

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

He was among the first called to be a disciple. He witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter. He stood on the mount of the Transfiguration and saw Moses and Elijah, and Jesus with His Divine nature exposed. He was one of the "sons of thunder" together with his brother James. Seeking a place at Christ's side in heaven, he confessed he was willing to drink the cup of suffering.

Of all the Apostles, it was John, son of Zebedee, that was given the nickname "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He reclined on the bosom of our Lord at supper. He witnessed the Passion of the Christ, faithfully standing by that terrible scene, among the few who did not flee. That the Christ be united to His Bride, John received by divine adoption the mother that bore the Infant of Bethlehem.

And he wrote that you might believe. Hear his Word, written for you: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us..."

You see John wrote not of himself, but of Christ. That what faith does. He wrote five Books of the New Testament, and still would write "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book..." And of the many divine and miraculous things John saw with his eyes, he wrote "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

But the Spirit of God moved John to record only that which is necessary for your salvation. Like Moses, John began his account of Christ "In the beginning..." By these Words St. John the Divine expresses the highest Christology, asserting that the God who at the first spoke and it was, is the same Word who became Flesh and dwelt among us. So the ages have named Him St. John the Theologian, for all true theology is Christology.

Perhaps this high theology coupled with the Words of our Lord caused the others to gossip saying that John would not die. But John was a man, a man born of human father, and so a sinner. So he could write "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us." John, even walking in the presence of the Lord, knew the doubt and temptation that you have known.

It is the weakness of the flesh that is magnified in the presence of holiness. And you have known, and more, you have indulged the depravity of your fallenness. And as St. John bids you confess, you too have walked in the darkness. And in trying to cover-up your sins, or minimizing your sins, or ignoring your sins, you have lied and not practiced the truth.

So hear the saving Word that John wrote for you: “But if we confess our sins, God, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” So if you walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanses us from all sin.

In Christ you have fellowship with St. John, fellowship with all the Apostles and Prophets and Evangelists. For truly their fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And of these things John writes that your joy may be full. The Christ he watched die died for you. And on the third day, John won that foottrace of faith to the empty tomb, that he might give witness to the resurrection of the Lord that loved him enough to die for him, and for you.

John saw Christ. He touched Christ. He heart Christ. And John ate Christ. For he was there in that Upper Room when our Lord instituted the Feast that he invites you to this day. He places His Body and Blood, the same Body and Blood that John ate and drank, into your mouth. By that Body and Blood he forgives your sins, and cleanses you from all unrighteousness. And eating and drinking, you have fellowship with that great cloud of witnesses, and your joy is full.

The tradition of the Church is that after Pentecost John went to Ephesus with Mary, and there John served Christ as Bishop of the churches of Asia Minor. Around the turn of the first century Christ, in His mercy, opened heaven to John, that exiled to Patmos for his confession of Christ, he record for you the Divine Revelation he received. John lived until his old age, and was spared martyrdom.

But the saying that went out among the brethren wasn’t wrong. They gossiped that the Lord promised that St. John would not die. And St. John lives. He lives with Moses and Elijah, whom he met on that blindingly bright mountain. He lives with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the saints, with the Patriarchs and Prophets and martyrs. He lives with Christ, his Lord. And the saying is true of you, dear Christian. The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us to die for you. Believing in Him, you will never die. And your joy will be full.

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