



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

Image by Christine Sponchia

GOD IS MY HELPER

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Reflection

Today is the feast day of St. Peter Claver, a Jesuit priest and missionary who was born in Spain in 1581 and raised on his family's farm. After joining the Jesuits, he sailed for the Americas for missionary work. He was 29 and never saw his homeland again.

Large numbers of people were being kidnapped in Africa and herded onto ships to be transported to Spanish settlements in the Americas, where they were enslaved laborers. On the two-month voyage, they were chained in cramped spaces below the ship's deck. Fed only corn and water once a day, they suffered from all kinds of diseases. There was no medical treatment, so a third to a half of the people died on the voyage. After landing, the survivors were enclosed in pens where they were held like animals.

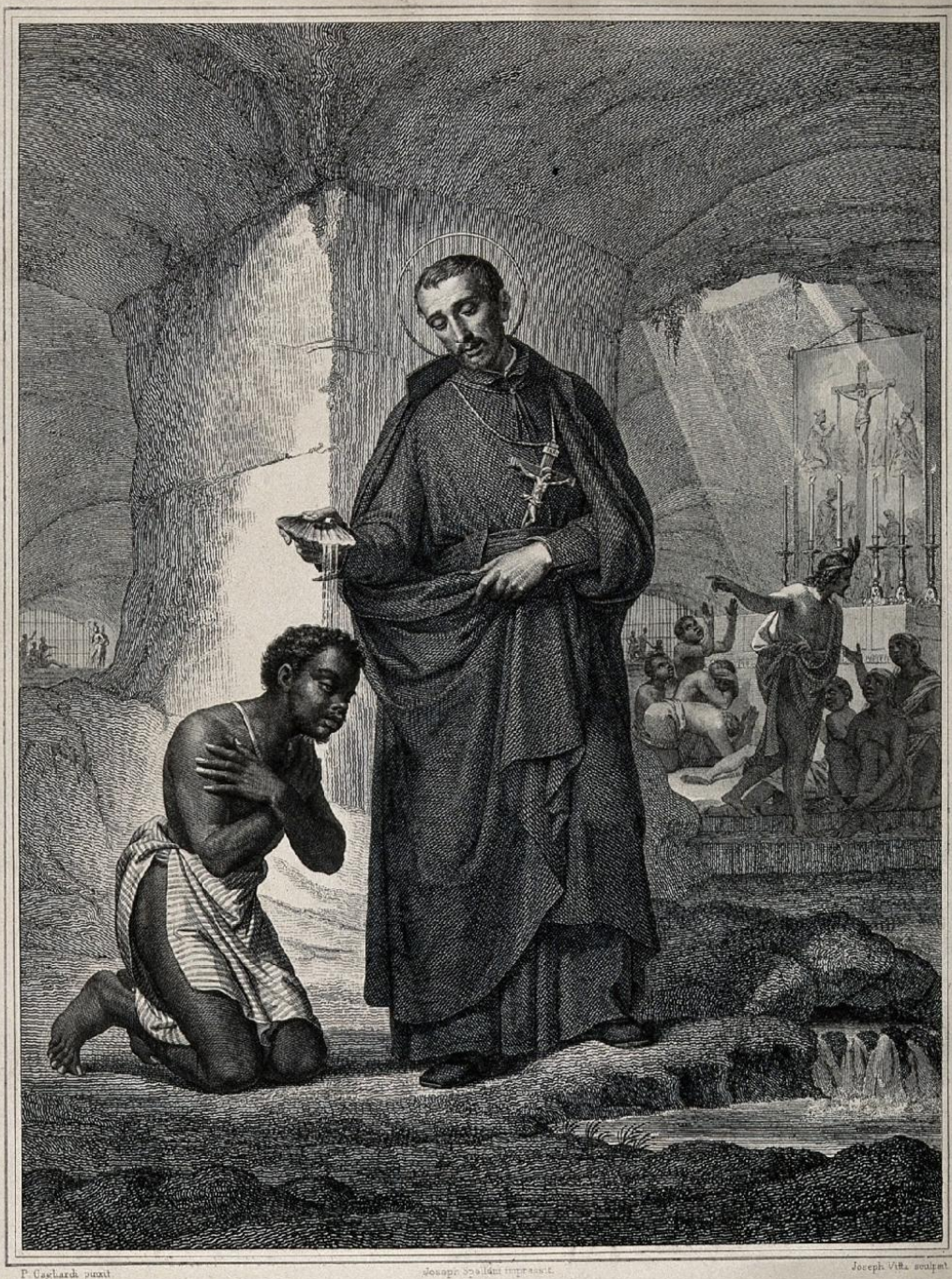
For 38 years, Peter Claver met the slave ships in at Cartagena in what is now known as Colombia. He would go down into the holds where the slaves were

confined. He brought medicine and fresh fruit and washed and dressed their wounds. If a slave was condemned to death, he would stay by her or his side until the final end.

During the seasons when the weather was too dangerous for the ships to sail, he traveled inland to the coffee and cotton plantations, as well as the mines. He would witness marriages, baptize babies, and hear confessions. Peter was known as a simple, quiet person who referred to himself as “slave of the slaves.”

At the age of 70, he caught the plague. As a result, his arms and legs trembled so that he was unable to take care of himself. When the word got out that he was dying, people of all races broke through the gates of the Jesuit college for a final glimpse of the man they considered a saint.

Psalm 54, the responsorial psalm for the day, is a prayer of confidence spoken while experiencing great danger. It may have been a prayer that Peter Claver used in his lifetime. The psalmist begs God’s help against all that seeks to destroy life -- and is confident that God will respond with Divine support.



S. PETRVS CLAVER SOC. IESV.
NIGRITARVM APOSTOLVS
IVSSV LEONIS XIII PONT. MAX.
CAELITVM SANCTORVM HONORIBVS AVCTVS

"File:Saint Peter Claver. Engraving by J. Vitta after P. Gagliardi Wellcome V0032875.jpg" is licensed under CC BY 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

For Pondering

- Imagine yourself assisting Peter Claver in ministering to the slaves. What does he say to you? What do you talk to him about? What do you say to the slaves? What do they teach you?

- Do you know someone who is enslaved in a situation? In what ways are you called to minister to her/him?
-

For Prayer

Use today's responsorial psalm for your prayer (Ps. 54:3-4, 6, 8):

O God, by your name save me, and by your might defend my cause.

O God, hear my prayer; hearken to the words of my mouth.

Behold, God is my helper; the Lord sustains my life.

Freely will I offer you thanks;

I will praise your name, O LORD, for its goodness.

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

[Support Us Here](#)



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



***Do you know someone who would like to receive
Daily Reflections? Please forward freely!***

Visit Website

714-744-3172

Join Mailing
List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92868 714-744-3175

[Unsubscribe slongbotham@csjorange.org](mailto:slongbotham@csjorange.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data
Notice](#)

Sent by thecsd@csjorange.org