

that he was tongue-tied when asked to say a prayer for the occasion, and wept while the Shroud was put on display.

Later, when he learned that Duke Charles of Savoy was ill, Borromeo journeyed to Savoy and found the duke at death's door. He prayed fervently for a recovery, which was granted. The duke believed his recovery was due to the good bishop's prayers.

In 1584, the year following that of the duke's miraculous recovery, Borromeo's own health deteriorated. When he arrived home from his annual retreat, he requested to have the last rites and went directly to bed. After receiving his last sacrament, he said "Ecco venio" meaning "Behold, I come." During that night of November 3-4, he died at the age of 46. He is thought to have died of exhaustion from his labors, the strain of too much work and too little sleep having taken a toll on him.

Quotes by St. Charles Borromeo:

- "Charity is that with which no man is lost, and without which no man is saved."
- "Stay quiet with God. Do not spend your time in useless chatter."
- "Be sure that you first preach by the way you live. If you do not, people will notice that you say one thing, but live otherwise, and your words will bring only cynical laughter and a derisive shake of the head."
- "If we wish to make any progress in the service of God we must begin every day of our life with new eagerness. We must keep ourselves in the presence of God as much as possible and have no other view or end in all our actions but the divine honor."
- "We must meditate before, during and after everything we do. The prophet says: 'I will pray, and then I will understand.' This is the way we can easily overcome the countless difficulties we have to face day after day, which, after all, are part of our work. In meditation we find the strength to bring Christ to birth in ourselves and in others."

Socials with the Saints

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Sources incl.: Butler's *Lives of the Saints*; *The Holy Shroud: Why We Believe* by Fr. Louis-Marie Navaratne, OSB (Lightning Press, 2013); Catholic.org; Wikipedia; *Lives of the Saints for Every Day of the Year*, Ed. Hugo Hoever, S.O. Cist., Ph.D. (Catholic Book Publishing, 1955); *The Book of Saints: The Lives of the Saints According to the Liturgical Calendar* text by Victor Hoagland, C.P. (Regina Press 1986, 2005); *Blessed Among Us: Day by Day with Sainly Witnesses* by Robert Ellsberg (Liturgical Press 2016)

Saint Charles Borromeo

Born: October 2, 1538

Died: November 3 or 4, 1584

Feast Day: November 4

Canonized: by Pope Paul V in 1610

Patronage: Of bishops, cardinals, seminarians, catechists, catechumens, spiritual directors, spiritual leaders, persons with stomach/intestinal ailments (ulcers, colic), persons dieting and obese



Born in the castle of Arona, Italy, in the Alpine region along the shore of Lake Maggiore, to Count Gilbert Boromeo and his wife, Margaret Medici, Charles was the second of two sons in a family of six. He demonstrated his love for the Church from a very young age. Recognizing his desire for an ecclesial career, his parents had him receive the clerical tonsure, the shaved head of a cleric, soon after he met the age requirement of 12.

Charles was educated at a Benedictine Abbey in Arona, the very property of which his paternal uncle turned over to him its considerable revenue. Charles instructed his father that any of the abbey's income exceeding his educational costs, belonged to the poor.

Because he had a slight speech impediment, Charles was thought to be a slow learner. He overcame that impediment, and, as his academic and professional accomplishments later proved, he was brilliant. He went on to Milan for Latin studies. Mourning his father's death in 1554, Charles paused his education to manage his family's affairs. Afterward, he earned his doctorate in civil and canon law from the University of Pavia in 1559 at the age of 21.

His mother's brother, the Cardinal de Medici, was elected Pope that same year and took the name Pius IV. Pius IV named Charles Cardinal Deacon of Milan, administrator of the vacant See of Milan, at the age of 22, prior to Charles' presbyteral ordination.

In 1560, Pius IV appointed Cardinal Borromeo papal secretary of state, which required him to remain in Rome for what turned out to be four years. His responsibilities included serving as legate (a papal representative) of Romagna, Bologna, the March of Ancona, Protector of the Kingdom of Portugal, Lower Germany, and the Catholic Cantons of Switzerland. Also

placed under his protection were the Carmelites, Franciscans, the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross of Christ in Portugal, and the Humiliati (the Brothers of Humility). He was named supervisor over the Knights of Malta.

