



Patron saint

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Albert Chmielowski - Patron Saint of Puławy

Adam Chmielowski - the later called brother Albert ; was born on August 20 1845 in Igołomia near Cracow. He spent his first years in Warsaw. Already as a child he was distinctive for his love for the poor; he shared all the goods he had with them. When he was 8 he lost his father. His mother sent him to a cadet school in Petersburg, but then moved him to a gymnasium in Warsaw due to rusification fear.

When he was 14 years old, his mother died. Since that moment the person who became responsible for Adam was his father's sister ; Petronela Chmielowska. After finishing gymnasium she directed him to Puławy, where Adam began his studies in the Polytechnic and Agricultural-Forest Institute. When in 1863 the January Uprising began, Adam broke off his studies and enrolled to fight



with the insurgents. After the Grochowiska battle (March 18) in which he took part and the uprising failure, he escaped to the other side of the Vistula where in Ujście Jezuickie he was interned by the Austrians and exported to Ołomuniec. After the escape from the interned camp he returns to help the insurgents. In the battle in Belchów (September 30) he was badly injured (an exploding grenade crushed his leg, which was afterwards amputated without any painkillers) and was taken prisoner by the Russians. Thanks to the efforts of his family he was paroled from prison and to avoid repressions from the tsar's authorities he left the country. In Paris he began studying painting but then moved to Belgium for engineering studies. Finally, he returned to painting and finished his studies in the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

In 1874 he came back to Poland. In this period he searched for his new life ideal. He was overcome by the question if one can serve at the same time art and God. One of his best paintings "Ecce Homo," was created as an outcome of a deep experience of the mystery of Christ's love for the humans.

Accidental contact with the tragic situation of the homeless people gathering in the so-called ogrzewalnie (municipal heating centres) of Cracow was the incentive to make an unusual decision: the appreciated, talented painter ; Adam Chmielowski ; decided to forsake his career out of love for God and the people and to assume the mendicant way of life. He decided to move for good to the heating centre and live there among the poor.

On August 25 1887 he assumed the grey monastery habit and assumed the name Brother Albert. One year later he made vows as a Franciscan tertiary and gradually he took charge of the subsequent heating centres. Despite his lameness and an uncomfortable peg leg Brother Albert traveled a lot. He set up new homeless people's shelters, orphanages for the children and young people, houses for old people and those suffering from incurable diseases, as well as traditional local kitchens. He taught with the example of his own life that "one should be as good as bread, of which anyone can cut off a bite and feed oneself, if he is hungry",, Exhausted by a serious disease he died at the age of 71 on Christmas Day of 1916 in the Cracow homeless people's centre.

Holy Father John Paul II beatified Brother Albert in Cracow on June 22, 1983 during his second apostolic trip to Poland, and he canonized him in Rome on November 12, 1989.

Justification of the decision to appoint St Brother Albert Patron Saint of our town:



- St Brother Albert is the only saint connected with Puławy
- St Brother Albert was a student of the Polytechnic and Agricultural-Forest Institute in Puławy in 1862-1863. Numerous Pułavian institutes, as well as the Higher Puławy School are the continuation and beneficiaries of that Institute.
- There is a church and parish by the name of St Brother Albert and Adam Chmielowski Street.
- There is a St Brother Albert's shelter for homeless men. It is as if the continuation of the Saint himself, who dedicated most of his life to poor and homeless people.
- St Brother Albert was a university graduate; he was an artist painter.
- The canonization of St Brother Albert took place in Rome on November 12, 1989, one day after the 71 anniversary of Poland's independence resumption. St Brother Albert's church and parish were created as a vote for the second apostolic trip of John Paul II to Poland.

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