

Celebrating a New Lasallian Saint

The Lasallian family has a new saint. Brother Solomon Le Clercq, FSC, was canonized in a ceremony on October 16, 2016, in St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. Brother Solomon, a martyr of the French Revolution, was the first Brother of the Christian Schools to be martyred, and, on October 17, 1926, the first to be beatified.

Teacher, Brother, Martyr, Saint

Saint Solomon's Story

Born Nicolas Le Clercq in Boulogne, France in 1745, he attended the Brothers' school and entered the novitiate in Rouen at age 21. In 1782, before being appointed as the secretary to the Superior General, Brother Agathon, Le Clercq had been a teacher, finance manager and director of novices. He was a man of deep spirituality who was quiet, gentle and shy, but also engaged and firm.

Brother Solomon lived during the tumultuous time of the French Revolution, when the Catholic Church became a target of the revolutionaries and all church belongings were confiscated. Clergy were required to swear the oath of "The Civil Constitution of the Clergy" denying their loyalty to the church. Brother Solomon refused to take the oath, resulting in him living in secrecy in Paris. Following his arrest on August 15, 1792, he was subject to a formal interrogation that ended with the question: "Have you taken the oath?" which he answered with a firm "No." He was then sent to an improvised prison in the Carmelite Convent with other religious prisoners. On September 2, 1792, each of the 166 prisoners were put to death by sword.

A Miracle in Venezuela

One step in the process of becoming a saint is determining whether any special favor or miracle has been granted through a candidate saint's intercession. Brother Solomon is credited with a miracle that took place in 2007, when a five-year-old Venezuelan girl was cured of complications from a venomous snakebite. Prayers for the girl were offered by religious sisters, children and parishioners before their church's statue of Brother Solomon, who was venerated in the area. The girl survived for two days after the bite with no medical intervention. When she was taken to the hospital to have her leg amputated in order to save her life, she regained her health suddenly and without explanation. The miracle was confirmed in 2016 by the Diocese of Caracas at the end of the five-year process and Pope Francis proclaimed the decree of canonization on May 10, 2016.

Brother Thomas Hetland, FSC, Brother Kenneth Arnold, FSC, and Brother Peter Tripp, FSC, were in Rome to witness the canonization of Brother Solomon Le Clercq. Read about their experiences on page 20.

Witnessing Lasallian History

Brother Peter Tripp, FSC, member relations associate, Brother Thomas Hetland, FSC, religious institutes relationship manager and Brother Kenneth Arnold, FSC, senior application developer, all of Christian Brothers Services, were fortunate enough to witness the canonization of Brother Solomon. "It is inspiring to see our Lasallian ministry, begun over 300 years ago, remains transformative and powerful," said Brother Thomas. "Saint Solomon reminds us of the power and potential each of us has to serve others with faith and zeal."

The Brothers gathered together with Lasallians and faithful spectators from around the world for several days of celebration surrounding the canonization.

"As the words of canonization took place, the cheers from those gathered in Brother Solomon's honor reflected the deep joy held by all," said Brother Peter. "In being part of this monumental event, I am edified to know now of another holy martyr among the Brothers who placed his love for God and his love for what is right and just as guiding principles in his faithful response to the events of his life. That his life and death would bring together so many in faith to one place to celebrate and pray is, indeed, another miracle to ponder."

For Brother Kenneth, the experience opened his eyes to the wide reach of the Lasallian mission. "Up to this point, I knew our order was a global organization, but except for the occasional Brother or Brothers visiting from another country, it wasn't real," said Brother Kenneth. "Now, after being at our Generalate and sharing three big events with Brothers throughout the world, it has become very real for me."

Saint Solomon was canonized with six others: José Luis Sánchez del Río, young martyr of the Mexican Cristeros War; Manuel González García, a bishop of Palencia, Spain; Lodovico Pavoni, an Italian priest; Alfonso Maria Fusco, priest and founder of the Sisters of Saint John the Baptist; José Gabriel del Rosario Brochero, an Argentinian priest; and Elizabeth of the Trinity, a French Carmelite nun.

Including Saint Solomon and Saint John Baptist de La Salle, 14 Brothers of the Christian Schools have been canonized, 150 are blessed and eight have been declared venerable. Five are on the path of holiness with the process started or nearly concluded. ☼

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