

Saint Ignatius of Antioch
(Bishop and Martyr)
17 October



About Saint Ignatius of Antioch [-107]

Saint Ignatius provides an important link to the early Church as he was the third Bishop of Antioch. He followed Evodius, who succeeded Saint Peter in Antioch. He was arrested (possibly because he was denounced by a fellow Christian), condemned to death and taken to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena.

During the journey to his martyrdom, Saint Ignatius wrote seven letters to various churches, in which he dealt wisely and deeply with Christ, the organizational structure of the Church, and the Christian life. These documents are important for the early history of the Church. They also reveal to us a man who was very holy, who called himself the God-bearer and who accepted his fate as a martyr for Christ, for in these letters he begs the Christians of Rome to not deprive Him of his crown of martyrdom. These same letters show Ignatius to be a devoted follower of Christ and also urge Christians to unity in and through the Eucharist and around their local bishop. He was martyred in Rome in 107.

His feast was already being celebrated on this day in the fourth century in his home city of Antioch.

What can we learn from Saint Ignatius' life?

We can learn a lot about Ignatius from his letters. He was focused on Christ and the Sacraments. Even amid a crisis Ignatius remained faithful to the Lord. We, too, can remain faithful to Christ in difficult circumstances and to others when it would be more convenient to do otherwise.

Whilst we might consider Ignatius to be over stating his self-importance by calling himself a God-bearer, in fact that is what he was. He bore God's word to the community at Antioch. **We, too, must bear Christ's word in our community with love, hope and joy. Ignatius must have been an incredibly positive model of Christianity, because his feast was already being celebrated on this day in the fourth century.**

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Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who adorn the sacred body of your Church
with the confessions of holy Martyrs,
grant, we pray,
that, just as the glorious passion of Saint Ignatius of Antioch,
which we celebrate today,
brought him eternal splendour,
so it may be for us unending protection.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 12:24-26

If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I tell you, most solemnly,

unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,

it remains only a single grain;

but if it dies,

it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it;

anyone who hates his life in this world

will keep it for the eternal life.

If a man serves me, he must follow me,

wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.'

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Antiphon

I am the wheat of Christ to be ground by the teeth of beasts,
that I may be found to be pure bread.

Hymn for the Feast of Saint Ignatius of Antioch

Saint Ignatius of Antioch,
a soldier of Christ you would be,
a holy shepherd to your flock,
with God's Holy Word as your key.

You called yourself the God-bearer
in everything you did and said
like Christ, you only spoke the Truth
by your example, Christ's word spread.

By standing firm in holy faith,
a martyr you would come to be.
With joy you shed your blood for Christ
and by His Truth He set you free.

O Lord, help us to faithful be,
let Your Truth be our only guide,
returning hate with forgiveness,
putting aside our earthly pride.

88.88 LM

Possible tunes: O Waly Waly, Tallis Canon?

**(If you think another tune works better, I'm open
to ideas/ suggestions)**

Other Music Suggestion

[Unless a grain of wheat](#) | Bernadette Farrell

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