

A MONTH OF PRAYER

With the Sayings of



Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa

**Remembered by his Friends
and
Family Members**

A SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR HIS BEATIFICATION

AUGUST 2015

DIOCESE OF TZANEEN RSA



INTRODUCTION

As we participate in a month of prayer and reflect on the sayings and example of Benedict Daswa's life, we are reminded that he was always conscious of his dependence on God for everything. Benedict Daswa was a man of prayer in action who lived according to the Benedictine Motto, "Ora et Labora". We can understand the events in the life of Benedict Daswa only in the light of his practical faith-relationship with God.

In the life and death of the Benedict Daswa, it is clear that God was the active Agent. This reminds me of what our Lord Jesus said to Peter, "When you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted, but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (John 21,18). Benedict Daswa did not live long enough to grow old in the literal sense but he did mature in the faith very quickly. We can detect that he was always trying to ensure that it was God who was leading his life rather than his simply following his own will.

Benedict Daswa, like all the saints and martyrs of the Church, challenges us to become mature Catholics, holistically formed in the Spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He challenges us to pray with the awareness of seeking that God's Will may be done in everything we do and think and say. He was killed by those who rejected his faith in Jesus Christ. He was killed because God's Will is a loving, merciful, life-affirming and truthful Will whom he lovingly obeyed without compromise until the very end of his journey in this life. Benedict Daswa is now in heaven interceding for us, especially for us in Africa, but also for anyone who is seeking his intercession, irrespective of nation, tribe, people or tongue (Revelations 7,9).

We are still journeying in this life in the hope of sharing the blessed eternal joy of the saints in heaven with Christ our Lord. Let us pray to God confidently with Benedict Daswa, and allow the Holy Spirit to form us into better and bolder witnesses of Christ in this world which is often, not only so far away from Christ, but even allied with the anti-Christ. In a special way we seek the intercession of Benedict Daswa for our Catholic married couples and families, that his spirit of family prayer, marital fidelity and loving service may be experienced in our homes and in our community life.

May God bless you with the peace of Christ.

Bishop Joao Rodrigues

Bishop of the Diocese of Tzaneen

29 June 2015

PRAYER TO IMPLORE FAVOURS
to be said each day

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

O Blessed Trinity, you filled the heart of your Servant Benedict with great love and zeal in building up your kingdom. You chose him and gave him the courage and the strength to stand up for his faith without fear and bear witness unto death. Loving God, like him, may I always proclaim the truth of the Gospel by the witness of my life.
Keep me away from all deeds of darkness.
Protect me from evil spirits and all the powers of evil.
Make me a true Apostle of Life in my family and in society.
Father, through his intercession, and according to your will, grant me the grace that I ask of you....
I draw strength and courage from the life of your Servant Benedict who has now been proposed to the faithful for veneration and as a model of holiness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

With ecclesiastical approval, 24 August 2013
+Joao Noé Rodrigues, Bishop of Tzaneen (South Africa)

Please send all information regarding graces and favours received through the intercession of the Servant of God, Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa to, Diocese of Tzaneen, Cause of Benedict Daswa, P. O. Box 261, Tzaneen 0850, RSA.

Email address, bendaswa@mweb.co.za

WEEK ONE

MONDAY *Benedict Daswa, A True Family Man*

One of Benedict's friends, a principal, spoke about Benedict's attitude toward family life,

"When men were at a District meeting, Benedict said, 'Men should help their wives, for example, if there is a baby at home and the Mother is busy, the Father should take care of the baby. The time has come for men to realise that we can do women's work.' Another man said, 'Men should do men's

work, and women women's work'. Benedict said, *'No, even men can do women's work. If the mother is busy washing, for instance, and a baby needs attention, the father should take care of that baby. If something happens to the little one, I can use a nappy to help the baby'*.

Some men used to laugh at him, saying that he was overpowered by his wife. Benedict Daswa replied, *'You will be looked down on if you are the boss in the family, yet do not help your wife, and expect that the women will do everything for you. Biologically, we are meant to help one another. There is nothing wrong if men do women's work, and nothing wrong if women do men's work'*. We asked him, *'Is that what you do?'* He replied, *'Yes'*, and gave some examples. The men thought to themselves, *'Poor Daswa!'* Yet even if people disagreed with him, Benedict never changed his mind because he was convinced he was right. Even today not every man would believe in sharing 50-50 at home”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

TUESDAY *Benedict Daswa, A Man of Prayer*

Benedict's eldest son, Lufuno, remembered, “We used to pray and I still have some memories of that. One time we were going to a resort somewhere. I do not remember where my siblings were, but I was there with Mum – I think there were three or four of us. Before we departed, packing our travel bags and having everything sorted out, my Father would say, *'Let us say a prayer'*”.

