Are Unknown**

Consider that unknown to man is not only the time, but also the place where he would breathe his last: whether in his own house or in another's, on the road or in bed, on land or on water. For there are many who travel to foreign countries; many that die at the doctor's, many who end the last moment of their life on the battlefield.

But who can know the manner of his death? Whether this thief is going to come unexpected or foreseen; whether by day or by night; would your life be snatched away from you slowly or brusquely; in a natural way, through torments, or in an accident?

Wherefore do not put off your improvement till tomorrow; you do not want to ever omit any occasion to gain merit; you do not want to promise yourself a long life, remembering the heavenly Teacher's parable: "But if that evil servant shall say in his heart: My lord is a long time in coming: and shall begin to strike his fellow servants, and shall eat and drink with drunkards: the lord of that servant shall come on a day that he hopes not, and at an hour that he knows not: and shall separate him, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 24:48-51).

*Inspectio cordis [f.177r]*

### **It Comes as a Thief**

Consider that the Divine Word often preached with the help of parables, including the story of no small importance about the thief and the householder. He teaches us there that we should

never be unprepared for the day of death. Since — as the very patient and wisest Job testifies: “The life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1) — we must always remain watchful. This is what the heavenly Teacher asserts, speaking of the householder, who would certainly deny himself a whole night of sleep if he knew that a thief was coming to break into his house.

Therefore, as it is proper for men to keep watch day and night so that they would not lose their temporal goods, you also ought to pay attention every moment, lest you lose immortal goods and gifts, and so that death would not surprise you devoid of merits.  
*Inspectio cordis [f.106v]*

### The Dying

Consider or picture in your imagination a person — perhaps even yourself — already at the moment of his ultimate struggle at the end of life. This is when the evil spirits attack the soul, willing to induce it to conceit by exalting its merits, or to desperation by exaggerating its sins. Next, picture yourself lying and most grievously moaning, surrounded by friends, family members, and relatives, with a candle lit at your bedside and some little picture or crucifix inserted into your hands.

Oh, how horrible is the thought of that agony! When the colossal power of illness shall try to force the soul out of the body, but the soul indeed shall still refuse to go, linger, and resist, unwilling to leave its Achates<sup>1</sup> — the body — being particularly aware of the evils committed together with it. What would you say then? What sort of prayers will you utter? Which of the Patrons will you invoke? Which of the friends of God or of your friends will you summon to your aid? Nothing will be able to help you, except the knowledge of your good deeds based on the merits of Christ.

*Inspectio cordis [f.177v]*

<sup>1</sup> Achates was the faithful companion and friend of Aeneas, according to the *Aeneid* of Virgil, where Achates is praised for being “brave” and “faithful.” Hence the word “Achates” is accepted proverbially for a faithful friend or companion. Here, “Achates” is meant to be the body of the dying person, the faithful companion of his soul during his life on earth.

## Judgment After Death

Consider now the departure of the soul, which painfully struggles as it leaves its habitation, namely, from the heart, while the vital warmth fades away from the feet, hands, and head and passes out through the door of the mouth. Then, accompanied on one side by its guardian angel, and on the other, by the evil spirit, the tempter, the soul hastens to the tribunal of the Judge. There, after the examination of its deeds according to their kind, the soul will either receive heavenly glory or be sentenced to Purgatory or eternal condemnation.

Therefore, see how much you should honor numerous saints, and especially among them the Virgin, Mother of the dying, and the guardian angel, your faithful companion during lifetime, so that you may experience their help at that time when you will be in no way able to help yourself.

*Inspectio cordis [f.178r]*

## Helping the Living and the Dead

Consider that escorting the dead to their burial place is a great deed of charity, but a greater one is leading their souls out of the tomb of Purgatory by pious prayers. Think that a deed equal to the previous one is helping by devout prayer those who are overcome by spiritual death — that is, those in mortal sin — so that they may be revived.

You were among the latter, but the widowed mother — be it the community where you belong or the Catholic Church with her great multitude of the faithful and saintly Patrons — obtained for you a better life by successfully entreating the Lord on behalf of sinners. And you should firmly believe that it is due to her prayers that the Lord of life decided to raise you up today, meeting you in the Most Holy Sacrament. See to it, when all is better with you, that you do the same for the others, and that you try to help the souls of the deceased, as well as spiritually dead sinners, through your extraordinary diligence in prayer or mortifications.

*Inspectio cordis [f.80v]*

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## Helping the Deceased

Next, it is the greatest charity to pray earnestly to God for the freedom of the souls remaining in Purgatory, or to assist them by merciful alms as by various other means. Quite impious and foolish is he who is not moved by their torments, and does not help those who suffer when he can. The leader, Judas Maccabeus, just as vigorous as he was noble-minded, “took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view” (2 Macc 12:43). This was done by a man who was occupied with continual wars, which usually extinguish pity, and who may well have known that the Synagogue did not have as much power as our Holy Mother the Church to apply the merits of Christ the Lord to the faithful departed. What is appropriate for us to do; for us who can obtain much from Jesus, and have such frequent incentives to bring assistance to the souls of the faithful who are destined for temporary torment? Therefore, I am greatly amazed how it is possible that a Christian does not begin to feel deeply the entreaty of these souls who cry aloud in these words: “Pity me, pity me, O you my friends!” (Job 19:21). What about the fact that we shall have in Heaven as many patrons and helpers as we have brought souls from the furnace of Purgatory! I do not relate many things on this subject; let it suffice to consider and follow what the Holy Spirit declared: “it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosened from sins” (LV 2 Macc 12:45-46).

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 115-116.*

## The Last Judgment

Consider that each of us has to appear twice before the supreme Judge: at first in the particular judgment, which is done usually after each one’s death; and the second time in the general judgment, which Christ the Lord shall arrange in the valley of Josaphat (see Joel 3:12) — as common opinion proclaims —

when the world comes to an end and is totally destroyed, according to what the royal psalmist says in his prophecy: “He shall judge the world with justice, and the peoples with his truth” (Ps 95:13). Then all mortals shall be there — from the first man Adam up to and including the last person that shall be born or die in the world; and the blessed from Heaven, and the purified from Purgatory and the condemned from hell — all will appear flocking together to render a strict account of all their thoughts, words and deeds.

*Inspectio cordis [f.179r]*

### **The Verdict of the Just Judge**

Consider the verdict of the implacable Judge, who — with His countenance assuming the greatest and almost unbearable gravity — will turn towards those standing at His left side, the sinners to be condemned eternally, and, giving that verdict in a fiery and terrifying voice, He will say: “Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire” etc. (see Mt 25:41). At once the earth, opening its mouth, will engulf them, together with all of the evil spirits and abominable things that would be then on its surface, to be exceedingly tormented forever in the abyss of infernal punishments; all this it will drag down with them.

But the same Judge, gazing most gently at the righteous at His right side, will invite them, speaking in the sweetest tone of voice, to take possession of eternal joy: “Come, you blessed of My Father, and possess the Kingdom, which was prepared for you by My Father for ever”<sup>2</sup> (see Mt 25:34).

Learn from this to devote yourself to purity of conscience, which will be the only fearless thing before the tribunal of that Judge, who is not appeased with gifts and does not accept excuses, but will openly declare what is just.

*Inspectio cordis [f.181r]*

<sup>2</sup> In the Vulgate: “prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

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### Picturing Hell to Oneself

If you want to know what hell is and what it is like, picture in your mind a very deep underground abyss, located at the very center of the earthly globe, and filled with different kinds of punishments. But among others, imagine two regions established there: one of inextinguishable fire, and the other of unbearable cold. And imagine in spirit that you see souls like very dense sparks flying at a great speed from the flames over into the cold, whereas from there, they fly like dense snow or frozen hail back into the flames. How painful must be this punishment, whose peculiarity changes so completely and so quickly, so that at one moment the souls glow in the flames just like fiery iron, and then suddenly congeal like ice in the cold.

Ah! I implore you, try to overcome your spiritual coldness here, lest you suffer the infernal one forever! Try to subdue by serious mortifications the flames of furious anger and the urge of passionate lust, lest you be punished with those untamed flames.

*Inspectio cordis [f.182v]*

### Internal Punishments of the Damned

Now turn your attention to consider the internal punishments of the damned, and imagine especially the torments of the three powers of the soul: intellect, memory, and will.

The intellect will be tormented first by reflection on the heavenly glory of the blessed, and by the clear recognition of its own punishment and condemnation.

The memory will be tormented by the recollection of former worldly pleasures and delights, while it will comprehend the torments into which it has fallen because of them.

The will gnaws and tears itself apart with inexplicable rage, while it continuously chews over and over that God is an unjust, pitiless, harsh, and most cruel tyrant (although the damned suffer everything justly), who punishes and torments it forever in such a horrible way.

But not least will be the pain that the no-longer-useful worm of conscience will cause through an unceasing examination of their sins. This worm will gnaw at the insides of the damned so bitterly that each of them would prefer to suffer all torments together than to be tortured by this worm (see Mk 9:45.47).

*Inspectio cordis [f.182v]*

### **The Essence of Damnation**

Try to think over more carefully that the punishment of damnation, which is nothing other than the deprivation of that most happy vision of God, exceeds all infernal punishments put together. For as all the joy, happiness, pleasure, and blessedness of the heavenly beings consists of delighting in this beatific vision, so — on the contrary — its deprivation contains all mourning, unhappiness, torments, and the condemnation itself.

Alas! What a grievous misfortune this is! What a severe pain! What an unbearable punishment it is to be stripped of the good for which man was created and to be deprived forever of the heavenly fatherland.

*Inspectio cordis [f.184r]*

### **God Is Not the Cause of Damnation**

Consider that God does not cause the damnation of anyone, so that each of us is the author of his salvation or his eternal death. For here you hear what the heavenly Truth says about those saved and about the condemned: “They chose out,” he says, “the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth.” It is as if he were announcing a verdict: all the righteous shall be saved; all the wicked shall be cast into eternal fire. But if each man is evil on account of himself, and not because God created him that way — for God, who is the highest goodness, cannot create an evil — then each man condemns himself by his own malice.

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As for you, flee from evil, do good in your life, and undoubtedly you shall not lose your everlasting salvation.

*Inspectio cordis [f.124v]*

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Consider that God is not the cause of the condemnation of any soul. This is clear from His own words, as well as from the testimony of the prophet, who says: "Destruction is your own, O Israel" (Hos 13:9). On the contrary, He eagerly desires the salvation of all, and for this reason, He handed over His only-begotten Son to be crucified. And He eagerly desires it at the present time, since He instituted the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist for no other reason than to let those who acquired anew the stains and filth of either mortal or venial sins after having washed away all the stains of their soul when they were cleansed through Baptism make expiation and be cleansed through their proper use and frequent reception.

Now, therefore, focus your thoughts on the great love that the all-good and supreme God has for us, and on His concern and eagerness for our salvation. It is He who provides us with so many and such easily accessible remedies, so that we may have everlasting life!

*Inspectio cordis [f.59r]*

### **Come, the Blessed**

O most delightful "come"! But by which virtue was it brought forth? By the works of Christian mercy. "For I was hungry" (proceeds God our Judge) "and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, a stranger and you welcomed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you visited Me" (Mt 25:35-36).

And so let us apply ourselves to the works of mercy, let us exert ourselves; through them we restore the Temples of God, our souls; we repair, I say, the inner man; we shall hear "blessed," and we shall possess the heavenly kingdom.

*The Mystical Temple of God, p. 118.*

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### Praying After the Manner of St. Augustine

“O Lord my God! Bestow desire upon my heart, that I may desire You; that by desiring You, I may seek You; that by seeking You, I may find You; that by finding You, I may love You; that by loving You, I may be freed from all my sins; and that once being freed, I may return to them no more. O Lord my God! grant repentance to my heart, contrition to my spirit, a fountain of tears to my eyes, and liberality in giving alms to my hands. O my King! extinguish all desires of the flesh, and kindle the fire of Your love in me. O You my Redeemer, drive away the spirit of pride; and grant me, through Your mercy, the treasure of Your humility. O You, my Savior! remove from me the fury of anger, and vouchsafe me (of Your grace) the shield of patience. O You my Creator! take all rancor from me; and through Your meekness, enrich me with a sweet and gentle mind. Bestow on me, O most merciful Father, a solid faith, a sure hope, and continual charity!”

“O You my Director! remove from me vanity and inconstancy of mind, unsettledness of heart, scurrility of speech, pride of eyes, gluttony of diet, the offense of my neighbors, the wickedness of detractions, the itch of curiosity, the desire for riches, the pillage of powers, the ambition for vain glory, the mischief of hypocrisy, the poison of flattery, the contempt for the poor, the oppression of the weak, the eagerness of covetousness, the rottenness of envy, and a death-causing blasphemy. Cut away from me, O You who are my Maker, heedlessness, wickedness, pertinacity, unquietness, idleness, somnolence, sloth, dullness of mind, blindness of heart, obstinacy of judgement, crudeness of conduct, resistance to the good, ignoring of advice, unbridled speech, plunder of the poor, violence inflicted upon the impotent, false accusation of the innocent, negligence of the subjects, severity towards the members of the household, neglect of duty towards the members of the family, obduracy towards the neighbors.”

“O my God and my Mercy, I beseech You through Your beloved Son, grant that I may perform the works of mercy, grant me the interior inclinations of devotion; suffering with the afflicted, advising those in error; supporting such as are miserable, coming

to the aid of those who are in want, consoling those in sorrow, freeing the oppressed, relieving the poor, comforting the tearful; forgiving those who trespass against me, pardoning those who do me wrong, loving those who hate me, rendering good for evil, despising nobody, but honoring all, imitating the good, guarding against the bad, embracing virtue, rejecting vice, having patience in adversity and moderation in prosperity; setting a guard at my mouth and shutting the door of my lips: despising earthly, and thirsting for heavenly, things.”<sup>3</sup> Amen.

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 124-125.*

### **The Lord Prepared a Place for Us**

Thus it really is true: the most spacious Kingdom of Heaven has countless dwellings, but those who seek a dwelling in the world, who run by a broad way, who strive after sensual pleasures, are not admitted to them. Nobody rises to Heaven unless he dies to earthly things. Just as an ensnared bird cannot fly into the open sky, so the human spirit, enticed by sensual pleasures, entangled in worldly allurements, and immersed in sins, cannot lift itself to Heaven. The heavenly Master teaches that a grain does not bring forth fruit unless it has died (see Jn 12:24-25). Thus, a man that loves the worldly life — and a luxurious one at that — shall not possess life eternal.

Oh! Therefore, say when you approach the heavenly Lord, the Son of the eternal Father today: “Most merciful, most gracious, most wonderful Jesus! If there are in the house of Your Father so many ample buildings, so many perennial mansions, I beg Your Majesty most humbly not to exclude me from this house.

Although on account of my sins I have deserved hell and the worst habitation among the damned spirits; for the sake of Your Passion and Death, give me Heaven anyway and an eternal dwelling among its blessed inhabitants.

*Inspectio cordis [f.113v]*

<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine, *Meditations*.

### **Impossible to Either Imagine or Describe**

That Apostle snatched up to the third Heaven, who heard secret words that it is not granted to man to utter, added that it was impossible not only to describe the glory of the Mystical Temple, but even to think about it: "What eye," he said, "has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love Him; this God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:9-10). Augustine, the Prince of Doctors, following the same opinion, said: "That glory and future majesty of the Mystical Temple escapes all manner of speaking, and exceeds all understanding of the human mind. What God has prepared for those who love Him is not grasped by Faith, is not attained by Hope, nor perceived by Charity; it surpasses our desires and wishes."

Therefore, I should long every moment to possess this glory and not take pains to portray in words with an unrefined pen what is impossible to describe. And so I shall derive what follows not from my own understanding about the bliss of our bodies and souls, but I shall derive it from the sources of those most happy wayfarers who often tasted these delights to which they have now been carried over by their feelings and intellect, but most sparingly, lest, by too great a desire, I overwhelm the thirst rather than excite it.

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 131-132.*

### **Heavenly Jerusalem**

Place before your eyes the city that the most Beloved Disciple of Christ described very accurately in the Book of Revelation. It is the holy Jerusalem, the eternal abode of all celestial spirits and blessed people, which shines with the brightness of God. Its walls are 144 cubits and are built of jasper. Its foundations are adorned with all kinds of precious stones. Its 12 gates are 12 pearls, and its streets are of pure gold. Also, the city itself is made of pure gold, similar to clear glass. The Lord Almighty and the Lamb will be its temple (see Rev 21:1-2, 10-23).

The city inhabitants and citizens are the angels of the Lord and the saints of both sexes; and between them reigns now and always such a great concord and such a great charity that the goods of each one seem to be regarded as common to all. One feels such a great joy about the merits, glory, and happiness of others, it is as if one were experiencing the same. There reigns neither envy nor ill-will, but everything is common to all.

O you, unfortunate one! If only you would desire to find yourself in their company as soon as possible.

*Inspectio cordis [f.184v-185r]*

### The Beatific Vision

Consider that the vision of God alone exceeds all the goods that the blessed possess in Heaven. This vision is the source out of which all glory flows, all the abundance of beatitude comes forth, and all happiness descends upon all heavenly beings, so that the heavenly inheritance itself — which the Savior of the world promised to His followers — depends upon this beatific vision.<sup>4</sup>

The apocalyptic prophet expressed it very well, saying: “They shall see His face: and His name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more: and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:4-5).

So you see of what great goods miserable sinners despoil themselves; indeed, of what great goods you despoil yourself whenever you do not want to struggle properly!

*Inspectio cordis [f.185v]*

<sup>4</sup> See CCC, n. 1045, where it is said that “the beatific vision, in which God opens Himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.”

### Qualities of the Beatified Body

Consider which goods the body as well as the soul will obtain in that holy city at the same time. The body will acquire immortality, resistance to pain, agility, and incomprehensible brightness. The soul will have perfect beatitude along with the highest glory.

Should you want to learn the privileged gifts of the individual senses, consider how there (i.e. in the heavenly Fatherland):

- **sight** shall receive the highest clarity and sharpness, by which it will penetrate everything up and down;
- **touch** shall be endowed with permanent vibrancy;
- **taste** shall abound in all sweetness and various flavors, not for nourishment, but for satiety and pleasure;
- **hearing** shall be refreshed constantly by various melodies of the angels singing together;
- **smell**, finally, shall detect unusual fragrance from everything, and even from one's own body.

Strive, therefore, for continuous mortification of your senses if you want to take delight in their beatitude. But chiefly mortify your will and intellect, since extraordinary gifts are prepared for them in Heaven.

*Inspectio cordis [f.185v]*

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Bodies indeed shall be adorned with those four admirable and excellent qualities: impassibility, as theologians say, subtlety, agility, and clarity.

