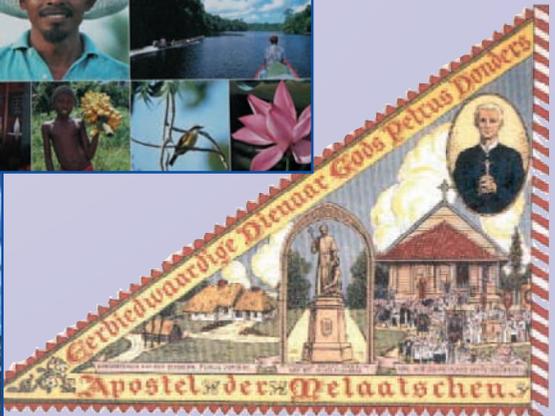
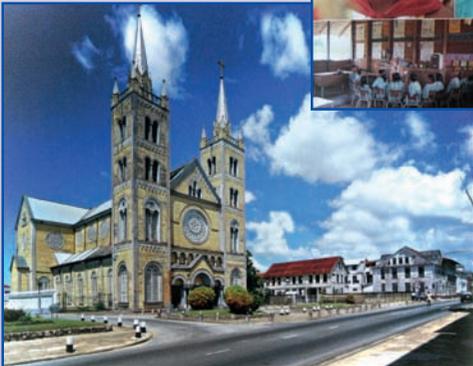
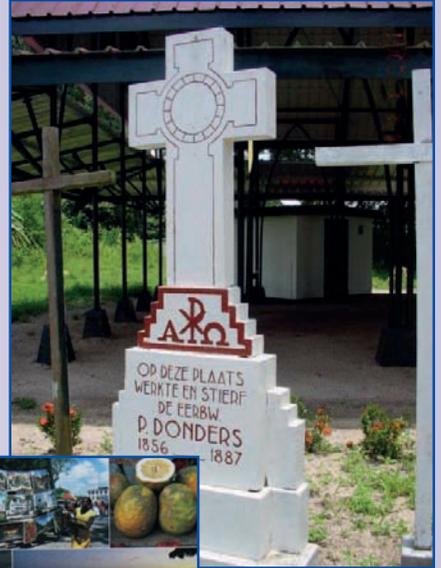
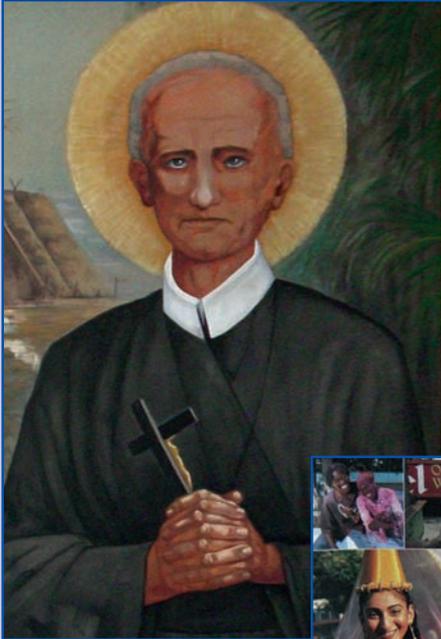


# Peter Donders

*On the side of the marginalized*



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# 1. The miracle of Tilburg

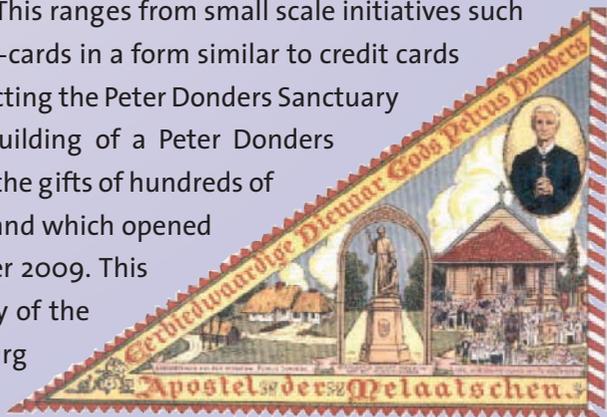
A committee has been working for the canonization of Peter Donders under the guidance of two Redemptorists. This has not been easy. At least one miracle is needed. That miracle is to have taken place after 1982: that was the year in which, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Pope John Paul II beatified Peter Donders. It has been difficult finding a new miracle. There is a miracle, but it is not of the kind that the Vatican considers essential for the canonization of someone.

The miracle referred to here, is the fact that Peter Donders is the most popular person of Tilburg today. “Peerke” is what he is popularly called. He has become an icon for Tilburg, the sixth largest city in the Netherlands (with 200,000 inhabitants). And that is so, even though he lived according to the values and norms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and therefore, as it can be said, not really of the times we live in today. There is a lot taking place concerning Peter Donders. This ranges from small scale initiatives such as the production of prayer-cards in a form similar to credit cards and small bicycle flags depicting the Peter Donders Sanctuary in North Tilburg, to the building of a Peter Donders Center made possible with the gifts of hundreds of people and organizations, and which opened its doors on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009. This day is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of this popular Tilburg citizen.

## **A miracle**

*A miracle is a Divine act of God outside of the natural law, such as a sudden and unexplained healing. God acknowledges the holiness of someone by means of a miracle.*

*You also have the answer to prayer. One asks God through the mediation of Peter Donders for a favor that can be regarded as humanly possible, such as success in obtaining a drivers license. The Peter Donders Society in Tilburg (Vereniging Petrus Donders) makes mention of an average of fifteen answers to prayer per month.*



pilgrimage flag, app. 1930

This jubilee was one of four reasons for a celebration on a large scale in Tilburg during 2009. The theme for the museum is Love for one's neighbor, an indication that the Tilburg community has understood the universal message of Peter Donders very well. Just as amazing as the museum for this holy person from Tilburg is the complete restoration of the Peter Donders Sanctuary in North Tilburg. This sanctuary houses a replica of the house where he was born, a monument, a large chapel, a set of Stations of the Cross in the open air, a pump on the well which plays an important role in the popular devotion for Peter Donders and a cafe. That last item completes this place of pilgrimage in a typically North Brabant way.

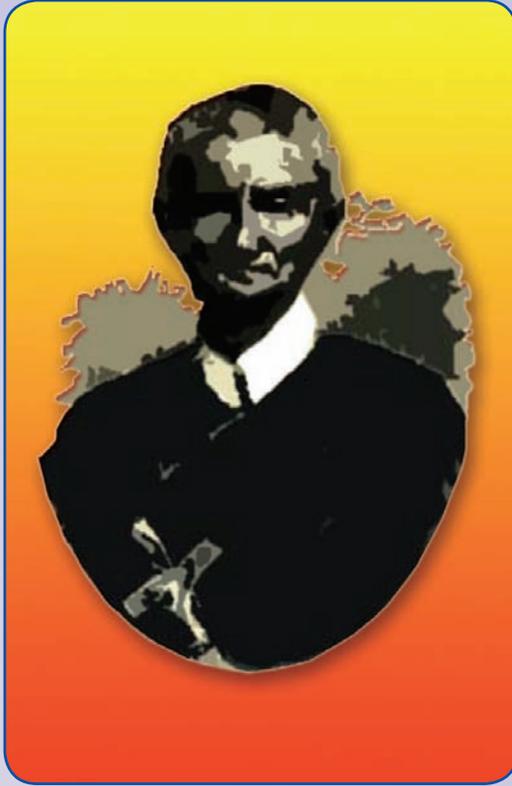


*chapel on the premises in North Tilburg*

The leper colony, Batavia in Surinam, where Peter Donders spent so much of his life time, has also been restored. Much has been accomplished thanks to the financial assistance from Jacques de Leeuw of Tilburg.

However, the Vatican does not recognize all this as constituting a miracle. None the less, the Tilburg population has given Peter Donders the honor of being its patron, as if he were already a canonized saint. He is regarded and promoted in Tilburg as being the patron of the global society. This is expressed in the prayer to be found on the credit-card-like holy card. Tilburg numbers amongst its citizens approximately 120 different nationalities.

In fact North Tilburg, the area where his sanctuary is situated, is a multicultural suburb second to none. Peter Donders is also very popular in Surinam and amongst the people of Surinam living in the Netherlands. He engaged himself with people, regardless of their origins. All saints are patrons of one thing or another. There has not been a patron saint for the global society. Peter Donders is the answer here.



*credit card - frontside (above)*

*credit card - rear (below)*

**Peter Donders**, you are a blessing for people  
because for you, boundaries did not exist  
because for you color, religion and status were of no importance.

**Peter Donders**, with your open mind to the world  
who treated each person as a friend  
who with your golden heart, bridged time and space  
who showed that God is for all people

**Peter Donders**,  
help us to be strong in difficult times  
help us to learn to know and understand each other  
help us to make the world a more beautiful and better place.

## 2. Peter Donders in Tilburg

### Home weaver

Peter Donders was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1809 in what can be considered a typical Tilburg setting. In that year Tilburg received city rights from Louis Napoleon. His father, Arnold was a home weaver. The manufacturer provided him with thread and the other necessities with which to weave linen cloth at home, and then to deliver these to the manufacturer. The weaving loom stood in the weaving room, which together with a small barn and living room made up the house. A replica of the house of his birth was blessed on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1931 and gives an excellent idea of what it must have been like then. Behind this house was a kitchen garden. This was vital because the family of a weaver earned hardly enough to survive on.

*house of birth in North Tilburg*



*That Peter Donders wanted to become a priest, was evident as a child. He built altars and played at "saying mass". This was commonly done by catholic children right up to the sixties. The mothers would make vestments and fathers made the little altars. Peppermints were used as hosts. And roles the children played would be as they then were; the boys were the priests, and the girls made up the congregation.*

A weaver's lot was a poor one, which can be seen from the high death rate of children. When Peter was six years old, his mother, Petronella van den Brekel, died. His father, Arnold remarried a year later with Johanna Maria van de Pas. She was a good stepmother for Peter and his younger brother, Martin. Martin suffered from a deformation of the spinal cord and Peter was not very strong. But his determination was strong. Already at the age of five he knew he wanted to become a priest.

