

Stanislaus of Szczepanów

Name: Saint Stanislaus

Dates: July 26, 1030 – April 11, 1079

Location: Poland

Feast day: April 11

Stanislaus was born July 26, 1030, the only son of noble parents, Weislaw and Bogna, at Szczepanow near Krakow, Poland. He was educated at a cathedral school in Gniezno (then the capital of Poland). After finishing his early training in his native country, he was sent to Paris where he spent seven years studying canon law and theology. Upon his return to Poland, Stanislaus was ordained a priest by Lambert II Sula – Bishop of Krakow. Stanislaus was an inspiring preacher and became a much sought-after spiritual adviser. His sermons preached about a reformation of manners (the ideological drive to bring religious morals, education and acceptable behavior back into the church). After the Death of Bishop of Krakow in 1072, Stanislaus was unanimously chosen to succeed him as Bishop of Krakow. Boleslaus II, then King of Poland, was leading a disgraceful life and as the Kings new advisor, Bishop Stanislaus advised the King on several occasions to change his behavior and live a more religious and moral life. At first the King seemed to repent, but he soon faltered and went back to his shameful behavior. After seven long years, Bishop Stanislaus lost his patience with the King and denounced his cruelties and injustices, especially the kidnapping of a beautiful wife of a nobleman. In 1079, Stanislaus excommunicated the King – enraging the king and costing Bishop Stanislaus his life. The King accused Bishop Stanislaus of treason and condemned him to death. On April 11, while Stanislaus was saying Mass in a small chapel outside of Krakow, the King with his guards entered the chapel; the Kings command was to kill the Bishop. The guards refused to kill the Bishop, feeling it was against the church law, so the impious King killed Stanislaus with his own hands. The King then ordered the guards to cut the Bishop's body into pieces and scatter them to be devoured by wild animals. The murder stirred outrage throughout Poland, leading to the dethronement of King Boleslau II, the Bold.



St Stanislaus

St. Stanislaus was the first native Polish saint and is a symbol of Polish nationhood. He was canonized by Pope Innocent IV in 1253 and we celebrate his feast day on April 11.