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**Circular Letter on the Promulgation of the Formulary of the Holy Mass
for St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, Priest and Founder
of the Congregation of Marian Fathers**

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Introduction

The grace of the Canonization of Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papeczyński, our Father and Founder, which the Good God granted to our religious community, enabled us to petition the Holy See for our own liturgical texts for his liturgical commemoration on May 18th. The Superior General and his Council undertook the appropriate efforts even before the Canonization, performed by Pope Francis on June 5, 2016 at St. Peter's in the Vatican. Our Congregation's Liturgical Committee had prepared relevant proposals, which – after minor changes made by the General Council in its 108th session on May 23, 2016 – were submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on May 24, 2016. The initial texts prepared by the Liturgical Committee in Polish (for which I would hereby like to thank them), became the foundation for further work, performed directly under the direction of the aforesaid Congregation. In the meantime, the *lingua typica* had also changed: Latin became the language of the formulary of the Mass. During the work, which has lasted for several years and through multilateral deliberations on the texts – thanks to which it was possible to refine the theological and liturgical details – a formulary of the Mass was developed, which expresses the spirituality and charism of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. The supervision of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on this effort was expressed not only in their approving or changing phrases or words of the submitted materials, but also in suggesting some specific proposals. As a result, a multifaceted document was created which features more than just the typical traits of the Saint's spirituality, such as a special emphasis on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayers for the dead, and the apostolate among the poor and needy. The liturgical texts also contain references to characteristic features of some spiritual and pastoral concepts of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, such as, e.g., the new idea of the human person as a mystical temple of God. Of course, we are speaking here only about the formulary of the Mass: we still have to await the texts for the Liturgy of the Hours.

The approval of the liturgical texts was done in stages. First, on July 22, 2020 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments approved the formulary in Latin and Italian, and then on March 25, 2022 in English, French, Portuguese and Polish. Now, the formulary should be translated into the other languages of the countries where we serve. This responsibility falls



upon the local superiors, whom I urge to do so as soon as possible. Upon receiving at least two or three of these translations, the Superior General will present them to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for approval.

The promulgation of the formulary of the Holy Mass for St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, Priest and Founder, requires a brief commentary and provides an opportunity to point out at least a few distinguishing characteristics in which the Saint is depicted.

I. General observations

1. The formulary is approved for the Solemnity of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, Priest and Founder of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the aforesaid Congregation, that is, for us, the spiritual sons of our holy Father Founder, the members the community he founded and the faithful under our care.
2. Consequently, specific terminology was used, appropriate for this type of formulary, such as, for example: the phrase “our Father, Saint Stanislaus” (*patrem nostrum, sanctum Stanislaum*); this kind of phrase is often used by older religious communities, among which we may now definitely count our own Congregation (after all, we celebrate the 350th Anniversary of its origin); likewise, the name of the Saint – his full Church name – is “Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary.”
3. The fact of the approval of the formulary for the Solemnity of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, Priest and Founder on May 18th also allows for its use on other days and under special circumstances, which includes its use in compliance with the general liturgical regulations in churches or chapels not belonging to the Congregation of the Marian Fathers.
4. The formulary of the Mass comes together with approved readings, which help us to see and understand the person of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary from the perspective of the Word of God. They expand the theological and spiritual perception of his life and explain the inspirations of his choices. They also help us to see ourselves in the light of God and they provide a deeper understanding of our spiritual identity. These readings are inseparably linked with the formulary and cannot be changed at will.

II. The Profile of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary contained in the formulary of the Holy Mass

The reading of the formulary of the Mass allows one to grasp the main traits of the spirituality in which St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary is presented. Indeed, the main concern of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments was to capture his spiritual profile and not the spirituality of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers which he founded. For it is a person who is canonized, and not an institute. Likewise, the Congregation made sure that the liturgical texts were not oriented towards the mysteries of the Faith, but towards



the person – whether divine or human. It is not the mystery that saves, but it is God; it is a person and not someone's example that intercedes for us nor someone's conduct that attracts us; in short, the mystery of salvation always has a personal character and references.

1. The love of the Mother of God in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception – the Collect

The central formulary prayer, which is the Collect, presents St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary as a person filled by God with the special grace of loving the Mother of our Lord in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. The Collect defines God's action as "providential," thus referring on the one hand, to our holy Father Founder's personal experience of being guided by Divine Providence, which he frequently expressed in his writings; and on the other hand, we can trace here his experience of Faith in relation to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary which was proclaimed by the Church nearly 200 years later. What is more: already at that time, during the act of the *Oblatio*, Father Stanislaus made a so-called vow of blood, that is, he declared his readiness to give his life in defense of this truth of the Faith.

At first glance, the Collect seems to present the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of the Lord in a way which theology calls negative, i.e. it focuses on Mary's being preserved from all stain of sin by the power of God's pre-emptive grace (*quam, tua grátia praeveniénte, ab omni labe præservásti*). This approach agrees with the classical formula of the immaculist doctrine used by Pius IX in his brief *Ineffabilis Deus*, proclaiming the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was undoubtedly dear to our holy Father Founder. However, this Collect is not limited to this aspect and contextually implies Mary's holiness throughout her life. The prayer concludes with words that inspire us to live in holiness; implicitly: Mary's holiness, as a positive response to the gift of her immaculate, that is, holy conception, is our motive for striving for holiness. The differences consist in the beginning and the scale of the sanctification: in Mary's case, it is her conception and mission to be the Mother of the Son of God; in our case, it is the grace of holy Baptism with the task of becoming sons in the Son.