Peter Donders attended primary school until he was twelve years old. He was a quiet boy and as a pupil, not especially intelligent. After school he helped his father with weaving. Behind the loom he prayed constantly. That did not enhance the quality of his work. Praying is what he also did daily in the church of 'het Goirke'. This church contains the 1590 baptismal font in which he was baptized. It is here also, that the large painting hangs that had been used at the beatification ceremony in St.Peters in Rome. Also Peter prayed often in the Hasselt chapel. A plaque commemorating this is to be found in the pilgrimage center. As a boy he preached from a washing tub. At the request of Father W. van de Ven, the parish priest of the Goirke parish, he taught the catechism to children. In 1831 he asked this parish priest to help him to realize his intense desire to become a priest.

### **Servant and seminarian**

A vocation for a boy like Peter Donders did not necessarily mean that he could also then become a priest. Two things worked against him: he was not one of

the clever ones and he was poor. At that time the priesthood was commonly the preserve for the sons of rich parents. But because he was so determined, Father van de Ven was prepared to pay at least part of the tuition fees. He also found him two other benefactors. Then, the director of the minor seminary Beekvliet in St.Michielsgestel had to be persuaded. An additional problem was the fact that Peter was really too old. A compromise was found. He would work as a servant in the minor seminary and during his spare time he would be allowed to study.

During the first six months at the minor seminary Beekvliet he functioned solely as servant. The study opportunities were not realized because the director considered his intellectual capacities to be inadequate. As a servant, Peter worked so hard that the director and teachers decided to give him a chance; he was allowed to attend classes. Nevertheless his results were not something to write home about. Except where religious subjects were concerned. Then he excelled. He was bullied and humiliated by the students. In spite of everything, he obtained decent results in the final exams in 1837.

On completing his schooling, Peter was advised to enter a religious order. This was considered to be more suitable for him rather than continuing his studies at the major seminary. The Franciscans, the Jesuits and the Redemptorists all rejected him – the Redemptorists did not consider him intelligent enough. Whereupon the director of the major seminary allowed him to come to his institute. Peter was 28 years old. During his stud-

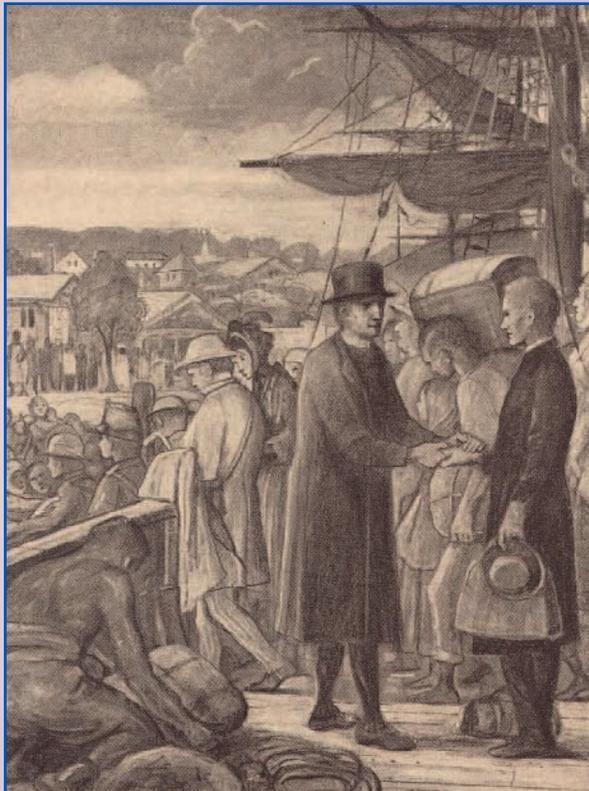
*the church of 'het Goirke', app. 1840  
(drawing on postcard)*



ies he was advised to volunteer for the foreign missions. A lecture on the mission in Surinam decided him to apply for it.

He was ordained to the priesthood on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1841 and the Tilburg weaver's son was ready to set off for Surinam. The "priest of very poor parents" according to an eyewitness, preached a sermon in the church of 'het Goirke' on the occasion of his departure for Surinam. The church was full. On the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1842 he left from Den Helder and arrived in Paramaribo on the 16<sup>th</sup> September.

*arrival of Peter Donders in Surinam  
(from A. Windhausen)*



### 3. Peter Donders in Surinam

#### “My destination”

Peter Donders would never return to Tilburg. A large crowd welcomed him on arrival in Surinam. In what was then the cathedral, he was made welcome with the singing of the “Te Deum”. “I am now at the destination to which the Lord has called me and to which His right Hand has led me”, he wrote in his first letter to the home-front. Peter Donders remained in contact via his letters, practically all of which have survived. The letters were used as point of departure for a documentary film on the life of Peter Donders, produced in 2009.

