



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE SACRED COLLEGE OF CARDINALS
ON THE FEAST OF ST CHARLES BORROMEIO***

Consistory Hall

Saturday, 4 November 1978

I wish to thank you heartily for the expressions of benevolence with regard to my person. Name days always draw the attention and the benevolence of those closest to us—of members of the family—upon the person who bears a given name. This name reminds us of the love of our parents, who, on giving it, wished to determine somehow the place of their child in that community of love which the family is. They were the first to address him with this name, and together with them, his brothers and sisters, relatives, friends and companions. And so the name marked out the man's path among men; among the men closest to him and fondest of him.

But the mystery of the name goes further. The parents who gave their child his name in baptism, wished to define his place in the great gathering of love which the Family of God is. The Church on earth strives continually towards the dimensions of this family in the mystery of the communion of Saints. By naming their child, the parents wish to bring him into the continuity of this mystery.

My beloved parents gave me the name Karol (Charles), which was also my father's name. Certainly, they could never have foreseen (they both died young) that this name would open up for their child the way among the great events of the Church of today.

St Charles! How often I have knelt before his relics in Milan Cathedral; how often I have thought about his life, contemplating in my mind the gigantic figure of this man of God and servant of the Church, Charles Borromeo, Cardinal, Bishop of Milan, and a man of the Council. He is one of the great protagonists of the deep reform of the 16th century church, carried out by the Council of Trent, which will always remain linked with his name. He is also one of the creators of the institution of ecclesiastical seminaries, which has been reconfirmed in all its substance by the Second Vatican Council. Moreover, he was a servant of souls, who never let himself be

intimidated; a servant of the suffering, of the sick, of those condemned to death.

My Patron Saint!

In his name my parents, my parish, my country intended to prepare me right from the beginning for an extraordinary service of the Church, in the context of today's Council, with the many tasks united with its implementation, and also in all the experiences and sufferings of modern man.

May God reward you, revered Brothers, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, for having, on this day, together with me, wished to venerate St Charles in my unworthy person. May God reward all those who do so together with you.

If only I could imitate him, at least partly!

I hope that your prayers, the prayers of all good, noble, benevolent men, my brothers and sisters, will help me in this.

And now, before I conclude this talk, allow me to address you particularly, revered and dear Dean of the Sacred College, who bear the same name, Charles.

We have a common Patron Saint and we celebrate our name day on the same day.

I reciprocate your good wishes. And I do so from the bottom of my heart, with deep gratitude.

The Dean of the Sacred College has shown me great benevolence on these first days of my pontificate. Whenever he speaks, his words are full of love and dedication; and I welcome the expressions he has addressed to me today as a sign of extraordinary support for my first steps at the beginning of my new Mission. I thank him heartily.

And I pray that St Charles, our common Patron Saint, will bless his person for his whole life, for all the days full of love for the Church and marked by the spirit of dedication and service which edifies us all.

With my special Apostolic Blessing.

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