



THE CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY (SS.CC.)

SEPTEMBER 2009



FR. STAN KOLASA, S.S.C.C.
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Dear Friends of Sacred Hearts Missions,

The excitement and anticipation about the upcoming canonization in Rome of Blessed Father Damien of Molokai on October 11th is really growing. For all of us who have been so deeply influenced by the life of this Holy Man, it is truly a great time in history.

A young Damien de Veuster gave his life in service to those who had the disease of leprosy, (today known as Hansen's Disease). Not only

had they been diagnosed with a dreaded sickness, one which in those days struck so much fear in people, these poor afflicted souls were torn from their families and loved ones, never again to return to the lives they knew. Damien went to minister to them and with them. It is often remarked that he *"became one with them"* when he contracted the disease himself. However, we know that it wasn't the illness that made him one with them, but *his unconditional love for them and his openness to be loved by them in return*. That sentiment is not only one that must be at the heart of all missionaries, but should be at the heart of all of humanity, *to love thy neighbor*.



POPE BENEDICT XVI APPEARS BEFORE A PAINTING OF DAMIEN IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE



At our Sacred Hearts Retreat House and Spirituality Center in Wareham, Massachusetts we are honoring the big event in our own way. Many cannot go to Rome for the canonization but want to join in the celebration. So, we are planning a day filled with wonderful festivities—an outdoor Mass, large screen TVs showing the canonization and some showing DVDs of the life of Father Damien. There will be music by children's choirs from different schools and participation by many groups of people—so many who love the environment and want to share that love for the earth and its people. Naturally there will be foods of all kinds and fun things for children of all ages.

Why do something like this? Because we can each do something... and to do something together makes it richer for us all. Doing what you can do makes a difference. Even if it doesn't change the world for all time...it changes a part of the world for a little of the time. We can all make a difference if, with our hearts, we strive to do what we are able to do.

All God's blessings .

Fr. Stan

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Director of Development



St. Damien of Molokai



A memory from Fr. Stan...

A horrendous tragedy occurred when a beautiful wife, mother and activist for the youth was murdered as she slept. The city was in shock. Our peace was shattered by the sounds of shots we couldn't hear but could feel in our hearts.

What to do? Who should do? I didn't know.

But, God knew. So I called the people to church. Many came, so many that the church overflowed into the streets. And, we prayed. We cried together and we prayed. We walked in the streets together and we prayed.

We couldn't do anything to take away the pain or undo the tragedy, but we could carry it together, hand in hand, hearts joined, tears flowing in a common stream. We couldn't do everything, but we did something together and, for the moment, we felt our strength and not only our weakness.