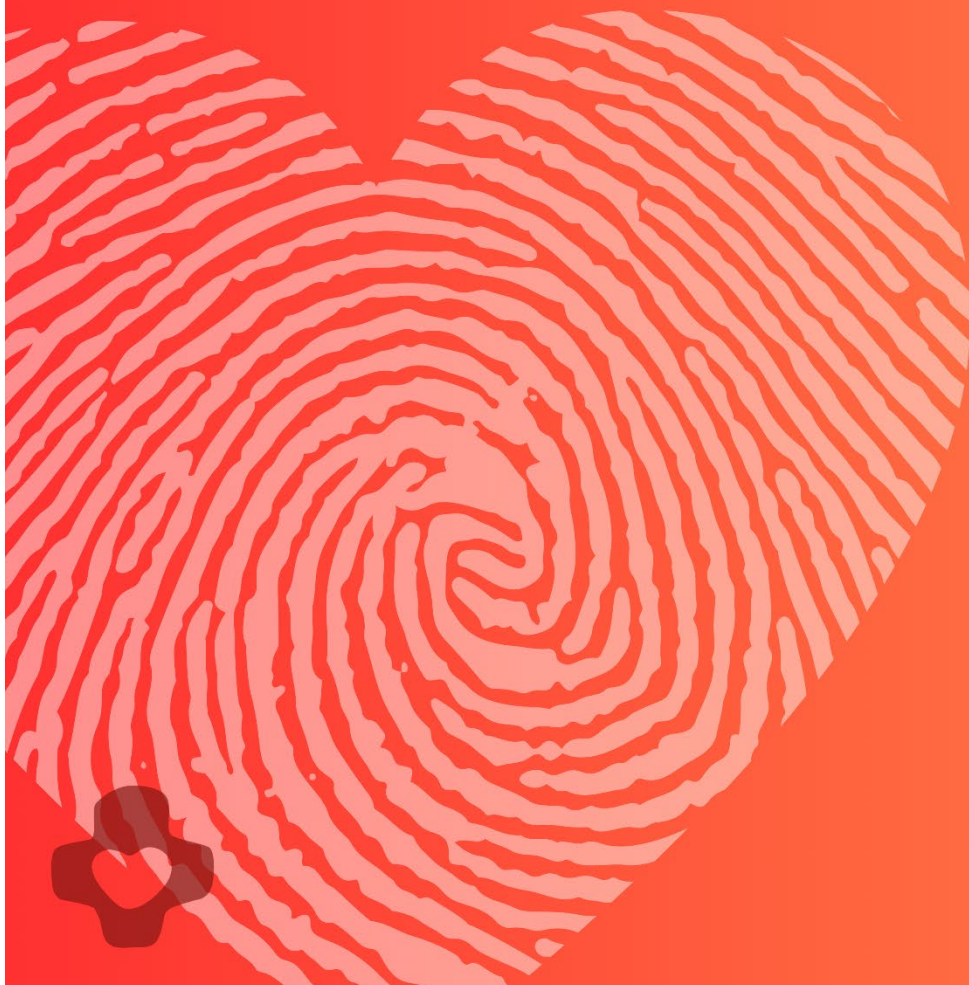


Dehon

Prophets of Love
and Servants
of Reconciliation

(Gst 7)



VIGIL ON THE DAY OF
DEHONIAN MEMORIAL



PROPHETS OF LOVE AND SERVANTS OF RECONCILIATION

(CST 7)

VIGIL ON DEHONIAN MEMORIAL DAY

| 2024 |

I. INTRODUCTION:

FR. DEHON, MISSIONARY AND MARTYR



OPENING

To make memory. To remember. To commemorate. To resonate. All these verbs are conjugated with the heart. Love is present in them. All this and much more is what we celebrate in our “Dehonian Memorial Day”. Every year, at the end of November, the month dedicated to the memory of our loved ones who are no longer with us, we celebrate the life, passion, and dedication of so many Dehonians who, out of love, have offered their lives to the Heart of Jesus. For us and for many, they are witnesses who became “Prophets of Love” and “Servants of Reconciliation”. By their example, these witnesses, our brothers, desired to be followers of the only Master for whom it is worth giving everything, even life itself, following in the footsteps of Father Leo John Dehon. Our Founder wanted to be a missionary and a martyr, but above all, he chose to be a disciple of the Heart of Jesus, loving until the end. And so, he became an example for all of us, Dehonians. Today we want to celebrate life, remembering so many witnesses who have shown us first of all the love of Him who is One, All, and True; the love of our God.

TEXT BY FATHER DEHON: NQT 45/1 – January 1925

“The ideal of my life, the desire that I nourished with tears during my youth, was *to be a missionary and a martyr*. It seems to me that this desire has been fulfilled. I am a missionary through more than a hundred missionaries whom I support in all parts of the world. I am a martyr for the outcomes that Our Lord gave to my vow of victimhood, especially from 1878 to 1884, for all the deprivations and annihilations up to the *Consummatum est*, for the rivers of blood shed on various occasions”.

Dehon

CST 7

“Father Dehon expected his religious to be prophets of love and servants of reconciliation of people and the world in Christ (cf 2 Corinthians 5:18).”

PRAYER OF OBLATION

Father,
glorify your Son raised on the cross,
so that your Son may glorify you.
In obedience of love, he accomplished everything;
now, lifted up from the earth, let him become
the heart of the world and the glory of creation.
Baptize our humanity
in the water and blood
flowing from his pierced side;
touch our heart with your love
so that in us too
the mystery of the transfixion may be accomplished.
Accept the offering of ourselves
and make use of us for the service of our others;
may the torrent of love
flowing from the Heart of your Son never be ceased,
and may all peoples drink with joy
from the springs of salvation.
Amen.

SONG for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

II. PROPHET OF LOVE: BEING A MISSIONARY



MONITION

Father Dehon said: “I am a missionary through more than a hundred missionaries whom I support in all parts of the world”. Certainly, he has done everything possible to announce the Good News through his missionaries. And many of our confreres have left everything to proclaim God’s love and mercy. They were sent to distant lands to be prophets of Love. We are moved by their life and testimony, because they have sacrificed themselves to change the world. Together with them we are called to build a new reality.

CANTICLE: Is 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

GOSPEL: Lk 10:1-12

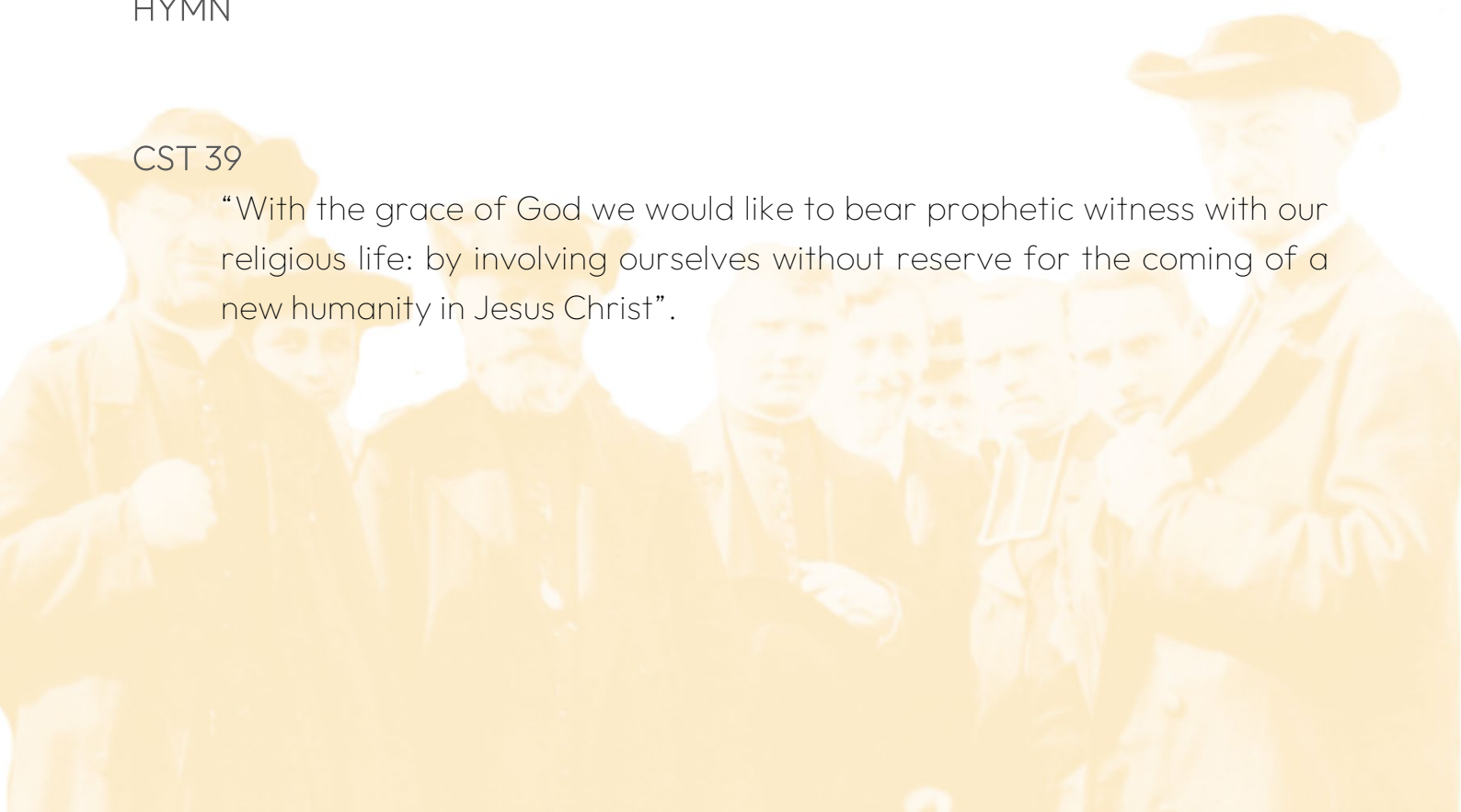
After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.”.

