August 10

Laurence (d. 258) deacon and martyr

Laurence, a deacon of the Church of Rome whose name appears in the Roman Canon, was martyred in Rome in the year 258.
Almost nothing is known about his birth, nor, for that matter, about his execution, although a very early tradition specifies the place and date of his martyrdom.
According to his Passion, he was arrested with Pope Sixtus II and other Roman deacons during Valerian's persecution. Laurence was the Church's financial administrator, and he was initially spared because his persecutors hoped to obtain information about the Christian community's assets. But Laurence, after distributing the Church's few belongings to the needy, gathered together the poor, the blind and the lame and presented them to Roman authorities, saying, "These are the Church's treasures." Thus, after carrying out the ministry the Church had entrusted to him in total faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he carried his Christian witness "to the end."
On Via Tiburtina in Rome's Verano district, a basilica bearing Laurence's name was built on the site of his tomb. It was the first of the thirty-four churches in Rome that came to be dedicated to this best loved of Roman martyrs.

PRAYER

Lord God,
the strength of your love
allowed the deacon Laurence
to serve the poor faithfully
and to encounter martyrdom gloriously:
grant that we may love as he loved
and we will carry out what he taught in our own lives,
showing our brothers and sisters the love he showed.
Through Christ our Lord.

BIBLICAL READINGS

2 Cor 9:6-10; Jn 12:24-26

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Laurence, deacon in Rome, martyr

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Laurence, deacon and martyr (Roman and Ambrosian calendar)
Sistus and Laurence, martyrs (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (4 misra/nahasse):
Ezechia (8th-7th cent. BCE), son of Acaz (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Destruction of Jerusalem (70); *Laurence*, martyr in Rome

MARONITES:
Laurence, martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Sistus II, pope of Rome, *Laurence*, archdeacon, and *Ippolitus* (d. 258), martyrs
Synaxis of the saints of Tambov (Russian Church)

WEST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Beginning of the fasting of the holy virgin Mary

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Laurence, deacon and martyr (Malabar Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:
Laurence, martyr