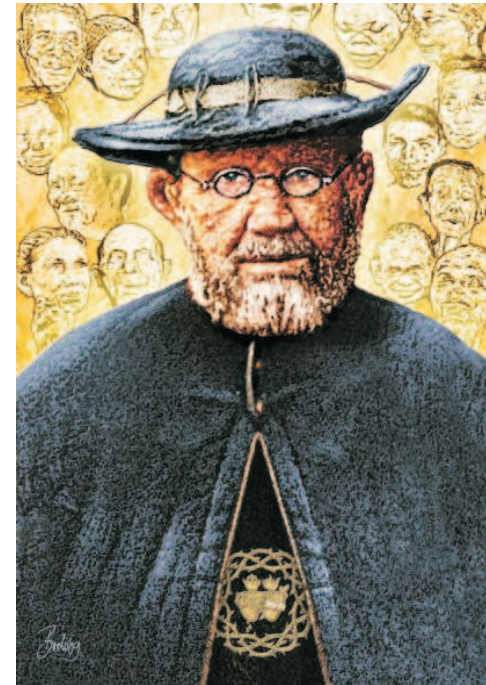


**MAY, 10**

**SAINT DAMIEN DE VEUSTER, PRIEST**  
**Memory**



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

### SECOND READING

*A reading from the Letters of Saint 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 :

Father of mercy, in Saint 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.