

OCTOBER 17, 2020
Memorial of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr
Luke 12: 8-12

“BE SOLDIERS OF CHRIST.”

How do we pray for other people or do we remember them in our prayer? Do we give thanks to God for the good things happened to others? In our First Reading, St. Paul showed us how to be thankful to the progress or success of the people of Ephesus. The letter to the Ephesians allegedly written by Paul when he was imprisoned in Rome. “Clearly he has been getting reports from the various churches by Christians who have been visiting him. He has been deeply gratified by what he has been hearing about the faith of the Christians and the loving support they show towards each other and he remembers them constantly, with gratitude, in his prayers.”¹ He remembered them in his prayers even if he was in prison, or in danger of death – a manifestation that the work of the Lord must be share in time of peace or in chaos. St. Paul gave us the way we need to do and say as we live and proclaim the gospel of Jesus. We can do this because the Holy Spirit will help us to live our mission that God gave us, the message too of our gospel today. Jesus said: “Do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”² Jesus is telling His disciples to be prepared as they will experience trials and persecutions in the future as they preach the gospel. It is not easy but through the help of the Holy Spirit, we can face even death. “He encourages them to be faithful to their Christian commitment and to their faith in Christ as Lord. When we publicly acknowledge Jesus as Christ and Lord, Jesus too will acknowledge us as his faithful disciple. Of course, it will be difficult during times of abuse and persecution, but they must always be ready to

¹ www.catholicsermons.com/living_space

² Luke 12: 11-12 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA

acknowledge their allegiance to Jesus. To deny that allegiance may win them a reprieve in this life but not in the next.”³

My brothers and sisters let us ask the Lord to send us the Holy Spirit to speak and defend our faith even if people ridicule and laugh at us. We need to stand and live our faith. May we also support those people who are persecuted because of their faith and belief in God. If somehow along the way, we don't stand with them, concealed our faith and identity, let us ask forgiveness from the Lord and give us the strength to be considered among committed and faithful followers of the gospel. May we also imitate St. Ignatius of Antioch who was not afraid of death for Christ. “The second Bishop of Antioch, Syria, this disciple of the beloved Disciple John was consecrated Bishop around the year 69 by the Apostle Peter, the first Pope. A holy man who was deeply loved by the Christian faithful, he always made it his special care to defend ‘orthodoxy’ (right teaching) and ‘orthopraxy’ (right practice) among the early Christians. In 107, during the reign of the brutal Emperor Trajan, this holy Bishop was wrongfully sentenced to death because he refused to renounce the Christian faith. He was taken under guard to Rome where he was to be brutally devoured by wild beasts in a public spectacle. It was Bishop Ignatius who first used the term "catholic" to describe the whole Church. In one of his pastoral letters he said: ‘I would rather die and come to Jesus Christ than be king over the entire earth. Him I seek who died for us; him I love who rose again because of us.’”⁴

So, my brothers and sisters, may we always defend and live our faith, be committed and faithful servants of the Word of God, and share it to others. Let us be soldiers of Christ daily.

³ www.catholicsermons.com/living_space

⁴ www.catholic.org/saints