

The Feast of St Laurence, Deacon, Martyr – Monday 10th August 2026:

Today, we keep the Feast of St Laurence the Deacon, charged with managing the Church's resources in Rome. He died during the persecution of Emperor Valerian in AD 258. The Roman prefect ordered Deacon Laurence to hand over the riches of the Church. Laurence said he would need three days, which all sounded rather promising. But what money the Church had, Laurence always distributed among the needy of Rome. On the third day, he came back to Valerian, and when ordered to give up the treasures of the Church, he gave him the poor saying to him, *'the Church is truly rich, far richer than your emperor'*. For this he was condemned to death, and we believe that Laurence was grilled to death; the legendary account telling us that he cheerful accepted his fate, saying to his executioner, *'I well done on this side, turn me over'*.

The Memorial of St Clare, Virgin – Tuesday 11th August 2025:

Aged eighteen, Clare heard St Francis preach, an encounter so positive that she ran away to follow him. Understanding her vocation, he facilitated her entry into a Benedictine Convent. At Assisi, Clare was joined by her sister Agnes and other women, becoming known as the *'Poor Ladies'*, who lived an austere lifestyle in joyous imitation of Christ. Unlike the Friars, who travelled the country, they lived in enclosure.

The opt. mem of St Jane Frances Chantal, Religious – Wed. 12th August 2025:

Jane lives the marriage vow, *'for richer, for poorer'*. While her husband inherited the title Baron, he was saddled with enormous debt. To the marriage, she brought a deep faith and a joyful can-do attitude enabling her to take charge of running every detail of the Baron's estate, which not only brought the finances under control, but won her the admiration of her staff. She and her husband shared *"one heart and one soul"* and were blessed with four children. She shared all her blessings with the poor, never turning away anyone who was hungry from her bread and soup kitchen. Her happiness was shattered when her husband was killed in a hunting accident, and although her husband had forgiven the man who had fatally wounded him, Jane struggled with forgiveness for a long time but through her constant prayer, God gave her not only the grace to forgive, but the generosity to become the godmother to his child. This drew her to the attention of Bishop St Francis de Sales, who encouraged her to form the Visitation Order for women who had otherwise been rejected from the religious life because of poor health or age. She died in 1641, at sixty-nine years of age.

The opt. memorial of St Pontian & Hippolytus – Thursday 13th August 2026:

Pontian was Pope from 230-235 and was the first pontiff to abdicate. He was likely Roman by birth and was elected to succeed St. Urban I and devoted much of his time to continuing the condemnation of the heretical aspects of Origenism and struggled against the schismatic movement which supported the antipope Hippolytus. In 235, Pontian was arrested by Roman officials during the persecutions of Emperor Maximinus I Thrax. With Hippolytus – his rival for the papacy - Pontian was exiled to the mines of Sardinia and, to make certain that the Church was not deprived of its leadership, Pontian stepped down, the first pope ever to do so. He and Hippolytus both died on Sardinia. Their remains were returned to Rome under Pope St. Fabian.

The Memorial of St Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr – Friday 14th August 2026:

Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish Priest who volunteered to die in the place of a stranger in the Nazi Death camp of Auschwitz. Kolbe is known as a '*martyr of charity*' and is the patron saint of political prisoners and Saint John Paul II called him the patron saint of the twentieth century. In 1941 he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz as was prisoner #16670. At the end of July 1941, three prisoners escaped and in retribution the German commander picked ten men to be starved to death. When Franciszek Gajowinczek cried out, '*my wife! My children!*', Kolbe volunteered to take his place. While in his cell, he continued to pray and encourage others by telling them that they would be with Mary in heaven. After two weeks of starvation and dehydration, only Kolbe remained alive. To free up the prison cell he was given a lethal injection of carbolic acid. His remains were cremated on 15th August.

Saturday in 19th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 15th August 2026:

NB: The Assumption of the BVM is transferred to Sunday 16th August.

The Lord has a special love for his children, drawing them close to bless them. Just because He also punishes transgressors does not limit His love. Every parent knows children require discipline, and occasionally, need to be punished. That punishment must be proportional, and never to humiliate the child; our goal is to move them to contrition and a firm purpose of amendment. All punishment should have rehabilitation as its aim, that the individual retake their place in the community, and grow as they learn from their mistakes. Traditional teaching shows us that the Lord holds justice and mercy in balance, something we struggle with because our emotions get in the way.