

My Baptism Day Gift (5/12/20)

Happy Baptismal Day to me! I started honoring this day about 20 years ago at the suggestion of my beloved spiritual director, Fr. Angelus Shaughnessy (now deceased). He had told the children and parents in a homeschooling lecture that it was just as important to acknowledge and celebrate one's Baptism Day as one's birthday. He strongly encouraged us to find out our Baptism Day if we didn't know it. I was one of the ones who had no clue. I immediately found out and have been celebrating it ever since. I was not surprised that my dear mother had had me baptized within a month of my birth.

Fast forward to January of 2005 (pretty sure about the year). I was heading to D.C. for the March for Life with a Pittsburgh group via bus. One of the coordinators was passing a bag around and instructed everyone to pick a card from the bag. The little cards depicted various Saints and included a few prayers and a short bio of the Saint. She said that she (and I believe a prayer team) had been praying for all of us to pick the Saint that God wanted each of us to embrace for that year. Well, I picked Saint Leopold Mandic. I felt gypped b/c I had never heard of this Saint and I wanted a heavy hitter like St. Francis, St. Michael, St. Monica, etc. It seemed like everyone else was picking well known Saints. I did read my little card and thought that I would comply and ask for this unknown Saint's help. I kept my little card (still have it) and did occasionally invoke St. Leopold throughout that year. After that year, if not sooner, St. Leopold was forgotten.

Fast forward to July 2006. My nephew Ryan and I were on a Catholic pilgrimage to Italy and Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina (former Yugoslavia). In the beautiful town square in Medjugorje, there are numerous outside Confessionals and statues. Ryan led me to one of those statues and laughingly said, "Hey Aunt Kathy, here's a Saint just for you...he's a midget!" Sure enough, I was standing in front of

the statue of St. Leopold Mandic, one of the favorite Croatian saints and patron of Confession.

Fast forward to 2015, when I was visiting the home of the fellow who I was dating at the time and am now married to, I noticed a picture of my favorite Croatian saint. No joke. My little friend follows me around everywhere! The statue described above was the only one I have ever seen of this saint and the framed picture is also a first (other than the pic on the little card). Bill said that he inherited the picture from a relative of a friend who was Croatian.

Fast forward 5 years to today. I looked forward to watching my live-streamed Mass this morning as I couldn't attend a physical one during these Coronavirus days. I was hoping to hear an inspiring reading or homily on my Baptism Anniversary. What I did hear even prior to both, was the announcement that it was the Feast day of (none other than) Saint Leopold Mandic I could hardly believe that I had not known of it prior to today. After looking on both my saint calendars (pre and post Vatican II) and not seeing it mentioned, I investigated further. Saint Leopold appears on the Franciscan only calendar, as he was a Capuchin Franciscan priest. The priest celebrating the Mass (EWTN) this morning is also in the Franciscan order and thus felt obliged to mention the Franciscan Saint of the day. Let me also add that my dear Fr. Angelus who prompted me to honor my Baptismal Anniversary is also a Capuchin Franciscan priest. I, myself, am a member of the Secular Franciscan Order as was my dear mother. How perfect for me...a short little Franciscan Saint with his feast day on my Baptism Anniversary Day. God is so good!

Saint Leopold Mandic pray for us!!

Submitted by:

Kathy Kness OFS

San Damiano Fraternity