

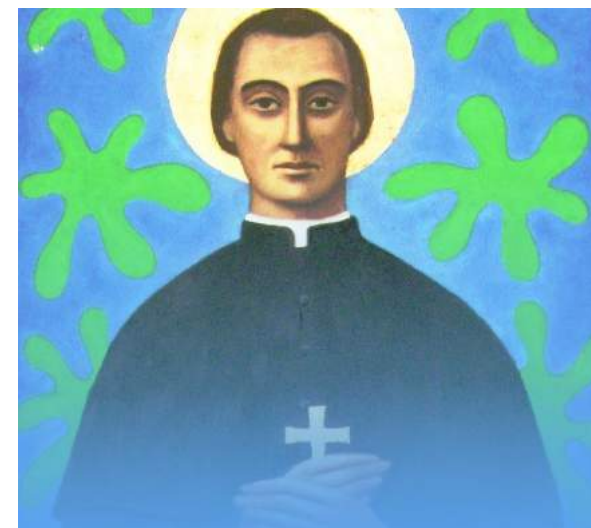
Prayer to St Peter Chanel

St Peter Chanel,
you left your homeland
to proclaim Jesus, Saviour of the world,
to the peoples of Oceania.

Guided by the Spirit of God,
who is the strength of the gentle,
you bore witness to love,
even laying down your life.

Grant that, like you,
we may live our daily life
in peace, in joy, and in fraternal love.

May your prayer and example
call forth from our midst
many workers for the Gospel
so that God's Kingdom may reach
to the ends of the earth. Amen.



St Peter Chanel

**Marist priest and
first martyr
of the South Pacific**

A short prayer service

Reading / reflection

Office of Readings, from a eulogy for St Peter Chanel
'The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians'

As soon as Peter embraced religious life in the Society of Mary, he was sent at his own request to the missions of Oceania, and landed on the island of Futuna in the Pacific Ocean, where the name of Christ had never before been preached. A lay-brother who was constantly at his side gave the following account of his life in the missions:

“Because of his labours he was often burned by the heat of the sun, and famished with hunger, and he would return home wet with perspiration and completely exhausted. Yet he always remained in good spirits, courageous and energetic, as if he were returning from a pleasure jaunt, and this would happen almost every day.

“He could never refuse anything to the Futunians, even to those who persecuted him; he always made excuses for them and never rejected them, even though they were often rude and troublesome. He displayed an unparalleled mildness toward everyone on all occasions without exception. It is no wonder then that the natives used to call him the ‘good-hearted man.’ He once told a fellow religious: ‘In such a difficult mission one has to be holy.’”

Quietly he preached Christ and the Gospel, but there was little response. Still with invincible perseverance he pursued his missionary tasks on both the human and religious level, relying on the example and words of Christ: There is one who sows and another who reaps. And he constantly prayed for help from the Mother of God, to whom he was especially devoted.

By his preaching of Christianity he destroyed the cult of the evil spirits, which the chieftains of the Futunians encouraged in order to keep the tribe under their rule. This was the reason they subjected Peter to a most cruel death, hoping that by killing him the seeds of the Christian religion which he had sowed would be annihilated.

On the day before his martyrdom he had said: “It does not matter if I die. Christ’s religion is so deeply rooted on this island that it cannot be destroyed by my death.”

The blood of this martyr benefited, in the first place, the natives of Futuna, for a few years later they were all converted to the faith of Christ. But it benefited as well the other islands of Oceania, where Christian churches, which claim Peter as their first martyr, are now flourishing.



Intercessions

Leader: From the poor of Israel, God chose Mary as Mother of the Saviour; and through her showed us how to live our lives in fidelity to the Gospel. We now turn to our God with complete confidence, as Mary did in all the circumstances of her life.

We ask that as St Peter Chanel imitated Christ in his passion, so may he guide us in all our struggles; like him, may we remain faithful to your call. Lord, hear us....

May the Lord, guide and strengthen our Church in her mission to make Christ known to the world as Mary did, with a heart for the poor and most needy.

Through the intercession of St Peter Chanel, may we be renewed in zeal for our own vocations, with the courage to call others to priestly, religious and Marist life.

We pray for those who seek to follow Christ more deeply in their lives. May we support them in their journeys to discern their call.

We thank our God for the witness of family and others who have ministered to us and inspired us in faith and discipleship — and for the gift of faith of those who have gone before us.

We pray for the peoples of Oceania and for the life of the Church throughout Asia-Pacific.

We pray for the Marist Family - Sisters, Brothers, Fathers, lay Marists - and for all who seek to live the Gospel as faithful disciples of Jesus in the way of Mary.

[Other intentions....]

Leader: Loving Father, hear our prayers which we put to you with great confidence and through the intercession of our brother, Peter Chanel, and through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.