

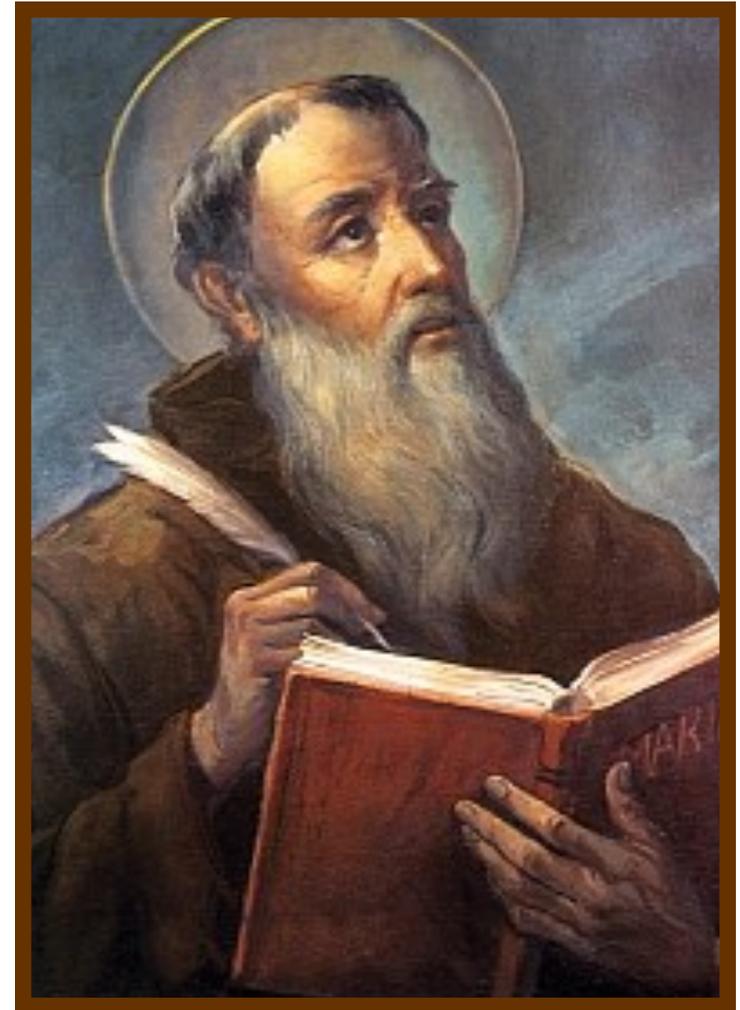
Our catechesis today focuses on Saint Laurence of Brindisi, a Capuchin friar of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries known for his vigorous labor for the salvation of souls, his vast learning and his eloquent preaching. Coming of age at a time when many of the articles of the faith were being called into question, Saint Laurence applied his immense talents to making clear the biblical and patristic foundations of the teachings of the Church. This son of the Franciscan tradition also applied himself heroically to efforts towards peace and reconciliation between the nations and peoples of Europe. His witness serves as an excellent example for our age, so fraught with violence, ethical relativism and religious indifference. The new evangelization needs well-prepared, zealous and courageous apostles like Saint Laurence so that the light and beauty of the Gospel may reach into the depths of every human heart. Dear friends, in order to achieve such a lofty vocation, Saint Laurence of Brindisi would have us grow close to our Lord Jesus Christ by reading the Sacred Scriptures and by cultivating daily the relationship of love with him in personal prayer, because every good action of ours has its beginning and its end in him...

I would like to complete this presentation of the life and doctrine of St. Laurence of Brindisi underscoring that all his activity was inspired in his great love for sacred Scripture, which he knew in great part by heart, and by the conviction that the listening and acceptance of the Word of God produces an interior transformation that leads us to holiness. "The Word of the Lord," he affirmed, "is light for the intellect and fire for the will, so that man can know and love God. For the interior man, who through grace lives from the Spirit of God, it is bread and water, but bread that is sweeter than honey and water that is better than wine and milk ... It is a hammer against a hard heart obstinate in vices. It is a sword against the flesh, the world and the devil, to destroy every sin."

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## ***Saint Laurence of Brindisi***

**Feast Day: July 21<sup>st</sup>**



***"All His Activity was Inspired  
in His Great Love for Sacred Scripture!"***

Pope Benedict XVI

## ***SAINT LAURENCE OF BRINDISI***

\*Born Julius Caesar Russo, Saint Laurence entered the Venetian province of the Capuchin Friars in 1575. Ordained in 1582, having completed his ecclesiastical studies as well as becoming most proficient at Hebrew, Greek, German, Bohemian, Spanish and French. Laurence began to preach throughout Northern Italy and beyond. His success at preaching is attributed to his extensive use of Sacred Scripture.

Between 1599 and 1613 Laurence established the Order in Bohemia, Austria and Germany, thereby reclaiming many souls from Protestantism. He also displayed his skill as a diplomat when in 1614 he was able to restore peace between France and Spain. In fact, it was in true Franciscan fashion, as a missionary of peace, that he finally died at Lisbon whilst on a mission to Spain on behalf of the oppressed people of Naples. Laurence was for the majority of his Capuchin life a major superior in which office he continually strove to stabilize the Order, balancing the rigor of primitive Capuchin life with the needs of the time. He is likewise remembered for his great theological work "Opera Omnia" of fifteen tomes in size and characterized yet again by the prolific use of Scripture.

In the life of St. Laurence of Brindisi, we see a man full of the courage and daring of Christ whose spirit carried him throughout the long and arduous years that he was engaged in a most trying apostolate. Of him it can be truly said that he possessed the special gifts that adorned the Churches' first Apostles and men were moved to the practice of virtue more by his example than by his words. Especially noticeable in Laurence's approach to life was his spirit of fortitude which enabled him to announce the Good News fearlessly and constantly, even among the very Jews of Rome.

Laurence's power and effectiveness as a preacher which was witnessed to the Christian life derived from the intense interior life he managed to observe during the course of his busy life. The two great loves of his life were the Mass and the Blessed Virgin. The Eucharistic Sacrifice was the center of his existence; he had on rare occasions been known to spend up to four hours saying Mass and in 1610 in Genoa on Christmas Day, he took a staggering 16 hours celebrating in Ecstasy, weeping with love and adoration. Also extraordinary was Laurence's love for Mary, from whom he attributed receiving his vocation, his success in the apostolate and especially his knowledge of Hebrew. He regarded Mary as the font of Mercy and the kindest of Mothers.

It belonged to Pope John XXIII in our own day and age to further honor this amazing son of St. Francis by proclaiming him Doctor of the Universal Church. Our Lord chooses the humble of the earth to confound the proud. In St. Laurence of Brindisi he called a humble son of St. Francis to further increase the light of Christ in the world by his powerful preaching and prolific writings. \*(excerpted from [www.capuchinfriars.org](http://www.capuchinfriars.org))

### **The following is excerpted from a Catechesis Pope Benedict XVI gave during the general audience held in St. Peters Square March 23, 2011**

"...With fine theological sensitivity, Laurence of Brindisi highlighted the Holy Spirit's action in the life of the believer. He reminds us that with His gifts the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity illumines and aids our commitment to joyfully live the message of the Gospel. "The Holy Spirit," wrote St. Laurence, "makes gentle the yoke of the divine law and its weight light, so that we observe the Commandments of God with great facility, even with pleasure."