



Rome, February 21, 2009

To the whole Congregation

**Announcement of the date  
of the canonization of Fr. Damien De Veuster**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with great joy that we write to tell you that the Holy Father has just announced the date of the canonization of our brother Damien. It will take place in Rome on **October 11, 2009**.

Now that we know the date, for which we have waited so long, the whole Congregation can intensify its preparation for this joyous and inspiring event, a preparation that has already begun in many places. Damien is a gift of God's goodness to the Congregation, the Church and all of humanity.

At the time of the canonization the General Governments will host three days of celebration in Rome: a vigil of prayer on **October 10, 2009** (the evening before), a festive gathering the day of the celebration at St. Peter's and a Mass of Thanksgiving on the following day, **October 12, 2009**. We will send you more information when we have the details.

As part of our interior preparation, both personal and communal, we offer two prayers, one addressed to God the Father and the other to Damien. We ask you to use them and share them with others:

**God of mercy,**  
We thank you for Damien,  
brother to all,  
father to lepers,  
child of the Sacred Hearts.

You inspired in him  
a passionate love for the life,  
health and dignity  
of those he found fallen  
by the side of the road.

Thank you, for like Jesus  
he knew how to love until the end.

Thank you, for like Mary  
he knew how to give himself without reserve.

Thank you Father, for through Damien  
you still inspire holiness  
and passion for your kingdom.

Amen

**Damien,** brother on the journey,  
happy and generous missionary,  
who loved the Gospel more than your own  
life,  
who for love of Jesus left your family, your  
homeland, your security and your dreams,

Teach us to give our lives  
with a joy like yours,  
to be lepers with the lepers of our world,  
to celebrate and contemplate the Eucharist  
as the source of our own commitment.

Help us to love to the very end  
and, in the strength of the Spirit, to  
persevere in compassion  
for the poor and forgotten  
so that we might be  
good disciples of Jesus and Mary.

Amen

May the Lord bless us with that same joy that filled the heart of Damien and may he pour forth on us his Spirit of love and courage so that we might respond generously to the gift of our brother, who died joyful to be a child of the Sacred Hearts.

Fraternally in the Sacred Hearts,



Rosa Mª Ferreiro ssc  
*Superior General*



Javier Álvarez-Ossorio ssc  
*Superior General*