

# Saint Stanislaus of Krakow

1030 - 1079

PURGATORY

Saint Stanislaus was born at Szczepanow in Poland in 1030. After undertaking his primary studies with the Benedictines of Krakow, he finished the rest of them in Belgium, in the renowned intellectual center of Liege. Upon his return to Poland, he distinguished himself for his pastoral zeal and for the tasks he carried out with charity and wisdom. After the death of the Bishop of Krakow, Pope Alexander II named him his successor to the Episcopal See. At first Stanislaus was in accord with King Boleslaus II, later as a result of the immoral conduct of the sovereign, he excommunicated the king. In the year 1070 the king had succeeded in turning against Saint Stanislaus the heirs of a certain Peter Miles, who had died three years earlier leaving one of his lands as an inheritance to the Church. The heirs, confident in the king's support, initiated a trial against the Saint, and by corrupting and intimidating the witnesses, obtained the conviction of Stanislaus and the recovery of the inheritance. The Saint trusted in God and succeeded in having his conviction suspended, by promising to have the deceased man himself appear as witness. After three days of fasts and prayers, the Bishop went to the tomb of Peter Miles with the entire clergy, and

ordered that it be opened. Finding only bones and dust, the heirs felt sure of their victory, when the Saint ordered the corpse to rise in the name of Christ. At once those bones drew near each other, rejoined themselves, were covered by flesh, and in front of many people the dead man was revived and gave his hand to the Bishop. He arrived in front of King Boleslaus II and confirmed to be true his desire to donate the land to the Church. After Peter Miles had made his deposition, Saint Stanislaus asked him if he would have preferred to return to the tomb or to live a few more years on this earth. The deceased answered that even if he was in Purgatory, where he suffered much because of his numerous sins, he preferred to die instead of staying alive with the danger of being then damned forever. Thus he begged the Saint to pray for him, in order that he would be liberated sooner from the punishments. After his remains were brought again into the tomb, everything went back as before and the deceased man had peace.

King Boleslaus II put out an order to kill Saint Stanislaus at Krakow in the Church of Saint Michael, during the celebration of Mass. It seems that the murder in the cathedral was committed



by the king himself, since his guards had to retreat because they were hindered by a mysterious force. Saint Stanislaus died as a martyr and immediately his fame of sanctity spread throughout Poland. He was canonized by Innocent IV on August 17, 1253 in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. He was proclaimed patron of Poland and his remains were kept in the Cathedral of Krakow, which became a destination for pilgrimages.

