

# **Novena to St Peter Chanel**

**for Vocations to the Society of Mary**



*For use at Morning or Evening Prayer  
of the Church, or for private use*

It is a long standing tradition in the Society of Mary to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life during the nine days leading up to the Feast of St Peter Chanel. You are invited to pray during this novena for Vocations to the Society of Mary. One suggestion for how to use this resource would be to have one person read the quotation, share the intercessions one by one, and conclude by saying one of the following two prayers together.

*All quotes are taken from: SAINT PETER CHANEL S.M. First Martyr of the South Pacific by PHILIP GRAYSTONE S.M.*

### **Prayer for Vocations**

Lord Jesus, you gave to the Church, the Society of Mary and the people of Oceania, St Peter Chanel, 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 the world. This prayer we make to the Father in Your name through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Prayer for Vocations by Pope Francis**

Lord of the Harvest, bless young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call. Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things. Inspire all of your disciples to mutual love and giving, for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people. Instill those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you. Unite us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may cooperate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. Amen.

## April 19th: The Desire for Mission

Years later, Peter was to reveal that his intention to enter the Society encountered great opposition from at least one of his friends, who urged the uncertainty of the whole enterprise and the shame and regret that he would share if the venture failed! But Peter's mind was made up; one who knew him well said that he looked to the religious life as a means of dedicating himself to the missionary apostolate, and if this is perhaps an over-simplification, at least it is safe to say that his ardent desire for the missions was a key reason for his decision. (*Graystone, St Peter Chanel Pg 8-9*)

### Intercessions

For all Marists: that by forming a “culture of vocations” in our communities we will help young people respond generously to God’s loving call. *Lord, hear us.*

From the island of Futuna, Peter Chanel encouraged the young people of the college of Belley to support the spread of the Gospel. May he intercede for college and university students, that from among them many will hear and answer the call to Marist life. *Lord, hear us.*

For those young people sensing God’s call to the priesthood or religious life: that they might find the support and encouragement they need to respond positively to His invitation. *Lord, hear us.*

That with the help of Mary, Marists may create conditions in our communities that free young people to say “yes” in response to God’s loving call. *Lord, hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

## April 20th: The Joy of a Saint

Among the tributes paid to Peter by those who knew him well at that time, the testimony of Marie, the girl who looked after his room, is worthy of mention. She had much to say about his kindness, consideration and habits of prayer; she added: "He was always laughing; during the holidays he went about the corridors and staircases singing; he had a beautiful voice and it was a pleasure to listen to him". Throughout his life his voice excited admiration; it was to stand him in good stead in Oceania. (*Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 10*)

### Intercessions

Risen Christ, in this time of Easter joy, gladden our hearts to know that you are with us. Bring joy to our lives, our ministries, and our Marist vocation. *Lord hear us.*

Lord God, as St Peter Chanel went to the 'ends of the earth' to make you known, may we be open to sharing the Marist spirit with all those we meet. *Lord hear us.*

Help us to be people of prayer so that your light may shine through us and bring joy and hope to the hearts of all people. *Lord hear us.*

Lord God, we pray that many people will seek to be part of the work of Mary as members of the Society of Mary. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

## April 21th: A Teacher of the Faith

One can only imagine the rigours of the voyage, including the rounding of Cape Horn in a small sailing ship, a manoeuvre which took nearly two months. Peter, with his great gift of meeting people and working with them, spent much time with the crew, who in the beginning had regarded the missionaries with deep distrust. Along with Pierre Bataillon he gave reading lessons to those who needed and wanted them; from this it was but a short step to what we would call reconversion and in the end many of them made their Easter duties. *(Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 16)*

### Intercessions

Lord of the harvest, we ask you today to call many young people to serve you. May they give witness to you through the living of their Christian vocation. *Lord hear us.*

Risen Christ, fill our hearts with confidence, so that we can share fully in the victory that your suffering, death and resurrection has won for us. *Lord hear us.*