Paul, that most ardent champion of our most fortunate resurrection, expressed them most happily, when counteracting with great eloquence and wisdom the tacit objection of certain men about this subject: "Someone may say, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?'" The Apostle replies: "You fool! What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare

kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind; but God gives it a body as He chooses, and to each of the seeds its own body. ...So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable, it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual one" (1 Cor 15:35-38, 42-44).

Moreover, that river of Paradise divided into four branches signifies the same qualities. Moses, that most holy man, said about this: "A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is the Pishon. The name of the second river is Gihon. The name of the third river is Tigris. The fourth river is the Euphrates" (Gen 2:10-14). In Jeremiah Drexel's opinion, one may compare the four qualities of the bodies of the blessed with these four rivers.

The first quality of impassibility will not only protect the glorious body from all corruption for all eternity, but completely from all petty annoyance. John prophesied this when he said: "And there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away" (Rev 21:4).

The second quality will confer on the glorious body the power of penetrating any other bodies, just as a ray of the sun penetrates glass but neither shatters nor damages it.

The third quality, agility, will give the glorious body the ability of moving most swiftly in every direction. Isaiah predicted this saying: "They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings" (Is 40:31).

The fourth quality, clarity, will render the glorious body brighter than any light: "the blessed in heaven shall shine [what Daniel foresaw] brightly like the splendor of the firmament, like the stars forever" (Dn 12:3).

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 132-133.*

### **In Conformity With the Body of the Risen Christ**

Paul shows us an example of this glory of the blessed body in the glorified Body of Christ the Lord Himself when he writes to the Philippians: "We also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with His glorified body" (Phil 3:20-21). Therefore, just as "Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him" (Rom 6:9): so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ, rising from the dead, came out from an untouched tomb, and while the doors were closed, appeared in the midst of the disciples: and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ rising from the dead gloriously appeared in distant places, at short intervals, both to His most beloved Mother, and to some very holy women, as well as to His most dear Apostles, and to the disciples on their way to a village: and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ, rising from the dead, was seen, I believe, with no different face than that which on the mountain of Tabor "shone like the sun" (Mt 17:2); and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. "He will change our lowly body to conform with His glorified body" (Phil 3:21).

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 133-134.*

### **The Heavenly Homeland**

In the meantime, among the unceasing waves may we, with St. Bernard, be permitted to console our dejected spirit with the following devout outcry, and encourage it to successfully continue our voyage as we sigh again and again:

"O heavenly city, secure dwelling, fruitful and spacious fatherland, containing all that delights, a people without complaint, peaceful inhabitants, men suffering no want! What glorious things are said of you, city of God! All who rejoice dwell in you. Also all rejoice in joy and exultation, all take delight in God, whose appearance is beautiful, countenance graceful, and speech pleasant. He is delightful to see, pleasant to hold, and sweet to enjoy: He is pleasing by Himself, and of Himself sufficient to gain merit and

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reward; nothing outside Him is required, because whatever is desired, all this is found in Him. In Him the intellect is clarified, and our feelings purified for knowing and loving the truth. And this is the entire good of man, namely to know and love his Creator!"

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 135-136.*

### **Praising and Imitating God**

Therefore treat yourself like a Temple of God because of that within you which is similar to God. Supreme honor shown to God is to worship and imitate Him. You imitate him if you are devout; you worship Him if you are merciful. Do everything like the Son of God, that you may be worthy of Him who deigned to call you son.

*The Mystical Temple of God, pp. 136.*



THE MARIAN FOUNDER ON  
MERCY AND MARY IMMACULATE



DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF  
THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ACCORDING TO  
FR. STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI (1631-1701)

**By Fr. Andrzej Pakuła, MIC**

*This paper was presented during the fifth International Conference of the Association of Marian Helpers in Fatima, 2003, and printed in: Lest You Remain Without Work in the Vineyard of the Lord, published by the General Curia of Congregation of Marian Fathers, Rome 2006. Note: We reproduce here the translations of Father Founder's words given in the original article.*

According to the original concept and vision imprinted by God in Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski's soul, the Congregation of Marians was to be dedicated, above all, to spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Father Papczynski first made his intentions known in Lubocza by a solemn public proclamation on December 11, 1670, the same day he left the Piarist Order at his own request and with papal dispensation. At the same time, he also made an "*oblatio*," an act of oblation, offering himself to the service of God and Mary Immaculate, and solemnly promising to persevere in religious vows made in the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, which, with God's grace, he wished to found. This Congregation was to have a special Marian character, as indicated in its title.

In his *oblatio*, Fr. Papczynski calls himself Mary's servant and, professing his faith in the privilege of her Immaculate Conception, makes a so-called "vow of blood": He pledges to spread and defend Immaculate Mary's honor even at the cost of his own life. By this act, he indicates the future Order's aim (at the moment, only as an intent), the primary goal of which is to spread devotion to the immaculately conceived Most Blessed Virgin Mary and to imitate her life. It should be mentioned here that his *oblatio* does not yet speak of any other particular goal of the Order, nor other works that the Congregation could possibly un-

dertake in the future. The same outlook is also present in his *Norma vitae* [*The Rule of Life*], where the Marian Legislator says: “But lest you remain without work in the Vineyard of the Lord, to the utmost of your strength you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God.”

However, *Norma vitae*, which is the Marians’ first constitution, already contains a totally new concept that will remain permanently in the Marians’ spirituality and goals, for to the above-quoted statement, the Founder adds: “... and with utmost zeal, piety, and fervor assist the souls of the faithful departed subjected to expiatory pains — especially the souls of soldiers and those who died of pestilence.” And further: “... those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work, if they would be called upon by pastors, and have previously obtained faculties from the Ordinaries and the Superiors.” Consequently, spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary means to assist the souls of the departed and to conduct active apostolic work. Can it be, since Fr. Papczynski’s first intent was to spread devotion to the immaculately conceived Virgin Mary, that those two subsequent goals that appeared at a later time — aiding the deceased and pastoral work — result from a special devotion to Mary Immaculate and are a form of spreading this devotion, thus needing to be subordinate to it?

### **1.1 Foundations of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

We do not doubt that Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski was a zealous venerator and imitator of our immaculately conceived Blessed Mother. In the most difficult moments of his life, he would entrust himself to her and fly to her maternal protection. This trust in the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin is a result of his deep belief in the special role that Our Lady plays in the Christian life and is reflected in his writings. He pointed

out that God's will is for us to give ourselves with trust into Mary's care in every circumstance of our life.

It is possible to assume that such convictions came from Fr. Stanislaus's experience of faith and piety that he learned in his family home. However, they were also a particular reflection of the times in which Father Founder lived, and of the Marian devotion then practiced by the Republic of the Two Nations, very similar to the piety of the environment in which Fr. Papczynski grew up. For the Republic (the Commonwealth of Poland) and Lithuania, the 17<sup>th</sup> century was marked by a particular Marian devotion with a strongly developed element of becoming a servant of Mary and defense of Mary's privilege of the Immaculate Conception. A fruit of this devotion was the famous Marian vows made by King John Casimir, who gave all the lands under his rule into Mary's service and proclaimed her the Queen of the Republic. Growing up in this particular epoch, the Marian Founder was its product and expression. He read the signs of the times and adapted for his newly established community everything that the Holy Spirit revealed to him. We should note that, given the circumstances, theological arguments regarding devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary were particularly important for him: Since, from eternity, she was predestined to be the mother of the Son of God, Mary was granted the privilege of the Immaculate Conception.

The gift of the Immaculate Conception shows in a special way the Divine Mercy and the primacy of grace. For Mary received this gift, not because of her own merits, but because of the merits of her Son, Jesus Christ. Father Stanislaus explained this in *Prodromus Reginae artium*: "Such a woman was destined to become the mother of God whom the Lord Himself adorned with so many virtues that only a few can enumerate and no fallen, human being can ever possess in their entirety." For this reason, the Immaculately Conceived is the first in the economy of grace: "We can call the Most Blessed Virgin Mary the only daughter of God, because she is not one by body, nor by blood or birth, but by adoption." And just as "those who are led by the

Holy Spirit are children of God” (Rom 8:14), Mary is also led by the Spirit in a particular way. By her acting in the Holy Spirit, she outgrew everyone in holiness, being obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit since her youngest years: “In the House of God she was inspired and nourished by the Spirit, becoming like the choicest olive, the receptacle of all virtues.” For this very reason, the first expression of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is imitation of her life: “to honor the Virgin Mother of God more with love than with speeches.” Deeper layers of the gift of the Immaculate Conception conceal the particular and unique relationship between Mary and God: “A virgin becomes a mother and being a mother she remains a virgin; from the daughter of the Father she becomes the mother of the Son, the bride of the Holy Spirit, the tabernacle of the entire Blessed Trinity.” She is both the paragon of the Christian life and this life’s light. Being free from any stain of sin, she demonstrates the victorious power of grace and God’s plan towards man: in other words, the mystery of salvation. In this regard, the Immaculately Conceived is for the faithful the “total hope of eternal life,” as Fr. Papczynski states in his *Orator crucifixus*, because the fruitfulness and effectiveness of the work of salvation performed by Christ found in her its fullest expression. The same work of salvation is to be fulfilled in us, both fruitful and efficacious.

### **1.2 Forms of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary**

“But lest you remain without work in the Vineyard of the Lord, to the utmost of your strength you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God” — this is the task assigned to us as our primary aim by Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski. How are we to spread this devotion? What is particularly important in spreading the devotion to Mary Immaculate? In reading the writings left us by Father Founder, as also by reflecting on his intentions and aspirations, it seems possible to establish two basic areas for spreading devotion to

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the Immaculate Conception: 1) by our way of life (in other words, by witness); or 2) by works that we take upon us.

## **2.1 Spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary by witness of life**

This is the fundamental means of devotion to the Immaculate Conception. Papczynski often encourages us to offer ourselves entirely to Mary so that a Marian attitude may be formed in a man. He writes in his *Templum Dei Mysticum*: “Most Blessed Virgin, I give myself entirely to you, with all the thoughts, words and works of my whole life, particularly those of today, and I desire to please you with the greatest diligence through all of them.” Encouraging us to imitate Mary, Fr. Stanislaus recalls certain events from her life so that this imitation also leads to concrete actions. For example, in *Inspectio cordis*: “It is rightly said [concerning Mary] that she conceived of the Holy Spirit, she — full of grace, full of the Holy Spirit. If only the same could be said of your actions, that they come from the Holy Spirit and are accomplished in the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is a great blessing to possess the Holy Spirit, but greater still to act according to the Holy Spirit; but the greatest of all is to live out one’s life in the Holy Spirit. Grant [O Mary] that we may live and die in accord with the Holy Spirit.” To form ourselves, our thoughts, words, and acts in imitation of Mary is the foremost task, which defines the fruitfulness of our other actions.

Without a doubt that was the reason why Fr. Papczynski, upon learning that the Holy See gave his Order “The Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” declared: “I pledge to observe the Rule of the Imitation of the B.V.M. in so far as it is not contrary to our Institute.” He discerned in it a similar spirituality that strongly encourages us to imitate the virtues of the immaculately conceived Blessed Virgin Mary in all areas of human life. This is confirmed, in a way, by the command repeated in the Rule, almost like a refrain at every virtue, on which the author reflects in detail, that Mary’s devotees should possess this virtue and imitate the Blessed Virgin in this virtue in a threefold

manner: in thought, word, and action. Papczynski makes a similar statement in *Inspectio cordis*: “My soul, you’ve been clinging so far to books containing various kinds of knowledge, but today look into a new book, a fresh book, unknown to you so far — the Most Blessed Mother of God; I’ll tell you that this book is written, illustrated, and published by God Himself. Could you find elsewhere what you could not get from Mary? Could anyone else give to you what Mary can?”

“This is a book of virtues and every perfection. It has as many chapters as the number of virtues it discusses. Thus, immerse yourself completely in the reading of this book and gather the flowers necessary for you in your walk of life.”

## **2.2. Spreading of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary through actions**

Without a doubt, Fr. Stanislaus’ first task in the service of spreading devotion to Mary immaculately conceived had to be founding the Congregation of Marian Fathers and discerning its charism. The very fact of the Congregation’s existence is already a form of promoting the Immaculate Conception. Father Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755) thus recalls in his diary the audience granted by Benedict XIV, during which the Pope commended the fact that the Congregation has been founded for the greater glory of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. In this very manner, the Congregation’s existence was perceived by its Founder who, for this reason, attributed great importance to the outward signs pointing to this aspect of Mary’s life and the Congregation’s charism. In his *Norma vitae*, he says: “You, as hermits, will wear clothing made from the most simple and coarse cloth: you will wear a habit stretching to the ankles [...] and a short mantle reaching to the knees, and a shirt from coarse linen or some other stinging material. All of these will be white in color, in honor of the pure Conception of Our Lady, and the greatest cleanliness of them should be observed, because dirty poverty can please no one.” In time, and also as a result of accepting the “Rule of the Ten Evangel-

ical Virtues,” he adds to this clothing a white and blue scapular embroidered or embossed with the image of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, as well as a 10-bead rosary to be worn at the belt. Such attire was supposed to recall the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. However, externals are secondary. What really fulfilled Fr. Papczynski’s vision for the Congregation was the existence of men devoted to Mary, living Marian spirituality inspired by the Gospel way of life, deepened by daily Marian practices, particularly the daily communal recitation of the Office of the Immaculate Conception, the Rosary, and other prayers (i.e., litanies), as well as hymns dedicated to the Mother of God, communal fasting prior to all major Marian solemnities, the placing of images of the Immaculately Conceived in the Marian monasteries, and the mandatory invocation used by all Marian communities at the conclusion of every communal activity: “*Immaculata Virginis Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio*” (“May the Virgin’s Immaculate Conception be our salvation [health] and protection”).

### **2.3. The Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

The Confraternity had a special role in the spread of devotion to Our Lady immaculately conceived. Already in *Norma vitae*, Father Founder recommends: “The Superior [General] will designate in each house a promoter of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception to pray for the souls of the faithful departed and as permitted by the Holy Father Innocent XI on March 20, 1681. He should establish such a confraternity in the church in accord with the Ordinary’s explicit permission. The one to whom this valued duty shall be entrusted shall by other means endeavor to gain the greatest number of servants and devotees of the Immaculate Virgin as helpers of the deceased, holy and devout. Let him administer this Confraternity prudently so that he may obtain great profit for souls. He will especially exhort and incite those who become members of this Confraternity by inspiring them to the frequent and salutary use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, as well as to

works of charity and to the abandonment of vices.” The concept of this Confraternity unites devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with prayer for the deceased. This spiritual trend, well known in medieval times, was also present in the Republic of Poland of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Undoubtedly, this was the result of the medieval concept of *ars bene moriendi* (“the art of a good death”) still very much alive in Polish spirituality from that period. These ideas emphasized, apart from the quality of life (so called *preparatio longa* [“prolonged preparation”]), specific stages of the process of dying and the presence of the saints in it. The Mother of God was considered a particular Patroness at the hour of death and an advocate of souls suffering in Purgatory.

We also know that in 1663-1667, Fr. Papczynski served as the promoter of the confraternity of the Sweetest Blessed Virgin Mary at the church of the Piarist Fathers in Warsaw. According to some sources, he himself founded this confraternity; according to others, he made it very popular. In addition, for a year and a half, he ran the archconfraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. at St. James of Kazimierz in Krakow around 1670. When, a few years later, he founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to give help to the deceased and pastors, he also established at the Marian churches (and commanded to be established) with authority granted by the Holy See in 1681, confraternities of the Immaculate Conception bringing help to the departed. The choice to unite devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with intercession on behalf of souls in Purgatory was undoubtedly related to Fr. Papczynski’s personal experience of faith. We know the accounts that speak of his visions of the Holy Souls in Purgatory and of his consequent insistent requests to pray for the deceased.

We shall not forget either the specific elements of spirituality characterizing this period of the Church’s life. It becomes even more important because those were times of Marian devotion strongly marked by the piety of “servants of Mary,” at

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the core of whose spirituality lay the total abandonment to God through Mary leading to simultaneous freedom from the bondage of sin and the devil. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary in her mystery of the Immaculate Conception has become the symbol and paragon of this abandoned servitude to God and freeing oneself from the bondage of evil. "Mary's bondservants" could not stop at freeing themselves from sin and the devil; they also undertook apostolic actions such as ransoming Christians from slavery, giving assistance to prisoners, and freeing souls from Purgatory. This idea of "entrustment to Mary as servants," strongly manifested in 17<sup>th</sup> century Polish spirituality, was undoubtedly well known to Fr. Papczynski as well because of his studies in a Jesuit college at the time. Jesuits were the main promoters of the spirituality of "entrustment to Mary as servants." To some extent, Fr. Papczynski's *oblatio* is an expression of this spirituality.

By this oblation, he surrenders himself to Mary for eternity and becomes her servant. Our Founder's personal contribution to this spirituality is the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and his complete dedication to the spreading of devotion to this mystery.

In time, as a result of accepting the Rule of the Ten Virtues, the concept of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception described in *Norma Vitae* embraced also the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception. The idea that has been enriched in this manner signifies a very important spiritual and external reality. That idea results in the fact that membership in the confraternities of the Immaculate Conception involves investiture with and wearing of the Scapular. Those who enter the Confraternity will enter permanently into the life of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. Also, and most importantly, the Confraternity will convey great blessings to those who find themselves enlivened by Marian spirituality, especially in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

## CHRIST IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF FR. STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI

**Fr. Tadeusz Rogalewski, MIC**

*This paper was presented at the Eighth International Conference of the AMH in Lichen, Poland, in 2006 and printed in Lest You Remain Without Work in the Vineyard of the Lord, published by the General Curia of Congregation of Marian Fathers, Rome 2006. Note: We reproduce here the translations of Father Founder's words given in the original article.*

The Marian Fathers, the spiritual sons of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski, were asked to follow Christ, but to what image of Christ did the Founder of the Marians most frequently draw attention in his writings? In Fr. Papczynski's writings, Christ appears above all as the merciful and suffering Redeemer.

### **The Merciful Christ**

One of the most frequently used Scriptural phrases from St. Paul's writings is "God rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4). John Paul II placed those words at the beginning of his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*. It is like a song of the merciful God. When writing this second encyclical, almost at the beginning of his pontificate, the Pope wished to place its fate in the hands of God Himself, who is rich in mercy. He knew that mankind was tormented by various evils and that God's mercy was the only refuge for weak, sin-stricken man. As we know, the particular encouragement to trust in Divine Mercy has come in our times through the revelations granted to Sr. Faustina Kowalska, whom John Paul II raised to the honors of the altar.