At school Benedict also taught the children to pray. One of the teachers from Nweli Primary School confirms this, “Every day he would encourage and teach the children to pray. Class by class he would say to them, *'You pray for us today. You will do this today'*. Benedict was interested in God's work. When he gathered the people for a meeting associated with the school, he would tell them about God first of all, then ask them if they went to Church, or if they were baptized. If the answer was No', he would say, *'Come on, you are late!'*”

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEDNESDAY *Benedict Daswa, A Man of Prayer*

One of Benedict's sisters-in-law recalled, "Benedict came to see me when I had my first child at the Donald Fraser Hospital. The baby was delivered on the 30th September 1988. When Benedict came to the hospital the following day, I will never forget what he said to me. He asked me was the baby a little girl or boy. When I told him the baby was a boy, Benedict was very happy. He said, '*You know, Mazwale – You know what? We are grateful. God has answered my prayer*'. What I know about the Daswa clan is that, if the first child is a boy, then the woman will remain with the family until she dies. It means that you will never leave. You will remain his wife until death parts you. These are words that I will never forget". ("Mazwale" is a Venda word of affection used between in-laws).

On Friday afternoon 2 February 1990, the very day Benedict was killed, he was working in his garden planting bananas, after being at school all the morning. Around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, his sister-in-law asked Benedict to drive her and her baby son to the Doctor in the nearby township of Makwarela (Sibasa), as her baby was suffering from earache. Even though Benedict was dirty and muddy, and without his shoes, he decided took them straightaway as it was getting late. He said to his sister-in-law, '*Let us first pray*'".

Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa

THURSDAY *Teacher Daswa – A Strict, Highly-Motivated Worker*

His sister shared, "One day, I asked my brother Benedict why he chose teaching. He told me that he chose teaching because in the Daswa family, and also in the village there were not many well-educated people. He then added, '*I also like children and I want to teach them so that they can be responsible people when they grow up*'".

Benedict loved his job. He followed the instructions from The Education Department on how to run his school. He would punish the wrongdoers, but in a loving way. He would call the wrong doers to his office, and listen to both parties. If there were two boys fighting, he would listen to both their stories, and then explain to the wrongdoer the reason for the punishment he would receive, adding, '*I am doing this, not because I dislike you, but because I want to help you*'.

Benedict encouraged good manners. He taught the children not to steal, to respect and obey their elders and to respect each other. He led by example and encouraged his teachers to support the less fortunate children in their studies. Benedict encouraged his teachers with Christian sayings such as, “*Only God knows how we can help that child.*”

In discussions with other principals Benedict would stress the importance of exemplary conduct for both the principal and the teachers. They must be honest in their work, avoid leaving work early as well as any unauthorised absenteeism. He would add, “*If we want to maintain discipline with the children, we ourselves must be found to be honest in our work. So we must not leave school early and, we should not dodge work.*”

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

FRIDAY *Benedict Daswa, A True Witness for the Faith*

One of his colleagues in Nweli Primary School remarked, “Whenever Benedict was with people he couldn’t help saying something about the Word of God. For example, if you spoke to him about a problem outside the church he would say, ‘*If you are with God, then God who knows everything will help you.*’

Another person shared, “Benedict helped people to build their faith, understand the Church’s doctrine, and explain and share their faith with others. Sometimes he tried to help people understand their own faith more deeply by explaining his own faith to them. The things he explained were the things he lived – he himself was a living book! When people questioned him, he would say, ‘*We pray and do the things of faith. No other things.*’ Benedict put into practice the teachings of the Gospel. He was humble and wanted to serve others, rather than expect others to serve him. He wanted to be forgiving just like Jesus”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SATURDAY *Benedict Daswa, A True Witness of Faith*

A witness testified, “On one occasion, a young Catholic told Benedict

about a certain German Pastor coming from the Apostolic Faith Mission Church, who was performing miracles and giving conferences. The young Catholic told Benedict he went there with some other youths and that they were discussing miracles. About 25 people were there with their crutches, along with many sick people. Afterwards they claimed they were all cured, throwing their crutches into the air, etc. It was a miracle! When, however, they saw these people two weeks later, they were still the same as before! Benedict warned the young Catholic, *‘Never ever lose your faith, because of what you see from outside your Church. Remain a Catholic and defend your faith’*. Benedict would often speak of the importance of determination and submission to the Almighty”.