Following one day of rest, he began to acquaint himself with the city, the people and the country. He was almost immediately confronted by slavery. Peter Donders abhorred slavery. In a letter dated December 1846 he wrote, “Oh, would people here care as much for the wellbeing and the state the slaves are in, as they do in Europe for animals, then things would be so much better...(.) Alas

*Slavemarket in Paramaribo, 1839*





*Streetview Paramaribo, 1839 - Pierre Jacques Benoit*

Surinam, on the day of final judgment. Alas,, alas, yes a thousand times alas the Europeans, the plantation slave owners, the administrators, the directors and the white officers (who all lord it over the slaves)!!! Unhappy ones, who enrich themselves with the blood and tears of poor slaves; they will find no defenders with God.” Peter Donders and other missionaries were obliged to accept slavery passively. Protest did not help.

The historian, J.Wolbers wrote, “The interference of individuals in the way slaves were treated was considered in Surinam as lèse-majesté. In order not to risk losing everything, the missionaries had to allow the

*In Paramaribo there was a so-called picket, a wooden building with two red-painted poles in front of it. Both poles had a pulley at the top end. The male or female slave who was to be punished, was pulled over the trolley with ropes, practically naked, and whipped with lashes. Slave owners could use the picket for 50 cents per slave. Slaves older than 14 years of age, received 25 lashes, female slaves 14.*

*In the year 1852, (Peter Donders had been in Surinam for ten years,) 507 male and female slaves had been whipped on the picket.*



*Saramacastreet, Paramaribo, 1839*  
*Pierre Jacques Benoit*

person. The small stipend he received each month, he gave away mostly; he pawned his watch and even his food and clothes he gave to others. Once he visited a female slave. The woman had no clothes. Peter Donders withdrew behind the house, removed his shirt and threw it inside through a door standing ajar. In 1851 Paramaribo was struck by a yellow fever epidemic, an illness caused by a virus that is spread by mosquitoes. Peter Donders was also infected and had to take to his bed for four weeks.

## **Dumping ground Batavia**

Towards the end of 1855, Peter Donders was appointed parish priest of Batavia where hundreds of lepers had been dumped since 1824. “Whole cargoes of these deeply sad creatures are sent there by order of the government”, an eyewitness wrote. They had nothing that even looked like a house. Peter Donders compared these shelters with pigsties. The shelters where they lay down had no floors and the sick had no beds. In the beginning there was no nursing personnel. Water in the wells was brackish. Sanitary facilities were nonexistent. One priest wrote concerning a dying leper: “He was lying on filthy clay earth, a green banana leaf was his bed. A dilapidated piece of canvas covered his nakedness, and a piece of wood covered in rags, served as his pillow. He was dying and several birds circled around him, ready to feed on his bleeding wounds. His infected body retained hardly a piece of flesh that was healthy enough to apply the Holy Oils to.”

owners of slaves much leeway.” Slavery was finally abolished in Surinam in 1863.

During the first fourteen years in Surinam, Peter Donders worked as pastor in Paramaribo. He was known to be strict in the confessional, but also known to be a generous

It is this terrible place that Peter Donders was assigned to, following his first fourteen years in Surinam.

Peter Donders would live in Batavia for 27 years. There he exercised a twofold ministry. On the one hand he worked to improve living conditions, on the other hand he was there to win souls. He was successful in both. He got the government in Paramaribo to install wooden floors in the huts. Children were born. Those children who had not been affected by this disease, were taken away from Batavia. Peter Donders managed to get health workers appointed.

He had remarkable success in enabling the deceased to be buried in wooden coffins. Before then, the corpse was wrapped in a cloth and buried. The lepers felt that a wooden coffin was essential for a proper burial.



*hand affected by leprosy*

*Leprosy is a collective name for various skin diseases, caused by the leprosy bacillus. Until 1945, Surinam was one of the countries where leprosy was most prevalent. The disease, already well known in the Bible, manifests itself firstly with patches on the skin. Then the skin thickens which causes deformations, for instance in the face. Muscles are affected, fingers, hands, feet and toes fall off. Even the genitals are affected. The isolation of the lepers in such places as Batavia was the usual treatment, as also happened in the Netherlands when leprosy was still to be found there. The leper was isolated.*

*Caring for lepers is one of the seven works of mercy. Since the 1980's, a good cure for leprosy is in existence. Peter Donders himself was never infected by leprosy.*

At the time he arrived, there were more than 500 lepers in Batavia. Every year some 150 of them died. Each year they were replaced by more or less the same



*Map of Batavia*

number of new patients. In later years, fewer came. And the numbers were greatly reduced when slavery was finally abolished in 1863. Ex-slaves could no longer be compelled by their former owners to go to Batavia. When in 1897 Batavia was closed, there were only 83 lepers remaining. These were transferred to Chatillon.

