

**Born:** 12 July 1803 at Cuët, Ain, France

**Ordained:** 15 July 1827, France

**Professed:** 24 September 1836, France

**Died:** 28 April 1841 at Poi, Uvea, Futuna

**Body:** Recovered and taken back to France in 1842

**Venerated:** 25 November 1888 by Pope Leo XIII (decree of martyrdom)

**Beatified:** 17 November 1889 by Pope Leo XIII

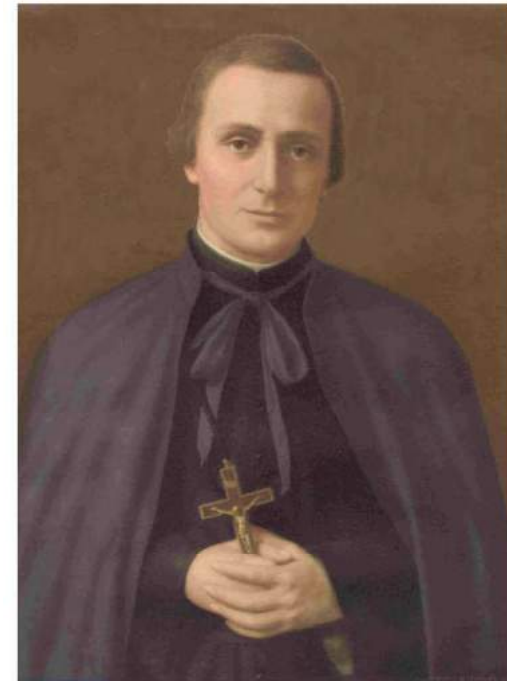
**Canonized:** 12 June 1954 by Pope Pius XII

**Relics:** Returned to The Island of Futuna in 1977

“Every specific vocation is in fact born of the initiative of God; it is a gift of the Love of God! He is the One who takes the “first step”, and not because he has found something good in us, but because of the presence of his own love “poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5).”

*Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the 49th World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2012*

# Novena to St Peter Chanel For Vocations to the Society of Mary



It is a long standing tradition in the Society of Mary to pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life during the nine days leading up to the Feast of St Peter Chanel. You are invited to pray during this novena for Vocations to the Society of Mary. The prayers and reflections in this booklet can be used individually, or as a part of community prayer/liturgy.



### **Prayer for Vocations 1**

Lord Jesus, you gave to the Church, the Society of Mary and the people of Oceania, St Peter Chanel, as an example of gentleness, compassion and love in action. Welcome many young men and women into the Marist Family, as priests, brothers and sisters. Help us to share our charism with lay people throughout the world and to work in partnership with them in mission for the good of your Church and the world. This prayer we make to the Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen

### **Prayer for Vocations 2**

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

*Quotes are taken from: Ever Your Poor Brother Peter Chanel :Surviving Letters and Futuna Journal. Presented by WJ Stuart & A Ward. APM. Rome. 1991*

## **DAY NINE: APRIL 27**

*16 May 1840. Futuna. Fr Chanel to Fr Colin.*

‘Soon death will come to decimate our still feeble ranks. Will the missions be condemned to die with their missionaries? Must brambles and thorns spring up in the different parts of the field of the Lord.... for lack of zealous labourers to take over from us? ...Very Reverend Father, tell the students at Belley... what affection I still have for them....’



### **Intercessions:**

That many young men, responding to God's boundless love, will follow the call to love and serve the Church in the ministerial priesthood.

*Lord, hear us.*

For priests, especially Marist priests: that their lives and ministry might witness to the limitless love that precedes, calls and sustains them along the path of life.

*Lord, hear us.*

For Marist seminarians: may they experience God's free gift of love in their calling to priesthood and dedicate themselves to love and serve his people with Mary as their model and inspiration

*Lord, hear us.*

Full of the love of God, Peter Chanel gladly sacrificed his life to preach the Gospel: through his intercession and following his example may all Marists act with a sense of love and service.

*Lord, hear us.*

**Prayer for vocations (On page 2)**

## **DAY EIGHT: APRIL 26**

*16 May 1839. Futuna. Letter of Fr Chanel to Fr Jean-Claude Colin.*

'The island is not yet Christian; apart from my lack of zeal, there are a thousand and one fears and prejudices to be dispelled.... The king and most of the chiefs are reputed to have gods that descend on them... inspiring fear. Twenty baptisms, four of which were adults and the rest children, and all in danger of death, make up the entire harvest I have reaped in eighteen months.' (p171)



### **Intercessions:**

For all those young people who are trying to decide what to do with their lives: that with Mary's intercession they may grow in knowledge and love of the Lord, and clearly hear his voice amid the noise of their daily life.

*Lord, hear us.*

The young Peter Chanel overcame discouragement after praying for light and comfort. May all Marists encourage and guide the young into a deeper love of prayer, scripture and the Eucharist.

*Lord, hear us.*

We pray that the Lord will call many young people to serve the Church in the priesthood and religious life. May they learn of "the beauty of a life spent fully in service of the Kingdom".

*Lord, hear us.*

For those young people called to be religious: that they might grow in faith and relationship with the Lord and hear clearly His invitation of love to them.

*Lord, hear us.*

**Prayer for vocations (On page 2)**

## **DAY ONE: APRIL 19**

*23 July 1837. During the voyage from France, Peter wrote to his mother about the death of Fr Bret at sea.*

'Fr Bret, whom you have met at home, had shown himself to be full of care and attention for those who had been unwell. After our stopover at Tenerife, he came aboard with a headache which, instead of getting better at sea, grew steadily worse.

..... I was his room-mate and left him as little as possible, so his death came as a thunderbolt. ... However I came to realise that the lot of my dear confrere should excite me to envy not tears. In fact all the consolations of our holy religion were given to him... Fr Bret caused us great distress on the Monday morning when he told us that his life was drawing to a close.... Peacefully he fell asleep in the Lord. .... Rejoice Mother dear if you should ever hear that I have died such an edifying death.' (page 130)



### **Intercessions:**

For all Marists: that by forming a "culture of vocations" in our communities we will help young people respond generously to God's loving call.

*Lord, hear us.*

From the island of Futuna Peter Chanel encouraged the young people of the college of Belley to support the spread of the Gospel. May he intercede for college and university students, that from among them many will hear and answer the call to Marist life.

*Lord, hear us.*

For those young people sensing God's call to the priesthood or religious life: that they might find the support and encouragement they need to respond positively to His invitation.

*Lord, hear us.*

That with the help of Mary, Marist may create conditions in our communities that free young people to say "yes" in response to God's loving call.

*Lord, hear us.*

**Prayer for vocations (On page 2)**



## **DAY TWO : APRIL 20**

27 November 1839. Futuna. Letter from Fr Chanel to Fr Vuillod, a friend and seminary professor in France.

‘I delight in seeing the ranks of the clergy increasing day by day. The premature death of Fr Bret, will not, I hope, put off the young priests who are contemplating coming here to join us. Missionaries die, but a mission must not die.’ (page 219)

### **Intercessions:**

For all who experience God’s call to service; that with Marys maternal intercession, we might give witness to the presence of that divine love in our lives.

*Lord, hear us.*

St Peter Chanel was inflamed by God’s love to proclaim the Gospel to the peoples of Oceania. May his example stir up a similar desire in the hearts of young man and women.

*Lord, hear us.*

That lay and professed Marists, by their lives of prayer, might proclaim the divine call to younger generations.

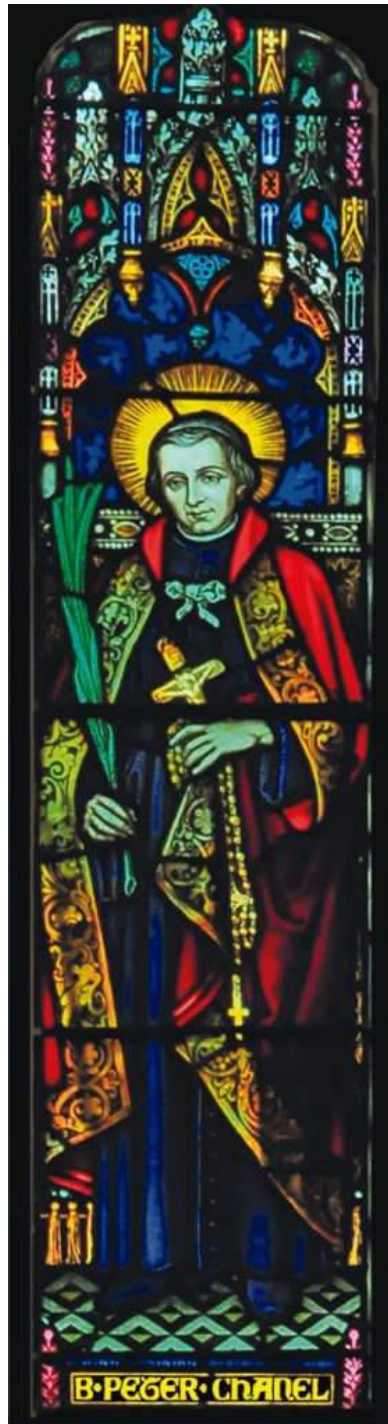
*Lord, hear us.*

We pray for the young; that inspired by the appealing beauty of divine love, many will follow the call to serve as religious and priests.

*Lord, hear us.*

### **Prayer for vocations**

(On page 2)



## **DAY SEVEN: APRIL 25**

1839. Fr Chanel received news of the death of his loved sister Françoise, a religious (Sister Saint Dominique) who was particularly dear to him.

Writing to fellow missionary Br Luzy who also knew her: ‘My sister, Sister Saint-Dominique tried to steal a march on me getting to heaven first. She died around Easter 1838.’ (page 175)

And to Fr Colin: ‘I am so convinced that the good Lord has been merciful to her... I could not weep for her.’ (page 172)

And to Fr Bolliat: ‘I cannot thank you enough for your many kindnesses to my good mother. They greatly sustain her faith and confidence in God and make the awareness of my absence less bitter for her.’ (page 223)

*Peter was himself dead by the time this letter arrived in France.*

### **Intercessions:**

We remember those who have sacrificed much, even their lives, for freedom. May young people be inspired to work disinterestedly to make our country a place of justice and peace.

*Lord, hear us.*

Peter Chanel gave his life to speak the Word where it had not been heard. Through his example and prayer may young men and women offer themselves to spread the Gospel.

*Lord, hear us.*

May our local communities become more and more “manifestations of the Love of God”: may young people be inspired to serve the Church in the

priesthood and religious life.

*Lord, hear us.*

We pray for those discerning a calling to serve the Lord and his people as priests or religious. May they grow closer to God through the sacraments and a devotion to Mary our mother.

*Lord, hear us*

### **Prayer for vocations (On page 2)**



## **DAY SIX: APRIL 24**

*12 October 1839. Letter of Fr Chanel to Fr Antoine Seon – a missionary at Belley who had already applied for the missions.*

'It is only prayer that can give life to our ministry to the poor natives. Without its help, all our efforts are sterile and in vain... It is now twenty-three months since I came among them, but only recently have I been able to speak their language at all properly.' (page 206)



### **Intercessions:**

For all Christian families, places for human and Christian formation: that they might help each other to see the beauty and the importance of the priesthood and the consecrated life.

*Lord, hear us.*

Peter Chanel first learned of God's love and call from his family. May his example and prayer inspire children to dedicate their lives to proclaiming the Gospel.

*Lord, hear us.*

We pray for parents growing their families as "communities of life and love"; that they might encourage their children to consider the priesthood and religious life.

*Lord, hear us.*

That young people will consider each Christian vocation: single life, marriage, priesthood and consecrated life and discern the path to which the Lord is calling them with the intercession of Mary our mother.

