PROPER CALENDAR
OF THE PIOUS SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
FOR THE FOREIGN MISSIONS
(XAVERIAN MISSIONARIES)

NOVEMBER

5	SAINT GUIDO MARIA CONFORTI, BISHOP AND FOUNDER	Solemnity
28	*Blessed Giovanni Didonè, Presbyiter and Companions, Martyrs*[*]	

DECEMBER

3	SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER, PRESBYITER (Patronal Feastday of the Institute)	Solemnity

[*] When the degree of celebration is not indicated, it is an Optional Memorial.

PROPER
OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

28 november

BLESSED GIOVANNI DIDONÈ, PRESBYITER, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Optional Memorial

Giovanni Didonè (Cusinati di Rosà, March 18, 1930 – Fizi, Congo DR, November 28, 1964) was a priest, a Xaverian missionary, sent to the diocese of Uvira in Congo in 1959 and the first superior of the parish of Fizi. In the complex situation of the Simba rebellion and in front of a group that persecuted the Christian faith, he bore witness to the primacy of the Gospel with the sacrifice of his life. He died next to Albert Joubert (Saint Louis de Mrumbi, November 21, 1908), a Congolese priest killed a few moments later. Thirty kilometers away, on the same day, two other Xaverian missionaries were killed in Baraka, Father Luigi Carrara (Cornale di Pradalunga, March 3, 1933) and Brother Vittorio Faccin (Villaverla, January 4, 1934). The killers thus eliminated two communities of consecrated people: shepherds according to the heart of Christ, zealous in charity, and in the proclamation of the Gospel, who did not abandon the flock in danger but defended it to the point of shedding their blood.

From the Common of Martyrs with psalmody from the current week and day of the psalter.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the "Discourses to the Departing Missionaries" by Saint Guido Maria Conforti, Bishop

(*La parola del fondatore*, Parma 1966, 102-106; Disc. 12, 16.11.1924)

Give yourselves without reserve to the good of all peoples

On this solemn occasion, oh new Apostles of the Gospel, I bring my words to you with emotion to bid you farewell on your departure and to extend my greetings.

From this holy place, therefore, you too depart for distant shores after having renewed the resolution of sacrificing yourselves for the greatest of causes, for the most legitimate of conquests.

The distant echo of your holy and peaceful victories will soon reach us, and we, too, will share in your rejoicing.

The work of those who live for a noble and great ideal and sacrifice their existence to it is no less appreciated.

But the Missionary is the most beautiful and sublime personification of the ideal life.

He contemplated in spirit Jesus Christ, who points out to the Apostles the world to be conquered over to the Gospel, not by force of arms, but by persuasion and love, and he was enamored by it.

And to this ideal, he sacrifices family, homeland, and all of his dearest and most legitimate affections, only in search of souls to conquer to the faith in Christ; not armed with a sword and a rifle to level out all the difficulties he encounters and to strike down anyone who tries to cross his path but armed solely with the cross of Christ, always ready to shed his blood, if this is necessary for the good of his brothers, with the desire in his heart to seal his apostolate with martyrdom.

And of these hidden heroes, who do not seek human applause, you now see four before this altar ready to sacrifice themselves for the expansion of the Kingdom of God, for the salvation of so many whom they do not yet know, but whom they already love, because they consider them as brothers, redeemed by the blood of Christ.

You have consecrated yourselves for life and death to the redemption of the poor infidels.

Do not go there in the name of any earthly authority, in the name of any government, but solely in the name of Christ, to whom the heavenly Father gave as an inheritance all the nations.

Do not go forth to conquer cities and provinces; rather, teach those distant peoples the sure, infallible way to conquer the heavenly Kingdom.

Do not set out to export the riches of the earth and the products of the industries you find there, but give yourselves without reserve for the good of those peoples and to pour out among them the heavenly charisms of your sacred ministry.

Yes, go to preach the universal brotherhood proclaimed by Christ, destined to break down all barriers and form of all, without destroying nationalities and their rights, one great family, united by the bond of Christian charity.

May your apostolate be long, glorious, and above all fruitful, which may compensate you abundantly for the greatness of the sacrifice you have made.

The cup you are about to drink is the cup of Gethsemane: pains and sorrows will not be lacking to you; the spirit of darkness, whose reign you will seek to overthrow, will leave nothing untried to cross your path; human treachery will stir up the storm of persecution against you, you will be hated by many for the name of Christ and you will experience what the Apostle of the Gentiles experienced, who preceded you on the glorious path of the evangelization of the peoples.

Fear not, for that grace which supported Paul will also help you in the arduous ordeal.

In placing the adorable image of the Crucifix at your side, Jesus Crucified is your sword, your strength, the invincible weapon, and the secret of your victories.

Through it, you will rise above your frailty, triumph over superstition and human betrayal, and proceed forward in your peaceful conquests for the spreading of the Kingdom of God.

RESPONSORY

See Mk 16:15-16a; Luke 10:1

℟. Go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature
* whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.
℣. The Lord appointed other disciples and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place:
℟. whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

PRAYER

Let us pray. O God, shepherd of souls and savior of your people, who filled blessed Giovanni, presbyter, and his companions, fraternally united in martyrdom, with zeal and faithful love, grant, we pray, through their intercession, that we may also adhere faithfully to Christ and work in your Church for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. Through our Lord…