

Reflection Tuesday Week 28 St Ignatius of Antioch 2023

St Ignatius of Antioch (- 107) was the third bishop of Antioch, the first being St Peter until he moved to Rome, and the second 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 who were escorting him as being like “ten leopards, who when they are kindly treated only behave 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 documents for the early history of the Church, and they also reveal a deeply holy man who accepts his fate and begs the Christians in Rome not to try to deprive him of the crown of martyrdom. He was martyred in 107 and his feast was already being celebrated on this day in fourth-century Antioch.

Ignatius was a man of hope, in the face of death, he embraced it rather than be frightened or cowed by it. In the face of what is happening in the world, war in Ukraine, war in Israel/Palestine, the steep rise in the cost of living, all militate against hope. There are millions of people suffering from the indiscriminate killing of the innocent that is a consequence of war; millions more have less and less to eat on a daily basis. It is good to ask where hope is in all this??

There are many heroes seeking to save lives, not just the doctors and nurses but those who clear rubble to release people buried there, the support of one person for the stranger in distress. The sharing of food and water and so many more. They all have hope and inspire hope in others. We cannot must not do less!!