Meditation in silence

HYMN

CST 39

“With the grace of God we would like to bear prophetic witness with our religious life: by involving ourselves without reserve for the coming of a new humanity in Jesus Christ”.



MISSIONARY WITNESSES

Gesture

Before reading the list of witnesses, someone brings a lit candle and stands at the foot of the altar. Another person brings the Bible as a symbol of evangelization.

Let us remember those who bore witness to the Gospel, moved by the urgency of the missionary proclamation. Let us remember our brothers who, in the exercise of their pastoral ministry, revealed an ardent desire to touch every human heart with God's love. Let us pray, expressing our missionary availability:

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will"

Fr. Giovanni Brevi, tireless apostle among the fragile victims of war and courageous presence of God in the midst of suffering.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will"

Bishop Gabriel Grison, first missionary sent by Fr. Dehon to Ecuador and Congo.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will"

Fr. André Perroux, distinguished expert on every reality of the Congregation and profound lover of the Founder's.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will"

Fr. Gabriel Lux, first missionary in Congo who afterwards left for a mission in southern Brazil. A self-taught architect and dedicated parish priest, he helped build the foundations of this new mission.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will."

Fr. Wilhelm Zicke, an ardent missionary in Cameroon and founder of the Spanish mission on Fr. Dehon's recommendation.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will."

Fr. Francisco Geradts, a missionary in Brazil who promoted the Sacred Heart devotion.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will."

Bishop H. Smeets, first apostolic prefect of Bengkulu, to whom Fr. Dehon entrusted the mission in Indonesia.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will."

Fr. Franciscus van der Hoff, missionary in Mexico and faithful guardian of the development the farmers' protective economy.

All: "Here I am, O Lord; I come to do your will."

(Entities may complete this list with names of confreres they wish to remember, according to the suggestion given by Fr. Ornelas on the letter instituting the Dehonian Memorial Day:

«May the celebration of this day become an occasion to encounter and remember those people who have marked the history of Province/Region/District and Congregation, or of a specific work or sector of our mission"»

TESTIMONY

"It is difficult to tell you what the secret of missionary life is. I believe it is Christ, mysteriously present in the person of the missionary. Christ on the tongue, Christ in the heart, Christ at the altar, Christ at the school. Christ in the city, Christ in the souls, Christ among the least and the great, Christ loved and blessed in the hard struggle of the spirit and the flesh. Finding the mold to make a missionary is difficult. I seek the protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ. When taken seriously, missionary life is a heavy cross. I strive to always return to supernatural principles... Therefore, prepare yourselves in holiness, peace, and balanced faculties. But above all, pray with humility. Dear young people, missionaries are crazy for Christ. They live like Paul amidst all dangers and temptations. Yet, they have Christ who comforts them." (Servant of God, Father Bernardo Longo, to the students of Bologna, August 18, 1951).

Silence

PRAYER

God, our Father,
Lord of the vineyard,
You call us to be messengers of the Gospel,
and to proclaim your Good News throughout the world.
You are with us, inspiring our hearts and minds.
You never forsake us.
You are our assurance and support when difficulties come.
Give us courage to preach
your message of peace
in this needy world
corrupted with lies and mediocrity,
conformism and evil.
Lord, be the comfort
and the consolation of your children in distress.
May we be “Prophets of Love”
and know how to announce, in word and deed,
your mercy and tenderness
always given to us.
Amen.

