

Week 3: Theme - Mission & Sacrifice

St Damien Molokai

Welcome:

Welcome to our third Lenten session of House Groups.

Introduce and welcome any new members to the group. Name a person who was significant in your journey of faith. Say how they encouraged you in your faith.

Worship:

Gather around a crucifix, an open Bible and a lit candle.

Sign of the Cross

Every time we pray the *Our Father* we say: *hallowed be thy name*. Let's spend some time reflecting on the names of God found in the Old Testament.

Read out the names of God and their meanings. Ask people to choose the name that most resonates with them. You might like to play some quiet music in the background.

Names of God

Elohim meaning "strong one"

El Shaddai meaning "God Almighty"

El Elyon meaning "Most High God"

Yahweh Jireh (Yireh), meaning, "the Lord will provide" and stresses God's provision for His people (Genesis 22:14).

Yahweh Nissi, meaning, "the Lord is my banner" and stresses that God is our means of victory who fights for His people (Exodus 17:15).

Yahweh Shalom, meaning, "the Lord is peace" and shows the Lord as the means of our peace and rest (Judges 6:24).

Yahweh Sabaoth, meaning, "the Lord of hosts" which depicts the Lord as a military commander of the armies of heaven (1 Samuel 1:3; 17:45).

Yahweh Ro'i, meaning, "the Lord my shepherd," showing the Lord's care for His people (Psalm 23:1).

Yahweh Tsidkenu, meaning, "the Lord our righteousness" and portrays the Lord as the means of our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6).

Yahweh Shammah, meaning, "the Lord is there" and shows the Lord's personal presence in the millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 48:35).

Yahweh Elohim Israel, meaning "the Lord, the God of Israel" and depicts the Lord as the true God of Israel in contrast to the false gods of the nations (Judges 5:3; Isaiah 17:6).

Thanksgiving prayer

Invite anyone who wishes, to say a prayer of thanksgiving. Here is a suggestion for how the prayer might be said...

Thank you *n* (e.g. *Yahweh Shalom*) for your love for me. I know I can depend on you. You are ... (e.g. *the one who gives me peace*).

Word: Jesus and St Damien Molokai speak to us

An example of great sacrifice is the life of St Damien of Molokai. In 1873 he went to work as a priest in a leper colony on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. He died from leprosy in 1889 aged 49. The testimony of the life he lived among the lepers of Molokai led to an intensive study of Hansen's disease, eventually leading to a cure. Pope John Paul II beatified Damien in 1995. He was named a saint on Oct 11th 2009.



Read the passage aloud, then give time for quiet reflection

The Bible

Matthew 25:31-40

"The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom

prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Now read the following quotations, then pause for further reflection.

"Having no doubts about the true nature of the disease, I am calm, resigned, and very happy in the midst of my people. God certainly knows what is best for my sanctification and I gladly repeat: 'Thy will be done.'" **St Damien of Molokai**

Questions for discussion: -

Is there a word or phrase that particularly catches your attention?

What do the readings tell us about Jesus, ourselves, others?

What does it say to you personally in this time of Lent?

Witness:

In the light of the gospel and the words of St Damien of Molokai, let's have a short time to pray for others, especially those who are seriously or terminally ill. We particularly remember those who suffer with cancer, HIV and AIDS, those

people coping with disabilities, both physical and mental and those who are close to death.

Holy Spirit, we invite you to be here with us. Inspire us to think of the names of people you wish us to pray for. Come Holy Spirit.



Each person is invited to take a small piece of paper and write the names of people who are ill, or dying. The names will not be read out.

Play some quiet music as the names are written and collected in a basket. As you place the basket before the cross, say together:

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Keep the names and the basket for next week.

Closing prayer:

Holy Spirit come into our lives.

Open our ears – **to hear what you are saying to us; in the things that happen to us; in the people we meet.**

Open our eyes – **to the needs of people around us.**

Open our hands – **to do our work well; to help when help is needed.**

Open our lips – **to tell others the good news of Jesus and bring comfort, happiness and laughter.**

Open our minds – **to discover new truth about you and the world.**

Open our hearts – **to love you and our fellow men and women as you have loved us in Jesus.**

**To you, with our Father and the Son, one God;
all honour and praise shall be given now and for ever,**

Amen.

(Anon)