

July 20th

Saint ELIJAH the prophet

Memorial

Elijah the Tishbite, from Gilead in Transjordan, prophesied in the Northern Kingdom at the time when Ahab, under the influence of his wife Jezebel of Tyre, had let Israel fall into paganism. Elijah was a man of the desert, the desert was where he sought God and met Him (1 Kings 19), and he left it only for rare and sudden appearances before the king or before the priests of Baal (1 Kings 21, 1 Kgs 18). His role of wonder-worker, his many miracles (1 Kings 17), the story of his mysterious abduction in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2) and the prophecy of Malachi (3, 23) which presented him as a forerunner of the Messiah, have helped develop, in Jewish tradition, the image of a prophet still alive, ready to intervene in the world, holder of hidden secrets, messenger of heaven and precursor of the messianic times.

Elijah was also a familiar figure for the first generations of Christians. The Gospels present him as closely associated with the coming of Jesus the Messiah. Ascetic and contemplative, the first Christians saw him as the precursor to and example of monastic life.

Many shrines were dedicated to him in Palestine even as far as Sinai and his cult spread throughout the Christian East.

The liturgy of the day highlights well the fiery temper of Elijah, terrible to his enemies, the image somehow of the coming Messiah, the savior of the little people, full of zeal for the living God and deserving to enter into intimacy with God on Mount Horeb.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:                    1 Kings 17: 1

Elias the Tishbite said: "He is living, the Lord God of Israel, whom I serve".

COLLECT

All powerful and eternal God, who bestowed on Saint Elijah your Prophet the gift of living in your presence and burning with zeal for your glory, grant that your servants may always to seek your face and bear witness to your love.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

or else:                                    Mal 3: 23-24a

Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the day of the LORD comes, the great and terrible day, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Sirach                    48: 1-4, 9-11

Till like a fire there appeared the prophet whose words were as a flaming furnace. Their staff of bread he shattered, in his zeal he reduced them to straits; by God's word he shut up the heavens and three times brought down fire. How awesome are you, ELIJAH! Whose glory is equal to yours?

You were taken aloft in a whirlwind, in a chariot with fiery horses. You are destined, it is written, in time to come to put an end to wrath before the day of the LORD, To turn back the hearts of fathers toward their sons, and to reestablish the tribes of Jacob. Blessed is he who shall have seen you before he dies.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM    Ps 145: 17-18, 19-20, 21 (R. 18)

R. The Lord is close to all who call on him in truth.

1. The LORD is just in all his ways,  
and holy in all his deeds.  
The LORD is close to all who call him,  
who call on him in truth.

2. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;  
he hears their cry and he saves them.  
The LORD keeps watch over all who love him;  
the wicked he will utterly destroy.

3. Let my mouth speak the praise of the LORD;  
let all flesh bless his holy name  
forever, for ages unending.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION                      Matt 17: 5b

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.  
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."  
R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to saint Luke                      9: 28b-36

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen. The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, who inspired in a miraculous way the sacrifice of the Prophet Elijah, look with favour on the gifts of your Church and be pleased also to accept our offerings.  
Through Christ our Lord...

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God., through Christ our Lord.  
In order to bear witness to you, the true and living God, and to educate your people in the hope of salvation, you raised up and chose prophets, and among them Elijah the Tishbite whom you wanted to be your friend, so that, burning with zeal for your glory, he might be a witness to your power and mercy. You wanted him to be one of the two witnesses to Christ at his Transfiguration, so that, after having walked all his life in your presence, he might rejoice in the vision of your glorious Son.

And so, with the Powers of heaven, we worship you constantly on earth, and before your majesty without end we acclaim :

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON                      I Kings 19: 8

Elias ate and drank, then, sustained by this nourishment, he walked up to the mountain of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Strengthened by angelic food and drink at the table of your Son, Lord, grant that continually seeking you by faith, we may come to mountain of eternal glory and the everlasting vision of You.

Through Christ our Lord...