



ŚMIGUS DYNGUS

The Easter season in Poland ends on Monday when the traditional "Dyngus-Śmigus" custom is observed, which is the most humorous of Polish customs at Easter time.

The origin of this custom is unknown. Some say it is a pagan tradition handed down from the earliest settlers in Poland around Xth century. Others assert it is a reminder that the sinner has been washed in the blood of Christ, newly risen from the dead. Still others declare that according to legend, the Jews tried to disperse the early Christians as they gathered in Jerusalem to talk about Christ's resurrection, by flinging water at them.

This day is called dyngus from a German word for ransom. Groups of young men used to go from house to house conveying Paschal best wishes and singing Easter songs such as: we have come for a dyngus and we sing of Jesus. About Jesus, His Son; who believes in God will not perish.

" Chodzimy po dyngusie i śpiewamy o Jezusie.
O Jezusie Jego Synie, kto w niego wierzy, ten nie zginie."

The singers often demanded a dyngus or ransom for their singing and would not leave without it. Easter Monday is also called śmingus from the custom of switching maidens with willow branches, also for fertility.

Although the Synod of Poznan (1420) banned dyngus and - drenching, nonetheless, they have survived down to modern times.

This day the young people break the solemnity of Easter by a burst of frivolity. They visit from house to house singing songs, playing pranks and merrymaking. After getting the girls out of their beds, the boys will switch their legs and douse them with water. On Tuesday, the girls are supposed to reciprocate in kind. They visit the boys, sprinkle them with water and use the switch.

After getting the girls out of their houses, the boys douse them with water. The girls reciprocate in kind. In cities this custom is practiced with more gentility, by using a sprinkle of water or fragrant cologne. The origin of this custom is unknown. Some say it is a pagan tradition handed down from the earliest settlers in Poland. Others assert it is a reminder that the sinner has been washed clean in the blood of Christ, newly risen from the dead.

In cities this custom is practiced with more gentility, by using fragrant cologne instead of water.

On this day it is customary to visit or receive distant relatives and friends. This custom is a survival of pre-Christian fertility rites and provides an occasion for much merriment.