



10 May

LITURGY

FEAST OF DAMIEN DE VEUSTER, PRIEST

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let us rejoice in the Lord for Damien, servant of God and servant of humanity, whose compassionate love and care for the suffering and the forsaken has given him a place among the blessed. **(P.T.: Alleluia)**

OPENING PRAYER ¹

Father of mercy,
in Blessed Damien you have given us a shining witness of love
for the poorest and most abandoned.
Grant that, by his intercession,
as faithful witnesses of the heart of your Son Jesus,

we too may be servants of the most needy and rejected.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (5, 1-8) ²

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. But that is not all we can boast about; we can boast about our sufferings. These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man - though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 33, 2-3, 6-7, 8-9, 20-21)

Response (9a): *Taste and see that the Lord is good. (P.T.: Alleluia)*

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. **R/**

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress. **R/**

The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him. **R/**

Many are the trials of the just man
but from them all the Lord will rescue him.
He will keep guard over all his bones,
not one of his bones shall be broken. **R/**

ALLELUIA (*Jn 10,11*)

Alleluia, Alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;
the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (13: 1-5; 12-17)

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord'; and you are right, for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

In all truth I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know this, blessed are you if you behave accordingly."

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS ⁴

Lord, accept the gifts of your people.
May we who celebrate the love of your Son
also follow the example of your saints
and grow in love for you and for one another.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Jn 15,13*) ⁵

No one has greater love, says the Lord,
than the man who lays down his life for his friends. (P.T.: Alleluia)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, merciful God,
for the gift of the Bread of Life
which you give us in your Son Jesus Christ.
Grant us through him the grace to know you
and the strength to announce your love through the witness of our lives.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

10 May

DAMIEN DE VEUSTER, PRIEST

Memory ⁶

He was born in Tremelo, Belgium, in 1840. He entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar in 1859. Not yet being ordained Priest, he offered himself to go abroad to the Hawaiian missions, where he arrived in 1863. Newly in the priesthood, he exercised the holy ministry at first in the Hawaiian Island; then he offered himself again to go and live among the lepers in the banned island of Molokai. There, during sixteen years, he partook their life, their labors, their sufferings, their joys, as well as their terrible decease and a similar death. He died as leper in 1889.

Common of Holy Men. Psalms as in the Office of the day

Office of Readings ⁷

SECOND READING

*A reading from the Letters of Blessed Damien De Veuster ss.cc. (Copia Publ. Proc. Mechlinien.)
"I have accepted this disease as my particular cross."*

In August 1873, to his Superior General:

Divine Providence, having compassion on the unfortunate, has thought fit to look upon your unworthy servant to care for the spiritual needs of a well-known leprosy hospital that our Government had to establish to preserve the whole archipelago from disease. Thus, it is in my role as pastor of an unusual parish of eight hundred lepers, nearly half of whom are now Catholics, that I take the liberty to write to you these lines.

(...) Here I am in the midst of my dear lepers. They are so frightful to see, it is true, but they have souls redeemed at the price of the precious blood of our Divine Savior. He also in his divine charity consoled lepers. If I can not cure them as he did, at least I can console them and by the holy ministry which in his goodness he has entrusted to me, I hope that many among them, purified from the leprosy of the soul, will present themselves before his tribunal prepared to enter the communion of the blessed.

My chapel, which was too big the first weeks I was here, has now become too small. Three weeks in a row I have had to ask some of the older Christians to stand outside along the windows in order to give their places to the new-comers or to the fallen away who have returned or to the catechumens of whom there are always some.

Besides Sunday, there are a good number who come regularly to Mass and evening rosary everyday of the week. A good number receive communion every Sunday. Besides the consolations that the heart of a priest finds in the church, there is also much good to do by visiting homes, going from one hut to another, almost all of them filled with poor unfortunates who can hardly drag themselves around as often their hands and feet have been eaten away by this horrible disease. They are condemned to breathe foul air. Ordinarily they listen with great attention to the word of salvation which I share with each one according to their disposition.

November 25, 1873, to his brother, Fr. Pamphile:

Even though I am not a leper, I make myself a leper with the lepers; when I preach, I always use the expression, "*We, lepers*". Thus may I gain all for Christ as St. Paul.

November 9, 1887, again to his brother:

As you know, it has been already quite a while that Divine Providence chose me to become a victim of this repugnant disease of ours. I hope to remain eternally grateful for this grace. It seems to me that this disease will shorten and narrow the way that will lead me to our dear homeland. In that hope accepted this disease as my particular cross; I try to bear it as did Simon of Cyrene, following in the footsteps of our Divine Master. Please assist me with your good prayers, so as to obtain for me the strength of perseverance, until I reach the summit of Calvary.

RESPONSORIAL VERSE *cf. Jn 15,13; 15,16*

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

** To lay down one's life for one's friends. That is the fruit of true love.*

I chose you and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last.

** To lay down one's life for one's friends. That is the fruit of true love.*

PRAYER ⁸:

Father of mercy, in Blessed Damien you have given us a shining witness of love for the poorest and most abandoned. Grant that, by his intercession, as faithful witnesses of the Heart of your Son Jesus, we too may be servants of the most needy and rejected. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever.

[1](#) This prayer was approved by the Congregation of Divine Cult and Sacraments on May the 3d. 1994.

[2](#) Cf. People's Daily Missal (C. Goodliffe Neale, Alcester and Dublin, 1974), I, p.1579 and 1855. From the Jerusalem Bible Version (ICEL-texts).

[3](#) Cf. People's Daily Missal, I, Fourth Sunday of Easter, p.1178-9.

[4](#) Cf. Missal, Common of holy men and women, N° 9: For those who work for the underprivileged.

[5](#) Cf. Missal, Common of holy men and women, N° 9.

[6](#) For the whole Congregation of the Sacred Hearts.

[7](#) Office approved by the Congregation of Divine Cult and Sacraments at April 17, 1996

[8](#) Prayer approved by the Congregation of Divine Cult and Sacraments at May the 3d. 1994 and June 17, 1994