

## Saint Daniel and Companions

### Feast Day – October 10

After the Franciscan Order had been blessed in the glorious death of its first martyrs, St Berard and his four companions, holy rivalry was aroused among the children of St Francis to offer their blood in preaching the Faith of Christ.

In 1227, Daniel, provincial of Calabria, a man of eminent sanctity, and six companions, Angelus, Samuel, Donulus, Leo, Hugolinus, and Nicholas, with the blessing of the minister general, went to Africa to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Mohammedans.

Landing at Ceuta, Saint Daniel and Companions resolved to preach in that large city. Before entering the city proper, they learned from Christian merchants that a strict order prohibited entrance to all Christians.

Saint Daniel and Companions realized that their undertaking was fraught with the greatest danger, and they prepared themselves accordingly. On Saturday, October 2nd, they made their confession, received Holy Communion, and then spent the remainder of the day in prayer. In the evening, as our Lord did on the eve of His sufferings, they washed one another's feet.

On Sunday morning Saint Daniel and Companions entered the city and began to preach to the crowds in the streets and public places, boldly declaring that salvation was to be found only in the name of Jesus.

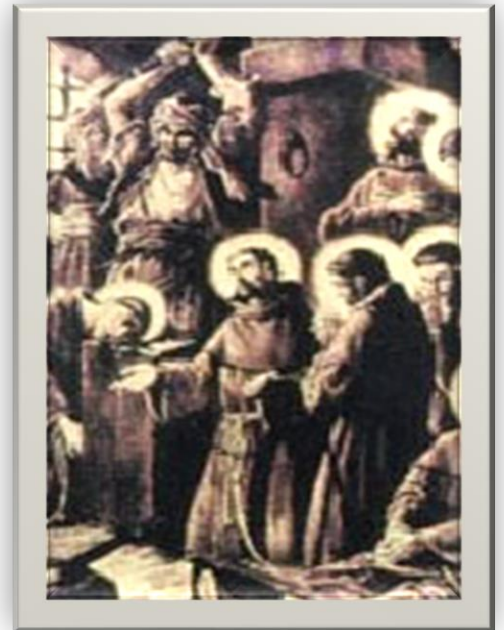
The city was in an uproar. The courageous preachers were thrown into prison. There they wrote to the Christian merchants in the suburbs:

"Blessed be God, the Father of mercies, who comforts us in all our tribulations! Our Lord has commanded us: 'Go and preach the Gospel to all creatures.' He has said: 'The servant is not greater than the Master; if men persecute you, remember that they first persecuted Me.' Struck by these words, we poor and unworthy servants of Jesus Christ have abandoned our home, and have come to preach in this country for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and the confusion of obstinate infidels. ...And although we may have much to suffer, we are greatly comforted in the Lord, hoping He will be pleased to accept the sacrifice of our lives. To Him only be honor and glory forevermore."

A week later the prisoners were led before the governor, and an attempt was made to induce them to renounce their faith, first by promises, then by threats. All remained firm in their profession of Christ and were condemned to be beheaded.

The six companions knelt down before Daniel, their superior, and thanked him for providing them with the opportunity of winning a martyr's crown, and asked for a final blessing. Father Daniel, amid tears of holy joy, embraced each one, blessed them, and said:

"Let us rejoice in the Lord, my faithful companions, for this festive day for us! The holy angels are already coming to conduct our souls to the eternal mansions, and this day the white-robed martyrs will receive us into their holy company. Heaven is open above our heads, we shall soon be in possession of eternal happiness."



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And so their heads rolled from the block, but their souls took their flight to heaven. Their remains were later taken to Spain, where many miracles occurred at their intercession.

Pope Leo X canonized Saint Daniel and Companions in 1516.

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