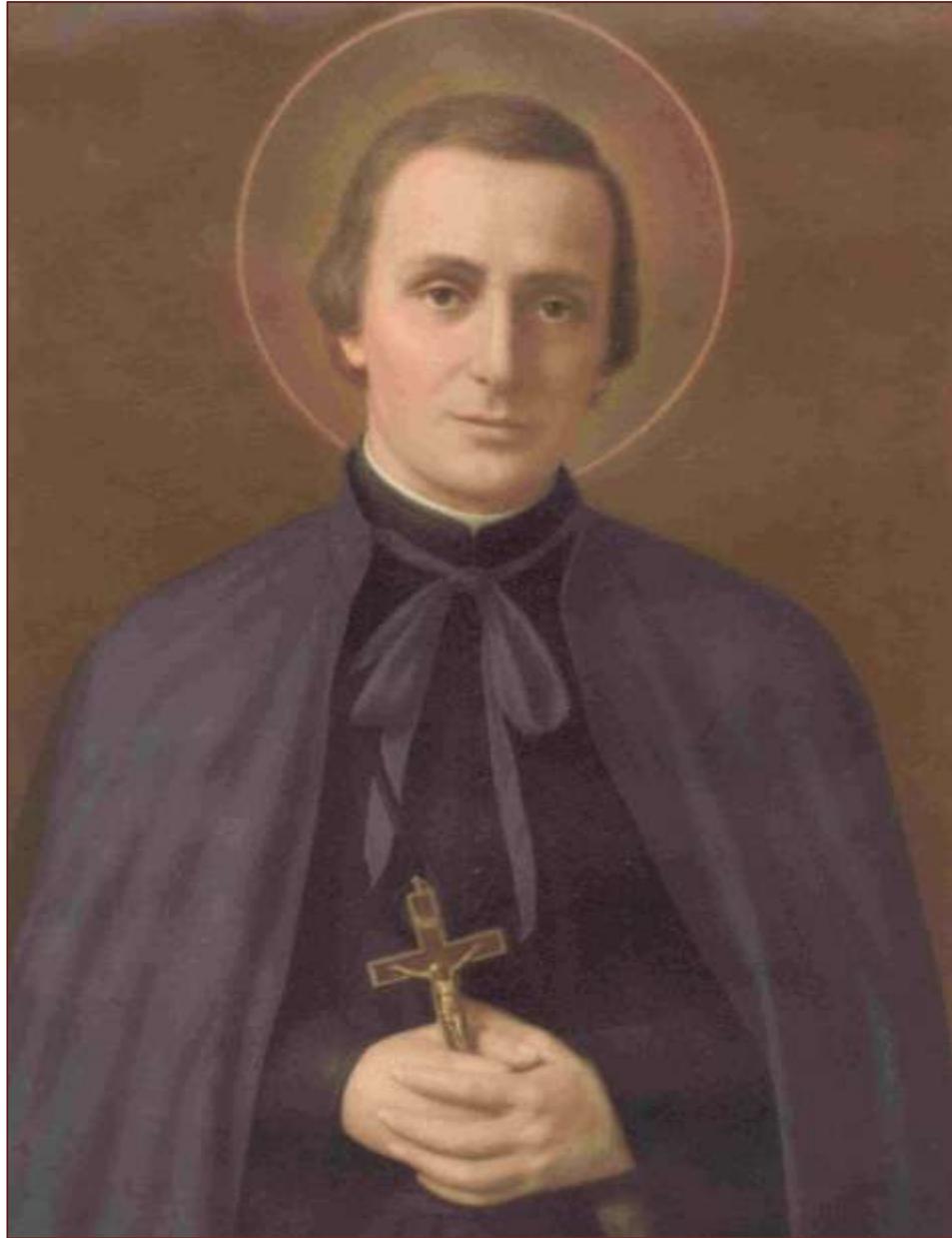


Novena for Vocation
to



St Peter Chanel
(1803 - 1841)

Day 1 - Friday 20th April

14. To Abbé Martin Gache, 21 September 1836 (a seminarian who had been on the staff of the Belley College when Peter was a pupil there in 1823-1824)

"I am very much afraid that I shall not get to see you again, as we are so terribly busy trying to hurry on our preparation for departure. We are due to leave Le Havre on 25 October. We are in the midst of a short retreat that finishes on Saturday. Bishop Pompallier is here with all the other Lyons Marists. We are going to call on God and the Blessed Virgin to witness to our desire to be pleasing to them by doing all they ask of us. Pray - do not cease, I beseech you to pray – and to have prayers said for all those already in Polynesia, and for those about to join them. I am sure that I shall not be forgotten if you resolve to pray for the one who most needs your prayers. I shall not say farewell, as I know your own aspirations regarding the missions; someday our mission may perhaps welcome you." (1-4)

Prayer

God of life, Peter Chanel drew his strength from a simple and deep union with you – may your Well-Springs always be a source of our life and strength. May our lives and our ministry give birth to the Church you desire.



Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Day 2 - Saturday 21st April

15. To Claude Buiron, 1 October 1836 (a pupil at the Belley College at the time this letter was written)

"We have six thousand leagues to cover to get there. We leave Le Havre on 25th of this month. I trust that you will be good enough to pray and to have prayers said from that day onwards, in a very special way, for the success of our mission." (2)

Prayer

Peter Chanel set out under the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit to a people and a land he knew not – may we trust the power and guidance of Your Spirit to set out for the Futunas of our own day.

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.



Day 3 - Sunday 22nd April

18. To Father Jean-Claude Colin 21 November 1836

Very Reverend Father,

After a month of waiting, we are finally close to the time of our departure. The ship that is to take us to Valparaiso is all ready to leave port, unless of course, the good Lord sees fit to keep us here for a few more days. We are to be aboard tomorrow, at ten in the morning. The *Joséphine*, taking Bishop Blanc with his twenty-one missionaries, men and women, as far as New Orleans, will set sail at the same time as our *Delphine*. We have arranged for the "Ave Maris Stella" to be sung on both ships, and all have promised to sing our heartily. We are happy as anything, consumed with the desire to entrust ourselves to the dangers of the sea, to please our Lord and his holy Mother. (1)

Prayer

Ever-creating God, both Mary and Peter Chanel heard your call and responded in generosity and greatness of heart – may we respond with the same generosity and greatness of heart. We pray t

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Day 4 - Monday 23rd April

24. To Father Jean-Claude Colin 23 July 1837

Very Reverend Father,

The brig *Hudson* that has just left for Bordeaux is bringing you news that is going to cause you very great sorrow when you read of the loss we have sustained in one of your beloved sons. Fortunately, every circumstance that can offer consolation on such an occasion attends upon the blow we have suffered. He has left us, this beloved confrere, to return to the bosom of his God. But he cannot cease to be our friend, our confrere. He has merely exchanged his title of missionary for that of protector of our mission. Would that all your sons, present and future, finish their appointed course with such reassuring dispositions! Our number has diminished, but our courage and confidence in God appears to gain new strength each day....We are all praying most earnestly that the good Lord will shower down his most abundant blessings on the precious seed-beds that he has entrusted to your care, that he will deign to raise up from them truly apostolic men. (1)

Prayer

Father, help us to live more deeply the paschal mystery of your death and resurrection. We thank you for the gift of faith and hope. Help young people to enter more deeply into the mystery of your love and friendship and so live a life in union with you.



Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Day 5 - Tuesday 24th April

25. To the Chanel family, 23 July 1937

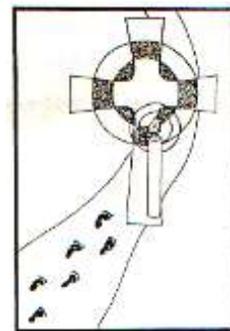
My dearest mother and all of you my dear brothers and sisters,
I have not written to you since I left France. Nevertheless, I am quite sure that you have not failed to have news of me from the Superior, to whom his Lordship our bishop has written from one of the Canary Islands, called Tenerife, where we were laid up some fifty days for repairs to a damaged rudder. This accident amounts to absolutely nothing when compared with the disaster that we have just heard took place on Christmas Eve, a very short distance from Le Havre. We were lucky enough to have left on the morning tide and been favoured by the best possible wind, while all of thirty two ships that left on the evening tide perished in the violence of the storm. How many acts of thanksgiving we owe to the Lord for setting us apart from those he was to engulf into the sea. The letters dispatched from Santa Cruz de Tenerife will then have left at the right moment to allay the fears and anxieties of all concerned for us and our mission. It was on 28 February that we set sail from the island, which enjoys a magnificent climate, but whose inhabitants can scarcely be described as industrious, and we did not reach Valparaiso until the eve of St Peter's Day. It may be that two months, and even less, rather than four, could suffice to make the crossing. The good Lord who rules the winds as all else did not always command them to blow in our favour. There are at sea moments so wonderful that everybody would love to be there were it not for other times terrible enough to put a damper on too great an ardour. We have spent the loveliest feastsdays of the year at sea. Sometimes we had the good fortune of being able to offer the holy sacrifice of the mass, at other times we were deprived of this consolation because of the rolling ship. In these circumstances we resorted to uniting our intentions with those who could do more than we could.