A principal friend of Benedict said, “Benedict was not shy about displaying his Catholicism in public. As Principals, we used to meet for feasts where we were served food. Always Benedict wanted to start with a prayer by making the Sign of the Cross. *‘We must stick to our religion,’* he would say, *‘and be proud to be a Catholic’*.”

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SUNDAY *Benedict’s Respect for the Religion of Others*

Sister Matthew had received a stand for a garden from the Headman of the community. That particular garden belonged both to the Catholic and the non-Catholic women. Because Sister respected the Sabbath Church, she would water the vegetables on Saturdays with the Sunday worshippers. Then on Sundays the Zionists of the Sabbath Church would water the vegetables. Each group respected the religion of the other. Benedict Daswa said this was because these people were Lemba relatives of his. *‘You cannot force them to be Catholics’*, He would say. *‘Let us respect each other’s religion.’* Because of this there was always a good relationship between the two religions.

One of Benedict’s cousins, who for three years had been welcomed into Benedict’s family, shared, “The words that struck me most and which I remember, were about prosperity. Benedict used to say to me, *‘You cannot prosper in life if you do not believe in Christ. You have to believe in God. You must bear in mind that it is only Christianity that will make you succeed in every aspect of life’*. When I first went there, I was not attending church. I can still remember my parents being very surprised when I came back home

from Mbahe, to see that I was now totally involved in the Church Services. I was now a different person, as I had learnt so much about Christianity from Benedict”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEEK TWO

MONDAY *Benedict Daswa, A Man Committed to the Church*

Benedict gave himself tirelessly to the Catholic community. He was a devoted Church worker and volunteer catechist who gave catechism classes to catechumens. He taught Catechetics free of charge so that the village catechist could receive some remuneration at the end of the month. He used to say, *‘We laymen must give our service for free’*.

His parish priest and close friend, Fr Patrick O’Connor MSC, would sometimes jokingly say to him, *‘Benedict you are a priest’*. But Benedict would respond, *‘No, Father, you are the priest, but we, as parishioners must also use the Bible. So why can’t we emulate your life? That is what we are called to. The disciples followed in Jesus’ footstep, so that is why you must encourage us laymen to follow you, because you are our leader’*.

He used also to say, *‘We should all try to serve. We must be there even when the catechist or priest is not there. We must try to assist, so that the people can see that the Church is really present when we are there’*.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

TUESDAY *Benedict Daswa, A Man Committed to the Church*

Benedict Daswa used to say, *“‘If we people who are working want to serve God wholeheartedly, then we must contribute generously’*. He went on to say, *‘What do you think Father can do with only 10 cents?’* He explained it in this way, *‘Let us try to think of the people who do not have salaries as we have. As these salaries are God’s gift to us, so other people can expect a gift from us’*. He was quoting from the Catechism book, *‘Help the poor as far as you can’*. (Taken from the Venda Question-and-Answer Catechism Book on the Commandments of the Church and the Ten Commandments).

Benedict Daswa explained that he stood for what he had previously said, *'It is only in Nweli District that people do not want to contribute generously'*. He continued, *'In Thohoyandou, people contribute more generously in their churches. All the people contribute generously, even the poor. We are the parishioners, so we must try to help our priest'*.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEDNESDAY *Building the First Church in Nweli*

Building the first Catholic Church in the area at Nweli was a project dear to the heart of Benedict Daswa. He worked tirelessly on this project, and encouraged others to do likewise. At that time, Fr Dan Eiffe MSC was responsible for Nweli district with Fr J. Stubbs MSC as parish priest of Thohoyandou. Benedict said to his wife, Eveline, *'We cannot build a house before we build the church'*.

He became more and more involved in the building process, sacrificing his time to collect stones from near the river and using his bakkie to transport them. On Saturdays and Sundays he would say, *'Let's go and collect the stones'*, and at his own expense he would bring along bread and spread. As the Principal of Nweli Primary School, he also gave permission to the Catholic Community to store window frames in his school. When the church had been completed, he encouraged the young people to paint the inside with him.

