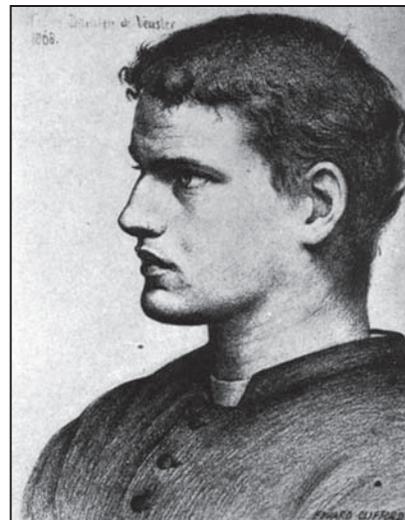


Saint Damien of Molokai— Minister to Those in Need

During his ministry Jesus often focused on healing those who were sick and attending to those in need. Many saints also made it their mission to bring Jesus' healing to those who were outcasts.



Father Damien—Minister to Those Who Were Sick and Outcast

Father Damien was ordained a priest in 1864 as a member of the religious order of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He was then sent to work as a missionary in Hawaii.

In 1873, at his own request, Father Damien was assigned to work on Molokai, a leper colony in the Hawaiian Islands. Until 100 years ago, leprosy, or Hansen's disease, was a dreaded illness. It was an infectious disease without a cure that resulted in terrible physical deformities. People who caught it were isolated from the rest of society and placed in leper colonies. The colony at Molokai was one such place. While the government provided the people with food and clothing, they had no resident doctors or nurses.

Father Damien went to live there and ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of about 600 lepers. He dressed their wounds, helped them build shelters, and built their coffins and dug their graves. The spiritual comforts included frequent benediction, adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and Eucharistic processions.

After 12 years on the island, Father Damien himself contracted the disease. He continued to work to help others until he was too ill to do so. He died in 1889. Father Damien was declared a saint on October 11, 2009. His feast day is April 15.

Write About a Saint

Find information about a saint who worked with those who were sick. Some saints to look for are Catherine of Siena, Vincent de Paul, and Louise de Marillac. On a separate sheet of paper, write an obituary for the saint, highlighting his or her life's work and mission.