

COMMENTARY ON THE FEAST OF SAINT LAWRENCE, MARTYR

The basilica of St Laurence-outside-the-Walls, where the famous deacon's relics are enshrined, is the fifth of Rome's patriarchal basilicas, the others being the four major basilicas: St John Lateran, St Peter's, St Paul-outside-the-Walls and St Mary Major; in these, the pope alone may celebrate Mass at the high altar, as a sign of his jurisdiction over all churches. The majestic sanctuary of St Laurence is the stational church on Septuagesima Sunday, the third Sunday in Lent, Easter Wednesday and Whit Thursday, and there to-day the Roman people celebrate the martyrdom of their Church's most famous deacon. It was damaged during the second world war, but happily restored. Rome possesses seven other churches dedicated to St. Laurence among which St. Laurence in Paneperna, where the saint was martyred and where they hold the Station on the Thursday of the first week in Lent. St. Laurence in Lucina, where part of his gridiron is kept and where is held the Station on the Friday of the third week in Lent and St. Laurence in Damaso where is held the Station on the Tuesday of the fourth week in Lent.

When arrested and bidden by the prefect of Rome to give up the Church's treasure, Laurence showed him a crowd of beggars, saying that their princeless gift of faith made them the true treasure of the Church, because they changed the alms bestowed on them into everlasting riches. He was slowly roasted to death on a grid-iron. "But fire could not overcome the love of Christ, whose flame leapt within him and was mightier than that without which burned him". Calmly he said to the executioner: "Turn me over now, that side is done", and later, "The cooking is finished; turn again now, and eat". He died on August 10, 258, a few days after Sixtus II and the other Roman deacons. His name is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass. To obtain grace to overcome the fire of sinful passions we should often say to-day's Collect which is included in the Church's prayers for thanksgiving after Mass.

Commentary From St. Andrew Daily Missal, 1952 ed.

Commemorative Proper Prayers of the Mass Feast of Saint Lawrence, Martyr August 10th



COLLECT

Da nobis, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, vitiórum nostrórum flammam exstinguere, qui beáto Lauréntio tribuísti tormentórum suórum incéndia superáre. Per Dóminum nostrum.

Grant us, we pray Thee, almighty God, to quench the flames of our vices; even as Thou gavest blessed Laurence grace to overcome his fiery torments. Through our Lord.

SECRET

Accipe, quæsumus, Dómine, múnera dignánte obláta: et beáti Lauréntii suffragántibus méritis, ad nostræ salutis auxiliúm proveníre concéde. Per Dóminum.

Graciously accept, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gifts which we offer to Thee; and by the merits of blessed Laurence pleading for us, grant that we may be helped in the way of salvation. Through our Lord.

POSTCOMMUNION

Sacro múnere satiáti, súplices te, Dómine, deprecámur: ut, quod débite servitútis celebrámus officio, intercedénte beáto Lauréntio Mártyre tuo, salutiónis tuæ sentiámus augméntum. Per Dóminum.

Filled with Thy sacred gifts, most humbly, O Lord, we pray Thee, that by the intercession of Thy blessed martyr Laurence, this our service, which it was our bounden duty to perform, may make us grow in Thy saving grace. Through our Lord.