

THE ILLUSTRATED STORY OF
SAINT STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI



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STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI
FOUNDER
OF THE CONGREGATION OF MARIAN FATHERS



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INTRODUCTION

June 5, 2016, marks for us, the Marians, a sign of God's abundant mercy for the Congregation – the canonization of our Founder, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski. Our Founder has been shown as a role model for all Christians, while the attention of the entire Church was directed to the charism of our Community.

For various reasons, Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski's canonization process, started in 1767, was interrupted in 1775. The political situation in Poland of the following decades did not allow for its reopening, which was made possible only in 1952. On June 13, 1992, Pope Saint John Paul II issued a decree on Fr. Papczynski's heroic virtues. The decree states: "It is considered to be a certain thing that the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, and other virtues associated with these to a heroic degree." By his Apostolic Letter of September 12, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI approved the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus, which was solemnly performed at the Marian Shrine in Lichen (Poland) by the papal legate, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., Secretary of State, acting on his behalf. Finally, on June 5, 2016, Pope Francis proclaimed the Founder of the Marians a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church on St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.

Despite the passing of the centuries, the interest of the faithful for the figure of Saint Father Stanislaus did not diminish. On the contrary, it is growing stronger. Many people turn in prayer to his intercession and their prayers are being heard. Numerous letters of thanksgiving, which continue to come testify to this. Many people request prayer cards with his relics and read with interest his biography and his works available in English language. The surviving writings of the Saint that we came to know are a testament not only to his vast knowledge of spiritual matters but above all to his close unity with God.

In answer to numerous requests from our confreres and the English-speaking venerators of Saint Father Stanislaus, we decided to reprint this richly illustrated book about his life originally titled, "Under the Banner of Mary Immaculate," which first appeared in 1968. We do so in the firm belief that nothing speaks better to one's imagination than a picture, which also facilitates the learning and makes the assimilation more permanent.

From the following illustrations and explanatory texts, the reader will see that Saint Stanislaus was a model of Christian virtue and apostolic zeal. Ever prompt to respond to the needs – both spiritual and material – of all people, he freely sacrificed his own comfort and used his God-given talents in the service of others – not infrequently, as documents reveal – in a manner which suggests direct Divine intervention. It is not surprising, then, that he lived and died in the odor of holiness, which was finally confirmed by the Church 315 years after his death.

Andrzej Pakuła, M.I.C.
General Postulator
of the Marian Canonization Causes

IN PLACE OF FOREWORD

HOMILY

DELIVERED BY CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE, SECRETARY OF STATE,
DURING THE MASS OF BEATIFICATION OF FR. STANISLAUS PAPCZYNSKI
LICHEN, 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 Fr. 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 Res Publica 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 Mar-

ian Fathers and Brothers with their Superior General, Fr. Jan Mikolaj 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 24th 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 Podegrodzie 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 marvelled 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 7th and 8th 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 Wyszynski (1700-1755), an ardent promoter of Marian devotion, Blessed Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matlewicz (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), George Kaszyra (1904-1943) and Anthony 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).



Father Papczynski was born and spent his early years in southern Poland, in a village called Podegrodzie, situated in the Sandetian valley. The village lies on the left bank of the river Dunajec (pronounced “Dunayets”), in the immediate vicinity of the town of Stary Sacz (pronounced “Sonch”). About 13 miles to the south, the bow-like shape of the Carpathian Mountains forms the southern boundary of Poland. In a straight line to the southwest, it is about 38 miles to Zakopane, the famous Polish winter resort, and some 45 miles, in a northwesterly direction, to Cracow.

The picturesque landscape of Podegrodzie takes in the surrounding mountains, many of them covered with dense forests. The cottages of the village form a semicircle on the slightly raised ground at the foot of the hills. Overlooking their thatched roofs, and dominating the view from a distance, is the parish church. The history of the parish itself goes back to the year 1014 – barely 48 years after the “Baptism of Poland.”

The early childhood of Fr. Stanislaus is closely linked to the parish church. It was there that he was baptized and confirmed, that he attended religious services with his parents, and acquired the first rudiments of the Catholic life of prayer and worship. It was there that he was initiated into the wonders of serving at the altar. We may wonder if these first contacts with the supernatural life at the parish church of Podegrodzie were not decisive regarding his priestly and religious vocation.





It was mid-May in the year 1631. Sophia had been shopping in Stary Sacz and was hurrying back to Podegrodzie to her many household duties. She had had so many things to settle in town that she was only able to stop for a brief visit at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Clare, to pray at the tomb of Blessed Cunegunda [Blessed Kinga]. It was getting late, and her sense of urgency was further increased by the heavy, dark threatening clouds approaching from the slopes of the Beskidy Mountains.

When she reached the bank of the Dunajec River, the ferryman was waiting to take her across. She could see her home on the opposite side, and felt sure that she could reach it before the downpour. But they were barely halfway across when a sudden gust of wind from the mountains began to churn up the water and toss the boat about like a feather.

Sophia had always had deep faith and great piety. We can picture her on her knees at his dangerous moment. As the ferryman strained at the oars in his attempt to keep the boat on its course towards the opposite shore, she prayed, with all the fervor of her young heart, for her own safety and that of the oarsman, and above all, for the child whom she carried in her womb. It was at this moment of anxiety for the unborn child that she offered him unreservedly to Jesus and Mary.

A sudden squall threw both oarsman and passenger into the swirling waters of the river. Fortunately, they were already close enough to the bank to be able to find their feet. Tradition has always attributed this deliverance of Fr. Papczynski's mother from the waters of the Dunajec to a miraculous intervention on the part of Divine Providence. Shortly after this incident, Sophia gave birth to her child – the future Blessed Stanislaus “of Jesus and Mary” Papczynski.

The child was born between Saturday night and Sunday morning, which was May 18. He was baptized on the same day in the parish church of Podegrodzie and given the name of John the Baptist.

The proud and happy mother was attentive to her son's every need, eagerly watching the signs of his developing consciousness. As she cradled him to sleep, she would pray fervently for his health and well-being, and, gazing into his eyes, would try to pierce the future and see what the years ahead held in store for him.

She frequently renewed the offering of John's entire life to Jesus and Mary, promising to spare no effort that could lead her son to appreciate and use to the full the supernatural grace infused into his soul at the moment of baptism.

Thomas – the father of the Saint – had had no further education than that given by the primary grades. The fact that he had been able to attain the position of head man of the village and administrator of parish property was undoubtedly due to his native intelligence, sound judgment, and upright character, rather than to any formal schooling.

Thomas was a blacksmith by trade and apparently a very good one, for he was well-known in this capacity throughout the countryside. He employed hired labor to till the soil and herd the sheep on his own plot of land, while he devoted himself entirely to his trade.

In these early years, Thomas looked forward to the day when his son would follow in his footsteps. Little did he know how entirely different the boy's future was to be.

For the time being, his hopes seemed well founded. As the child grew, he often, with the natural inquisitiveness of youth, would wander into his father's forge. Thomas, delighted to think that one day his son might help him at his work and eventually take over from him altogether, would permit the boy to "play blacksmith" in some corner of the forge.

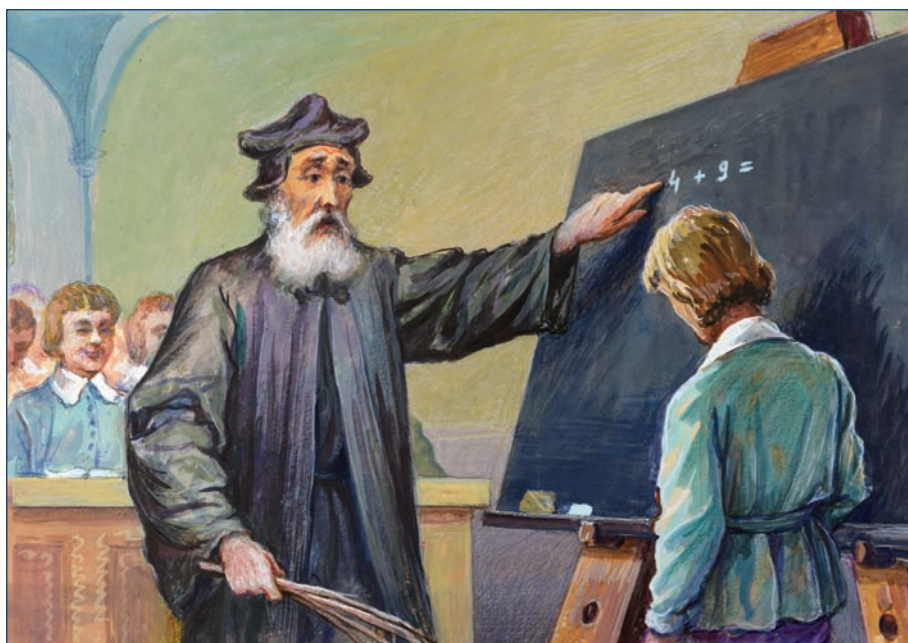


John's mother, on the other hand, tried from his earliest years to awaken different interests in him. Her influence should not be underestimated. It was she who taught him his first prayers, she who watched over him, morning and evening, as he said them; she who initiated him into the marvelous rhythm of parochial devotions and services and who, in time, entrusted him with the task of keeping the wayside shrines supplied with fresh flowers.

Small boys who assist the priest at the altar during services and devotions often imitate, in their own homes, the majesty and beauty of the actions in which they have taken part. John was no exception to this. He had his own little altar, which he tended carefully. He saw to it that it always had fresh flowers, candles, and various emblems. He tried to recall and imitate, in his own childish manner, the movements, gestures, and actions of the priest at the altar.

He took great pleasure in organizing his own "processions," and he never seemed to lack companions and willing youngsters anxious to follow him. The reaction of the elders to these manifestations of youthful piety were varied; some rejoiced and saw therein a clear sign of a priestly vocation; other, more superstitious, tried to stop these "processions" along the village roads and fields, seeing them as foreshadowing some future pestilence.





John had an elder brother, Peter. From earliest childhood Peter had evinced a keen intelligence and capacity for learning. His parents, therefore, did not hesitate for a moment when the time came to decide whether to send him to school.

In John's case it was different. He manifested a deep, innate piety, but he seemed to have no ability whatever for study or school work. In the family circle he was even somewhat looked down on, and it never occurred to his parents to send him to school, as they thought that he would not be able to manage even the first elementary grades.

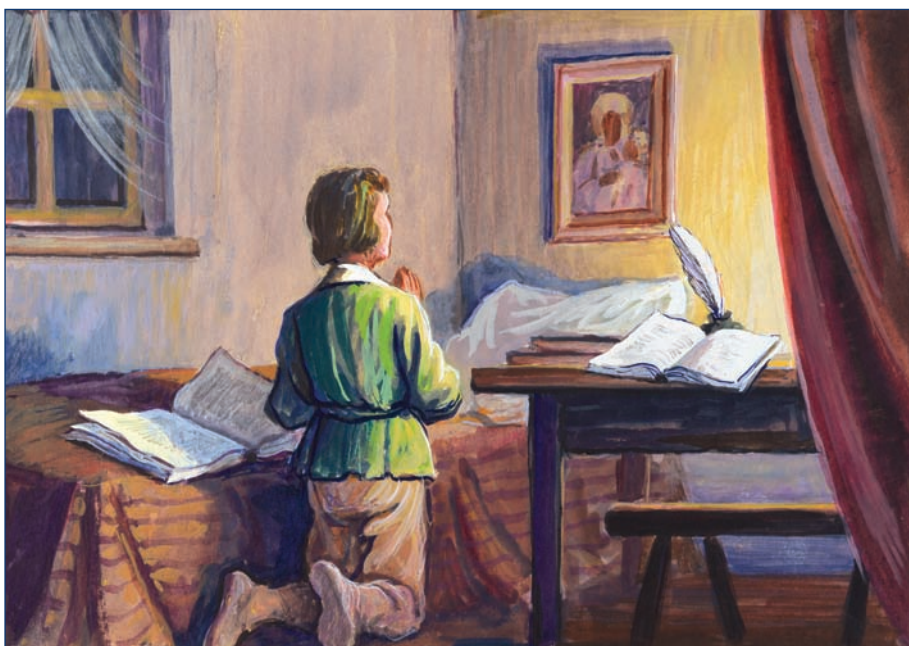
Consequently, when John reached school age his parents refused to enroll him at the village school. It must have been heart-rending to see the bewilderment and pain in the youngster's eyes as he watched all his companions and acquaintances marching off to school on opening day. How much this seven-year-old boy must have longed to be able to share in the new adventure that was to affect their whole lives.

Tradition tells us that one day his father was induced to permit him to attend class for the day, on a trial basis. His first encounter with the teacher was evidently a humiliating experience, for he was immediately sent home as being completely incapable of keeping up with the rest of the class.

