

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

HAPPY SAINT CHARLES DAY!

Recently I was reading about some kids in religion class who had made some funny bloopers. Here are some of them: "In the first book of the bible, Genesis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off." "Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark." "The fifth commandment is humor thy father and mother." "The seventh commandment is thou shall not admit adultery." "The Epistles were the wives of the Apostles." "A Christian should have only one wife-this is called monotony."

Well, learning all about God and religion sometimes can be difficult and we all make mistakes. One time I went to visit one of the CCD (Religious Ed) classes on Wednesday afternoon. I asked the children all about the saints and they gave me the names of a good number of saints. I then asked them about our Parish patron, Saint Charles and inquired if they knew where he was from. One little girl piped up enthusiastically, "Oh sure Father! Ireland wasn't it?" I think she has Saint Charles mixed up with Saint Patrick!

In any event, Charles Borromeo was born in Italy and on this Sunday, (Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time) we celebrate his feast day. This should mean something to us here in Oakwood Heights because our Parish bears his name. I am not exactly sure how this parish received the name of "Saint Charles." Someone told me that a certain man named Charles donated a good deal of money and that is why the Church is named after him! Maybe that's not true but it's a good story nonetheless!

Who was Saint Charles Borromeo? Well, as we said, he was born in Italy in the year 1538. He entered the priesthood and was such a bright and talented young man that he was chosen to be the Bishop of Milan at the incredibly young age of 22. Guess people were a little more mature during those times! In any event, Saint Charles was a deeply humble and prayerful man. His motto in Latin was "Humilitas"-humility. His crest is emblazoned in the stained glass window in the back of the Church as a good reminder that we should be humble too!

Saint Charles lived at a difficult time in church history. It was the Protestant Reformation and holiness was very much needed among the clergy. As a Bishop and later on as a Cardinal of the Church, Charles led an important role in assembling the Council of Trent which brought a much needed reform to the Catholic Church and all the priests and bishops.

The saint was active in enforcing the council's reforms and the result was a better behaved Catholic Church. Maybe we need someone like him today! Saint Charles also helped write the Roman Catechism which re-emphasized the basic teachings of Jesus Christ for a new generation.

When a deadly plague devastated Milan in 1575, Saint Charles personally ministered to the sick himself. He waited on the dying and helped with his own money those who were lacking in resources. Eventually, his own health gave out, worn down by toil, penance and fasting. He died on November 4, 1584 at only forty six years of age. His last words addressed to God were "Behold I come."

In his life, Saint Charles proved to be truly a good shepherd after the model of Jesus Christ himself who sacrificed himself. As we honor the Patron Saint of our Parish this Sunday, let us imitate Saint Charles in loving the Lord and doing his work on this earth!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome