

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 28.
July 09, 2023
Proper 9

*“Some went down to the sea in ships *and plied their trade in deep waters.
They beheld the works of the lord * and his wonders in the deep. (Ps. 107: 23-240)*

I feel that people today are losing a sense of connection to the sea. I don't mean the beach, I mean the oceans, or the deeps as the psalmist would have it. Few travel by boat anymore, and those who do usually sail around in floating hotels that don't have the same feel to them that yesteryear's ocean liners did.

Those of my generation however (and I know there are a few of you lurking about out there) do remember the days when instead of flying back to Manila, or Caracas after your summer leave or furlough, you sailed back, embarking with your bags and trunks, and sometimes a full household, on a voyage that took not many hours, but many days, perhaps several weeks. The liners themselves were elegant but functional ships, all polished wood and brass, smaller than today's cruise ships and so much closer to the sea. They were designed for travelers, not vacationers, and carried cargo as well. Usually you made calls at several ports, some exotic, others not; there was always time to disembark and go shopping, see the sights. And the length of the trip gave you time to make friends, even form a community and accumulate memories that would last a lifetime.

And I'm sure those who share my experience would agree with me, that there's no place you can grasp the full glory and wonder of God's awesome creation quite like the upper deck of a solitary ship plowing through some vast ocean, days from land, under a cloudless night sky. The view from a 747 just can't compare.

But, of course, there are still thousands and thousands who do ply their trade in deep waters and who by their strenuous labor do far more for this world than most of us realize – indeed, it is they and the ships on which they sail and serve that link us together into one global community. We may no longer go down to the sea and ships and behold the wonders of God's works, but they do, and we owe them much. And I'm looking forward to honoring their service this morning and praising God for the wonders of Creation to which they bear special witness.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK:

Benedict of Nursia, Father of Western Monasticism, 11 July. Benedict was born in Nursia, central Italy, around the year 480. As a young man he was sent to study in Rome, but was soon appalled by the corruption in society and withdrew to live as a hermit at Subiaco. He quickly attracted disciples and began to establish small monasteries in the neighbourhood. Around the year 525, a disaffected faction tried to poison him so Benedict moved to Monte Cassino with a band of loyal monks. Later in life Benedict wrote his Rule for Monks, based on his own experience of fallible people striving to live out the gospel. He never intended to found an 'order' but his Rule was so good that it was disseminated and widely followed, becoming the model for all western monasticism. Benedict died at Monte Cassino in about the year 550.

Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, 15 July. Swithun was Bishop of Winchester in the ninth century, though little is known of his life. He was bishop for ten years and appears to have been the trusted adviser of Egbert, his king in Wessex. He had asked to be buried 'humbly' and not in a great shrine and, when he died on 2 July 862, his request was fulfilled. However, when a new cathedral was being built, Ethelwold, the new bishop, decided to move Swithun's remains into a shrine in the cathedral, despite dire warnings that to move the bones would bring about terrible storms. He was duly translated on this day in the year 971 and, though many cures were claimed and other miracles observed, it apparently rained for forty days, as forecast. Thus the feast-day of Swithun became synonymous with long, summer storms, rather than as an occasion for celebrating Christian simplicity and holiness.