

# **The Play of the Martyrdom of St Lawrence**

Translated by Nerida Newbigin © 2009, 2020

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For discussion, see:

Nerida Newbigin, *Making a Play for God: The Sacre Rappresentazioni of Renaissance Florence* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2021), 298–302.

## Characters

THE ANGEL *who announces and bids farewell*

VALERIAN, *prefect of Rome*

BARONS AND HOUSEHOLD *of Valerian*

DECIUS, *emperor*

PRIESTS *who perform the sacrifice in the temple*

ST SIXTUS, *pope*

FELICISSIMUS *and* AGABITUS, *deacons*

KNIGHTS *and* GUARDS

ST LAWRENCE, *deacon*

CIRICA, *a widow*

CHRISTIANS *in the house of Ciriaca, who do not speak*

NARCISSUS *who does not speak*

CHRISTIANS *in the house of Narcissus, who do not speak*

CRESCENTIUS, *a blind man*

PATRIZIO, *a priest*

CHRISTIANS *in the house of Patrizio*

JUSTINUS, *a priest*

DEVILS

PARTHEMIUS, *tribune of the plebs*

HIPPOLYTUS, *vicar of Decius*

LUCILLUS, *a blind prisoner*

GOD'S POOR, *who do not speak*

TORTURERS

ANGEL *who comforts St Lawrence*

ROMANUS, *imperial knight*

ANIME IN PARADISO *rivelate a Ipolito*

THE HOUSEHOLD *of Parthemius*

A DEVOUT FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

## The Play of the Martyrdom of St Lawrence

*These are the stanzas of the play of St Sixtus the Pope and of St Lawrence his Deacon. First an Angel appears and announces the play and says as follows:*

1. O devout Christians, who have come  
to be present here because you want to see  
something that will satisfy your desire  
with some beautiful and honourable pleasure,  
while avoiding those other risky matters  
which cause mankind to lapse into sin,  
I bring you consolation, and sent by God  
I greet you all on his behalf.

2. These people will show you how acceptable  
to almighty God is the man who serves him willingly,  
and how much more He delights in the man  
who despises his own flesh, since for love of Him  
every martyr finds it a delight  
to the blind and sinful world,  
as you will see with St Sixtus and Lawrence,  
if you all pay close and willing attention.

*VALERIAN, who was Prefect of Rome under Emperor Decius, leaves his palace and goes with his nobles and his attendants to visit Emperor Decius and says as follows:*

3. Let's go, my nobles, to visit  
the Emperor in his great palace  
just as we usually do on other days,  
to bring him pleasure, joy and delight;  
so gather together now at once  
trumpeters, my servant and my page.  
Let's go now, because he will have risen  
from his nap, as is his custom.

*VALERIAN the Prefect reaches the palace and goes to visit the Emperor and says as follows:*

4. O supreme and most serene prince,  
Caesar Augustus Decius by name,  
most excellent Lord over all Lords,  
may Jove keep your state in happiness,  
and always make you always victorious  
against your foes, and as ever  
may you show your sovereign virtue  
and persecute the wicked Christian sect.

*VALERIAN continues:*

5. And if you want to root it out completely,  
 so that no memory of them survives,  
 you must have Sixtus, their pope, siezed,  
 along with all his companions.  
 You will use force to make him sacrifice  
 to our idols, and deny Mary,  
 Christ crucified, and those who seek baptism,  
 so that Christianity is extinguished.

DECIUS *replies to Valerian:*

6. Good Valerian, worth prefect  
 of fair Rome and of our holy empire,  
 we wish to follow in every detail  
 your mature and sincere advice,  
 in order to extinguish completely the accursed  
 Christian progeny begot by that Peter  
 who called himself the vicar of Christ,  
 as Sixtus does in the present day.

DECIUS *continues:*

7. But since, in everything we do,  
 before we embark on any action,  
 we must call on the Gods' assistance,  
 without which nothing was ever done well,  
 therefore be quick and call the priests  
 to assemble at the temple, and let them  
 make sacrifice with all the required acts,  
 then let each go about his business.

*Now the priests, robed in the manner of infidels, make their  
 sacrifice in the temple of Jove, in the presence of the Emperor  
 and all the nobles, but while they are arranging the sacrifice,  
 ST. SIXTUS THE POPE, having heard news of the persecution  
 that Decius and Valerian wanted to wage against all the  
 Christians, gathered together all the clergy, among whom were  
 Felicissimus and Agabitus his deacons, and exhorting them to  
 bear their martyrdom for Jesus Christ with patience, he says to  
 them:*

8. My dear sons and brothers in Christ,  
 perfect Agabitus, and Felicissimus,  
 I think you will have heard of all the cruel  
 and wicked torments the most cruel tyrant  
 Decius is trying to inflict on us, so that we  
 will worship their false gods and deny the most holy  
 Christ Jesus, the true Son of God,  
 but I will die before I deny him.

9. So I urge each of you  
 to bear every cruel torment  
 just as so many saints before you

have borne them for wanting to follow  
 Christ Jesus and his disciples.  
 Be prepared, each of you, to suffer  
 every cruel torment, harsh and atrocious,  
 for him who redeemed us on the cross.

FELICISSIMUS AND AGABITUS *reply, weeping and sighing:*

10. Dear father most holy and merciful,  
 true shepherd of the Christian flock,  
 you are the one who governs us so excellently,  
 and instructs us in the holy law,  
 without you, father, we can do nothing.  
 Your holy virtue guides and rules us,  
 so without you, father, where will we go?  
 O woe, alas, how will we manage?

