



September 9, Feast of St. Peter Claver

mercredi 8 septembre 2021, par [Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny](#)

We pray especially to the patron Saints of the Congregation : St. Teresa, St. Martin, St. Francis Xavier and St. Peter Claver. We learn from them to unite intimacy with Christ and courageous zeal in the service of the mission. (General Chapter Ordinances, 2000)

St. Peter Claver

(1580-1654) was a Spanish Jesuit missionary to Latin America. He is known as :

- the "Apostle of the West Indies"
- and the "Slave to the Slaves".

Haunted by a vision of going where he was really needed, Claver left his theological studies before their completion and in 1610 went to Cartagena, New Granada (now Colombia).

In his profession he stipulated that he would "never admit any inferiority in the African slaves," and so that there would be no doubt of this, he proclaimed himself their slave, adding to his signature 'ethiopia semper servus' (servant of the Ethiopians / Africans forever).

For the remaining 38 years of his life, Claver lived in Cartagena, one of the major Caribbean ports in Latin America to which slaves were imported. He had no social program but simply **geared his life to the primary needs of the often sick and broken slaves** who arrived on American shores.

He was not a "revolutionary" priest, intent on changing the fabric of society ; **he simply cared for the slaves and exhorted the slave masters to be humane.** He died of the plague on Sept. 8, 1654 and was canonized in 1887.

Three years later he was declared the **patron saint of missionary work among slaves** ; hence his adoption as a **special patron by the Cluny Sisters.**

His feast is celebrated on September 9.

