

**Wednesday, October 13, 2021**

Ignatius of Antioch: ground down by the teeth of wild beasts  
by Pastor Tim for St. Laika's

Today is a feria day at Saint Laika's. No particular saint is remembered. Some Christians remember Ignatius of Antioch this week and his story is one worth telling, for he made a deep impact on the Church of Jesus in its early days.

Ignatius of Antioch, martyred in 115, had a profound sense of two ends, his own and the consummation of history in Jesus Christ. He was the second Bishop of Antioch in Syria. Seven authentic letters which Ignatius wrote to Churches while he journeyed across Asia Minor in the custody of ten soldiers, give valuable insights into the life of the early Church.

In the late first, early second century, Christian doctrine was unsettled and many ideas and notions of who Jesus was and what his life and teachings were all about, contended for acceptance. Many taught that Jesus was not really a human being, but only "seemed" so. Ignatius was a fierce opponent of this view.

He wrote: "Be deaf to any talk that ignores Jesus Christ; who was really born, ate and drank; was really persecuted under Pontius Pilate; was really crucified and died in the sight of heaven and earth and the underworld. He was really raised from the dead."

Ignatius maintained that the Church's unity would always spring from that liturgy by which all are initiated into Christ through baptism.

He exhorted: "Try to gather more frequently to celebrate God's Eucharist and to praise him. At these meetings, you should heed the bishop and attentively and break one loaf, which is the medicine of immortality."

He wrote: "Flee from schism as the source of mischief. You should all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ did the Father. Follow, too, the presbytery as you would the apostles and respect the deacons as you would God's law. Where the bishop is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church."

When asked about his upcoming death, at which time he was to be set in an arena with wild beasts, he remarked: "May they grind me down like flour, to make a sweet-tasting bread for God."

**Scripture.** In the forty-third chapter of "Isaiah," at verses twenty and twenty-one we read:

"The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise."

**Prayer.** Almighty God, we praise your name for your bishop and martyr, Ignatius of Antioch, who offered himself as grain to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that he might present to you the pure bread of sacrifice. Accept, we pray, the willing tribute of our lives and give us a share in the pure and spotless offering of your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



# Hospice Workers Help Couple in Their 90's Take the Wedding Photos They Never Had

Scott Stump for msn.com

There was no time to get a photographer or even a wedding gown when Royce King and his wife, Frankie, got married on his whirlwind, two-day leave in 1944 before he went overseas to fight in World War II.

Royce, 98, and Frankie, 97, had a special 77th anniversary on Sept. 16 thanks to the staff at St. Croix Hospice who help care for the couple at the Kings' home in Oelwein, Iowa. They found a vintage 1940s wedding gown for Frankie, and Royce wore his Air Force uniform as they held an anniversary celebration in their backyard on a beautiful sunny day. Flowers from the patio were turned into a bouquet for Frankie, and a music therapist from St. Croix played some 1940s standards as Frankie walked down the "aisle."

"How can you not have a sense of overwhelming emotion?" St. Croix Hospice CEO Heath Bartness told TODAY. "The connectivity you almost feel that you were a part of this, and thinking back to what it was like in World War II the first time, and how meaningful and how emotional this second opportunity to do this was. There's an overwhelming sense of pride in not just the company and what the organization did, but more so just as an act of humanity."

Hilary Michelson, a staffer at St. Croix who is also a professional photographer, captured the heartwarming scenes in a series of beautiful photos that now make up the Kings' wedding album. The couple's daughter, Sue Bilodeau, who lives in California, happened to be in the area and was able to witness the impromptu ceremony. "It was very emotional, very heartwarming," Bilodeau told TODAY. "I couldn't stop smiling, and I couldn't stop being so happy for both of them, especially mom in her wedding gown looking so beautiful."

They also did a "first look," where they put a handkerchief over Royce's eyes and then escorted Frankie in front of him. "They said, 'Are you ready to see your bride?' and took the blindfold off," Bilodeau said. "He had just the biggest smile the rest of the day. It was amazing." "I had the honor of snapping some photos for their 77th wedding anniversary," Michelson wrote on Facebook. "Absolutely no shame in the fact that I had a hard time keeping it together behind the lens." It was long overdue for the couple, who got married in a church back in 1944 and were not able to get pictures of the ceremony. "We always knew that, and we had so many other pictures because they had dated since high school, but they never had any formal wedding pictures," Bilodeau said.

The couple still live in the home where they raised Bilodeau and her brother. Last month's ceremony showed the spark is still there for the two after all these years. "In fact, when they said 'you may kiss the bride,' when he gave her a kiss, we all commented, 'That was quite a long kiss,'" Bilodeau said while laughing. Bilodeau is grateful to the staff at St. Croix for pulling together a day her family won't soon forget. They also made a special wedding cake with a pair of 7s on it so the couple could have the traditional moment where they cut the cake together.

"It was an impromptu thing, and that's really the best way for them at this stage," Bilodeau said. "I didn't know they were planning it until I was on my way to Iowa anyway. They were just very excited and honored that St. Croix would do that for them. They liked to be in the limelight, dad especially, and mom was so happy to put on a gown and be beautiful. I think they were just overwhelmed at the whole day."

"With hospice, we always talk about joining in someone's journey," Bartness said. "Sometimes you get to create new memories at this stage, and that's what's really cool and special." Several staff members from St. Croix were able to be there in person after rearranging their schedules to witness the sweet moment. "We can't thank them enough," Bilodeau said. "It was wonderful and long overdue. I just got done printing up a photo album, so it will be in the mail and now they will finally have their wedding photos."

This beautiful story of enduring love, compassionate hospice workers and the simple joy of a beautiful dress, a uniform, a cake and a kiss, comes just as my own mother leaves this life through the care of hospice and is happily reunited with her husband, my dad. I imagine a scene, something like the one pictured above taking place with my parents in heaven, minus the wrinkles. No we won't be given or taken in marriage in heaven, but I have to believe there are special and joyful reunions for those who were blessed to love each other for many decades while on earth. John and I chose the song, "The Best is Yet to Come" for our wedding dance some 28 years ago. Looking at the two stories in today's Minitas, one of an elderly bishop whose courage and love of Christ came into full bloom in his last moments, the other of a lasting love that no doubt endured many, many sacrifices, joyfully celebrating it all under hospice care, I pray that, with the grace of God, we too will give our best in our later years and final days. Thank you all for your prayers, cards and many loving and kind gestures during this time of death, with the firm hope of resurrection.

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