

The bishop's message to the Catholics of Estonia 18.12.2024



Dear brothers and sisters!

I am very happy to inform you that on **December 18, 2024**, Pope *Francis* gave permission for the beatification of the Servant of God, *Bishop Eduard Profittlich SJ (1890-1942)*.

The beatification will take place in a few months according to the norms of the Holy See and we will announce it in due time. This ends the 21-year beatification process.

I thank all the people who have participated in this process, who have given their testimonies in writing or orally, who have recognized the numerous graces or blessings they received by turning to the protection of the servant of God *Eduard Profittlich*. As Pope Francis writes: "*The processes of beatification and canonization recognize the characteristics of heroic virtue, the sacrifice of life in martyrdom, and certain cases in which life has been continually sacrificed, even to death, for others. "It shows an exemplary imitation of Christ that deserves the admiration of believers."* (*Gaudete et exsultate*, 5)

This beatification is the first in the history of the Estonian Catholic Church and also one of the first in the Nordic countries after the 16th century. This does not mean that holiness is a rare phenomenon in our

church. I am convinced that holiness is much more common than we think. What is rare is not the sainthood itself, but the long process by which the Church decides to declare someone a saint, martyr, or beatified after a very deep and detailed study of the person's life and works. Holiness itself is the goal of every Christian's life, as the Scriptures teach us: "*God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love*" (**Eph 1:4**), and the teaching office of the Church: "*Everyone who believes in Christ, whether in office or rank, is called to fullness in the Christian life and perfection in love*" (**Lumen Gentium, 40**) and when God calls someone, he also gives him all the means that this person needs so that the goal of holiness can be achieved concretely and practically.

How can we better prepare for the upcoming beatification?

September 26, 2024 and December 18, 2024 have been consecutively two important moments in the history of the Catholic Church in Estonia: the new bishopric and the first beatification. We have reasons to be very grateful to God and to Pope Francis, who has been a worthy instrument of God's will. We have been waiting for a new diocese for a hundred years and the official beatification of Archbishop Profittlich has lasted a total of 21 years (actually longer, because the investigation began already in 1991). God chose to answer both of our prayers at almost the same time. Let us rejoice and be thankful for it!

Therefore, after consulting with priests working in Estonia, I want to announce *a year of thanksgiving in the Diocese of Tallinn, which will begin on December 18, 2024, the day Pope Francis issued the decree, and will end on February 22, 2026*, the first anniversary of the death of Archbishop Eduard Profittlich following his beatification. I think the best way to approach Christmas is with a spirit of gratitude. Thanksgiving always plays a very important role in Christian spirituality. Christmas itself is a holiday of gratitude. We await the return of Christ and give thanks for the birth of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Each of us, each congregation, could find a way to better express our gratitude for all that God has given us. Not only with great events, but through ordinary, everyday life and Christian life. These could be, for example, votive masses in parishes, prayers of the rosary and other forms of piety. And, of course, now the Church encourages us to frequently turn to the patronage of the future Blessed *Eduard Profittlich* and to entrust him with our needs, desires, problems and gratitude. Finally, let us remember that a special moment in the life of Archbishop *Eduard Profittlich* was when, following the Pope's suggestion, he decided to share the fate of so many Estonians who were also detained and died in the *Kirov prison camps* or in other places in the former Soviet Union. May the beatification of Archbishop *Profittlich* be a special opportunity to remember them and thank them in prayer for their sacrifice.

May baby Jesus bless all of you and your loved ones! May he protect us from all problems and free us from current trials. I wish you a very holy and joyful Christmas!

+ **Philippe Jourdan** (*Bishop of the Diocese of Tallinn*)

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS:

January

01.01 *Mary mother of God*

Mary is a sublime mountain, because to reach the conception of the eternal Word she raised the summit of her merits above the choirs of angels, to the threshold of divinity.

(St GREGORY MAGNO, *In I Regum 1,5*).

03.01 *Holy name of Jesus*

The Word became man by the design of God the Father and was born for the salvation of believers and the destruction of demons. And you can verify this by what is happening right now before your eyes. Because throughout the world and in your own imperial city many of our people (Christians) by conjuring them in the name of Jesus Christ cure and expel demons that possess men.

