

# *A Coffee with Alessio*



## **Feast of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr**

Today, we celebrate the feast of Saint Lawrence, who was one of the Seven Deacons of Rome and was martyred in year 258. So, I thought today is a good opportunity to look at the role of the deacon in the liturgy and the history of this ministry.

In the early Church, the deacon was a man of the people, who knew their needs and cared for them in highly practical ways (Become One Body One Spirit In Christ). In the Church today we have two types of Deacons- permanent deacons and transitional deacons- those who are preparing to be ordained to the priesthood. In the liturgy, the deacon proclaims the Gospel, preaches the homily, reads or sings the Universal Prayer, assists with the distribution of Holy Communion and gives the dismissal.

As the role of the deacon is one of service, when incense is used, he incenses the celebrant and other clergy and the people (Become One Body One Spirit In Christ). I like incense in the liturgy. That's a topic for another column though.

Now, I can hear some people thinking that's great reading about the deacon but what has this topic got to do with anything. Actually, a lot! The role of the deacon ties in so well with the focus on the Eucharist in our Sunday Lectionary at the moment. If we go back to the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his twelve Apostles he demonstrated that our participation in the Eucharist is not just a series of motions to go through. Rather we must actively participate in the ritual as well as live it out in our daily lives. That is what deacons were supposed to do- take care of the needs of the people. So, as we continue with the sixth chapter of Saint John's Gospel this week, and an Old Testament reading focusing on the Eucharist, let us try to find ways to live out the Eucharist in the coming week.

Saint Lawrence, pray for us.

Enjoy your coffee and cake!

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