

23.8.76

12.9.77 ✓

10.9.79

Lord Our God [Panel 6]

Gloria (Mass of St. Francis) A number of Christians these days get upset or are uneasy about the increasing involvement of the Church, as an institution, in questions of justice in the world, or poverty, or social problems. Governments of course like to think they alone either know all the answers, what's best for people, or have the right or power to do anything for people in need. And in so many places today, governments do use their power all right, but making sure nobody's free to question their rightness or even simply to point out where there are real needs, real injustice — because that, somehow, would seem to suggest they were failing in some way, were not after all infallible and all-wise, or that their authority was somehow being flouted. Quite silly really, if it weren't so often so tragic in its results for human beings and their life and development. But there's nothing so terribly new about it. Ironic, though, that for instance there's more known today about an awkward 4th century bishop and what he thought and said, than about the emperor who exiled him to shut him up. And a lot of what he said could have been written for today. He strongly attacked misuse of wealth, corruption, and lax moral standards prevalent in the Constantinople of his day. I'm talking about St John Chrysostom, one of the great Greek doctors of the early Church: and I wanted to read for you from one of his sermons. ^[Tomorrow, actually, in his feast day comes up in a couple of days' time] A change of a couple of words, and this is not so different from what modern Christians have been arrested for saying too insistently, and ~~the~~ from what others perhaps feel is getting too much along from the presbytery, the secretary, the inside of the Church. But until, like Chrysostom, the church is exiled, silenced,

surely we must keep on saying those things where necessary, and encouraging each other to act on them as part of our Christian life, and concern and involvement with all our fellowmen. Nor must we forget that the message of Christ's love is addressed to us and our behaviour as much as to others in what they do. If faith and baptism made us perfect people, and perfect followers of Christ's commands, perhaps there wouldn't be so much corruption, immoral action, abuse of wealth and power, or injustice in our society. But it doesn't: and in humble honesty we have to admit our personal failings and our communal failings, without abandoning (as critics perhaps would have us do) the standards and ideals we've learnt from the gospels, or retreating to a private world inside the church divorced from the society of mankind, as it's wished or enforced on us to do. Let us pray, then, in repentance to God: Lord have mercy — Kyrie eleison. Here's the entrance — great litany from the liturgy of St John Chrysostom for Easter Day:

Byzantine
Easter
5'8"

MUSIC

PRAYERS

And now to St John Chrysostom: ☩

(Breviary 21 week Sept.)