(St. JUSTINE, *Apology II, 5,1-6*).

06.01 *Epifany*

They announce, ask, believe and search, as if symbolizing those who walk in faith and desire reality.

(St. Agustin, *Sermons 199,2*)

12.01 *Baptism of the Lord*

So, Christ descended into the water and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. God, the Father, spoke from heaven. Here you have the presence of the Trinity.

(St. Ambrose, *from the Sacraments 1,19*)

17.01 *st. Anthony the Great, abbot*

The most excellent pedagogy does not consist in first allowing evil to dominate us and then looking for a way to banish it from us, but in putting all our effort and care to make ourselves blameless before it.

(St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Against the opponents of monastic life, 3,18*)

21.01 *st. Agnes, virgin and martyr*

They are the flower sprouted from the bud of the Church, the brightness and decoration of spiritual grace, the lush fruit, the finished and incorrupt work, worthy of praise and honor, the image of God that reproduces his holiness, the most illustrious portion of Christ's flock.

(St. CYPRIAN, *On the external virtues of the virgins, 3*)

25.01 *Conversion of st. Paul*

Late I loved you, beauty so old and so new, late I loved you. And you were inside me and I was outside... you called me and you cried out and you broke my deafness; you shone and shone, and cured my blindness; I like you and now I feel hungry and thirsty for you; You touched me and I long for the peace that comes from you.

(St. AGUSTIN, *Confesions*)

NEXT TEADE:

February

02.02 *Presentation of the Lord*

05.02 *St. Agatha, virgin y martyr*

10.02 *St. Scholastica, virgin*

11.02 *Virgin of Lourds*

14.02 *St. Cyril and Methodius*

22.02 *Chair of St. Peter*

GESTURES AND WORDS: To sprinkle with holy water

The beginning of the Eucharistic celebration on the Lord's Day is characterized by the blessing of the water with which the assembly will be sprinkled, and which will then be deposited in the holy water fonts placed at the door of the church. The sprinkling rite represents the weekly remembrance of the event that determined the life of each member of the community at the time of the celebration of baptism. Immersion in water gave rise to the new creature. At the Easter Vigil each year the baptism is commemorated; Every Sunday, weekly Holy Week, we relive this mystery. The premises of the blessing ritual in this regard say the following: «Among all the signs that the Church uses to bless the faithful, that of water is frequently used due to an ancient custom. Holy water brings Christ the Lord to the minds of the faithful: in it is summarized the divine blessing, which is poured out on us, as a sign of the blessing that saves, baptism, the sacrament of water» (n. 1085). "The blessing and sprinkling of water are ordinarily done on Sunday, according to the rite prescribed in the Roman Missal" (n. 1086). The newness that baptism has produced in the heart of each disciple constitutes the determining aspect of his life; however, this wealth may run the risk of not being sufficiently deep and personalized in everyday life. Born of God, we become children of God every day, to reach the maturity of faith. The Sunday rite of sprinkling reminds us of this ineffable mystery and presents to us in an ever new way the demands of the Easter gift of a new life, so that in Christ we know how to die and rise every day. A lifestyle that must be continually attentive to invisible realities, such as the mystery of the Lord's Passover, implies the urgency of the presence of signs that recall the entire meaning of the mystery that has qualified the life of the disciple and that commits him to a continuous coherence. This richness is very clear in the gesture of sprinkling with

