

Reflection Wednesday Week 11 St Aloysius Gonzaga 2023

St Aloysius (b. 1568) was the eldest son of a Mantuan nobleman, who wanted him to be a soldier. Aloysius, however, was determined to be a missionary, and even to die for his faith. He renounced his birthright in favour of his brother and, aged 16, he became a Jesuit novice in Rome, living the same life of severe austerity and penance that he had followed while serving in the courts of dukes and princes. In 1591 a plague broke out in Rome, and the Jesuits opened a hospital to care for the sick. Aloysius, still a novice, worked hard in the hospital until he himself caught the plague. He did not recover; but, his determination to die for the faith having been fulfilled, died at midnight on the 20th of June with the name of Jesus on his lips.

Love God and Love your neighbour Jesus says. St Aloysius shows us how. It is understood that you cannot do one without the other. This suggests that you cannot truly love God unless you truly love your neighbour and also that you cannot love your neighbour unless you love God. In loving your neighbour, you will experience God's presence within them but in loving God you are better able to experience God's presence in your neighbour. St Aloysius offers these thoughts for reflection:

*"I am a piece of twisted iron,
I entered the religious life
to get twisted straight."*

*"He who wishes to love God
does not truly love Him,
if he has not an ardent
and constant desire
to suffer for His sake."*

*"When He takes away
what He once lent us,
His purpose is to
store our treasure elsewhere,
more safely and bestow on us,
those very blessings,
that we ourselves
would most choose to have."*