Years ago, it was not an uncommon thing in Poland for lovers of Our Blessed Lady to observe a “Saturday fast” in her honor. We need not, then, be surprised that early biographers of the Saint tell us that John “as a boy would fast on Saturdays in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mother.” Moreover, he “had recourse daily to Mary’s intercession, praying to her with a tender, childlike devotion, and looking upon her as his own Mother.” Furthermore, we are given to understand that on more than one occasion he experienced Mary’s help in an almost miraculous manner. One of the first graces attributed by tradition to Mary’s merciful intervention on his behalf was the sudden, unexpected awakening of his ability to absorb knowledge.

After his unfortunate experience at school, John refused to admit defeat. There was apparently no one but God to whom he could turn for help. Stealthily he would open his brother Peter’s books and try to decipher the words, but in vain. Sadder than ever he would fall on his knees in earnest prayer to his Immaculate.

One day – he was only seven years old at the time – all his difficulties suddenly disappeared, and a new world of comprehension opened before him. There seemed no doubt, at least in the youngster’s own mind, that it was Mary who had answered his prayer.





After the boy's first embarrassing experience at school his father unhesitatingly rejected the many petitions to let him try again. Quite evidently the word had got around that Thomas' son was an ignoramus. Another such experience would be too much for the family name.

Nevertheless, we do find John back at school. One day, without the knowledge of his parents and with the aid of one of the farm hands, he sneaked out of the house and spent the afternoon at school.

Patiently, yet doubting whether his efforts would be successful, the teacher began to teach the boy the alphabet. What a peasant and almost unbelievable surprise it must have been to him to find John mastering his ABC's within a few hours. What was more, it wasn't long before the boy overtook his classmates.

John completed the rural three-year elementary grades along with his class and without any difficulty.

A curious change came over John when he passed from the elementary grades to "Grammar School" lever. The 10-year-old boy, who had always been a model of diligence, developed a sudden dislike for school and study, and wanted only to go his own way in comfortable idleness.

One day, instead of settling down to his homework, he decided to take a peep at the young storks in their nest on the thatched room, and began climbing a ladder placed against the barn wall. In doing so, he leaned just a bit too far over the edge of the ladder and, with a loud scream, came tumbling down. His mother, frantic with anxiety, dashed out of the house. The lad lay unconscious, with blood from a deep gash soaking the ground under him. To his mother, numb with fear, he looked more dead than alive; in her imagination she already saw him a permanent cripple.

The results of the fall might well have been tragic, but, once again, we are told, recourse was had in fervent prayer to Our Blessed Lady, and Mary's motherly intercession did not fail the pious mother. John was restored to complete hearth within a short time.

However, he was in no hurry to return to school. In fact, he decided to discontinue his studies altogether, arguing within himself that, after all, his own father had not been anxious, at one time, to send him to school, and it was surely far better to be an “obedient” son than a “learned” one.

His father, strangely enough, proved easy to convince. Nevertheless, instead of taking John into his own forge and letting him learn the trade (as he himself had wanted the boy to do at one time), he sent him into the pasture to herd the sheep: John obediently hastened into the fields, delighted, no doubt, that he was not to return to school.

How wonderful were those spring days. John would sit down beside a field shrine, not far from the sheep grazing quietly, and play his home-made flute, or listen in silence to the mysterious voices of nature awakening to life.

It didn’t take long, however, for him to see that the life of a shepherd was not always an idyll. It can be physically exhausting work. In the summer, the sun can beat down mercilessly, and in winter the snow, whipped by the wind, can cause piercing cold. Exposed as he was, day after day, to the varying elements, John carried out his task for many months with constancy and perseverance.

Finally, when he was so utterly exhausted, both physically and mentally, that he felt he could no longer continue his work as a shepherd, he began to reflect deeply and to see that in this life one must work, in one capacity or another; that one may not capriciously squander the God-given talent for study. He resolved to return to school and henceforth to resist all temptation to sloth. After almost a year’s interruption, then, we find John back at school. Never again was he to permit himself to be swayed by frivolity and indolence.





When he was about 12 years old he accompanied his parents to Nowy Sacz, which was six or seven miles from his home. (It must be remembered that at that time this was considered a good day's journey, whether one went on foot or by horse and wagon.) John's parents, busy with their marketing, did not even notice that they had lost him in the crowd in the market square. Later, frantic with worry, they sought him everywhere, inquiring of friends and acquaintances whether anyone had seen him. It was all in vain; the boy could not be found. Weary, yet apparently sure that he would somehow be safe, they returned to Podegrodzie late in the evening.

John, meanwhile, wandered about the market square, and finally ran into one of his relatives, who took him home for the night. Early the following morning, yielding to the boy's entreaties, they took him to the local school, which was taught by so learned a master that it was well known.

John immediately became convinced that he would be able to learn much more there than at the little school at Podegrodzie. After much pleading, he eventually induced his parents to permit him to remain at the school in Nowy Sacz. It was not long before his brother Peter, and a few of the other boys from Podegrodzie, envious of John's rapid progress, transferred to the school in Nowy Sacz. *(This entire episode may sound very strange to us today, but we must remember that we are back in the 17th century. It was then not unusual, much less forbidden, for a boy to change schools practically at will.)*

Some time later it became evident that the schoolmaster, in spite of his learning, was morally perverted and a source of scandal to his pupils. When he made indecent proposals to John, the boy decided then and there that he would much rather renounce all hope of scholastic progress than expose his soul to such jeopardy.

One day things came to a head, and he had no alternative but to flee home from the schoolmaster's advances. There was no time to wait for the ferryman. Without a moment's hesitation, he set out alone by boat across the Dunajec. With the words "Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament" on his lips, he shoved the boat out from the shore into the treacherous current of the river, and, almost before he realized it, was on the other side. He sighed with relief. He was safe now, and the tempter could no longer endanger his soul.

However, John did not remain long at home. His father, suspecting that some boyish caprice lay behind the entire episode of his flight from school, sent him back to Nowy Sacz.

But it seems that once again our young student did not stay long there. On this occasion, his sudden departure was caused by a fight with one of the students who had struck his brother Peter. John, going to his defense, must have given the culprit quite a trouncing if he himself was forced to flee and seek safety at home from the threatened retaliation.

After this second flight, John remained at home. He acquired what learning he could at the local school, and, from time to time, on his father's orders, he herded the sheep in the meadows.

Presumably the school at Podegrodzie, like all those in the vicinity, was only able to take the student through the first five grades of schooling. John was an intelligent and a talented boy, and anxious to continue his studies. His parents, therefore, at no small sacrifice, sent him to Jaroslaw, over 100 miles east of Podegrodzie.

In those days an expedition of this sort was not common for a 15-year-old boy. His departure from home, with prospect of not seeing his family and friends for a long time, was not without its emotional pangs and tears.

Accompanied by his cousin (his aunt's son), he arrived in Jaroslaw early in June 1646. He was accepted without difficulty at the Jesuit College where he, the son of a peasant and artisan, was, for the first time in his life thrown in with the sons of the wealthy and the nobility.

Here, certainly, it seemed that he would be able to continue his studies without interruption. Divine Providence, however, decreed otherwise. With the end of July the summer vacations began, and, when school reopened a month later, John was no longer at Jaroslaw. He had received, in the meantime, additional funds from home, brought to him by someone from Podegrodzie who had come to the annual August Fair usually held at Jaroslaw around the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Thus equipped and acting on one of the sudden impulses of youth, John left Jaroslaw in the company of his cousin and another student and traveled further east to the renowned Jesuit College at Lvov (Lemberg).

The journey to Lvov did not bring the hoped-for result. John, insufficiently prepared and lacking the necessary credentials, was refused admission into the college. Nevertheless, he stayed on in Lvov. When his meager funds ran out, he began to earn his living by tutoring two sons of the local townsfolk, while trying at the same time to make up for his own deficiencies in learning.

For about a year and a half he managed well. Then, suddenly, in the summer of 1648, the situation changed for the worse, both for him and for Poland. The Cossack uprising, under the leadership of Khmelnicki, began to affect an increasingly wide area on the eastern frontier of Poland. Soon the war brought its inevitable train of destruction, death and pestilence to the outskirts of Lvov.

John was seized one day by a high fever, which held him in its terrifying grasp for almost four months, racking his body and leaving him completely inert. Thanks to the remedies and careful nursing given to him by the kindly woman of the house where he was boarding, his fever subsided, but it left his body covered with scales and sores, which itched almost unbearably and were so repulsive looking that the landlord asked him to leave. Still weak from the fever, John roamed the streets and alleys of Lvov, begging for food and shelter. He suffered greatly, both physically and morally. But as always at such critical times, he found solace in frequent prayer.





God, in His Mercy, did not abandon him. He found people willing, out of kindness and charity, to take him in and care for him. And, strangely enough, the household dogs, by licking his wounds, caused them slowly and almost miraculously to heal and disappear, one after another.

In February 1649, some men from the vicinity of Podegrodzie, in Lvov for their pre-Lenten marketing, somehow managed to locate John, and gave him some money from his father. They found him still weak from his recent illness and on their return, told his parents of his pitiable state. Because of his advanced age, Thomas was in no condition to make the long and arduous journey himself. He did, however, send a man to Lvov with the family horse and wagon to fetch the boy.

On the return journey, John again came down with a violent fever. He was received at home with joy and naturally with some tears. Under his mother's loving and solicitous care, he convalesced rapidly. By the summer of 1649, having completely regained his strength, he began to make plans for continuing his studies.

When, in 1646, John had gone to Jaroslaw and Lvov for further studies, he probably knew about the school that the Piarist Fathers had started three years before at Podoliniec, on the side of the Carpathians, and only about 17 miles from his home. At that time, however, the Piarist school lacked the particular grade that he needed (the grade was added on to the school only in September 1646, shortly after John's departure for Lvov).

In 1649, now a young man of 18, John matriculated at the Piarist school at Podoliniec. In 1650, he completed his sixth grade (comparable to our fourth year of high school). He was about to begin his study of the humanities (probably corresponding to the first year of college in today's system) when an epidemic broke out in the vicinity of Podoliniec. The schools were closed and the students sent home. Once again John was back in Podegrodzie.

Although John's family was not rich, they were never in need, and when his father again sent him into the pasture to tend the sheep, it was more for the discipline and character training that resulted from the work than out of any financial necessity ("If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thes 3:10).

It was not the likeliest kind of work for a 19-year-old who had finished high school, but John was an obedient and humble son. Years later, recalling the time spent tending sheep in the mountain pastures, John thanked God that his parents had made a shepherd of him, for roaming the fields and watching the sheep had made it easier for him to preserve his purity of heart.

After the summer of 1650, he returned to Lvov, where the Jesuits admitted him into the college. There he completed his first year of humanities (then called "poetics") with honors.

In May 1652, when John was in his second year of college (rhetoric), the Cossacks defeated the Polish Army at Batoh and threatened the city of Lvov with siege. John, like all who were able to escape, fled west into central Poland.

One of the Jesuit colleges was at that time situated in Rawa, a small town of Mazovia (a province in the center of Poland). It was here that John, along with some other refugee students from Lvov, found safety and an opportunity to continue his studies. In fact, in Rawa he was able to complete his year of rhetoric and a two-year course in philosophy.





The Jesuits had a lovely garden near the College, and John must have spent many wonderful moments there in the company of his fellow students. His studies, of course, absorbed most of his time, but there were moments of leisure. Furthermore, filled as he was with deep faith and piety, he worked just as hard at developing his character and training his will.

With his pious upbringing, it was only natural for him to join the Sodality of Our Blessed Lady, always so intimately a part of the Jesuit school atmosphere. The sodality meetings and devotions in honor of Our Blessed Lady served to deepen his love of Mary and his reverence for Her Immaculate Conception. The salutary fruits of this training were to be revealed in his later years as a religious.

In 1654, John completed his philosophy course at Rawa. This was as far as a lay student could advance at a Jesuit College. The day of his departure dawned, and with sincere and deep gratitude he bade the Jesuit Fathers farewell. They had given him most of his higher education, and in their colleges he had received the treasures of the spiritual life – a deep and abiding faith, true piety, and sound Catholic morality.

As he said his goodbyes, he must have both felt and expressed the sentiments that he was one day to put into writing: “I wish here to offer my sincerest thanks to all those who instilled into me the knowledge of God and virtue and who, by their teaching, dispelled my ignorance. Whether they did so by word or example, I beg Jesus to grant them an eternal reward.”





He was now 23, a mature man with an understanding of the essential meaning of life, and ready, in making the fateful decision as to his future, to respond wholeheartedly to the Divine Call.

To a young man, even of peasant stock, who had received John's education, the road was open to a number of high positions in life and administration of the city, or in the courts of the aristocracy and nobility. John's intentions, however, were far removed from any such career.

Before doing anything else, though, he wanted to see his mother in Podęgodzie. His father had died a couple of years before John completed his schooling. There were, then, several reasons for him to return home: To pray at the grave of his father, to console his mother, and to thank her for making his education possible at no small sacrifice to herself and the family, particularly after his father's death. And what was certainly the most compelling reason of all – his mother was anxious to see him!

His family, of course, received him with open arms, and he remained with them for some time.

It was generally understood by his neighbors, friends, and relatives that he would soon take a position in some city or court nearby and then think seriously of marrying and settling down. In fact, they even went so far as to urge on him a certain local girl – pretty, of good character and from a well-to-do family.

To the amazement of all, John firmly resisted all such attractive propositions. He was being drawn by another, more sublime ideal in life. During his stay at home, he kept to himself, avoiding worldly attractions and amusements. He ate sparingly and, instead of amusing company, sought solitude and gave himself up to frequent prayer. He found great delight in the contemplation of heavenly truths, and it seemed to others that he was continuously absorbed in God.

Although few who knew him were aware of it, John Papczynski had, for some time, been thinking seriously of following a priestly and religious vocation. Filled with the desire for spiritual perfection, he had probably decided while at Podoliniec, as early as 1650, that he would one day join the Piarist Fathers and consecrate himself to the service of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

This “inner voice of a vocation” accompanied him to Lvov and Rawa Mazowiecka. And now, while he rested at home, with his studies behind him, it became more insistent, giving him no respite. He knew that he could not remain with his mother and family any longer than was strictly necessary. Our Divine Lord’s call was too strong, too urgent.

At last the day came when he took leave of his mother, family, friends, and home and made his way back across the Carpathians to Podoliniec and the Piarist Fathers.





Podoliniec was by no means strange to him, for he had been a student there at the Piarist College. He had then had ample opportunity to observe and admire the life and zeal of these priests, their love of poverty, their piety, and their unselfish dedication to the education and training of youth – particularly penniless youth. Even though his stay with them had been but a short one, he himself had experienced the salutary effects of the educational method employed in the Piarist “Pious Schools.”

Indeed, the Piarist way of life must have had a powerful attraction for John if, after four years at Jesuit Colleges, he returned to Podoliniec to enter the Community of the Piarist Fathers.

On July 2, 1654, he was received into the novitiate, vested with the habit of the Order, and given his new name: Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary.



The novitiate was, of course, as it is today, a period of probation. The novice Stanislaus Papczynski came under the direction of the saintly novice master, Fr. John Franco (Franchi) of the Holy Cross. Stanislaus followed the normal routine of the novitiate, training himself by a life of prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, mortification, and humble submissiveness.

From the beginning, Stanislaus surpassed even those who had been in the Order for many years by his love and practice of the virtues of religious. He performed the lowliest tasks, cleaning out barns and stables, chopping wood and carrying it to the kitchen stove, and washing dishes. On the coldest days of winter, he would be sent out, with hands raw, chapped and numb from the bitter cold, to fetch water from the well.

After completing his first year of the novitiate, Stanislaus was sent to Warsaw to continue his period of probation and begin the study of theology.

On July 21, 1655, four days after Stanislaus's departure from Podoliniec, the Swedes invaded Poland. The victorious Protestant armies advanced rapidly, sweeping over the land like a merciless deluge which threatened to engulf everything that was Polish and Catholic.

It was not long before the capital itself fell into the hands of the enemy. Plunder, pillage, and outrage – not only of the lay population, but also in religious houses and churches – became commonplace. An eyewitness tells us that, in the streets of Warsaw, “the Swedish soldiers kill at will and with impunity.”

One day as Stanislaus and a companion were returning from the Old City, they suddenly came upon a Swedish soldier who at once drew his sword. The companion fled in terror, but Stanislaus, in his youthful enthusiasm for a martyr’s death, welcomed the opportunity to shed his blood for the Faith. He dropped to his knees, bared his neck and braced himself for the blow. The sword fell thrice, with great force, and caused intense pain. And yet, unbelievable though it may seem, “by the decree of Divine Providence” (as he himself was later to say in his Will), he sustained no wound. Indeed, the pain itself disappeared within a short time and with it his hope of martyrdom.

The abnormal conditions of the time made study difficult. We do not know just how much of his theological course he completed at this period. We do know that he began it in 1655, under the guidance of the Franciscan Fathers, at St. Anthony’s Monastery. Yet we also know that after April 1656 the only religious left in Warsaw were the Piarist Fathers.





At any rate, on July 22, 1656 – when the invader had been temporarily expelled from Warsaw – Stanislaus made his religious profession and shortly afterwards received his minor orders and sub-diaconate.

With the advent of August 1656, persecution was on the increase in reoccupied Warsaw. The spread of pestilence began to take on epidemic proportions. Our young cleric, Stanislaus, along with his confreres, fled the city. After a short period of rest at Podoliniec, he made his way towards the end of September to the newly opened foundation of the Piarist Fathers at Rzeszow. But by February 1657, this city also was threatened by invading armies – in this case ‘Transylvanians’ (from what is now Romania) under Prince Rakoczy – and once again Stanislaus sought refuge at Podoliniec.

Here, with the opening of the new school year, the young sub-deacon was appointed instructor of rhetoric at the same college in which, only seven years before, he had been a student.

In teaching and training his students, he made use of a textbook that he himself had written and to which he had given the title *Queen of the Arts* (Regina Artium). Part of this book was published in 1663 under the title *Forerunner of the Queen of the Arts* (Prodromus Reginae Artium).

Ever an ardent lover of Our Immaculate Mother, the Saint dedicated his first published work to Mary: “*To the Mother of the Eternal Word, to the Devoutly Eloquent Virgin Mary Conceived without stain – Stanislaus, vowed to poverty, dedicates this Forerunner of the Queen of the Arts*”.

The dedication ends with the petition: “Teach us, O Purest Mother of Wisdom, both how to live well and how to speak well.” This twofold purpose – to form at once a *good Catholic and Pole* and a *good speaker* – was always in his mind, particularly when it came to the choice of exercises or examples. It is characteristic of the Saint that one of the latter was a verse composed by himself in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1660, Stanislaus was transferred by his superiors to the college at Rzeszow. Here too he was appointed instructor of rhetoric. Busy as he was teaching others, he, nevertheless, probably found time to complete his own theological studies. In 1661, he was raised to the diaconate and ordained priest by the Bishop of Przemyśl, Stanislaus Sarnowski.

To his other duties were now added those of a preacher. We still have one of his first sermons, titled “In praise of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God.” In it we find these words:

“How greatly the Blessed Virgin’s love for us here shone forth! What sublime love she showed us! What concern for our salvation! What mortal would not strive, by all the means in his power, to love, honor and venerate the Lady who has done so much to help him? Set to work, then, and do not neglect any good deed by which you may honor this Virgin.”

In the year 1663, Fr. Stanislaus was transferred to Warsaw, where he soon made his name as a preacher. Particularly memorable are the sermons in honor of St. Thomas Aquinas which, at the invitation of the Dominican Fathers, he delivered at their church of St. Hyacinth in Warsaw.

One sermon that he preached there on March 7, 1664 was published under the title “The Angelic Doctor” (*Doctor Angelicus*) by a man who had heard it. “I was unwilling,” wrote the editor in his dedication, “that this voice, which had so held the attention of all who heard it, should be simply a momentary and passing thing, instead of an enduring one.”

According to the Saint, one of the reasons why St. Thomas Aquinas had earned the title of “the Angelic Doctor” was that he had “so vowed angelic chastity to God, that he preserved it, and so defended it, that he conquered.”

“Should we not, then,” asks Fr. Stanislaus, “award this title to one who has offered to all those battling in the same arena, the one sure means of defeating the enemy? For he has taught us that the flame (of passion) can only be overcome by the ardor (of true love) *ignes ignibus vincere*; that the defense of chastity calls for great resolution, which alone can win the crown of victory.”



The natural complement of all pastoral work begun in the pulpit is the direct and personal contact that a priest establishes in the confessional with the souls of men. Even as a young priest and confessor, Fr. Stanislaus must have revealed unusual attributes of mind and heart if, as we learn, so many were attracted to his confessional. We know too that among these penitents were a number of distinguished prelates, bishops, and members of the Polish Senate.

There are indications that one of the Senators who frequented his confessional at this time was the future King of Poland, John III Sobieski, who in 1683 was to defeat the Turks at Vienna. There is also some evidence that Fr. Stanislaus became the confessor of Anthony Pignatelly, the Apostolic Nuncio to Poland (1660 -1668) and later (1691) Pope Innocent XII.



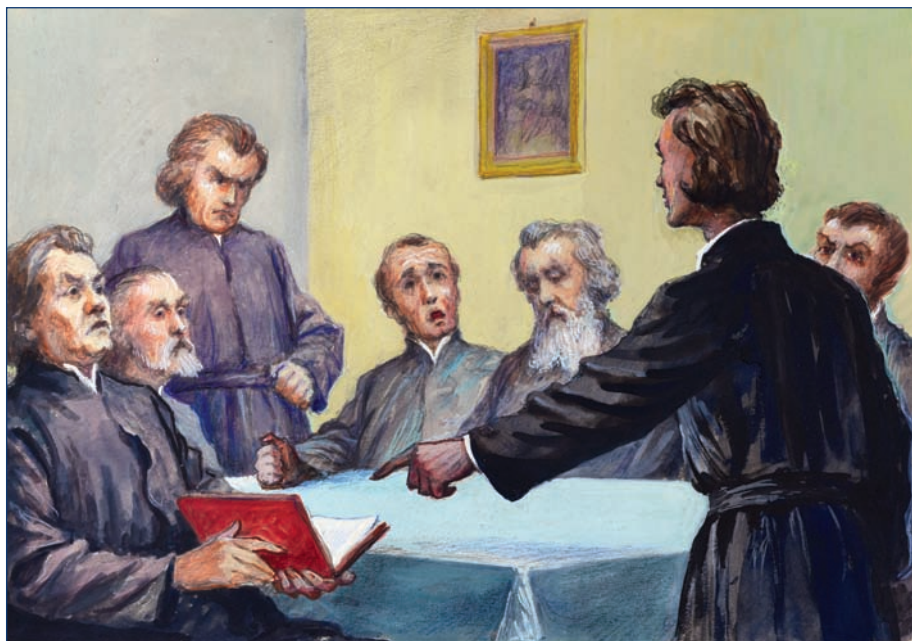


Tradition maintains that during this period Fr. Papczynski was also the Moderator of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Grace at the Piarist church in Warsaw.

In 1651, the picture of Our Lady of Grace had been solemnly crowned with the authorization of the Holy See. This was the first such crowning in Poland and one of the first in Europe.

During the epidemic of 1664, on the petition of the local Magistrate and the faithful, Our Lady of Grace was made Patroness of Warsaw. It may be presumed that Fr. Papczynski and his confraternity did much to influence this decision since the confraternity had been founded precisely for the purpose of imploring Our Lady of Grace to preserve the city “from pestilence, disease and all afflictions.” The Saint often exhorted the members of the Confraternity to fulfill this fundamental obligation when they were gathered around the figure of Our Lady “delle Grazie.”

His teaching obligations at the College of the Piarist Fathers in Warsaw, in addition to his pastoral activities, absorbed most of Fr. Stanislaus’s time and energy. He soon became popular. There were many who admired and respected him.



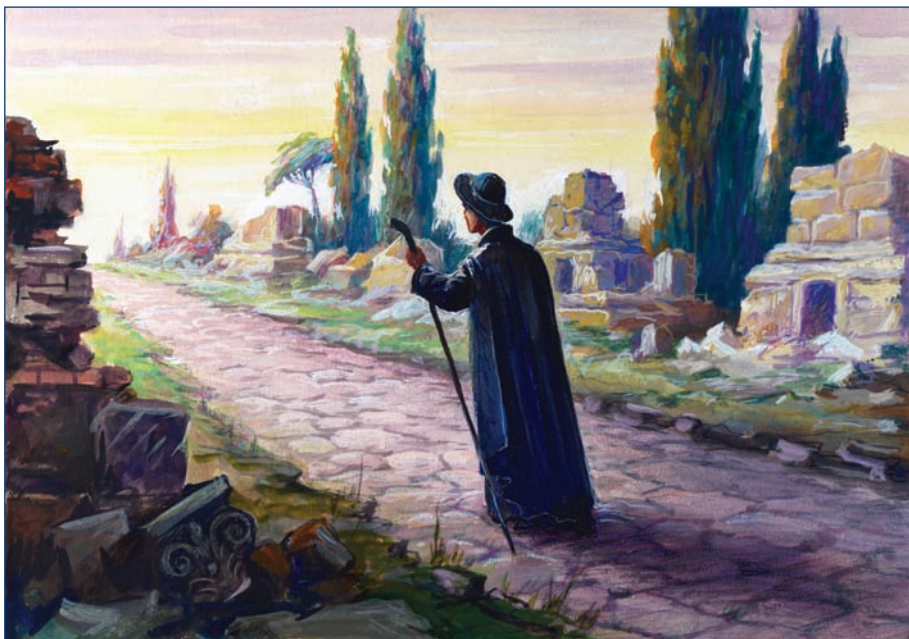
Both his natural talents and his acquired proficiency certainly had much to do with this public recognition, but it was due even more to his own deep spirituality, the maturity of his interior life, and his resolute striving for priestly and religious perfection. One can hardly be expected to impart to another what one does not possess oneself. As the old Latin proverb says, *Nemo dat quod non habet!* Father Stanislaus was well aware of this, and to ensure the fruitfulness of his apostolate both within the classroom and outside it, he saw to it that his own prayer life did not suffer, that he had sufficient time for personal study, and that he took his full share in the community life of the Congregation.

