October 23rd: Saint Ignatius of Constantinople, bishop

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:9-17): Jesus said to his disciples: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. (…) This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends (…)”

Saint Ignatius of Constantinople, bishop (799-877)

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today the Church—in both East and West—celebrates Saint Ignatius of Constantinople (799–877), a saint who was a key figure in the ecclesial life of the East during a time of political and doctrinal tensions. As Patriarch, he firmly defended the freedom of the Church against interference from imperial power, showing that spiritual authority cannot be subordinated to political interests. This stance brought him persecution and deposition, but it also made him a witness to evangelical faithfulness.

From a theological standpoint, his teaching stands out for its defense of sound doctrine and ecclesial communion. Ignatius understood the Church as a living body, grounded in unity with Christ and expressed through fidelity to legitimate shepherds. His insistence on discipline and on the moral integrity of the clergy arose from a desire to preserve the credibility of Christian witness.

His life reminds us that true reform in the Church is born from coherence and personal holiness. In the midst of conflict, Ignatius showed that the unity of the Church can only be sustained through truth and fidelity to the Gospel.