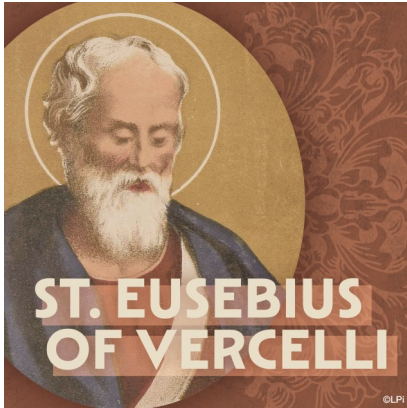


## FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we gather, united in the love of the Lord, let us turn our hearts to the witness of St. Eusebius of Vercelli, whose feast we celebrate on August 2. We are called to re-discover the beauty of our baptismal calling, to live as a community rooted in the Word of God and the Eucharist. St. Eusebius, a faithful pastor and defender of the faith, speaks to us powerfully in this journey of conversion, showing us how to live radically for Christ in a world that often opposes Him.

St. Eusebius was born around 283 on the island of Sardinia, a land marked by the trials of persecution. His father, it is said, was martyred for the faith, and his mother brought him to Rome, where he grew in the heart of the Church. There, he became

a lector, proclaiming the Word of God with zeal, a role that prepared him for his mission as the first bishop of Vercelli in northern Italy around 340 AD. Like us, who gather to listen to the Word, Eusebius understood that the Word is living and active, cutting to the heart and calling us to conversion. What strikes me about St. Eusebius is his total surrender to Christ. In a time when the Arian heresy threatened to tear the Church apart by denying the divinity of Jesus, Eusebius stood firm. He was not swayed by the pressures of emperors or the powerful Arians who held sway in the courts. At the Council of Milan in 355, when many bishops buckled under the weight of imperial threats, Eusebius boldly placed the Nicene Creed on the table, demanding that all affirm the truth of Christ's divinity before any other discussion. Can we not see in this act a reflection of our own call to stand firm in the truth, to proclaim Jesus as Lord and God, even when the world tempts us to compromise?

For his fidelity, Eusebius paid a heavy price. Exiled by Emperor Constantius II, he was dragged through the streets of Scythopolis, stripped half-naked, and imprisoned in a tiny cell without food for days. Yet, even in exile, he did not despair. He wrote to his beloved flock in Vercelli, Novara, Ivrea, and Tortona, calling them his 'sancta plebs' – his holy people – and encouraging them to guard the faith, preserve harmony, and be constant in prayer. In his suffering, he lived the paschal mystery, uniting himself to the cross of Christ. He shows us how to embrace the cross, to see in our sufferings a participation in Christ's redemptive work, and to trust that through it, God is forming us into a new creation.

As bishop, he did something revolutionary for his time: he united the monastic life with the life of the clergy, forming a priestly community in Vercelli that lived together, prayed together, and served together. Eusebius knew that the Church is not just a collection of individuals but a body, where each member supports the other. He promoted Marian shrines in the countryside to evangelize the pagan populations, reminding us of our call to go out, to bring the Gospel to those who do not yet know Christ, and to live as missionaries in our own neighborhoods.

When Emperor Julian allowed Eusebius to return to Vercelli in 361, he did not return bitter or defeated. Instead, he continued his mission with renewed zeal, attending the Council of Alexandria in 362 to reaffirm the Nicene Creed and working to reconcile those who had fallen into Arianism. His pastoral heart sought not to condemn but to bring back the lost, showing mercy while never compromising the truth.

St. Eusebius challenges us to ask ourselves: Are we living our baptism fully? Are we ready to suffer for the faith, to stand firm in the face of opposition, whether it comes from the culture, our workplaces, or even within our own hearts? Like Eusebius, we are called to live not for this world but for the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal city where Christ reigns as King.

Let us pray: "St. Eusebius, you loved your flock and defended the truth of Christ's divinity even at great cost. Help us to guard the faith, to live in community, and to proclaim the Gospel with boldness. Amen."

St. Eusebius, pray for us!

Peace,