

Saint Peter Chanel

(Priest and Martyr)

28 April



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Saint Peter Chanel was born at Cuet (France) on 12 July 1803 and died on 28 April 1841 on Futuna (South-west Pacific Ocean).

He was a diocesan priest for three years before joining the Society of Mary (Marists). He was sent out to evangelize the people on the Island of Futuna in the Pacific and is remembered for the missionary work he carried out. He learned the local language of the people (there was no Internet or audio-visual materials available in his day) and at first he was very successful in winning converts for Christ. **The local ruler Niuliki became jealous of Peter Chanel's success (especially after Niuliki's son and one of his friends became baptized)** and so he sent some men to set upon Peter Chanel and club him to death. Saint Peter Chanel is honoured as the first martyr of the Church in Oceania.

What lesson can we learn from Saint Peter Chanel's life?

What does the word evangelization mean? The biblical definition in Christianity of evangelization is the commitment to or act of publicly preaching (ministry) the Gospel with the intention to share the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. Saint Peter Chanel was so driven by the message of the Gospel that he lost his life because of his commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

The challenge Saint Peter Chanel faced is not much different today. We still have to proclaim the message of the Gospel to people who may not want to hear it.

As a Christian community we see death in the light of hope. Saint Peter Chanel is remembered for his life and death, which is part of the evangelizing story of the Church. We do not remember the nameless people who were responsible for his death. He lost his life living his baptismal promises.

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The Collect

O God, who for the spreading of your Church crowned Saint Peter Chanel with martyrdom, grant that, in these days of paschal joy, **we may so celebrate the mysteries of Christ's Death and Resurrection** as to bear worthy witness to newness of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading John 6:1-15

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, **'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?'** He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, **'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.'** One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, **'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?'** Jesus said to them, **'Make the people sit down.'** There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready;

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he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

Antiphon Mark 8: 35

Whoever loses his life for the sake of the Gospel will save it, says the Lord, alleluia.

A Hymn for the Feast of Saint Peter Chanel

A priest who proclaimed God's word
was Saint Peter Chanel,
his care for all the sick showed
that Christ did in him dwell.
As Oceania's first martyr,
he witnessed to the faith;
may we also give witness
with Christ as our Breastplate.

May we learn from this martyr
the way that we should live,
proclaiming Jesus' Gospel,
learning how to forgive.
So, like Saint Peter Chanel,
we'll win souls for the Lord,
e'en though we may encounter
the wrath of worldly sword.

Text:76.76D Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono, April 2020,

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Music links to the Scripture Readings for the Memorial

[I Have Loved You](#) - Michael Joncas

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