



**St Peter Chanel**

**NOVENA FOR VOCATIONS**

**to**

**The Society of Mary**



## 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...’

Let us pray: that the Lord of the Harvest will send many labourers into his vineyard. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

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 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)

Let us pray. Keep our eyes fixed on you Lord, who are the Lord of the Harvest. In times of discouragement, strengthen our faith in you so that we may remember the marvels you work for us. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

Lord Jesus you gave the church St Peter Chanel to Marists and the people of Oceania 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 our world. This prayer we make to The Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen

## **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)

Let us pray.

Lord, we commend to you these Nine Days of Prayer for Vocations to the Society of Mary. Grant that those whom you call may be generous in hearing and responding to this great privilege of serving you in this Society. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

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

## 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.’ (page219)

Let us pray.

Lord, 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 those whom you call to the Society of Mary.

Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

Lord Jesus you gave the church St Peter Chanel to Marists and the people of Oceania 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 our world. This prayer we make to The Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen

## 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.’ (page223)*

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

Let us pray. For our parents and families and all who foster and support vocations to priestly or religious life. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

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

## **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.’  
(page206)

Let us pray. Bless Lord our efforts, our actions and our speech.  
Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

Lord Jesus you gave the church St Peter Chanel to Marists and the people of Oceania 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 our world. This prayer we make to The Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen

## **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)

Let us pray.

Lord from the earliest days, St Peter knew the possibility of a violent death. Give courage to missionaries today who work in hostile communities and in constant danger. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

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

## **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 letter s's among the words.' (page 164)

Let us pray.

Lord we pray for immigrants and refugees: that they may find support, understanding and patience among the people who receive them. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

Lord Jesus you gave the church St Peter Chanel to Marists and the people of Oceania 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 our world. This prayer we make to The Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen

## **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)

Let us pray.

For the victims of war and violence and for those who serve them. Lord hear us.

### **Prayer for vocations**

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