Prayer

Lord, today we take time to consider our own "journey" and the people who have helped to shape who we are today; our parents, family, friends, special people who have become a part of the fabric of our lives. We thank you for them. As they have been your instruments in leading us to faith, may many young people hear your warm and encouraging voice calling them to become Marists.

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.



Day 6 - Wednesday 25th April

26. To Sister Saint-Dominic (Françoise) Chanel, 23 July 1837

My very dear sister

With the consent of Very Reverend Father Superior you can read the letter that I am sending to our dear mother. I have put in a few details omitted here. It takes time to get used to the sea, but once you are accustomed to it, it is certainly the best way to travel. The Bishop is not yet far advanced enough in his mission to ask for Sisters of the Congregation of Mary (Marist Sisters). We have yet some way to go before arriving among our poor savages but we hope to be with them soon. The good Lord deals with us always like the most loving of fathers; He has reduced the number of workers for our mission only to augment the number of its protectors. (1)

When new missionaries come to join us, they will be well advised to put their precious belongings into tin boxes well-soldered, then housed inside a simple wooden case. The larger these cases, the greater the cubic content. If it is thought unnecessary to use tin boxes for certain things, these should at least be wrapped in a piece of waxed cloth before being placed in the cases. These precautions are taken by all traders as a protection against spray and other water damage. (3)

His Lordship would like all vestments that are to travel with missionaries to be very light and double-sided; so only taffeta or satin should be used, with the crosses made simply of ribbons. The burse to match each vestment should be sewn up along one side only, so that it, too, becomes an open envelope like two folded leaves of paper. Stoles, maniples, veils and burses must also have double sides like the vestments. In this way, three vestments actually become six, and a complete little Mass-kit can fit into a small strongbox. (4)

Prayer

God of the universe, as Peter Chanel went to the “ends of the earth” to make you known, may we be open in sharing the Marist Spirit with all those we meet. We pray that our lives may bear witness to your love and so encourage young people today to respond to your love by serving you as Marist Sisters.

Hymn: We Sing Chanel



We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Day 7 - Thursday 26th April

33. To Father Jean-Claude Colin, 16 May 1839

Very Reverend and dear Father,

It is with inexpressible joy that after a stay of eighteen months in Futuna with young Brother Marie-Nizier I finally received a visit from the first reinforcement of apostolic workers that you were kind enough to send out here to help us.....It was 8 May, the eve of the feast of the Ascension, that these dear confreres came and sprang such a pleasant surprise on me. We said five Masses on the feast. I asked Father Bataillon to celebrate the last of these, which was sung solemnly in the house of King Niuliki, and I am pleased to say that the natives present behaved respectfully throughout. This King Niuliki is the one that his Lordship Bishop Pompallier negotiated with to allow us to stay on the island. He promised his Lordship that we would be comfortable, and he has left no stone unturned in keeping that promise. He has a truly paternal affection for us. (1)

We were no more than two months and a few days in Futuna when war broke out. It was to last three months. Fear drove away the families living with us. The king set off to join the main body of his troops. Completely at a loss to know what the consequences of this war might be, I wished to stay absolutely neutral, taking sides with neither one party or the other. Both, however, were keen to have our support..... We lived off the provisions that were left in the valley, and now and then the king's relatives would come and cook for us. Both sides traversed the island in all directions to spy, both feared to be caught off their guard. The war had gone on for two months and I had not spared my efforts to bring the two sides into the way of peace, but it was all to no avail. There was a death to be avenged. (2)

Prayer

Lord, we know that responding to your call to mission requires fidelity, even in the face of opposition or lack of apparent success. As Peter Chanel showed great compassion for those to whom he was sent, may we too recognise you present in the people around us and in our world today. Help young people to respond to the needs of others with deep compassion and willingness to persevere.

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.