Lord, as St Peter Chanel worked to bring the Gospel to the Pacific, renew in us a sense of being truly missionary. *Lord hear us.*

Lord God, we pray that you place within the hearts of young people the desire to follow you as priests and religious. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

# April 22th: Dependency on God

The missionaries of Wallis and Futuna were left in virtual isolation. If they had shown striking courage in leaving France for a voyage literally into the unknown, they displayed nothing less than heroism in taking this further leap into the dark. Over and above the formidable language difficulty and the problems of food and shelter, was the total insecurity of their situation. No friendly flag flew over these islands; the help so often provided to missionaries by colonial powers was thousands of miles away. The islanders were warlike people, accustomed to bloodshed. What would their attitude be when they realised that the newcomers were precisely the European missionaries of whom they were strongly suspicious?

*(Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 21-22)*

## Intercessions

Lord may the unity and charity that we show to each other as Marists strengthen our witness to others. *Lord hear us.*

Be with all Marists who suffer in any way. Help them to seek to live as Mary did, and witness to the world the saving power of God. *Lord hear us.*

Lord, as St Peter Chanel was nourished by the Eucharist and given strength to live his vocation, may we too deepen our love of you in the Eucharist. *Lord hear us.*

Loving God, be with young people as they discern their calling in life. Help them to know that you care for them, and wish to guide them in their lives. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

# April 23th: Saint and Missionary

For a while the missionaries seem to have lodged with the king; they must have had a very abrupt introduction to that sharing in the common life of the islanders which in future would be, to a great extent, their daily lot. Niuliki was as good as his word and made sure they were supplied with food and drink, though the unaccustomed diet of the islanders, and the unfamiliar timing of their meals must have added still more to the feeling of the newcomers that they had entered a completely new world. Nowadays we talk about culture shock, but probably there are few places remaining on the face of the earth where one could experience such a violent change of life as those Marists did in those weeks.

*(Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 24 )*

## **Intercessions.**

Give us courage to face the uncertain and the unknown. Help us to be like Mary and trust in you no matter what the situation. *Lord hear us.*

As St Peter Chanel was sent forth by his brothers to the Oceania mission, may we support each other in community and in ministry. *Lord hear us.*

Risen Lord, may we be people who are true witnesses that you are indeed risen from the dead. May our lives show to those around us that good can overcome evil and hope can overcome despair. *Lord hear us.*

Lord Jesus, you alone are the Lord of the harvest, send labourers to your vineyard. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

## April 24th: The Joy of the Gospel

The followers of Niuliki... gathered one day near the Marists' hut in Alo to hear one of their gods speaking through the mouth (as they put it) of one of his devotees. It was, as the good Brother observes, especially in time of war that they felt the need of such encouragement. The speech, loud and animated, was clearly audible inside Peter's dwelling. To counteract this pagan exhibition the missionaries started to sing "a deux voix" the *Salve Regina*, followed by the *Inviolata*. Their voices must have been remarkably strong, for after a while a few of the islanders, despite their fear of the god who they thought was addressing them, came over to ask the Marists to continue their singing, and at the end of the harangue a great number joined them. (*Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 24*)

### Intercessions

Lord, may we learn from your mother Mary who was the one who heard the word of God and kept it. *Lord hear us.*

Jesus, risen from the dead, help us to accept your will for our lives. May we see hope in our suffering, and joy in our sadness. *Lord hear us.*

As St Peter Chanel said 'yes' to your will for him, help us to trust in you, and be open to what you call us to do. *Lord hear us.*

God, give us today a renewed joy in serving you, and give us the courage to call others to Marist life. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*



## April 25th: A Saint who Perseveres

He had been on the island for over four months. Daily he and Brother Marie Nizier had faithfully practised the routine of prayer prescribed by their rule; on most days he had celebrated Mass; in February with his companion he had carried out the liturgy of Candlemas Day and Ash Wednesday. Quite often the islanders had been present at these acts of worship, though without understanding them, since Peter had no means of explaining anything. His efforts at peacemaking had largely gone unheeded. Very little - except what we might nowadays term wishful thinking - occurs in his diary about direct efforts at evangelisation. Quite simply, he was completely handicapped by lack of communication, and it must have been extremely discouraging. Small wonder that he felt the need of consulting ...his Marist fellow-priests. (*Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 29*)

