

I WILL FOLLOW YOU ...

Damien's Life

Here is what the young Joseph wrote to his parents from Braine-le-Comte - *"I hope that when my turn comes, I will be able to choose the path I must follow. Would it be impossible for me to follow in the footsteps of my brother Pamphile?"* (July 17, 1858)

Later in Paris he would listen to Bishop Tepano Jaussen, the Vicar Apostolic of Tahiti, who spoke about the needs of the mission in Polynesia. So, on April 25, 1861, he wrote to his parents from Paris: *"Probably he will take a few of us along. Would you be pleased if I went along?"*

Then in September of the same year, Damien left Paris and went to Louvain, making the trip with Jaussen, from whom he would hear other stories about Polynesia.

What Damien so ardently desired was given to his brother Pamphile. But he fell ill with typhus before the trip.

This offered Damien an opportunity. So, without delay, he wrote to the Superior General at this time, Euthyme Rouchouze.

When he received the Superior General's approval, Damien went running to his brother's room joyfully crying out: "I'm to go instead of you! I'm to go instead of you!"

After a brief farewell to his mother at the Marian shrine of Scherpenheuvel (Montaigu) and a few days of retreat in Paris, he departed from Bremen for Hawaii with five priests and ten sisters, a trip that would last nearly five months (October 23, 1863 to March 19, 1864)

Once in the Hawaiian Islands, during the blessing of a church on Maui he heard Bishop Maigret speak to the missionaries about the possibility of tending to the abandoned and imprisoned leprosy patients in the Kalawao colony on the island of Molokai. *Damien was the first to volunteer.*

At your feet, Jesus

Here I am with my desire to follow you and also with my hesitations.

What are my fears, my hesitations, my "false securities" or attachments that make it difficult for me to depart for where you are calling me?

Through which faces and cries are you are calling me today?

To what new paths are you inviting me in my life and pastoral service? To what new frontiers are you inviting me?

Lord, help me keep the fire of your first call alive, and like Damien, may I have the courage to say "Yes" and take the decided step to respond to the necessities of this time, leaving my fears and comfort behind.



I will follow you...

“As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him,
– I will follow you wherever you go.
Jesus answered him,
– Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.”

(Lk. 9: 57-58)

The Year of Damien - 2014

Adoration Guide

ADORATION AND THE POOR