Peter Donders was obliged to spend three weeks in Paramaribo annually. While there, he purchased all sorts of things needed in the leper colony and he also made a ten day retreat. A retreat is as the word suggests, a time of withdrawal from normal daily activities, where, by means of prayer and reflection, one concentrates completely on Divine matters.

On one occasion, Peter Donders discovered that thirteen lepers had died during his three weeks leave. He was distressed that he had not been able to support them in their final hours.

## **Redemptorist**

Peter Donders stayed in Batavia from 1855 till 1866. And then again from 1867 till 1883, which was the year in which he was transferred to Coronie. Two years later, in 1885, he was back in the leper colony. There he would remain until he died at the beginning of 1887. Peter had come to Surinam a secular priest. A “secular” priest is a priest who is attached to a diocese and not bound by religious rules such as the “regulars” (member of orders and congregations) were. However Peter Donders was to enter into a religious congregation in Surinam. He would become a Redemptorist.



*The Redemptorists were founded by the Italian saint, Alphonsus Mary de Ligouri. The name “Redemptorist” is derived from Congregatio Sanctissimi Redemptoris (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, abbreviated to C.Ss.R.). The aim of this congregation was and is to preach the Good News to those who are most abandoned. The new congregation was approved by the pope in 1749. With the input of Saint Clement Mary Hofbauer, the Redemptorists were able to expand their wings beyond Italy. In 1832 the congregation established itself in the Netherlands (Wittem). They became well known in the Netherlands through their preaching of parish missions and retreats. The Dutch, North German (Cologne), Flemish and Swiss Redemptorists formed in 2005 a single new province. This province is named after Clement Mary Hofbauer, and its headquarters is in Wittem, the Netherlands.*

Two years after slavery had been abolished, the catholic mission in Surinam was entrusted to the care of the Redemptorists by the Vatican. The secular priests in Surinam, including Peter Donders were given the option of returning to the Netherlands or to join the Redemptorists. Peter Donders and his colleague Jan Rommen decided for the latter. The new congregation appointed Peter Donders again to Batavia. From then on he had the company of a second priest in Batavia. This gave Peter Donders the chance to expand his mission to the indigenous people of Surinam, namely the Indians, and also to the Maroons, the slaves who had escaped into the jungle.

### **To the Indians and the Bush Negroes**

At this time, he normally spent two weeks in Batavia and then left for two weeks to go into the interior via the river. His journeys steadily became longer and longer, even spending up to 83 hours travelling on the river. He discovered

*Peter Donders left the leper colony Batavia temporarily in 1883. The Redemptorist superior recalled him to Paramaribo following complaints from the lepers. Apparently, his sermons were no longer understandable because he had no more teeth left in his mouth. The complaints came from a few lepers who wanted to get rid of him because he had criticized their anti-social behavior. So for eight months he worked among the sick in Paramaribo, after which he was transferred to Coronie. In 1885 Peter Donders returned to Batavia where he would remain until his death. The priests who had been required to take over his work in Batavia, were apparently not prepared to continue to work in the same manner as Peter Donders had done. Particularly when they were expected to clear up excrements, bind up stinking wounds and remove sand-flies from the lepers feet.*

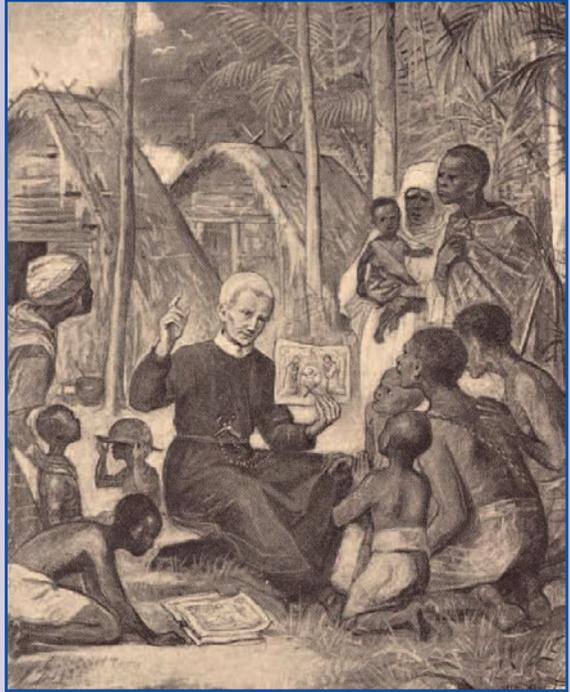
new Indian villages, including the one eventually named Donderskamp. Some Indians were very suspicious, others were very welcoming. He made contact with the use of a small harmonium and a book with pictures from the Bible.

*Bush Negroes, , Suriname, 1839, Pierre Jacques Benoit*



Stories surrounding his person began to resemble the miracle stories surrounding St. Wilibrord (the saint who brought the Christian faith to the Netherlands). For example, during a period of extreme drought, Peter Donders once drew a circle in the sand, then hit the ground, after which water emerged.

Peter Donders made first contact with slaves who had escaped into the jungle, the so called Maroons or Bush Negroes, in 1863.