SIXTUS *replies to the disciples:*

11. Our great Redeemer, full of pity,  
 will always be with you, beloved sons.  
 He is mighty and merciful, he grants  
 eternal glory to his chosen ones,  
 and he will make you strong in the harsh and fearful torment.  
 Once you are cleansed and purged  
 of all sin and detached from the false world,  
 he will give you eternal peace.

EMPEROR DECIUS *says to Valerian:*

12. Now that holy sacrifice has been made,  
 good Valerian, worthy and perfect,  
 in your name and that of your office, have  
 Sixtus brought here before me  
 to purge his infamy and the wicked judgement  
 that I have made of him. Do what I have commanded.

VALERIAN *to the Knight:*

Come, night, and the imperial command  
 carried out without delay.

*Now the Knight hurries with the guards to seize Sixtus together  
 with Felicissimus and Agabitus and they bring them before*

EMPEROR DECIUS *who says to Sixtus as follows:*

13. Little old man, I'll give you some advice  
 for the sake of your health and your flock's:  
 you should sacrifice to our gods  
 and renounce the Law of the Christians.

SIXTUS *replies to Decius:*

That's something I have no intention of ever doing.  
 I'll make my sacrifice to him who rules  
 earth and heaven, the true Son of God,

Christ Jesus, my perfect Lord.

DECIUS *says to Sixtus:*

14. Come, follow my advice  
so that you don't perish with all your followers.  
If you don't do it, I see you heading  
into such great peril that it will overwhelm you all.

SIXTUS *replies to Decius:*

The almighty Father eternal, the holy Son,  
with them the Holy Ghost will help us all.  
To them in Holy Trinity I've always  
offered the host, pure and immaculate.

DECIUS *to the Prefect Valerian and the Knights:*

15. Since I see this old man's crazy mind  
is obdurate, and words are of no use,  
have him taken at once to the temple  
of the god Mars, and if he does not want  
to sacrifice there to him, let him be imprisoned  
in the Mamertine prison, which is usually  
a safe place to hold him, so that  
when I'm ready I can find him again.

*When he has spoken, the Knights and their servants seize Sixtus  
and his followers and take them to the temple of the god Mars,  
and there THE KNIGHT says to Sixtus as follows:*

16. If you want the Emperor's grace,  
and want to escape cruel death,  
make a sacrifice to Mars willingly,  
promise to be faithful to our gods.

SIXTUS *replies:*

O blind fools, full of error,  
to think I would abandon sweetness and choose gall!  
You will not make me sacrifice  
to your false gods and abandon my Jesus.

17. But you wretches, blinded by the devil,  
who adore the vain deceiving gods  
that are made out of stone or wood,  
and are deaf and dumb and blind, and have no feeling  
in hands and feet or any other limbs.  
They are without speech, worse than dogs.  
They are like the man who made them:  
woe betide the man who trusts in them.

18. The true God, the highest deity  
is He alone who created the world.  
Heaven and earth and all living things

by him were made, and he alone shaped  
our flesh, and in his goodness  
breathed eternal souls into our bodies,  
wherefore any man who will not believe in him  
will lose both his soul and his body at once.

19. Therefore, o sons of God, created by him,  
descended from him, and coming from him alone,  
turn to believe in him, and in baptism  
abandon the idols, blind and dumb.  
If you are tortured by tyrants  
with cruel torment, let none of you change your mind.  
Be yet strong, and heavenly virtue  
will make you immortal in all eternity.

*THE KNIGHT says to his companions:*

20. This fellow is holding fast to his opinion,  
and certainly does not want to change his mind,  
but he is enticing to his religion  
as many as he can, and he is trying to bring  
our law to nothing. Therefore, he's to be thrown  
in prison, as we were ordered,  
along with these followers of his, and there he'll stay  
for as long as the Emperor sees fit.

*As St Sixtus is being taken to prison, ST LAWRENCE comes on  
the seen by chance and seeing him, says to St Sixtus as follows:*

21. Alas, dear father, where are you going  
without your son whom you have so loved?  
O holy priest, where will you stay  
without your deacon whom you ordained?  
Perfect father, well you know that you never  
sacrificed without your minister.  
Alas, father, why do you abandon me?  
Have you found fault in what I do?

22. If you chose me as your minister  
why do you refuse to let me come with you  
to shed my blood with you, and to let the subordinate  
follow the lord whom he reveres and fears.  
Despising his disciple  
harms the master and causes him much grief.  
So, benign father, do not leave  
your Lawrence, please, do not abandon him.

23. Abraham offered his son to God  
as holy sacrifice; the First Shepherd,  
sent to cruel martyrdom ahead of himself  
Stephen his deacon, who acquired  
such honour for this that he earned the name

of protomartyr; and for the love  
that you, kind father, have shown me,  
please, make an offering of him whom you raised.

24. So let the good father and the son  
together in the same torment die  
confidently as equals and in a single martyrdom.  
I feel myself being consumed by this desire  
then conquering with him the highest pole,  
the worthy palm, accompanied together  
into the holy convent of paradise  
to possess the kingdom of the blessed.

ST SIXTUS *says to St Lawrence:*

25. I do not want to leave you, my good son,  
and do not think that I would ever abandon you,  
but being as old and as weak as I am  
I'm to receive light battle and far  
lesser gifts, but the heavenly thrown  
reserves for you great triumphs and greater gifts  
because you will wage greater battles  
and thus you will acquire greater glory.

26. Therefore cease your weeping,  
Lawrence, and be strong.  
After three days you will follow me,  
victorious over cruel death,  
and this interval is very appropriate  
between the priest and the cleric. Fate  
must be mediated with some number  
so that each is raised as high as possible.

27. I leave you all my inheritance,  
the church's treasure. Dispense it  
as you see fit,  
to God's poor and at the table  
of eternal life it will be doubled  
a hundredfold, and make no attempt to stop  
my departure, because when Elijah took his leave  
from his Elisha, he did not take his virtue.

*And when he has said this, he gives him the keys to the treasury  
and goes off to prison and St Lawrence takes the treasure and  
certain pieces of cloth and goes off to Monte Celio to the house  
of Cirica the Widow, where there were many Christians, and  
CIRICA says to him:*

28. O servant of Jesus, take pity  
on this poor woman. For eleven years  
I lived with my husband, and then I have lived  
in these widow's weeds for thirty-two years.



I am afflicted by illness,  
with headaches, and it causes me such distress  
that I can find no relief.  
Set me free, in merciful Jesus' name.

ST LAWRENCE *replies*:

29. If you will believe in my Lord  
Christ Jesus, and receive baptism,  
you will be freed from all suffering,  
if you live according to Christianity.

CIRICA *replies*:

Holy Lawrence, I believe willingly  
in your Lord, as you do yourself.

*Then LAWRENCE baptises her and says:*

So be baptised in his name  
and freed from all suffering.

*And when he has said this, he gives her a piece of cloth to keep,  
because he wants to wash the feet of those Christians present,  
and he says:*

30. Take this piece of linen you see here:  
hold it in your hands while I  
wash the feet of all these people  
as just and faithful servants of God.  
This commandment was given by Jesus,  
our kind and holy lord, to his heirs:  
that one Christian should wash the feet of the next,  
and that one should carry the weight of the next.

*Having washed and kissed all the feet, he gives them alms and  
says:*

31. In the name of Jesus, and in love,  
take these holy alms  
that Pope Sixtus bequeathed to me  
in his will, and as you will hear  
I now must turn my steps towards  
the castle of Canaan. Remain in peace.  
I wish to go to the house of Narcissus:  
I want to visit the Christians who are there.

*ST LAWRENCE leaves and goes to the house of Narcissus and  
when he arrives he distributes alms to everyone and says:*

32. May the peace of Lord Christ Jesus  
be with you always, and in his love  
I pray each one of you to  
to sit down, and with devout heart  
allow me to wash you. You deserve more,  
I know, but may our kind

Lord Jesus make good what is lacking  
in me, and give you perfect reward.

33. Take these holy alms in charity  
and with devotion, and pray  
with contrite heart, and make confession  
often of all the sins you commit.

*Then he turns to Crescentius, the blind man, and says:*

And you, Crescentius, hear my words:  
if you believed in the Trinity,  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
I would boast that I had restored your sight.

CRESCENTIUS *replies:*

34. Alas, servant of God, pray do not look  
at my sin, which is infinite.  
Baptise me with your hands,  
so that my eyes will be healed.

ST LAWRENCE *kneels and prays, saying:*

O my Lord Jesus, do not look  
at our sin, and let my prayer be answered  
now by you, and like the Man Born Blind,  
let Crescentius' sight be restored.

*Having said this, he makes the sign of the cross and restores  
his sight. CRESCENTIUS, his sight restored, kneels joyfully and  
says:*

35. I give you thanks, o Lord of Lords,  
Christ Jesus, true Son of God.  
Without regard for my sins  
you have restored my sight, o holy Lord.

ST LAWRENCE *leaves, saying:*

My dear brothers, let each now pray  
for St Sixtus, who is being held in prison  
by the wicked tyrant with great torment  
I leave you to God: remain in prayer.

*Having said this he leaves and goes to the castle of Patrizio  
where he finds many Christians, and among them Justinus, a  
priest ordained by St Sixtus. LAWRENCE greets them all and  
says to him:*

36. Christ Jesus, kind Son of God,  
grant his peace to all.  
Good Justinus, a priest worthy  
to administer the holy sacrifices,  
ordained by Sixtus, although I know  
I am unworthy for such office, before

I attend to other things, I would ask  
you to let me wash everybody's feet.

JUSTINUS *replies to St Lawrence:*

37. Do as you wish, o perfect Lawrence,  
for I am prepared to obey,  
as far as I can, every divine precept  
and follow the teaching of good Jesus,  
then I will wash you, with a pure heart,  
before you have to go from us.

ST LAWRENCE *says as follows:*

I am happy, Justinus, with what you ask.  
Come, each of you put out your feet for me.

*And when he has washed their feet, Justinus washes his. Then  
ST LAWRENCE takes his leave, after distributing alms to them,  
and says as follows:*

38. To you, father Justinus, and all the others  
I commend Lawrence as much as I can.  
Take the holy fruits of the church:  
I give, distribute and spread them among you.  
I'll now return in haste to St Sixtus  
whom I left in great distress,  
because I fear that the Emperor will  
put him to death to increase my suffering.

*In the meantime, EMPEROR DECIUS commands that Sixtus be  
brought to him, saying:*

39. Go quickly and bring me Sixtus  
and his followers from prison.  
Bring him here before me  
because I intend to know whether he has changed  
his mind, and whether he has abandoned  
his fantastic ideas, and whether he intends  
to follow his fraudulent Christian faith,  
which we regard as wicked, false and empty.

*Sixtus is led violently before DECIUS who says to him:*

40. I won't waste words with you any more,  
I have to show you your blatant error  
with actions, and if it is the same as usual,  
you'll have to prepare your mind  
for cruel death, and your foolish  
ideas will make you come to grief.

SIXTUS *replies to Decius and to Valerian:*

My death will be eternal life;  
yours will be infernal pain forever.

VALERIAN *says to Decius:*

41. How long to these men think they are going to live  
if they promise us infernal torment.

Let them be taken at once, without delay,  
again to the god Mars, and there,  
with each of them on their knees,  
let them be forced to sacrifice to him.

DECIUS, *all enraged, says:*

Let it be done, and if they refuse  
cut the heads off all three of them.

*When this cruel sentence has been given by the Emperor, Sisto and Agabitus, are led with Felicissimus to the temple of Mars, and there ST SIXTUS prays to god and makes the temple collapse and says as follows:*

42. Here are your stone idols, mute and empty,  
that you wretched people believe in,  
and you will all die like dogs,  
and you will lose the benefit of eternal life.

ST SIXTUS *kneels and says:*

Christ, living son of God, you spread  
over the earth, and all walls are destroyed in you.  
Let its great might be undone:  
as you command, father, so be it done.

*As soon as he says this, the temple collapses completely and out of the ruins devils come shouting, and Sixtus and his followers are led away to be beheaded. LAWRENCE sees them and says to Sixtus as follows:*

43. Ah, holy father, don't abandon me,  
because I have spent the treasure you gave me  
and I have done faithfully everything  
that you, good father, entrusted to me.

PARTHEMIUS, *one of the Emperor's barons and Tribune of the Plebs, tells the knights to seize Lawrence:*

Rush and seize that man who is so  
against us. Be quick about it!  
Put him in my prison,  
then tomorrow you will bring him before Decius.

*When Sixtus and his disciples have been beheaded, certain faithful Christians come and they bury their bodies and when this is done, PARTHEMIUS THE TRIBUNE goes to the Emperor and says:*

44. O holy and victorious Emperor  
Decius Augustus Caesar, I must inform you  
that the hidden treasure of the church

is held by a man the Christians call Lawrence.  
 I have him in prison, and if you want  
 to have it, he will be brought before you  
 and I'll have him brought from the prison  
 where I'm holding him at your request.

*DECIUS replies to Parthemius:*

45. I am delighted with what you've told me,  
 good Parthemius, and I heed your words.  
 Go for him at once,  
 because I want to hear how much he has offended  
 our law, and you, Parthemius, know  
 how he has always slandered our gods.  
 But now I want him to return  
 their church's treasure that he is keeping hidden.

*He continues, and gives orders for the sacrifice to Jove, their  
 god, and says to the priests as follows:*

46. In the meantime, o holy priests,  
 to observe our ancient practice,  
 give orders for devout sacrifice  
 to the god Jupiter, to whom praise be given  
 as much as possible, so that he will answer the prayers  
 of us, his servants, and against the enemy  
 sect of the Christian give us victory  
 to our great triumph and highest glory.

*When the sacrifice is completed, Lawrence is brought to*

*DECIUS who says to Lawrence:*

47. Tell me at once, Lawrence, where are you keeping  
 the church's treasure that you took  
 from Sixtus, and all that you have done with it.  
 You do not answer, and you seem to be dumb.  
 Tell me at once, and if you won't confess  
 your sin, I'll make you sorry.  
 Still you are quiet, and you seem not to talk:  
 if you don't tell me, you'll suffer the consequences.

*St Lawrence remains silent, and DECIUS says angrily to  
 Valerian:*

48. Take that man, Prefect Valerian,  
 and make him show you the church's treasure,  
 then make him sacrifice with full  
 reverence to our gods,  
 and if he refuses, then to his cost  
 have him shown by force the error of his ways,  
 with harsh torture and fierce torment.  
 If that does not work, we'll put him to death.

*VALERIAN says to Hippolytus, the Emperor's vicar:*

49. Hippolytus, vicar of the holy empire,  
 take that man: you'll keep him in prison  
 with the others of his sect, and with your arts  
 and kind gestures that you will know to make,  
 try to find out from him the truth  
 about his great treasure, and if you succeed  
 in having it handed over to Decius,  
 you will be well rewarded by him.

HIPPOLYTUS *replies to Valerian:*

50. What you command me, Valerian,  
 I shall do, as long as I know that I am doing something  
 that is pleasing to our sovereign Emperor.  
 This effort will not seem a burden,  
 and I will spy on Lawrence, quietly  
 and softly, and find out where he is hiding  
 the church's wealth and its treasure  
 that Sixtus, their bishop, left him.

*Lawrence is placed in prison where there are many others,  
 including LUCILLUS, blinded by all his weeping, and he says to  
 Lawrence as follows:*

51. *Miserere*, have mercy on me, servant of God,  
 because I have gone blind for weeping and for sorrow.

LAWRENCE *replies to Lucillus:*

If you believed with all your heart  
 in my Lord Jesus, and wanted  
 to be baptised in his holy name,  
 he would grant you sight  
 in the eyes of your body and of your mind,  
 because he is the true, almighty God.

LUCILLUS *replies to Lawrence:*

52. It has always been my desire, Lawrence,  
 to serve Jesus, the true lord,  
 and that my mind should be enlightened  
 by him alone who can grant it peace.  
 So, for love of him, let this desire  
 be granted by you, and if you will,  
 please baptise me, good Lawrence,  
 and give me this single gift of grace.

LAWRENCE *to Lucillus:*

53. Since I see that your will  
 is resolved to be a good Christian,  
 you must answer my questions,  
 one by one, as I ask them.  
 Do you, o good Lucillus, believe in the three persons  
 of the Holy Trinity? That is, do you fully

understand, that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

LUCILLUS *replies to Lawrence*:  
I believe in all this as you do.

LAWRENCE *to Lucillus*:  
54. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was  
crucified for us, and died, and was buried?  
And that on the third day he rose  
with his own body, and ascended into heaven alive?  
And that we shall each be judged by him  
at the end of the world, when all our bodies  
will be gathered with our souls  
and all the world will be destroyed by fire?

LUCILLUS *to Lawrence*:  
55. I believe all that you have said, verily,  
with pure faith and without doubt.

LAWRENCE *prays and says*:  
Merciful Jesus, I humbly pray  
that you will accept our prayer,  
and that you will in your mercy  
give the light of the body and of the mind  
to the soul and to the eyes of Lucillus,  
and that you will gather him up among the elect.

*And when he has said this, he baptises him and then his eyes  
open and he says joyfully:*

56. O blessed God, eternal Lord,  
O Jesus Christ, our redeemer,  
you have restored the light, of heavenly King,  
by the hands of Lawrence and by his love.  
I who once was blind, now see clearly.  
My mind is opened, and my heart.  
May your most holy name, dearest lord,  
always be glorified.

HIPPOLYTUS *goes to the prison, and urges Lawrence in a  
friendly way, to reveal the treasure:*

57. I would advise you, Lawrence,  
for your own good, that you should hand over  
the treasure that you have to Decius.  
If you do this, you will be freed.

LAWRENCE *replies to Hippolytus*:  
I promise you, Hippolytus, I'll show you  
eternal life and the treasure, if you will  
believe in the Father, eternal and true God,  
in the beloved son, and in the Holy Ghost.

HIPPOLYTUS *to Lawrence:*

58. If you show me, with clear indications,  
what you promise, I will do what you ask.

LAWRENCE *to Hippolytus:*

Leave your blind, crazy idols,  
and kneel devoutly at my feet  
and with the most devout gestures  
you can manage, ask God  
for forgiveness for all your sins, and devoutly  
you will pray to him.

HIPPOLYTUS *kneels and prays and while he is worshipping, he  
sees in a revelation a multitude of blessed souls rejoicing in  
God, so he says to Lawrence:*

59. I've seen the happy souls  
of holy innocents all rejoicing in God,  
and therefore I pray you to allow  
all my household to know  
this sweetness, and may they all here present  
be baptised, so that we can  
have eternal glory on the highest throne.

LAWRENCE *replies and says:*

Let what you wish be done, good Hippolytus.

*When Hippolytus and his household have been baptised, he  
returns to the palace and VALERIAN says to him:*

60. Hippolytus, hurry and have Lawrence  
brought before us in great haste.

HIPPOLYTUS *turns to Lawrence and says:*

On behalf of Emperor Decius  
and of Valerian, I am commanded  
to bring you to them, and to avoid any mistake  
get ready to be reprimanded.

LAWRENCE *to Lucillus:*

Let's go, then, because glory is being prepared  
for me and then for you, and victory too.

VALERIAN *says to Lawrence:*

61. Lay aside your obstinacy now.  
Give us the treasure, because we know for sure  
that you have hidden it about you.

LAWRENCE *replies:*

You will be offered the true treasure.  
If you give me three days



I'll show it to you just as I told you.

VALERIAN *to Lawrence:*

On your word, you are given  
three days to show us the treasure.

VALERIAN *to Decius:*

62. O holy majesty, I have granted  
just three days' time to Lawrence  
to show you the treasure. He has promised  
to satisfy our desire in this.  
Let's wait and see if he speaks it now,  
but if he tricks us, we'll punish him for it.

DECIUS *replies to Valerian:*

I'm happy to wait these three days  
provided that I can get hold of the treasure.

*Lawrence leaves and gathers together lots of paupers and he takes them to Decius, and DECIUS says to Lawrence when he sees him as follows:*

63. Well, now, Lawrence, where is the great treasure  
that you promised to bring  
within three days, without any delay.  
Come on, out with it, don't waste time.

LAWRENCE *shows Decius the paupers and says:*

The true treasure of God lies in them  
who fortunately can never diminish.  
Come here, God's poor:  
this is the great treasure that I had hidden.

VALERIAN, *outraged, says:*

64. This in truth is a fine treasure!  
Who would not love it?  
And in exchange for silver and gold  
you give us rogues and lice with them.  
Come, Lawrence, and delay no longer.  
Sacrifice to the gods and believe in them.  
Deny Christ and, if you don't,  
you'll be cruelly tormented.

LAWRENCE *replies to Decius and Valerian:*

65. Alas, poor wretches! Why do you let yourselves  
be blinded by the false demon,  
and want to sacrifice to him and  
wretchedly deny the true God.  
I intend always to adore  
the only God, the highest good,  
who was creator of the universe.

All glory, laud and honour belongs to him.

DECIUS *to Lawrence*:

66. Who is this God of yours who was the maker  
of all these things you name?

LAWRENCE *says*:

He is God, the father of Christ Jesus,  
who made the heavens and the earth, waters and the birds  
and beasts, and the centre  
of the eternal abyss below, with all those  
malign spirits, banished from heaven  
because they rebelled against God.

LAWRENCE *continues*:

67. This is the true God who with his hands  
created humanity in his likeness:  
with highest reason and healthy intellect,  
beautiful, adorned, worthy and noble.  
But your false, ling gods  
made by man from base materials,  
how to you expect me to adore their filth  
and deny the creator of all creatures.

DECIUS *is enraged and says*:

68. Come now, seize him, for he is so  
presumptuous that he dares to blaspheme  
against our gods, and holds himself a saint.  
Strip him at once, and take cruel scorpion whips  
and have him beaten and battered  
so that his blood flows down to his feet,  
tied tightly to the column,  
since he so despises our gods.

*Now ST LAWRENCE is beaten with whips that have on their  
knots bits of twisted metal in the form of scorpions, and as he is  
tortured he says to God:*

69. I give you thanks, my eternal Lord,  
for giving me strength so that I may be chosen  
among your servants in the heavenly kingdom.  
But for you, cruel tyrant, will have that cruel  
and wicked punishment of doleful hell,  
along with your wicked sect and company.

DECIUS *says to the torturers*:

Torture him no more, but go and bring  
every kind of torture tome here.

*When they have brought many and varied torments, DECIUS  
says to Lawrence:*

70. If you do not sacrifice to our gods,  
 your wretched body will suffer  
 every kind of cruel torment  
 with terrible, cruel and burning pain.

LAWRENCE *replies to Decius*:

You'll be the wretch, because this repast  
 that you present to me is what I wanted,  
 because they will be at my triumph  
 and they will bring you eternal suffering.

DECIUS *says to Lawrence*:

71. If these are glory for you,  
 tell us where the other heathens  
 like you are waiting, so that we  
 can give this food to all your Christians.

LAWRENCE *to Decius*:

Those whom you seem have given their names  
 to God in heaven and your plans are worthless.  
 You are not worthy, accursed tyrant,  
 even to see their holy faces.

DECIUS, *enraged, has him dressed again and attached to a chain like a dog he has him taken to the temple of Jove to make him sacrifice, and he says*:

72. Have him chained at once  
 like a scoundrel, because he is so bold,  
 and let the judgement seat be made ready  
 in the temple of Jove in the appropriate place.  
 Have this Lawrence brought there  
 before me so that I can see if I am  
 to be obeyed by him and by his sect  
 which opposes us in such accursed wickedness.

*Arriving at the temple, DECIUS goes to sit on the judgement seat, and says to Lawrence as follows*:

73. It is clear that I intend to purge  
 the entire city of all the Christians  
 in your malicious sect, so that it is cleansed  
 of this blight, so get ready now  
 to sacrifice to our great Jove.  
 Don't put your faith in the treasure that you hold.

LAWRENCE *replies*:

I trust in my heavenly treasure  
 and I do not care about your empty threats.

DECIUS, *enraged once again, has him stripped and has him cruelly beaten with whips and says*:

74. Come on now, have him stripped

naked and let him be beaten hard  
 with iron tipped whips, until he's all  
 bathed in blood, and give him the treatment  
 so that he is well chastened  
 for all his sins. Come on, don't delay,  
 because I want to see whether he'll persist  
 in his wildly obstinate view.

*The torturers bind and beat him, and LAWRENCE says to Decius as follows:*

75. Now, wretched dog, you can know  
 and you can see clearly what your torments  
 to my body have achieved.  
 Still I triumph in the name of Christ.

*DECIUS enraged says:*

He's mocking us! Can't you see  
 how happy he is, how bold and wily?  
 Get burning plates of heavy, red-hot iron,  
 and place them close to his head.

*As he is tortured, LAWRENCE says to God:*

76. O my Lord Jesus! O God, o God,  
 give true strength to your good servant.  
 I am tortured and I have never denied you.  
 Lord Jesus, I confess you and I keep your faith.

*DECIUS to Lawrence:*

I know you for a truly wicked and evil  
 magical enchanter and perverse man!  
 Since you mock my torture,  
 you'll get so much that you'll die!

*DECIUS continues:*

77. And I'll call all the gods as witness  
 that you will sacrifice to them.  
 If you don't, I'll make you die with the fierce  
 torment of other cruel forms of torture.

*LAWRENCE replies:*

In the name of Jesus, I would not fear  
 your harsh torments or your false judgement.  
 Do what you want with my body  
 but you will never be able to stain my soul.

*DECIUS becomes even more enraged and says:*

78. Have him beaten with leaden balls  
 all over his body and shatter his limbs.

*LAWRENCE to God:*

O my Lord Jesus, as much as I can  
 I thank you for always helping me  
 in every way. You came to my assistance  
 before, and you were gracious;  
 now more than ever you make me patient  
 in such a way that my heart feels great joy.

LAWRENCE *continues, praying:*

79. And if ever it pleased your greatest Goodness  
 that my spirit should be loosed  
 from this body, and that my soul  
 should return to you in its freedom, and that I should  
 abandon the great earthly delights, may I rejoice  
 among your saints with them in purity,  
 I beg you, if it is your will.

AN ANGEL *appears and says to him:*

You have greater battles yet to bear.

DECIUS, *hearing the voice of the Angel but not seeing it, says to the people as follows:*

80. O good and prudent Roman citizens,  
 did you hear the consolation  
 that the demons offer this enchanter?  
 Do you see how much he derides  
 our law so that not even with prayers or gifts,  
 or even torture can we bend him  
 to our. So let him be whipped again  
 with the scorpion, right to the bone.

LAWRENCE, *as he is beaten again without being removed from the column, says to God:*

81. Almighty and eternal God,  
 O Jesus Christ, son of Mary,  
 blessed be your name eternally.  
 You grant me so much of your blessed,  
 holy mercy that I do not mind, that I mock  
 these torments, and rather I hear  
 great melody in my soul, granted by your grace,  
 so that I am you servant more than ever.

*Now one of the Emperor's knights, called ROMANUS, by God's grace takes pity on the wounds inflicted on St Lawrence, and is rewarded by the sight of an Angel drying St Lawrence's wounds, and he says to St Lawrence as follows:*

82. I see a most beautiful shining man,  
 drying your wounds with a towel  
 so that no sign remains  
 that he was ever beaten. Because of this, I want  
 to beg you now, Lawrence, to give me

holy baptism, and that I be called to Christianity.

LAWRENCE *replies to Romanus*:  
Beloved brother, Jesus be praised  
that he has called you among his chosen saints.

LAWRENCE *continues to Romanus*:  
83. And since I see your mind disposed  
to being a good servant of God,  
and that your will is all directed  
to following Christ and setting aside  
every other thing, if I ever have any respite  
or rest from my torture  
and find myself unbound, with my own hands  
I will immediately make you a Christian.

DECIUS, *when he sees that Romanus has converted, says to  
Valerian all full of regret*:  
84. Alas, can't you see, Valerian,  
that we are beaten by spells?

*Then he turns to Romanus and says*:  
O bold knight, o good Romanus,  
are you so stupid that you have abandoned us?  
What foolishness, what insane thought  
has so stripped you of good sense  
that you want to deny supreme Jove  
and the other gods and become a Christian?

ROMANUS *replies to Decius*:  
85. I've seen, o holy Emperor, with certainty  
that the true God is Jesus of the Christians,  
and I was his angel, full of splendour,  
cleansing all Lawrence's wounds  
with his own hands, and you are wrong  
in worshipping the empty, deceitful gods.  
The one true deity who rules everything  
is the god of Christian law.

DECIUS *sorrowfully has St Lawrence freed from the column and  
taken back to prison, and says*:  
86. Take him away. Have him handed over  
to Hippolytus, to keep him at my will.

*When he is free and handed over to Hippolytus, ROMANUS says  
to Lawrence as follows*:  
See, servant of God, that I have brought  
an abundance of water in this vase,  
so I beg you to baptise me

because this is what I greatly desire.

LAWRENCE *baptises him and says:*  
In the name of the perfect Trinity  
be baptised, and your soul be cleansed and pure.

DECIUS, *seeing Romanus baptised, says to his men as follows:*  
87. Bring that diabolical fellow here,  
who's let his head be turned by that man.

*Then he turns to Romanus and says:*  
You wretch, you have denied our sacred gods,  
and you don't know whom you've put in their place.  
Now I know you're raving mad.

ROMANUS *replies to Decius as follows:*  
You're the mad one! I adore Him  
who chose to die on the cross to save us  
and free us from hell's cruelty.

DECIUS, *enraged against Romanus, says:*  
88. You pay the penalty for this mistake  
of denying them, and you'll be punished.

DECIUS *turns to Valerian:*  
Come, Valerian, go after him  
as fast as you can. Have his head cut off at once,  
then have the traitor brought to me  
who is the cause of so much strife and trouble,  
because I want to subject him again to different torments  
until he submits in the end to my will.

ROMANUS *is beheaded, and Lawrence is taken back to prison.*  
*Then Valerian says to Hippolytus as follows:*

89. Hippolytus, come here. Go at once  
and bring Lawrence before us here.

*Hippolytus is weeping as he goes to the prison to get*  
LAWRENCE *who says to Hippolytus:*  
Come, brother, do not weep! Be of good cheer!  
I'm going to rejoice in the blessed kingdom  
of eternal life, in that great sweetness  
for which you, good brother, have been chosen.  
Remain in hiding, and when you hear me,  
for I will call you, you will come there.

*While Lawrence is being brought to Decius, DECIUS says to the*  
*torturers as follows:*  
90. Come, bring all the instruments

of torture before the judgement seat.

*Then he turns to St Lawrence who has arrived and says:*

Come here, Lawrence. Come and stand  
before our imperial throne.

Lay aside your perfidy, and tells us  
who your family was, and what  
nationality you are, and where you were born,  
and do not stray from the point.

LAWRENCE *replies to Decius:*

91. As for my origins, I state that I was  
born in Spain, but then I was raised  
in fair Rome, and there I studied  
from childhood, united in God,  
and I am a true baptised Christian.  
I follow the gospel, and I have always obeyed  
the holy law of perfect Jesus,  
and held your false gods in contempt.

DECIUS, *enraged, says to Lawrence:*

92. Since I know the crazy wicked thoughts  
of your stony heart, and you don't want to change,  
I promise you, in the name of our gods,  
that you per force will have to make  
worthy sacrifice, and you must understand  
what I am telling you and saying very clearly:  
if you don't do it, all this dark night long  
I'll have you tortured with cruel pain.

LAWRENCE *says:*

93. My nights will never be dark. Rather,  
you'll always see them shining in the sun.

DECIUS *to the torturers:*

Since he's following his humours  
and I see he is more obstinate than ever,  
let him be tortured this night  
so that he suffers ever pain, anguish and torment,  
then smash his mouth with stones  
if he persists in this foolish wish.

*Now the torturers take him and, when that have bared his head,  
they torture him with whips, scorpions, and lead balls, then  
they strike him in the mouth with stones, and ST LAWRENCE  
turns to God and says:*

94. I give you thanks, o gracious Lord,  
for giving me strength in all my suffering.  
I pray to you, merciful Jesus,  
on behalf of these ungrateful men who have beaten me.



And so that I may rest more peacefully, make them see clearly that this Jove is the devil, full of deceit. Therefore, by your power, blessed Lord, let this idol be struck by lightning's rage.

*And when he has spoken, a flash of lightning comes from heaven and destroys it into several pieces. At this, DECIUS is enraged and says to Valerian as follows:*

95. Have you see how this accursed man has destroyed our god?

Let's go back to the great palace, good Prefect. Have him brought, tightly bound, there before my worthy throne, like an evil, wicked enchanter.

I have decided to put him to death with the cruellest torture that can be found.

*Decius returns to the palace with the others and there, having taken his seat, EMPEROR DECIUS says to the torturers as follows:*

96. Find a bedstead made out of iron, in the form of a grate, and have that evil man brought here and put to rest on it.

We'll see if his merciful Jesus can save this sorcerer from being burnt to ashes by the burning fire.

Go, find coal, find fire, because he cares little for the other torments.

*When he has found the iron grate, and Lawrence has been stripped and placed on it, DECIUS says to him:*

97. Now listen to what I have to say: sacrifice to the gods with a pure heart.

LAWRENCE *replies to Decius:*

I want to sacrifice to holy Jesus my body and my soul, in odour of great sweetness, and I intend that the sacrifice pleasing to my Lord shall be my tormented spirit and my contrite heart, humiliated in God.

LAWRENCE *continues:*

98. And I want you to know, wretched tyrant, that your coals cool me.

For you there will yet be grave torments, my Lord Jesus, in whom I trust, has seen that our torture has not prevailed in me. Rather, I have always confessed that true Lord Christ Jesus

and even amid the flames I have thanked him.

DECIUS *to Lawrence:*

99. Where are these torments  
that will be so arrogantly inflicted on us?

LAWRENCE *replies:*

O your madness, o you fools,  
Why can't you see how much consolation  
and resolution your coals give me.  
I don't care about them, but with great boldness,  
I return always to my Lord Jesus  
who will save me from your hands.

DECIUS *to Lorenzo:*

100. Now we come to the test, Lawrence,  
of whether your spells are more powerful  
than my coals, and you'll see whether your God  
and his pious sermons are any use to you.

LAWRENCE *relies to Decius:*

The virtue of my God always renews  
his grace in me with great and generous gifts,  
in such a way that I care nothing  
for your coals or for this burning flame.

LAWRENCE *continues to Decius:*

101. And you, cruel tyrant, since you have  
roasted one part of my body,  
turn it over, and eat this part.  
Sate your bestial appetite on me.

LAWRENCE *turns to God and says:*

I give you thanks, Lord, more than ever.  
You have always granted my requests.  
Since you call me to you, Lord God,  
Father, receive my spirit.

*When St Lawrence has died, A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN goes to St  
Justinus the priest and says as follows:*

102. O good Justinus, o worthy priest,  
listen to my words with great sorrow  
and hear why I come weeping to you.  
Cruel Decius has had St Lawrence  
tortured, tied to a tree,  
then in the end he has had him burnt  
on a grate and there he died.  
Let us run and have him buried.

JUSTINUS *replies:*

103. O alas, what news is this?  
 Alas, Lawrence, why have you left us  
 in this blind world, amid so many storms,  
 while you triumph in heaven with the saints  
 in eternal rejoicing. Come, let the robes  
 and other things be prepared.  
 Let's go, my brother, and perform  
 the holy funeral rites on his blessed body.

*And when he has said this, they carry St Lawrence's robes and they lay him in the bier and they carry it to the grave, singing devoutly [the Benedictus, Luke 1:68-79] Benedictus dominus deus Israel, with the whole canticle. Then JUSTINUS, dressed in his vestments, says the prayer of St Lawrence:*

*Prayer of St Lawrence*

*And when his body has been placed in the grave, THE ANGEL bids the audience farewell and says:*

103. O all you who were created  
 in God's likeness by his holy hands,  
 spurn the body and forget  
 about the treacherous world, full of sin.  
 Put your hearts always  
 in Jesus Christ, our holy Lord,  
 so that we may find ourselves in eternal joy  
 with St Lawrence, and I bid you farewell.

THE END OF THE PLAY OF ST SIXTUS AND ST LAWRENCE HIS  
 DEACON.