

The Japanese Martyrs Saints Paul Miki & Companions

Paul Miki, Soan John de Goto and James Kisai were the first of a long line of Jesuits who gave their lives in a literal imitation of their crucified Lord. Miki was also the first Japanese religious to be martyred.

The initial growth of Christianity after Francis Xavier's 1549 arrival in Japan led to opposition from Japanese leaders who feared that the introduction of Christianity was the first step in Spain's effort to conquer their country, just as the Spanish had already conquered the Philippines. Japan's ruler, Hideyoshi, banished all foreign ministers of religion and in 1596 ordered the arrest of all Franciscans who had come to Japan from the Philippines three years earlier. Along with the Franciscans, police arrested the Jesuits Paul Miki, a scholastic, and James Kisai, a brother, and John de Goto, a catechist who was in the process of entering the Society.

Miki came from an affluent family near Osaka and became a Christian when his whole family converted. He entered the Jesuit-run seminary in Azuchi when he was 20 and then joined the Society two years later. He was an eloquent speaker who was very successful in drawing Buddhists to Christian faith. He was only a few months from being ordained when he was arrested. James Kisai just happened to be in the same community when the police arrived. Although educated by a Buddhist, Kisai was later baptized and married a woman who had also converted. She subsequently returned to Buddhism. Kisai then moved to Osaka where he joined the Jesuits as a brother, probably in 1596.

John de Goto, on the other hand, was born of Christian parents that moved to Nagasaki. He was living in the Jesuit community in Osaka and working as a catechist while attempting to join the Society. De Goto, Kisai and Miki were arrested on Dec. 9 and then taken to Kyoto where they were imprisoned along with six Franciscans and 15 tertiaries. The 24 prisoners were taken into the public square and condemned to be executed by crucifixion. The prisoners left the following day for a 600 mile month-long walk to Nagasaki where they would be killed. Along the way Miki and a Franciscan priest preached to the crowds.

The prisoners were taken to a hill outside the city where they saw crosses lying on the ground waiting for them. They sang a Te Deum, the traditional song of thanksgiving, when they saw how they were to die. Finally soldiers pierced each prisoner's chest with a lance. The hill on which they died became known as "Martyrs' Hill."

ESKER REDEMPTORISTS



**January 31st – February 6th
The struggle of faith**

Jesus said: "I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country". The word prophet conjures up the image of someone who foretells the future, a bit like a fortune-teller. No! A prophet is someone who gets to the deepest reality of human life and is able to proclaim that this deepest reality will come to the surface sooner or later and calls us to make it sooner. Generally people don't like to hear about these deepest realities because they get used to the way things are. A good example of this is: the deepest reality of marriage is that it is a sacrament, a source of Christ's presence in and salvation of the world we live in. Couples need to do a lot more to bring their love to that pitch. Every home is a Domestic Church, a sacred place. Every faith community is the living Body of Christ. We have a lot of change to work on.

The Presentation of the Lord - 2nd February

The Feast of the Presentation, often called Candlemas, commemorates the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the presentation of Christ in the temple, which took place 40 days after his birth as Jewish law required. Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem because every firstborn child was to be dedicated to the Lord. They also went to sacrifice a pair of doves or two young pigeons, showing that Mary and Joseph were poor. Once in the temple, Jesus was purified by the prayer of Simeon, in the presence of Anna the prophetess. Simeon, upon seeing the Messiah, gave thanks to the Lord, singing a hymn now called the Nunc Dimittis:



Lord, now you let your servant go in peace,
your word has been fulfilled:
My own eyes have seen the salvation,
which you have prepared
in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.
Simeon told Mary,
“Behold, this child is set
for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that is spoken against, (and
a sword will pierce through your own

soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." Simeon thus foreshadowed the crucifixion and the sorrows of Mary at seeing the death of her Son.

The Feast of the Presentation is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church.

Traditionally the term “Candlemas” (or Candle Mass) referred to the practice whereby a priest on 2 February blessed candles for use throughout the year, some of which were distributed to the faithful for use in the home.

Within the Roman Catholic Church, since the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, this feast has been referred to as the Feast of Presentation of the Lord, with references to candles and the purification of Mary de-emphasised in favor of the Prophecy of Simeon. Pope John Paul II connected the feast day with the renewal of religious vows.

Weekly Masses Special Remembrance

Mon. 1st Feb. to Sun. 7th Feb. 2010

Mass at 8.00 and 10.00 each morning, Monday to Friday, is offered for all those whose names are on the list of Mass intentions. If you wish to have someone mentioned specifically - for an anniversary, a recent death, an illness - please leave the name at the Reception Office.

In the Novena Masses on Saturday at 8.00 and 10.00 we remember especially all those who have sent in petitions and those attending the Novena.

Wed. 10 am: Margaret & Thomas Rabbitte R.I.P.

Thur. 10 am: Pat Kennedy R,I,P

Sun. 8 am: Jim Kelly R.I.P.

Sun 11 am: Renee Doherty R.I.P.

THE SICK

Please pray for
Fr. Brian Foley,
Fr. Seán Mullin,
Mossie Whelan.

Feast Days of the coming week.

Mon: St. Brigid.
Tues: The Presentation
of the Lord.
Wed: St. Blaise
Fri: St. Agatha.
Sat: The Japanese Martyrs

Wednesday, 3rd February.

The Blessing Of St. Blaise.

Through the intercession of St Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from all ailments of the throat and from every other illness: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(The blessing may be had after the 8 & 10 am Masses).

During the coming week:

In The Youth Village:

Feb 1: Corrandrum N.S. (Confirmation)

Feb 2: Cooloo/Moylough N.S. (Confirmation)

Feb 3: Mountbellew N.S. (Confirmation)

Feb 4: Newtown N.S. (Confirmation)

Feb 5: Newcastle N.S. (Confirmation)

Parish Missions & Novenas in Ireland & Abroad.

*Please share in this Redemptorist
Apostolic Work by praying for its success.*

**Coming soon!
Galway Cathedral
Solemn Novena to Our Mother
of Perpetual Help
FEBRUARY 8th-16th**