

10 August 2026

Feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon

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

Homily

In his Rule, Saint Benedict says that he wants to establish a "School where one learns to serve the Lord" (*Schola dominici servitii*). Whoever comes to the monastery comes to serve the Lord -- a service that will be embodied day after day in the service of the brothers or sisters. Now Jesus, in the brief Gospel we have just read, says: "*If anyone wants to serve me, let him follow me*". This is why monastic life is also called a *sequela Christi*, a life of following Christ. Now, Jesus pronounces these words (*If anyone wants to serve me, let him follow me*) in a context in which he announces his own passion. We can therefore understand why he describes what this following consists of using the image of a grain of wheat that has fallen into the earth. A dry grain of wheat can certainly be crunched and eaten. But it is only a small grain, all by itself. On the other hand, if a grain is healthy, it begins to germinate as soon as it comes into contact with the moisture in the soil. It dies as a grain of wheat, but it is born to new life as a stalk, then as an ear, and it produces many other grains. And Jesus concludes this comparison with this mysterious phrase: "*He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world will keep it in eternal life.*"

Today we celebrate the feast of one of the first martyrs of the Church, Saint Lawrence, who was a deacon - in other words, someone ordained to serve. According to the story of his martyrdom, at a time when the Roman emperor wanted to confiscate the Church's property, Lorenzo, who was in charge of this property, found no better way to prevent it from being confiscated than to distribute it to the poor. He was burnt alive.

Entering monastic life is a way of losing one's life in this world. It is also a way of allowing oneself to be buried in the ground, to disintegrate in a way in order to be reborn to a truer and more personal identity. This is *never* easy. In fact, it is never easy. Serving our community sometimes feels like dying, like losing our identity and our personality. But the more we make ourselves servants - or handmaidens - of one another, the more we become like Christ who made himself the servant of all, and the more our true identity becomes apparent, what we have been called to become in God's plans. If we take this gift of ourselves far enough, we will be able

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to say with Paul. *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"*.

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