

Daily Prayer

Francis Xavier

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys—and Francis Xavier, Missionary to the Far East, 1552.

We begin by saying

He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established
justice in the earth.

Isaiah 42.4

The First Reading

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Isaiah 42.1-4

The Psalm

Sing to the Lord a new song; ♦
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless his name; ♦
tell out his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations ♦
and his wonders among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; ♦
he is more to be feared than all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are but idols; ♦
it is the Lord who made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him; ♦
power and splendour are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ♦
ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; ♦
bring offerings and come into his courts.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; ♦
let the whole earth tremble before him.

Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is king. ♦
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad; ♦
let the sea thunder and all that is in it;

Let the fields be joyful and all that is in them; ♦
let all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord.

For he comes, he comes to judge the earth; ♦
with righteousness he will judge the world
and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 96

The Gospel Reading

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!' He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

Luke 10.1-9, 17-20

We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

The Reflection

Steven Mackison

"I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag no sandals and greet no one on the road. Whatever you enter a town say to the people: 'the kingdom of God has come near you!'"

Jesus commission to the disciples was not where Francis Xavier's life has headed. He didn't want to be sent out, he wanted to stay in school. He began his adult life about as far from the kingdom of God as you could get.

Francis Xavier, was the son of a great Spanish nobleman and was one of the best known and most popular figures in the University of Paris in his time. He was smart, good-looking, and was reputed to be the life of the party. He was headed for a promising career in public life. But God had other plans, and in the fullness of time "stay-in-school Francis" was sent out.

At the tail of his university career, Francis was sharing his dorm room with a man in his forties who was unremarkable, except for his limp. As it turns out, this former soldier was none other than Ignatius of Loyola. The two struck a fast friendship and shared faith that would eventually lead them to form the Society of Jesus (SJ). The story goes that after his battle wounds, Ignatius had to rest for two years. To pass the time he began reading the Gospels, and they changed his life. The more he read, the more three questions kept on plaguing him in his life of study and meditation. These were questions that would frame the rest of his life and inspire Francis Xavier, with whom he shared his longings. The questions were:

“What have I done for Jesus;

What am I doing for Jesus;

What should I do for Jesus?”

He posed those questions to Francis Xavier and changed his life for ever. In writing about the incident Francis wrote.

“I saw with the clarity of the saints in heaven that God was sending me out, when my brother Ignatius challenged me with our Lord's holy words: ‘What does it profit you, Francis, to gain the whole world if you lose your soul?’”

After that exchange Francis left the university and he and Ignatius wandered the world seeking to win souls for Christ.

He led a hectic life for the next ten years. He sailed east and ministered to the peoples of India, where working in coastal villages, he won countless converts. He visited other settlements in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan. His missionary efforts and pious influence were such that within the next few decades there were more than 200,000 Christians in Japan alone. Interestingly, the first community Francis established was in Nagasaki, which became the largest Christian community in the east, until 1945 when the city was bombed, heralding the end of the second world war. It is a tragic irony of history that it was so-called “Western Christian Governments” that wiped out the Japanese Christian community in their zeal to win the war. Imagine that!

Xavier's last mission was to be in China, but he was fated never to see his journey through. He perished on a small island, alone but for one companion. However, the miraculous life of Francis Xavier, gave way to an even more miraculous death.

When uncovering his body for transport back to the west, it was discovered that there was no decay. Francis was remarkably

preserved.

To this day, his hand, which remains astonishingly uncorrupted, is sent around the world as a witness to the miraculous ministry of St. Francis Xavier. I had a glimpse of it myself in Montreal when I was in ministry there. Thousands upon thousands gathered to gaze upon this holy relic and salute his ministry in a modest Roman Catholic Church in Notre Dame de Grace.

Today, we salute Francis Xavier as well, who never desired to be sent out, but whom God guided on a path to change the lives of countless peoples, with a piety that echoes the simple, stirring, compelling words of today's Gospel, words that are given to all who are sent to preach God's love. These are the words and they are for us:

"The Kingdom of God has come near you."

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ The New Jerusalem

Arise, shine, for your light has come; *
the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Though night still covers the earth *
and darkness covers the nations,

Over you will the Lord arise, *
over you will his glory appear.

Nations will stream to your light *
and kings to your dawning brightness.

Your gates will always be open; *
day or night, they will never be shut.

They will call you, The City of the Lord, *
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Violence will no more be heard in your land, *
ruin or destruction within your borders;
you will name your walls, Salvation, *
you will call your gates, Praise.
No longer will the sun be your light by day, *
no longer the moon give you light by night;
the Lord will be your eternal light; *
your God will be your glory.

Isaiah 60.1-3, 11ab, 14cd, 18-19

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,
that all who are fearful and anxious
may be at peace and free from worry:
Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the isolated and housebound,
that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:
Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families,
our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:
Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

We conclude our prayers

God of all the earth

you called your servant Francis Xavier

and rejoiced to see him preach your Gospel

among the outcasts of India

and the warriors of Japan.

Kindle our hearts with your truth,

that we may give the whole of our lives

to the working of your will and purpose;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

May God himself, the God of peace,
make you perfect and holy,
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Credits:

Scripture quotations: The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the USA. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

The Psalm: Common Worship © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Cantic: The Book of Alternative Services: Copyright © 2004 by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. All rights reserved. Reproduced under license from ABC Publishing, Anglican Book Centre, a ministry of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, from *Anglican Liturgical Library*

The Intercessions: Church of England Coronavirus resources.

The Collect: For All the Saints © 2007, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

The Concluding Sentence: Common Worship: Times and Seasons—Advent. © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The reflection: The Rev'd Canon Steven Mackison

Church of the Redeemer

162 Bloor Street West Toronto, ON M5S 1M4

416.922.4948

office@theredeemer.ca

www.TheRedeemer.ca

Twitter: @theRedeemerTO

Facebook: theRedeemerTO

Instagram: theRedeemerTO