

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans Please help support the mission of New Advent and get the full content of this website as an instant download. Includes the Catholic Encyclopedia, Church Fathers, Summa, Bible and more for only \$19.99... Greeting Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of the Son, and of Jesus Christ, which has through mercy obtained every kind of gift, which is filled with faith and love, and is defined in no gift, most worthy of God, and adorned with holiness: the Church which is at Smyrna, in Asia, wishes abundant happiness, through the immaculate Spirit and word of God. Chapter 1. Thanks to God for your faith I Glorify God for Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom. For I have observed that you are perfected in an immovable faith, for you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are established in Him through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord, that He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, Romans 1:3 and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled Matthew 3:15 by Him; and was crucified under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed [to the cross] for us in His flesh. Of this fruit we are by His divinely-blessed passion, that He might set up a standard Isaiah 5:26, Isaiah 49:22 for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faithful [followers], whether among Jews or Gentiles, in the one body of His Church. Chapter 2. Christ's true passion Now, He suffered all these things for our sakes, that we might be saved. And I have suffered truly, even as also He truly raised up Himself, not, as certain unbelievers maintain, that He only seemed to suffer, as they themselves only seem to be [Christians]. And as they believe, so shall it happen unto them, when they shall be divested of their bodies, and be mere evil spirits. Chapter 3. Christ was possessed of a body after His resurrection For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is still now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit. And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and by His words. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He ate and drank with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father. Chapter 4. Beware of these false teachers I give you these instructions, beloved, assured that you also hold the same opinions [as I do]. But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, avoid meeting with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, may be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were not done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, Romans 8:17 He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening himself Philippians 4:13 Chapter 5. Their dangerous errors Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also that they are doing something regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are still unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection. Chapter 6. Unbelievers in the blood of Christ shall be condemned Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Matthew 19:12 Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty. Chapter 7. Let us stand aloof from such heretics They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it is better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again. It is fitting, therefore, that you should

keep aloof from such persons, and not to speak of them either in private or in public, but to give heed to the preachers, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved. But avoid all divisions, as the beginning of evils. Chapter 8. Let nothing be done without the bishop, so that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid. Chapter 9. Honour the bishop Moreover, it is in accordance with reason that we should return to the soberness [of conduct], and, while yet we have opportunity, exercise repentance towards God. It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil. Let all things, then, abound to you through grace, for you are worthy of it. You have refreshed me in all things, and Jesus Christ [shall refresh] you. You have loved me when absent as when present. May God recompense you, for whose sake, while you endure all things, you shall attain unto Him. Chapter 10. Acknowledgment of their kindness You have done well in receiving Philo and Rheus Agathopus as servants of the Lord, God, who have followed me for the sake of God, and who give thanks to the Lord in your behalf, because you have in every way refreshed them. None of these things shall be lost to you. May my spirit be for you, and my bonds, which you do not despise or been ashamed of; nor shall Jesus Christ, our perfect hope, be ashamed of you. Chapter 11. Rejoice in them to send a messenger to Antioch Your prayer has reached to the Church which is at Antioch in Syria. Commend me to the place bound with chains, most acceptable to God, I salute all; I who am not worthy to be styled from thence, in company with I am the least of them. Nevertheless, according to the will of God, I have been thought worthy [of this honour], although I have any sense [of having deserved it], but by the grace of God, which I wish may be perfectly given to me through your prayers I may attain to God. In order, therefore, that your work may be complete both on earth and in heaven, it is fitting that, for the honour of God, your Church should elect some worthy delegate; so that he, journeying into Syria, may congratulate them that they are [now] at peace, and are restored to their proper greatness, and that their proper constitution has been re-established among them. It seems then to me a becoming thing, that you should send some one of your number with an epistle, so that, in company with them, he may rejoice over the tranquility which, according to the will of God, they have obtained, and because that, through your prayers, they have now reached their harbour. As persons who are perfect, you should also aim at those things which are perfect. For when you are doing well, God is also ready to assist you. Chapter 12. Salutations The love of the brethren at Troas salutes you; and I also I write to you by Burrhus, whom you sent with me, together with the Ephesians, your brethren, and who have in many things refreshed me. And I would that all may imitate him, as being a pattern of a minister of God. Grace will reward him in all things. I salute your most worthy bishop, and your very venerable presbytery, and your deacons, my fellow-servants, and all of you individually, as well as generally, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in His flesh and blood, in His passion and resurrection, both corporeal and spiritual, in union with God and you. Grace, mercy, and patience, be with you for evermore! Chapter 13. Conclusion I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows. Be strong, I pray, in the power of the Holy Ghost. Philo, with me, greets you. I salute the house of Tivas, and pray that it may be confirmed in faith and love, both corporeal and spiritual. I salute Alce, my well-beloved, and the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutecnus, and all by name. I salute you in the grace of God. About this page Source. Translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. From *Antiochian Epistles*, Vol. 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0101.htm>> Contact information. The editor of New Advent is Kevin Knight. My email address is feedback732@newadvent.org (to help fight spam, this address might change occasionally.) Regrettably, I can't reply to every letter, but I greatly appreciate your feedback - especially notifications about typographical errors and inappropriate ads.