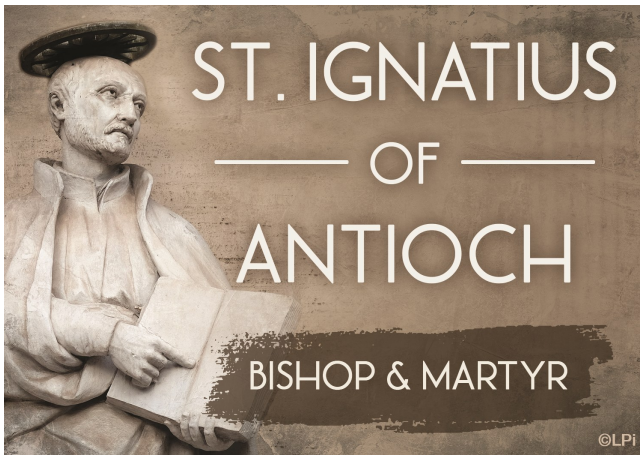


FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In these days of October, as the leaves turn and the harvest gathers, the Church invites us to gaze upon the pierced Heart of Jesus through the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. What a sister she is to us in this journey of Faith! Born in the humble fields of France in 1647, orphaned young, and marked by the cross of illness, Margaret entered the cloister of the Visitation not as a princess, but as a 'little one,' seeking the Father's embrace. There, in the silence of Paray-le-Monial, the Lord spoke to her heart. "Behold this Heart which has so loved men," He whispered to her in visions, flames leaping from His wounded chest, a furnace of mercy poured out for the world.

This is no distant tale, no pretty statue gathering dust in a side chapel. No! St. Margaret Mary's encounter echoes the Kerygma, the Good News, that we are called to proclaim: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (Jn 3:16), and from that giving flows the blood and water of our new birth. She, like us, was called from the slums of the soul - those places of doubt, sin, and abandonment - into the household of Nazareth, where the Heart of Jesus beats in rhythm with our own. Margaret Mary did not hoard her visions; she shared them with her sisters and with us.

Think of the twelve promises that were revealed to her, those treasures from the Lord's own mouth: peace in families, blessings on homes, consolation for the afflicted. In a world of divided houses - parents estranged, youth adrift, hearts hardened by the noise of screens and streets - the Sacred Heart calls us to be families again, churches where the flame of divine love warms the cold.

As we approach her feast on October 16, let us not linger in "devotionism," as if prayers alone suffice. No, the Church teaches us to live this Heart! Let it propel us outside: invite that wandering neighbor to the parish, encourage a young person to discover God's vocation for their life, allow that coworker to see the difference faith makes for you. St. Margaret Mary, pray for us, that like you, we may console the Heart of Jesus by our fidelity in the little things - the shared meal, the honest word, and making our homes a domestic church. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, make our hearts like unto Thine! Through the intercession of St. Margaret Mary, grant us the grace to journey toward the Father's house.

The Church also calls us to stand with St. Ignatius of Antioch on October 17, his feast day. He was a bishop ablaze with the fire of the early Church: chained, yet free in the Lord. Born in the shadow of Antioch, that cradle of the first Gentile Christians, Ignatius walked as a disciple of the Apostles themselves, successor to Peter and Paul in that bustling hive of faith. But it was in the year 107, under the Emperor Trajan's shadow, that his true itinerary unfolded: arrested for his bold proclamation of Christ, he was dragged across sea and land to Rome, not as a prisoner of despair, but as a pilgrim bearing letters like torches to the seven churches along the way. "I am the wheat of God," he wrote from the hold of a ship, "to be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ."

In his letters, he cries out the very heartbeat of the Church: "Where the bishop is, there let the people be, even as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." See how he urges unity and that, where the bishop stands, he is an icon of the Good Shepherd, calling us from division to the one flock. O Jesus, grain of wheat fallen to earth, through the intercession of St. Ignatius, our father in the Faith, grind us in Your love! Make us one Body, one Church, journeying boldly to the Father's banquet.

Peace,