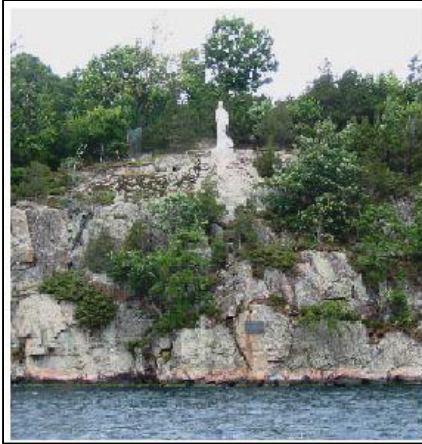


## Excerpt from the Ottawa Citizen

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On this day (*August 10, 2007*), 471 years ago, on the anniversary of the martyr's death, French explorer Jacques Cartier spent a night on some unknown body of water in the New World.

It being the feast day of the roasted clergyman, **Cartier decided to name the body of water after that very man, who had since become the patron saint of librarians, cooks and butchers, among others.**

The name stuck. To this day, we refer to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River.

Had Cartier arrived a day sooner, Quebec City and Montreal would be located on the St. Oswald River. A day later and we would be sharing with the Americans something called the St. Clare Seaway.

Few boaters plying the St. Lawrence River likely have a clue who St. Lawrence was. Monuments to him, if they exist at all along the river, are as rare as hen's teeth. Gananoque businessman and sailor Hal McCarney decided to do something about that. As a result of efforts by Mr. McCarney and his pals at the tourism-promoting, bi-national Thousand Island Admirals, funds were raised to erect a riverside statue of St. Lawrence.

Mr. McCarney has been a fan of St. Lawrence most of his life. "My mother bought me a picture of St. Lawrence 50 years ago," Mr. McCarney said yesterday. "It's in my house now."

The approximately five-metre-high (14-foot) statue was carved by Belleville sculptor James (Jim) Smith from Indiana limestone. The nine-tonne statue will be unveiled Tuesday in Gananoque, near Joel Stone Park, during the annual Festival of the Islands. After the festival, **the statue will be moved to a permanent location in an area known as the Pallisades, a cliff overlooking the river on the Canadian side, one kilometre east of the Ivy Lea International Bridge.**

The statue will be visible only to boaters. Sculptor Smith said he wanted to ensure St. Lawrence looks "stoic, spiritual and strong." Part of his inspiration came from a fresco by Renaissance painter Fra Angelico depicting the trial of St. Lawrence.

Mr. Smith's statue shows St. Lawrence, as he is often depicted, holding a gridiron, the instrument of his death. **The saint is also holding a book, to emphasize his role as a librarian**, and standing on a two bags of coins, to represent his role as keeper of the church's wealth.

It was that latter role that made Lawrence particularly interesting to Emperor Valerian. Back in 258 AD, the emperor was on an anti-Christian campaign. He killed Pope Sixtus II and six deacons. Two days later, Lawrence was ordered to appear within a few days before the emperor and reveal the location of all the riches of the Christian church in Rome. Lawrence kept the date. But instead of bags of gold, he brought with him poor, orphaned and disabled Christians.

"These are the treasures of the church," Lawrence is supposed to have said.

The emperor was not impressed. Reports vary, but the prevailing story is that Lawrence was ordered to be strapped to a red-hot grill and roasted to death on the site of what became the Basilica di San Lorenzo in Rome. (Other reports say Lawrence was beheaded but the death-by-barbecue story is the one that has stuck.)

Lawrence, the popular legend goes, welcomed martyrdom, being eager to join in heaven the other church leaders killed a few days previously.

Accordingly, Lawrence was rather jolly while sizzling on the grill and is alleged to have shouted at one point: "Turn me over. I am done on this side."