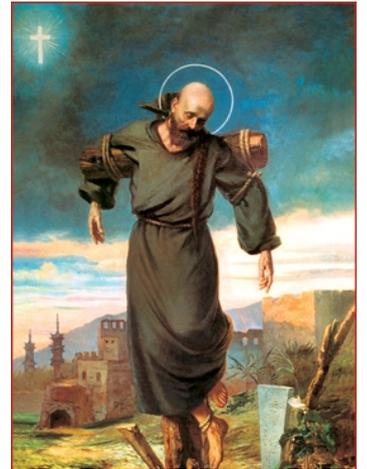


Prayer of the Month • September 2017

O my Divine Saviour,
transform me into yourself.
May my hands be the hands of Jesus.
Grant that every faculty of my body may serve only to glorify you.
Above all, transform my soul and all its powers
so that my memory, will and affection
may be the memory, will and affections of Jesus.
I pray you to destroy in me all that is not of you.
Grant that I may live only in you, by you and for you,
so that I may truly say with St. Paul, 'I live - now not I - but Christ
lives in me'.



St Jean-Gabriel Perboyre (1802–1840)

We are called to follow Jesus and also to be like Jesus. This prayer is aimed seriously at becoming like Jesus. Is this too difficult a concept for us? And yet, the writer of this prayer takes this task seriously. He begins with physical characteristics (hands), and then extends this to his whole body. Next, he moves onto the soul 'and all its powers'. He lists memory, will, desires, and then asks that anything that is not of Jesus should be destroyed, as there will not be room for both. So, quoting St Paul (Galatians 2.20), the end result is 'Christ lives in me'.

Jean-Gabriel Perboyre (6 January 1802 – 11 September 1840), was one of eight children born to Pierre Perboyre and Marie Rigal, on 6 January 1802, in Montgesty, near Cahors, in southern France. In 1818, he entered the seminary of the Congregation of The Mission (Lazarists), at Montauban, and was professed in 1820, and ordained in 1826, and put in charge of seminarians. In 1835 he began his journey to Ho-Nan, China, the mission to which he had been assigned, and then in 1838 he was transferred to the mission of Hou-Pé, which is part of the region of lakes formed by the Yangtze kiang (blue river). He suffered much in body and spirit. In a letter he wrote: 'No, I am no more of a wonder man here in China than I was in France ... ask of him first of all for my conversion and my sanctification and then the grace that I do not spoil his work too much...' (Letter 94). In 1839 persecution broke out against this mission, and Jean-Gabriel became one of the first victims. He was stripped of his clothes and given rags to wear, bound and dragged from tribunal to tribunal. He was tortured and then condemned to death, and on 11 September 1840, Jean-Gabriel was led to death with seven criminals. He was tied to a cross and strangled to death on it at Ou-Tchang-Fou, China. He was canonized in 1996.

Colin Lunt