

Prayer to Blessed Charles the Good

Blessed Charles, you were never afraid of those who persecuted you; you never succumbed to the temptation to enjoy your status and wealth without caring for those less fortunate. Help make us strong to bear the hatred, persecution and calumnies that the enemies of the Church employ against us today.

Help us to be true sons and daughters of light as you were. Help us to always follow our Savior and to "go about doing good."

AMEN.



Do unto others...



Resources used for this pamphlet:

www.americancatholic.org

www.catholic.org/saints

www.traditioninaction.org

www.stthomasirondequoit.com

Evangelization and the Lives of the Saints

Blessed Charles the Good



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"He went about doing good..."

These words from Acts 10:38 which apply to Jesus could also be said of this month's saint, Blessed Charles the Good. Born in 1083, he was the son of St. Canute, the King of Denmark, who was murdered when Charles was only five. Charles was then taken by his mother to his grandfather's court in Belgium, and he eventually became the Count of Flanders.

Charles was known to be an exceptionally fair and humane ruler. He had a true love of God, and every evening after his dinner would meet with three renowned theologians to discuss scripture and try to put it into practice in the rule of his people. One of his harshest punishments was meted out to those who dared blaspheme the name of God - but he felt it was better to punish them on earth so that they would be able to repent than to be punished eternally in Hell.

Charles had a strong desire to bring about justice and help those who were suffering, especially from poverty. When a severe famine struck Flanders in 1125, he set up feeding lines in each of his castles, where it is said he distributed thousands of loaves of bread in a single day. Even at other times he would always provide for those who came to his doors for help. He tried to ensure that enough crops were always grown to feed everyone in his realm.

His other greatest attribute was that of sincere piety. Each morning,

very early, he would walk barefoot to Mass, no matter what the weather, as a form of penance. He was warned by his family that he could easily be attacked in this way, as he had made enemies because of his insistence on fair treatment of the poor, widowed and orphaned. But his reply was, "We are always in the midst of dangers, but we belong to God." He was, sadly, martyred in the year 1127 while praying before Mass in front of a statue of Mary, to whom he had a strong devotion. He was greatly mourned by his subjects. Here are some thoughts on his spirituality:

- Blessed Charles, as the Count of Flanders, had a huge responsibility to the people he governed. But his faith sustained him and helped him to rule in a manner that was upright and moral. How important it is for us to pray for our leaders today! They are besieged with problems and must make critical decisions which often affect many people. Our leaders, whether in government or the workplace, need our prayerful support to ask God's intervention on their behalf.
- How dedicated Charles the Good was in trying to be close to God and understand His will! He met with three learned scholars each evening to get their help in interpreting scripture so he could apply it to his own life. In his commentary on the life of Blessed Charles, Prof. Plinio Correa de Oliveira remarks, "On those nights one could say that Heaven embraces earth and prepares those saintly men for their nightly repose and the next day's work and fight." We, too, can take more time to contemplate Scripture and its words of wisdom to us. We have the

Church herself to help us interpret the Bible accurately. Make it a point to try and read a portion of Scripture each day.

- Charles was ahead of his time in his formulation of one of the first "soup kitchens"! He cared for the poor in a hands-on way that few rulers did. How can we become more involved in our communities in helping to feed, clothe, and generally care for those who do not have the means to do so? If there isn't a soup kitchen or outreach facility locally to volunteer in, there is almost always a neighbor or fellow parishioner who could use a little extra TLC with a visit, some food or a phone call.



God's Promise

- "We are always in the midst of dangers, but we belong to God." So Blessed Charles wisely remarked when warned of threats made on his life. No matter what we face, in trials, temptations or troubles, we know we belong to One who is greater than all of these. Let us rest assured that God has the last word in our lives, and that Word is Jesus! "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38) AMEN!