

# Damien of molokai essay



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Damien of Molokai Religious identity is derived from a chosen person's personal faith that they see themselves as in the eyes of God- the meaning of their life.

Religious purpose is how the chosen person lives their faith and how they put their faith into action. It is what the person has recognised as their purpose in life. Social justice is the awareness that the world has entered on a phase of social existence with potential for the greater good. This is evident in the teachings of the Church because it is a virtue that inclines one to co-operate with others in order to help make the institution of society better serve the common good.

Damien of Molokai was born on January 3rd, 1840 and he was sent to Molokai, Hawaii and was ordained. For the next 9 years his mission was to care for the lepers, he built hospitals, clinics and churches there too. In 1985 he was announced a leper and still cared for the sick. The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. The Church's teachings on social justice are founded on the Gospel and have developed strongly over the last 140 years to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world and to respond to a variety of misinformed and in some cases noxious theories of politics and government.

The Social Justice Council gives people a significant role in promoting the principles of social justice throughout the community in the hope that this awareness will help governments and public institutions to promote the right notions of justice and the common good. Damien of Molokai symbolises a

tree and a dove. He had a role as an unofficial patron of those with HIV and AIDS. Damien once said, " I make myself a leper with the lepers to gain all to Jesus Christ.

" His arrival on Molokai was the turning point for the community. Under his leadership, basic laws were enforced: shacks became painted houses, working farms were organised, and schools were established. Social service is giving direct aid to someone in need, and with this then comes social action, which is correcting the structures that perpetrate the need, Through the lens of social justice, we begin to take a look at the problems and issues facing us in our own communities. St Paul once said, " Faith without action is meaningless. " Damien had faith and put it to action to the best of his ability- even being the cause of his death on April 15th 1885.

Therefore, the church's teaching on social justice was demonstrated vicariously with Damien. Saint Damien's life is remarkable and heroic, committed to service of a marginalized and forgotten people, at great risk to his personal health. His obedience to the call of the Lord, and the love, which he demonstrated, to others, makes him a shining example of the holiness on earth. During his beatification homily, Pope John Paul II said: " Holiness is not perfection according to human criteria; it is not reserved for a small number of exceptional persons. It is for everyone; it is the Lord who brings us to holiness, when we are willing to collaborate in the salvation of the world for the glory of God, despite our sin and our sometimes rebellious temperament. " Damien's virtue was that he saw everyone in Christ and he see's Christ in everyone.

His main intention as to become present for others as one with them, thus his involvement in active social justice issues. Religion was an important determinant in Damien's life as his examples of self sacrifice in serving needs of others led him to be named a "blessed" by church as his life was very holy. He worked tirelessly to help the sick on Molokai with their physical and spiritual needs. The people of Molokai needed the love of God to sustain them.

Damien offered daily mass and had dispensing graces of sacraments of Penance, Matrimony, the sacrament of the sick and finally inspired people to love the blessed sacrament through the adoration of the Holy Eucharist. It is with these practises, Damien's work was influenced on religion and was the main reason he did so much. Because of his relationship to God. Damien of Molokai was very energetic, compassionate, he was a man of action and felt the need to improve the lives of lepers that were banished to the Hawaiian island of Molokai. His contribution was radically generous and his selfless work was that of something the lepers whose lives he had touched changed significantly due to his work of god.

Damien is a powerful example of a Good Samaritan or a "servant of Humanity." Therefore religious identity and purpose of Damien of Molokai had contributed to his life and work.