*Lord, hear us*

**Prayer for vocations** (On page 2)

## **DAY THREE: APRIL 21**

*2 May 1838. Futuna. Letter from Fr Chanel to Fr Bataillon in Wallis. On arrival by boat from Uvea, Chanel witnessed a killing between locals, there in the surf.*

'We dropped anchor at nine on Friday evening.... The attacker (in the water), instead of embracing his victim, grabbed him firmly by the arm, and waited for reinforcements.

One of these seized the victim's other arm. Then a third man coolly speared him several times in the belly. He was finally struck a blow to the forehead with an axe and let to drop. In spite of the heavy loss of blood, this mortally wounded man kept on swimming for all he was worth, but since he was swimming out backwards, he headed away from the shore, and was lost in the waves.' (page 158)



### **Intercessions:**

We pray that our community will always draw from the wellsprings of God's love in prayer, the word and the Eucharist; so that we may live a life of love and service to the gospel.

*Lord, hear us.*

St Peter Chanel drew strength from prayer, God's Word and the sacraments. May his intercession and example strengthen us all to serve our neighbour.

*Lord, hear us.*

That by meditating on the life and example of Mary, each one of us will deepen our self-offering and openness to the love of God through prayer and reflection on the Word of God and in the Eucharist.

*Lord, hear us.*

We pray that young people be open to God's love so the seed of a religious and priestly vocations, may germinate in their hearts.

*Lord, hear us*

**Prayer for vocations** (On page 2)



## **DAY FOUR: APRIL 22**

*22 May 1838 Futuna. Letter of Fr Chanel to Fr Bataillon in neighbouring Wallis. At the beginning, Marie Nizier and Chanel lived in the king's house. They had little privacy and many difficulties with the new language.*



'Brother Marie Nizier and I are still living in a corner of the king's house. The numerous wedding feasts have prevented his Majesty from getting on with building our house. I have no idea how long this provisional arrangement will last. The crowd is still all over us and we can do very little work. I am forever confusing a large number of words - despite your efforts in teaching me. The principal reason for my confusion is that there are so many letters' among the words.' (page 164)

### **Intercessions:**

For all who follow Jesus; that we might grow in love of the Lord and our response to his call will be complete and deeply joyful.

*Lord, hear us.*

Compelled by God's love, St Peter Chanel offered himself to preach the Gospel to the people of Futuna. May all priests and religious mirror that

divine love in their lives.

*Lord, hear us.*

That all young men and women will experience God's love; may they live joyful lives fully given and lived out in service of the Gospel.

*Lord, hear us.*

Through Mary's intercession; we pray that many young people will answer the Lord's call to special consecration through priestly ordination and the profession of the evangelical counsels.

*Lord, hear us.*

**Prayer for vocations** (On page 2)

## **DAY FIVE: APRIL 23**

*31 October 1839. Futuna. Letter of Fr Chanel to Bishop Devie in Belley, France. A long running feud made violent death a part of life for Chanel and Marie Nizier on the island.*

'The battle lasted but a few minutes... The king sent me to render assistance to the wounded among whom he himself numbered. ...We found... only the wounded and the dead, with a few weeping women covering themselves with the blood flowing from the wounds of their dear ones.' (page 214)

### **Intercessions:**

We pray for priests and religious; that advocating for those who suffer and are in greatest need they might inspire their faith communities to work for justice and peace.

*Lord, hear us.*

St Peter Chanel ministered to the sick and infirm on Futuna; his kindness and sacrifice showed them God's love for them and they came to know the Lord. May we follow his example of sacrificial love.

*Lord, hear us.*

For all those who suffer and are in need; that the Lord will call many young men and women to respond to serve them in faith, hope and love.

*Lord, hear us.*

In Mary, by her Fiat and the Holy Spirit's action, the word became flesh; may many young people mirror her Fiat and answer the call serve in the ministries of priesthood and religious life.

*Lord, hear us.*

**Prayer for vocations** (On page 2)