One young adult who was involved in the Young Christian Students' Movement said, "Benedict was greatly concerned that, *'The Church should evangelise as widely as possible'*. This was his main area of concern, and in fact, if it were possible, Benedict would want everyone to be converted to Catholicism. He was proud of being a Catholic, as could be seen in his great zeal for teaching the Catholic faith. He showed this through the building of churches. Many churches were built in his area and Benedict played a significant role in this. He used to say, *'Let us not have church under trees, but let us build churches'*. He caught this enthusiasm from Fr O'Connor MSC, who was a source of great inspiration to him".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

THURSDAY *Benedict Daswa, A Man of Charity, A Man for Others*

Some people used to see him taking some bags of mealie meal to needy families. When asked why he was doing this he replied, *“I am doing this because I grew up in that situation and I know how difficult it is to sleep without having eaten anything”*.

Benedict would also visit the families of the learners he was teaching, in order to get first-hand information about their situation. If there were needy children, he would not hesitate to take some money out from his pocket and give it to the mother so that she could brew beer to sell. He would say to her, *“I grew up that way. My mother used to brew beer in order for me to go to school”*.

One of Benedict’s relatives said that Benedict was a generous man providing vegetables to his neighbours free of charge. He really cared about his neighbours. The only problem he had with them was when their children would steal his oranges. He would say to the parents, *“I am giving you these things, because whenever you steal from me you are not only stealing from me, you are stealing from God.”* He emphasised, *“If you are stealing, then I will not give you any more vegetables, because you are also stealing from yourselves.”*

Some students often used to come and work with him after school. Benedict did not believe in giving them anything for free. He would say, *“You get down and work and then I can do something for you..As long as you work hard in the garden I will help you!”* Most of the students who came and worked for him would use the money he paid them to get their school things. Benedict would challenge them, *“If you do something without having to be pushed, then you will enjoy it, but if you just make it a job that has to be done, then you will be working like a slave!”* On one occasion he said to one of his cousins who was working in his field, *“Are you aware that most of the things I am teaching you are vitally important for you in the future when I am not with you?”*

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

FRIDAY *Benedict, A Man of Charity, a Man for Others*

One of the sisters-in law of Benedict recounted, *“As we were approaching Dzingahe playground we saw a group of people who didn’t stop us. We drove*

on and when we came to Mbahe village Benedict stopped near his house for me to alight. He requested, *'Mazwale, will you tell my wife, that I am driving on to Ha-Nkavhele, next to Nweli village, to drop off this boy and his bag of mealie meal'*.

One of Benedict's daughters gives her recount of the incident, "We went to school on the Friday as usual. After school, my father took the mother and baby to the doctor in Sibasa, who was a paediatrician. I remember my father bringing them back from the doctor's. As I was running to open the gate for him, my father called out to me, *'Do not open the gate, I am still going somewhere near Nweli to drop off the man and his bag of mealie meal. Tell your mother I am taking him home and will return immediately'*. That was the last time I saw my father or spoke to him. I waited near the window in the sitting room, looking out for the car. It was not yet dark but was getting dark. They drove off".

The boy with his bag of mealie meal also remembers, "When we arrived at my place, I took the bag of mealie meal into the house, but when I came out, I noticed that Benedict had not yet driven off. I asked him why, but he said he didn't know why the car would not start. Then he went to the back of his bakkie to see if there was anything wrong. He tried once again, and this time the ignition started. There seemed to be nothing wrong! Jokingly he said to me, *'What have you done to my vehicle? Are you a witch?'* I replied, 'It was a good thing you had to stop otherwise you would have left before I said goodbye'".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SATURDAY *Benedict, a Man of Charity, a Man for Others*

One of Benedict's friends recalls asking him, "Why did you drive so fast on the mud road where there were lots of cows?" He replied, *'If you want to save a person's life, you won't be involved in an accident'*. On Wednesday 31 January 1990, he paid me for my work. I was due to come back to work on the next day, Thursday, the last time I was with Benedict Daswa". He continues, "When the Deacon came to see the garden, Benedict was saying to me, *'If you want some mealie meal, you can cut some'*. He said the same thing to the deacon, *'Why don't you cut some, and cook it?'* I replied, 'When I come back on Monday I will chop some', but Benedict answered, *'No, I*

will chop it for you, and you can collect it at church on Sunday'. This was Thursday afternoon after school between 3.00 and 4.00 pm. I left, telling Benedict that I would see him on Sunday [4 February]. That was the last time I saw him”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SUNDAY *Benedict and His Friendships*