He had been trained in the rugged school of religious life outlined in the original Constitutions drawn up by the Founder of the Piarist Fathers, St. Joseph Calasantius. He had come to love these constitutions deeply, and to live his life in accordance with them. He, therefore, opposed the growing tendency to mitigate them, in any way whatever. He had always tried to remain faithful to the ideal of ‘utter poverty,’ and he was a courageous and zealous advocate of strict religious discipline. He strenuously defended the rules and regulations as he understood them, believing that the good of the Polish Province of the Piarist Fathers, then (in 1662) newly established, depended upon their observance.

Not all the members of the province were in sympathy with Fr. Papczynski's views on the religious observance. Serious friction, aggravated by nationalistic differences, resulted, and he soon found himself in open conflict with his superiors. When the Superior General heard of this conflict, he summoned Fr. Stanislaus to Rome in the fall of 1667 to give an account of his conduct.

In those days, a journey to Rome, particularly at that time of year and for someone of such modest means, was full of hardship and even danger. It is not surprising then that the Saint was advised by a good many serious-thinking people not to attempt so dangerous an undertaking. But Fr. Stanislaus did not waver in his resolve, even for a moment: "...Summoned to Rome," he wrote before setting out on his journey, "I accept this command with the utmost respect, humility, readiness, and resignation, solely for the love of God and Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the honor of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, my Lady... I desire that God should be glorified by my journey, undertaken out of obedience, as He was by the persecutions and Passion of My Lord Jesus Christ and by the sufferings of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary."

Filled with this sublime spirit of faith and love, Fr. Stanislaus made his way on foot, for many weary days, to the Eternal City.





The Superior General of the Piarists, Fr. Cosmas Chiara, received Fr. Stanislaus cordially and treated him with the utmost hospitality during his stay of several weeks at the Mother House in Rome.

After hearing the arguments of the Saint, Fr. Chiara at once saw and admitted that his conduct in Poland had been fully justified, and permitted him to make preparations for the return journey to Poland.

However, shortly before Fr. Papczynski was due to leave, Fr. Chiara received the report of the Provincial Chapter held at Podolinec, which upheld and even strengthened the previous accusations against Fr. Stanislaus as a dangerous “firebrand” in the Province. On the basis of this report, Fr. Cosmas revoked Fr. Stanislaus’s permission and sent him to Nikolsburg, the seat in Moravia of the German Province of the Piarists.

A few months later, in the spring of 1668, the Nikolsburg Provincial Superior permitted Fr. Stanislaus to return to Poland. His return caused fresh ferment in the province, and in 1669 at the request of the Apostolic Nuncio, the Provincial Superior and his assistants examined the accusations against Fr. Stanislaus and declared in a Memorandum that his behavior was not that of a “firebrand” but due rather to “a kind of zeal.”

This “zeal,” however, continued to meet with opposition from the superiors and a good many members of the province (particularly those who were not Poles). Father Stanislaus became convinced that his efforts were fruitless, and being unable in conscience to accept the existing state of affairs in his community (as he was later to explain in detail in his “Apologia”), he asked to be released from the Congregation. In his concern for the welfare of his own soul and the good of the province, he saw no alternative.



In the autumn of 1669, the Congregation of the Piarist Fathers was raised by the Holy See to the rank of an Order with solemn vows. However, all members were free to decide for themselves whether to accept the solemn profession.

Father Stanislaus, anticipating his release from the community, decided to remain in simple vows. He also believed that his decision to do so released him from all dependence on the superiors of the Reformed Order. Consequently, towards the end of 1669, he placed himself directly under the protection and jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cracow, Andrew Trzebicki.

The Provincial Superior retaliated by forcibly removing the Saint from the Piarist residence at Kazimierz, near Cracow, and sending him first to Podolinec, and later still further from Cracow – to Priewidza in Slovakia. There, in accordance with the religious discipline of the time, Fr. Stanislaus spent almost three months in the monastery prison.

All indications suggest that it was precisely during this period of solitude and suffering that he received from God a new inspiration, a new vocation – the summons to a new task, which he was to carry out only after his release from the Piarist Institute. This task was the founding of a new Congregation.

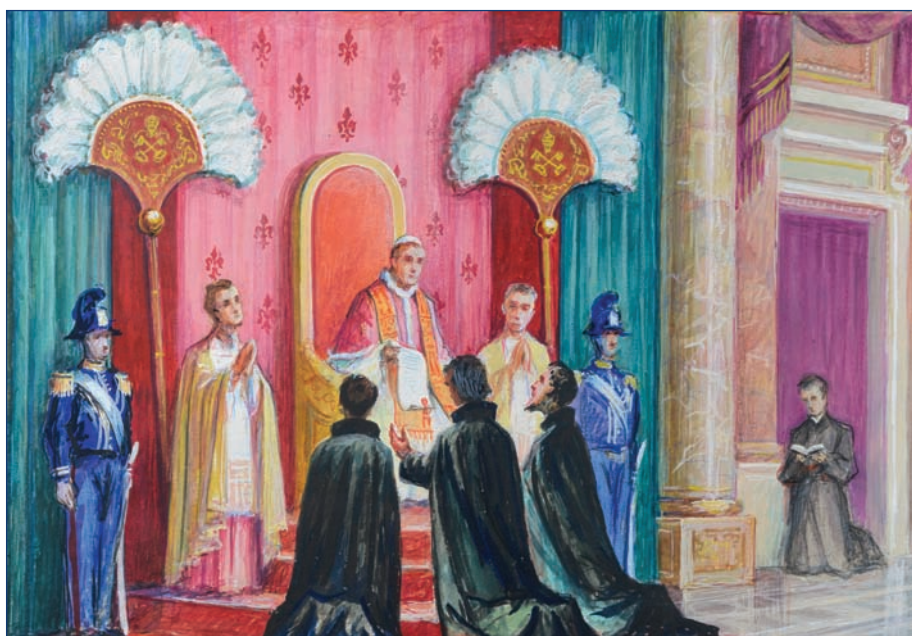
The Bishop of Cracow, as the protector of the Saint, strongly protested against the forcible removal of Fr. Stanislaus without his knowledge or permission from a residence under his episcopal jurisdiction. It may have been this protest that caused the Superior at Prie-widza to become apprehensive and, without even communicating with the Provincial Superior, he released Fr. Stanislaus. Whatever the reason, we know that he was released from his imprisonment at the monastery and, early in April 1670, was back in Cracow.

There, some time after his return, his case was heard before the Ecclesiastical Diocesan Tribunal and, on the strength of the evidence, the Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow, Michael Oborski, solemnly declared that there had been nothing to justify the imprisonment of Fr. Stanislaus since “he was and is entirely innocent.”



Meanwhile, the death of Pope Clement IX and the delay in electing his successor held up Fr. Stanislaus's release from the Piarist Fathers.

In October 1670, the newly elected Pope Clement X authorized the Superior General of the Piarist Fathers to secularize all members who had refused to take Solemn Vows. On October 24, Fr. Cosmas Chiara, in a letter to the Bishop of Cracow, released Fr. Stanislaus, at his own request, from his religious vows, and from the oath of perseverance in the Piarist Congregation.





Father Papczynski's dispensation from his vows, however, became officially effective only in December 1670, when the Vice-Provincial, Fr. Michael Kraus, personally communicated it to him in the name of the Superior General.

At the close of the ceremony, the Saint began a new phase of his life by making the following solemn oblation: "In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, Amen. I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski [...] offer and consecrate to God the Father Almighty, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and likewise to the Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, my heart, my soul [...] my body, leaving for myself absolutely nothing, so that henceforth I may be the servant of the Omnipotent (God) and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Consequently, I vow to serve Them zealously, in chastity, to the end of my life, in the Society of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception (which by the grace of God I desire to found)."

Then he added a vow of obedience and poverty. Finally he made a Profession of Faith which included the so-called "Vow of Blood," whereby he promised to defend the "honor" and spread the cult of the Immaculately Conceived Virgin Mary, "even at the cost of his own life." He concluded with the words: "So help me God and this Holy Book of the Gospels." Father Kraus responded with the words: "May God confirm that which He has brought about in you."



By virtue of his solemn oblation, Fr. Papczynski remained inter-
iorly and spiritually faithful to his religious vows, although
legally he had passed into the ranks of the diocesan clergy.

This experience, for one with so delicate a conscience, was no small shock. He was suddenly assailed by doubts, scruples, uncertainties, and fears. At one moment he was even ready to return to the Piarist Fathers, if only they would be willing to return to the original “utter poverty” enjoined by their Founder, St. Joseph Calasantius, and undertake to spread the cult of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady.

In God’s plan, this “mystical cleansing” of the soul of the Saint was apparently necessary to complete the “way of the cross” which he had hitherto been treading and to prepare him for so momentous an undertaking as the founding of a new religious community.

No less a trial to him in his new vocation were the prelatial honors and lucrative Church benefices that were being offered to him by certain bishops. He was convinced, however, that these would serve only as a hindrance to his efforts and would eventually deter him from following his divinely inspired path. Consequently, he resolutely rejected all such offers.

As a temporary means of support, he retained only (in accordance with existing Church Law) the modest benefice of chaplain to the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, attached to the church of St. James at Kazimierz, near Cracow. There, for the time being, he also took up residence.

He did not, however, remain long at this post. Since he saw no possibility of founding his community in the Diocese of Cracow, he left in the summer of 1671 for the Diocese of Poznan.

The Ordinary of this Diocese, Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski, lived permanently in Warsaw (which had already become the center of the social and political life of Poland). Father Stanislaus, then, sought an audience with the Bishop in Warsaw. Bishop Wierzbowski received him kindly and promised him his personal assistance in realizing so pious a plan as the founding of a Congregation dedicated to the honor of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Mother. As a result, the Saint decided to remain permanently in the Diocese of Poznan.

Shortly after his interview with the Bishop of Poznan, Father Papczynski learned that a certain nobleman at Lubocz, James Karski by name, an upright man with a high reputation in the community, was seeking a court chaplain. On the advice and recommendation of his confessors, Fr. Stanislaus accepted the position.

James Karski was delighted and, since the position was immediately available, the Saint had no need to wait. By the beginning of September 1671, he had taken up his new duties at the quiet court on the banks of the River Pilica. The nobleman even sent his own carriage to Warsaw for him, and on his arrival he was met by the entire Karski Family.

He was to enjoy a friendly and pleasant association with this family for almost two years. While he was with them, he began to seek out ways and means of starting his new Congregation, that of the Marian Fathers.



Before leaving Warsaw, Fr. Papczynski had paid another visit to Bishop Wierzbowski and obtained, without difficulty, permission to wear the new religious habit that he had chosen for his future Marians. This habit differed only in color from that of the Piarist Fathers. That of the Piarists was black; the one that Fr. Stanislaus chose for his Congregation was white.

He apparently thought that white would be the most appropriate color for those who were to be members of the “Society of the Immaculate Conception.” The spotlessness of Mary’s Conception could not, in his opinion, be so well expressed by any other color. Furthermore, he was convinced that the public wearing of the white habit would be a powerful aid in spreading the cult of the Immaculate Conception which, after all, was to be one of the principal aims of the new religious community.

Shortly after his arrival at Lubocz and with the knowledge of the Apostolic Nuncio, Fr. Stanislaus was vested in the new white habit, “in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” “I have now offered myself,” writes the Saint, “in the white habit, as a new ‘candidate’ of this Mother, to serve her for ever.” (*There seems to be a play on words in the use of the term “candidatus,” which in Latin may also mean “one dressed in white.”*) And so in the year 1671, within the octave of the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, in the Chapel of the Karski Court at Lubocz and before a “miraculous” painting of Our Blessed Lady, the ‘first seed of the new Congregation dedicated to honoring Mary’s Immaculate Conception was sown and began to take root.