The truth about God rich in mercy has always been present in Catholic theology. Nonetheless, there were times when a special emphasis was put on it. This essentially happened when hard times came down on people. Such was the case in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, and the theologians of that time began to bring

this truth home to ordinary people. The teachings of the Marian Founder reflected this in describing the role of the Divine Mercy in the life of a Christian. He was the one to call Divine Mercy “a clear guiding star” that shines for the human soul.

Born in 1631, in Podegrodzie near Nowy Sącz, Fr. Papczynski was one of the most prominent figures of Polish Catholicism of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was a great humanist, teacher of rhetoric, public speaker, writer, poet, pastor, spiritual director, ascetic, mystic, and founder of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. In the Jesuit, Piarist, and Reformed Franciscan schools, he obtained a sound general, theological, and philosophical education, which encompassed the wisdom of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and contemporary times. He left behind many writings, including theological treatises. He died in 1701, in the odor of sanctity.

In Fr. Papczynski’s teaching on the Divine Mercy, a reflection on the unfathomable depth of mercy takes a dominant place. The author emphatically states that this truth is the very hope of repenting sinners. He also points out numerous graces with which God showers people, especially sinners who run to His mercy.

The Blessed Mother — the Mediatrix of Mercy — also participates in the distribution of these graces. Father Stanislaus bases his observations on Holy Scripture, especially on the Gospel parables; however, he also draws generously from the Church’s entire treasury, in whose tradition this truth has been frequently pondered in a very profound way.

### **Unfathomable Divine Mercy**

When one considers the moral condition of the modern world, one cannot flee from the impression that all mankind is standing on the edge of a chasm that can consume it. However, God Himself comes to our rescue and points out to us another abyss that can save us. This abyss is the unfathomable Divine Mercy. In his teachings, the Marian Founder moves us closer to it, drawing mainly on Gospel parables.

First, he makes a connection between his reflection about the Divine Mercy with the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector who come to the temple to pray. The tax collector “beat his breast” (Lk 18:13), repented for his sins, and “went home justified” (Lk 18:14). This is an example of how we ought to trustfully immerse all our imperfections in the unfathomable Divine Mercy. The Pharisee’s behavior, on the other hand, which Jesus censured, is a warning for those who hold people in contempt and condemnation. No one has a right to do so, because God’s Heart is open to everyone. God does not close a road of salvation before any sinner who wants to repent and make amends. Remembering God’s goodness, which we have experienced ourselves, and being aware of our own frailty keeps us from judging others and treating them harshly.

In another example, our author shows the truth of Divine Mercy in Christ’s meeting with the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee. She had already been converted, and for this reason, our Redeemer defended her against the Pharisees’ verbal attacks, and then sent her away with the words “go in peace” (Lk 7:50). He treats each repentant person similarly. A person burdened with sins would come to Christ, but he or she would leave freed of them all, as if shaking off binding chains. Bitterness had filled the heart of such a person, but now it is infused with sweetness. It was immersed in the darkness of errors, and now it is enveloped in the brightness of sun. It was perturbed by an internal struggle, but now it is at peace.

Father Papczynski sees an even greater example of Divine Mercy in the conversion of the “repentant thief.” He hung on his gibbet at the right hand of the Crucified Redeemer, and he might have heard Him praying to the Father for His enemies. Then he understood that Jesus was innocent, although He had submitted to such terrible torture. Influenced by the light of the Sun, in whose presence he found himself, he fully understood the evil of his actions, for which he was condemned to death. He then defended Christ against the words of his fellow criminal. He admonished him for bad-mouthing the Redeemer who was guilty of no crime. The thief understood that this

falsely accused, innocent Man was the Redeemer, and that He suffered for him. Thus, he asked Him the favor of remembering him in His Kingdom.

By this appeal, he won over Christ's heart and gained His pardon, along with the promise of being taken by Him to Heaven (see Lk 23:41-43). The thief earned paradise through a critical, though delayed, repentance. He acknowledged his offenses, repented of them, and made his confession before the High Priest Himself, crucified next to him. Discussing the example of the conversion of the thief on the Cross, who was grasped by the Divine Mercy at the time of execution, the author reaches out to St. Augustine who thus commented on this conversion: "This [alleged] Thief [Christ] through the wood [of the Cross] performed an act of redemption, while this [true] thief stole the Kingdom of Heaven, thus violating Majesty [...]. You have seen how a robber and thief of paradise who hasn't forgotten his trade even on the cross stole the Kingdom of Heaven by means of his very confession." This comparison helps Fr. Papczynski to illustrate the idea of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven through repentance, thus opening the road to paradise. Father Papczynski shares yet another thought of St. Augustine's, who sees the conversion of the thief as a great hope for all people: "Let us notice that Christ the Lord, kindly forgiving the offender, guaranteed safety to all mankind; so that the absolution granted to one despondent person may become the consolation and hope for all people and, finally, so that a gift given to one person might benefit the common good."

Summing up, the Servant of God affirms that Divine Mercy is indeed unfathomable and embraces all of humanity. The Redeemer of the world is concerned with the salvation of all people and cares not only about the happiness of the righteous, but also about sinners. He brings them closer to Himself through various inspirations and the innumerable graces that He showers on them. He calls to Himself people who were wounded by serious sins; He seeks them out like a shepherd searches for lost sheep; and He nourishes and protects those whom He recovers.

This is the future of sinful humanity: to stop at the edge of the precipice of evil and to jump into the unfathomable Divine Mercy.

### **Hope for sinners**

People who have committed a grave evil often fall into despondency because they don't believe in the possibility of forgiveness. They think that their sins are too great to be forgiven. These are precisely the people whom Fr. Papczynski desires to convince that the unfathomable Divine Mercy is rightly available to all, especially to sinners. According to him, sinners are most privileged in this regard. The Lord Jesus said: "I did not come to call the righteous but sinners" (Mt 9:13). He is most sad when He sees those for whose salvation He gave His life perish by their own volition. Many among them may lose hope of redemption, but Christ Himself assures them that He did not come to call the righteous but sinners. While the righteous are sure of future happiness, the sinners know that they deserve punishment. Because of this, Christ tells them about the chance of obtaining redemption. The road to Heaven is closed to no one. It is enough that a person wishes to begin walking on this road and abandon evil. Sinners can rejoice because the Son of God left the throne of glory and came to earth for their sake.

Not only does Christ declare His will to save sinners, but He also seeks them out and calls them to Himself. He was even criticized for it once: "This man welcomes sinners" (Lk 15:2). But it is impossible to put limits on God's goodness and mercy. He invites and embraces everyone: "Come to me, all you ... " (Mt 11:28). Thus, many have come. Father Papczynski exemplifies this idea by one of the comparisons that were fashionable in his time. "Just like the sun that draws up from the earth harmful humidity, and at times it even awakens poisonous snakes, so too Jesus — the Sun of Justice — drew to Himself and still to this day draws tax collectors, sinners, and many big transgressors. He used to do it to such an extent that one, when pondering His life, notices that it was spent on showing mercy and pity."

“Though in His manger, He attracted to Himself pagan kings; during the time of His teaching — Zechariah, Matthew, Magdalene, and numerous others; and when He was dying — the thief, the centurion, and Longinus, who opened His side. What is more: He placed at the head of His Church no one other than a sinner.”

Today, many sinners also come to Jesus, especially those seeking the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Then they sit with Him at table and partake of the Heavenly Banquet. Then they are no longer sinners, but become righteous. Father Stanislaus does not conceal his joy when speaking of their conversion, which justifies what one might perceive to be his excessive enthusiasm. Those who are sinners today may become saints tomorrow. A short time ago, they were worse than the evil spirits, but right after receiving God’s mercy, they became more righteous than the angels. And all this happens in a very simple way: It suffices that they go to Jesus and sit at His table, thus becoming purified of all sins and adorned with virtues. By going to Jesus, one obtains the power to turn away from sin. “Oh, how holy is this Sacrament that turns a sinner into a loving person; a servant of this world into God’s servant; a son of darkness into a son of light; Satan’s slave into a free man of Christ.”

Father Papczynski conducts himself with great compassion toward repenting sinners because he sees them as examples of “the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame” in Christ’s parable of those invited to table by the master of the house (Lk 14:21). These are sinners stripped of virtues, wavering in the face of inspirations from the Holy Spirit, not seeing a path of justice, and not acting according to the law of the Lord. God’s Goodness orders all of them to be brought to His table. If they are already repenting, it clothes them in the garment of innocence, gives them strength to do good, enlightens them with its light, and returns their power to walk so that they may persevere on the road to perfection. All of this is achieved by grace, which is given through Holy Communion. This feast enriches the poor, strengthens the weak, enlightens the blind, and makes the lame walk again.

Speaking to repentant sinners, Fr. Stanislaus consoles them with the words of Christ Himself: “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do” (Mt 9:12). He told the Pharisees that He is the healer of souls and that He was sent not to the healthy ones — that is, to the saints — but to the sick — that is, to the sinners. Those are the ones whom He heals with the most effective medicine of all — His Body and Blood. Jesus rejects the Pharisees’ accusation that He does wrong when He eats with tax collectors and sinners (see Mt 9:11). They were driven by pride, and as servants of the devil, they imitated their master. Sensing that they themselves could not attain salvation because they did not want to humbly ask for it, they envied it in others. This is why they persecuted, not only the Son of God, but also those who came to Him so as to receive mercy. In order to encourage trust in Divine Mercy, which opens itself before sinful people, the Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] illustrates its blessed results.

### **Blessings of mercy**

Our world is so full of sin that God could rightly annihilate it. However, God’s goodness continues to keep it in existence. For Fr. Papczynski, this is precisely the most basic proof that God is indeed a Merciful God. Preserving the world from annihilation regardless of its sinfulness is an exceptional blessing that the Merciful God grants to people because God’s mercy tempers His justice. People also participate in His mercy who show mercy to others. Father Papczynski is convinced that when God sees people showing compassion one to another, He changes His severe judgment and does not look at the sins of those who show mercy to their neighbors. He is merciful to those who are merciful, and because of them, He is also merciful toward others. In this manner, human mercy unites with God’s mercy, and punishment is changed into grace.

Our apostle of mercy [Fr. Papczynski] offers this advice to those who judge that there is no one to whom they can show mercy: Let them in the meantime have compassion on their

own soul, redeemed through God's Love. One must deny one's own soul, if one does not wish to lose it (see Mt 10:39). Another blessing of mercy is the joy that derives from the conversion of a sinner.

Father Stanislaus called the day when a sinner experiences the grace of conversion "the day of all days most favored and bountiful in greatest joy." This joy is also shared in Heaven: "... there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance" (Lk 15:7).

Thus, it is difficult to comprehend the joy known by the heavenly inhabitants on account of the conversion of the sinner Magdalene. The earth also trembles with great joy, because the Messiah has come to her in order to redeem sinners. Not one of them should despair, if only they can comprehend that Jesus easily pardons the offenses of those who repent and even takes them into His care. An example of His unprecedented goodness is His pardon of the adulteress and His defending her before the Pharisees. Uplifted in spirit by such an act of mercy, the Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] cries out with the Psalmist: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love is ever lasting" (Ps 106:1).

The experience of joy arising from conversion is not the only reward for conversion. Repentant sinners also achieve a special excellence. For Fr. Papczynski, the argument that underpins this conviction is Jesus' written genealogy, where sinful David is placed prior to the righteous Abraham (see Mt 1:1). This is proof that when a sinner truly repents, he will not only return to grace, but will also be honored and raised to a higher throne in Heaven. It goes without saying that such an elevation was earned by meek and repentant sinners.

To encourage the effort necessary to gain the "throne of heavenly glory," Fr. Papczynski depicts an apocalyptic vision of the heavenly city — namely the New Jerusalem — that needs to be won. Saint John the Baptist incites the fight for this city by his words and actions. His example alone can rouse people to battle. "He has a face gaunt with fasting, deeply set eyes;

wearing a coarse camel skin; barefoot, pale, exhausted, filled only with the Spirit of God coming down upon him. He proclaims a baptism of repentance — he prepares a battering ram to conquer Heaven. He shows that Heaven must be won by the use of great force: knocking with deep sighs, breaking in with fasting, bribing the guards with generous and pious alms. And if this holy attack does not bring success, one needs to break into the city by ravaging one's body and mortifying those parts that fight against the spirit."

When the soldier in Fr. Papczynski — a chaplain to Polish knights — wakes up, his thoughts take on a war-like cast. To support his thesis, he quotes Christ's words: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force" (Mt 11:12). Heaven can be violated through virtue; and for those who have it, "the sky is the limit." The gates of the heavenly city are wide open for such people, and the place that remained vacant because of the fall of the angels begs to be taken over. "To take over this city, the most efficient weapon is faith, the assault ladder — hope; the arrow — love, by which, as soon as you pierce God, He will order His Capital (Kingdom) to be opened for the conqueror and will crown the worthy one with immortal laurels."

If someone conquers the Kingdom of Heaven by worthy fruits of repentance, God Himself cannot resist them because He once bound Himself by saying: "As I live, ... I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live" (Ez 33:11). Father Papczynski draws our attention to another important element of conquering the Kingdom of Heaven: namely, humble and confident prayer. The one who thinks that he still does not have a right to participate in the joy of the future life can cry out in the manner of the leper from the Gospel: "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean" (Mt 8:2). Father Stanislaus changes little of this prayer and implores God with tears: "Lord, even if You don't want, You ought to clean me. Because if You did not come to redeem the righteous but the sinners, why do You permit me to remain for so long in my offenses? (...) If You were stirred by

the leper's cry when he begged You for a healthy body, then even more so and reasonably should You bow to my pleading, because I beg You for the healing of soul (...). My cause and my request is so much more justified and so much more needed, that You may want to heal me, clean and enlighten me. Otherwise, what good would Your Blood be, if I had to be lost? What fruit would I have from Your sacrifice and my redemption, if, [though] redeemed by You, because of my sins, I would remain tempted and thus would lose forever my freedom?" This is an example of a converted sinner's sincere prayer, which deeply moves the Heart of the Merciful Jesus.

In this humble prayer to the Merciful Jesus, Fr. Stanislaus also seeks the help of our Blessed Mother as the merciful advocate, because she truly gave the world its Redeemer.

A person often becomes despondent because of sins they have committed. It is possible that pride does not permit total submission to the mercy of God. Or the obstacle in achieving a radical change is laziness and a lack of desire for honest work on oneself. Also, it may happen that the obstacle is despondency induced by the enemy of our salvation. To these very people, Fr. Stanislaus directs a truly dramatic appeal so as to awaken in them trust in the intercession of our Blessed Mother: "Come here, oh most desperate sinner! You, who under the weight of your transgressions fall into the deepest hell and by now believe your salvation to be a lost cause. Come here, run to the feet of Mary: *This is your Mother.*"

### **Suffering Christ**

In Kalahari, one of the languages in southern Africa, the phrase "to show mercy" is translated as *butelo butloko*, meaning "to accept somebody else's suffering." This is what Christ has done: He took upon Himself our suffering. And this is how Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski portrays Him. The Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] was himself closely united to the suffering Christ. This manifested itself both in his life and in his writings. He showed the depth of the suffering Christ's agony with a realism

typical of his contemporaries, but with a great sensitivity and love for the suffering Redeemer. By describing in intense and graphic ways everything that happened to Christ from the Last Supper to Calvary, Fr. Stanislaus wished to not only move his Christian reader, but also to teach him by showing him important truths that have such a great meaning for the Christian life.

### **The deepening experiences of the suffering Christ in the teachings of Fr. Papczynski**

A 17<sup>th</sup>-century preacher and writer, Fr. Papczynski portrays everything that Christ undergoes during His Passion with the characteristic realism of that epoch. This is easily seen in his writings about each individual event of the Passion. The author narrates them in a very vivid and concrete way. It is also confirmed by the titles of those passion reflections, such as “Baptism in the Garden of Olives,” “Scourging intended for a sinner,” or “Crowning with thorns.”

Father Stanislaus depicts Christ’s prayer in the Garden as a struggle with a multitude of human sins. This was a true battle, an armed confrontation, in which blood has been spilled. The blood flowed down Christ’s forehead and His entire Body as great drops of sweat; it was dripping down to earth preparing for humankind a salvific bath to wash off the filth of evil.

Christ, the Divine Monarch — the Only Begotten Son of God, the Lord of men and angels, tied at the pillar of scourging: Understanding these attributes of Christ makes us grasp the extent of this crime of scourging. This was an outrage far greater than the scourging of Paul, a Roman citizen (see Acts 12:25).

But Christ conducted Himself during this torture as a true monarch. He was not afraid of the whips, unlike the Israelites, who came to King Rehoboam asking him to remove the yokes placed on them by Solomon and were fearful at their very mention (see 1 Kings 12:14). The superhuman perseverance of the Scourged One is witnessed by this: that He endured at the pillar

unperturbed and unconquered, while the executioners probably took turns, exhausted by their effort.

Christ's royal dignity shows itself ever more clearly at the crowning with thorns. Jesus at that moment reminds us of King Solomon, who had also been crowned in Jerusalem. But Solomon's crown was made of gold adorned with precious stones, while Christ received a crown made of sharp thorns. Solomon was crowned for glory, while Christ — for infamy. Solomon's head was crowned by his dearest mother; Christ's — by the worst possible stepmother, the Synagogue. The elevation of Solomon took place on the day of his betrothal and with a joyful heart; the humiliation of Jesus — in sorrow, on the day of His Death.

It also comes to the mind of the Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] to equate Christ and the bridegroom in the Song of Songs, but here also appear contrasts (see Songs 5:10-16).

Scourged and crowned with thorns, the suffering King is immeasurably greater than both Solomon and the bridegroom in the enormity of His sacrifice, in patience, and perseverance.

Realism is again seen in Fr. Papczynski's writing on the Passion when he meditates on Christ crucified. When the Savior spoke His last words, the blood streamed down from His pierced hands and feet. This blood soaked the wood of suffering, just as it previously soaked the scourging pillar. Truly at this moment was fulfilled the consecration of the Cross — that wood of which the Eastern Church sings: "*Quam sacer cruor perunxit fusus Agni corpore.*"

The depth of the torments of the suffering Christ manifests itself not only through the realism with which Fr. Papczynski speaks about it, but also in his description of Christ's spiritual experiences. They accompanied Him throughout all stages of His Passion, but at certain moments they became evident in a particular way. One of the most dominant experiences of our Savior was His internal joy, with which He embarked upon the road of suffering. It showed itself right at the beginning, when

Jesus, during the Last Supper, expressed His great desire to suffer and to die so that the work of salvation could be more quickly accomplished. He even encouraged the traitor to hurry up (see Jn 13:27). The haste with which Christ went to His painful destination is astonishing. He desired to die as soon as possible so as to give life to mankind, and this very prospect filled His soul with joy, which revealed itself in the exclamation He uttered after the traitor had gone out: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (Jn 13:31).

The internal feeling of joy accompanied Jesus during the Way of the Cross, on which He "like an athlete joyfully runs its course" (Ps 19:6). How is it possible that after so much pain, such great weakening caused by the loss of blood, weighed down with an enormous Cross, that Christ could still rejoice? He did rejoice because He took upon Himself this great burden freely, out of love for all people. He also knew that the Cross would be for Him the title to rule over the world, which He was about to redeem.

The profound internal joy of Christ during His Passion united itself with another sensation expressed in the cry: "I thirst" (Jn 19:28), which came down from the height of the Cross. This was not a desire for a drink (which, incidentally, Jesus refused); it was a thirst for redeeming men, his faith and conversion. This call for conversion has a special significance for Fr. Papczynski. It had come in such circumstances that it was absolutely necessary to answer it. And the answer should be not tears alone, but true contrition and earnest atonement. Father Stanislaus emphasizes the importance of Christ's appeal for conversion in such dramatic circumstances by recalling the scene of the Last Judgment when Christ will remind people that He had been thirsty, and they had given Him no drink.

The Venerable Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] also sees another reason for Christ's thirst on the Cross, namely: His desire to experience even greater suffering. It appears that His suffering had reached its limit, but the Savior's love for humanity was limitless, and actually, this very love intensified the desire for

suffering. The only solace for Christ at that time was the tears of His mother and some pious women who empathized with Him in His suffering. Those were tears of love in response to His love.

Yet another of Christ's spiritual experiences captures Fr. Stanislaus's attention: the feeling of desertion expressed in the words: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). He was not voicing desperation, as Calvin thought, and it was not a complaint, but a teaching. God could not abandon the Incarnate Son of God, equal with the Father. By His cry, Jesus taught people that they must call out to God when they feel abandoned by Him.

In Christ's suffering, both spiritual and physical, in His experiences during His Passion, Fr. Stanislaus always tries to discover a deeper meaning, as well as to draw on instruction given to us by the "Crucified Preacher." Thus, for the Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski], all these events are the school of faith and life. Christ's victory over death is also our victory; however, that victory is not without our participation. Christ's Passion puts a concrete example before men. They are clearly shown in Fr. Papczynski's teaching; from this is seen the great living value of his Passion meditations.

### **Practical value of Passion meditations**

As to practical hints for living the Christian life derived from Fr. Papczynski's Passion meditations, an appeal to break away from sin recurs most often in Fr. Papczynski's teaching. Because the Son of God has been "pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins" (Is 53:5), each Christian must realize that these were his or her sins which wounded Christ. Our Savior gave Himself over to suffer because it was necessary to make atonement to the Father for human transgressions. The great burden that fell on Christ's shoulders has become salvific for men, because "by his stripes we were healed" (Is 53:5). However, people must accept with full awareness Christ's gift of salvation, which should also touch our consciences, thus leading us to break completely away from sin.

Their conversion has to be a radical one, and their internal change — total and profound. It ought to be outwardly expressed by remorseful tears because of their sins and sorrow over the spilled blood of the Lord.

A Christian's repentance for committed sins leads him or her to establish a heartfelt union with Christ. The Savior then becomes so close to a Christian that there is no more room for the sins that had previously excluded that believer from God. Father Papczynski draws our attention to the possibility of freeing ourselves from venial sins through meditating on the Lord's Passion and a chance of cleansing ourselves from our spiritual filth, which he calls "lesser offenses."

In order to help Christians draw even closer to Christ, Fr. Stanislaus asks us to share our pains with the suffering Savior. Deep feelings must awaken within us at the sight of the scourged and derided Lord. It is impossible for a Christian heart to remain unmoved by this shocking picture. Father Papczynski calls "barbarian and inhuman" a soul that does not mellow at the sight of the Son of God being so terribly humiliated.

For Fr. Papczynski, in meditation the suffering Christ becomes so close to the Christian that he desires to suffer with the Savior and to experience all of His pains, which have become His lot. Sharing in suffering brings about a wish to follow Christ in every salvific deed, according to His appeal: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 16:24). By the cross that a Christian ought to take upon himself, Fr. Stanislaus means voluntary mortification, long-lasting penances, slander, contempt, injustice, and every other anguish. Our cross may also be illness, poverty, misfortune, lack of basic necessities, and any other setback. Christ admonishes us that we ought to accept the cross with a joyful heart, doing so out of love for Him and according to His example.

One particular moment of Christ's Passion is emphasized by Fr. Papczynski as an example to follow. It is His prayer to the

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Father for His executioners: “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 24:34). The Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski] has no doubt that everyone has enemies and thus has someone to forgive. He only wonders why there are so many misunderstandings between Christians, who are supposed to be united by mutual love, that it is really difficult to single out one person who would not have an adversary or a persecutor. It seems to him that it happens with God’s dispensation so that people have a chance to forgive their neighbor, thus meriting for themselves God’s forgiveness. Forgiving our neighbor is not just the forgiveness of a fault, but even more the love of an enemy, which is a difficult matter. This is why it is so important to penetrate ever deeper into the prayer that Christ offered on the Cross for sinners and ponder its every word, each of which is full of mystery. Jesus urges sinners and pleads with the Father, and nobody deserves to be heeded more than He does. He asks for true absolution, begs for forgiveness of an unusual offense, of which no one ever heard before. For whose intentions is He interceding? He who was offended by people, rejected by people, and who suffers on their behalf, asks for forgiveness for them. He pleads for those who nailed Him to the Cross and scorned Him. Jesus forgave those people and obtained for them His Father’s favor. And He did it with great goodness, so that forgiveness can be obtained more easily. Because He could not justify the deeds of his persecutors, He justified their intentions. He referred to their incompetence and lack of understanding about what they were doing. For a Christian, this breadth of nobility is a magnificent example of love for enemies. Father Stanislaus’s practical approach is noticeable throughout his meditations. Having perceived a call to follow Christ in His prayer for His enemies, Fr. Papczynski tries also to find that call in Christ’s words with which He put His spirit into the Father’s hands. By giving His soul to the Father, Christ teaches us that we also ought to entrust our spirit to our Savior, namely: “our thoughts, our souls, and our conscience.” Thus, following Christ is to guide us to a complete union with Him and entrusting everything to Him — the depths of our con-

science, our whole soul, and every thought. This is the consequence of personally embracing the Crucified Savior and accepting the teaching that He imparts to us through the stages of His Passion.

While striving to bring men to the suffering Christ, Fr. Stanislaus also wants to establish a heartfelt union with the Sorrowful Mother. The Founder of the Marians tells us to direct our special attention to her and to ponder her behavior during Christ's suffering. A Christian ought to deeply comprehend the magnitude of the pain which Mary felt upon seeing Christ burdened with the Cross, for she could not utter a single word. Her silence at her meeting with Jesus is particularly meaningful. The pain of this Mother had to be greatly unusual, if it prevented her from expressing her feelings at meeting with her Son on the Way of the Cross.

Mary shared suffering with Christ: Her very presence at the agony and death of her Son is the last act in the work of salvation, which started at the moment of the Incarnation. Mary's participation in this work was a significant one, because, along with Christ, she offered God expiation for the salvation of the world.

Father Stanislaus Papczynski, who profoundly experienced the truth of Divine Mercy revealed in Christ, as well as the mystery of His Passion, can also be our teacher of faith and Christian life today. Showing the depth of these mysteries and drawing from them practical conclusions, just like the Servant of God [Fr. Papczynski], can be highly beneficial for modern man, who is mostly consumption-oriented. If Fr. Papczynski had to speak to him today, he would point out the nothingness (emptiness) of such a life and would take him before the Cross of the Merciful Lord, so that his life would take on a new form and a deeper sense.

DOCUMENTS AND HOMILIES  
FROM HIS BEATIFICATION



# THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

ARCHDIOCESE OF POZNAN  
THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION CAUSE  
OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD  
STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY  
(in the world: John Papczynski)  
PRIEST AND FOUNDER  
OF THE CONGREGATION OF MARIAN FATHERS  
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE MOST B.V.M.  
(1631-1701)

## **The Decree Concerning A Miracle**

The Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (in the world: John Papczynski) was born on May 18, 1631, in the town of *Podegrodzie*, of the Archdiocese of Kraków, in Poland. Having entered the Order of the Poor Clerics Regular of the Pious Schools of the Mother of God, he pronounced religious vows and was admitted to the order of priesthood. Upon taking leave of the Order, he founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., for the spreading of devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, for assisting pastors in pastoral ministry, and for commending to God in prayer, souls detained in Purgatory. He fell asleep in the Lord's peace on September 17, 1701.

The Supreme Pontiff John Paul II declared on June 13, 1992, that the Servant of God exercised the virtues to a heroic degree.

The Postulator of the Cause recently submitted to examination by this Congregation for the Causes of Saints an extraordinary healing claimed to be miraculous, that regarded an infant which Mrs. N.N., residing in Poland, in the city of N. was carrying in her womb. In the year 2000, the same woman had a first pregnancy that ended with a spontaneous miscarriage. In the month of February of the following year, she came into a

new pregnancy which, on March 22, also almost ended in a miscarriage. For this reason she was admitted to a hospital where three ultrasounds were performed, from which the latest, performed on March 30, clearly evidenced the vitality of the fetus and the normal state of the fetal sac. She was discharged the same day; however, on the first day of April, on account of increasing abdominal pains, she was compelled to return again to the hospital. From the ultrasound examinations it was detected that the fetus had no heartbeat, for which reason the diagnosis stated was “an internal miscarriage.” In addition, the fetal sac appeared to be more reduced in comparison to the size observed during the first days. Meanwhile, from March 28 on, several members of the woman’s family and other persons began to invoke divine help through the intercession of the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, in order to obtain a favorable outcome. On April 4, a further ultrasound unexpectedly revealed the fetus to have regained a heartbeat. This event was immediately judged to have come about beyond the powers of nature. On October 7, the child was born alive and viable.

Regarding this occurrence, which is considered to be a miracle, there was instituted during the years 2003-2004 in the Curia of N. the Diocesan Investigation, the juridical validity of which this Dicastery confirmed by means of the decree published on May 7, 2004. The Congregation’s Medical Consultation, in the session of May 12, 2005, declared that the unexpected resumption of pregnancy after a spontaneous internal miscarriage — verified by ultrasound documents, including the fact of the development toward the resulting natural conclusion of birth, without negative consequences to the fetus — cannot be explained by means of the laws of science. On September 20 that same year, there took place the Meeting of the Theologians Consultors, and on May 2, 2006 the Ordinary Session of the Fathers Cardinals and Bishops, during which the *Ponens* of the Cause was His Excellency Lino Fumagalli, Bishop of Sabina-Poggio Mirteto. Then on the following October 3, another Ordinary Session was held. And in both

Meetings, whether of the Consultors or the Cardinals and Bishops, the doubt having been raised whether there is certainty about a miracle having been performed by divine intervention, there was given an affirmative response.

Finally, an accurate report about all these things having been made to the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, His Holiness, accepting and officially confirming the recommendations of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, this day declared: *It is acknowledged as a miracle performed by God through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (in the world: John Papczynski), Priest and Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., namely, the unexpected resumption of pregnancy by Mrs. N.N, at the 7th-8th week of gestation, following a spontaneous interruption caused by an "internal miscarriage" documented by ultrasound, with the subsequent development toward the normal result of birth, without negative consequences for the fetus which was born alive and viable on October 17, 2001.*

This decree, moreover, the Supreme Pontiff ordered to be published and entered into the Register of the Acts of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints.

*Given at Rome, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the month of December A.D. 2006.*

— JOSEPH Card. SARAIVA MARTINS  
*Prefect*  
— + EDWARD NOWAK  
tit. Archbp. of Luni  
*Secretary*

**Apostolic Letter**

We,  
Fulfilling the desire of Our Brother  
Stanislaus Gądecki,  
the Archbishop of Poznań,  
and indeed of very many other Brothers in the Episcopate  
and of many faithful,  
having taken into consideration the decision of the  
Congregation for the Causes of Saints,  
by Our Apostolic Authority  
make it possible  
that the Venerable Servant of God  
Stanislaus Papczynski, a priest,  
Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers  
under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the  
Most Blessed Virgin Mary,  
who devoted himself to prayers and other suffrages for the  
deceased  
and to the Christian instruction of the people,  
may in the future be called Blessed,  
and that every year on May 18th, his feast may be celebrated  
in the places and in the manners established by the law.  
In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit  
Amen.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's  
On September 12<sup>th</sup> in the year of the Lord 2007,  
in the third year of Our Pontificate

— Benedict XVI, Pope

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**CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE**

Homily during the Mass of Beatification  
of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski  
Licheń, September 16, 2007

My brother cardinals,  
My brothers in the episcopate and the priesthood,  
Distinguished civil and military authorities,  
Dear members of the religious family founded  
by Blessed Stanislaus,  
Dear brothers and sisters,

First of all I thank the Lord because, for the second time within the space of a few months, he has given me a welcome opportunity to visit your beloved country, the homeland of Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski and of the Servant of God, John Paul II, who, let us hope, may himself soon be raised to the honors of the altar. I also thank the Lord because in this very Shrine, where last night we gathered for Vespers, it falls to me today to preside at the solemn Eucharist during which, in the name of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, I have had the honor of beatifying Father Stanislaus Papczynski. It is both significant and moving that this should happen at the famous Shrine of Our Lady of Licheń, where for many years, the Marian Fathers and Brothers, the spiritual sons of the new *beatus*, have carried out their pastoral ministry, ever faithful to the charism of their Founder.

With these sentiments of deep gratitude towards the Lord, I would like to extend a cordial greeting to the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops present, with a particular word of thanks to Bishop Wiesław Mering of this Diocese, who has provided a truly fraternal welcome to me and to those who have accompanied me here. I respectfully greet the civil and military authorities from the locality, the region, and the State, beginning with the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Lech Kaczyński. Today we see fulfilled the wish of the Sejm [Parliament] of the Commonwealth of the two nations [Poland and

Lithuania], which in 1764, petitioned the Apostolic See to raise to the altars “Stanislaus Papczynski, a Pole famous for his miracles” (Volumina Legum, vol. VII, Saint Petersburg 1860, p. 168, no. 105). I greet all the priests and deacons, consecrated persons, and among them in particular, the Marian Fathers and Brothers with their Superior General, Fr. Jan Mikołaj Rokosz. I greet the pilgrims who have come here from various parts of the world, some of whom have travelled great distances. Lastly, I greet those who are spiritually united with us in this sublime liturgy through television and radio, and I am thinking especially of the elderly, the sick and those in prison.

The Word of God that we hear in today’s liturgy for the 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time presents us with the mystery of sinful man and God’s response of supreme and infinite mercy.

“The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people” (Ex 32:14). In the first reading, which we heard a moment ago, Moses, after making a Covenant with God, ascends Mount Sinai to receive the tablets of the Covenant and remains there to converse with the Lord for forty days. The Israelites grow tired of waiting for him, and they turn their backs upon God, forgetting the wonders He has worked to deliver them from slavery in Egypt. The scene which the sacred author describes is truly moving: When God reveals to Moses the Israelites’ sin and His intention to punish them, Moses becomes their advocate and ardently implores pardon for that ungrateful and sinful people. He does not ask God for justice, knowing well that Israel has committed the gravest of sins by yielding to the temptation of idolatry, but instead he appeals to Divine Mercy and to the Covenant which God, on His own initiative, established with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God hears Moses’ prayer: patient and merciful, He abandons His plan to punish His people, who have turned their backs on Him. How many lessons we can learn from this passage from the Book of Exodus! It helps us to discover the true face of God; it helps us to understand the mystery of His good and merciful Heart. However great our sin, Divine Mercy is always greater, because God is Love.

A wonderful testimony to this mystery is the human and spiritual experience of the Apostle Paul. In the second reading, from his First Letter to Timothy, he confesses that Christ has touched him in the depths of his spirit and has made him who was once a persecutor of Christians into an instrument of divine grace for the conversion of many. Jesus, the true good Shepherd, does not abandon His sheep, but wants to lead them all back to the Father's flock. Dear brothers and sisters, is this not our experience too? When our sin leads us away from the right path and deprives us of the joy of God's friendship, if we then repent and return to Him, we discover not the severity of his judgment and condemnation, but the gentleness of His love which renews us within.

"Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Lk 15:10). These words of Jesus, reported by Saint Luke in the Gospel passage we have just heard, offer a further confirmation of our certainty of the Lord's merciful love. Divine Mercy is the good news that we must never tire of proclaiming and testifying in these difficult times. Only Christ, who knows man intimately, can speak to his heart and restore to him the joy and the dignity of one created in God's image. And for this he needs faithful and trusted collaborators; He needs saints and He calls us to be saints, that is, true friends of Christ and heralds of His Gospel.

One true friend and tireless apostle of Christ was Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. Born in Podęgrodzie of a poor peasant family, he lived at a time when Poland was afflicted by numerous wars and plagues, falling deeper and deeper into chaos and deprivation. Formed on the sound principles of the Gospel, young Stanislaus wanted to give himself completely to God, and from his adolescent years onwards, he felt drawn towards the Immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ. Gradually the Lord transformed the little shepherd-boy, who found it so hard to study and was physically so frail, into a preacher who drew crowds through his wisdom filled with erudition and profound mysticism; into a confessor whose spiritual counsel was sought

after even by the great men of Church and State; into a well-prepared teacher and an author of various works published in numerous editions; into the Founder of the first Polish Religious Institute for men, the Congregation of the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Guiding him throughout his life was Mary herself. In the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, the new *beatus* marveled at the power of the Redemption worked by Christ. In the Immaculate Virgin, he discerned the beauty of the new creation given totally to Christ and to the Church. He became so fascinated by this truth of the faith, that he was prepared to give his life in its defense. He knew that Mary, the crowning glory of God's creation, is the confirmation of the dignity of every man and woman, loved by God and destined for eternal life in Heaven. He wanted the mystery of the Immaculate Conception to be the distinguishing mark of the Religious Community that he founded, to be its constant support and its true joy. How many times in this very place, in this Shrine of Our Lady, Mother of Sorrows, where throngs of pilgrims come together to pray, has Blessed Stanislaus's moving prayer resounded up to the present day: "Mary, you console, comfort, sustain and raise up the oppressed, those who weep, who are tempted, who are weighed down ... O sweet Virgin! Show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your life!"

Inspired by God's love, Blessed Stanislaus burned with a strong passion for the salvation of souls and he addressed his listeners with heartfelt pleas such as this: "Turn back now to your Father! Why do you wander through the distant land of passions, deprived of the loving sentiments of the Supreme Good? Go to your Father! Christ is calling you, go to Him!" (*Inspectio cordis*, 1, 25, 2). Following the example of the Good Samaritan, he stood at the side of those wounded in spirit and eased their sufferings, he consoled them and filled them with hope and serenity, he led them to the "inn of pardon" which is the confessional, thus helping them recover their lost or rejected Christian dignity.

Divine charity impelled Blessed Stanislaus to become an evangelist of the poor in particular, of simple folk, the socially marginalized whose spiritual needs were overlooked, and of those who were in danger of death. Knowing how widespread the scourge of alcoholism was at the time, through word and example, he taught sobriety and inner freedom as an effective antidote against all forms of dependence. Filled with profoundly patriotic love for the united Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian nations, he did not hesitate to condemn the way in which those in power sought their own advantage, abused the privilege of nobility and promulgated unjust laws. Today too, the new *beatus* offers a timely invitation to Poland and to Europe, in its arduous search for unity: Only by building solidly upon God is reconciliation possible between people and between nations. Without God, there cannot be true social justice or stable peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, Blessed Stanislaus's love for his fellow men extended also to the dead. After his mystical experience of the suffering of those in Purgatory, he prayed fervently for them and exhorted everyone to do the same. Alongside spreading the cult of the Immaculate Conception and proclaiming the Word of God, praying for the dead thus became one of his Congregation's principal aims. The thought of death and meditation upon Heaven, Purgatory and hell help us to "spend" wisely our time on earth; it encourages us to think of death as a necessary stage on our journey towards God; it leads us always to accept and respect life as a gift from God, from its conception to its natural end. What an important sign for the modern world is the miracle of the "unexpected recovery of pregnancy between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> week of gestation" which occurred through the intercession of Fr. Papczynski. God is the Master of human life!

The secret of life is love: the ineffable love of God, which surpasses human frailty and moves our hearts to love life, our neighbor and even our enemies. To his spiritual sons, the new *beatus* entrusted this message from the beginning: "A man

without charity, a religious without charity, is a shadow without the sun, a body without a soul, he is simply a nothing. What the soul is to the body, that is what charity is in the Church, in religious orders and in religious houses." It is hardly surprising then, that a number of his disciples, amid many hardships and crosses, were distinguished by their evangelical perfection. Suffice it to recall the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Kazimierz Wyszyński (1700-1755), an ardent promoter of Marian devotion, Blessed Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz (1871-1927), who carried out a providential renewal and reform of the Congregation of Marian Clerics and was a champion of reconciliation between Poland and Lithuania; the Blessed Martyrs of Rosica (Belarus), Jerzy Kaszyra (1904-1943) and Antoni Leszczewicz (1890-1943), who freely gave their lives during the Second World War for their faith in Christ and for love of their fellow men. Even in dramatic times of persecution, the work of Blessed Stanislaus was never eclipsed. Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz gave it a new impulse, bearing witness once again to the fact that Love conquers all.

Dear Marian Fathers and Brothers, today this precious spiritual heritage of your Founder is entrusted to you: welcome it and, like him, be tireless heralds everywhere of God's merciful love, keeping your gaze fixed upon Mary Immaculate, so that in each of you the divine plan may be fulfilled.

Dear pilgrims and faithful people, the Church in Poland is celebrating the elevation to the altars of this chosen son of hers. May the example of his holy life and his heavenly intercession encourage all of you to open your hearts at every moment, trusting in God's all-powerful love. Filled with joy and hope, let us give thanks to God for the gift of the new beatus and let us praise the Lord in the words of the Apostle Paul: "To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim 1:17).

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**CARDINAL FRANC RODÉ, C.M. PREFECT OF  
THE CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED  
LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE**

Homily during the Thanksgiving Liturgy at the  
Tomb of Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski  
in Góra Kalwaria, September 17, 2007  
(on the Anniversary of the Death of the Blessed)

Your Excellency Archbishop Metropolitan,  
Your excellencies archbishops and bishops,  
Most Reverend Father General and all fathers and brothers of  
the venerable Congregation of the Marian Fathers,  
Brother priests and religious,  
Representatives of the authorities of all levels and honors,  
Beloved in Christ, brothers and sisters:

*The Lord is my shepherd* (Ps. 23:1). With the words of one of the most beautiful psalms in the Bible, we praise God in this joyful celebration. We give Him thanks for all He did for each and every one of us in His Son Jesus Christ. On this day, which you, brothers and sisters, have so longed and prayed for, we give special thanks for the ripe fruit of Christ's grace which the Church places before us in the Beatification of Stanislaus Papczynski.

Seventy years, filled with an ardent and uncompromising search for God in prayer, mortification, and service to his brothers, led Blessed Stanislaus to the joy of Heaven. A joyful psalm of pilgrims who have reached their destination may serve as an apt description of his path from Podegrodzie, where he was born as one of many children in the peasant family of Tomasz, a blacksmith, and Zofia, to the place of today's celebration, where his earthly remains rest. What was the path he took? How much toil did he endure? How many struggles did he endure to remain faithful to the internal voice of the Spirit and to his own conscience? Only He Himself, the Good Shepherd, whom he followed till the end of his days, knows the answers to these questions. He knows the fidelity and the toil of His servant whom He led to the "Father's house" (Jn 14: 2).

The eternal rest of the saints is laborious love. You, faithful devotees of the New Blessed, you, who for years have been coming here to Marianki (Góra Kalwaria) from all corners of Poland and remote parts of the world, know this perfectly well. Many among you and your close ones have experienced the power of his intercession. A few years before his death, in his first spiritual testimony, Fr. Stanislaus wrote that he leaves this world with one debt only, that of gratitude toward the inhabitants of this town and all benefactors, friends, and foes. He went to the Lord, yet remained here with us as a debtor full of love to listen to and support those who come to him. His intercession opens the gates of human hearts to the flow of God's grace. Thanks to it, the chains of sins break, the fetters of bad habits crumble, and a life to be born, once possessed by the gloom of death, blooms anew.

We have waited a long time for the joy of today's thanksgiving. For you, beloved Marians, these were three centuries of prayers and efforts, so that the glow of your Founder's sanctity, which you were so convinced of, could shine through to the whole world. In this time of expectation, you were accompanied by the Marian spiritual family and many devotees of Blessed Stanislaus. In many hearts a question may arise: Why so long? Let's keep in mind that God's Providence does not follow a path of human longings, and the gifts of His grace often come, not when we call, but when the time is most appropriate. If now we rejoice at the Beatification of Fr. Papczynski, we can most forcefully claim that today is the day when the testimony of his life is needed most for the Church and the world. Beatification marks the end of the road, but more than that, it is a call to get on the road again. Dear Marians, never in the over three-hundred-year history of your Congregation, has the necessity to reconsider the life and charism of Your Founder been more burning. Return to the spring from which flowed each of your own vocations. Get back to living your religious consecration to the full, with your hearts undivided. With confidence, entrust your entire life, your strengths and weaknesses, to the One "who for your sakes died and was raised up" (cf. 2 Cor 5:15).

Both today's reading from the Letter to the Ephesians and a fragment of John's Gospel are one great call for communion, profound and full of love. When we listen to the words, which are almost like Jesus' testament and the last instruction left to His disciples, it is hard not to recall such strikingly similar words left to you by your Founder. In the *Norma vitae*, he wrote:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37) This, which Divine Wisdom wanted to be most recommended in both [Old and New] Testaments, (Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27) should be your common rule and the safest way to heaven. Concerning mutual love: let it be known that the one who excels in mutual love is more dear to the Divine Majesty. Each of you should keep in mind that the soul of his Institute is love, and to the extent that he withdraws from love, he withdraws from life.

Dear Marians! Rejoicing in the gift of the Beatification, choose again the path on which the Gospel calls you and which your Founder showed to you. Only the one who fulfills the testimony of the Father is worthy of being called His son. The spiritual gift and mission which Blessed Stanislaus received from God, he has passed on to you, defining the aim of the created Order in the words: “But lest you remain without work in the Vineyard of the Lord, to the utmost of your strength, you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, and with utmost zeal, piety and fervor assist the souls of the faithful departed subjected to the punishments of Purgatory ... Yet, it will not be forbidden for those who would be granted such abilities, to humbly help pastors in pastoral work, if after a prior permission of the local bishops and superiors, they would be called by them.” This is a very broad and rich field to harvest. It entails many theological issues and numerous pastoral calls. It touches the beginnings of a human being and the end of man's pilgrimage, revealing a magnitude of grace and mercy of the One, who “loved His

own till the end” (cf. Jn 13:1). Certainly, it is not accidental that the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus and confirmed by the Church took place in the womb of a mother, between the life and the death of a conceived child. It is the work of God’s Providence that the Beatification in which we now rejoice was given to the contemporary world in the times when God’s presence and His grace are so often rejected at the thresholds of human existence. God’s Vineyard needs spiritual sons of Fr. Papczynski, who would bear fruit while taking up and developing the charism which the Lord entrusted to him.

The Church and the world needs you also, beloved lay helpers, who in various ways participate in the spirituality and mission of the Congregation of Marians. From the charism shining through Blessed Stanislaus, draw your strength and inspiration to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to contemporary man. It is also thanks to you, that numerous works carried out by the Congregation in many countries of the world bear wonderful fruit. You received a special vocation from God. Remain faithful to it.

The Church and the world also need you, devotees of Blessed Stanislaus. Fascinated with his path of faith and having experienced his efficacious intercession before God, try to become witnesses of God’s love to the world, devotees of His Mother and zealous intercessors for the deceased, but first and foremost apostles of mercy.

Here, I think particularly about you, dear inhabitants of this town, Gora Kalwaria, where the tomb of the Blessed has been located. You have always revealed great respect and ardent care toward his remains, seeking his intercession in the difficult moments of your private lives and the storms in the history of your homeland, treating Fr. Stanislaus as *your saint* and *the patron of your town*. Thus, thanks to your love, he becomes a Blessed for the entire Church.

Beloved brothers and sisters, through many different ties connected with Blessed Stanislaus: Each and every one of you in an individual way is an heir to the spirit with which He lived,

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prayed, and worked. In one of his writings, entitled *Templum Dei mysticum*, he wrote that each Christian is a temple of God. He taught how to keep this temple from becoming abandoned, dirty, and neglected, and how to make God live in it, in the beauty of love, prayer, and virtue, by opening up to the light and power of the Holy Spirit, and taking up the challenge of raising such a temple. May Christ dwell in your hearts. Become servants of His presence wherever He sends you, and be certain that in your toil, the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus and Mary Immaculate, whose glory he so zealously spread, will never abandon you.

“The Lord is the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep” (cf. Jn 10:11). He leads man on the best paths and delivers him from the valley of death to give him shelter in His house forever. To Him we give thanks today, celebrating the commemoration of His Passover. Through the power of the death and the resurrection of Christ, God’s grace gained a total victory in the life of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski and made him participate in the glory of Heaven. May the words of the Blessed, praising the triumph of Christ over death, set our hearts on fire for further liturgical celebrations and for all our lives: “Death died at the moment when the Life gave His life on the tree. When Jesus, making a sign to death by bowing his head, delivered over His spirit, the breath of life was coming back to us. When He was dying, He was empowering us. When He triumphed over death, He was preparing for us the joy of a never ending triumph. What triumph? ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’ – St. Paul, calling in joy, scoffs at death. ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? . . . But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’”

In Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski, the victory of the Lord and the fullness of His life shone. May it also shine in us, for eternal life. Amen!

**CARDINAL STANISŁAW DZIWIŚZ,  
METROPOLITAN OF KRAKOW**

Homily during a Mass of Thanksgiving for the  
Beatification of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski  
in the Chapel of the Bishops of Krakow,  
September 19, 2007

*Immaculata Virginis Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio –  
May the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our refuge and  
protection.*

Dear Marian Fathers! May this invocation, which Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski encouraged his spiritual sons to repeat, be the motto of our thanksgiving for this remarkable personality in the history of the Church in Poland and of our homeland. As the founder of the Marian Fathers and a great venerator of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, he has taken his place in the pantheon of saints of the Church in Poland and the world.

By an act of Divine Providence, Blessed Stanislaus was closely associated with the Diocese of Krakow as he was born there. He established his bonds with Krakow through the Krakow Piarists while living in their residence in Kazimierz. During difficult moments in his life, he always sought help from the bishop of Krakow, Mikołaj Oborski. This was the place where the charismatic idea about founding a new congregation was preconceived.

We also have to remember that it was the Pope from Krakow, the Holy Father John Paul II, who resumed the process of Beatification of Stanislaus Papczynski and on June 13, 1992, at a Vatican Consistory in Rome, proclaimed a decree on his heroic virtues. In this way, the beatification process, which was ongoing for almost 300 years, entered into a new stage.

Today, in the Chapel of the Bishops of Krakow, we would like to express our gratitude to God for Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski and for his legacy.

2. The life of Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski was full of contradictions, as were the lives of many other saints.

Without going into the details of his life story which you all know so well, I would merely like to point out some of the facts that support my earlier statement. The Blessed was the son of a farmer from Podegrodzie near Nowy Sącz, yet he managed to graduate from a Jesuit College in Lvov. He started his religious career with the Piarists, while ending it as the Founder of the Congregation of Marians, the first Polish male order. As a Piarist, he was a confessor to King Jan III Sobieski and the apostolic nuncio to Poland, Antonio Pignatelli, who was later to become Pope Innocent XII. While in his mother's womb, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski was entrusted to the care of our Blessed Mother. Her intercessory prayers helped him in a miraculous way to pass unharmed through various dangers.

3. In his times, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski became famous as a preacher, a zealous promoter of the Gospel, and a great venerator of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Last Sunday, during the ceremony of the Beatification in Licheń, His Eminence Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone spoke in his homily about the great love that Papczynski had for the Blessed Mother: "In the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, the new *beatus* marveled at the power of the Redemption wrought by Christ. In the Immaculate Virgin, he discerned the beauty of the new creation given totally to Christ and to the Church. He became so fascinated by this truth of the faith, that he was prepared to give his life in its defense" (Homily in Licheń, September 16, 2007). Through his ministry as a preacher and confessor, and particularly in his dedication to fight addiction to alcohol, a great national shortcoming already at that time, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski led the human person to the beauty and dignity bestowed on him by his Creator and Redeemer.

4. Dear Marian Fathers, I am happy that today, together with all of you, I have this opportunity to show my gratitude to God for the grace of the Beatification of your Founder, Blessed

Stanislaus Papczynski, an outstanding personality of his time. As I participated in the ceremony of his Beatification, so perfectly prepared that it may be held up as an example for other Church events of this kind in Poland, three thoughts occurred to me and I would like to share them with you.

Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski was a great venerator of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I urge you to proclaim Mary Immaculate with ardent enthusiasm. Your Founder entrusted the Congregation of Marian Fathers to the Mother of God. Following the example of the Blessed, learn how to depend on God with full trust and confidence, repeating Mary's "*fiat*": "Be it done unto me according to thy word!"

Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski held in reverence the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Being faithful to your Founder, try to revive the prayer for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. The practice of this prayer restores faith in eternal life in people's hearts and a yearning for the supreme happiness of Heaven. Today, greed overpowers our yearning for Heaven and makes us satisfied with worldly goods, putting the heavenly ones behind us. This leads to the culture of consumerism and deprives our souls of this longing for eternal life and happiness. Awaken then a desire for Heaven in the hearts of the faithful, and inspire them with prayer for the intentions of the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

The third thought I would like to share with you concerns the devotion to the Divine Mercy advanced by the Holy Father John Paul II, the great Apostle of the Divine Mercy. I express my appreciation for your attentiveness and dedication to the Divine Mercy and I urge you to spread this devotion worldwide, and especially in the United States and England, as you have always been doing. I urge you to not forget that the essence of the Divine Mercy mystery is also expressed in the Sacrament of Penance so ardently advocated by your Founder. Encourage people to make frequent confessions and serve the contemporary human person with your pastoral care.

On this occasion, I would like to express my appreciation for your contribution to the life of the Church in Krakow in the form of parochial ministry and of the prudent and responsible service at the *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly, as well as of your intellectual collaboration with the Holy Father.

Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski was always faithful to God, both in happy times and in times of trials and misfortunes. Today, we express our gratitude to our Merciful Father for everything He cared to offer, urging you to show your devotion to God and the Church by being faithful to the spiritual legacy of your Blessed.

**CARDINAL ZENON GROCHOLEWSKI,  
PREFECT OF THE CONGREGATION FOR  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

**Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski and the Primacy of  
Spiritual Values and Evangelization**

Homily Delivered during the Mass of  
Thanksgiving for the Beatification  
of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski

Rome, St. Mary Major Basilica,  
December 5, 2007

Is 25:6-10a; 2 Cor 4:1-2, 5-7; Mt 15:29-37

Excellencies, dear Marian Fathers, beloved brothers in the priesthood, religious sisters, dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are gathered in this magnificent Basilica of St. Mary Major to thank God for the Beatification of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski, which took place on September 16 of this year, in the Shrine of Our Lady of Licheń. Let us call that event to mind while we contemplate the Word of God for today's Advent Mass.

**God's Promise**

In the first reading, we have heard one of the canticles of the Prophet Isaiah in which, after the destruction of the city, the conversion of distant peoples, and the defeat of the proud, the conviction is expressed that the Lord is the only One whom we should praise. In this way, he confesses that only God is the true Lord of history. At this point, the prophet notes that the fullness of the divine plan has not yet been completely fulfilled. He declares that God will perform still greater works. The prophet speaks of an exquisite feast prepared by God himself. He says that the Lord will reveal His face, so that the peoples will know the immensity of his merciful love,

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which is not indifferent to the tiniest tears of man, nor to the experience of the fragility of every human life, in fact, he assures us that even death will be defeated.

### **Jesus Is the Salvation of Man**

The image presented by the Prophet Isaiah becomes particularly comprehensible and moving to the soul, while St. Matthew, in today's Gospel, relates the words of Jesus: "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd," uttered in the midst of the lame, the deformed, the blind, the mute, and the hungry. In this context, we can see how God's promise is being fulfilled. The Lord is faithful, and He knows the trials of the man whose life is in danger. Not only does God know all these things, but He is also the only One capable of resolving the dramatic situation of man and who accomplishes the miracle of the multiplication of the bread.

After the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, the first community of His disciples could understand the profound meaning of this miracle of the Teacher. This was the announcement of the Eucharist. They recognized that Jesus' concern for man goes beyond the immediate satisfaction of his temporal needs. Their eyes are opened when the Lord gives Himself to them as food for Eternal Life.

