



ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, Bishop and Martyr
October 17

ST. IGNATIUS was a convert to the Faith and a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. St. John Chrysostom says that St. Peter appointed him Bishop of Antioch, which See he governed for forty years. The Saint longed to shed his blood for Christ, but the opportunity was not granted him during the persecution under Domitian.

While the short reign of Nerva lasted the Church was at peace, but under Trajan persecution broke out anew. In the year 107 the Emperor came to Antioch. St. Ignatius was seized and brought before him. Having confessed Christ, he was condemned to be taken in chains to Rome, there to be exposed to the wild beasts. During this last journey he was welcomed by the faithful of Smyrna, Troas, and other places along the way.

He arrived in Rome just as the public spectacles in the amphitheater were drawing to a close. The faithful of the city came out to meet him. He was at once hurried to the amphitheater, where two fierce lions immediately devoured him. He ended his saintly life by a glorious death, exclaiming, "May I become agreeable bread to the Lord." His remains were carried to Antioch, where they were interred. In the reign of Theodosius they were transferred to a church within the city. At present they are venerated in Rome.

During his long journey he addressed seven epistles to various congregations, in which, as a disciple of the Apostles, he testifies to the dogmatic character of Apostolic Christianity.

PRAYER Almighty and ever-living God, You adorn the body of Your holy Church with the witness of Your Martyrs. Grant that the sufferings of St. Ignatius on this day which brought unending glory to him may bring us perpetual protection. Amen.



Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His Apostles to establish the Church all over the world; that was His express command. The Apostles and their successors, the Bishops, have complied with this command, this mission of the Church to continue Christ's teaching and to apply the fruits of His Sacrifice to

all men. In the process many have suffered martyrdom for their mission. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, one of the Apostolic Fathers, received the crown of martyrdom in the second century under Trajan; he was thrown to the wild beasts in the Amphitheatre during the public games.