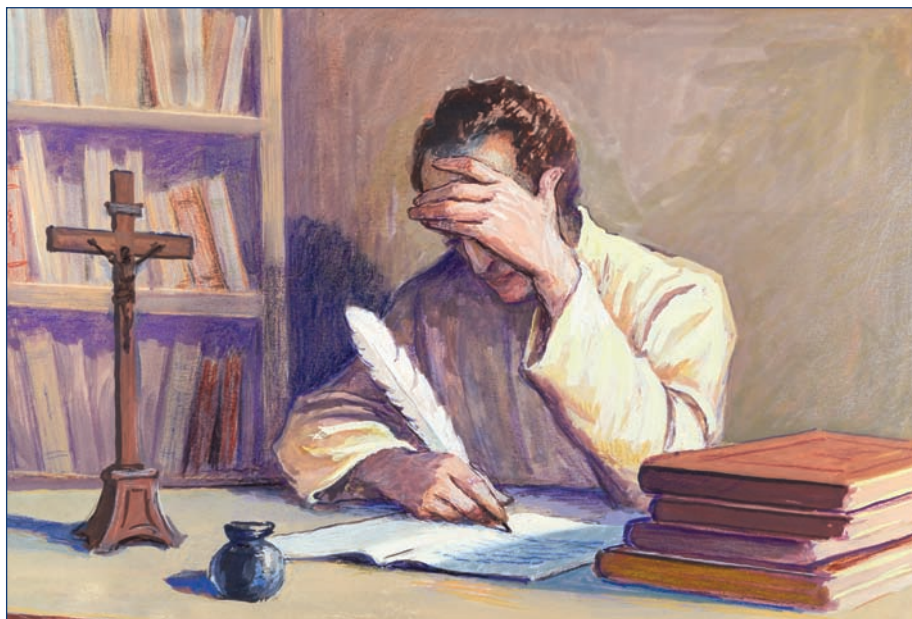


In addition to his priestly obligations on behalf of the Lubocz community entrusted to his care, Fr. Papczynski continued as far as he could the practice acquired during his life as a religious of spending a good part of each day in private prayer. Evidently it was no easy matter completely to avoid the frequently boisterous life of the court, echoes of which would reach him even in the house chapel. Consequently, he sought privacy elsewhere. Or was it that he feared that it would not be possible in the chapel to conceal from others the manifestations of peculiar graces with which God visited him during prayer?

Whatever the reason, we have evidence of at least one witness that “... the Venerable Fr. Stanislaus would often secretly absent himself from the courtly gathering and make his way to the barns to pray, and he was frequently seen by those who were sent out in search of him (to summon him to meals) ... raised about a yard above the ground, and thus remaining for a long time in prayer.”

Father Stanislaus did not fail to impart to others the benefits that he himself had derived from his contact with God in contemplative prayer. Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us that it is good, holy, and praiseworthy to dedicate one's life wholly to God in contemplation, but he goes on to say that it is even better if one shares the fruits of this contemplation with others by means of an active apostolate (*contemplata aliis tradere*).

During his stay at the court of James Karski, Fr. Papczynski devoted himself with the utmost zeal and energy to his pastoral and apostolic duties, and particularly to spreading devotion to the Mother of God. One instance of this was his introduction, among the members of the household and the local faithful, of the practice of singing the Rosary prayers in common. This devotion was kept up at the Karski court long after the Saint had left; in fact, as we know from one of the witnesses at the process for his beatification, the custom survived there until the first half of the eighteenth century.



The fruits of Fr. Papczynski's long and profound meditations have been handed down to us in two books on the spiritual life which he wrote at about this time. One – *The Mystical Temple of God* (*Templum Dei Mysticum*) – was intended for general use; the other – *The Norm of Life* (*Norma Vitae*) – for future Marians. In this Norm, Fr. Stanislaus gave the canonical and spiritual directives which were to form the basis of the future "Society of the Immaculate Conception." It is, in reality, a textbook of the Religious Life.

The Mystical Temple of God, on the other hand, was one of the first works of its kind to appear in the Church, for it set out to provide a textbook, intended chiefly for the laity, on Christian perfection. Based on the authority of the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, and other outstanding writers on asceticism of more recent date, the book describes and elucidates the concept of Christian perfection or sanctity and the means (accessible to the laity) of acquiring it. It is, above all, a practical guide, inasmuch as it treats of the methods and practices of the interior life by which the Christian soul may, with God's grace, endeavor to avoid sin and practice virtue. Striving thus for sanctity, the soul – the Mystical Temple of God – recovers the beauty and likeness to God which were so tragically defaced by original sin. In short, the book, written in an original, allegorical form, points the way to the heavenly kingdom and eternal happiness.



In the meantime, Fr. Stanislaus sought every possible way of bringing into existence his “Society of the Immaculate Conception,” the idea of which, as he reveals in one of his writings, “had been clearly formed” in his mind “by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”

But there just weren’t any suitable candidates to be found. What was more, Bishop Wierzbowski, apparently cautioned by someone, made the foundation of the new Community conditional upon Fr. Stanislaus’ obtaining permission from the Holy See. The Saint submitted the matter to a Procurator in Rome who, for more than a year, put him off with hopeful promises but took no steps whatever to obtain the necessary permission.

Seeing the futility of his previous attempts, Fr. Stanislaus sought the advice of a prominent Camaldolese monk, a certain Fr. Francis Wilga, at the hermitage in Bielany (Warsaw). Father Francis advised him to go about the matter in another way by finding at least one companion, setting up a religious house, and then, from even such slight beginnings, seeking the approval of the Holy See. The Saint resolved to follow this advice.



About 22 miles from Lubocz, in the heart of the Korabiew Forest (Puszcza Korabiewska), Stanislaus Krajewski, a veteran of many wars, had set up a “hermitage” on a plot of land given to him in 1670 by King Michael of Poland.

When Fr. Papczynski decided to follow the advice of Fr. Wilga, the thought of this hermitage came into his mind. He approached Krajewski with a concrete proposal, and explained his *Norm of Life* to him. Krajewski, in his own name and that of his companions, enthusiastically accepted the proposal and offered himself and his property to form the beginning of the Society of the Immaculate Conception. He declared himself ready to hand everything over to Fr. Stanislaus, to recognize him as his Superior, and to submit completely to *The Norm of Life*.

Some time later, however, Fr. Stanislaus, who had come to know Krajewski better, decided that he was not a suitable candidate for the religious life and put off making any definite steps where he was concerned. But on the advice of his spiritual director, he permitted Krajewski some months later to receive the white habit of the Marian Fathers and to make his “oblation” to the budding Society of the Immaculate Conception. The ceremony took place at Lubocz on July 4, 1673.

It now became necessary to organize some kind of “community life” with these hermits. With this in mind, he obtained permission from Bishop Wierzbowski to make a month’s retreat at the hermitage, and from the Apostolic Nuncio, to celebrate Mass in the private chapel which Krajewski had begun to build on the site.

The day of Fr. Stanislaus’s departure from the Karski court finally dawned. The family was grieved to see him set off. They fully realized that he was not just “going away” for a while but that a dear friend and saintly priest was leaving them for good. Their sorrow was somewhat assuaged by the knowledge that God was calling their chaplain to a far more important task and that he had no choice but to be faithful to his God-given vocation.

The Saint arrived at the hermitage on September 30, 1673. Krajewski was not there, and the two remaining “hermits” helped him to move into his new quarters. As he entered his “cell,” Fr. Stanislaus commended himself humbly and wholeheartedly to the Blessed Mother of God. To her maternal hands he entrusted the entire task of founding, there in that isolated spot, the Congregation that was to be dedicated to her Immaculate Conception.





Early on the following day, he began to initiate his companions into the ways of true religious and community life. He soon saw, however, that a life of regular prayer, penance, and obedience was not to their liking. He began to doubt whether, with such men, he could ever hope to found a religious community whose aim it would be to strive for sanctity by means of those methods which he was trying to introduce.

Towards the end of the retreat he made up his mind to seek out other companions, more desirous of a true religious life, and to set up a foundation on a piece of land close by offered to him by Krajewski. But before he could take even the first step, Bishop Stanislaus Swiecicki, Vicar for Warsaw, arrived suddenly and unexpectedly on October 24 to conduct a canonical visitation of the Hermitage at the request of Bishop Wierzbowski, Ordinary of the Poznan-Warsaw Diocese. The visitor immediately resolved to put an end to the free and easy, if not downright scandalous, way of life of the “hermits.” He introduced radical reforms: Those who wished to remain must submit totally to *The Norm of Life* formulated by Fr. Papczynski. The visitor even added certain statutes of his own to *the Norm*, thereby making life at the Hermitage still more rigorous. He likewise obliged the “Marian Hermits” to swear obedience to the bishop of the diocese.

“I had decided,” writes the Saint, “to leave this place once the retreat was over, but he ordered me to remain as Superior, giving me complete authority over them.”

When Krajewski’s companions learned of the bishop’s severe decrees, which were intended to intensify and strengthen the religious spirit of the Community, they were appalled; cold shivers ran up their spines at the thought of so rigorous an existence at the hermitage. Needless to say, they just packed up and left! Father Stanislaus was left with only Krajewski.

We must not think, however, that Bishop Swiecicki's decrees (or Statutes) were entirely to the liking of Fr. Stanislaus. By imposing upon the first Marians a way of life that was strictly eremitical – i.e., penitential and contemplative – the bishop was to a great extent frustrating the “apostolic aims” which Fr. Papczynski had foreseen for his community. He probably had this in mind when he characterized the reforms as “very severe.”

In spite of this, the Saint accepted the statutes with a willing heart and endeavored to put them into practice since, as he himself said, “I desire nothing else but the salvation of my soul.” To that end he was prepared to sacrifice everything and to submit to the most exacting discipline.

And so, with his companions, he was obliged to lead a strictly cloistered life. This did not mean, however, that he could not from time to time be dispensed from it. We know that he did occasionally take advantage of such a dispensation in order to aid the neighboring parish clergy in their pastoral work. In fact, as a Marian he felt that this was his God-given vocation.

Scarcely two weeks after the retreat, on the Feast of St. Martin, November 11, he was invited to preach a sermon at the parish church named after the Saint, in Chojnata. Before ascending the pulpit to deliver his sermon, he spent some time in private prayer, as was his custom. Tradition says that an unusual thing happened on this occasion. He saw, in ecstasy, Sobieski's victory over the Turks at Chocim, a victory which actually took place on that very day. Moved by some divine impulse, he shared this joyful knowledge with the faithful gathered in the church.





A few years earlier, Fr. Papczynski had written on the subject of pastoral work in these words: “Oh, how praiseworthy are those fellow-laborers with Christ, who, solely out of love for Him proclaim clearly and zealously, and especially to children and simple folk, all that is necessary to salvation, to a life lived in conformity with Christian morality, to the extirpation of faults and the acquisition of virtues. No work of charity could be more excellent or more blessed.” He ended by begging Our Lord that he himself might never in any way neglect such work for souls.

It seems that Our Divine Savior did not deny him this grace. He took advantage of every opportunity to help souls. His apostolic zeal is shown by the fact that he even used to leave the hermitage at Korabiew to preach, to catechize, to hear confessions, and to conduct devotions in the neighboring parishes.

This activity received the general recognition of the faithful and bore fruit in their souls.

It is no wonder then that after a few months the faithful, drawn by the holiness of the Saint and their own desire to take advantage of his advice, began to come to the hermitage in ever increasing numbers. It soon became necessary to find ways of ministering to them at the hermitage.

Krajewski had begun, some time before, to build a chapel, but the site that he had chosen was too damp to be suitable. Father Stanislaus immediately sought permission from the Church authorities to build a larger chapel, with a Retreat House near it, on higher ground where the soil was dry and sandy. As soon as the necessary permission was obtained, he began clearing the forest, preparing the wood for the building, and leveling the ground. It was hard physical work, and the laborers, at the time, were few.

They probably did not begin the actual building of the chapel until the spring of 1675. In the meantime, “[...] attracted by the renowned holiness of the Saint, a number of men of deep learning and piety hastened to his side and put themselves under his direction and guidance.” It was with their help that the construction of the church in honor of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception and St. Michael the Archangel made such rapid progress.

They were “men in a hurry.” They wanted the new church to be ready as soon as possible for the recitation of the choir prayers and the administration of the sacraments to the local people and to the many who came from outside.

Father Papczynski urged his helpers on not only by words of encouragement but by his own example: Along with the others, he dug the foundations, carried the beams, took up the saw, the axe, and the wheel barrow.

It would be only natural to suppose that after a long day’s hard physical exertion, the evening hours and nightfall brought him well-earned rest and sleep. Bone-weary and exhausted, his body cried out for such rest. Yet it is a fact that Fr. Papczynski sometimes “spent the whole night in prayer.”

And when he did permit himself to lie down on his hard bed, “he was content with but a few hours’ sleep.” Frequently, for greater mortification, he would lie not on the bed but on the floor, which was covered only with a rough sack. A log then served as his pillow.





During his stay at the Karski court at Lubocz, Fr. Stanislaus had frequently visited the miraculous shrine of Our Lady at Studzianna, barely four miles away.

When he moved to the Hermitage in the Korabiew Forest, which was about 27 miles from Studzianna, he naturally had to limit these visits to the shrine to the greater feasts of Our Lady. At that time, the miraculous picture was under the care of the Oratorians who had taken up residence at Stuzianna in 1673.

While at the hermitage, Fr. Papczynski fell seriously ill and asked to be taken to Studzianna. On his arrival, he first made his confession to the Superior of the Monastery. Then after celebrating Mass before the miraculous picture, he went to the cell assigned to him to take a short rest. There, according to tradition, he fell into an ecstasy during which, in spirit, he visited purgatory and shared the suffering of the departed souls.

