

JUNE 9  
BLESSED JOSEPH DE ANCHIETA  
PRIEST AND RELIGIOUS  
OPTIONAL MEMORIAL

Joseph de Anchieta was born in San Cristóbal de la Laguna (in Tenerife, Canary Islands) on March 19, 1534. He entered the Society of Jesus in the Portuguese Province on May 1, 1551. Two years later he was sent to Brazil, where for love of Christ he devoted himself to the welfare of the indigenous population, seeking to shed the light of the Gospel on every aspect of their way of life, both human and Christian. He spent his whole life in an unremitting, many-sided apostolate.

Ordained priest in 1566, he was appointed Superior of the communities of São Vicente and São Paulo. Ten years later he became Provincial of the whole Brazilian Mission; during ten years of office he proved himself to be a wise Superior and an outstanding leader.

He was a pioneer in compiling a grammar of the vernacular and in editing a catechism in that language. As a true apostle and missionary he made many contributions toward improving the condition of the native Brazilians, showing great skill in raising the human, social, and moral levels of their culture. When this became common knowledge among the citizens of Brazil, he was generally known by the title of "Apostle of Brazil."

He died on June 9, 1597, in the town of Reritiba, which was re-named Anchieta in his honor. On June 20, 1980, he was enrolled among the Blessed by Pope John Paul II.

From the Common of Pastors

THE OFFICE OF READINGS

Second Reading

(From a letter of Blessed Joseph de Anchieta to Father General James Laynez [Dated June 1, 1560; Spanish text in Serafim Leite, S.J., *Cartas dos primeiros Jesuítas no Brasil*, vol. 3, 1558-1563, São Paulo, 1954, pp. 253-255].)

*Nothing is too difficult for those who seek only God's love and the salvation of souls.*

I could tell of many others, especially among the slaves, who die soon after baptism or have been baptized and then, after making their confession, pass to the Lord. This is why we are constantly making the rounds of the various settlements, of Indians as well as of Portugese, without regard for dead calms or rains or floods. Often we journey by night through dense forests to bring help to the sick, with great difficulty because of the roughness of the roads and the inclemency of the weather. Besides, there are so many of these settlements at such distances from one another that we cannot cope with the various emergencies as they arise. Nor could we even if there were more of us. Again, though we are called to help others we are often sick ourselves, worn out by illness and scarcely able to complete the journey: the doctors seem to need as much help as the sick. But nothing is too difficult for those who seek only God's love and the salvation of souls: for this they are ready to lay down their lives. Often we rise from sleep to help the sick and dying.

I have written at length on the dying because they must be seen as the true fruit that endures to the end. I would not dare to say anything about the living because many of them are so unreliable that one could not, and should not, promise with regard to them anything likely to last. More "blessed are those who die in the Lord [Apoc. 14:13]": having embraced the faith and the commandments, they are freed from the chains of death, and enter into life, rescued from the treacherous waters of this constantly changing sea. Their happy deaths give us so much

consolation that it eases the pain we feel at the waywardness of the living. Yet we take great trouble in instructing them by our public preaching and our private discussions, urging them to persevere in what they have been taught. Many go to confession and Communion each Sunday; others come to Mass and confession from the different places in which they are scattered.

**Responsory** (1 Thess. 2:8; Gal. 4:19)

**R.** Our earnest wish has been to offer you, with God's Gospel, our own lives as well: so dear have you become to us.

**V.** My little children, I suffer again the pains of birth, waiting for Christ to be formed in you: so dear have you become to us.

**Concluding Prayer**

Lord, pour out upon us your Holy Spirit as you did upon Blessed Joseph, your priest, so that like him we may become all things to all, and as faithful servants of your Word seek to gain all for your kingdom and so unite them in the love of your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.