

Today is the memorial of St. John Chrysostom who lived in the late 4th and early 5th centuries.

“Chrysostom” is a sort-of nickname ... meaning “Golden Mouth” which he got for his eloquent, but straight-forward preaching style.

He lived in Antioch, which is on the southern border of Turkey right next to Syria. It was a center of learning and education. He became a hermit, living a life of severe asceticism ... which led to his failing health, and his return to public life because of it.

Soon, he was ordained to the priesthood, and became well-known for his preaching.

In one of his works which comes down to us, titled *On the Priesthood*, he reminds his readers of the mystical transport that occurs during the liturgy ... how heaven and earth become one at the altar in the Eucharist; he says:

*For when you see the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshippers empurpled with that precious blood, can you then think that you are still among men, and standing upon the earth? Are you not, on the contrary, straightway translated to Heaven, and casting out every carnal thought from the soul, do you not with disembodied spirit and pure reason contemplate the things which are in Heaven? Oh! What a marvel! What love of God to man! He who sits on high with the Father is at that hour held in the hands of all, and gives Himself to those who are willing to embrace and grasp Him. And this all do through the eyes of faith!*

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us be drawn more deeply into the great mystery of the Eucharist. Recognizing not only what is happening here, but through God’s grace see with the “eyes of faith” through this place ... to the altar in heaven ... in the presence of the Holy Trinity.