

John Coleridge Patteson and his Companions

Bishop of Melanesia, Martyrs, 1871

The death of Bishop Patteson and his companions at the hands of Melanesian islanders, whom Patteson had sought to protect from slave-traders, aroused the British government to take serious measures to prevent piratical man-hunting in the South Seas. Their martyrdom was the seed that produced the strong and vigorous Church which flourishes in Melanesia today.

Patteson was born in London, April 1, 1827, of a Devonshire family. He attended Balliol College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1849. After travel in Europe and a study of languages, at which he was adept, he became a Fellow of Merton College in 1852, and was ordained the following year.

While serving as a curate of Alphington, Devonshire, near his family home, he responded to Bishop G. A. Selwyn's call in 1855 for helpers in New Zealand. He established a school for boys on Norfolk Island to train native Christian workers. It is said that he learned to speak some twenty-three of the languages of the Melanesian people. On February 24, 1861, he was consecrated Bishop of Melanesia.

On a visit to the island of Nakapu, in the Santa Cruz group, Patteson was stabbed five times in the breast, in mistaken retaliation for the brutal outrages committed some time earlier by slave-traders. In the attack, several of Patteson's company were also killed or wounded. Bishop Selwyn later reconciled the natives of Melanesia to the memory of one who came to help and not to hurt.

Leader: Peace on each one who comes in need,
All: ***Peace on each one who comes in joy.***

Leader: Peace on each one who offers prayers,
All: ***Peace on each one who offers song.***

Leader: Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,
All: ***Peace of the Spirit, the triune one.***

Psalm 119: 49-56

My delight shall be in your commandments.

49 Remember your word to your servant, •
on which you have built my hope.

50 This is my comfort in my trouble, •
that your promise gives me life.

51 The proud have derided me cruelly, •
but I have not turned aside from your law.

52 I have remembered your everlasting judgements,
O Lord, •
and have been comforted.

My delight shall be in your commandments.

53 I am seized with indignation at the wicked, •
for they have forsaken your law.

54 Your statutes have been like songs to me •
in the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I have thought on your name in the night, O Lord, •
and so have I kept your law.

56 These blessings have been mine, •
for I have kept your commandments.

My delight shall be in your commandments.

Prayer

Leader: O God, for your love for us, warm and brooding, which has brought us to birth and opened our eyes to the wonder and beauty of creation,

All: ***We give you thanks.***

Leader: For your love for us, wild and freeing, which has awakened us to the energy of creation: to the sap that flows, the blood that pulses, the heart that sings,

All: ***We give you thanks.***

Leader: For your love for us, compassionate and patient, which has carried us through our pain, wept beside us in our sin, and waited with us in our confusion,

All: ***We give you thanks.***

Leader: For your love for us, strong and challenging, which has called us to risk for you, asked for the best in us, and shown us how to serve,

All: ***We give you thanks.***

Leader: O God we come to celebrate that your Holy Spirit is present deep within us, and at the heart of all life. Forgive us when we forget your gift of love made known to us in Jesus, and draw us into your presence.

Reading

Mark 8:34–38

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’

Sharing of the day

Prayer

Leader: We bring to God someone whom we have met or remembered today and for whom we want to pray _____ Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Leader: We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer _____ Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Leader: We bring to God a troubled situation in our world tonight _____ Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Leader: We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to like or forgive or trust
Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Leader: We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit,
clarity of mind, and warmth of affection.
Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And God's righteousness,
And all these things, shall be added onto you,
Allelu, alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you,
Seek and ye shall find.

Knock and the door shall be opened onto you.
Allelu, alleluia

We shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Allelu, alleluia

Closing responses

Leader: O Trinity of Love, You have been with us at the world's beginning,

All: ***Be with us till the world's end.***

Leader: You have been with us at our life's shaping,

All: ***Be with us at our life's end.***

Leader: You have been with us at the sun's rising

All: ***Be with us till the day's end. Amen.***

All: ***Lord, make us instruments of your peace.***

Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master.

grant that we may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

it is in dying that we are born again

to everlasting life. Amen.

Leader: And now may the God of hope bring you such joy and peace in believing that you overflow with hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: ***Amen.***