2. The vision of man as a Temple of God – Prayer over the Gifts

The Eucharistic liturgy, which opens with the Preparation of the Gifts and the associated prayer, introduces two direct references to St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. First, the prayer refers to his piety, infused in him by God (*illum pietátis afféctum, quem sancto Stanisláo a Iesu et María infudísti*), and shows him to be a model for the celebration of the Eucharist; we are not only to draw from his example the motivation of appropriate attitudes, but above all, to implore God, the Giver of this pious attitude (*pietátis afféctum*), to grant it to us. The prayer makes a second reference to our holy Father Founder by recalling his anthropological



vision of the human person as a mystical temple of God, expressed in his theological and spiritual treatise (*Templum Dei Mysticum*), addressed to Christians of all states in the Church. The concluding petition, urging us to become a living temple of God's glory (*gloriae tuae vivum templum inveniri valeamus*), refers to this vision and inspires us to implement it not only during the celebration of the Eucharist, but also in everyday life.

3. The theological and spiritual vision of St. Stanislaus's life – the Preface

All of the good things that happened in the life of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary came from the Triune God and are oriented to God – this is the Preface's main theological thought, which is eminently Trinitarian in character. God the Father is the source of the Saint's calling to serve in the Church, because He kindled in the heart of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary a desire for consecration (*se tibi consecrandi infudisti propositum*). The Holy Spirit inspired him (*Spíritu Sancto afflante*) with the special grace to love the Immaculate Mother of the Lord – which is in the Collect – and to entrust himself to her (*Immaculatae Virgini Mariae totum se commendavit*) – which is in the Preface. Christ is a constant point of reference for St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, which bears the fruit of his conforming to Him (*Christo Filio tuo conformatus*) in his zealous service to the Church, especially to the poor and the deceased undergoing purification after death. The facts of our holy Father Founder's life known to us from his biography, the exemplary traits of his character, the deep spiritual aspirations animating him and the great zeal for the salvation of all, including those who have already left this earthly life, receive a theological and spiritual explanation in the Preface. God is at the beginning of all of the good in the life of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary and he discerned His mercy; for this reason, in his openness and docility to His actions, the Saint responds in faith. This response is not unlike God's action: it is marked by mercy and self-emptying. The presence of the Immaculately Conceived Mother of the Lord, to whom St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary entrusted himself completely, is clearly significant on this path of faith. Such a Saint is a glorification of God, and he invites us to conform ourselves to him by living in faith like him and by embracing his way of life dedicated to God.

4. The destiny of man is to participate in the eternal banquet of God – the Prayer after Communion

The eschatological aspect of Father Stanislaus's spirituality, which is also our legacy, resonated in the Prayer after Communion. The Eucharist is presented here as a pledge of eternal life (*aeternae pignus salutis*) thanks to which we already become partakers in the heavenly banquet (*caelestis convivii participes*). Although many formularies present a Prayer after Communion expressed in a similar way, in the case of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, this approach is of particular importance. The most extensive written work he left behind is a book of meditations entitled *Inspectio cordis*, centered mostly around Holy Communion and based on the biblical readings of the Holy Mass for the day. He presents the Eucharist as a banquet – the heavenly wedding feast to which the Immortal Bridegroom Himself invites us (*te hodie immortalis Sponsus ad nuptias invitat*



anima mea: ad nuptias caelestes). The way Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary lived out the Eucharist found expression in his life and in his writings and gave witness to his spiritual experience. This made him a participant at the heavenly banquet that he had already tasted on earth. The prayer at the end of the Eucharist invites us to imitate his way of life of faith and to bear witness to God's goodness.

Dear Confreres,

We are grateful to God for allowing our generation to see the Canonization of our Father and Founder, St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary and to now acquire the formulary of the Holy Mass for him. I encourage you to frequently use these liturgical texts, as long as the general liturgical regulations allow it. I also urge you to meditate on these liturgical texts, including the accompanying Word of God. The Church teaches us that "... the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. [...] for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*, Nos. 10, 14). Therefore, by celebrating the Holy Mass for St. Stanislaus, our Father and Founder, we will more profoundly understand his spirit, become imbued with it and discern his founding charism, which has already been imparted to us in the religious profession in our Congregation. Your personal meditation on the liturgical texts will help to form the spirituality proper to the Congregation that he founded. Furthermore, as is customary in many religious communities, in the Eucharistic liturgy, following the remembrance of the Saints, I recommend always adding the phrase: "together with our Father, St. Stanislaus."

Therefore, may the celebration of the Holy Mass for St. Stanislaus sanctify us; may the example of his life, so beautifully shown in the liturgical texts, inspire us to imitate his life, and may we, on our path of faith, constantly receive favors obtained through his intercession.

Immaculata Virginis Mariae conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio!




Andrzej Pakuła, MIC
Superior General

April 13; 2022

On the 151st anniversary of the birth of Bl. George Matulaitis MIC,
Bishop and Renovator of our Congregation