



“... on the contrary, the parts of the body that seem weaker are indispensable”  
(1 Corinthians 12:22)

Every year on August 10, the Church remembers Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr (225-258). Lawrence served as Archdeacon (chief deacon) of Rome during the reign of the emperor Valerian (c.199-260), who had imposed the death penalty on Christian believers, beginning with the clergy. Following the execution of the Bishop of Rome, Pope Sixtus II, the emperor ordered Lawrence to hand over the treasures of the Church, which he had been managing as a duty of his diaconal office. Upon asking, Lawrence was granted three days to gather these together. During that time, he gave the possessions of the church away to the poor. When the emperor again demanded the treasures of the church, Lawrence presented a group of poor, disabled, and sick individuals to Valerian, saying, “These are the treasures of the Church.” Note that these people were all ones whose lives, in the mindset of the pagan Romans, were not worth living. Valerian was, to say the least, not amused, and ordered Lawrence put to death by, according to Church tradition, being roasted alive on a gridiron.

Lawrence understood that God created man out of His selfless love; thus, all human life is precious to Him, and worth living. Furthermore, in the Body of Christ, each and every person has been gifted with a role that upholds the Body as a whole (1 Corinthians 12). This includes those who the unchurched world might perceive as unable to contribute to society, and thus can be discarded. In truth though, each of us, whether strong or weak to the human eye, when left to our own devices, is like the half-dead man lying on the steep downhill road between Jerusalem and Jericho, unable to save ourselves and completely dependent on Jesus, our Good Samaritan, for rescue (Luke 10:25-37). To accomplish our rescue, our Lord Himself gladly and willingly became poor and destitute, and died for us and for all people, bar none, saving us all from God’s wrath and from sin, death and hell by His blood (2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 John 2:2). Having thus received everything we could possibly need, we pray that God grant us charitable hearts that we gladly and willingly “pay it forward,” serving those who need us, allowing Him to use us to be their “daily bread.” And we pray that through them we learn humble faith, as together we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), that on the Last Day we may all rise again, our bodies perfected and reunited with our souls, to an eternal life of bliss in His presence.

For more on Lawrence, and all of the Feasts, Festivals and Commemorations in the Church Year, we recommend Rev. William Weedon’s book *Celebrating the Saints*, available at [cph.org](http://cph.org).