holy water. Through that gesture we ideally immerse ourselves again in that river of living water that comes out from the right side of the temple and makes all things new: «...every living being that moves as far as the river reaches will live... those waters where they come from the heal... along the river on one bank and on the other, all kinds of fruit trees will grow, whose branches will not wither: their fruits will not cease and each month they will ripen, because their waters flow from the sanctuary. Its fruits will serve as food and the leaves as medicine» (Ez 47,9.12). This prophecy was fully fulfilled in the death of Jesus on the cross, when blood and water flowed from his side (cf. Jn 19:34) and the disciples were flooded with his Spirit (cf. Jn 7:37-39). The antiphons of the Easter season enlighten us in this regard and confirm us: «Behold the water that flows from the holy temple of God, hallelujah; and to all who reach this water it will bring salvation, and they will sing: hallelujah, hallelujah. «From your side has flowed a fountain of salvation, Christ the Lord, which washes us from sin and renews life throughout the world. Alleluia." The reference to Ezek 36:25-26 in turn animates the antiphon outside of Easter time, to indicate the interior newness that baptism produces: "I will pour pure water on you, and you will be cleansed from all your sins, and I will give you a heart." new, says the Lord." We feel once again immersed in the baptismal font, and our entire person feels fully consecrated to God. This gesture, at the beginning of the celebration, reminds us that on the day of our baptism we became one with the dead and risen Christ; Today we are his memorial, since Christ is contemporary with us and we with him; today the rite we perform is the language of our mystical and sacramental death-resurrection in the Lord. At that moment we can celebrate his Easter in the sacrament, because he makes us participants, through the sacred rite, in his mystery of death and resurrection. Sometimes we may be tempted to passively live the call to the Sunday liturgical assembly or to believe that we are protagonists of it. Sprinkling, on the other hand, reminds us that we are exercising our priestly service, just as the baptismal rite teaches us when, at the moment of confirmation, it reminds us that we are inserted in Christ as priest, king and prophet. The fact that sprinkling replaces the penitential act reminds us that the celebration is for those who want to enjoy the

remission of sins, offered by the Lord's death to those who experience the newness of his Easter. Flooded by the water of salvation, we can access the altar of the Lord with greater awareness and become absorbed in his paschal oblation. It is interesting to observe how the sacramental moments celebrated in the homes of the sick are preceded by sprinkling, accompanied by the formula: "Revive in us, in the sign of this holy water, the memory of our baptism and our adhesion to Christ the Lord." crucified and resurrected for our salvation. In that baptismal water are the strength, the capacity, the suitability to put the sign of Christ's salvation today in a true and fruitful way.

This ritual then becomes every day in the gesture we make with faith and simplicity when entering the church. At the entrance to the sacred building we find the font that contains holy water. By dipping our hand in it, ideally we enter the baptismal waters again, and in the sign of the cross we remember that only through baptism have we been able to have access to the family of God's children, which is the church. It is baptism that introduces us into the Christian community and offers us our true dignity with the strong moral commitment: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy" (cf. 1 Pet 1:15-16; Luke 11, 44). The gesture of crossing oneself with holy water reminds us of who we really are and the daily effort we must make to experience this richness. Finally, sprinkling accompanies the gestures of blessing people and things. This rite reminds us that we must always walk in the spirit of the Lord's Easter, which represents the content of our authentic existence and that only in Easter do we have the reference point for daily choices.

Objects, in turn, are the tools through which men improve their existence. Holy water reminds men that its use must be oriented toward good, so that ordinary life, in all its complexity, can be built in accordance with the will of the Father. By welcoming the sprinkling of holy water, we put our entire existence in that river of living water that is the Paschal love of the Lord, to be increasingly new creatures, who make our brothers and the cosmos new, because of everything created we can out the true glorification of the Father.

NEXT TEADE: TO USE INCENSE

KEY: To understand sacred signs and symbols – THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Jesus, at the beginning of his public life, is about **thirty years old**. At this age the priest becomes fit for his service (**Numbers 4, 3**); At that age *Joseph* the Egyptian had been elevated to a high position (**Gen 41, 46**), *David* had been elected king (**2 Sam 5, 4**), *Ezekiel* had received his prophetic vocation (**Ez 1, 1**). The messianic task - king, priest and prophet - has its age.

The scene takes place on the banks of the *Jordan* River (**Mt 3, 17; Mc 1, 9-11; Luke 3, 21-23**). *John the Baptist* who closes the time of promise (**Lk 16, 16**); *Christ*, naked or with a loincloth, submerged in the waters, inaugurating the time of fulfillment; the *Holy Spirit*, in the form of a dove, over the praying Jesus, coming out of the water that, for Jesus, begins the new creation; *the voice of the Father*, which descends from the open heaven, which affirms that Jesus is the Son of God (**Acts 13, 33; Ps 2, 8**): these are the characters!

