

Then, with a resigned air, he throws up his hands in despair and goes out to find kindlings to light the fire.

—*Frank Corcoran, '46*

THE LEPER-PRIEST OF MOLOKAI

Probably no one on earth has felt more pity for the suffering than Father Damian, who saw the need of several hundred unfortunate people afflicted with the horrifying disease of leprosy and thus decided to devote his entire life to the spiritual and temporal welfare of these lepers.

On May 10, 1873, Father Damian landed on the shore of Molokai and took up his residence at Kalwao, which had a population of about seven hundred lepers. These disabled creatures looked upon the arrival of this beloved martyr-priest as a gift from God, because, before his coming, they were practically abandoned and, regardless of age and sex, were crowded together in tiny huts and given to all sorts of vice.

In this desolate hole Father Damian began his life's work with remarkable zeal and heroism, his only hope lying in the goodness of God. Many nights he was forced to sleep on the bare ground because, at first, he had no home of his own. Later, some kind friends furnished him with sufficient means to erect a little house for himself. In order to carry on his great work he needed an abundance of strength and courage which he acquired by long hours of prayer.

Before giving an account of Father Damian's work, it might be well to describe briefly the terrible sickness of leprosy. Of all diseases it is certainly the most dreadful. It destroys the whole body; it eats away the nose and ears; and it decays the hands and feet. There are some whose faces are completely covered with running sores. Even little children are afflicted with it. Sometimes their heads are swollen and wrinkled so much that they appear to be dwarfs or freaks. Finally, those afflicted must exile themselves forever and are banished to homes or settlements for such cases. It was to work among

such people that Father Damian dedicated his life.

Every morning, after Mass, Father Damian preached to his flock. Then came his immense labours. He spent hour after hour visiting the homes of his unfortunate people, giving them food, and working with and bandaging their wounds. Often, too, he had to assist the dying, being compelled to anoint their hands and feet that were covered with sores.

His care for the lepers did not end with their death. He himself made their coffins, dug their graves, and buried them with the proper ceremonies in order that they might have a decent burial.

After twelve years of heroic work, Father Damian himself became a victim of leprosy. Four years of slow death followed before his sacrifice was complete. On April 15, 1889, Father Damian breathed his last.

Today, on a lonely South Sea Island, the grave of Father Damian lies beneath the very tree under which he often slept. His body rests with those lepers whom he loved and served.

—William V. MacDonald, '47



FAITH

My boy, my sweet beloved son,
I miss you more each day.
I pray that you'll return to me
When Hitler's brought to bay.
I pray that God will help you, son,
Will keep you safe from harm;
I pray that He'll preserve your smile,
Your own endearing charm.
I know, my boy, your heart is pure,
That you're at peace with Him;
That if perchance you might meet death,
Your soul is free of sin.
It helps my poor old heart to think
You'll soon be homeward bound;
To know that He is watching still
To keep you safe and sound.

—J. E. Green, '47