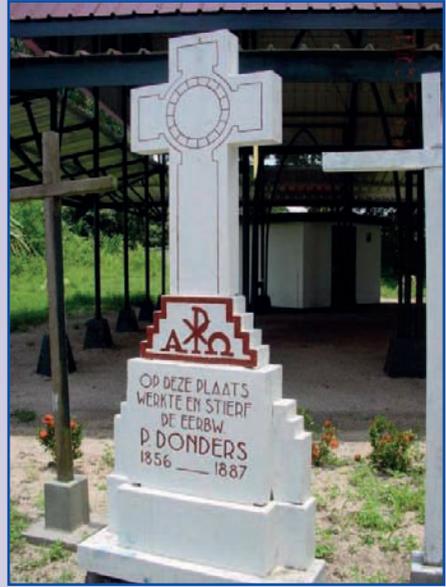
*Peter Donders gives lessons to the Bush Negroes  
(from A. Windhausen)*

He had less success with them than he had with the Indians. For instance in 1862 he baptized 662 Indians, but the former slaves had no expectations regarding him. They had after all, had many bad experiences at the hands of white people, and thus they viewed their faith negatively. Added to this, Peter Donders, just like St. Boniface had done chopping down “holy” oaks, destroyed the sacred “pagan” objects of the Maroons. The missionary reduced the sacrificial sites and totem poles to rubble, much to the disgust of the Bush Negroes.

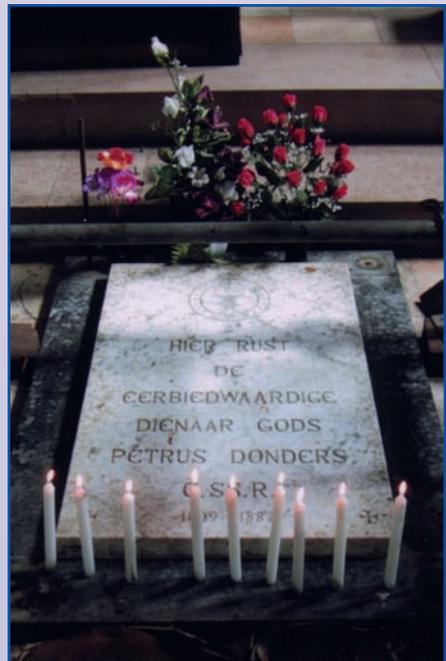
On occasion, the missionary from Tilburg was only able to save his skin by fleeing from the angry inhabitants of a village. In one of his last letters to the homefront, he wrote: “It is not working as I would have liked with the Bush Negroes”. Nevertheless, he did convert a few. And Peter Donders kept up his visits to the villages.

## 4. Towards the end

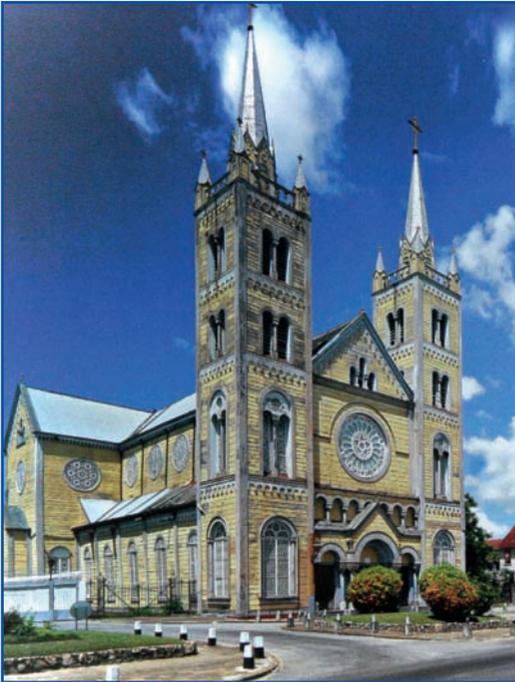
The final years of Peter Donders' life were relatively calm. This was due in part to the fact that the number of lepers in Batavia had been greatly reduced following the abolition of slavery. He had been able to improve their living standards considerably, including the foundation of a kind of hospital. This was ultimately not such a success because the doctor and the nurses considered Batavia as a sort of penal colony. One of the doctors was not even prepared to extend his hands to the sick, and he was also continually drunk.



Towards the end, Peter Donders began to struggle with his health. He had a high fever. His left knee began to ulcerate. For weeks on end he could neither kneel nor walk. The typical reaction of Peter Donders to this ailment was, "It came of itself, it will also disappear of itself." On New Year's Eve the pain in his kidneys was unbearable. Medicines were not able to alleviate the pain. His condition worsened, but he never complained. "Gods holy will be done in all things" he tended to say. On the eve of Epiphany, the Feast of the Three Wise Men, the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1887, he received the Sacrament of the Sick. On the 12<sup>th</sup>



January, Peter Donders predicted that he would die on Friday at 15.00. Indeed he died round half past three on Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> January. The Brother who was infirmarian, Gustaaf Bles, remembers, “At quarter to three on Friday, I visited Father. He was in complete command of his faculties and praying silently... He was looking very peaceful, no signs of a struggle with death”. Peter Donders was buried the next day in the cemetery of Batavia at the foot of a mission cross. After Batavia had been closed in 1897, it was burnt to the ground. In 1901 his mortal remains were reburied behind the cathedral of Paramaribo. Twenty years later, Peter Donders was placed in a tomb within the cathedral.