- (1) The iconography has generally abandoned the motif of *immersion* (from the Greek



bapto "I immerse"), which translated death and rebirth, for that of *infusion*, with water poured over the head, following the common liturgy. Jesus descended into the Jordan, not to

be cleansed, but to give the water the virtue of cleansing that sinful body, formed by all the humanity he assumed: "*to bury all the old Adam in the water*" (*Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Or 39*). The Church, body of Christ (**1 Cor 12, 13**), could be represented in the person of Christ, submerged or emerging from the water.



(2) Even the presence of **ministering angels**, with the robes of the Holy One or linen to dry, is a reminder of the baptismal rite. It is precisely about highlighting how the baptism of Christ is a prototype of the sacrament by which every believer becomes a child of God, thus resulting in the same relationship with God, as Jesus in the baptism of the Jordan. In fact, as for the sacrament of the Eucharist, memorial of the passion, its institution occurs on the eve of the passion, it is assumed that also in this baptism of humility and penitence, Christ wanted to anticipate the baptism of water, waiting for that of blood (**Lk 12, 50; Mk 10, 38**).



(3) In ancient iconography, a **cross** was depicted on the river bed, also taken from the Baptist's staff: it was not a reminder of the stele that the first Christians would have erected at the place of the Lord's baptism: it was intended to represent the anticipation of the passion, through which the sacrament receives its redeeming virtue (**Luke 12:50**). Even the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ is not to make him a son of God, but so that, through him, we all become one again.



(4) The word "*illumination*" (Gk. *photismos*) is included in **the light of the Holy Spirit**, since everyone who is baptized is a "*partaker of the light*" (**1 Thes 5:5**). And "*place of light*" in ancient times, precisely for this reason it was called the Baptistry, today remembered by the lighted lamp: "*Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and the Holy One will shine on you*" (**Eph 5:14**).



(5) For anointing - against all activity of the adversary and to be grafted into the good olive tree (**Rom 11, 24**), the Holy One, the anointed one, king, priest and prophet (**Is 61, 1-2; Luke 4, 16- 21**) - in the iconography a naïve allusion was made to a **blister** held in the beak or by the legs of the pigeon or by a drop of oil falling from the blister.



(6) At baptism, one receives the seal (kr. *sphragis*) of belonging to Christ's flock, like the ancient fighters, which is now expressed in a white tunic. This also translates the eschatological character of baptism: having become the people of God, the door to the heavenly homeland is open (**Phil 3:20**), like a wedding dress, to enter the feast of the father of the family (**Mt. 22, 11-12**).



(7) In the landscape of the Jordan there is also a **barren tree**, with an **ax** at the base: an allusion to the Baptist's speech about the necessary cooperation to be saved: now a baptism of love - in the Holy Spirit - but tomorrow of justice - in the fire eternal (**Lk 3, 16**). Nor did it fail to represent the reapers who, on the threshing floor, separate the wheat from the chaff and then throw it into the fire.



(8) After his baptism he still imagined Christ in prayer **stepping on a stone, under which four small snakes appeared**: in allusion to the exorcisms of the baptismal rite. Again, on the banks of the river, there is a great dragon, torn and bleeding: a memory of **Psalm 73:13** that recalls the passage of the sea of reeds and the death, among the waves, of Pharaoh, a figure of the devil, defeated by the baptismal waters.



(9) The figure of **the fish**, here marked with the tau, is a common motif in baptisteries, as is the figure of the fisherman. The words of the Father (*logion*) are linked to the episode of the "*songs of the servant of Yahweh*" (**Is 42, 1; Ps 2**). The iconography used cartouches or letters about rays or the hand in the clouds. The dove can allude - as in the time of Noah (**Gen 9, 12**) - to the bow placed above the clouds, for peace between God and men. In Hebrew: *Messiah* (Gr. *christós*) "*anointed*", "*consecrated*" (**Acts 10, 38; Luke 4, 18**). The coming out of the water, with the glorious Christ (**Acts 2, 36; 13, 33**): the two scenes are also expressed in the baptisteries, without forgetting that of *the transfiguration*, which the compendium of the two is.



