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2 August

Blessed AUGUSTUS CZARTORYSKI, priest

Optional Memorial

Augustus Czartoryski was born in Paris in exile on 2 August 1858. For about 30 years his family with historical and dynastic ties to Poland had been emigrants in France.

When he was six his mother died from tuberculosis: a sad legacy his mother left her son. When the first symptoms appeared, a long forced pilgrimage began for Augustus to different countries in search of the good health which he never recovered. But health was not the main concern of his search; in his youthful heart there was also a more important search that for his vocation.

Great influence was exercised on the young prince by his tutor Joseph Kalinowski, a Carmelite, canonised by John Paul II in 1991. He was Czartoryski's tutor for only three years (1874-1877), but he left a great impression on him.

The decisive event, however, was a meeting with Don Bosco. August was already 25 years of age when he met him for the first time. That was in Paris, in the Hotel Lambert, where he was living with his family. After this meeting, Augustus not only felt strengthened in his vocation to religious life but he had the firm conviction that he was called to become a Salesian. In 1887 he entered the novitiate, under the guidance of the Master of Novices Fr Giulio Barberis. On 24 November that same year he was clothed in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians by Don Bosco. The saint died two months later, and on his tomb at Valsalice Prince Czartoryski became a Salesian making his religious profession. Prepared by his sufferings, on 2 April 1892 he was ordained priest at Sanremo by Blessed Bishop Tommaso Reggio bishop of Ventimiglia.

Fr Augustus's life as a priest lasted scarcely a year, which he passed in Alassio, in a room overlooking the boys' playground. He died there on the evening of 8 April 1893, sitting in the armchair Don Bosco had used. His body was taken to Poland and buried in the parish crypt at Sieniawa, beside his family's tombs. Later his remains were moved to the Salesian church in Przemyśl, where they are still to be found today. Pope John Paul II beatified him in Rome in St Peter's Square on 24 April 2004.

From the Common of saints: for religious. or from the Common of pastors; psalms of the day as in the Ordinary.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the "Biographies of Salesians" by Fr. Giovanni Battista Francesia

*(Salesian Press and Bookshop, San Benigno Canavese 1896;
Positio, Summarium documentorum additum, pp. 204-205)*

Here I have found angels

As soon as he arrived at San Benigno, like a poor shipwrecked mariner escaped from the perils of the sea he introduced himself to the Rector and confided everything to him. Then almost afraid that they would show too much respect in his regard which he wished to avoid he told his Superior that he should give him orders without any difficulty in anything. "Certainly I need allowances to be made for me since when one has lived in the world one brings certain defects with one which only with time can be eradicated. You, however, can help me, and I hope that I shall be able to succeed". It was not only on his first arrival that he spoke in this way with familiarity and

confidence with his new spiritual director, but whenever he felt it appropriate or when he felt the need. And then wishing really to die to the world to give himself totally to the Lord, he could say in all truth the words of St Bernard: “Here I have found angels, while everywhere else I only came across men.”

For him everything was the subject for study and imitation. Determined to free his heart from everything that was not God and for his greater glory, he placed all his trust in his spiritual director. Fully aware that the security of a building depends on good foundations, and that fervent novitiate is a sure sign of a religious and holy life, he determined with great resolve to do everything immediately and well. He worried slightly in remembering the comforts he had left behind, and experiencing the austerities of religious life for real. Often he heard a voice saying to him: “You poor thing, what have you done? Will you be able to put up with this kind of life? You are no longer young, you have never been accustomed to this noise which is part of Salesian life! You will manage for a few days, but then this common life will ruin you. Wouldn’t it have been better for you to stay at home with father, aunt, and your brothers? Who could have stopped you doing good, and in the best way you could? And now here, among people you don’t know, who in a short time will forget how much they owe to you...”

