

FROM THE FATHERS

From 'On the Mysteries' by St Ambrose of Milan (340-97)

Catechesis on the rites preceding Holy Baptism

Open then your ears. Enjoy the fragrance of eternal life, breathed on you by means of the sacraments. We explained this to you as we celebrated the mystery of "the opening" when we said: Ephatha that is, 'be opened.' Everyone who was to come for the grace of Baptism had to understand what he was to be asked, and must remember what he was to answer. This mystery was celebrated by Christ when he healed the man who was deaf and dumb.

After this, the holy of holies was opened up for you; you entered into the sacred place of regeneration. Recall what you were asked; remember what you answered. You renounced the devil and his works, the world and its dissipation and sensuality. Your words are recorded, not on a monument to the dead but in the book of the living.

There you saw the levite, you saw the priest, you saw the high priest. Do not consider their outward form but the grace given by their ministries. You spoke in the presence of angels, as it is written: The lips of a priest guard knowledge, and men seek the law from his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord almighty. There is no room for deception, no room for denial. He is an angel whose message is the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. You must judge him, not by his appearance but by his office. Remember what he handed on to you, weigh up his value, and so acknowledge his standing.

Saints and Heroes

15th July

St Swithun (c.800-62)

Born in Wessex, Swithun died on 2 July 862. He left orders that his body was not to be buried in a "vile and unworthy place".

Egbert, King of Wessex, chose Swithun as his chaplain and entrusted to him the education of his son Æthelwulf, who succeeded to the throne in 839. Æthelwulf appointed Swithun Bishop of Winchester in 852 and during the ten years of his episcopate he became famous for his charitable gifts, and for his activity in the building of churches.

His body was moved from its almost unknown grave into the Old Minster at Winchester on 15 July 971, and this day became his feast-day. His transferral was preceded and followed by numerous miracles. His body was probably later split between a number of smaller shrines. His main shrine was transferred to the then-new Norman cathedral of Winchester in 1093. His shrine became a great focus for pilgrims, and the cathedral's retrochoir was built in the early 13th century to accommodate the large numbers of people wishing to visit his shrine. His shrine was moved into the retrochoir in 1476. It was demolished in 1538 during the English Reformation, and a modern representation was placed on the site by the Dean and Chapter in 1962. St Swithun, pray for us!

Collect for St Swithun's Day

Almighty God,
by whose grace we celebrate again
the feast of your servant St Swithun:
grant that, as he governed with gentleness
the people committed to his care,
so we, aided by his prayers,
may always seek to build up your Church in unity and love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

11th^{July}
2021

Sixth Sunday
after Trinity/
Fifteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

He First Loved Us

Reflect on your 'faith history': how have you come to be in church at Mass? At sometime in your past the Lord has sown a seed in your mind or sent a person to reveal something to you, or you have been invited to a meeting or to church. One thing is for certain: you by yourself, and by your own discovery or invention did not find Jesus. Jesus



found you. In fact, as we heard in the letter to the Ephesians 'he chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.' That is how far back God's love for each of us stretches. We might recall the message of John in his first letter: 'we love him because he first loved us.' This is the great mystery of our spiritual life: God has loved us for eternity. Now in this Mass we touch the eternal again and we join in the worship of heaven. More than that, Paul tells us Christ is 'making known to us the mystery of his will.' Out of all eternity, and within the span of our lives, in the here and now of daily life, the Lord is using us to bring in his kingdom and perhaps using us to reveal to others his eternal purpose for them.