(10) **The heavens** are split (**Mk 1, 10**): allusion to **Is 63, 19**. The long wait for the long-awaited *Messiah* is broken, the one who shows solidarity with sinful humanity (**2 Chr 5, 21; GI 3, 18; Rom 8, 3-4; Heb 2, 9-18**), becoming "*the lamb of God who takes upon himself the sins of the world*" (**Jn 1, 29**): in Aramaic *talja* has the meaning of both "*servant*" and "*lamb*." It is the "*beginning of the good news of Jesus Messiah, son of God*" (**Mk 1, 1**).



(11) In the context of the baptismal font, the scene of the **burning bush (Ex 3:5)** was sometimes imagined, linked to that of the water of Horeb (**Num 20:11**). Perhaps it is related to the Baptist's expression: "*I am not worthy to bend down and untie the laces of his sandals*" (**Mk 1:7**). According to an ancient rite, the *discalceatio*, the same minister took off the shoes of the neophytes, who, during the Easter octave, along with the white tunic, put on new shoes. "*It is necessary that whoever purifies himself frees the soul from the body and its sins, like the foot from its bonds*" (*Clement Aless. Stramm V,8,55*)

NEXT TEADE: THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

GROW IN FAITH: ST GREGORY THE GREAT. The mirror of the soul:

The Holy Scripture is presented to the eyes of our soul as a mirror in which we can contemplate our inner face. In this mirror we can know our beauty and what disfigures us; we can become aware of our progress or how far we are from the goal.

The Holy Scripture recounts the works of the saints and encourages weak hearts to imitate them. While evoking his victories he supports our weakness against vices; with his words he assures that our spirit, faced with the triumph of so many heroes proposed to him, does not hesitate in the fight.

Sometimes then, he not only tells us about his virtues, but also makes us aware of his failures, to show us in

the victory of the strong what we should imitate and in their fall what we should fear.

In fact, here we are presented with Job enriched by temptation, and instead David defeated by it, so that the courage of our ancestors fuels our hope and their fall makes us cautious and humble: the courage in which we rejoice. , gives us courage, while the fall fills us with healthy fear. In the first case the soul of the reader is educated in the confidence that is born from hope, in the second case in the humility that is born from fear. Thus, he will not become reckless through pride, because fear holds him back, nor will he despair through fear, because courageous example will encourage him to confident hope. (*Comentario morale a Job, II,1*)

INFO AND EVENTS

***08.12** T.E. *Bishop Philippe Jourdan* has visited Tartu for the first time as bishop of our diocese

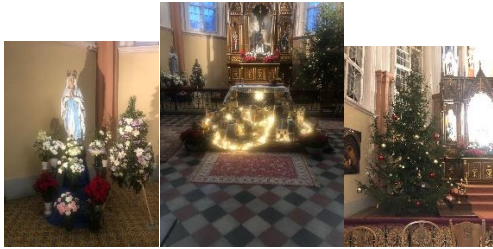


* **20.12** The Orthodox Bishop of Tartu *Elias* has passed to the Father. May the good Lord receive him in his kingdom.

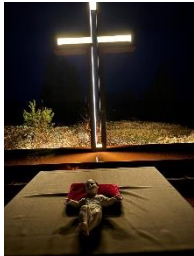
* The children of our school celebrated the mystery of Christmas in our Church.



* Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Christmas decoration of our Church.



* **24.12 at 16:00** Father *Miguel* and Father *Emmanuel* celebrated a Christmas Liturgy in *Vastselinna* in southern Estonia.



***28.12-01.01** 47th *Taize* European Meeting in *Tallinn*

* We continue with catechesis **Monday** and **Thursday** at **7:30 p.m.** in the parish house

* The 3 Kings will visit the Church on Sunday **5.01** at **4:00 p.m.**