April 23rt Saint Adalbert of Prague, bishop and martyr

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:18-21): Jesus said to his disciples; “If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. (…) They will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me”.

Saint Adalbert of Prague, bishop and martyr (c. 956–997)

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Today we celebrate Saint Adalbert of Prague. Vojtěch was born into a noble family in Bohemia. He received a solid theological and pastoral formation, from which emerged his ideal of ecclesial reform. Appointed Bishop of Prague in 983, he exercised this office with great difficulty, given the resistance of the noble class and the local clergy to the evangelical demands he promoted.

His principal ecclesial contribution lay in his defense of a Church more faithful to the Gospel. Thus, Saint Adalbert fought against simony, promoted discipline among the clergy, and upheld Christian marriage in the face of pagan practices still widely observed. He did not write systematic theological treatises; rather, he was distinguished by a deeply Christocentric pastoral praxis: for Adalbert, the bishop was called above all to be a witness, even at the cost of social rejection. After resigning his see several times, he lived as a Benedictine monk and eventually undertook the mission of evangelization among the Prussian peoples. He suffered martyrdom in 997. His witness strengthened the Church’s missionary awareness in Central and Eastern Europe.

—Saint Adalbert thus embodies the union of reform, mission, and witness, reminding us that ecclesial renewal is born of personal conversion and radical fidelity to Christ.