

JANUARY 14

Blessed Peter Donders, Priest

Memorial

PETER DONDERS WAS BORN IN TILBURG IN HOLLAND on October 27, 1809. From his youth he felt himself called to the priesthood, but, because of the poverty of his family, his schooling was cut short so he could take up the weaver's trade of his father. This did not prevent him from teaching catechism to children in his free time. He also had a good influence on young people his same age. At the age of twenty-two, with the help of his parish priest, he entered the minor seminary of St. Michael-Gestel as a seminarian and part-time worker, thus paying for his room and board. He was ordained a priest on June 5, 1841. He was able to follow his missionary vocation, setting out for Suriname, which was then a Dutch colony.

For the next fourteen years, his base of ministry was in the city of Paramaribo where he dedicated himself to some 2,000 resident Catholics and also regularly visited the slaves of the plantations (around 8,000 of them in the Paramaribo area of some 40,000 in all of Suriname), as well as the military garrisons and the native Indians and black slaves along the rivers. In 1856, he offered himself as a volunteer for the government leprosarium of Batavia, where he remained, with the exception of a few short intervals, for the next twenty-eight years, caring for the residents bodily and spiritually. He left them, only for a few months, in 1866, when he asked to join the Redemptorists to whom Pope Pius IX had confided the Apostolic Vicariate of Suriname. He was invested with the religious habit on November 1 of that year and professed his vows on June 24, 1867.

Religious profession, in associating him with a missionary congregation, gave him a more vivid sense of the apostolic life in community, allowing him to leave Batavia more often to give himself to the conversion of the native Indians and black slaves. But the name of Donders remained bound to the leprosarium of Batavia. He died among his lepers, poor among the poor, on January 14, 1887, mourned as their benefactor and invoked as a saint. Pope John Paul II beatified him in St. Peter's on May 23, 1982, during the 250th jubilee year of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Entrance Antiphon "Come, you that are blessed by my Father," says the Lord:
"I was sick and you visited me. Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt 25: 34. 36. 40).

OPENING PRAYER

**Father, you showed your wonderful mercy toward lepers
through Blessed Peter, your priest.**

**By his example and prayers
may we serve you through our loving care
for those who are in the greatest need.**

**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. Amen.**

FIRST READING

1 John 3:14-18

We ought to lay down our lives for one another.

A reading from the First Letter of John

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them.

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Ps 112)

R. The Lord loves those who give with joy.

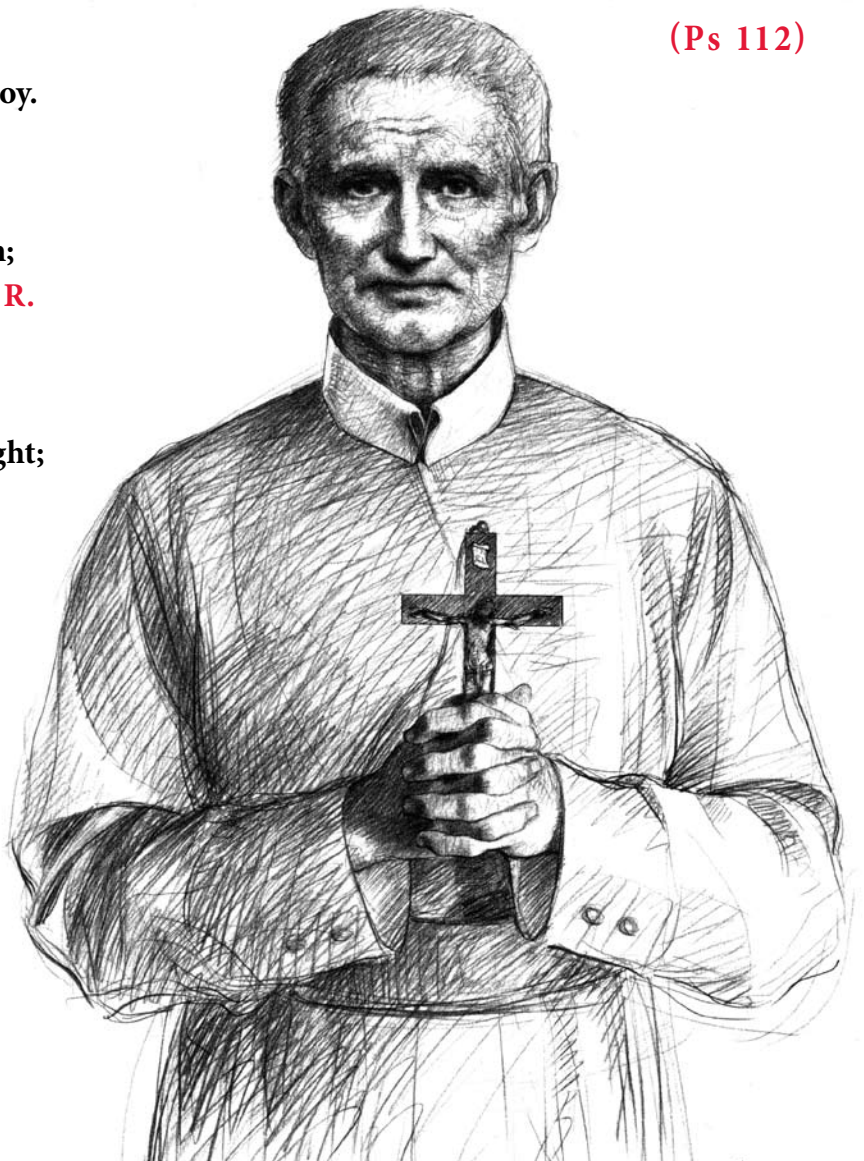
Happy the man who fears the Lord,
who takes delight in all his commands.
His children shall be powerful on earth;
the children of the upright are blessed. **R.**

Riches and wealth are in his house;
his justice stands firm for ever.
He is light in the darkness for the upright;
he is generous, merciful and just. **R.**

The good man takes pity and lends,
he conducts his affairs with honor.
The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever. **R.**

He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.
With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
he will see the downfall of his foes. **R.**

Open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory. **R.**



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Jn 13:34)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another,
just as I have loved you.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:34-40

You shall love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time, when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

God, our Father, accept our gifts
in this memorial of the infinite love of your Son,
and through the intercession of your saints,
strengthen us in generous dedication to you and to our brothers and sisters.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

**Father, all powerful and ever-living God,
We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.**

**You renew your Church in every age
through the witness of faith of your saints
with the creative power of your Spirit,
and you give us, your children,
a sure sign of your love.**

**They inspire us by their heroic lives,
and help us by their constant prayers
to be the living sign of your saving power,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**We praise you, Lord with all the angels and saints
in their song of praise.**

Communion Antiphon No one has greater love than this, to lay down
one's life for one's friends (Jn 15:13).

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**O God, you have made us companions at your table,
grant that we may imitate the example of Blessed Peter Donders,
who devoted himself to you with his whole heart
and gave himself untiringly for the good of your people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**