*The cathedral church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Paramaribo, is the church in which Peter Donders was buried in 1921. It is the largest wooden structure in South America. The church was built between 1883 and 1885 following a design by the Redemptorist, Frans Harmes. The wooden towers were built in 1901 and have a height of 44 meters. The cathedral was closed in 1979. A poor restoration attempt of the building, led to it beginning to keel over. A new restoration was started*

*in 2002. The funds for this restoration were collected from the Vatican, the European Union, the Foundation for the preservation of the cathedral, the Jacques de Leeuw Foundation and the Foundation Help Peter Donders. In 2009, new technical problems presented themselves for which extra money was needed.*

## 5. Peter Donders on the way to canonization

### A local saint

Already during his lifetime in Surinam, Peter Donders was regarded as a saint, both by the Redemptorists and local Catholics in the country. The faithful were impressed by the miracles attributed to him. For example, by him sprinkling holy water over the stormy waves, he was able to calm the sea. The Redemptorist superior did a good job looking after his letters and considered himself fortunate to have in his possession, some hairs from the head of the “Venerable man”. At that stage, the Redemptorists numbered only one canonized saint in the person of their founder, St. Alphonus Maria de Ligouri.



A holy person from their own soil would be most welcome in their attempts to get the congregation to flourish. During his funeral, the Redemptorist superior said of Peter Donders, “It is no secret that in Father Donders, we have found our teacher.” The ‘odour’ of sanctity was increased by the life he had led. He fasted three days each week and each evening he scourged himself as a form of penance. The “discipline” with which he did this, has been preserved. On the other hand it is also known that Peter Donders sometimes smoked a pipe. This was long considered an impediment in the process for his beatification. Perhaps he smoked in order not to distinguish himself from the other Redemptorists, most of whom smoked.

Following his death, an investigation into his life was initiated. The result was that he indeed enjoyed an unflawed reputation. The diocesan process was started up in the dioceses of Paramaribo and Den Bosch in 1900, which was the formal start for the eventual beatification. In 1913 the process had made so much headway that Peter Donders received the title of “The Venerable Servant of God”. The beatification process continued. Witnesses were heard, the answers



*colourful and multicultural Surinam*

*the mosque next to the synagogue in Paramaribo*



to prayer and miracles recorded. On Palm Sunday 1945, Pope Pius XII decreed that Peter Donders had exercised the Christian virtues heroically.

## The increasing popularity in faith surrounding Peter Donders

At the turn of the century a strong devotion to Peter Donders began to develop among the faithful. In the process for beatification and canonization, the vox populi (the voice of the people) is regarded as being very important with the Vatican. A well, close to the place where he was born, has played a big role in the emerging devotion. Its water has been attributed with miraculous power. It has been applied to the eye in cases of eye infections. This well has recently been restored as part of the total restoration of the Peter Donders Sanctuary in Tilburg. Even today, people take water from this well.



*the well before restoration*

The Redemptorists were involved with the increasing popularity of Peter Donders, beginning with the blessing of the temporary chapel on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1923. Because the “Venerable Servant of God” was not allowed to be honored, at that stage, the chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. On the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1926 a set of Stations of the Cross in the open air were erected for the edification of the pilgrims. The Stations of the Cross in their present form, were only completed after the Second World War had ended. On the foundations of the original house where Peter was born, a replica has been built that was blessed on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1931. The house contains a





*the large painting at the beatification in Rome*

weaving loom that once belonged to a Tilburg weaver. This loom is estimated to have been made between 1880 and 1920.

A monument to Peter Donders was erected at the entrance to the Peter Donders Sanctuary in 1933. The Sanctuary is now a listed national monument. The statue of Peter Donders on the corner of Wilhelmina Park in Tilburg was unveiled in 1926. In Tilburg there are more places that remember Peter, such as the Peter Donders Church on Enschootestreet. This church serves the Surinam community in Tilburg.