When those sent to summon him to dinner found him motionless and apparently lifeless, they thought he was dead and were greatly grieved. They even began to wonder what arrangements ought to be made for his funeral. The Superior was hastily summoned. He took one glance at the seemingly lifeless Fr. Stanislaus and said quietly to the community standing around: "Leave him alone; he is not dead; I know where he is." Soon afterwards, to the amazement of all, Fr. Stanislaus came to himself – back to life, as it were. Without taking any refreshment, he immediately began his return journey to the hermitage. To those who met him upon his return, he simply said: "Pray, brethren, for the souls in purgatory, for they suffer unbearably." Then he locked himself in his cell, where he prayed and scourged himself for the "relief of the souls in purgatory."



We are not sure of the year in which Fr. Papczynski experienced this mystical phenomenon. In all probability it was in 1675, the year in which, as he himself reveals, God endowed him with “profound devotion to the souls in purgatory.”

The fact is that the following year, 1676, the Saint made it one of the principal aims of his new Congregation of Marian Fathers to aid, “with the utmost diligence, devotion, and zeal,” the suffering souls in purgatory, especially the souls of soldiers who had died in battle and of the victims of pestilence.

To understand and appreciate the need for this work of mercy, one has but to recall the frequent wars which ravaged Poland, especially from the middle of the 17th century, and the pestilence and disease that normally followed in the wake of such wars. Thousands upon thousands met with sudden death, and God alone knows how many of them were taken without even a moment in which to prepare themselves.

This thought gave Fr. Papczynski no peace. As he saw the cemeteries so swiftly filling with graves, he felt himself impelled to more prayer, mortification, and self-denial.

Shortly after, the Turks had been driven away from the eastern frontiers of Poland by the Polish army under Sobieski’s command. In order to get some rest, the army set up camp in the fields of the Ukraine. “Saint Stanislaus was also present in the camp, accompanying the King. As was his custom, he went outside the camp to the common graves of the soldiers that had been killed in the previous wars with the Turks, and there every day until the camp broke up he prayed with the utmost devotion for the dead soldiers.

“One day in the midst of these graves, he had a vision of many of the souls, who begged him groaningly and with much insistence that he never cease to render them *such* help,” because they suffer intolerable pains in purgatory.

Therefore, upon his return to his confreres, Fr. Papczynski “imposed upon them the obligation to remember in their prayers for the dead particularly the souls of soldiers and of the victims of pestilence” (S. Wyszynski, *Life of the Ven. Servant of God Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary*, sec. 50).

We do not have any historical documents for the confirmation of the above episode. Nonetheless, it is quite probable: there is in fact, nothing that would forbid us to accept that Fr. Papczynski really was a chaplain in the Polish army that set out in October 1674 against the invading Turks. Consequently, the episode would have occurred in the year 1675, the year then, in which Fr. Stanislaus “conceived a tremendous devotion towards the souls in purgatory.”

One day, according to tradition, Fr. Stanislaus, as the former chaplain and close friend of the Karski family, was invited to take part in a family gathering at the court in Lubocz. After the usual devotions in the chapel, all made their way to the dining hall. Suddenly during the meal an unusual scene took place. Father Stanislaus seemed to fall into ecstasy, and with eyes raised to heaven he became absolutely motionless.

All those present witnessed the scene, and such was their reverence for his sanctity that the hum of conversation died down. Some continued their meal in silence; others simply stared at him in amazement, wondering how this extraordinary ecstasy would end.





After some time the Saint was himself again. Without a word he rose and made his way to the door. But – not in the usual way. Finding his exit blocked by the wall behind him and not wishing to disturb the seated guests, he went straight through the table as though it were not there. Neither his foot nor his habit touched any of the guests, or even one of the dishes spread all over the table. In a few seconds he was at the dining-room door.

He found his wagon and asked the driver to take him back immediately to the hermitage. His confreres were surprised to see him so soon. He said only: “Brethren, pray for the dead!” Then he again locked himself in his cell for several days, taking neither food nor drink.

When he next visited Lubocz, his host James Karski begged him to describe what he had seen during his ecstatic vision. The Saint was at first very unwilling to reveal anything. Karski, however, urged him all the more, promising that he would reveal nothing of the secret to anyone during Fr. Papczynski’s lifetime. Father Stanislaus at last gave way and said, “I was in purgatory; I saw the unbearable agony of the suffering souls.”

When he was asked how he had been able to walk straight through the table, he answered: “That I don’t know myself, for it seemed to me that there wasn’t anything in front of me and that I simply walked across the floor.”



The Karski family preserved the memory of a number of other unusual incidents connected with the life of the Saint Stanislaus. For example, Fr. Stanislaus occasionally went from the hermitage to the court at Lubocz to render pastoral assistance. He was met one day on his arrival by an anxious and unhappy James Karski, whose son Joseph had fallen under the wheels of a wagon and been badly crushed.

Karski, pouring out his grief and anxiety to the Saint, took him straight to his son's bedside. Joseph was in great pain and close to death. "Joseph, get up," said Fr. Stanislaus, "and hurry along to serve my Mass!" At these words the boy, completely healed, immediately arose and hastened after the Saint to the chapel.

Around the year 1730, when her 100th birthday was not far off, the mother of the above-mentioned Joseph Karski related to Fr. Wyszynski another “miraculous” incident which had occurred at about the same time.

As a young woman she had a dog of which she was extremely fond. She would play with it, pet it, kiss it, allow it to lick her face, and even to eat off the same plate with her.

As we have already mentioned, Fr. Stanislaus went to Lubocz from time to time to hear confessions and celebrate Mass. Mrs. Karski goes on to tell us that on such occasions he would reproach her for “being over-fond of the dog.” He would explain to her that it was not fitting that a dog should eat off the same plate as a person created in the image and likeness of God; and that she, who received Holy Communion so often, should not permit an animal to lick the lips that received the Eucharist. These and similar admonitions had no effect. Mrs. Karski merely regarded them as the usual scruples of a saintly priest, and she continued to lavish affection on the dog.

At last one day, when Fr. Papczynski had come to carry out his usual pastoral duties, he saw Mrs. Karski, who was then expecting a child, petting the dog, and he warned her to desist, lest God should punish her by permitting her child to be born a “monstrosity.” She paid not the slightest attention to the warning, but continued to pet the dog which was in her arms.

Seeing this, Fr. Stanislaus shouted at the dog: “Down, dog!” Strangely enough, the dog obeyed him and fixed his eyes on the Saint as if awaiting a further command. Nor was he wrong, for Fr. Stanislaus’s next words were, “Die, dog!” And at that moment “the dog fell, and with his paws convulsively scraping the ground, he died.”

The amazement of those who had witnessed the scene was boundless. “And I,” the aged Mrs. Karski concludes, “trembling with fear, fell at the feet of Fr. Stanislaus and begged his forgiveness for not heeding his admonitions. This is why all of us at the court held him in the highest esteem and considered him a saint.”





While Fr. Papczynski was laying the foundations of his Congregation in the forest of Korabiew, his guardian and immediate ecclesiastical Superior, Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski, was carrying out, in another section of his diocese, a bold and pious plan for commemorating the various scenes of Our Lord's Passion.

With this purpose in mind, he had purchased a hamlet called Gora near Czersk, not far from Warsaw. In 1670, he received the King's permission, and the rights which went with it, to build a new town there, to be called the "New Jerusalem" (it is today known as "Gora Kalwaria" or "Calvary Hill"). In accordance with his plan, the bishop began to build chapels, churches, and Stations of the Cross similar to those in the real Jerusalem, for he wanted the "New" Jerusalem to be a copy, a duplicate, of the "Old."

One memorable ceremony that took place at this time was the transfer of the body of St. Valerian from Rome to New Jerusalem. The relics of the martyred Saint, the spouse of St. Cecilia, were carried in solemn procession to a church that had recently been built to represent Solomon's Temple. From that time onwards, St. Valerian became the patron of the Land of Czersk, "against pestilence."

Meanwhile, the rapidly growing New Jerusalem attracted pilgrims in ever increasing numbers. To minister to the spiritual needs of the faithful and to look after the many churches and shrines, Bishop Wierzbowski enlisted the help of various religious communities, including the Franciscan Fathers, the Oratorians, the Piarists, the Dominican Fathers, and the Dominican Nuns.

In 1677, he also decided to make use of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception. He did not hesitate to invite this newly founded community to New Jerusalem since – as he himself was to declare later – he had been so deeply impressed by the “rigorous and exemplary life” led by Fr. Papczynski at the Korabiew hermitage.

The bishop entrusted to Fr. Stanislaus the Chapel of the Last Supper, otherwise known as the Cenacle. The Marians, who established themselves in an adjoining, modest monastery, were to accompany the pilgrims from the Cenacle “along the way of Our Lord’s Passion.”





The fields adjacent to the Cenacle also belonged to the Mari-ans. They were, however, in a deplorable condition and could hardly be turned to any useful purpose. In fact, most of the land consisted of swampy hollows, and what the act of donation pompously called “the lake” (lacus) was nothing more than a morass.

When Fr. Papczynski arrived at the Cenacle in 1677, with a few companions, he made it his first concern to improve the modest holdings of the community. Before anything else could be done, he and his companions would have to drain the morass. They accordingly set to work and dug ponds that could be stocked with fish. Before long the land became practically unrecognizable. The water had been drained away from the swamps, the “lake” had become a meadow, and a good part of the land round the Cenacle was now tillable.

All this the Marians had done with their own hands, during the time free from obligatory devotions and pastoral work.

Strangely enough, the improvements accomplished by the Mari-ans only excited the envy of some of their neighbors, who began to lay claim to the drained land, maintaining that the Marians only had a right to the fields in question while they were in there original condition – in other words, completely useless. Some of the local people raided the fields and woods, causing serious damage.

Most of the abuse, of course, was directed against Fr. Stanislaus, since he vigorously defended the rights of his community. Yet he bore the abuse and persecution patiently and quietly, even joyously, with forgiveness in his heart and on his lips.

A herdsman who had made a physical attack on Fr. Stanislaus fell seriously ill shortly afterwards. Through his master he begged Fr. Stanislaus for forgiveness, which he at once received, and his health with it!

According to tradition, Fr. Stanislaus was not only Bishop Wierzbowski's confessor but also his trusted adviser on various matters connected with the planning and execution of his favorite project – New Jerusalem. The Saint, therefore, must have been a frequent guest at the bishop's town residence. But we know also that occasionally Bishop Wierzbowski himself went to see Fr. Papczynski at the Cenacle monastery.

Arriving there on one of his visits, the bishop found Fr. Stanislaus so ill that he appeared to be at the point of death. The bishop went up to his bed and, touching him gently on the shoulder, said, "Fr. Stanislaus, you will not die. You will live!" At these words, Fr. Stanislaus, completely restored to health, rose from his bed and was able to accompany his visitor to the door when the time came for him to leave the Cenacle.





On another occasion, Fr. Stanislaus sent Br. Kuczewski to Czersk on an errand. The Brother was to settle a certain matter and return at once to the Cenacle. He could quite easily have been back at the appointed hour had he not taken it upon himself to “go begging.” Father Papczynski, his Superior, had not given him permission to do so, but as he explained when he returned late to the Cenacle, he had felt that, being in the city, he ought to take advantage of the opportunity. The Mar-ians could certainly use the funds.

The Brother handed the money that he had collected to Fr. Stanislaus. He could not believe his eyes when he saw the Saint throw it into the pond, and his amazement increased when, just at the place where the money had fallen, the water began to boil as if there were a fire beneath it. Father Stanislaus said to the terrified Brother, “Just as that water appears to be boiling, so will your soul burn in purgatory.” By such object lessons did Fr. Stanislaus attempt to instill into his subjects a true appreciation of the principles of poverty and obedience.



Such lessons must have been effective, for almost all the early Marians who had received their initial training under the personal guidance and direction of Fr. Papczynski attained a high degree of perfection in the practice of the interior life and the religious virtues. These early disciples included Fr. Stanislaus of St. Ann, Fr. Joseph of All Saints, Fr. Cyprian of St. Stanislaus, Fr. Constantine of St. Michael, Fr. Peter, and Br. Anthony Cinski. There were others mentioned by the witnesses at the beatification process of Fr. Stanislaus.

Bishop Wierzbowski was quite aware that this spiritual progress was to be attributed in great measure to the direction of Fr. Stanislaus. Consequently, when the Dominican nuns whose convent was but a short distance from the Cenacle asked him to appoint a Spiritual Director for them, he did not have to reflect long. At once, he entrusted them to the care of Fr. Stanislaus.

From that time onwards, the Saint held regular conferences for the nuns, heard their confessions and was generally available for spiritual advice and direction. God blessed his work. For as the witnesses at his Beatification Process testify, the nuns made great progress under his able guidance and saintly direction. Many of them even attained a high degree of perfection.

It was the yearly custom in New Jerusalem to hold a solemn procession, on the Feast of the Assumption from the Church of the Dominican Fathers to that of the Piarists. It was also customary for the procession to stop at the Chapel of the Last Supper to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion. The preacher was usually Fr. Papczynski.