One of his teacher friends explains that his friendship with Benedict was to last till death. “Was it a premonition of his death when he said one day to Edward Matshili and me, ‘*Look, we are friends; if one of us dies, then the other two of us will be keeping watch over the coffin that day*’”. Looking directly at me he went on, ‘*If it is you, then Edward and I will be keeping watch over your coffin, since we are all friends.*’ It is a Venda tradition to attend the funeral of our friends”.

A co-member of the Headman’s Committee can still remember Benedict’s words the last time they met. He reminisced, “Samuel Tshimangadzo Benedict was a person who grew up close to me, and was very used to my family. Just before his death, he came to my home one day and said, ‘*Well, we no longer see you at funeral services. Does that mean you won’t even be present at my death?*’”

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEEK THREE

MONDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

When any teacher was encouraging people to go to traditional doctors, Benedict would stand up and challenge them, ‘*I am surprised that you who are educated, instead of teaching people about the will of God, are taking them backwards*’.

In November 1989, heavy rains and lightning strikes were prevalent in the Venda area. As this was not seen by the locals as a natural phenomenon, some members of the Community became very concerned about who was responsible. One member of the Headman’s Council remembers, “In 1989

around October, November, December, there were some rains with lightning. I cannot recall anything about other houses, I do remember that the Magoba house which was a thatched house, was struck with lightning. This happened twice, so people came to the conclusion, that it was not a natural phenomenon, but that someone was doing it. When the matter went to the Headman's kraal, it was Benedict Daswa who said, *'We cannot get involved in the affairs of that family. This is not the business of the whole village'*. He was then made to shut up, as if he had been speaking nonsense".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

TUESDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

"As a Christian, Benedict never believed in killing people. He would say, *'Look, no one can bring about death except God, so why spend our money? Death comes, people pass away, doctors can verify that the person has died because of an illness, but no one can say that Mr X died because of muti. We must not take the law into our own hands'*. This public and consistent stand against witchcraft was soon to bring the violent end to his own life.

Then people started grumbling, *'He is the one influencing people. He is a leader, so why is he refusing to burn witches? He does not agree with our way'*. As a result, Benedict was told in no uncertain terms to keep quiet. He became very angry and threatened to leave the headman's council altogether. As a result, chaos and conflict began that day.

People were saying, *'We would do better to kill him'*, because Benedict was standing firm on his belief in God. As many in the Community saw him as belittling their traditional beliefs, they conspired to get rid of him. He was a stumbling block to them because of his Catholic Faith and his consistent stand against witchcraft. This was also confirmed indirectly by something Benedict said to a person working in his field the Monday evening, a week before his death. It was not, however, something he had not often said publically, *'My conscience will not allow me to contribute the money'*".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEDNESDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

"Benedict said to the Headman, *'I cannot understand why you have agreed to*

with the villagers. Once you give them permission and write a letter, they will go off and come back with a sangoma. He will then 'sniff out' the so-called suspect and the villagers will kill that person as soon as the name is known, and it will be all because of your decision. There will also be chaos in the village. I am not going to contribute anything toward getting the sangoma. You can do it with other villagers!"

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

THURSDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

"Benedict always refused to spend money on expensive things, because mostly he wanted his money to help the poor. One time when I was in his garden, there was a storm with thunder and lightning which struck people in his area. He told me, 'You see these people here, are not educated, they just want to spend money. These people at the Chief's kraal want R5 to be contributed by all the families to go to a sangoma and find out what can be done about the person causing the lightning'"

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

FRIDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

A man who used to work in Benedict's garden said, "During the weekend, there was a meeting at the Headman's kraal, to find out if people would agree to contribute R5 to go to a sangoma to cast the bones and find out who was causing the lightning. "What are you going to do?" I asked Benedict Daswa. He said that he would not contribute. Benedict told me this story on Monday of the week he was killed. What Benedict said to me that Monday evening was, "My conscience will not let me contribute the money".

