

# Into the Lion's Mouth

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle C

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 12:1-7.

At that time: So many people were crowding together that they were trampling one another underfoot. Jesus began to speak, first to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven—that is, the hypocrisy—of the Pharisees. "There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one. Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."

Luke 12: 1-7

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I believe that you are present here as I turn to you in prayer. I trust and have confidence in your desire to give me every grace I need to receive today. Thank you for your love, thank you for your immense generosity toward me. I give you my life and my love in return.

Petition:

Lord, give me courage to keep following you even in the face of temptation.

1. Lion Food:

St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was arrested and then transported to Rome, where death by lions awaited him. In a letter, he urges the Romans to do him no untimely charity of interceding with the emperor to spare him from execution. He writes to them, I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable goodwill towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God (Letter to the Romans). These North American martyrs were of a similar mind. When Christ speaks of having no fear of those who kill the body but after that can do no more, he means it quite literally. If we encounter a situation in which we must either be faithful to Christ or cave in to pressure and abandon the path of the Lord, we should never hesitate. Follow Christ. Do not fear those who might kill by their criticism or disapproval of our rectitude of conscience. Do not be afraid.

2. Becoming Eucharist:

St. Ignatius also wrote, I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God (Letter to the Romans). He is drawing a connection between his own coming martyrdom wheat ground by the teeth of wild beasts and the Eucharist the pure bread of God. These words are not just grisly yet pious analogy; rather, they touch on the most profound meaning of the mystery of the Eucharist and our participation in it. The Eucharist is the most complete worship given to God the Father: It is the Incarnation of God among us, it is Christ's sacrifice of his body on the Cross, and it is his Resurrection from death to eternal life. Through the Eucharist we become an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. Just like the martyrs whose feast we celebrate today, we need to offer the struggles and challenges of each day in order to remain united with Christ in the Eucharist.

3. More than Birds:

In our daily life we take many small things for granted because they seem to have little import in the grand scheme of things. What were the high and low temperatures a year ago today? What does it matter now? we might as well respond. Where will the four sparrows I saw in the park two weeks ago get food to eat? It's not even a question that occurs to us. We have many other things of immediate importance that require our attention and action. Yet such a question is important enough to occur to God. Christ tells us in Luke 12:24, They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. He continues, And how much more are you worth than the birds! If God would make time to think about something so insignificant among all the goings-on in the world, how much more will he be taking care of our needs!

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, when I look at the difficulties and rough spots I know I will be facing today, I worry about the sacrifices I'll have to make. Maybe events won't turn out as I hope. Help me to have confidence and trust in you like Saint Isaac Jogues and John de Brebeuf. Help me realize that you have taken care of every minute detail of all that will occur today.

Resolution:

When faced with any worry today I will pray, Jesus, I trust in you.