

Desire to return to Purgatory

St. Stanislaw—Bishop of Cracow had disputes with King Boleslaw II of Poland over property claimed by the Church. The king conspired with the heirs of Peter Miles, who had been dead for three years. Before he died he sold a piece of property to the Church. The conspirators claimed fraud, and brought Stanislaw to court on this false charge.

Stanislaw asked for a 3 day delay, after which he would produce the dead man himself as a witness to the right of the Church to possess the property. He then prayed and fasted for 3 days, after which court was reconvened. Stanislaw led a procession to the Miles' gravesite, where he then prayed. The grave was opened and nothing but bones lay in the grave. Stanislaw touched the bones with his crozier, and in the name of Christ, ordered the dead man to rise. Before the awed clergy and crowd the bones suddenly reunited, became covered with flesh, and Miles came forth from the grave and proceeded to the trial.

Stanislaw said, "Behold Peter! He comes to give testimony before you. Interrogate him. He will answer you." Peter affirmed that he had been paid for the contested property. He then turned to his terrified relatives and reproached them for their evil plans, exhorting them to do penance.

Stanislaw then offered Peter the opportunity to remain alive, but Peter replied that he would rather return to Purgatory and to the surety of eternal salvation—but he did ask for prayers. Stanislaw and a vast crowd accompanied Peter Miles back to the cemetery, where he lay down in his grave and composed himself. His body fell to pieces and his bones lay as when the grave was opened.