Even though Benedict said he would not pay for this, he explained that, *'If there is a poor person running short of money for the house or for food, then it is good to contribute to help such a person. But if it is for someone who is supposedly causing lightning, then what will they do to that person?'* "They will chase him away", we answered. *'No, we cannot promote that.'* Benedict Daswa said emphatically".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SATURDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

One of Benedict's relatives remembers the last visit made to Benedict, "First of all I want to say that when it comes to his enemies, Benedict didn't want to share with anyone. So it was not evident what was happening between him and some of his enemies in the village.

I had a dream. My brother called me and I went there. When I was there with Benedict, my brother said, *'I am going to slaughter a beast because soon I will be graduating from the University and we will have a feast'*.

At that point I said, 'You know, my brother, while you are talking about this, I have been dreaming about your having been hanged and beaten and bleeding'. After that, my brother said, *'You are right. I have many enemies here. There is a rumour going around that the Headman has given me a plot of land, and given me a bigger portion. For that reason my enemies are complaining that the Headman is giving to the Lembas land which is ours, while we Vendas have nothing'*. This was in 1989. It was in November that year that I dreamt about Benedict".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SUNDAY *Benedict, a Courageous Witness to the Truth*

The relative continues, "I told Benedict that I'd already had this dream when he called me to come to his place and tell me they'd soon be slaughtering a beast to celebrated his graduation from University. It was on 21 November, 1989 when I went to Mbahe. Benedict's reaction to my dream was that he began to connect it with what was actually happening on his side. The Venda's were complaining that he had been given a large portion of land where he could plant bananas, and mangoes. This was the first time he had shared with me the enmity between him and some members of the village.

On that particular day, when I used to visit my mother, my brother said to me. *'Let's eat from the same bowl'*. While we were eating he said, *'Let's pray hard. Let's pray hard for the problems facing me'*. He wanted to pray hard against the evil one. That was the last time I saw Benedict alive. I did not spend the night there. When evening came, Benedict drove me back to my home and dropped me at the gate".

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEEK FOUR

MONDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

An eyewitness testified, “The two boys who had my box of matches entered and pulled Benedict Daswa out of the rondavel kitchen. The one that Benedict Daswa hugged was the son of my brother-in-law. While Benedict was clinging to him, he was pleading, ‘*Don’t kill me. Please, spare my life*’”

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

TUESDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

“When the crowd came they threatened the wife of the rondavel owner shouting, ‘If Benedict is there bring him out. If you refuse, we will burn down your house!’ As Benedict heard this from inside, he came out to confront the crowd, and pleaded with them, ‘*Don’t burn her house. Here I am*’. After that he said to the mob, ‘*Won’t you allow me to pray first?*’ They did and he prayed until he was killed.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

WEDNESDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

“What I heard was that Benedict, after praying with his head bent low, and having finished his prayer said, ‘*I am finished [praying]. You can now do to me what you want*’. They then immediately started beating him once more”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

THURSDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

All the witnesses confirm that Benedict was praying when he was killed. Some people said, “He asked to be allowed to pray before being killed. In Venda, he asked, ‘*Nditsheni ndi rabele*’, that is, ‘*Let me pray before you kill me*’”.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

FRIDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

What was his prayer? Because of all the noise, it was difficult to hear and understand what Benedict was praying. Only one eyewitness alone, said, 'What Benedict said in his prayer was, *'God, into your hands receive my Spirit'*'.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SATURDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

Another witness, a catechist, said that there was a boy present whom Benedict knew very well. He asked this boy, 'Are you also going to kill me?'

Someone else reported that Benedict asked his killers, *'Are you looking for money from me. If I owe you anything, let me know how much and I will pay you'*.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

SUNDAY *Benedict Daswa's Martyrdom*

Then one of the men from the mob came with a knobkerrie. Benedict saw him coming. Realising he could not escape because the mob was surrounding him. Benedict prayed, *'God, into your hands receive my Spirit'*. Everything then went very quickly. Some of the mob said, 'Listen to him, he is dying calling on his God'. The man hit Benedict on the head with his knobkerrie, which crushed his skull. Benedict fell to the ground. Boiling water was then poured over his head, ears, nostrils and injuries.

**Prayer to implore favours through the intercession of the Venerable
Servant of God Tshimangadzo Samuel Benedict Daswa**

Fr Andre Bohas msc

Tzaneen, 8 May 2015

Printing kindly sponsored by The Catholic Order of the Knights of da Gama

