

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING by S. Casarotto, CS 12/28/08

THE DISCIPLE JESUS LOVED

It has been said that St. John, Apostle/Evangelist, (*feast: Dec. 27*) is the only Apostle who did not die a martyr because he already testified to the Cross by standing at its foot with the Mother of God.

According to St. Jerome, John was brought to Rome and thrown into a vat of boiling oil but emerged miraculously unscathed. But St. John's most famous brush with death (as far as popular folklore is concerned) is when his enemies tried to kill him by poisoning his cup of wine. Some say that when St. John the Divine (as he is called in the East) made the sign of the Cross over the cup, it split in half, thus spilling the poison. Others, however, claim that his blessing neutralized the deadly beverage and allowed him to enjoy it unharmed. Either way, it is a good reminder to say one's grace before meals!

According to the famous Maria von Trapp, in Austria and other places, it is customary to bring wine or cider to church on this day so that that the priest could give a special blessing. Later that night, the wine is poured into everyone's glass before dinner. The father then takes the glass, touches it to the mother's and says: "I drink to you the love of St. John", to which the mother replies: "I thank you for the love of St. John." Both take a sip before the mother turns to the oldest child and repeats the ritual, at which the child turns to the next oldest sibling, etc. The last one to receive St. John's love gives it back to his father, thus closing the family circle.

The blessed wine is a sacramental and is kept in the house throughout the year for newlyweds to drink soon after their wedding, for travelers and guests. Sick people also are served a sip as a good wish.

FAMILY WEB

We have been on line for only 3 months and our site is visited by people from all over the world. Granted, some may be looking for St. Anthony's Basilica in Padua, others are just browsing and then move on. But many are interested in the history and activities of our unique parish and particularly this column. Unfortunately, we can not host an electronic open forum, but signed comments through the regular mail are welcome. In the meantime, thanks to all our readers, whether you are in Poland, Italy, France, Greece, Spain, Pakistan, Omar, Singapore, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland, and various States of the Union. Keep in touch and pray for us. *Buone Feste! Blessed Holidays!*