Day 8 - Friday 27th April

33. To Father Jean-Claude Colin, 16 May 1839

The island is not yet Christian; apart from my lack of zeal, there are a thousand and one fears and prejudices to be dispelled. The natives all know the way the recent converts from Tonga, Ha'apai, Vava'u, Niuha, Fiji, Samoa, the Sandwich Islands, Tahiti, etc. are treated¹ In vain do we tell them that the Catholic religion does not behave in that way. Natives escaping from those archipelagos feed their fears. (4)

The king and most of his chiefs are reputed to have gods that descend into them. These gods inspire fear in the other natives, who are unstinting in giving gifts to win their favour. (5)

Twenty baptisms, four of which were adults and the rest children, and all in danger of death, make up the entire harvest I have reaped in eighteen months. However, we are consoled by the fact that the dispositions of the natives appear to be changing for the better day by day. His Lordship has not returned after six months, as he promised. Brother Marie-Nizier and I were made to look like liars or like tow abandoned men. The arrival of our confreres therefore produced the best possible effect on the minds of everybody. The natives are happy to listen to us, all are anxious to see the newcomers, and ask their names without respite. We see tears welling up in the eyes of some, when we speak to them about the interest and friendship there is for them in France. Then we hear acclamations of '*Malie Falani*', the French are good, which go on interminably. (6)

Prayer

How can I bring your Good News to our world today, Lord? The circumstances of my day and the many people who cross my path will provide me with opportunities to bring the spirit of the Gospel alive in our world. Help young people to be alert to those occasions when you call them and enable them to respond especially if someone requires an act of kindness, or forgiveness, or some help.

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Day 9 - Saturday 28th April

Hymn: We Sing Chanel

1. Full of faith, alive with zeal, you sailed the ocean wide,
with a chosen band bound for Southern lands,
Holy Mary at your side.
2. Three hard years you laboured long for next to no reward,
for the sake of love you shed a martyr's blood
in the steps of Christ the Lord.

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

3. When times are tough, our patience spent, the effort seems in vain,
we can look to you and begin a-new
and set out in faith again.

We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
We sing of courage strong and true
We sing Chanel, Peter Chanel
Mary's tender voice made a gracious choice in you.

Prayer

Lord, today we thank you for the life and death of St Peter Chanel. Thank you for the way you touched his life and made him such an outstanding model of courage and faith. Through his intercession, help us to be as open to your Spirit as he was and to live our lives in the spirit of Mary. May many young people hear and respond to your call to the Marist way of life and continue Marist mission in our world today.

From A Founder Speaks

April 17-24th 1842 – Peter Chanel's Three Crowns. To the members of the General Chapter.

Let us go, we who are so weak, to the divine heart of Jesus. The more we aware we are of our weakness, the closer we are to God and God to us. If on the other hand, we think ourselves to be something, everything will go badly. (1)



It is from this feeling of confidence, of humility and of abnegation that all our strength derives. That was the attitude of Father Chanel, of whose martyrdom we have just heard. (2)

Look at the apostles: they sold everything. Jesus Christ called them to follow him only to use them in hard work. They did not hesitate. (3)

Father Chanel gained three crowns in a very short time. The first was the sacrifice he made in generously leaving his homeland and his friends. That was an heroic sacrifice.... The second crown of Father Chanel is that after three to four years of an almost barren ministry, not a single complaint escaped from his lips, not a single word, nothing... He consoled himself with Jesus and Mary and he prayed.



Well God gave him a magnificent reward for his desires: he received the grace of martyrdom. That was his third crown. (5)

Gospel: A Reading from the Gospel according to John

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

(You may wish to take time to share on any of the readings we have read during this novena)

Intercessions

Father from the poor of Israel you chose Mary as Mother of the Saviour, and you have called the Marist Family to life out her vocation in humble service. We now turn to you with complete confidence as Mary did in all the circumstances of her life.

1. Lord, we humbly ask that as St Peter Chanel imitated Christ in his passion, so may he guide us through all our challenges so that like him we may remain faithful to your call. Lord, hear us.
2. Bless, guide and strengthen all Marists in their mission to make you known to the world as Mary did. Lord, hear us.
3. As we remember Peter Chanel renew in us a zeal for our own vocation and give us the courage to call others to Marist life. Lord, hear us.
4. We pray for those who feel called to join us. Help us to welcome them and to support them in their journey to discern your will in their lives. Lord, hear us.
5. Give us courage in the face of the uncertain and the unknown. Help us to be like Peter Chanel who trusted in you no matter what the situation. Lord, hear us.
6. We thank you for the witness of the lives of Marists who have gone before us. We thank you for your gift of faith by which we believe that they are now in your eternal embrace. Lord, hear us.

