

# FAITH FUNDAMENTALS

Helping Catholics to Learn, Live, and Love their Faith.

## DECEMBER 2024 SUPPLEMENT

### Saint of the Month



**St. Francis Xavier, Missionary** (Feast day, Dec 3) – St. Francis Xavier was born in 1506 to a noble family in the Kingdom of Navarre in Northern Spain. Not yet 20, he studied at the University of Paris where he met St. Ignatius Loyola and became one of the 7 founders of the Jesuit order, established in 1540 by Pope Paul III.

When the king of Portugal wanted to send missionaries to India, St. Ignatius sent Francis with the immortal words, “Go, set the world on fire!” And so he did. For the next 12 years, Xavier traveled thousands of miles by primitive means of transportation to spread the Catholic Faith to millions of souls in Mozambique, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan. St. Francis Xavier is considered the patron saint of Catholic missionaries.

### Catechism Connection



**MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH** – The mission of the Church is rooted in the command of Christ before He ascended to heaven: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).

This command is often called “The Great Commission.” It is the way Our Lord “commits” His Church to the mission of evangelizing the nations, and the Church takes it seriously. The Catholic Church has dozens of religious orders and societies explicitly devoted to sending missionaries to unevangelized regions of the world. We must never forget that the most effective way the Church evangelizes is through a personal encounter with Christ Himself:

“Side by side with the [public] proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one, remains valid and important. The Lord often used it (for example,

with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee), and so did the apostles.” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 46)

### Back to Basics



**THE GREAT COMMISSION FOR US** – Few are called to be missionaries in foreign countries like Francis Xavier, but every Catholic can evangelize in their own way.

**By Catholic Parenting** – The primary means by which the Church has spread the Faith throughout the centuries is by the Catholic family! This requires parents to be the first and best communicators of the Faith by word and example.

**By Teaching** – Every parish community is in dire need of men and women who will serve in basic catechism programs to hand on the Catholic Faith to children and adult converts.

**By Witness** – When we befriend those who are not of the Catholic Faith, we show them by our conversations and actions the immense blessings of living a life of grace and belonging to the Church that Christ founded.

**By Prayer and Sacrifice** – Even if we are not literal martyrs for the Faith, our prayers and sacrifices for others can have a profound effect on their souls over time and lead them to the Truth of Christ.

*“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)*

## SITSTANDKNEEL

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