

EPHREM, DEACON AND DOCTOR

Saint Ephrem was born of a Christian family at Nisibis (Southeast corner of present day Turkey) around the year 306. Ordained deacon, he exercised this office throughout the country and in Edessa (present day Syria), where he founded a theological school. Despite his ascetic life he did not relax his ministries of preaching and writing books to confute the errors of the time. He died in 373.

From a sermon by Saint Ephrem, deacon

The divine plan for the world is the mirror of the spiritual world.

Lord, shed upon our darkened souls the brilliant light of Your wisdom so that we may be enlightened and serve You with renewed purity. Sunrise marks the hour for men to begin their toil, but in our souls, Lord, prepare a dwelling for the day that will never end. Grant that we may come to know the risen life and that nothing may distract us from the delights You offer. Through our unremitting zeal for You, Lord, set upon us the sign of Your day that is not measured by the sun.

In Your sacrament we daily embrace You and receive You into our bodies: make us worthy to experience the resurrection for which we hope. We have had Your treasure hidden within us ever since we received Baptismal Grace; it grows ever richer at your sacramental table. Teach us to find our joy in Your favor! Lord, we have within us Your memorial, received at Your spiritual table: let us possess it in its full reality when all things shall be made new.

We glimpse the beauty that is laid up for us when we gaze upon the spiritual beauty Your Immortal Will now creates within our mortal selves.

Savior, Your crucifixion marked the end of Your mortal life; teach us to crucify ourselves and make way for our life in the Spirit. May Your resurrection, Jesus, bring true greatness to our spiritual self and may Your sacraments be the mirror wherein we may know that self.

Savior, Your divine plan for the world is a mirror for the spiritual world; teach us to walk in that world as spiritual men.

Lord, do not deprive our souls of the spiritual vision of You nor our bodies of Your warmth and sweetness. The mortality lurking in our bodies spreads corruption through us; may the spiritual waters of Your LOVE cleanse the effects of mortality from our hearts. Grant, Lord that we may hasten to our true city and, like Moses on the mountaintop, possess it now in vision.