

the King punished the soldiers' faithless wives very cruelly and was criticized for it by Bishop Stanislaus. Jan Dlugosz, however, writes that the Bishop had in fact criticized the King for his own sexual immorality. Whatever the actual cause of the conflict between them, the result was that the Bishop excommunicated King Boleslaw. The excommunication aided the King's political opponents, and the King accused Bishop Stanislaus of treason and had him killed.

King Boleslaw sent his men to execute Bishop Stanislaus without a trial, but that when they dared not touch the Bishop, the king decided to kill the traitor himself. He is said to have slain Stanislaus while he was celebrating Mass in the Skalka outside the walls of Cracow. The Bishop's body was then hacked to pieces and thrown into a pool outside the church. According to the legend, his members miraculously reintegrated while the pool was guarded by four eagles. The exact date of Stanislaus' death is uncertain. According to different sources, it was either April 11 or May 8, 1079. The murder stirred outrage through the land and led to the dethronement of King Boleslaw II the Bold, who had to seek refuge in Hungary and was succeeded by his brother, Wladyslaw I Herman.

Whether Stanislaus should be regarded as a traitor or a hero, remains one of the classic unresolved questions of Polish history. Stanislaus' story has a parallel in the murder, nine decades later, in 1170, of Thomas Becket by henchmen of England's King Henry II.

\*excerpted from: //en.wikipedia.org; www.newadvent.org; www.catholic.org; and www.americancatholic.org)

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## Saint Stanislaus

**Bishop & Martyr**

**Feast Day April 11**



**Father, to honor You,  
St. Stanislaus faced martyrdom with courage.  
Keep us strong and loyal in our faith until death.  
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, for ever and ever. + Amen.**

## Saint Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr

\*Anyone who reads the history of Eastern Europe cannot help but chance on the name of Stanislaus, the saintly but tragic bishop of Cracow, patron of Poland. He is remembered with Saints Thomas More and Thomas Becket for vigorous opposition to the evils of an unjust government.

Stanislaus was born of noble parents on July 26, 1030 at Szczepanow near Cracow, Poland; he died at Cracow, 8 May, 1079; but his feast day is celebrated on 7 May in the Roman Martyrology, and on 8 May in Cracow, which has a special feast day of the translation of his relics on 27 September; patron of Poland and the city and Diocese of Cracow; invoked in battle.

He was educated at Gnesen and was ordained there. He was given a canonry by Bishop Lampert Zula of Cracow, who made him his preacher, and soon he became noted for his preaching. He became a much sought after spiritual adviser. He was successful in his reforming efforts, and in 1072 was named Bishop of Cracow after the death of Bishop Lambert. Only on the explicit command of Pope Alexander II did he accept the position.

Stanislaus' major accomplishments included bringing papal legates to Poland, and re-establishment of a metropolitan see in Gniezno (then Poland's capital). The latter was a precondition for Duke Boleslaw's coronation as king, which took place in 1076. Stanislaus then encouraged King Boleslaw to establish Benedictine monasteries to aid in the Christianization of Poland.

Stanislaus initial conflict with King Boleslaw was over a land

dispute. The Bishop had purchased for the diocese a piece of land on the banks of the Vistula River near Lublin from a certain Peter (*Piotr*), but after Piotr's death the land had been claimed by his family. The King ruled for the claimants, but--according to legend--Stanislaus resurrected Piotr so that he could confirm that he had sold the land to the Bishop.

According to Augustine Calmet, an 18<sup>th</sup>—century Bible scholar, Stanislaus asked the King for three days to produce his witness, Piotr. The King and the court were said to have laugh at the absurd request, but the King granted Stanislaus the three days. Stanislaus spent them in ceaseless prayer, then, dressed in full bishop's regalia, went with a procession to the cemetery where Piotr had been buried three years earlier. He had Piotr's grave dug up until his remains were discovered. Then, before a multitude of witness, Stanislaus bade Piotr rise, and Piotr did so.

Piotr was then dressed in a cloak and brought before King Boleslaw to testify on Stanislaus behalf. The dumbfounded court heard Piotr reprimand his three sons and testify that Stanislaus had indeed paid for the land. Unable to give any other verdict, the king dismissed the suit against the Bishop. Stanislaus asked Piotr whether or not he would like to remain alive but Piotr declined, and so was laid to rest once more in his grave and reburied.

A more substantial conflict with King Boleslaw arose after a prolonged war in Ruthenia, when weary warriors deserted home, alarmed at tidings that their overseers were taking over their estates and wives. According to Kadlubek,