

“CORRECTING THE RECORD”: OF PATRON SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS

Our legal system recognizes a statute of limitations, and for good reason. Much of it has to do with **faulty memories** over time. The 19th century German psychologist **Hermann Ebbinghaus** was among the first to conduct an in-depth study of faulty memories, establishing a clear **link** between **memory** and **time**. And yet, some of our most **vivid** memories are as **small children**, whereas we may struggle with what we ate for dinner last Friday. What gives? It can be infuriating when you **think** you recall something, only to find out you were **mistaken**. If asked to name the Patronal Feast of the Archdiocese, I would reply **definitively**— of course, it is **January 25**, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. And guess what— I’d be wrong! Glad I’m not a Las Vegas guy— I’d lose my shirt! How could I have been so **mistaken**? I decided to sleuth around. Turns out, my error is a bit **more complicated** than at first glance!

I conducted a word search using a few key Latin terms, seeing what **Google** might turn up! Oh, how fun it is to “Google”® while sipping one’s early morning coffee! The Latin name for our Archdiocese includes *Paulopolitana*, not exactly a **household** word. So, I entered it—bingo! A document popped up from the **1963 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis***, the official Acts of the Holy See. Even several months after the fact, once published in the *Acta*, curial documents become **official**. And what did this document contain? It announced our Archdiocesan patron saint! What? When? Dated October 3, 1962, it reveals that our Archdiocesan patron saint was still an **open question**, a full **century** after the diocese was established. With this “discovery,” I sought access to the Archdiocesan Archives, as the document references Archbishop Leo Binz’s request. They responded with a **treasure trove** of correspondence. **Thank You!** Here’s the backstory.

On **August 8, 1962**, Archbishop Binz wrote to the Apostolic Delegate **Archbishop Vagnozzi** petitioning for St. Paul to be named the Patron of the **Archdiocese of St. Paul**. There was no “and Minneapolis” until 11 July 1966. Ah, the good ‘ole days! Archbishop Vagnozzi forwarded the request to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome. Only the Holy See can make such a designation. It appears Binz had discovered an **oversight**— a big one— in that **no archival records** whatsoever existed that any such request had previously been made. It was simply “local custom”. While he was at it, Binz requested that **St. John Vianney** be named our **secondary** patron. I never knew that! An affirmative reply (in Latin of course) came by way of the Congregation. Dated 13 Oct. 1962— just **two days** after the opening of Vatican II— the letter indicated that an Apostolic Brief would be prepared and requested a processing tax of **\$80!** On 29 October 1962, the Apostolic Delegate sent a **preview** copy. When published the spring of 1963 in the *Acta*, it became official. Binz shared the **joyous news** in a June 1963 Clergy Bulletin. (Inset: Photo of the decree)

Better late than never! But I was still **scratching my head**. The papal Brief **officially** named Saint Paul as our patron, “granting likewise all the **liturgical rights** and **privileges** which duly accrue to Diocesan patrons.” **Which** liturgical rights and privileges? For starters, a patronal feast day. Prior to the simplification of the liturgical calendar after Vatican II, Saint Paul had **several** feast days. But the Roman decree **did not specify** which feast day corresponded to our newly named patron. So, which one? Binz made it official, designating **June 30** as the Feast Day, the Commemoration of St. Paul, Apostle. That’s **peculiar**, considering that January 25 was the clearly established patronal feast day of The Saint Paul Seminary. Digitized copies of the earliest editions 1911-22 of the newly established **Catholic Bulletin** (thanks, MN History Center!) confirm this fact. The **January 28, 1911** edition notes the seminary celebration. (See [here](#)) I also found my optician grandfather’s ad copy! (See inset below)

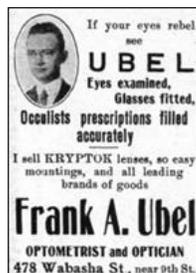
Curiously, in the online editions that I scoured, **nothing** is mentioned about a **June 30** celebration for the Archdiocese. Why not? Was it merely presumed? Should the seminary have a **different** patronal feast than the Archdiocese? I'm clueless, but it is odd. And one more thing. Yes, I'm as stubborn as I am persistent! If our patron is St. Paul, it's logical that Archbishop Binz would assign the patronal feast day focused **solely** on him, as opposed to June 29, the dual Feast of **Sts. Peter and Paul**. Even that feast was remarkably **slanted** towards St. Peter. Hardly a mention of Paul! When the June 30 feast was **abolished** in **1969**, the prayers of June 29 were adjusted to provide equity between the "two pillars" of the Roman Church. Still, a **question** remains in my mind. **Why** did Binz transfer it to June 29 (the dual feast), rather than January 25? Convenience? Disdain for winter? Or **did he** formally transfer it? Hmmn...

The Archives contain nothing more on this matter. One may infer it was transferred to the **joint feast** of Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29), which has **ancient** roots. The pope would celebrate a Mass at St. Peter's and then **proceed** to Saint Paul's Outside the Walls for a **second** Mass. Finally, he venerated the catacombs, where tradition holds their bones were kept safe during the persecutions. In the heat of a Roman summer, that **nine-mile** round trip was quite a day! So, a **second feast** was added a day later—the Feast of St. Paul (all to himself!). My humble proposed local solution—let's all get on the **same page!** If it took **100 years** to petition Rome for a patron, why not after a **mere 60 years**, we declare January 25 as the Patronal Feast of the seminary, Cathedral and Archdiocese? After all, as our Archdiocesan history demonstrates, it's **never too late** to adjust!

- In recognition of our partnership with the **Maronite Archeparchy of Damascus**, an **icon** of The Conversion of St. Paul was commissioned to portray the meaning and spirit of our partnership—an icon to draw us deeper into the experience of St. Paul's encounter with Ananias in Damascus, and our encounter with one another. The magnificent icon (3x4 ft.) was written by Stillwater resident **Deb Korluka**, whose work has been featured at major exhibitions, both in Russia and Spain. (See bulletin cover)
- The icon will be temporarily placed in the Saint Joseph Chapel for this Tuesday's ordination of **Bishop-elect Joseph Williams**, so the public may venerate it. It will be hung in a permanent location within or near the Baptistry. Following daily Mass at 7:30 a.m. on January 25, the Church will close until 11:00 a.m. for final ordination preparations. The Ordination Mass begins promptly at 1:00 p.m.
- Whenever I see the grainy B&W video of **Martin Luther King Jr.'s** "I Have a Dream" speech (28 Aug. 1963), I can't believe that I was alive—well, barely. I was all of **one day old**, in the old Miller Hospital, across the street from the Cathedral. Read his speech [here](#)—it is very compelling. More importantly, pray that we will continually strive to work together as Americans to respect one another.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,
Rector



"If your eyes rebel...
See UBEL"

Fr. Ubel's grandfather
ran regular ads in the 1911
Catholic Bulletin for his
optometry business.

