

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



**January 15- Memorial of Blessed James da Villa, Almsgiver: Defender of the poor and oppressed**

**B**l. James was born in the town of Città della Pieve, in central Italy, about 1270. He was the son of Anthony da Villa and Mostiola. As a devout young boy, he frequently attended services at the nearby Servite Church. There are indications that he studied both law and letters at Siena, gaining proficiency in both.

Even at that time he became concerned about the poor and the sick. He spared no sacrifice in the defense of orphans, widows and the needy. Later, so as to fulfill better the commandment of the Lord, he gave all his possessions to the poor and dedicated himself completely to the care of the sick. As an example of his great love, the author of an early life of Blessed James did not hesitate to apply to him what we find in many other lives of the saints: during Mass one day James was struck by the words of the Lord: "if anyone comes to me without turning his back on his father and mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, indeed his very self, he cannot be my follower. In the same way, none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." Bl. James felt that these words were addressed to him, and so he left all and dedicated himself to the service of God and his neighbor. This description, though commonplace in the

## CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY  
Vocation Newsletter

lives of the saints, nevertheless testifies to his reputation for holiness.

James restored a church and hospice which had fallen into disrepair, and there he received the poor of the town. He fed them, treated their wounds, and cared for their needs. When a powerful man usurped the possessions of the hospice, James defended the rights of the poor at the Roman Curia and won his case. The usurper then invited James to come visit him on the pretense of desiring to resolve their differences. This avaricious man then arranged to have assassins attack and kill James on his way back to Città della Pieve. Thus James, defender of the poor and oppressed, died in 1304, giving a witness of justice and love with his own blood.

In 1806 the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved the cult of Blessed James and in 1846 Pope Pius IX permitted the Servite Order to celebrate a Mass and Office in his honor.

The life of Bl. James witnesses to the important fact that to be a disciple of Jesus, one must fall in love with the Lord.

To be in love with Jesus is to make Him the center of our lives, to make him the





most significant relationship in our lives. The reward is the gift of joy that reassures us that all will be well in all circumstances, good or not. Our love for the Lord exhibits itself in the manner by which we are willing to empty our hearts of a personal agenda and adopt the agenda of the Lord. The agenda of the Lord is clear. We are to love God and love others. Blessed James fell in

Jesus cares for us. We give what we have received. In doing so, we grow stronger in the deep knowledge that the Lord is one with us. The witness of Bl. James invites us to fall in love with the Lord and to discern how we can share the gift of God's love with others. When we share this love, we experience fulfillment and deep peace because we do what we were created to do.

## Reflection Questions:

1. **What was it like, how did it feel when I fell in love with the Lord? How do I experience His love in my life?**
2. **What might be my hindrances to being in love with Christ? What do I need to ask the Lord help me with that I can fall in love with Him?**
3. **How might I serve others as Christ serves me in love?**

## Prayer:

**Father in heaven, your love inspired James to risk his life in defense of the rights of the poor and oppressed. Make us strong and courageous against opposition as we work for peace and justice, building a community of love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

### Vocation Directors

Fr Donald Siple, OSM  
donaldsiple@servitesusa.org

Mr Eddie Murphy  
vocations@servitesusa.org

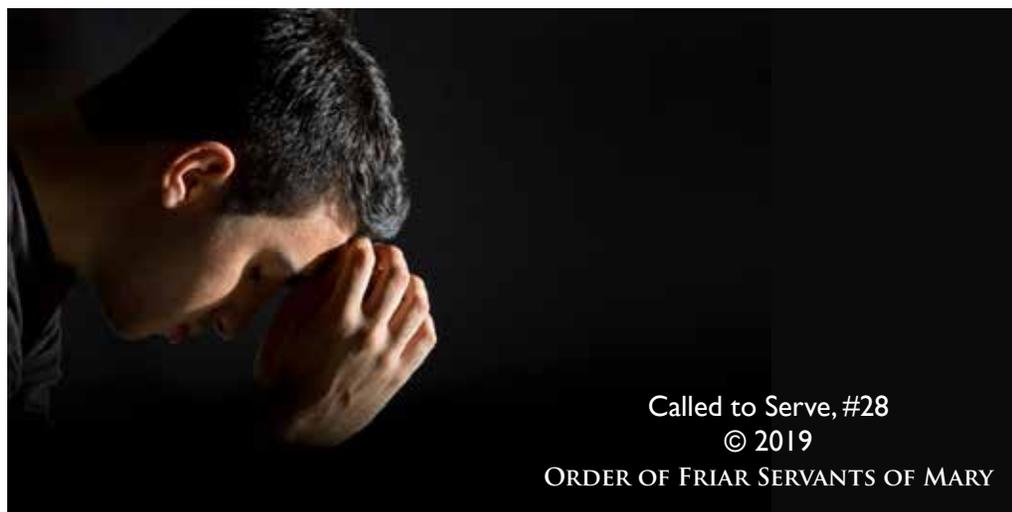
follow



love with the Lord and let the Lord use him to care for and defend the poor. Bl. James became the voice of those who had no voice in society. The poor knew the Lord's love through the life and ministry of James.

As you continue to discern your response to the call and invitation of the Lord, ask for the gift to fall in love with Christ and ask how you can share Christ's love with others.

The Lord invites us into a relationship of love that moves us to care for others as



Called to Serve, #28  
© 2019

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY