



Podcast for the Feast of St Casimir: 4th March 2021

Mgr Daniel McHugh

Picture of St Casimir and these words: Journey of Faith - Life from the Holy Mass - with Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Hello, I am Monsignor Daniel McHugh. Podcast for the Feast of St Casimir, 4th March. Over the years I have found the Daily Mass Commemoration of Saints and corresponding readings from Scripture resources of inspiration for life. Knowing the short reflections on these have encouraged those with whom I shared them too, is the foundation of my weekly Podcast "Journey of Faith".

This week I have chosen the Commemoration of St Casimir on 4th March as the focus of this Podcast. I will always remember celebrating Mass on this Feast in the Chapel of St Casimir in the Cathedral of Vilnius, Lithuania. Not only was it so cold that I will never forget it because I went there ill-prepared in terms of clothing, but it was a wonderful beginning for the Mission I was privileged to be undertaking. The Mission was to share the catechetical and theological programmes we had developed at Maryvale in the Archdiocese of Birmingham with the Underground Church in Lithuania, that was just emerging from the persecution of the Church under the Soviet Union and its atheistic ideology.

I found the Church there celebrating the Feast of St Casimir, the Patron Saint of Lithuania and Poland. Born in Poland at Krakow, he died in Lithuania and is buried in Vilnius. He was a King who integrated his Catholic Faith into daily life: despite his high office and affairs of State, he remained faithful to his vocation as a Christian layman, centering his life on the Eucharist and devotion to Our Lady. In these days when we are becoming ever more conscious of the importance of the lay vocation, he is an inspiration. I am glad that the catechetical and theological programmes we were offering to Lithuania were more than academic study, they were aimed at forming the lay people especially for their Mission to take their Faith into the lives they lived, the places where they worked, and into the society of our day that needs the truths and values of Catholicism.

In turn Lithuania gives so much to the life of Faith we journey on here in England. This was what I experienced:

- The Faith lived out at great personal cost by so many people in Lithuania, not least the Archbishop of Kaunas, Tamkevicius, who had been imprisoned in Soviet times and emerged true to his vocation and has recently been honored as a Cardinal by Pope Francis.
- The suffering of families celebrated on the Hill of Crosses where those who are numbered among the "disappeared", were remembered with Crosses placed to remember them always by their families, often the mothers and fathers of sons

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



and daughters. Pope St John Paul II visited there on his Apostolic Visit after the liberation of Lithuania in the 1990s.

- The old port, Klaipeda, on the Baltic Sea where, Bernard Ullathorne, the first Bishop of Birmingham, experienced Conversion at the age of 15 when taken to Mass by a fellow sailor.

In the Church Communities across the world we owe each other so much: the Feast of St Casimir presents us with the opportunity to celebrate it. Here in the Archdiocese of Birmingham it is also an opportunity to celebrate the presence of many Lithuanian Catholics, sustained by their own Chaplain Fr Ramunas appointed by the Bishops back home.

The picture of St Casimir at the beginning of the Podcast shows a mysterious third hand, explained in various ways as portraying the Saint's generosity to those in need or a re-painting of the hand in a new position by the artist in the 1500s, or as miraculous. Sent by a Facebook friend, Sean O'Donnell, who works in Lithuania and Latvia, it is the painting in use on public posters and devotional cards there.

The Reading is taken from the Feast rather than the Lenten Weekday: St Paul to the Philippians 3:8-14....

The Prayer is the Collect of the Mass...

Thank you for listening. You can find more Podcasts from the Archdiocese of Birmingham on www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/podcasts

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese