

St. Vincent

Friends in Christ,

Today is the Feast of St. Vincent.

St. Vincent was a Deacon, one of the Church's 3 most famous deacons.ⁱ

His bishop, in Saragossa, Spain, had some kind of a speech impediment,

and so he commissioned his Deacon Vincent to do the preaching for him in the diocese.

His preaching was strong and fearless, and this angered the anti-Catholic authorities.

By order of the Governor Dacian, he and his bishop were dragged in chains to Valencia and kept in prison for a long time.

He was told that if he threw the Sacred Scriptures into a fire and burned them, he could be released, but he adamantly refused.

Vincent was then put on the rack, and his limbs were torn apart.

Dacian asked him, 'Tell me Vincent, how does your body look to you now?'

But the saint smiling, replied: 'This is what I have always longed for, you are doing me great favors!'

Beside himself with rage, Dacian yelled at the torturers:

'Miserable wretches, you're getting nowhere with him.'

So they drove iron hooks into his sides until blood spurted forth and his intestines hung out,

but he still said, 'I have no fear of your tortures.'

He was taken from the rack and carried to a hot gridiron.

He was seared and roasted,

but nothing could undermine the courage of his faith.

Frustrated, the Governor ordered him returned to prison. During the night, a heavenly brightness flooded into the prison bringing a great peace; seeing this, the guards immediately converted to the Faith.

The authorities then tried a different approach. Instead of tortures, Vincent was placed on a soft bed in the hope that lenient treatment would convince him to give up the faith. Yet no matter what methods were tried, strengthened by faith in everlasting life, he remained invincible in spirit.

According to legend, after he died, they threw his body out for the vultures to eat, but ravens came and guarded him.

His body was taken to what is known as Cape St. Vincent, today a shrine, and his grave continued to be guarded by flocks of ravens.

In the time of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula, even the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi noted that the grave of St. Vincent was constantly guarded by ravens.

St. Vincent is often pictured as a deacon being torn by hooks and being defended by ravens. He is the patron saint of Winemakers.

ⁱ the other two being St. Stephen and Lawrence. Vincent is also Spain's most famous martyr.