### **The Church Proclaims True Salvation**

The Church at that time had already understood that its main task was not to solve temporal problems. In fact, the greatest misery of man is to go through life without a knowledge of the gratuitous love of God, particularly revealed in His having given His only begotten Son for our salvation. The Church, indeed, was, is, and will always be united with all people of good will and is also committed to the works of mercy. However, it is also even more convinced that the primary need is to announce God's Word to men and women, so that they believe in His immeasurable Mercy.

The Church wants to take care of the poor, the afflicted, the meek, and of those who hunger and thirst for justice in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. That is why the Church evangelizes! It evangelizes ever anew, because the greatest sickness that can strike man is that of putting himself in the place of God, and of organizing his life based on the principle: "I alone know what is good and what is bad for me."

The Church also desires that all of its faithful, the pastors and their communities, would continually experience the grace of conversion, and of welcoming the Gospel as the vital principle of their conduct.

The perspective of evangelization is as follows: to announce Jesus Christ to other people, but above all, to cooperate with the unfolding of God's plans, so that what God Himself has intended would be fulfilled in us and in those to whom we proclaim the Gospel.

### ***Seek First the Reign of God (Mt 6:33) in the Teachings of Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski***

It seems that today, we should not only be roused by gratitude in our hearts to God for His promises, but also to thank Him because His signs confirm that truly, one can be blessed, that is, experiencing happiness springing from the power of His Word, and from the nourishment that He gives us, and from responding to God's call to announce the Gospel.

This evening, we look at Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski, who, on September 16 of this year, according to the will of Benedict XVI, was proclaimed Blessed at the Marian Shrine in Licheń (Poland). We turn back in our minds to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, remembering, however, that the reputation for sanctity of Blessed Stanislaus has perdured until our day in the Congregation of Marian Fathers which he founded, in associations, in parishes connected with this Institute of the Consecrated Life, and among many faithful.

Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary heard the same Word of God that we also hear. He obeyed it. He said: "Contemplate the fact that Jesus, just as when he stayed among men and treated sinners in a friendly manner, in the same way, He communes with us as well today. He does not refuse them His Body and Blood, despite their insufficient preparation, following [...] the sequence: 'the good go, the irreverent go'" (*Inspectio cordis*). He also observed in a different place: "Reflect that Servants of God uselessly worry about food, drink, clothing and other things; however, would it ever be possible, that the One who covers the earth with grass, the birds with feathers, the trees with leaves and bark would not take care of His servant's garment? It would not be suitable, if you, for this reason, would murmur against the Moses of the New Testament" (*Inspectio cordis*).

The words just cited of Blessed Stanislaus are not abstract meditations, because he himself, during the 70 years of his life, experienced poverty, first in a family with many children, in which he was born on May 18, 1631, in Podegrodzie near Stary Sącz in Poland, then in Lvov (present day Ukraine), where he studied at the Jesuit College, and finally, for 30 years in a small religious community. What's more, having access to the powerful of this world, he did not avoid staying with poor and simple people. In fact, material poverty was not a justification for not accepting the promise contained in the Word of God of God's solicitude; on the contrary, it was the motive for entrusting everything to Providence. That is why he dared to say: "Think rather, how to persevere in His grace, to fulfill His will, and then everything will be given to you. The one that is covered, refreshed and nourished by grace, is not naked or in want or hungry. Employ yourself first of all to obtain grace" (*Inspectio cordis*). In this regard, a rhetorical and provocative question from Jesus comes to mind: "What shall a man profit, if he shall gain the whole world, and loses his soul? O what will a man be able to give in exchange for his own soul?" (Mt 16: 26).

## **The Support of the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception**

At a certain moment in the life of Blessed Stanislaus, the grace and the desire to persevere on his path found a particular support in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of Christ. In this truth of the Faith, he discerned both the presence of God as well as the special role of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This mystery was the source of his recognition, admiration, and adoration of God. Toward Mary on the other hand, there was love, veneration and the desire to live as she did. This can clearly be seen in these words which he wrote: "It was the right thing [...] to say that there would be conceived, really by the work of the Holy Spirit, the One who was full of grace, full of the Holy Spirit. O, if only one could say about your deeds that they come from the Holy Spirit, that they have been done in the Holy Spirit! It is truly a great happiness to acquire the Holy Spirit, it is an even greater happiness, to possess the Holy Spirit, it is an even greater happiness to act according to the Holy Spirit, and it is the greatest happiness to come to the end of one's days in the Holy Spirit" (*Inspectio cordis*).

Blessed Stanislaus was therefore happy when the Church approved The Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Decem beneplacitorum*) as the norm of life of the Marian Fathers. Even though it is no longer binding on the reformed Congregation today; nevertheless, it constitutes an extraordinary patrimony of Marian piety which consists in the imitation of the Mother of Jesus. To some extent, it is incorporated in the current Marians' motto: For Christ and the Church: *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*. Who, in fact, more than Mary, lived for Christ and the Church?

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## **Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski Exhorts Us to Evangelization**

The fact that the Word of God fulfills and makes man happy is confirmed by the motto of the Marians as well as, in the past, by the rule of the Imitation of the Immaculate Mother of Christ, as well as by the witness of the life of Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and the witness of the lives of other Marians, Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz from Lithuania and the Blessed Martyrs from Belarus, Antoni Leszczewicz and George Kaszyra. Above all, therefore, they call us to conversion, to have the courage to go to the new poor of our times (John Paul II to the Marians), and to have a new enthusiasm for evangelization.

It was also an eloquent sign that Benedict XVI carried out, on the occasion of the above mentioned Beatification, toward the Marians at Our Lady's Shrine in Licheń, and toward those that visit that place, to consign the Book of the Gospels with the following dedication: "Listen and preach the Gospel following the example of the Immaculate Mother of Christ." Today we could add: following also the example of Blessed Stanislaus.

It is worthwhile to recall here that the first book written by Fr. Papczynski was a textbook on rhetoric. He mastered the theoretical art of oratory and, from the time he was a deacon, he preached willingly, in such a way that he gained a reputation as one of the best preachers in the Republic of Poland. Today, he would probably invest mind and heart to find new forms of evangelization, of preaching the Word of God and of guiding souls, in the awareness that the greatest poverty is the absence of God.

### **Conclusion**

Dear Marians, spiritual sons of the new Blessed, undertaking the labor of the evangelization of the world of today, fix your gaze on the example of your Founder. By renouncing his own self, he made a total gift of himself to Christ, and in the

ministry of evangelization, he proclaimed the good news of love of the living God, whom he not only pointed to with words but, above all, with the witness of his own life. He became a credible sign of the Kingdom of God. Just as the Holy Spirit did for Blessed Stanislaus, may He make you capable of a zealous pursuit of the means and the methods suitable for our times, to reach that depth of the soul that has need of the Savior. In this work of evangelization, seek to include, with ever greater efficacy, the large community of lay collaborators associated with you, always taking care for their solid formation, to be in conformity with the Marian charism. The Beatification of your Founder opens before you new perspectives and new challenges that spring from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the Church. Listen intently to His voice.

Today's celebration also encourages all of us to insert ourselves into the great work of evangelization, in the effort to proclaim the Gospel, there, where we live and where we work, each one according to his own vocation in the Church, in a way that the Word of the Good News gets carried everywhere, to free man from sin and from sinful tendencies, and to plant hope which springs from faith in Jesus Christ. May we also be helped in this work, by the one who Blessed Stanislaus loved and imitated in a particular way, Mary, who supports us in our faith and "shines before the pilgrim People of God, as a sign of sure hope and consolation" (LG, 68).

MIRACLES AND GRACES  
RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF  
ST. STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY PAPCZYNSKI



## **The miracle recognized by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in the beatification process of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski**

In 2000, Mrs. N. of Poland was expecting her first baby, but a miscarriage occurred. In February of the following year, she became pregnant again. On March 22, she experienced complications with her pregnancy, which almost ended in a miscarriage. For this reason, she was admitted to the hospital, where she had three ultrasound tests, the last of which — on March 30 — clearly showed the viability of the fetus and a normal fetal sac. She was discharged from the hospital the same day. However, on April 1, she was forced to return to the hospital because of abdominal pain. An ultrasound revealed that the fetus did not show heart function, and thus a diagnosis of miscarriage was made. In addition, the shrinking of the fetal sac — compared to the dimensions it had achieved in the previous days — was observed. The doctor recommended discontinuing medication for pregnancy support so that a miscarriage could occur. Further tests performed the next day confirmed the diagnosis. The doctor planned to perform surgery to remove the dead fetus if a miscarriage did not occur within a few days.

Meanwhile, beginning on March 28, several members of Mrs. N.'s family and others had begun to invoke God's help through the intercession of the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski for the successful outcome of this case. On April 4, the next ultrasound unexpectedly revealed that the fetus showed a newly restored heart function. Much to everyone's surprise, the doctor announced the revival of the fetus. It seemed impossible, given the earlier, twice-confirmed diagnosis that the child was dead. The doctor decided to repeat the test with another camera. The result conclusively confirmed that the child was alive. It was immediately recognized that this event took place outside the forces of nature and that it coincided in time with the novena asking for assistance through the intercession of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski. On October 17, Mrs. N. gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

The above-described event was examined first in the diocesan process (2003-2004) and then in Rome by the consultative doctors, eminent professors (May 12, 2005), and consultative theologians (September 20, 2006). On December 16, 2006, the Holy Father Benedict XVI authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree recognizing a miracle performed by God through the intercession of the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski. On September 16, 2007, in Lichen, Poland, on behalf of the Holy Father Benedict XVI, the secretary of state of the Holy See proclaimed Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski a blessed.

**The Vatican-approved miracle attributed to the  
intercession of Marian Founder Stanislaus Papczynski  
that opened the way for his canonization.**

Barbara Rudzik was 20 years old and engaged to be married in June 2008. She had no history of any unusual diseases or medical conditions, but in February 2008, that all changed.

She developed symptoms of a heavy cold. First she went to her family doctor, who prescribed flu medication. Seeing no improvement, Tomasz Sobolewski, Barbara's fiancé, took her to the hospital where she was told she had nothing out of the ordinary wrong with her. But her symptoms became more acute. She experienced shortness of breath and severe chest pains. More hospital visits ensued.

On February 24, Tomasz reported: "We went to the emergency room, and at my insistence a chest X-ray was done. I was anxious because the doctors maintained that they could not find any problem, yet my girlfriend was feeling so bad that she was forced to use the hospital wheelchair. She had already lost 11 pounds and looked awful." The X-rays showed severe pneumonia and dehydration. She was hospitalized at the local Mazurski Health Center, in Ełk, Poland.

The following day, she suffered complete respiratory failure and was placed on full life support under the care of Dr. Walde-

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mar Szypulski, the department chief and specialist of the Intensive Care Unit.

Dr. Irena Minarowska, a radiologist, reported: "On February 25, 2008, for the first time, I looked over her lung X-rays and examined her in the ICU. The patient had severe difficulty breathing, was pale, and in critical condition. We had to deal with a very serious injury of the lungs that prevented the ventilation of her lungs predominantly. Any work on the patient resulted in the worsening of her condition. The patient was very unstable. No matter what was tried on her, it provoked further instability. We wondered if the patient would survive, and if she survived, in what state. The status of the patient was so serious that she was in a constant state of critical condition. ... Despite the lack of improvement in her clinical status, our team did not give up and carried on with the therapeutic protocol for the whole time."

A multidisciplinary treatment plan was followed for the diagnosis of Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) concurrent with pneumonia. Aggressive treatment of symptoms included multiple antibiotics and mechanical ventilation on a respirator. Still, Barbara's condition worsened. She went into a coma, developed multiple organ failure and septic shock, and remained in critical condition.

By March 19, Barbara was not responding to targeted therapy. She remained in critical condition. Dr. Szypulski recognized that the medical team had exhausted all therapeutic methods. He told the family that he considered her condition desperate and irreversible and expected her death in a short time.

Alfreda Rudzik, Barbara's mother, deeply distraught, went to the parish church, where she encountered Anna Mazurek, her catechism teacher and the parish organist. In her efforts to console her, Anna suggested that Barbara's family pray the Novena to Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski for her healing. Since Alfreda was not aware of these prayers, Anna gave her a novena booklet to guide her. That evening, together with her husband and Barbara's fiancé, Alfreda began the novena.

On March 22, the fourth day of their novena, Dr. Szypulski noticed a slight improvement in Barbara's clinical status, including in the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in her blood. He modified the mechanical ventilation settings and reduced her medications. He stated that "after those days of desperation and lack of hope," they were "blown away" by her improvement. The chest X-ray taken on March 25 (the seventh day of the novena), shocked the doctors even more as it showed a complete healing of her irreversibly damaged lungs.

On March 27, the final day of the novena, Barbara's breathing tube was removed and she began to spontaneously breathe on her own.

Seeing her lungs restored — lungs that had been damaged beyond modern medicine's treatment capabilities — and seeing the overall positive turn in her condition, both Dr. Szypulski and Dr. Minarowska were dumbfounded. They admitted that their medical intervention was not responsible for this reversal and healing, and that no scientific reason would explain it. Although her lungs were healed, serious questions remained. Dr. Minarowska stated: "We were certain that she would survive, but unable to answer the question 'how' she would function after her eventual recovery."

The doctors wondered, would her brain function normally after such high levels of carbon dioxide in her blood for over four weeks that had caused cerebral hypoxia (severe lack of oxygen to the brain)? Would her vital organs, damaged by septic shock and total organ failure, recover? Would resultant quadriplegia be reversed? The physicians had no answers on that day, as they feared permanent brain injury, organ dysfunction, and total body paralysis.

The answers came during her stay at the hospital's Rehabilitation Department. Despite her cerebral hypoxia, she had no cognitive impairment. Her Rehabilitation Discharge Summary stated: "Twenty-year-old patient was admitted for rehabilitation after quadriplegia and cerebral hypoxic respiratory failure.

She has achieved a significant improvement in functional status, now ambulating independently on level surfaces, climbing stairs and was discharged home." She was healed from the permanent damage of cerebral hypoxia and quadriplegia, which is medically unexplainable.

Barbara Rudzik returned to lead a normal life. She married Tomasz on June 21, 2008. They now have two healthy boys.

### **A Pharmacist's Testimony — Manoel Ribas, State of Parana, Brazil**

In April 2013, I conceived. Until my third month, everything seemed normal. Then my doctor discovered my child had an incurable disease called "ascites," meaning his stomach was swollen with fluid. He asked me to come back next week, saying my child could die at any moment.

Shaken, I contacted a friend (a Marian priest) to ask for prayers. He advised me to pray a novena asking the intercession of Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski and gave me a third class relic, a piece of cloth he'd touched to Fr. Stanislaus' relics, to touch to my belly while praying. I prayed the novena daily, asked family and friends to pray, and decided to bring the relic to every doctor's visit.

At my next visit, the doctor noted the fetus' heartbeat was very slow. He insisted (and other doctors concurred) that nothing could be done; I would lose my child. I saw the doctor every eight days. As the situation worsened, he advised an abortion, unless I miscarried. When I asked about other tests, the doctors declared them pointless. Nonetheless, I saw another doctor, who confirmed the ascites and discovered three small gaps in my child's heart. She said the baby would be born with cyanosis and have trouble receiving nourishment. Nevertheless, I continued to pray the novena.

A few days later, I returned to my original doctor and told him what the other doctor had found. Immediately, my doctor ordered a new ultrasound. During the test, he said: "I don't believe what I

see.” My mother-in-law and I clasped hands. I thought I’d lost my child. But the doctor said all my child’s complications had vanished.

During labor, I kept the third-class relic in my bag — I couldn’t bring it into the delivery room. My child was born without any problems. I was able to breastfeed him. The pediatrician said the child was all right, but knowing the child’s history, he advised me to visit the doctor who had discovered the heart problems. When I saw her, she said: “You won’t believe it; there’s nothing wrong with his heart. The baby is fine.”

The doctors said they will never forget my story.

### **Testimony of a doctor from the United States**

I am an obstetrician/gynecologist. I was taking care of a pregnant patient who called me and said she had not felt the baby move in a couple of days. I had her come to the office immediately. She was in her 34<sup>th</sup> week.

Thankfully, I found a heartbeat, and the baby seemed fine, but suddenly the heartbeat dropped dramatically. I personally drove the woman to the hospital, because I knew if we waited for an ambulance, the baby would have died. I immediately performed an emergency Caesarian section. We successfully revived the baby, but I was concerned about the amount of time without oxygenation.

It just so happened that I received a booklet about Blessed Stanislaus a few days after this occurred. I read the chapter about the child who was originally diagnosed as a miscarriage and the return of a heartbeat after the novena to Blessed Stanislaus. After reading this, I prayed through Blessed Stanislaus’ intercession for the health of the child.

It is almost a year later, and I can say that this baby is absolutely perfect. The neurologist and the pediatrician are both amazed. I believe that this booklet came to me for a reason at that particular time.

DOCUMENTS AND HOMILIES  
FROM HIS CANONIZATION



# CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

POZNAŃ  
CANONIZATION OF  
BLESSED  
STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY  
(SECULAR NAME: JOHN PAPCZYNSKI)  
FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF MARIAN FATHERS  
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE B.V.M.  
(1631-1701)

## **Decree regarding the Miracle**

Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (secular name: John Papczynski) was born in the town of Podegrodzie in Poland on May 18, 1631. Having completed primary school, he attended the college of the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of Pious Schools in the town of Podoliniec, as well as [the college] of the Society of Jesus in Lviv and Rawa Mazowiecka. In 1654, he completed two years of philosophy. He entered the novitiate of the Piarists and then assumed the religious name “Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary.” In the second year of novitiate, he began theological studies in Warsaw and made simple vows. He was ordained a priest in 1661. He stood out as a teacher of rhetoric, a preacher, and confessor. Among the penitents who came to him was even the Apostolic Nuncio of Poland, Antonio Pignatelli, who later was elected Supreme Pontiff with the name Innocent XII. He founded a new religious order, the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., whose cult of the singular privilege [of her Immaculate Conception] the Marians promoted. Among the main objectives of the Congregation, he desired to include aiding the souls most

in need in Purgatory, especially victims of war and pestilence, as well as pastoral help for those in need. In 1667, he obtained a second house, called "New Jerusalem," near the modern city of Góra Kalwaria [Mount Calvary] in Poland, where he himself dwelled from that year forward, and until the end of his life, he remained in a small convent located next to the church entitled the "Lord's Cenacle." Here he carried out assiduous apostolic labor, especially for the poor of the country villages. He faithfully kept the rule [of life] and diligently governed the [new] religious institute. Gravely ill, he died in the aforementioned Góra Kalwaria on September 17, 1701, leaving behind many writings on spiritual topics. The Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI granted him the title of Blessed in 2007.