HYMN

III. SERVANTS OF RECONCILIATION: BEING A MARTYR



MONITION

"I am a martyr for the outcomes that Our Lord gave to my vow of victimhood, especially from 1878 to 1884, for all the deprivations and annihilations up to the Consummatum est, for the rivers of blood shed on various occasions," says our Founder. A martyr is a witness to the Gospel and to Jesus himself who gave his life for each of us. Being a martyr is to do everything that God wants; it is to abandon oneself into his hands; it is to generate life; it is to take on weaknesses and announce that with God no one should be afraid. Ultimately, it is to be a Servant of Reconciliation, knowing and believing that forgiveness creates a new humanity. Many have marked their lives by following Jesus and by offering themselves to others in pursue of a new civilization.

CANTICLE: Phil 2:6-11 – Christ, servant of God

Though he was in the form of God,
Jesus did not deem equality with God
something to be grasped at.

Rather, he emptied himself
and took the form of a slave,
being born in the likeness of men.

He was known to be of human estate,
and it was thus that he humbled himself,
obediently accepting even death,
death on a cross!

Because of this,
God highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
above every other name,

So that at Jesus' name
every knee must bend
in the heavens, on the earth,
and under the earth,

and every tongue proclaim
to the glory of God the Father:
Jesus Christ is the Lord!

GOSPEL: Jn 15:5-13

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends".

Meditation in silence

HYMN

CST 21

"We are strengthened in our vocation by contemplating the Heart of Christ, the privileged symbol of this love. Indeed, we are called to enter into this movement of redemptive love, by giving ourselves, with and as Christ, for our brothers and sisters".

MISSIONARY WITNESSES

Gesture

Before reading the list of witnesses,
someone brings a lit candle and stands at the foot of the altar.
Another person brings a palm branch symbolizing martyrdom.



Let us remember those who offered their lives for Christ. We ask their intercession for peace in countries at war, for healing of wounds caused by hatred, and for reconciliation of every human heart in God. Facciamo memoria di chi ha offerto la vita per Cristo. Let us pray, expressing our oblation:

All: "For Him I live, for Him I die."

In 1936 (Spain), the testimony of blood given by our proto martyr Blessed Juan María de la Cruz García Méndez, in the context of the Spanish civil war.

All: "For Him I live, for Him I die."

In 1941 (Germany), the offering of vulnerability for the love of Christ given by Fr. Franz St. Loh, in the context of the persecution against the Church, during the Second World War.

All: "For Him I live, for Him I die."

In 1942 (Luxembourg), the life surrender in the Spirit of our confreres Fr. Joseph B. Stoffels and Fr. Nicolas A. Wampach, killed by gas in concentration camps of the Nazi regime.

All: "For Him I live, for Him I die."

In 1944 (Italy), the last blessing given by Fr. Nicola Martino Capelli as he offered his blood during the Second World War.

All: "For Him I live, for Him I die."

From 1944 to 1945 (Indonesia), the oblation of life given by 11 Dutch missionaries who died at the Japanese concentration camp in the island of Banka: Fr. Petrus M. Cobben, Fr. Andreas Gebbing, Fr. Wilhelmus F. Hoffmann, Fr. Franciscus B. Hofstad, Fr. Teodorus Th. Kappers, Fr. Isidorus G. Mikkers, Fr. Gerardus

Matthaeus Schulte, Fr. Theodorus Wilfridus van der Wef, Fr. Petrus N. van Eijk, Fr. Franciscus J.B van Iersel, Fr. Henricus N. van Oort.

All: *"For Him I live, for Him I die."*

In 1945 (Belgium), the offering of life by Fr. Kristiaan Hubertus Muermans who was killed for resisting injustice, during the Second World War II

All: *"For Him I live, for Him I die."*

In 1959 (Cameroon), the life surrender for the love of the people of God by our French missionary confreres Fr. Héberlé, Fr. Musslin, Fr. Sarron, who were killed in the turmoil during the fight for Cameroonian independence.

All: *"For Him I live, for Him I die."*

Between 1961 and 1964 (Congo) the extremely cruel death of 28 Belgian, Luxembourgish, Dutch, and an Italian missionaries, persecuted and killed in the context of the Simba revolution: Bishop Joseph A. Wittebols, Fr. Amour J. Aubert, Fr. Karel J. V. R. Bellinckx, Fr. Hermanus W. Bisschop, Br. Martinus Damianus Brabers, Fr. Clément F. Burnotte, Fr. Joseph Ch. B. Conrad, Fr. Johannes B. de Vries, Fr. Henricus D. Hams, Fr. Leo L.-M. Janssen, Br. Jozef Andries Laureys, Fr. Aquilino Bernardo Longo, Fr. Jacques J.V. Moreau, Fr. Gerardus St. Nieuwkamp, Br. Jozef Alois Paps, Fr. Arnoldus W. Schouenberg, Br. Wilhelmus Arnulfus Schouenberg, Fr. Johannes A. Slenter, Fr. Josephus J. Tegels, Fr. Franciscus Th. M. ten Bosch, Fr. Jean I. Trausch, Fr. Christian J.B. Vandael, Fr. Jeroom G. Vandemoere, Fr. Petrus J. van den Biggelaar, Br. Henrik Jozef Vanderbeek, Fr. Henricus B. van der Vegt, Fr. Henricus J.E. Verberne, Fr. Wilhelmus P. Vranken, and also Blessed Anwarite Nangapeta (1964), who was formed in the path of Dehonian oblation under the spiritual direction of the bishop and martyr Joseph A. Wittebols scj.

