

Pray at all times

St John Chrysostom, whom the Church commemorates this week, wrote simply and powerfully about the importance of prayer at all times:

‘Place and time are no hindrance....The wife , while she holds in her hand the spindle and spins, can with her soul look up to heaven, and call with fervency upon the name of the Lord. It is possible for this man to offer a fervent prayer while he is on his way alone to market; for that other, who sits in his shop and sews leather, to lift up his soul to God; and the servant who makes purchases, does errands, or sits in the kitchen, has nothing to hinder him from doing the same.’

Yes, it sounds very dated, but we can easily update the text to reflect the reality of our lives today. St John’s teaching is still relevant: we should pray at all times and in all circumstances. Prayer keeps alive our relationship with God, it sanctifies our day to day lives and opens our eyes to the needs of those around us.

Saints & Heroes

Saint John Chrysostom

St John gained the name Chrysostom, which means ‘golden-mouthed’ in Greek, because of his eloquence in preaching. He was born in Antioch to Christian parents and was intended for the law. When he grew up, however, he had to care for his widowed mother until her death, and after that decided to become a hermit. After a few years, he returned to Antioch and was ordained deacon and then priest. His reputation grew quickly because of his personal goodness, his outstanding preaching and the books he wrote. Two years later he was elected Archbishop of Constantinople. Here he faced conflict with Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, who had hoped to be made Archbishop of Constantinople himself. John Chrysostom preached against the evil done at the Imperial Court of Constantinople, and this attracted the hatred of the Empress. After five years he was banished and sent to live near Antioch; later he was ordered to go to Pontus, by the Black Sea, and, being made to travel on foot in bitterly cold weather, died on his journey in the year 407. Thirty-one years later, on January 27th, his body was brought back to Constantinople.

Prayers to Remember

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

A Prayer of Saint Chrysostom, Book of Common Prayer 1662

24th January
2021

The Third Sunday
of Epiphany
3rd Week
of the Year

Transformation



The master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. John 2.10,11

“Three wonders mark this day we celebrate”, the ancient antiphon for the Magnificat at Evening Prayer on the Epiphany sings, “today the star led the Magi to the manger; today water was changed into wine at the marriage feast; today Christ desired to be baptised by John in the river Jordan to bring us salvation, alleluia.” So from early times the Church has linked the first of Jesus’ miracles that St John’s Gospel records with the season of Epiphany. The reason why are the words that St John carefully uses to describe the miracle: it is a ‘sign’ and a ‘manifestation’ of the glory of Jesus. It is, primarily, a sign of the transformation that Jesus has come to bring. The water in the jars that are used for the ritual purification of guests is transformed into something new – the good wine that Jesus makes. It is a sign of the ‘new work’ that God is making in Christ, the joyous abundance of the Kingdom. It’s also a ‘sign’ that resonates in our own lives, for it carries a call to transformation ourselves, day in and day out. What transformation would God bring to you today? Perhaps there is a wound of grief that he would heal? Perhaps there is a sin that has been holding you back that he would forgive? Perhaps he would have you know a deeper sense of his presence in your life? How will you open yourself to receive that transformation, so that your life itself becomes a sign of the new wine that Jesus makes.