

Daniel

Matthew 22:36-40

Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

Daniel Delany was born in Paddock, Ireland, in 1747. His parents were relatively well-to-do but when his father died young Daniel spent the rest of his childhood with his two aunts in the nearby village of Mountrath. It was here too that the parish priest, Father Denis Lawlor, influenced Daniel's decision to enter the priesthood. The public practice of the Catholic Faith in Ireland was outlawed by British Law during these times. Therefore, Daniel was

smuggled out of Ireland to France in order to receive his priestly education. After excelling in his studies, Daniel was ordained a priest in 1770 and spent some six years in St. Omer, France, until his return to Ireland in 1776.

On his return to his native land he found that the condition of the Catholics had worsened considerably during his absence. Poverty and hunger had turned the country into a land of misery and lawlessness. Drunkenness, fighting, and the lack of religious observance in a Catholic country led the young priest to seek to return to his successful career in France. It was the pleas of his mother that originally kept him in his native Ireland, and over time he became deeply immersed in the needs of his local community. As he took up his duties as assistant priest in the parish of Tullow, he began to realise that the cause of much of the evil of

the day was the lack of education among the people. Determined that the Irish Catholics deserved better, he started Sunday schools for the children of his parish.

In 1783, at the young age of thirty-six, Father Delany was consecrated a Bishop, and did much to better the conditions under which the people of his diocese lived. After organising many public religious functions which were still illegal under British law, Bishop Delany finally took steps to secure for his Sunday schools a reliable source of catechists: he founded two religious congregations. On February 1st, 1807, he received the first women to start the Sisters of Saint Brigid (Brigidines) and a year later on February 2nd, he received four men to start the Brothers of Saint Patrick (Patricians).

Maxims Attributed to Bishop Delany

- Love God and live together in peace and charity.
- The Cross is the sure way to find Christ.
- The force of love will convert the hard wood of the Cross into a bed of roses.
- Do everything in a spirit of holy love and you will not find your hands empty at journey's end.
- It is not, my dear children, God's consolations but God himself you should seek.
- What you are those who come after you will be: the fountain should itself be pure in order to have the stream pure.
- From every seed sown and cultivated by pure love we shall be sure to reap a harvest of endless glory.
- Never entertain yourself or others in speaking of another's faults or failings.
- You should be no less careful to draw a veil over these than if they actually belonged to yourself.
- For you holiness will not consist in doing great actions, but in doing your least actions with great purity of intention and a genuine desire to please God.
- By performing the ordinary duties of your day well you will perfect yourself, and your day will be full of merit and good works.

