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Today's collect makes some interesting points for us to consider. First, we admit that God alone can *order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men*, second, we ask that *God grant to His people that they love those things which God commands and to desire what He promises*, and finally we ask that by doing this God would help us keep our hearts fixed on heaven, *where true joys are to be found*, despite *the sundry and manifold changes of the world*, which includes the chaos and turmoil of everything around us. These points are even more interesting considering the life of St. Stanislaus, who's feast day is today. St. Stanislaus, the late eleventh century bishop and martyr and Patron saint of Poland. Along with working to revive the church in Poland, St. Stanislaus is often mentioned among the likes of St. Thomas Becket and St. Thomas Moore, those saints that defended the church against unruly and sinful Kings. St. Stanislaus often denounced the cruelties and injustices of Boleslaw II, the King of Poland. He did everything in his power to reform him. Stanislaus even threatened the King with excommunication and went so far as to stop services whenever the King entered the Cathedral.

One of the best-known stories of St. Stanislaus reads almost like a parable. As the story goes, he once bought a field from a certain man named Peter. Soon after the sale, Peter died, and his children claimed the land as part of their inheritance. However, St. Stanislaus appealed to the King, who ruled in favor of the decedent's children. When St. Stanislaus asked for three days to produce a witness the king and his court laughed at his absurd request. So, St. Stanislaus fasted and prayed for three days, and at the end of the three days he had the body of Peter, who had been dead for three years exhumed, and then he raised Peter from the dead to be his witness. Peter was dressed in a cloak and brought before the King to testify on behalf of Stanislaus. It is said that the dumbfounded court heard Peter reprimand his three sons and testify that Stanislaus had indeed bought the land for the church. The King dismissed the suit against the bishop. It is also written that Stanislaus asked Peter if he wished to remain alive, but Peter declined and so was laid to rest once again. One would think that Stanislaus raising a dead witness to testify on his behalf would have helped *to order the unruly wills and affections of the sinful King*, but his disordered and sinful lifestyle only grew worse.

Sometime later, Stanislaus and the King were at odds again over the King's cruelty and adulterous life. He is recorded as being a man of savage cruelty and unbridled lust. After the King kidnapped another man's wife, Stanislaus threatened to excommunicate him from the church in a last-ditch effort to get the King to repent and amend his ways. Of all the nobles and prelates, Stanislaus was the only man who dared to demand the King set the woman free and repent of his evil deeds. The King was so furious over this that he ordered the execution of Stanislaus, but when his own guards refused to touch the holy bishop, the King went and killed him with his own hands during Mass. The martyrdom of Stanislaus so outraged Poland that the King was dethroned and exiled to Hungary. Though it is believed that Boleslaw traveled to Rome to beg forgiveness from Pope Gregory the Great, who imposed on him to wander like Cain as a mute repentant. On a summer evening in 1082, he reached the Benedictine Monastery of Carinthia, where he was received and did all kind of hard work until he finally was reconciled in the Sacrament of Penance and died.

The life of St. Stanislaus contains an important lesson for us. We like St. Stanislaus believe that *God alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men*. We pray this every time we pray for the conversion of family, friends, neighbors, even our enemies. We pray that they would love *what God commands, and desire what He promises*, even if they act more like King Boleslaw from the story of St. Stanislaus. Regardless of their sinfulness, or of our own sinfulness, regardless of the changes and turmoil of the world we live in, we pray that their hearts and our hearts would be fixed on heaven where true joys are to be found. St. Stanislaus spent much of his ministry trying to convert a King who was the opposite of a virtuous Christian. It must have seemed to him that his prayers for the King were of no effect. He literally died trying to bring this King to repentance. But it was only after his death, only after his witness to the King was made complete through his martyrdom at the King's own hands did he begin to allow God to order his heart and curb his sinful affections. We are taught to bear witness to our prayers with all humility and patience, believing that they will be answered in God's perfect timing. We must be willing to testify of the better way that God has made for all men, even if it mean making the ultimate sacrifice.

We are reminded too this morning that it is always easy to look outwardly when the church holds up prayers and saints like this before us, when the same

prayers and lessons from the saints apply to us as well. Lest we grow complacent in thinking, *thank God I am not as bad as King Boleslaw was*, we must remember that we are a constant work in progress. We need God to continue ordering our unruly wills and affections because we are sinful. And so, we pray too that we as God's people will love what He commands, and desire what He promises, not what our own prideful hearts lust for, but that our hearts would be fixed where true joys, not worldly happiness, are to be found. Ultimately, we pray that we will be worthy witnesses of Christ to this world, the people of God, marked and set apart by the Holy Ghost the comforter, who leads us into all truth. Amen.