

Light in the Darkness

XBSS students at the March 2020 junior retreat in West Hartford, CT

DEAR XBSS ALUM,

I hope you are well as you and your family manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am writing during these challenging times to ask for your support for our XBSS efforts so that our network and your alma mater remain focused on mission and what really matters.

“You are my life!” were the words exclaimed by Brother Brain Davis as he stood before a group of students at the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools Annual Junior Retreat in Connecticut. He asked students to reflect on Xaverian Brothers who have dedicated their lives and careers to students just like them.

Dr. Patrick Slattery, Executive Director of XBSS, concluded the retreat by showing a photo of a statue of St. Francis Xavier “standing ready” with his left foot moving from perch, symbolic of taking action. Dr. Slattery asked students to consider how the journey ahead may feel uncertain and uneasy despite God’s calling to step forward into action to “give our gifts as

a gift to others.” In the days that followed, our schools were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Immediately, the XBSS office jumped from the retreat to networking with schools as they managed their new online education reality. Bad was turned around for good as both schools and students seized the moment, developing ways to keep actively and positively engaged in mission to love all, especially those suffering from want, neglect, and injustice.



Statue of St. Francis Xavier perched above St. Walburgis' Church in Bruges, where Theodore Ryken would often pass in his daily travels

Amid one of history's most challenging moments, XBSS leadership, Brothers, faculty, and staff transitioned to distance learning. As the goal of all our schools is to educate the whole person, they found creative ways to stay connected to students and families.

Even now, the XBSS office is working with schools to give them a forum to talk about how Xaverian values inform our Xaverian schools' response to the issue of systemic racism; praying that the conversion of minds and hearts may give rise to actions that, in the words of the Brothers' Fundamental Principles, witness to God's care and compassionate love especially for those who are marginalized.



The Our Lady of Good Counsel High School community gathered on campus in June to join in a student led peaceful protest and prayer service regarding racial injustice. Student leaders did an incredible job organizing and speaking to the hundreds that came out to show their support.

“When we rise, we must carry our values, expectations, history, and commitment with us,” wrote JR Calvery,

a 2020 graduate of St. Xavier High School in a senior reflection blog post. “Nothing can be dropped. So far, as teachers, you all have dropped nothing. The waters got tough, and you all are keeping us afloat.”

I value how you, as an alumnus of a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School, offer your prayer and support that keep us afloat in rough waters. Your belief in the value of your own education and the support you can give both to your alma mater and to the Xaverian Brothers can truly make a difference as we shine light in the darkness and raise our voices in support of the changes needed to bring about justice and compassion.

I want to encourage you to remain connected with us through social media as you journey onward in the early stages of your career. In these times, your dedication and financial support have never been more important. Your gift helps our Sponsorship Office provide service and programs to sustain the spirit and values that distinguish a Xaverian education. I thank you for your support and ask that you help us continue to make a difference in lives of students and the wider school communities.

God bless you and your loved ones,

Brother Daniel

BROTHER DANIEL SKALA, CFX

General Superior