In this and other ways, the devil tempter tried to make Br Augustus regret what he had done. But he, convinced that the path to heaven is strewn with many tribulations and thorns tried to forget completely what he had been in the world in order to begin to be what he intended to become. First of all he asked that he be called by his simple surname. Since his Superiors had agreed that he should rather be called Br Augustus, he thanked them, because in this way he would have another reason almost not to remember his family. And this total self-sacrifice was so resolute and all-embracing, that even those who were more advanced on the path of virtue were amazed. His attitude was indeed admirable from the first day he entered. He requested that no exceptions be made on his account, and he followed the common rule saying that it would cause him some distress if some day it was possible to say of him that he had benefited from exceptions being made for him. It was Don Bosco who expressed the wish that on account of his poor health he should be at the Superiors’ table. But for good Br Augustus this preference proved a real school of perfection. “Nothing better could have happened, he used to say, than to have these models of every virtue constantly before my eyes. May the good Lord help me to draw profit from it.”

RESPONSORY

Cf. Psalm 70, 17; 74, 2; 88,1; Is 49,2

R/. God has taught me from my youth: * I shall recount his wonderful deeds

V/. He hid me in the shadow of his hand

R/. I shall recount his wonderful deeds.

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

SCRIPTURE READING

Rm 12, 1-2

My brothers, I implore you by God’s mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance; the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade, and you whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. The law of God guides him, * his mind is fixed on God.

The law of God guides him, his mind is fixed on God.

V/. His steps will never falter

*. his mind is fixed on God.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The law of God guides him, his mind is fixed on God.

Ant. At the Ben. My good is the Lord,
generous to the one who hopes in him.

INTERCESSIONS

At the beginning of this new day, on the memorial of Blessed Augustus Czarторыski, let us raise to

God our Father our praise and our petitions:

Strengthen O Father the fidelity of your children.

With the grace which comes from you O Father, you call the ministers of the Church to work with
patience in love:

– grant courage and perseverance to those you have called to work for the Kingdom.

You call men and women to follow you more closely through the profession of the evangelical
counsels:

– grant that in fidelity to the Gospel and to the charism of the Founders they may make their
communities a living sign of the love of Christ.

In Blessed Augustus Czarторыski you have given us a model of total obedience to your call:

– grant that imitating his example, we may love and serve Christ in the young we meet on our
journey.

In Blessed Augustus you have given us an example of poverty and detachment from the things of
the world:

– help consecrated persons to live and bear witness to the evangelical counsels.

You made him a model for the young in the search for their vocation:

– make us capable of helping in their discernment those who come to seek our advice.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God,
who called the priest Blessed Augustus
to follow you Son, who being rich made himself poor,
grant that encouraged by his example
and docile to the action of the Holy Spirit
we may humbly serve you in needy young people.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Evening Prayer

We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design. All those who from the first were known to him, he has destined from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren. So predestined, he called them; so called, he justified them; so justified, he glorified them.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. The Lord is good; * he loves good deeds.

The Lord is good; he loves good deeds.

V/. His face is turned towards the upright man.

* he loves good deeds.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

The Lord is good; he loves good deeds.

Ant. At the Magn. You have left all things and followed me; you will be repaid a hundred times over, and gain eternal life

INTERCESSIONS

At the close of this day with humble confidence we address our prayer to God our Father who calls all his children to holiness:

Santify your family O Lord.

You have established the Church as your holy and sinless people:

- grant that with a faith which is pure and spotless, we make recognise and bear witness to your love in the practical circumstances of life and of history.

You accompany the whole human race on its journey:

- grant that by corresponding to the plan of creation, it may collaborate in the human development of every culture, and release the potential enclosed within nature for the holistic development of every individual.

You led Blessed Augustus to give himself to you, at the school of Saint John Bosco:

- grant that we too may be faithful to the charism of our Founder.

You gave Blessed Augustus a deep interior life:

- grant that we make of our lives a pleasing sacrifice acceptable to you.

The life of Blessed Augustus is resplendent with the practice of poverty and the courageous acceptance of his illness:

- through his intercession, grant that we may accept with faith the trials of every day.

To the faithful departed who worked with total dedication in the service of their brothers and sisters:

- grant the reward promised by your Son to the good and faithful servant.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God,
who called the priest Blessed Augustus

to follow you Son, who being rich made himself poor,
grant that encouraged by his example
and docile to the action of the Holy Spirit
we may humbly serve you in needy young people.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.