

SAINT CHARLES - "SPIRITUAL CHARGER"

The story is told of the late Cardinal Richard Cushing, the Archbishop of Boston- certainly a very down to earth man. He certainly never wanted to become a bishop at all. When Cardinal O'Connell asked him to become one, he said, "Cardinal, I would like a few days to think it over."

After a few days of thinking, Cushing said, "Your Eminence, I don't want this and maybe some other priest wants to be a bishop but not me... The only way that I will do it is of you command me." The old Cardinal shook a finger at him, "You take it!" "So I took it," said Cushing.

Certainly being a bishop now is much more of a difficult job than it ever was. During this month of November on the fourth, we honored the Patron Saint of our parish-St. Charles Borromeo. St. Charles exemplified what a true bishop is-a dedicated pastor of souls.

Who was St. Charles? Well, he was born in Italy in the year 1538 and became a bishop when he was in his twenties. Incredibly, he was nominated as Archbishop of Milan at the young age of 22. I guess people matured earlier in those hard times! St. Charles was a profoundly spiritual man. He lived at a time during the Protestant Reformation when holiness among the clergy was very much needed.

As bishop and later Cardinal of the church., St. Charles led an important role in assembling the Council of Trent, which brought a much needed reform to the Catholic Church and her clergy. The Saint was active in enforcing the council's reforms and he helped write the Roman Catechism, which reemphasized the teachings of Christ and the Church.

When a deadly plague devastated Milan in 1575, St. Charles ministered to the sick with his own hands. In this he showed himself to be a good shepherd just as Jesus was. The Saint died in 1584, only forty six years old, worn out by his labors for the church and for souls.

One thing that St. Charles recommended for priests was that they meditate each day. That's a good thing not only for the priests and nuns but for each and every one of us! St. Charles said: "We must meditate before, during, and after everything we do." Meditation is what we might call reflective prayer. In other words, we think and pray about divine things and so appreciate them more. In order to meditate and pray we need to settle ourselves down and be quiet. It's not so easy these days when there is so much noise around us-even a lot of it in church sad to say.

St. Charles did much good for the church because he truly was a person of prayer and devotion. Here was a man who loved God sincerely and then expressed that love by his charity and concern towards his brothers and sisters. A great role model!

Although we have a statue of St. Charles outside the church, there is no shrine to him inside! Maybe in the future a statue or an icon of our parish patron could be obtained. As we honor the memory of this great Saint this month, let us all invoke his special intercession. May

we, like him, show the image of Christ to our world today!

*Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome*