

Living the Word: Isaiah 25.1-9

Today's Old Testament returns to the theme of the Holy Mountain. Isaiah tells us that the Holy Mountain, identified elsewhere as Mount Zion, is a place where a meal takes place, where those who are invited find the best food, and where they're given the best wine. We partake in this sacred banquet every time we receive the Sacrament at mass: when we come to the Temple and receive the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord. This draws us into communion with him and with one another, and it gives us a foretaste of heaven, a glimpse of what reality will be like when the veil is lifted: 'It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'. So as we eat and drink of the Lord today, may we do so knowing that this banquet on earth is making us fit for heaven.

Saints and Heroes: St Ignatius of Antioch (+107) 17th October

St Ignatius is believed to have been born in AD50 and to have been martyred c.107. He was the third bishop of Antioch succeeding from Evodius and St Peter the Apostle. He claims to have received his episcopal consecration at the hands of St Peter himself. Not much is known of Ignatius' early life, or for that matter his life as bishop of Antioch, until the account of the end of his life. What is known is that the Emperor Domitian persecuted Christians in Antioch; Ignatius was a defender and great leader of his people at that time. His martyrdom came about as a result of the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Trajan. Trajan wished to unify the Empire and so decreed that Christians should join with pagans in worshipping their gods. Ignatius used his position to defend the Faith from this, and his people from punishment. As a result he was arrested and brought before Trajan in chains where by all accounts he eloquently and bravely gave defence to the people of Christ. This did not impress the Emperor, who ordered that Ignatius be sent from Antioch to Rome and fed to the lions as a spectacle for the people in the Colosseum. His remains were transferred back to Antioch but have since been returned to Rome, where they lie in the Basilica di San Clemente. Most of the writings we have from him were written during his journey to his death in Rome and are important documents concerning the Church's teaching on Christ's two natures, and the theology of the Mass.

15th October 2023

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary
Time



In today's Gospel, Jesus gives us the Parable of the Wedding Feast. It's a beautiful image to describe the Kingdom of Heaven, a festive meal with delicious food in abundance, put on by the King. Those who are first invited to the Feast do not come for various reasons, making their excuses. These represent the religious elite who have rejected the invitation of God, through Christ, to join in the heavenly wedding banquet. Next, he sends for everyone he can find. But though all are invited only some wear the wedding garment, and those without are cast out. Of course, the wedding garment is not about the owning of riches but rather the true wedding garment, the clothing with Christ which Christians receive at Baptism. The baptised are clothed with Christ and join him in his offer to attend the delightful wedding feast. Let us give thanks, today then, for the gift of baptism in which Christ clothes us with his very self and welcomes us to the banquet.

Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 22:1-14