The Postulator of the Cause for Canonization submitted to the examination of this Congregation for the Causes of Saints the extraordinary healing of a young woman, which happened in the diocese of Ełk in 2008. Twenty years old, she had to be brought to the hospital on account of a severe disease of the lungs. With her health always worsening, she was brought to intensive care, where she was given a [breathing] tube and connected to a respirator. Acute respiratory distress, as well as dysfunction of the kidneys and other pernicious consequences, compounded her illness, such that the doctors pronounced an unfavorable diagnosis. In these circumstances, which seemed already to be irreversible, a chain of prayer to Blessed Stanislaus, so as to obtain the gift of healing of the young woman, was begun on account of her needs, in which many of the faithful participated, at the same time that novena prayers [were begun]. On March 22, when the woman had already been in the hospital for almost a month, the general condition of the woman had taken a turn for the better, and on the last day of the novena, namely, March 27, the [breathing] tube was taken out of the woman. A few days later, in generally good health, she was released from the hospital, and the following June, she was married. After a year

and a half, she gave birth to an infant in perfect health. Now she is the mother of two children.

The connection between the invocation of the Blessed and the healing of the woman was evident, who thereafter obtained good health and was able to lead a normal life.

Regarding this case, considered to be miraculous, the diocesan inquiry was performed from November 16, 2012, to April 30, 2014, in the Curia of the Ełk Diocese, whose juridical validity by this Congregation was recognized by the decree of June 27, 2014. The Council of Doctors of this Dicastery, in the Session held on September 17, 2015, acknowledged the healing to be speedy, perfect, constant, and inexplicable according to the laws of this world. On November 10, 2015, the *Congressus Peculiaris* [Special Meeting] of the Theological Consultors was held. On January 12, 2016, in the Ordinary Session, the Fathers, Cardinals, and Bishops gathered together with me, Angelo Cardinal Amato, as the moderator.

And in both of the assemblies, both that of the Consultors and that of the Cardinals and Bishops, to the question posed as to whether they agreed the miracle to be divine, the affirmative response was given.

Having received all these things regarding these matters in an accurate report to the Supreme Pontiff, Francis, through the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, His Holiness, having received the ratifying vote of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, declared on this day: *The miracle, namely the rapid, perfect, and complete healing of the same girl from "bilateral pneumonia from Streptococcus pneumoniae, complicated by ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome in adults) [and] MOF (multiple organ failure syndrome) and septic shock," is confirmed as having been performed by God through the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (in the world: John Papczynski), Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

The Supreme Pontiff has ordered that this decree, moreover, is to be made public law and to be related in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

*Given in Rome, on January 21, 2016 AD.*

ANGELUS Card. AMATO, S.D.B.

+ MARCELLUS BARTOLUCCI

Titular Archbishop of Mevania

*Secretary*

[Unofficial Translation]

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**FATHER STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI —  
ADVOCATE OF DIGNITY AND HOLINESS OF LIFE**

**Pastoral Letter of the National Conference  
of Bishops in Poland before the canonization of  
Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski**

Dear sisters and dear brothers,

At the beginning of today's Liturgy of the Word, we heard the prayer of King Solomon in which he asks that all nations may know the one God (see 1 Kings 8:41-43). Thanks to his constant intimacy with God, Solomon was widely recognized for his wisdom, while Israel knew peace and prosperity. However, in the Gospel (see Lk 7:1-10), Christ gives us the example of a centurion who, although aware of his weakness and sinfulness, yet deeply believes in Jesus and His healing power. Following the example of this centurion, we plead Christ in every Mass for our healing: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word" [...]. Saint Paul reminds us that there is no other Gospel than this: that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead after three days (see Gal 1:1-2, 6-10).

God is constantly raising new witnesses who help people of a particular place and time accept the Gospel and live it out every day. The Church recognizes some of them and proclaims them saints. In a few days, on June 5, 2016, Pope Francis will canonize two new saints in Rome. One of them is a Pole — Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski, Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through a canonization, the Church proclaims that the new saints are authentic models of life and intercessors before God, and that their message is important for the Church and the world of our times.

Father Papczynski was born in Podegrodzie, near Stary Sacz, in 1631. In his youth, he had several brushes with death.

He often changed schools — at first, because of learning difficulties, and then because of wars and epidemics. When he was 23, he joined the Piarists, and, upon his ordination, proved to be an outstanding preacher, a master of the spiritual life, a lecturer in rhetoric, and a writer. When he was more than 40 years of age, he founded the first Polish male Order — the Congregation of Marian Fathers, which serves today in Poland and nearly all continents. At the age of 70, Fr. Papczynski died in the odor of sanctity in Góra Kalwaria and was buried there. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński said during the 1964 preparation for celebrations of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland: “Father Papczynski knew his Nation, and knew what was its power and strength. This is why he gave his Nation such counsels that are still timely. His life and charism are still compelling [...] We ought to imitate him.”

### **1. Created in the image of the Merciful God and called to holiness**

Father Papczynski admired the beauty of life and saw it as the gift of the Holy Trinity. He wrote: “Remember that you were created out of nothing, [...] and have been made so beautiful by the wisdom of the Divine Artist that — aside from the inhabitants of Heaven — you surpass in appearance all creatures. God shows you kindness out of pure, selfless love for you. From it comes God’s wish to be reconciled with us, to do us good and show mercy.” Today also, the new saint calls out: “Contemplate God’s mercy! Proclaim that the heart of God is open to all and attest that the path to salvation is not closed to any sinner, provided that he is ready to repent.” Today Fr. Papczynski assures us, just as he did more than three centuries ago: “Your Redeemer, the best Shepherd, gave His life. You are full of sins? Jesus came to save sinners. Surrender yourself entirely to Jesus, and Jesus will be entirely yours. It really is a great happiness to possess the Holy Spirit, but an even greater one is to work according to the Holy Spirit, while the greatest yet — to complete one’s days in the Holy Spirit.”

Desiring to lead all to holiness, Fr. Papczynski composed a textbook on the spiritual life for lay people and clergy. He opened by saying that “Man, created by God and consecrated to Him through the Sacrament of Baptism, is His Mystical Temple.” He further wrote: “How great is your glory! What dignity!” According to Fr. Papczynski, the first dedication of our temple is the Sacrament of Baptism, in which the Holy Spirit consecrates us to Himself. Therefore, our new saint encourages everyone to joyfully celebrate the anniversary of his or her Baptism and to be grateful for this event every day. This call is ever more valuable on the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Poland!

## 2. The Immaculate Conception of Mary

During the 2007 Mass of Beatification in Licheń, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone thus portrayed Fr. Papczynski: “Guiding him throughout his life was Mary herself. In the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, the new *beatus* marveled at the power of the Redemption worked by Christ. In the Immaculate Virgin, he discerned the beauty of the new creation given totally to Christ and to the Church. He became so fascinated by this truth of the faith that he was prepared to give his life in its defense. He knew that Mary, the crowning glory of God’s creation, is the confirmation of the dignity of every man and woman, loved by God and destined for eternal life in Heaven.”

At the end of the last century, St. John Paul II called the dogma of the Immaculate Conception “a synthesis of the Christian faith,” and — addressing Mary — he cried out: “In your Immaculate Conception we have been given a hope of victory.” How very similar sounds Fr. Papczynski’s frequently repeated invocation, “May the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection.” Through this mystery, God assures us that — like Mary — we were beloved by Him centuries ago and called to eternal life in Heaven. His love is always first and always greater than our sins. For this reason, Fr. Papczynski admonishes: “You appeared as a result of God’s plan. The Holy

Trinity personally raised you as this temple. Oh, how you should admire and follow this solicitude for you of the best God the Father, which outpaced even your birth! With what zeal should you reciprocate Him! May you closely cooperate with both your vocation and every grace of God!"

### **3. Praying for the dead**

In Fr. Papczynski's times the Republic of Poland suffered from continuous wars, famine, and diseases. As a result, many people — often unprepared to meet God — were dying. Therefore, Fr. Papczynski chose prayer and sacrifice for the dead as his Order's second goal after spreading honor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. He had visions of Purgatory and fallen soldiers, who asked him to intercede before God. Thus, he often urged: "Pray for the souls in Purgatory, for they are suffering unbearable pains." These words of the Marian Founder reverberate even more strongly in the Jubilee Year of Mercy: "What can be greater than mercy shown to the dead, from whom you expect no reward, no thanks, and no praise. Those who do so will definitely prepare themselves for immortal life."

### **4. His love for man and the homeland**

Father Papczynski often said that if we desire God's mercy, we must show mercy to other people. He wrote: "Love is the soul, the light, the life of religious orders, and every human society." He personally would not let any person in need depart without getting help. He cared about the poor, the sick, and the dying; he supported asylums and hospitals, comforted the afflicted, and spoke out on behalf of the rejected and those who were treated unfairly. Aware of the growing scourge of alcoholism, he advocated sobriety by word and example, and showed the way to inner freedom. He performed every work of charity for the love of God and man, but also for love of his homeland. He wrote that "the Republic of Poland should be

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understood as something to which one should give himself and dedicate himself completely." His love for Poland was so well known that the 1764 Coronation Diet of the Republic of Poland petitioned the Holy See for the beatification of "Stanislaus Papczynski, a Pole renowned for miracles." In 2011, the Polish Senate recognized him as an exemplary Pole dedicated to the matters of his homeland. Today, just as he did more than three hundred years ago, Fr. Stanislaus reminds us: "True freedom consists in obeying the law, and more so divine laws than human ones. We are born not for ourselves, but for our Homeland. [...] We need real men, not some bad eggs or scum. Give to the homeland true Poles, not some weaklings; that is, give strong, brave people, capable of great efforts, seasoned to fight, prepared to sit in councils. This is what the Fatherland expects and demands you to be."

Beloved in Christ,

The upcoming canonization of Blessed Father Stanislaus Papczynski is an invitation to receive again the mercy of God and to renew the grace of our Baptism, so that we may respond to God's gratuitous love with our love for Him and charity towards the living and the dead. May the Immaculate Conception of Mary strengthen our hope!

*This letter is to be read on Sunday, May 29, 2016.*

Signed by the Shepherds of the Catholic Church in Poland,  
present at the 372<sup>nd</sup> Plenary session of the National Conference of  
Bishops in Gniezno and Poznan, on April 15, 2016.

Unofficial translation

**'WITNESSES TO THIS MYSTERY  
OF RESURRECTION'**

**The following is the homily given by Pope Francis on  
June 5, 2016, at the first canonization ceremony in  
the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, for the  
canonizations of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary  
Papczynski and Maria Elizabeth Hesselblad:**

The word of God, which we have just heard, points us to the central event of our faith: God's victory over suffering and death. It proclaims the Gospel of hope, born of Christ's paschal mystery, whose splendour is seen on the face of the Risen Lord and reveals God our Father as one who comforts all of us in our afflictions. That word calls us to remain united to the Passion of the Lord Jesus, so that the power of his resurrection may be revealed in us.

In the Passion of Christ, we find God's response to the desperate and at times indignant cry that the experience of pain and death evokes in us. He tells us that we cannot flee from the Cross, but must remain at its foot, as Our Lady did. In suffering with Jesus, she received the grace of hoping against all hope (cf. Rom 4:18).

This was the experience of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and Maria Elizabeth Hesselblad, who today are proclaimed saints. They remained deeply united to the passion of Jesus, and in them the power of his resurrection was revealed.

This Sunday's first reading and Gospel offer us amazing signs of death and resurrection. The first took place at the hand of the Prophet Isaiah, the second by Jesus. In both cases, they involved the young children of widows, who were then given back alive to their mothers.

The widow of Zarephath — a woman who was not a Jew, yet had received the Prophet Elijah in her home — was upset

with the prophet and with God, because when Elijah was a guest in her home her child had taken ill and had died in her arms. Elijah says to her: "Give me your son" (1 Kings 17:19). What he says is significant. His words tell us something about God's response to our own death, however it may come about. He does not say: "Hold on to it; sort it out yourself!" Instead, he says: "Give it to me". And indeed the prophet takes the child and carries him to the upper room, and there, by himself, in prayer "fights with God," pointing out to him the absurdity of that death. The Lord heard the voice of Elijah, for it was in fact he, God, who spoke and acted in the person of the prophet. It was God who, speaking through Elijah, told the woman: "Give me your son." And now it was God who gave the child back alive to his mother.

God's tenderness is fully revealed in Jesus. We heard in the Gospel (Lk 7:11-17) of the "great compassion" (v. 13) which Jesus felt for the widow of Nain in Galilee, who was accompanying her only son, a mere adolescent, to his burial. Jesus draws close, touches the bier, stops the funeral procession, and must have caressed that poor mother's face bathed in tears. "Do not weep," he says to her (Lk 7:13), as [if] to say: "Give me your son." Jesus asks to take [sic] our death upon himself, to free us from it and to restore our life. The young man then awoke as if from a deep sleep and began to speak. Jesus "gave him to his mother" (v. 15). Jesus is no wizard! It is God's tenderness incarnate; the Father's immense compassion is at work in Jesus.

The experience of the Apostle Paul was also a kind of resurrection. From a fierce enemy and persecutor of Christians, he became a witness and herald of the Gospel (cf. Gal 1:13-17). This radical change was not his own work, but a gift of God's mercy. God "chose" him and "called him by his grace." "In him," God desired to reveal his Son, so that Paul might proclaim Christ among the Gentiles (vv. 15-16). Paul says that God the Father was pleased to reveal his Son not only to him, but in him, impressing as it were in his own person, flesh and spirit, the death and resurrection of Christ. As a result, the Apostle was not only to be a messenger, but above all a witness.

So it is with each and every sinner. Jesus constantly makes the victory of life-giving grace shine forth. He says to Mother Church: "Give me your children", which means all of us. He takes our sins upon himself, takes them away and gives us back alive to the Mother Church. All that happens in a special way during this Holy Year of Mercy.

The Church today offers us two of her children who are exemplary witnesses to this mystery of Resurrection. Both can sing forever in the words of the Psalmist: "You have changed my mourning into dancing/O Lord, my God, I will thank you forever" (Ps 30:12). Let us all join in saying: "I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up" (Antiphon of the Responsorial Psalm).

[Vatican-provided translation of the Italian original]

## **'POLAND HAS WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT'**

**The following is an English translation of Polish President Andrzej Duda's speech following the Mass of Canonization for St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski:**



Andrew Maczynski, MIC

Your Eminence Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz;  
Your excellencies, archbishops, and bishops;  
Monsignors and reverend fathers;  
Above all Superior General of the Marian Congregation  
Fr. Andrzej Pakuła.

First, I would like to congratulate you on account of this great event for the Congregation of Marian Fathers. It is your Congregation that, for 300 years, has undertaken this great responsibility that your Founder would first be beatified and then be canonized. But this [canonization of the Marian Founder] is not just of fundamental importance to the religious community. It is also a matter of our country as a nation, because here I would like to remind you that in 1764 [63 years

after Father Founder's death], the parliament of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth turned to the Holy See and requested the beatification and canonization of our newly canonized saint. This was done, not only because he was a great spiritual leader and an excellent preacher who taught his young confreres, brothers, and priests; or because he was a renowned rhetorician who wrote a textbook before he founded the Marians; but also on account of his being a great patriot and a great intercessor for his country. He frequently said that love of one's country and giving of oneself to his country is [a virtue to be emulated]. He said we need good Poles, and a good Pole is someone who has given himself to his country in a heroic way — who has morals, who has ethical values, and who is courageous.

This is how I would summarize his own words. He challenged his fellow countrymen to this way of life and was uncompromising in this. He was not only a priest, but he was a warrior, a warrior for a free, strong, sovereign, and independent Poland. And that is why the parliament of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania already, 63 years after his death, issued this attestation of his singular virtues so that he may be proclaimed a blessed and then a saint. And that's why today is a day of rejoicing for our whole country, the Church as well as our nation. And Poland has waited for this moment, this moment of canonization by the Holy Father and the Church. Poland has waited for this moment when the Marians' Founder is brought into the community of the people — the saints — who, by their way of life, have merited official recognition of their sanctity.

Here I wish to say that I am thankful that I was invited. This is not just a personal matter of someone who, in an unusual way, is connected to the Podegrodzie and Stary Sacz [area of southern Poland]. I can say I am a member of the region. Today, I would like to congratulate all the people from this region. It is from their heritage that this great man came. I would also like to congratulate the Marian Fathers. The Superior General

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informed me that, as a gesture of appreciation for the beatification of St. Stanislaus in 2007, they built a hospice for the elderly in Lichen, Poland, and opened a mission in the Philippines. I'm reluctant to hazard a guess what's coming now after the canonization [laughs]. One more time, to all of you who have gathered here, it is my hope that the saint who was canonized today will keep our country in his care, and as he spoke so beautifully about her in his lifetime, may we likewise remember our own responsibilities for our nation, and, when necessary, ask him for intercession.

## 'THE WITNESS OF THE NEW SAINT SPEAKS TODAY'

**On June 6, 2016, Cardinal Stanislaus Dziwisz, archbishop of Krakow and former private secretary to St. John Paul II, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Basilica of Saint Mary in Trastevere in Rome for the canonization of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski. His homily follows.**



Marie Romagnano

Dear brother bishops and priests,  
 Dear Father General and the Marian Fathers,  
 Dear brothers and sisters!

1. The day after the solemn canonization of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski, we gather in this great Roman basilica to thank God for the gift of a new saint. Looking at the outline of his earthly life, we can say that he was and still is a very patient saint. He was born in the distant past, in the year 1631, in Podegrodzie, which then belonged to the diocese of Krakow. He died in 1701. Therefore, he waited for his elevation to the altars for more than three centuries. Three successive

popes were directly involved in his case: On June 13, 1992, St. John Paul II promulgated the decree on the heroic virtues of the servant of God. Pope Benedict XVI made the decision for his beatification, which took place on September 16, 2007, in Lichen. Finally, the Holy Father Francis completed this work on June 5, 2016, announcing to the Church that Stanislaus Papczynski enjoys the glory of the saints in Heaven. So we see that the conviction of God's people about the sanctity of this priest and religious began to be reflected in the subsequent official decrees and decisions of the Church only in the last 25 years. What does God want to say to us? And what have we to say to the new saint? What strikes us in his outlook and spirituality?

2. There is no doubt that an important element of the new saint's identity was his vocation to the consecrated life and the priesthood. He obtained priestly formation in the Piarist Order and later fulfilled his vocation in the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary that he founded, the Congregation that lives out his charism — his sensitivity to the things of God and his way of proclaiming the Gospel.