All: *"For Him I live, for Him I die."*

In 1975 (Brazil), the loving dedication of Fr. Paolo Punt, Dutch missionary who was killed for defending the truth and protecting fishermen, the poor and vulnerable people.

All: *"For Him I live, for Him I die."*

TESTIMONY

“There are many martyrs in the Church today, many, because for confessing the Christian faith, they are banished from society or end up in prison... there are many. Vatican Council II reminds us that “martyrdom makes the disciple like his master, who willingly accepted death for the salvation of the world and through it he is conformed to him by the shedding of blood. Therefore the Church considers martyrdom the highest gift and supreme proof of love” (cf. *LG* 42). Imitating Christ and with his grace, martyrs turn the violence of those who reject the proclamation into the supreme proof of love, which goes as far as the forgiveness of their own persecutors. This is interesting: martyrs always forgive their persecutors. Stephen, the first martyr, died as he prayed, “Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do”. Martyrs pray for their persecutors.

Although martyrdom is asked of only a few, “nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men. They must be prepared to make this profession of faith even in the midst of persecutions, which will never be lacking to the Church, in following the way of the cross” (*ibid.*, 42). But, were these persecutions something of those times? No, no: today. Today there are persecutions of Christians throughout the world, many, many. There are more martyrs today than in the early times. Martyrs show us that every Christian is called to the witness of life, even when this does not go as far as the shedding of blood, making a gift of themselves to God and to their brethren, in imitation of Jesus.”

(Pope Francis, General Audience, 19 April 2023).

Francis

Silence

PRAYER

We give you thanks, Father of mercy
for having called us to be “Servants of Reconciliation”
of your Kingdom among of the poor and the needy,
proclaiming your Gospel of Love.
Through the oblation of our lives
we consecrate ourselves to the Heart of Christ
and, professing the *Ecce Venio* and *Ecce Ancilla*
we offer our hearts to you in the service of your people.

May the Church be an instrument of reconciliation and peace,
and may the seed sown by our testimony
bear fruits for the Civilization of Love.
Grant us the grace
to always be rooted in you
and carry with courage the confession of your name.
Amen.

HYMN



IV. CONCLUSION: THIS DAY OF GOD

CST 147

By making our lives conform to these Constitutions as our profession requires, we shall be confirmed in fidelity to our vocation and our mission as Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Our religious life shares in the evolution, the trials and the searching of the world and of the Church.

And so our life is constantly called into question. We are bound to re-think and to find new expression for its mission, its forms of presence and of witness.

Assured of God's unfailing faithfulness, rooted in the love of Christ, we know that the choice of religious life, to stay vital, requires faithful encounter with the Lord in prayer, continuing conversion to the Gospel, availability of heart and attitude to welcome **This Day of God**".

MARTYRDOM TODAY

"There is a non-bloody 'martyrdom' which is equally significant [...]: this is the silent and heroic witness of so many Christians who live the Gospel without compromise, doing their duty and dedicating themselves generously to the service of the poor. This martyrdom of ordinary life constitutes a particularly important witness in the secularized society of our time. It is the peaceful battle of love which every Christian, like Paul, must fight without flagging: the race to spread the Gospel that involves us until our death. May the Virgin Mary, Queen of Martyrs and Star of Evangelization, help us in our daily witness"

(Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, 28 October 2007).

Benedictus PP XVI

CLOSING PRAYER:

Extracted and adapted from the Encyclical "*Dilexit nos*", 220

Lord Jesus, grant that your Sacred Heart
may continue to pour forth
streams of living water
that can heal the hurt we have caused,
strengthen our ability
to love and serve others,
and inspire us to journey together
towards a just, solidary and fraternal world.
Until that day
when we will rejoice in celebrating together
the banquet of the heavenly kingdom
in the presence of the risen Lord,
who harmonizes all our differences
in the light that radiates perpetually
from his open heart.
Amen.

Benediction HYMN

Benediction with THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