### Intercessions

Give us the grace Lord to show mercy and compassion to others. May the witness in our own lives to compassion and mercy inspire others to follow you. *Lord hear us.*

Heavenly Father, may we who bear the name of Mary, be of one mind and heart, and always rejoice in your saving love. *Lord hear us.*

Lord, as we seek to revitalise our communities, our ministries and our own vocations, guide and strengthen us through your Holy Spirit. *Lord hear us.*

Lord Jesus, we know that you alone are the Lord of the harvest, send labourers into this part of your vineyard. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

## April 26th: Daily Faithfulness

...[E]xcept when illness prevented him, Peter was offering his daily Mass, often very early in the morning, so as to be undisturbed. At other times the local people were often present - indeed it was impossible to prevent them when the missionaries had no house of their own - and some ideas about the new religion must have started to take form in their minds. This was especially so on great Feasts like Pentecost, when Peter and Brother Marie-Nizier contrived a Sung Mass, in their improvised chapel (they were still in the king's house) which they had decorated as well as possible for the occasion. The islanders, along with the king, came in great numbers and were very impressed. The crucifix and (later) the pictures which Peter hung on the walls caused great amazement.

*(Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 31 )*

### Intercessions

Loving God, give us hearts faithful to prayer, and help us to pray constantly for vocations. *Lord hear us.*

Lord, be with young people as they discern their calling in life, and stir up within them a sense of mission, and zeal for your kingdom. *Lord hear us.*

Be with all families and help them to be places of love, nurturing, and peace. Give parents the grace to encourage vocations from their children. *Lord hear us.*

Lord God, thank you for the life of St Peter Chanel . As he trusted in you through his difficulties, may we always draw upon your grace. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

## April 27th: Joy of Fraternity

Besides the boundless personal joy which Peter and Marie-Nizier felt at the arrival of their confreres, it made a great difference to their own standing among the islanders... For the next few days the visitors toured the island; Peter, always eager to assert his neutrality between the two factions, took five of them to stay a few days in Singave, where, for the first time, he had the happiness of celebrating Mass, along with his confreres. While there they made the acquaintance of King Vanai, with whom they had breakfast. The newcomers had apparently brought some musical instruments with them; an organ (presumably a very small one) and an accordion are mentioned. These created a great impression. Music was played at the Mass on Whit Sunday, but the joy of the feast was marred some what by the departure of Peter's confreres later that day.

*(Graystone, St Peter Chanel, Pg. 31 )*

### Intercessions

Lord Jesus Christ, in this season when we celebrate your Resurrection, help us to proclaim you as Lord through our words and actions.

*Lord hear us.*

Loving Father, we thank you for our own vocations. Help us to grow in holiness and love for those we serve. *Lord hear us.*

Lord, through the intercession of your mother Mary, may many young men and women desire to serve you as Marists. *Lord hear us.*

As we celebrate the feast of St Peter Chanel tomorrow, renew in us a love for our own vocation, and give us the courage to call others to Marist life. *Lord hear us.*

*Prayer for Vocations*

**Born:** 12 July 1803 at Cuet, Ain, France

**Ordained:** 15 July 1827, France

**Professed:** 24 September 1836, France

**Died:** 28 April 1841 at Poi, Uvea, Futuna

**Body:** Recovered and taken back to France in 1842

**Decree of Martyrdom:** 25 November 1888 by Pope Leo XIII

**Beatified:** 17 November 1889 by Pope Leo XIII

**Canonized:** 12 June 1954 by Pope Pius XII

**Relics:** Returned to The Island of Futuna in 1977



**Societas Mariæ**