

H. B. NO. 2587

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SAINT DAMIEN DE VEUSTER DAY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Jozef Damien de Veuster, who would later be
2 known as Father Damien of Molokai and Blessed Damien de Veuster,
3 was a Roman Catholic missionary who sacrificed his life in
4 service to those suffering from Hansen's Disease in Kalaupapa on
5 Molokai.

6 On October 11, 2009, Father Damien was canonized as Saint
7 Jozef Damien de Veuster by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in
8 Rome. Prior to his canonization, Saint Damien was beatified on
9 June 4, 1995 in Brussels by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. At
10 the time of his beatification, Saint Damien was granted a
11 memorial feast day celebrated annually on May 10.

12 The purpose of this Act is to reflect Saint Damien's recent
13 confirmation of Sainthood, and mark his feast day as Saint
14 Damien de Veuster Day in Hawaii.

15 SECTION 2. Section 8-8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended to read as follows:

17 " ~~[f]§8-8[]~~ ~~Father~~ Saint Damien ~~[DeVeuster]~~ de Veuster
18 Day. ~~[April 15]~~ May 10 of each year shall be known and

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1 designated as "~~[Father]~~ Saint Damien ~~[DeVeuster]~~ de Veuster
2 Day", provided that this day is not and shall not be construed
3 to be a state holiday."

4 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
5 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Calvin K. Ay
BY REQUEST

JAN 25 2010

Report Title:

Saint Damien de Veuster Day; Non-state Holiday

Description:

Changes the Father Damien DeVeuster Day on April 15 of each year to the Saint Damien de Veuster Day on May 10 of each year.

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Office of the Lieutenant Governor

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SAINT DAMIEN DE VEUSTER DAY.

PURPOSE: To change the Father Damien DeVeuster Day on April 15 of each year to the Saint Damien de Veuster Day on May 10 of each year.

MEANS: Amend section 8-8, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: Jozef Damien de Veuster, who would later be known as Father Damien of Molokai and Blessed Damien de Veuster, was a Roman Catholic missionary who sacrificed his life in service to those suffering from Hansen's Disease in Kalaupapa on Molokai.

On October 11, 2009, Father Damien was canonized as Saint Jozef Damien de Veuster by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in Rome. Prior to his canonization, Saint Damien was beatified on June 4, 1995 in Brussels by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. At the time of his beatification, Saint Damien was granted a memorial feast day celebrated annually on May 10. This measure reflects Saint Damien's recent confirmation of Sainthood, and marks his feast day as Saint Damien de Veuster Day in Hawaii.

Born on January 3, 1840 in Belgium, Jozef Damien de Veuster was the seventh of eight children. After college, he entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and took the name Damien, after the ancient physician and martyr, in his first vows.

He arrived in Honolulu on March 19, 1864 as a missionary, and was later ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace, a church built by his religious order. He served at several parishes on the

Big Island until he learned about Kalaupapa, a secluded settlement on Molokai populated by Hansen's Disease patients. Though the Board of Health provided the residents of Kalaupapa with food and supplies, there were not enough resources to give them the health care they required.

On May 10, 1873, Damien arrived in Kalaupapa to meet the spiritual needs of its 600 residents. The first thing he did was set up a church, the Parish of St. Philomena. He soon realized that his presence provided much needed comfort to those suffering from Hansen's Disease, and he served in different capacities, including doctor, carpenter, legal advocate and grave digger. He also organized religious associations, a children's band and a choir. Through his work, Saint Damien instilled pride and dignity in the residents of Kalaupapa, restoring the faith of the forgotten.

In recognition of Damien's selfless actions, King David Kalakaua bestowed on him the honor of Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Kalakaua. When Princess Lydia Liliuokalani visited the settlement to present the medal, she witnessed the pain Hansen's Disease brought to her subjects. Impressed by his compassion, the princess spread the word of Saint Damien's work across America and throughout Europe. As a result, various organizations raised money and sent food, medicine and supplies to Kalaupapa.

Though Saint Damien passed away on April 15, 1889, his legacy lives on. His service and ministry at Kalaupapa has perpetuated the Spirit of Aloha, and has offered hope and inspiration to past, present and future generations. In Hawaii, Saint Damien remains a spiritual hero and an icon of love, compassion, courage, humility and humanitarian service.

Impact on the public: This measure allows Hawaii's citizens the opportunity to celebrate and learn about the remarkable life and works of Saint Damien.

Impact on the department and other agencies:
None.

GENERAL FUND:	None.
OTHER FUNDS:	None.
PPBS PROGRAM DESIGNATION:	None.
OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES:	None.
EFFECTIVE DATE:	Upon approval.