On these occasions a pulpit was set up outside the small chapel. One year as Fr. Stanislaus ascended it to pour forth his own love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary into the hearts of his hearers, he saw a dark rain-cloud rapidly approaching.

What was he to do? Only a very small number of those present would be able to shelter from the storm in the chapel itself. The anxious people were about to disperse when they were suddenly stopped by the firm and resolute voice of Fr. Stanislaus: "Don't be afraid! Not a drop of rain will fall upon you from that cloud. Stay and listen to the sermon!"

It was a strange sight that met the people's eyes. To their stunned amazement one sign of the cross made by the Saint in the direction of the rain-cloud dispersed it immediately. Not one drop of rain fell upon the faithful gathered together. Father Stanislaus went on to deliver his sermon in accordance with the program. Need we add that in the circumstances it must have been an unusually effective one?



Father Stanislaus's apostolic zeal was not confined to the faithful who visited the Cenacle. He frequently visited the surrounding and outlying parishes and assisted the pastors by hearing confessions, preaching and catechizing. His zeal, perseverance, and dedication to the welfare of souls – particularly those of the simple folk – were unsurpassed.

The Saint was always ready to preach at parish feasts and festivals. He would walk long distances in order to show fatherly kindness to the poor and socially wronged who stood in such dire need of comfort and help. How many souls he thus brought closer to God, what peace and concord he spread around him – this is something that God alone knows.

When Fr. Papczynski paid his first visit to the parish church at Jasieniec, he found it an almost complete ruin. The pastor of this poor parish had no means of undertaking the necessary repairs. When Fr. Stanislaus suggested the building of a completely new church, he shook his head in resigned hopelessness.

Father Papczynski, apparently with the pastor's reluctant consent, addressed a fervent appeal to parishioners, urging them to shoulder the task themselves. He was the first to make a sizable donation to the building fund. The work was begun. In quite a short time the people's enthusiasm for this common venture infected even the pastor. When funds ran low, Fr. Stanislaus himself went begging.

It is not surprising, then, that when the new church was finally completed, Fr. Papczynski remained in the memory of a grateful people as its principal architect.





The first biographer of the Saint tells us that he possessed the gift of “healing various illnesses, fevers, and headaches.” Father Stanislaus had his own peculiar way of producing the desired effect. He would trace the sign of the cross on the forehead, lips, and breast of the sick person, saying as he did so: “May the Cross † and the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ † bring you health of soul and body † Amen.” Then he would bless the liquid refreshment to be given to the patient, saying: “God the Father is life † God the Son is remedy † God the Holy Spirit is health † This is the sublime and undivided Trinity, Father † Son † and Holy Spirit † Amen.”

Those sick in either soul or body were brought to him from far and wide. He was also always ready to visit the sick in their own homes. As we know from statements made by witnesses to the beatification process, he brought them “health in their illnesses and solace in their grief” by his prayers.

As Fr. Stanislaus always attributed these cures to the intercession of St. Raphael the Archangel, the faithful surrounded the altar of St. Raphael in the Cenacle with numerous silver votive offerings and other tokens of thanksgiving in gratitude for the favors they had received.

Tradition tells us that at one time the proprietress of an estate (Cedrowice) bordering on the New Jerusalem behaved unjustly towards the Marians. Immediately afterwards, her daughter fell gravely ill. The despairing mother hastened to the Dominican Fathers and begged them to pray for her child. Despite their prayers the girl grew steadily worse. “Go,” said the Fathers, “to that wonder-worker Stanislaus, the Marian.”

Father Stanislaus met the woman as she entered the Cenacle, and at once said to her: “I know why you are here. Go home; your daughter is dead.” Nevertheless, he told her to have the girl’s body brought to the chapel, and on the following day when it had been taken to the Cenacle, he had it laid on the table which commemorated the Last Supper. He then told the mother to go to confession while he himself immediately began to offer the Mass at the altar of St. Raphael the Archangel.

Suddenly during the Mass, in the sight of all present, the girl came to life, sat up and held out her arms towards the altar.... When after the Mass the joyful mother was about to fall on her knees in gratitude before the Saint, he immediately sent her to the altar of St. Raphael.



Such incidents could not fail to spread the name and fame of Fr. Stanislaus throughout the surrounding countryside. Little wonder then that the King himself, John III Sobieski, heard of his presence at New Jerusalem. In all probability it was Bishop Wierzbowski, whom the King had visited there on more than one occasion, who gave him this information.

Father Papczynski was not a complete stranger to Sobieski, who was often in Warsaw during the reign of John Casimir and had thus been able from time to time to profit by his advice in the confessional and to hear his sermons. Moreover, when in 1677, Sobieski (by now King of Poland) took the newly-formed religious community in the Korabiew Forest under his own protection and that of the Polish Republic, he came to know Fr. Papczynski as the venerable Founder of the Marian Fathers.

Now as he listened to the praises heaped upon the Marians by the bishop and learned of their exemplary life and the marvelous results of their work, the King resolved to give new proofs of his favor to Fr. Stanislaus's Institute. The opening words of a document dated June 2, 1679, and signed by King Sobieski at New Jerusalem, express the King's desire to aid "the souls suffering unbearable pain in purgatory." He, therefore, took the Marians, who "in so many ways help the faithful departed," under his special protection, confirmed and added to the privileges bestowed on them by his predecessors, guaranteed the peace and inviolability of the Congregation, and made an additional grant of land "in perpetuity" to the community in the Korabiew Forest. Finally, the King expressed his wish and his permission for this "most pious Institute" to spread to other parts of his Kingdom.





The documentary evidence tells us nothing more about the relationship between King Sobieski and the Marian Fathers. As regards his personal relationship with Fr. Papczynski, there seems to be little doubt that King Sobieski knew of and highly valued the spiritual and intellectual acumen of the Saint and that he sought his advice on spiritual matters not only by means of letters but also through personal contact. We know for a fact that the King paid occasional visits to New Jerusalem, and at such times it is very probable that he not only went to confession to Fr. Stanislaus but discussed certain problems with him outside the confessional. There is no reason to doubt the tradition which says that Sobieski, as he set out for Vienna in the defense of Christendom, commended himself and his armies to the prayers of Saint Father Stanislaus.

It would be difficult to substantiate in any wider sense the statements that Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski was the King's "personal theologian," the King's confessor, that the King looked upon him as a saintly man, and maintained close and friendly relations with him (based on articles and witnesses at the beatification process.)

Ever since the foundation of the Congregation of Marian Fathers in 1673, Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski had shown himself deeply interested in the welfare of the young community. He erected it canonically in 1679, he defended it against all attack, and he saw to it that its legal position was secure. Documents from the years 1681, 1685, and 1687 bear witness to the bishop's kindness and solicitude. The last of these documents, dated February 21, is a solemn confirmation and reaffirmation of the canonical act of erection. That very same day the bishop, then seriously ill, drew up his last will and testament.

Father Papczynski visited the bishop on his deathbed and begged for a last paternal blessing on his community. He received it. "And in my will," added the dying prelate, "I have left you Marians only one thing: Divine Providence."

Father Leporini – the first biographer of the Saint – adds that on hearing these words Fr. Stanislaus "was overjoyed and blessed the Lord." He had always greatly valued religious poverty with the boundless confidence in Divine Providence which it implied, and he now felt that the Founder of New Jerusalem, the solicitous protector of the Marian Fathers, could not have bequeathed a more precious legacy to the Congregation than the Providence of God.

From that day onwards, he began to recite twice daily one *Our Father* and one *Hail Mary* in honor of the Providence of God, and he recommended that this practice should be observed by the community for all time.





The small group of Marians went through a difficult time after the death of Bishop Wierzbowski. Their opponents now began openly to urge the new Ordinary, Bishop Stanislaus Witwicki, to suppress the small community. The danger for a time was indeed real. The new bishop, already somewhat prejudiced against the Marians, seemed to lend a willing ear to the calumnious accusations made against them.

In 1688, faced with the hostile attitude of the bishop, his superior, Fr. Papczynski began to wonder whether God wanted this undertaking of his to continue. He was even ready, if God so willed, to return to the Piarists.

In time, however, Bishop Witwicki came to see that all the accusations against the Marians were unfounded, and his own attitude to the Fathers gradually changed. He was finally quite won over when in 1690, Fr. Stanislaus dedicated his book, entitled *The Suffering Christ (Christus Patiens)*, to him.

Nevertheless, the difficulties experienced by the Marians at this time served to remind them how uncertain was the future of a religious community founded on diocesan statutes alone.

Consequently, in 1690, the Saint went to Rome in the hope of obtaining apostolic (i.e., papal) approbation for his Institute. It was a difficult, tiring, and uncertain venture, yet one that he deemed absolutely necessary, for only apostolic approbation would assure the Congregation of the stability and security that it needed and enable it to look forward to growth and development.



In spite of his advanced age Fr. Papczynski – always a great lover of religious poverty – made his journey to Rome “on foot, living on alms all the way.”

In May 1668, the Papal Nuncio Marescotti had traveled along the same road from Rome to Poland – although in his case, by carriage, not on foot. The interesting description that he wrote of the journey gives us a vivid picture of its hardships and dangers – and much worse these must have been to a poor man traveling alone on foot – such as the long stretches of road where even food was almost unobtainable, the difficulty, especially for a priest, in finding a suitable lodging; the tracts of forest overrun by thieves and robbers; other areas briefly described as “dangerous” (*passo pericoloso*), even “deadly” (*passo della morte*). Father Stanislaus made his journey in late autumn when the rainy season made the roads still more hazardous. Yet – staff in hand and regardless of hunger, cold, rain and mud – he pushed on.

In his biography of the Saint, Fr. Leporini tells us that on one occasion he slipped and fell into a deep bog from which he was miraculously saved by a saint of the Order of St. Francis.

After many arduous weeks, Fr. Papczynski finally reached Rome. Unfortunately, he arrived there shortly after the death of Pope Alexander VIII (February 1, 1691), and before a new successor had been elected to the See of Peter. To obtain the desired papal approbation of his Congregation, Fr. Stanislaus had no choice but to await in Rome the election of a new Pope. In the meantime, he made many pilgrimages to the various churches of Rome and its vicinity and spent much time in prayer at the tombs of the Apostles and Martyrs.

One day – according to Fr. Leporini – as he knelt in prayer at the tomb of Pope Innocent XI (who in 1681 had granted various indulgences to the Marians and permitted them to establish in their churches the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception for helping the souls in purgatory), “he received an interior revelation” that Cardinal Anthony Pignatelli would be elected Pope at the Conclave then in session.

And this, indeed, came to pass, for the Cardinal – who as Papal Nuncio in Warsaw had been the penitent of the Saint – was raised to the See of Peter under the name of Innocent XII.



Unfortunately, in spite of his intentions and earnest wishes, Fr. Stanislaus was not to witness the election of the successor to Alexander VIII. For some time his health had been steadily failing him. He delayed his departure as long as he could, knowing that at any time now the new Pope might be elected. When the first heat of summer began in Rome, his health became so much worse that the doctor advised him to return to Poland. Toward the end of June Fr. Stanislaus began the long journey home.

Before leaving Rome, he obtained the much-valued “affiliation” of his Institute with a number of other Orders, and established contacts which enabled him in the following year to send a formal petition to the Holy See requesting apostolic approbation of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, “helpers of the dead.” But he knew that unless he himself were in Rome to see to these affairs, he could not entertain much hope of success. It was with a heavy heart, therefore, that he left Rome for Poland on his way back to the confreres who had placed such high hopes on his visit to the Eternal City.

Three years after his return to New Jerusalem, Fr. Stanislaus received from Rome his Constitutions (*The Norm of Life*), amended by Cardinal Colloredo and accompanied by the information that “episcopal approbation is sufficient for the Congregation of Marian Fathers.”





Though he himself lived in extreme poverty, Fr. Stanislaus was ever ready to extend a helping hand to the sick and the poor. He loved Christ's poor; his charity towards them was unfailing and he seized every available means of alleviating their poverty and wretchedness.

Bishop Wierzbowski, too, had always been a great friend of the poor. When the good bishop died it was they, of all the inhabitants of New Jerusalem, who felt his loss the most. The building of a Home for the Aged Poor, which began when he was in authority, was abandoned after his death. To make matters worse, anyone in need of building materials simply helped himself to such parts of the Home as were already in place, thus almost completely dismantling it.

These thefts ceased only after Fr. Stanislaus and his companions took upon themselves the reconstruction and completion of the Home. It is not surprising, therefore, that those suddenly deprived of the opportunity of stealing the materials did all they could to obstruct the work. They jeered, mocked, and ridiculed him, singing derisive songs: "*Stanislaus in the white sack, Founder of venerable farm hands.*"

Nothing, however, could deter the Saint. The building was completed and given over to the poorest of God's poor.



Tradition has preserved for us a number of examples of Father Papczynski's gift of prophecy. These predictions, improbable as they appeared at the time, were fulfilled in every detail years later.