For the time being the beatification on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1982 forms the final part of the story of Peter Donders. More than 350 people from Surinam and hundreds

### ***The liberation of Tilburg***

*Tilburg was liberated on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1944. The fact that the Germans were driven out on the birthday of Peter Donders contributed strongly to his post war popularity.*

*At the time of the liberation, Tilburg suffered much from the "Flying Bombs" (V1 and V2) which the Germans used to attack Antwerp. The people in Tilburg used the following little prayer "Dear Mary above, give a little further shove. Dear Peter, give it another meter."*



### ***On the way to canonization?***

*A degree of Pius XII brought the probability of the beatification closer, and the time was ripe to await the official recognition of a miracle. In 1929 Louis (Lewieke) Westland was cured from a very serious*



*bone-marrow infection. The boy from Tilburg was 18 months old. His parents were fervent devotees of Peter Donders. The medical experts could find no medical explanation for his sudden cure. Initially the Vatican did not accept it as a valid miracle. In 1976 it was officially recognized as such and six years later Peter Donders was beatified. Now the committee is in search of the miracle that will enable him to be canonized. That miracle needs to have taken place following the date of his beatification.*

of people from Tilburg witnessed the official ceremony by Pope John Paul II. In Surinam the beatification was celebrated with a national holiday. Since then, the son of the weaver of Tilburg has never been out of sight. He has grown into the most important icon for Tilburg itself and now has his own museum. The modern building stands in the Park of the Stations of the Cross close to the house of his birth, where his story began. He is still an inspiration for children two centuries on. The “Tilburg Language-dialect Foundation” organized a song festival for primary school pupils in 2008 and 2009. There they sang in Tilburg dialect:

*Pirke, Pirke, Pirke Donders waar ne goeje, wier den held van onze stad.*

*Pirke, Pirke, Nò Prike Donders hèmme nôot mir zonne goeie gehad*

*(Peerke, Peerke, Peter Donders he was a good one, who was the hero of our town*

*Peerke, Peerke, Since Peter Donders we have never had anyone so good.)*

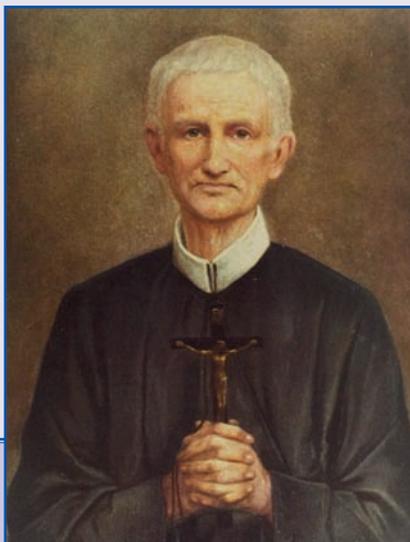


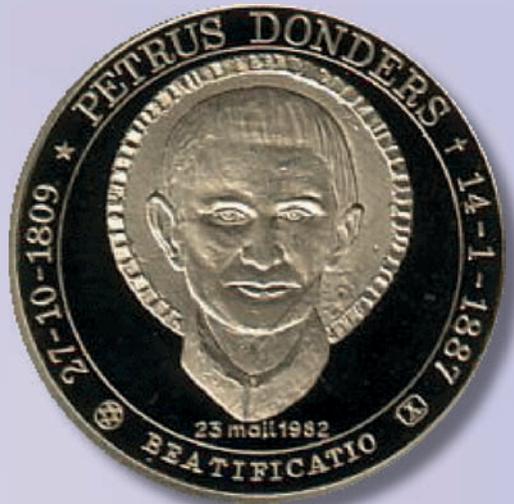
*on pilgrimage to Batavia*



## Peter Donders

- 1809 *Born 27<sup>th</sup> October in Tilburg*
- 1831 *Start of study on minor seminary*
- 1837 *Acceptance in major seminary*
- 1841 *Ordination to priesthood on 5<sup>th</sup> June*
- 1842 *Arrival in Surinam on 16<sup>th</sup> September*
- 1855 *Goes to Batavia*
- 1863 *Abolishment of slavery in Surinam*
- 1865 *Transfer of the Surinam Mission to the Redemptorists*
- 1867 *Joined the Redemptorists 24<sup>th</sup> June*
- 1887 *Died on 14<sup>th</sup> January*
- 1982 *Beatified on 23<sup>th</sup> May*
- 2009 *Opening of the Peter Donders Center, museum of brotherly love in North Tilburg*





## Resources

The most important resources for this booklet where:

- Een bijzonder Tilburgs missionaris; leven en werk van de zalige Peerke Donders. Door Karin Bijker. Gepubliceerd in 2002 in Tilburg, tijdschrift voor geschiedenis, monumenten en cultuur.
- Het leven van Peerke Donders in twaalf kapittelkens verteld. Door Jozef Boon C.Ss.R. Hilversum, 1930.
- Peerke Donders, een Tilburger van deze tijd; weverszoon uit de negentiende eeuw boegbeeld van multicultureel Tilburg. Door Paul Spapens. Tilburg, 2003.
- Peerke Donders, schering en inslag van zijn leven. Door J. Dankelman C.Ss.R. Hilversum, 1982.
- Zalig zijn zij die geven (over het leven van Peerke Donders in Suriname red.), door Bas Mulder C.Ss.R., Paramaribo, 2006.

## **Peter Donders, On the side of the marginalized**

*describes the life of a Dutch Redemptorist, who for the greater part of his life lived and worked among the rejected lepers in Surinam. The great significance of Peter Donders was emphasized in 1982 when he was beatified by Pope John Paul II.*



*Copiosa apud eum redemptio  
With Him is plentiful redemption*

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