

Rev. Derek Fairman

## Roman Canon Saints 2

Now I will continue speaking about the saints mentioned in the Roman Canon with St. Lawrence. Saint Lawrence was a deacon in Rome around the time of Pope Sixtus II. He was born in Spain in 225. He met St. Sixtus II while in Spain, and both ended up in Rome. When Pope Sixtus II was elected pope in 257, he ordained Lawrence a deacon and appointed him archdeacon.

As the archdeacon, Lawrence was in charge of giving help to the poor, as well as looking after the material possessions in the church of Rome. After the martyrdom of Pope St. Sixtus II, the imperial authorities demanded to confiscate the goods of the Church. St. Lawrence asked for three days to gather the temporal goods. He then distributed the wealth to the poor to avoid the wealth ending up with the imperial authorities. When he was asked to present the Church's wealth, he pointed to the poor in Rome and commented that this was the Church's true treasure.

Because of his act of defiance, he was martyred on August 10<sup>th</sup>. He was martyred on a large gridiron, with many hot coals underneath. After having suffered pain for a long time, he told the torturers, "I'm well done. Turn me over." He has enjoyed widespread veneration in the Church since then, both in Rome and outside of Rome. He is the third patron of the city of Rome, after Sts. Peter and Paul. Many churches in Rome are dedicated to him.

Because of his care of temporal goods and his concern for the poor, he is the perfect model for deacons. He is also the patron saint of comedians, chefs and tanners because of the account of his martyrdom, and librarians, because of his desire to hide the documents of the church from the Roman authorities. He is the patron of many other professions.

Next is St. Chrysogonus. He was a martyr who died in Aquileia around the end of the third century and beginning of the fourth century under the persecutions of the Emperor Diocletian. Not much is known beyond that, except that his feast day is November 24<sup>th</sup>, which is the day of the dedication of a church in Rome to St. Chrysogonus.

Next the Roman Canon mentions Sts. John and Paul. Obviously, these are not the apostles John and Paul, because they were already mentioned before. These are two martyrs who lived and died in Rome in the fourth century. They were both servants to Constantina, the daughter of the Emperor Constantine. After the death of Constantine and his sons, Julian the Apostate became emperor and then persecutions of Christians began again. They were martyred

under the rule of Julian the Apostate and they were buried on the ground floor of a house on the Caelian hill where they died, which later became a basilica in Rome. Their feast day is June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Then the Roman Canon mentions Sts. Cosmas and Damian. These saints were twin brothers who were born in Arabia. They both became very skilled doctors. They practiced medicine in Syria where they did not exact payment for their services. This attracted many to the Christian faith. They were arrested under the persecution of Emperor Diocletian and were martyred in Syria around 287. They were beheaded along with their younger brothers. The veneration of these martyrs spread throughout the Church rapidly. As we would expect, they are patrons of those in the medical field. Their feast day is September 26<sup>th</sup>.