

September Chaplain's Report

This September marks the beginning of the 50th anniversary year of St. Robert Bellarmine Church's founding in Warrington, PA beginning with the annual Forty Hours Devotions beginning on the feast of St. Robert Bellarmine, Sunday September 17th 2017. As the parish prepares to celebrate this milestone it's good to take a moment and reflect upon who this St. Robert Bellarmine was and is for us today.

St. Robert Bellarmine was a Jesuit Father from the area Montepulciano in Italy born on October 4, 1542, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. From an early age he was captivated by the spirit of religious beginning with the Franciscans and eventually the Jesuit Fathers whom he would join in the mission to build up Christian Disciples through mission and education.

As a Jesuit Father, St. Robert Bellarmine served in various capacities throughout the Order and was renowned as a great scholar and did much to strengthen the intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church. He advised a number of popes and was created a Cardinal in 1599 and was made Archbishop of Capua in Italy a few short years later. St. Robert is noted for his boundless generosity to the poor and kindnesses to other with what little property he had to offer, as well as his time and energies.

After many years of service to the Church St. Robert Bellarmine retired to the Jesuit Novitiate in Rome and there died after a short illness on September 17th 1621. He was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1930 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1931.

St. Robert's life may sound to us distant and removed but at its heart is something very familiar to us. There at the center is a manly desire to provide, protect and offer our lives as a sacrifice for others; that others may live and love in the way God desires. Growing more familiar with the lives of the saints can help us to become the men God is calling us to be as husbands, fathers, deacons, priests, religious and more. The book, *Parish Priest: Father Michael J. McGivney and American Catholicism* by Douglas Brinkley and Julie Fenster details well Fr. McGivney's life and times as well as the motivations for the foundation of the Knights of Columbus. One cannot read the lives of the saint without being struck by their humanity, relatability, and God's power to make the most unlikely among us into missionaries of his mercy and love in the world. St. Robert Bellarmine and Venerable Michael McGivney pray for us!