

Reflection Saturday Week 28 St Ignatius of Antioch 2020

St Ignatius of Antioch (- 107) was the 2nd bishop of Antioch after St Peter (the first being Evodius). He was arrested, condemned to death, and transported to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. In one of his letters he describes the soldiers escorting him as being like *"ten leopards, who when they are kindly treated only behaved worse."* In the course of his journey he wrote seven letters to various churches, in which he dealt wisely and deeply with Christ, the organisation of the Church, and the Christian life. They are important for the early history of the Church and reveal a deeply holy man who accepted his fate and begged the Christians in Rome not to try to deprive him of the crown of martyrdom. He was martyred in 107. His feast was celebrated on this day in 4th-century Antioch.

The prayer of St Paul to the Ephesians obviously applied to St Ignatius of Antioch. *May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers.* And in Ignatius one can see the promise of Jesus fulfilled. The Holy Spirit came to Ignatius, as he was dragged before his persecutors, not only in word and in writing but in courage and perseverance. Let us join with Ignatius and the psalmist and say ***How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!***

In his own words:

"It is not that I want merely to be called a Christian, but to actually be one. Yes, if I prove to be one, then I can have the name... Come fire, cross, battling with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of the Devil -- Only let me get to Jesus Christ!"

"Labour together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together; and awake together as the stewards and associates, and servants of God. . . Let your baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply. Let your works be the charge assigned to you, that you may receive a worthy recompense. Be long-suffering, therefore, with one another, in meekness, as God is towards you!

Praying . . .!!!

Little Sonia was shouting her prayers. *"Please God send me a new doll for my birthday."* Her mother, overhearing this, said, *"You don't have to shout Sonia, God isn't deaf."*

Sonia replied, *"No, but Grandad is, and he's in the next room."*