

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## THE HOUR THAT MADE A BISHOP'S DAY

Many Catholics of a certain age will remember fondly Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. He was really America's first "Televangelist" in the 1950's and millions of people watched his TV program "Life is Worth Living." Sheen died back in December, 1979 but his name has been in the news lately. Recently, Pope Francis accepted a miracle in favor of the bishop's cause for canonization.

In 2010 in Washington, Illinois, a baby, James Fulton Engstrom was still born-there was absolutely no heartbeat. The parents prayed fervently to Bishop Sheen and after an hour, the baby revived and the heart started beating. Predictions that the baby would be an invalid were proved false and he is a very healthy child today. The family credits the prayers of Bishop Fulton Sheen for his truly miraculous recovery.

A few weeks ago, as you might have heard, Sheen's body was removed from Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Peoria where he was ordained many years ago. Apparently this removal of the body is something that is essential to the canonization process, although I really can't see why.

Over the years in my visits to the Cathedral crypt, I have always said a prayer at the tomb of Bishop Sheen for his guidance in my own priestly life. I will miss that. One thing that was left at Saint Patrick's was Bishop Sheen's kneeler, obviously well used! Yes, Bishop Sheen was a man of great prayer.

A priest I know, Msgr. Hilary Franco, told a story about his devotion to the eucharist and prayer. As a young priest, Msgr. Franco went to work for the bishop as his secretary. The first morning he wanted to make a good impression by getting to the chapel ahead of the good Bishop. As he came down the stairs though about 6:30 AM, he noticed the light was shining under the door. Sheen was there already!

Msgr. Franco learned then that Sheen made a daily "holy hour" before the Blessed Sacrament. The bishop often insisted on this practice for priests saying that it was the eucharist that really gave him the power to do so much good for God and the Church.

It's true to say that we're not saints and most probably nobody will ever introduce a cause for our canonization. Yet, we might take a cue from Bishop Sheen and consider doing a holy hour before the tabernacle. It's a wonderful practice that truly will enrich our lives.

Here at Saint Charles we're lucky to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the chapel each weekday for five hours, from noon till five. Many people do "take an hour" to pray and meditate in the presence of Christ. Now, it might not be possible to do an hour every day, but we might just think about it all the time that we waste on a daily basis in all kinds of frivolous activities especially on the internet. Why not give some of that time to the Lord? Time given to the Lord is never wasted.

Bishop Sheen wrote in his autobiography: "The purpose of holy hour is to encourage a deep personal encounter with Jesus Christ. The holy and glorious God is constantly inviting us to come to Him, to hold conversation with Him, to ask for things that we need and to experience the blessing of fellowship with Him."

During these summer months where we might have more time, let us make time to be with Jesus, the hour that made Bishop Sheen's day!

Sincerely in Christ  
Father Jerome