The new saint was a zealous priest. God's promise delivered through the lips of the Prophet Jeremiah ("I will give you shepherds after my own heart" [Jer 3: 15]) found realization in his life and ministry. He became famous as an excellent preacher, as a sacrificial confessor, as a priest especially sensitive to the plight of the poor. We can say that he could harmoniously combine three realities that make up the triad of priestly ministry: the ministry of the Word combined with sacramental ministry and the ministry of charity. In this sense, he can be a model for all priests, and an example of all-inclusive evangelization, which is concerned with the whole man, his spiritual and temporal needs.

Today's reading of a short passage from the Gospel, initially provided for the liturgical commemoration of the Blessed (and since yesterday, St.) Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, highlights another feature of pastoral ministry in Christ's Church. The apostles tried to prevent a certain man from driving out evil spirits, although he did it in the name of Jesus. They sought to do this only because he "did not follow them." The Lord gave them an important lesson, relevant for all times, for every age of the Church: "For whoever is not against us is for us" (see Mk 9:38-40). These words are worth remembering. Noticing and promoting the good outside of the structures of the visible Church is worthwhile. It is good to have a dialogue with all who have the good of man at heart. Such was the position of St. Pope John Paul II. This is also the position of Pope Francis and the Church today.

3. The name of the Congregation founded by St. Stanislaus Papczynski was an expression of his great piety and devotion to the Mother of Christ. During her visit to Elizabeth, praising God for the great things that the Almighty has done for her, she foretold: "Behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed" (see Lk 1:48). The new saint blessed Mary by his life, word, and deed. Anticipating the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he praised this mystery particularly, placing it in God's plans for the coming of the Son of God, who was conceived in the immaculate womb of His mother. Being particularly sensitive to the mystery of the preservation of the Mother of God from the consequences of original sin, inherited by the descendants of Adam and Eve, Fr. Stanislaus praised God for His love toward the world and men, while directing attention to the dignity of man, with whose fate the Son of God and Son of Mary identified Himself to the end and for whom He gave His life.

For the disciples of Jesus Christ, His Mother is also their mother. She is the Mother of the Church, which mission she received under the Cross from her Son. The canonization of Fr. Stanislaus, which is the seal of authenticity confirming his faith,

hope, and charity, his way of living the Gospel and proclaiming it to the world, also highlights the authenticity of his devotion to Mary, and invites us to adopt a similar approach. This is the way that St. John Paul II walked, who said to Mary "*Totus Tuus*" — "I'm all yours." This is the way also followed by the Servant of God Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, primate of Poland, who was for many years the spiritual shepherd of the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere.

4. Father Stanislaus' concern about the fate of man found its expression in the goal that he included in the mission of the Congregation he founded: to pray and offer sacrifices for the dead, for the souls in Purgatory. This concern of his puts man at the center of our attention, man created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore created to live forever in God, in His kingdom. A characteristic sign of our times is that many people forget about the sublime and ultimate vocation of man, living as if God did not exist. In this way they narrow the horizon of hope by assigning themselves, as it were, only to earth, and yet we are only pilgrims on the way to eternity. The Earth is our task. This is where we are born. We work there and try to conquer it; there we do good and embrace our neighbor with love. But all this is only the beginning of the reality awaiting us, which we call Heaven.

Saint James reminded us today of how fragile is the fate of man. The Apostle wrote thus so that we would not make detailed plans for the near or far future, because not everything depends on us, and we do not know what will happen tomorrow. "You have no idea what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a puff of smoke that appears briefly and then disappears. Instead, you should say, 'If the Lord wills it, we shall live to do this or that'" (see Jas 4:14-15).

Therefore, true wisdom consists in entrusting our fate to God and placing God at the center of our lives, our problems, our hopes, and dreams. The old Polish proverb says, "Without God, you won't even make it to the doorstep." Our fate is in His

hands. Our deepest source is in Him. He gives ultimate meaning to our lives, work, and love. Remembering the dead, praying for the dead is a manifestation of remembering that reality. We want it for those who have already left us, and we want it for ourselves, because we were created and saved for it. Saint Stanislaus and his spiritual sons awaken in us this kind of sensitivity.

5. Esteemed and dear Marian Fathers, together with you we rejoice in the elevation of your Father Founder to the glory of the altars. You had long waited for this moment. His canonization testifies to the potency and timeliness of his charism, of which you are heirs, custodians, and continuers. The Church needs your witness and your service.

Significant is the fact that Fr. Stanislaus is declared a saint during the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. He left us the example of a man and a priest with a great heart, concerned about his neighbor's poverty and not indifferent to his fate.

The mystery of Divine Mercy seems to be the answer to the great problems of our troubled world, unsettled with tensions, violence, blind terrorism, and armed conflicts. Hence our plea for God's mercy on our world. This plea has been amplified thanks to the humble Sr. Faustina, who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked by the rule of inhuman totalitarian systems. This call was also repeated by St. John Paul II, who raised the whole Church's awareness of this issue. He did so by issuing the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia (On the Mercy of God)*, by introducing in the Church the Feast of Divine Mercy, as well as entrusting the world to Divine Mercy in Krakow in 2002, which happened in the last years of his long pontificate and, in a certain sense, is his pastoral testament. Today I would like to thank the Marian Fathers for their pioneering and long-time work of spreading the Divine Mercy message and devotion in many countries, especially in the United States, England, and Poland

I also would like to take this extraordinary opportunity to extend my thanks to the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the

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Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the person of their Father General for their worldwide service and for their service in Poland and in the Archdiocese of Krakow.

6. Let this Eucharist be our thanksgiving for the gift of the holiness and canonization of Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. Authentic holiness is always fresh, always young, and for this reason the witness of the new saint speaks today to our minds and hearts. In gratitude for his canonization, let us pray for the intentions of the Holy Father Francis — Peter of our times — that he strengthen his brothers in faith and guides the boat of the Church with living faith, hope, and love.

Personally, I'd like to ask all to pray for the intentions of the next World Youth Day, which, together with Pope Francis and young people from all over the world, will be celebrated at the end of July in Poland and Krakow. May this celebration of faith show the world the young face of the Church. We cordially invite you all to Krakow!

Mary, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us!  
Saint John Paul II, pray for us!  
Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, pray for us! Amen.

Stanislaus Cardinal Dziwisz  
Archbishop of Krakow



ASKING FOR GRACE  
THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF  
ST. STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY PAPCZYNSKI  
NOVENA AND LITANY



## Intercession of St. Stanislaus Papczynski

During his lifetime, Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski was regarded by many as a special intercessor before God. Looking at his holy life, permeated with prayer, penance, and the thirst to know God's will, they became convinced they could find in him an efficient intercessor before God. They often asked him to pray for their intentions, especially in the case of seriously ill people, and they obtained help. According to witnesses' testimonies, there were even instances of the resurrection of dead children during Holy Masses celebrated by Fr. Papczynski.

Numerous graces obtained by people who came to pray at St. Stanislaus' tomb earned him the title of "renowned for miracles." The Marian Founder was thus described by the Coronation Diet of King Stanislaus Poniatowski in 1764, in its petition to the Holy See for his beatification.

And this hasn't changed during the past three centuries! In times favorable for the faith in Poland and Europe or in times of persecutions, when his tomb was easily accessible to the faithful or when it remained locked up and deserted, streams of unusual graces kept flowing down on those who prayerfully requested his intercession. What is more, during the last decade one could easily notice the growing devotion to St. Stanislaus Papczynski, not only in Poland, but also on the American continent and in Africa.

Testimonies coming from different parts of the world suggest that particular prayerful help was given by St. Stanislaus to childless families, women with troubled pregnancies, addicts, dysfunctional families, and children and youth with learning disabilities.

We trust that, as a new saint, Fr. Stanislaus — always so sensitive to human misery — will become our effective intercessor before God.

At the beginning of the novena, call to mind your intentions, deeply trusting in God's help and agreeing to accept His will.

NOVENA TO  
ST. STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY PAPCZYNSKI

FIRST DAY

*The Almighty has done great things for me (Lk 1:49)*

Lord God Almighty, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who, with the utmost zeal, took upon himself, in the foundation of a religious community, the work of spreading the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of Your Son. Grant us this grace: that we might continually praise You for the great things You have done for Your saints and permit us to enter eternal life in the state of friendship with You and in unsullied chastity.

**Prayer for a special grace**

Saint Stanislaus, gracious intercessor before God, defender of the oppressed and patron of those in mortal danger, you always zealously served Jesus and His Immaculate Mother for the salvation of immortal souls, and you took pity on every misery. Trusting in your intercession, I have recourse to you, and I ask that you do not deny me your help. By your earnest prayers, obtain for me from God the grace ... for which I beg you with trust, and help me, all my life long, to fulfill the will of the Heavenly Father. Amen.

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

O God, in your providence, You have called your priest, St. Stanislaus, to make known the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to assist the souls in Purgatory. Following the example of his apostolic life, grant, we pray, that we may also proclaim the fullness of innocence and sanctity of the Mother of your Son, and invoking your mercy for the departed, may we safely arrive at our true homeland. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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SECOND DAY

*His mercy is from age to age (Lk 1:50)*

God, Righteous Judge, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who generously and in every way hastened to assist the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Grant that we may zealously imitate him in this great work of mercy, especially toward those deceased who are most dear to us and those who most need our spiritual help.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

THIRD DAY

*He has shown might with his arm,  
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart (Lk 1:51)*

O Jesus, our Redeemer and Master, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who used every occasion to proclaim the Word of God and to bring spiritual support to people deprived of pastoral care. Grant us the grace that we may attract other people to God through our own word and example of striving for holiness.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

FOURTH DAY

*He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones (Lk 1:52)*

Holy Spirit of God, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who throughout his life firmly defended the Catholic faith and showed willingness to witness to it by a mar-

tyr's death. Grant us the grace that we may steadfastly grow in faith and courageously profess it in every moment of life.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

FIFTH DAY

*The hungry he has filled with good things;  
the rich he has sent away empty (Lk 1:53)*

God our Father, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who, trusting in the help of Your Providence, in spite of many obstacles, by Your inspiration, founded and strengthened the Congregation of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grant us the grace that we may distinguish ourselves by an unyielding trust in Your omnipotence, goodness, and fidelity, especially when You guide us on the difficult road toward the wonderful promises of Your love.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

SIXTH DAY

*Blessed are the merciful  
for they will be shown mercy (Mt 5:7)*

God, Father of Mercy, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, whose love for You showed itself most eloquently in his daily and sacrificial practice of the works of mercy. Grant us the grace that we may always and generously imitate him in the active love of our neighbor.

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**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

SEVENTH DAY

*Whoever listens to you, listens to me (Lk 10:16)*

Lord, You Who are a faithful God, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who always formed his life and works in filial submission to the Successor of St. Peter. Grant us the grace that we may persevere in our fidelity to God, the Cross, and the Gospels through perfect obedience to the Church.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

EIGHTH DAY

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 5:3)*

Lord, You who love us, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who freely embraced an austere and mortified life in utmost poverty so as to give himself to You with all his heart and soul. Grant us the grace that we may courageously resist craving money and sinful pleasures, striving for freedom of spirit in Your truth and love.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

## NINTH DAY

*Take courage; it is I (Mt 14:27)*

God, from whom everything takes its beginning and to whom everything returns, look upon Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary who, by the example of his life, gave us a model of total trust in Your holy Providence. Grant us the grace that we may confidently place in Your merciful hands our past and future, our whole life, allowing You to lead us along the evangelical road to Your home in Heaven.

**Prayer for a special grace**

*Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be to the Father ...*

**Prayer through St. Stanislaus' intercession**

We recommend you complement this novena  
with Confession and Holy Communion.

LITANY OF  
ST. STANISLAUS OF JESUS AND MARY PAPCZYNSKI

(for private devotion)

Lord, have mercy.	<i>Lord, have mercy.</i>
Christ, have mercy.	<i>Christ, have mercy.</i>
Lord, have Mercy.	<i>Lord, have mercy.</i>
Christ, hear us.	<i>Christ, graciously hear us.</i>

God, the Father of Heaven,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
God, the Son, Redeemer of the world,	<i>"</i>
God, the Holy Spirit,	<i>"</i>
Holy Trinity, One God,	<i>"</i>
Holy Mary, Immaculate Mother and Queen of the Marian Order,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski,	<i>"</i>
Lover of the Cross of Christ,	<i>"</i>
Willing to accept sufferings for Christ and the faith,	<i>"</i>
Adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament,	<i>"</i>
Submissive to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit,	<i>"</i>
Chosen son of the Immaculate Virgin Mary,	<i>"</i>
Propagator of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception,	<i>"</i>
Faithful imitator of the virtues of the Immaculate Mother of Christ,	<i>"</i>
Founder of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception	<i>"</i>
Apostle of the love of God and of neighbor,	<i>"</i>
Man of great trust,	<i>"</i>
Model of purity, poverty, and obedience,	<i>"</i>
Zealous defender of evangelical poverty,	<i>"</i>
Model of a life of continuous conversion and penitence,	<i>"</i>
Servant of the Divine Mercy,	<i>"</i>
Zealous intercessor for the suffering Souls in Purgatory,	<i>"</i>
Companion to the dying on the battlefield,	<i>"</i>
Solicitous friend of the poor,	<i>"</i>
Apostle of temperance,	<i>"</i>
Prudent director in matters of conscience,	<i>"</i>
Master of prayer and the spiritual life,	<i>"</i>

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Tireless herald of the word of God, “  
 Teacher of the truths of the faith  
     and the ways of holiness, “  
 Promoter of peace and unity, “  
 Defender of newly conceived life, “  
 Intercessor before God, “  
 Rejoicing with Christ and the Immaculate Virgin in Heaven, “

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.  
*Spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.  
*Hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.  
*Have mercy on us.*

**V.** Behold a faithful and wise servant,  
**R.** Whom the Lord rewarded with glory.

**Let us pray:**

O God, you called Your servant St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary to spread the honor of the Immaculate Mother of Your Son and to assist the deceased as they undergo purification. Grant, we pray, that by imitating his example and through his intercession, we may strive for holiness through deeds of mercy, and so give You glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## About the Marians

The Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception is a worldwide community of about 500 priests and brothers who have been serving Christ and the Church for more than 340 years.

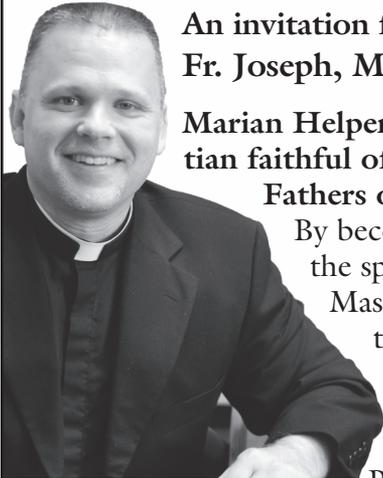
Founded in Poland in 1673 by St. Stanislaus Papczynski, the Marians were the first Catholic men's order still in existence to give witness to Mary's Immaculate Conception by bearing her title.

As the years passed, the Marians continued to spread beyond the borders of Poland. However, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Marian Congregation's very existence was being challenged by a flood of political oppression. By 1909, the Congregation was reduced to a single elderly priest. At the moment of extinction, God sent Fr. George Matulaitis-Matulewicz who, as a child, was spiritually formed and educated by the Marians. He undertook renewing the religious order.

As an educator and social reformer, Fr. George — now Blessed George — renovated the Congregation of Marians in 1910, calling on its members “to serve where the need was greatest.” It was a period of restoration and great renewal for the Marians. Known as the Renovator of the Congregation, Blessed George served the Church as bishop of Vilnius, archbishop and apostolic delegate, and founder of two religious congregations of women. He challenged his fellow brothers in Christ to “Respond to the signs of your times ...” and “see how the gospel is touching humanity.”

The principal apostolic goals of the Marians are to promote and foster devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, to aid the Holy Souls detained in Purgatory with God's abundant grace and merciful love, and to assist diocesan priests in their pastoral ministry and catechetical formation offered to the faithful. Faithful to Christ and His Church, and attentive to the spiritual needs of God's people, the Marians have been spreading the salutary message and devotion to the Divine Mercy since 1941.

Join the  
*Association of Marian Helpers*,  
headquartered at the  
National Shrine of The Divine Mercy,  
and share in special blessings!



An invitation from  
Fr. Joseph, MIC, the director

Marian Helpers is an Association of Christian faithful of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

By becoming a member, you share in the spiritual benefits of the daily Masses, prayers, and good works of the Marian priests and brothers.

This is a special offer of grace given to you by the Church through the Marian Fathers.

Please consider this opportunity to share in these blessings, along with others whom you would wish to join into this spiritual communion.

## Or Enroll Loved Ones!

Give a Consoling Gift: *Prayer*

Enroll your loved ones in the Association of Marian Helpers. Enrollments can be offered for the living or deceased. We offer a variety of enrollment cards: wedding, anniversary, First Holy Communion, birthday, get well, and more.

*Request a Mass*

to be offered by the Marian Fathers for your loved one:

**Individual Masses**

(for the living or deceased)

**Gregorian Masses**

(30 days of consecutive Masses for the deceased)



1-800-462-7426

[Marian.org/Enrollments](http://Marian.org/Enrollments)

[Marian.org/Mass](http://Marian.org/Mass)

# WITHOUT HIM, THERE'D BE NO MARIAN FATHERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



**Tomb of St. Stanislaus Papczynski at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria, Poland**

Meet St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary (1631-1701), a prophet, healer, and miracle worker; an outstanding benefactor to the poor; and an apostle of intercessory prayer for the dead.

One of the first saints to be canonized in the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski was born on May 18, 1631, in Podegrodzie, Poland. He was ordained a priest in 1661, and became famous as a gifted educator of youth, an illustrious preacher, wise spiritual director, and a noted author of works on spirituality and rhetoric.

He was the first in the Church to found a male Order dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he did so

nearly two centuries before the declaration of this dogma. To his new Community he assigned three goals: promulgation of devotion to the Immaculate Conception, prayerful assistance to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and pastoral ministry, especially among people lacking spiritual guidance.

Stanislaus Papczynski died in the odor of sanctity on September 17, 1701, in Góra Kalwaria near Warsaw. His remains were laid to rest at the Church of the Cenacle of Our Lord.

On September 16, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI beatified him, and on June 5, 2016, the Marian Founder was canonized by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square.

In this volume, the Marian Fathers share the life and legacy of their Founder, including the miracles that helped make him an officially canonized saint, excerpts from his writings, and more.

**Come meet St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and discover a wise teacher, a powerful intercessor, and a great friend in Heaven.**



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More information about St. Stanislaus Papczynski is available at [stanislawpapczynski.org](http://stanislawpapczynski.org)