In the autumn of 1697, King August II, on his way back to Warsaw from his coronation in Cracow, spent a night with his retinue at New Jerusalem. Among the many who were then received in audience by the King was Fr. Stanislaus.

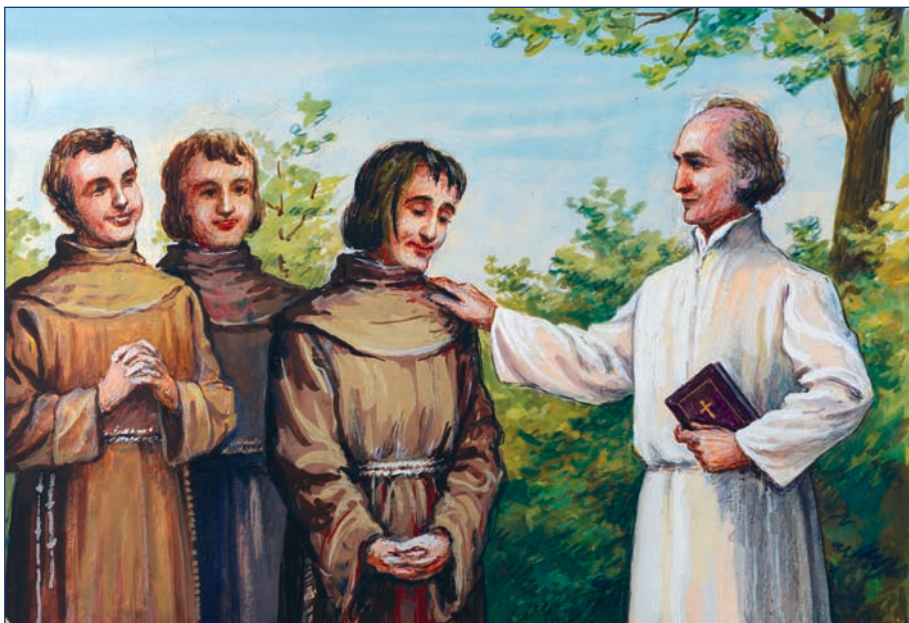
After the audience, the Saint happened to overhear a chance remark made by one of a group of the senators who had accompanied the King: "Yes, we chose him as our King, and it was a good choice; but he will not live long; he is too fat!" On hearing this, Fr. Stanislaus said to them: "My Lords, you are mistaken. The King will live a long time. He will live for as many years as I have here golden coins that he gave me."

Thereupon he opened his hand and began to count the coins that he had just received from the King. There were thirty-five of them. King August lived exactly thirty-five years after this incident!

In 1698, Fr. Papczynski attended the funeral of a certain nobleman by the name of Karczewski at Kolbiel, not far from New Jerusalem. There he met some seminarians of the Friars Minor who had been sent from Warsaw to help with the services. Among them was a theological student, James Wolski.

Wolski and Fr. Stanislaus had never met before. The student was, therefore, utterly amazed when the Saint, meeting him in the parish rectory, clasped his head in his hands and whispered into his ear, “And you, my dear young man, will one day be the Provincial Superior of your Order.”

“He said the same thing about me to my fellow students and companions,” Wolski later testified. “They laughed at me and, as a joke, kept calling me Fr. Provincial.” Twenty-one years later, Fr. James Wolski was elected Provincial Superior of the Franciscan Friars Minor in Warsaw.





In 1699, the Marians established themselves at Gozlin, about six miles from New Jerusalem. The monastery and church there were presented to the Marian Fathers by John Lasocki of Glew. The donor was motivated “by the pure intention of promoting God’s glory and the honor of the immaculately Conceived B.V.M., and of helping the souls in purgatory, (especially) those forgotten by others.”

According to tradition, Fr. Stanislaus took to the new church at Gozlin a picture of Our Lady that had belonged to his family, and under which he had been born and received his early training. It had undoubtedly also been instrumental in arousing in him that tender love of and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin that were so characteristic of him.

From the moment of its installation in the church at Gozlin, this picture of Our Lady became the center of numerous pilgrimages and Marian devotions, and even acquired the reputation of possessing miraculous powers. The many votive offerings and tokens of thanksgiving surrounding the picture are evidence of the people’s gratitude for the favors they had received. To this day, the picture is known affectionately as “Our Lady of Gozlin.”

Father Papczynski had decided to make one more attempt to obtain papal approbation of his Congregation. As he was not himself capable of making the arduous journey, he entrusted the mission to Fr. Joachim of St. Ann Kozlowski, who had been his companion on his visit to Rome in 1690-91. Probably in the autumn of 1698, Fr. Stanislaus bade farewell, with the sign of the cross and a prayer, to Fr. Joachim and his companion, Brother Anthony Cinski.

It is unnecessary to add that the Saint spent much time in prayer for the success of the mission, and that he anxiously awaited a favorable reply from Rome. He knew how much depended on this reply – the stabilization of the entire Congregation, its rapid growth, and its security.





The first messages from Fr. Joachim were not encouraging. Shortly after his arrival in the Eternal City, he went to the Vatican and was there directed by one of the imposing halberded guards to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious. He made his way slowly up the magnificent staircase, was received by the authorities, and presented his petition. He did not have to wait long for an answer, but that answer was negative. He was told that under existing ecclesiastical law (dating from the year 1215), no new Institute could receive papal approbation.

It was then that someone advised him to appeal against the decision, having first obtained letters of recommendation from highly placed persons, both clerical and lay, in Poland. Equipped – after some delay – with these documents, he again presented himself to the Sacred Congregation. Again his petition was refused. There seemed to be no other course left to him: He would have to agree to the “incorporation” of the Marian Fathers into one of the existing Orders.

Father Francis Diaz, a Franciscan, suggested that the Marian Fathers should adopt the Rule of the Ten Virtues of Our Blessed Lady. Father Joachim agreed that the Marian character of his Institute would seem to favor this step. By accepting this Rule, he automatically agreed to the incorporation of the Marian Fathers into the great Franciscan Family to which all Institutes following the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* belonged.

The carrying out of this incorporation met with no obstacles. On September 21, 1699, Fr. Joachim obtained the official act of incorporation of the Marian Fathers into the Order of Friars. On November 24 of the same year, Pope Innocent XII officially approved the act. The Marian Fathers thus finally obtained the papal approbation so ardently desired by Fr. Papczynski, and it became an Order with solemn vows.

It was probably in the spring of 1701 that Fr. Joachim returned to Poland from Rome and handed over to Fr. Papczynski the new Rule, the Papal Decree, and the Act of Incorporation.

The joy of the Saint was for a moment mingled with sadness: his own Constitutions – *The Norm of Life* – had not received papal approbation. In fact, Fr. Joachim had not even sought it for them, as he thought that a religious Institute which had a *Rule* had no need of *Constitutions*.

The disappointment was acute, but Fr. Stanislaus' customary trust in Divine Providence soon dispelled all fear and uncertainty. As he carefully read the *Rule of the Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary*, he found himself greatly drawn to it, and expressed his willingness to pronounce his solemn vows upon this *Rule*.

On June 6, 1701, Fr. Papczynski made his solemn profession in Warsaw, in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio, Francis Pignatelli: "I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, unworthy Superior of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary [...] to observe throughout my entire life the Rule of the Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary [...] living in chastity, obedience and holy poverty [...]"

A month later, on the authorization of the Apostolic Nuncio, Fr. Stanislaus received the solemn profession of his confreres. The small chapel of the Cenacle resounded with a hymn of thanksgiving – *Te Deum Laudamus*.





For some time Fr. Papczynski's health had been failing rapidly. In December 1692 – a year after his return from Rome – he was so close to death that he made his will. Knowing however, that he was still needed by the little Community (the more so as it had not yet received papal approbation), he vowed to go on a pilgrimage – probably to the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa – if his Immaculate Patroness, Our Lady Queen of Poland, restored his health.

He rallied for awhile and in the summer of the following year fulfilled his promise to Our Lady. However, in the winter of 1699, he apparently became seriously ill again, for he drew up a second will in which he wrote: “In a spirit of profound reverence, I commend this small Congregation, of which I am the unworthy Superior, to my Lord Jesus Christ and to the Most Elect Lady, Mary His Virgin Mother, as the true and only Founders, Directors, Defenders, and Patrons of this little Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, the helper of the faithful departed [...]. Pray for me, and I, having by your help obtained Divine Mercy, will pray for you.”

He rallied once again, but not for long. In April 1701, having made an addition to his will, he was so weak that, as he wrote himself, he signed it with a “failing hand.”

In July of the same year, it required a great effort on his part to receive the solemn profession of his subjects. Having done so, he handed them his will, which was a summary of the principles by which he had lived, of the truths that he had believed, and of the undertakings that he had accomplished. It was, moreover, an expression of his concern for the preservation and growth of the work to which God had called him, and which with God's grace he had begun.

In August 1701, Fr. Stanislaus was forced by illness to take to his bed, from which he was not to rise again. He was fully aware that he was dying, and now that the Congregation had received its papal approbation, was ready to depart from this life in peace. From the lips of this fervent Knight of the Immaculate Virgin, exhausted as he was by his labors for God and His Church, worn away by voluntary mortification and the fever now consuming him, there burst forth the words of Simeon: “Now Thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace” (Luke 2:9).

Racked with pain he, nevertheless, bore his sufferings patiently, and with complete submission to God’s will. When the pain became particularly acute, he would say, according to his custom, “Increase, O Lord, my sufferings, that You may diminish the punishment of the souls in purgatory.”

On September 17, the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, it was evident that the end was fast approaching. Father Stanislaus was growing steadily weaker. The Marians at the Cenacle – his spiritual sons – gathered around his bed. Humbly he made his confession, received the Viaticum, and was anointed.

As for the last time he blessed his confreres, he urged them to persevere in the observance of the *Rule* and the *Constitutions*, and to show special zeal on behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory.

Grasping his crucifix and kissing it tenderly, he died peacefully with the words of the Savior on his lips: “Into Thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.”



The news of Fr. Stanislaus's death spread rapidly through New Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside. The clergy, religious and the faithful made their way in great numbers to the Cenacle to pay their last respects to one who had been so good to them, who had helped them so much in so many ways, and who had sacrificed himself unstintingly for their welfare. They gathered around his body with tears in their eyes as they bade farewell to the Father whom they had always looked upon as a saint.

With deep sorrow they lamented the loss of “a man so holy, the father of the poor and of orphans, the comforter of grief-stricken hearts, the one to whom they had always turned for advice.” They commended themselves, their families, and all their affairs to his prayers before the throne of God. Those who had been guided by his advice in the confessional found it difficult to imagine a future without him.

One thought alone brought some solace to their sad hearts – “That the Saint had chosen for himself the best part, and that it would not be taken away from him.”





Father Papczynski was buried in New Jerusalem (known today as “Calvary Hill” – Gora Kalwaria) in the little church of the Cenacle.


Four years after his burial the grave was reopened. “It is amazing,” writes Fr. Leporini, who was apparently present at the time, “that the coffin, which had been buried in wet soil, had decayed completely, but the body [...] and habit were quite undamaged.”

In time, however, the moisture that seeped into the foundations of the Cenacle from the marshy land on which it had been built caused the body to decay. In 1740, Fr. Casimir Wyszynski had the bones dug up and put in a new coffin. Around the year 1766, this coffin was enclosed in a brick tomb or sepulcher on the left or gospel side of the high altar.

The memory of the Saint continued to be revered by the faithful. Many graces were attributed to his intercession, and his tomb at the Cenacle became a place of pilgrimage. So it is today, for his reputation for sanctity has never died out.

For various reasons, Fr. Stanislaus Papczynski’s beatification process, started in 1767, was interrupted in 1775. The political situation in Poland

of the following decades did not allow for its reopening, which was made possible only in 1952. On June 13, 1992, Saint John Paul II issued a decree on Fr. Papczynski's heroic virtues. The decree states: "It is considered to be a certain thing that the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, and other virtues associated with these to a heroic degree." By his Apostolic Letter of September 12, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI approved the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus, which was solemnly performed at the Marian Shrine in Lichen (Poland) by the papal legate, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., Secretary of State, acting on his behalf. On June 5, 2016, Blessed Fr. Stanislaus was canonized in Rome by Pope Francis.



IRBS WARSOVIA
fait d. 22-Jul-1636.

"In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified. Amen.

I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski, in the flesh, son of Thomas of Podegrodzie, of the Diocese of Cracow, being 40 years of age, offer and consecrate to god the Father Almighty, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in like manner to the Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, my heart, my soul, intellect, memory, will, feelings, whole mind, whole soul, interior and exterior senses, and my body, leaving absolutely nothing for myself, so that henceforth I may be the servant of the Almighty and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

Therefore, I promise Them that I will serve to the end of my life in chastity and in zeal, this Company of Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception (which, by the grace of God, I intend to found). Further, I will accommodate my manner of life to its laws, decrees, and rites (...)."

From the Act of Oblation made by St. Stanislaus Papczynski in Kazimierz near Krakow, on December 11, 1670.



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