

AUGUST 10

**Saint Laurence,  
Deacon and Martyr**

“ONCE THE MOTHER of false gods, but now the bride of Christ, O Rome, it is through Laurence thou art victorious! Thou hast conquered haughty monarchs and subjected nations to thine empire; but though thou hadst overcome barbarism, thy glory was incomplete till thou hadst vanquished the unclean idols. This was Laurence’s victory, a combat bloody yet not tumultuous like those of Camillus or of Cæsar; it was the contest of faith, wherein self is immolated, and death is overcome by death. What words, what praises suffice to celebrate such a death? How can I worthily sing so great a martyrdom?”

Thus opens the sublime poem of Prudentius, composed little more than a century after the saint’s martyrdom. In this work the poet has preserved to us the traditions existing in his own day, whereby the name of the Roman deacon was rendered so illustrious. About the same time, St. Ambrose, with his irresistible eloquence, described the meeting of Sixtus and his deacon on the way to martyrdom. But, before both Ambrose and Prudentius, Pope St. Damasus chronicled the victory of Laurence’s faith, in his majestic monumental inscriptions, which have such a ring of the days of triumph.

Rome was lavish in her demonstrations of honor toward

the champion who had prayed for her deliverance upon his red-hot gridiron. She inserted his name in the Canon of the Mass, and moreover celebrated the anniversary of his birth to heaven with as much solemnity as those of the glorious apostles her founders, and with the same privileges of a Vigil and an Octave. She has been dyed with the blood of many other witnesses of Christ, yet as though Laurence had a special claim upon her gratitude, every spot connected with him has been honored with a church. Amongst all these sanctuaries dedicated to him, the one which contains the martyr’s body ranks next after the churches of St. John Lateran, St. Mary’s on the Esquiline, St. Peter’s on the Vatican, and St. Paul’s on the Ostian Way. St. Laurence outside the Walls completes the number of the five great basilicas that form the appanage and exclusive possession of the Roman Pontiff. They represent the patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, which divide the world between them, and express the universal and immediate jurisdiction of the Bishops of Rome over all the churches. Thus through Laurence the Eternal City is completed, and is shown to be the center of the world and the source of every grace.

*Commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875).*

*Illustration: Condemnation of St. Laurence by the Emperor Valerian (detail), 1447-49, by Fra Angelico.*



**Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form**

**ADDENDUM:**

**COMMEMORATION OF SAINT LAURENCE**



**SECOND COLLECT**

DA NOBIS, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: vitiórum nostrórum flammam exstinguere; qui beáto Lauréntio tribuísti tormentórum suórum incéndiam superáre. Per Dóminum ...

GRANT to us, we beseech Thee, almighty God, to extinguish the flames of our vices, Who hast given to blessed Laurence to overcome the fires of his torments. Through our Lord Jesus Christ ...

**SECOND SECRET**

ÁCCIPE, quæsumus, Dómine, múnera dignánter obláta: et beáti Lauréntii suffragántibus méritis, ad nostræ salútis auxiliúm provenire concéde. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

ACCEPT, we beseech Thee, O Lord, these gifts worthily offered: and by the helpful merits of blessed Laurence, grant them to come forth to the aid of our salvation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ ...

**SECOND POSTCOMMUNION**

SACRO múnere satiáti, súplices te, Dómine, deprecámur: ut, quod débitæ servitútis celebrámus officio, intercedénte beáto Lauréntio Martýre tuo, salvatiónis tuæ sentiámus augméntum. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

SATIATED by the sacred gift, we supplicants entreat Thee, O Lord, that by the rite of due service which we celebrate, with Thy blessed Martyr Laurence interceding, we may experience an increase of Thy salvation. Through our Lord ...

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