In Rome, Borromeo lived austerely and worked tirelessly for the Church, founding the Vatican Academy for Literary Work. In 1562, he reassembled the Council of Trent for its third and final session, ten years after it had been suspended, and kept it going to its end. He enforced its reforms, and helped draft the Roman Catechism.

When his older brother Frederico died suddenly in 1562, Charles became head of his family. The family's wish was that he be laicized and marry so that the Borromeo line would not die out. However, he resigned his family position to become a priest. Three months after his ordination on December 7, 1563, he was ordained a bishop, and on May 12, 1564, he became Archbishop of Milan. He also accepted the office of grand penitentiary, who assists the pope in granting pardon to penitents who have committed very serious sins. Cardinal Borromeo served at the deathbed of his uncle, Pius IV.

After the election of Pope Pius V, Borromeo was given permission to reside in Milan. Arriving in 1566, he immediately set about reforming and revitalizing his long-neglected diocese, which had not had a resident bishop in many years. The See of Milan was the largest Catholic archdiocese at that time, and was rife with widespread corruption, such as the selling of indulgences. Cardinal Borromeo began reforming his diocese in his own household of close to 100 people, mostly clergy. He gave most of his income to charity, spending only what he needed for himself, shunning luxury and any form of ostentation. He established seminaries, oversaw the training of catechists, and reformed the clergy, allowing them a good salary and forbidding them to receive gifts (which often were bribes in disguise).

He also established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in order to properly instruct children in the Catholic faith, for which he is considered the originator of Sunday schools. He was responsible for the establishment of 740 schools, the founding of a college at Pavia, the training of 3,000 catechists and the education of 40,000 pupils.

Borromeo is considered one of the greatest reformers of the Church and, along with St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Philip Neri and St. Pope Pius V, one of the foremost pastoral theologians of the counter-reformation movement. Though the changes he instituted were not always well received, his reforms were eventually upheld as models.

Charles Borromeo was not without controversy. Several religious orders opposed his reforms, most notably the Humiliati, a corrupt society which owned about 90 monasteries despite having only 170 members. A group of the Humiliati conspired to kill Borromeo. In 1569, Jerome Donati Farina, a Humiliati priest, was paid 40 gold pieces to shoot Cardinal Borromeo while he was in the chapel of his residence praying. He miraculously survived the failed attempt when the bullet failed to penetrate his clothing. In gratitude, Borromeo reconsecrated his life to God.

He also came into conflict with civil authorities; in particular, the governor of Milan. That "conflict of jurisdiction" eventually involved the king, Philip II of Spain, and even the pope. Ultimately, Borromeo prevailed when the king sided with him. While the conflict subsided, bad feelings remained, and he had powerful enemies.

In 1570, Milan suffered a great famine. Borromeo himself fed 3,000 people every day for three months, which took a toll on his health. In 1572, he went to Rome for the election of Pope Gregory XIII. While there, he resumed his normal habits and his health recovered. Europe was then overwhelmed by one of the deadliest plagues in history (circa 1575-1577). While the governor and nobility left the city of Milan, Borromeo remained to care for the afflicted. Since there weren't enough diocesan priests to care for the people, he begged help from the superiors of religious orders and urged government officials to return to their posts. Borromeo used all his resources and even incurred huge debts on behalf of those afflicted. He organized the care and the provision of basic necessities for his people.

Borromeo made an urgent plea to God to miraculously end the plague that had taken the lives of millions of people. His appeal was made in the name of the "Holy Shroud," the ancient linen cloth believed to be the burial cloth of Christ. Borromeo accompanied his plea with a vow that he would make a pilgrimage on foot to venerate the Shroud, which was in the safekeeping of the royal House of Savoy in Chambery, France, at that time. The "great miracle" was granted, but before Borromeo could honor his vow, the Shroud was permanently transferred to Turin, the new capital of Savoy, where it remains today. The move may have occurred as a courtesy to Borromeo, to shorten the arduous journey from Milan to Chambery. The political climate at the time also may have played a role in the decision.

At the end of his four day pilgrimage, Borromeo's feet were bleeding profusely. After being welcomed by an official gun salute by the duke's infantry, he spent hours in the duke's private chapel adoring the Shroud. When the Shroud was put on public display, Borromeo became so emotional