

Reflection Monday Week 24 St John Chrysostom 2021

St John Chrysostom (349 - 407) was born in Antioch. After a thorough education, he became an ascetic. He was ordained to the priesthood and became a fruitful and effective preacher. He was elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 397, and reformed the ways of the clergy and laity alike. Incurring the displeasure of the emperor, he was twice forced into exile. After three years of his second exile, to Armenia, they decided to send him still further away, but he died on the journey, worn out by his hardships. His sermons and writings helped explain the Catholic faith and encouraged the living of the Christian life: his eloquence earned him the name "Chrysostom" (in Greek: "golden mouth").

Despite representing their hated conquerors, the Centurion was highly thought of by those over whom he had authority. In fact, he showed care and sensitivity to all people beginning with his own servant for whom he wanted healing but also those he governed, helping them build their synagogue. How easily do we judge people because of their title, their political persuasion, religious belief or recent history? Jesus obviously did not and, in publicly recognising the Centurion's faith, praised him as an excellent example for people to follow. One of the titles we have been given in trust by God is *Stewards of Creation* and what have we done? We have abused and misused the materials and goods of creation to such an extent that it is on the verge of collapse. Like the Centurion we could appeal to God to heal the dying creation but the true illness lies within ourselves. We are the ones who need to be healed, to radically change the way we live for any kind of healing of the environment.

We pray for the ecological conversion of the people of God... For hearts burning for climate and ecological justice... For the fruits of the initiatives of Catholic institutions... For bold action in governments and societies.

Loving Creator, give us the grace to be faithful co-creators who care for our common home. Fill us with Your Spirit who renews the face of the earth and inspire us to sing as we go, through Christ our Lord. Amen.