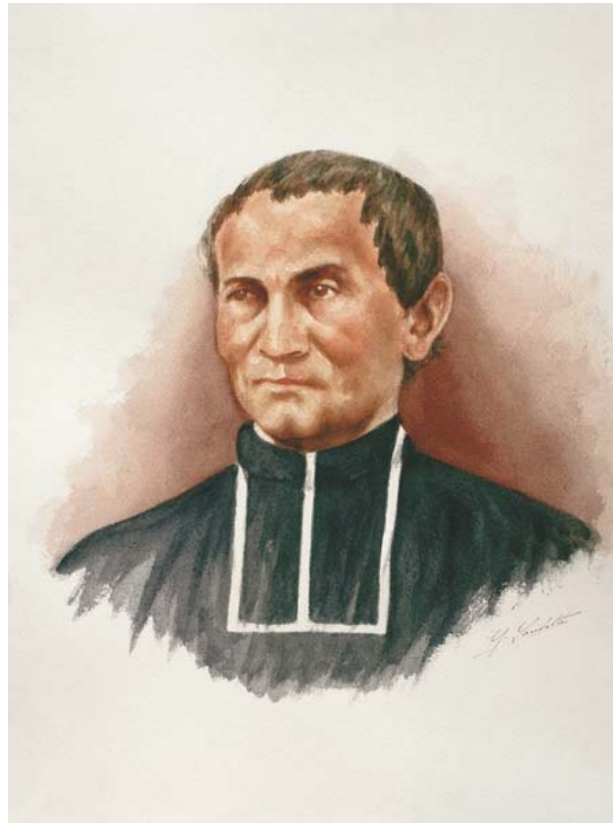


REMEMBERING
FRANCIS LIBERMANN C.S.Sp.

1802 - 1852

Founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit



Suggestions for Prayer Service in the Schools



We Begin by recalling the life of Francis Libermann

Francis Mary Paul Libermann was born in 1802 of Jewish family and was, himself, destined to become a rabbi like his father. But during his youth he became a Catholic and choose to become a priest. For this reason he was rejected by his father. Perhaps because of this rejection he developed epilepsy and his ordination was delayed by 10 years.

In the seminary he had two friends. Eugene Tisserant was from Haiti in the Caribbean and Frederic LeVasseur was from Reunion island in the Indian Ocean. These friends spoke to Libermann of the plight of the newly freed slaves in their countries. Libermann was so moved by this story that he and his two friends spent the rest of their lives not only in service of the freed slaves from Africa but also of African people everywhere on the continent.

In 1848 Libermann joined his society to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and so he is considered as the second founder of the Spiritans (Holy Ghost Fathers). Today over 3000 Spiritans work in international communities spread across the globe in the Mission of building up God's reign of justice and peace in the world. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Spiritans in Ireland.

On the 2nd February 1852, Libermann died after a life time of service to the Mission of the Church.

Suggested Song

Christ be our Light : *Bernadette Farrell*

Reading : 1 Samuel 3:1-9

This reading is taken from the Old Testament or, as it is often called today, the New Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures. Growing up as a Jewish boy, Libermann would have been very familiar with this story of God calling the young man Samuel to be his prophet. A prophet is someone who is able to read the events of the time and to see where God is calling his people.

In those days, when the boy Samuel was serving the LORD under the direction of Eli, there were very few messages from the LORD, and visions from him were quite rare. One night Eli, who was now almost blind, was sleeping in his own room; Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, where the sacred Covenant Box was. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning, the LORD called Samuel. He answered, "Yes, sir!" and ran to Eli and said, "You called me, and here I am." But Eli answered, "I didn't call you; go back to bed." So Samuel went back to bed.

The LORD called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the LORD, because the LORD had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me,

and here I am." But Eli answered, "My son, I didn't call you; go back to bed." The LORD called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am." Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy, so he said to him, "Go back to bed; and if he calls you again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

The LORD came and stood there, and called as he had before, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak; your servant is listening."

Silence

Questions for reflection:

1. How can I be open to hearing the Lord speaking in my life?
2. How can I go beyond my present way of thinking and acting to live my life in service of all the children of God?

Suggested Psalm

Here I am Lord : Dan Shutte s.j.

Reflection from Fr. Libermann

Francis Libermann was a man of his time. He lived in France during a period of great injustice. In 1848 he witnessed the revolution that finally abolished the monarchy in France. His reflections about society are very appropriate for the times we are living in. It shows us that like the young Samuel, Libermann saw God's presence in the world of his time and lived as a prophet embracing life and change.

"You ask me what I think of our revolution. I think it is an act of justice that God has exercised against the fallen dynasty because it looked after its own interests instead of those of the people they were supposed to serve...Is it not natural that God's arm rises up against those criminals who only do justice to those they fear, because they are strong over the weak but weak when faced with the strong? This is how they sacrifice without pity the weak to those whom they fear..."

The world is going forward and we must follow, remaining in the Spirit of the Gospel so that we do good and fight what is wrong...

Let us then embrace the new order of things and bring to it the spirit of the Gospel. We will make holy the world and the world will join with us."

Francis Libermann, 1848

Prayer of Intercession

The students can compose their own prayers of intercession.

Leader: Please respond: God of Truth, Hear Our Prayer

For a world of justice and respect for all people,

We pray to the Lord...

For the transformation of heart and mind that God call us to,

We pray to the Lord...

For the truth and wisdom God offers in abundance,

We pray to the Lord...

For new ways of seeing, hearing and responding to others,

We pray to the Lord...

For a respect and care for God's creation,

We pray to the Lord...

For what else shall we pray? (spontaneous petitions)

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Be with us in all our days, O God,

As we celebrate the memory of Francis Libermann.

Be with us to challenge us.

Be with us to guide us to learn what is difficult.

Be with us as we move from our places of comfort

to be challenged to work for a better more just world.

Be with us as we discover and develop our solidarity with others.

Be with us, O God, early and late.

Final Song

Go Ye Afar