



Bringing Home the Word



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 5, 2015

Tuning into God's Word.

By Janel Esker

In this world of satellite radio, MP3 players, and music downloads, my husband and I still listen to the radio on a boom box in our bedroom. In fact, one of my husband's Christmas gifts last year was a brand-new "old" contraption, complete with audiocassette player and an adjustable antenna. Yes, we sometimes have to reposition the antenna to make sure we can hear voices and not just static, but with a little patience it usually works.

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 2:2-5

They shall know that a prophet has been among them.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

My grace is sufficient for you.

Mark 6:1-6a

He was amazed at their lack of faith.

The crowd that gathered to hear their "native son" Jesus in the Gospel clearly wasn't willing to adjust its collective antenna to hear Jesus' words. He was too familiar, he was just one of them—how could he have anything important to say? To them, his words came off as nothing but static.

How receptive are *we* to God's words and movement in our lives? We may think we're completely open—but what if God speaks to us in ways we're not used to, through people we find disagreeable or perhaps, as the Gospel crowds did, too familiar?

Maybe God speaks to us through the words of someone from a different political party or a different religious denomination. Can we hear it? What if God seeks us through a difficult family member we've dismissed? Maybe God is reaching for us through the all-too-familiar words of the Mass or ritual prayers.

Saint Paul reminds us today in our second reading that God reaches us best when we are humbled, weak, and open. Maybe our antennae need humbling and readjusting. Perhaps we need to reposition our hearts to discover where God is speaking to us today. †

A Word From Pope Francis

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," the Apostle to the Gentiles tells us



(2 Corinthians 12:9). Poverty teaches solidarity, sharing and charity, and is also expressed in moderation and joy in the essential, to put us on guard against material idols that obscure the real meaning of life. Poverty learned with the humble, the poor, the sick and all those who are on the existential outskirts of life. A theoretical poverty is no use to us. Poverty is learned by touching the flesh of the poor Christ, in the humble, in the poor, in the sick and in children.

Address to the participants in the plenary assembly of the International Union of Superiors General, May 8, 2013

**PRAYER**

Lord, you give rest to the weary of heart. Help me create space in my life to rest in your presence. Amen.

St. Francis Xavier

Mary Lee Barron, PhD, RN

Jesus commanded his apostles to go out and teach all nations. Xavier took this charge seriously. He traveled all the way to Japan from Europe in the 1500s.

Francisco de Jasso y Azpilicueta was born in 1506 to an aristocratic family at the castle of Xavier in Navarre, Spain. As a student at the University of Paris, he met Ignatius of Loyola, who was also a student. Youthful and shallow Xavier would chide Ignatius, not understanding Ignatius's seriousness about living a life for Christ. However, the two became close friends, and Xavier joined Ignatius in founding the Society of Jesus.

Xavier went to Italy with the rest of the members of the newly papal-approved Jesuit Order to be ordained to the priesthood in 1537. Pope Paul III requested that Ignatius send two Jesuit missionaries to India. Francis was selected, although Ignatius knew that meant the two friends would never see each other again.

Xavier and another Jesuit left Rome in 1540 and arrived in Lisbon. Xavier (acting as a papal apostolic nuncio) headed off alone, and the other Jesuit stayed to start a school.

It took thirteen months for Xavier to arrive in India, where he preached, visited prisoners and the sick, and eventually baptized more than 10,000 people. He moved to the Spice Islands in 1546. In 1549, Xavier set sail for Japan, intrigued by word of a culturally advanced nation whose people had not heard of Christ.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I deal with rejection?
- What burdens do I carry?

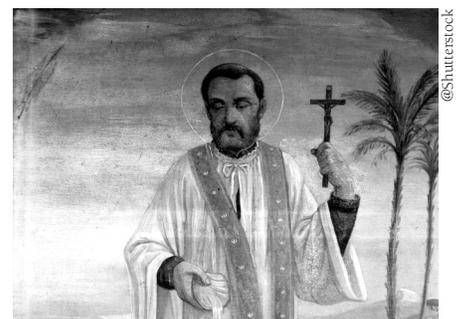
Xavier decided that converting the emperor was crucial to conversions in Japan. He and Br. John Fernandez found a prince willing to take them to the Imperial City in 1551. They were not successful in seeing the emperor. However, now they knew that the most powerful lord in Japan was the daimyo of Yamaguchi, whom they had already failed to convert.

They tried again, appearing not as poorly clad Europeans, but as a Japanese lord would dress. Xavier presented the daimyo with expensive gifts and credentials: letters from King John III of Portugal and Pope Paul III. The daimyo agreed to give people the freedom to become Christians if they wanted to. He also gave the Jesuits a residence in the city, where they had many visitors. Within six months, they had gained 500 converts.

Xavier believed China was now calling to him. In April 1552, Xavier set out from India and entered the Bay of Canton in September. He landed on Sancian Island, which was both a hide-out for Chinese smugglers and a base for Portuguese traders. Xavier became ill and died there on December 3, 1552.

As the first Jesuit missionary, Xavier developed the missionary methods that became a successful blueprint for Jesuits to follow. His efforts are significant to the missionary history of Southeast Asia, India, and Japan.

Francis Xavier was canonized along with Ignatius Loyola in 1622. He was named patron of the Propagation of the Faith in 1910, and in 1927, he was named patron of the missions.



St. Francis Xavier

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 6-11

Mon. Weekday:
Genesis 28:10-22a / Matthew 9:18-26

Tue. Weekday:
Genesis 32:23-33 / Matthew 9:32-38

Wed. Weekday:
Genesis 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a / Matthew 10:1-7

Thu. Weekday:
Genesis 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5 / Matthew 10:7-15

Fri. Weekday: *Genesis 46:1-7, 28-30 / Matthew 10:16-23*

Sat. *St. Benedict, Abbot: Genesis 49:29-32; 50:15-26a / Matthew 10:24-33*

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