

Today is the Memorial of St. Alphonsus Liguori. He was born in 1696 in what was then the Kingdom of Naples to a noble family; and was one of 7 children. His full name was Alphonsus Mary Antony John Cosmas Damian Michael Gaspard de' Liguori ... I'm not sure how he'd fit all that on a government form, but anyway.

At the age of 16 he began the study of law, and eventually became a well-known lawyer ... not losing a single case in eight years of practice. At the ripe-old-age of 27, he left his legal practice, and began to study for the priesthood. He was ordained at the age of 30, and began to work with the homeless and marginalized youth of Naples.

He founded what were called "Evening Chapels" which were for the youth and were centers of prayer and piety, preaching, community, social activities, and education.

In 1732, he founded the Congregation of the Redeemer - what we know today as the Redemptorists, whose mission was to teach and preach in the slums of cities and other poor places.

When he was 66, he was made a bishop, but tried to refuse the appointment on the grounds of his advanced age. During his time as a bishop he wrote many works on the Eucharist and Our Lady; as well as working to renew teaching on Moral Theology. When he was 79, he retired, and died at the age of 90.

Even though he lived over 225 years ago, the problems of St. Alphonsus' time are not all that different than the problems of our own time.

In today's Gospel, we hear Our Lord's "Parable of the Dragnet." All believers are called to be "Fishers of Men," and God's will is that all be saved ... and the Church is generous in offering God's grace and the Salvation of Christ to all who will come.

Jesus asks his disciples:

*Do you understand all these things?*

And we too, are asked the same. Because with understanding comes responsibility.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist ... let us pray for a spiritual fervor to be kindled in us ... so that we might go forth from this place as true disciples of Jesus Christ, messengers of His Gospel, and as a Light to the World.