



Essential Evangelization

St. Francis Xavier

December 3

Young Francis was born in a castle, had a promising career in academics as a philosophy teacher and a guaranteed life of prestige and honor. He instead became one of the great evangelizers and missionaries of our Catholic Church. He boldly went where few had gone before him. Early in life, he was a student and good friend of another great saint, Ignatius of Loyola. One day in Paris, he heard the Gospel message of Jesus, “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Matthew 16:26).

Although Francis Xavier did not take these words to heart at first, the determined persuasion of Ignatius finally won him to Jesus Christ. Francis then joined the Infant Society of Jesus under St Ignatius in 1534. This society later became one of the great priestly orders of our Catholic Church, the Jesuits. Together in Montmartre, France, Ignatius and Francis each vowed the virtues of poverty, chastity and apostolic service.

Francis was ordained a priest 3 years later in Venice and went to Lisbon, and on to the west coast of India, landing at Goa. For 10 years he labored to bring the faith to the foreign non-Christian lands of the Hindus, the Malaysian Islands and the Japanese. Wherever Francis traveled, he lived among the poorest of poor, sharing their food and humble abodes. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick, the lepers and baptizing all believers with great joy. His preserved incorrupt body lies today in Goa at the Church of Good Jesus.

The life of Francis is a wonderful example of our great Commission “to go and preach to all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Although we may not be very good at “preaching,” the Lord has given us quite a different mission field for our evangelizing work. One thing we can all do is live our lives by good example and self sacrifice; a simple life of prayer and helping others. Our mission land is close to home: our spouse, families, friends, neighbors and coworkers. As Francis gave the great gift of himself, so can we.

*This is one of a series of articles on
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