Prayer

St Peter Chanel you left your homeland to proclaim Jesus, Saviour of the world, to the peoples of Oceania. Guided by the Spirit of God, who is the strength of the gentle, you bore witness to love, even laying down your life. Grant that like you we may live our daily life in peace, joy, and in love. May your prayer and example call forth from our midst many workers for the Gospel so that God's kingdom may reach to the ends of the earth.

Hymn Magnificat

**All that I am, sings of the God
who brings new life to birth in
me.
My spirit soars on the wings of
my Lord**

My soul gives glory to the Lord,
rejoicing in my saving God;
Who looks upon me in my state,
and all the world will call me blest;
For God works marvels in my sight,
and holy, holy is God's name!



God's mercy is from age to age,
on those who follow in fear;
Whose arm is power and strength,
and scatters all the proud of heart;
Who casts the mighty from their
thrones, and raises up the lowly ones!

God fills the starving with good things,
the rich are left with empty hands;
Protecting all the faithful ones,
remembr'ing Israel with mercy,
The promise known to those before,
and to their children forever!

Key Dates Concerning St Peter Chanel

1803	July 12: birth at La Potiere, France
	July 17: baptised at Montrevel
1813	Begins classes with Abbe Jean-Marie Tromprier, with whom he then boards from 1815-1819
1817	March 23: First Communion at Cras
1819	October: enters minor seminary of Meximieux
1823	August: confirmed at Meximeux by Bishop Devie
	October: enters major seminary of Belley
1824	October: enters major seminary of Brou, at Bourg
1827	July 15: ordained priest at Brou by Bishop Devie
	July 17: first Mass at Cras
	August: goes to Ambriou as curate for a year
1828	September: goes to Crozet as parish priest for 3 years
1831	August: joins the Marist project on the staff of minor seminary at Belley
1832	Class teacher, Belley
1833	Accompanies Fr Colin to Rome
1833-1834	Spiritual Director of College, Belley
1835-1836	Superior of College, Belley
1835	Death of peter's father, Claude-François
1836	September 24: takes vows at Belley with the first 20 Marists to be professed
	December 23: leaves France as a member of first mission band to Oceania
1837	March 20: Peter's close friend and cabin mate, Fr Claude Bret, dies en route to Oceania
	November 12: Peter Chanel and Br Marie-Nizier Delome begin their lives as missionaries among the people of Futuna
1837	December 25: first mass on Futuna
1838	January 23-April 5: war between two districts on Futuna
	March 29-April 29: Peter visits Fr Bataillon on Uvea, the nearby island to Futuna
	September 4: Peter and Br Marie Nizier set up house at Poi, near that of the King
1839	Feb 2-3: cyclone hits Futuna, Peter's bamboo house destroyed; lodged with King Niuliki, political unrest on island
	May 8-19: visit by the second band of Marist missionaries who had left France for Oceania
	May 8-July 3: Fr Bataillon, from neighbouring island of Uvea visits Peter and Br Marie-Nizier on Futuna
	August 10: war between two districts on Futuna, murderous battle, 37 killed and many wounded
1840	May 3: violent earthquake
	May 16-17: Fr Chevron & Br Attale join Peter and Br Marie-Nizier on Futuna
	June onwards: increasing ill feeling toward Peter and Br Marie-Nizier and presence of Christianity
	September 13: Peter's mother, Marie-Anne Sibellas, dies; Peter was never to hear the news
	November: request from Fr Bataillon for help; Peter sends Fr Chevron & Br Attale to Uvea
1841	April: conversion of Meitala, son of Niuliki
	April 28: Peter Chanel killed by Musumus
1889	November 17: Peter Chanel beatified by Pope Leo XIII
1954	June 13: Peter Chanel canonised by Pope Pius XII

Acknowledgements

Readings for Days 1-8

...ever your poor brother: Peter Chanel, Surviving Letters and Futuna Journal

Texts translated and presented by William Joseph Stuart and Anthony Ward. APM
Rome, 1991

Reading for Day 9

A founder Speaks: Spiritual Talks of Jean-Claude Colin

Selected and introduced by Jean Coste, s.m. and translated by Anthony Ward, s.m.
Rome, 1975

Hymn

We Sing Chanel

Chris Skinner sm

Magnificat

David Haas

