Dear friend
I enclose this week's virtual service, paying tribute to the life of St Laurence.

To start, a hymn celebrating saints in general, 'Who are these like stars appearing', sung by four members of St Luke's church choir, Chelsea, with words:
https://youtu.be/xM1FcEMCbjs

A setting of the collect, 'Let thy merciful ears', by the Tudor composer Thomas Mudd, sung by the choir of Clare College, Cambridge (rolling score provided):
https://youtu.be/jcSEi2VpgiQ

From the Catholic Church of Nigeria, a rather calypso-inspired version of the creed:
https://youtu.be/QLxKgBHCIUM

This ancient Greek chant to the words we know as, "Let all mortal flesh", dates to the time of St Laurence's earthly life (3rd century AD):
https://youtu.be/9UZViksVuc4

although we know it better to the French tune Picardy, the basis for this sensitive setting by the Canadian composer, organist and harpsichordist Stephanie Martin (back to Clare College):
https://youtu.be/St3u_-KoLKA

Finally, a splendid worship song from Martin, 'The Heart of Worship' (Live) - Matt Redman. British-born songwriter, Redman, leads a huge congregation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4RUjGsTfks

With all good wishes
Chris

VIRTUAL SERVICE 8th. AUGUST 2021

FEAST of ST LAURENCE, DEACON at ROME

He hath put down the mighty from their seat;
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things;
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
From the Magnificat, Book of Common Prayer.

CONFESSION O God, save me from this frivolous self which misuses your creation, this masterful self which manipulates your creation, this greedy self which exploits your creation, this self which throws the thick shadow of its own purposes and desires in every direction, so that I cannot see what it is that you are showing to me. Teach me to stand out of my own light, and let your daylight shine. *(Austin Farrar, adapted).*

COLLECT Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, *Amen*.

READINGS Deuteronomy 31.1-8, 32.3-4,7-9, Psalm 107.1-3,32-end, 2 Corinthians 9.6-10, Matthew 18.1-5, 10, 12-14.

REFLECTION As Deacon of the church in Rome, St Laurence was put in charge of the church treasury. When the Roman authorities demanded the church's treasures, Laurence hastily distributed them among the poor, presenting the people as the true riches of the church; he was brought before Emperor Valerianus (pictured) and beheaded.
Today's readings echo this contrast between worldly values and those of God's Kingdom. The psalm, written as the city of Jerusalem was being rebuilt after its destruction, tells of God's power on earth, when those who oppress the poor will "wander in trackless wastes". His steadfast love will support us when we go through the dark times. Children, in biblical times, had very low social status, with high infant mortality rate and low life expectancy. Then, as now, they were abused and exploited. Yet, when the disciples were asked for positions in a heavenly hierarchy, Jesus commended the humility of these "little ones". Can we approach God with a child-like simplicity? Can we truly value those who are marginalized in society? Can we be generous with our money, our time and our talents, for, as Paul puts it, God loves a cheerful giver?

PRAYERS O Lord, in your Son our Lord Jesus Christ you have made us your children. We have heard your call and come now to praise you, to hear your word and to call on you. Be in our midst, that this may be a time of light, in which we see heaven opened and then a little brightness on this dark earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *(Karl Barth, adapted)*.



Bring peace to the troubled nations of this world, reducing the inequalities between rich and poor, that they may be governed for the good of all.
We pray for the poor and disadvantaged in society, those who are refugees and those trapped in slavery and child labour.
We bring before you the sick, anxious and distressed, especially remembering……
We pray for ourselves, that we may be open to your teaching. Enable us to live generously for your kingdom.

We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**.
We share the **GRACE**.

FINAL PRAYER Lord Christ, We bring before you the world of children, their openness and friendliness, their sense of inquiry and curiosity, their creativity and freshness. Forgive our voices of experience, our demand for their conformity. Help us to stimulate, encourage and cheer, to inspire and to understand, that their spirits may be lifted, their imaginations quickened, their vision broadened. For your world's sake. *J Dickson Pope*