
ADVENT 2021

Whispered Words of Hope

A Xaverian Journey Through Advent



XAVERIAN BROTHERS

IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

INTRODUCTION

In the 'Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers' we are advised to “make God’s word our home. To do this we must be willing to spend time each day in solitude and prayer, opening ourselves to His living word.” I am pleased to provide these readings and reflections for your use as a vehicle for prayer during the Advent season. During Advent, we wait with patience and with hope for God to break through our world.

Throughout Advent we make a spiritual journey in which we pay close attention to God's word. In addition, we look for its connection to our lives. Often we find God's hand in unexpected ways in the ordinary circumstances of our days. Prayer and reflection is a powerful way to gain a deeper appreciation for the many ways the grace of God leads us.

May your Advent journey give you hope, and help prepare you for the real meaning of Christmas. The Xaverian Brothers, our Associates, and our Partners in Mission pray that the coming of Jesus gives you hope and peace.

God bless you,

Brother Daniel

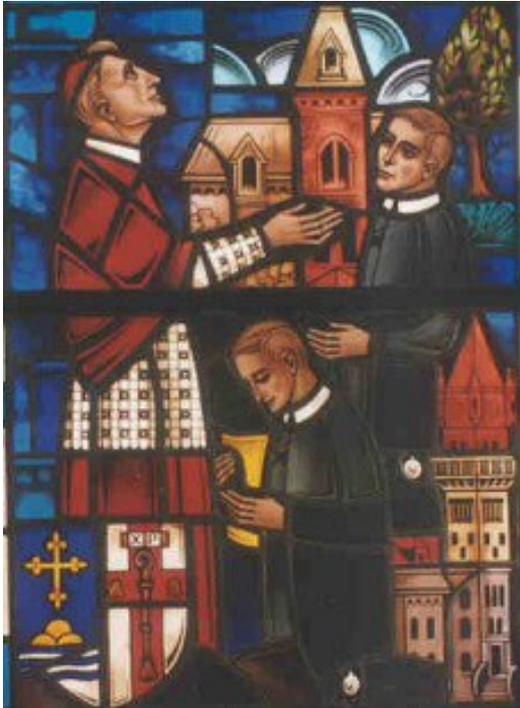
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XAVERIAN BROTHERS
IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

Week 1

Nov. 28 - Dec. 4



Xaverian House Window: Creation of St Joseph Province with Cardinal Cushing of Boston blessing the start of the new province in 1960

November 28

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from the anxieties of daily life..." - Luke 21:34

Over the past year and a half, in prayers, retreats, and reflections, our Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools have often cited the following passage from the Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers:

Day by day
you will need to renew your response.
Do not become discouraged
over the difficulties you encounter
in your life of gospel service.
Knowing that difficulties would be your share,
your Founder judged:

*that nothing special is achieved
without much labor, effort and zeal.*

It would seem justifiable for any person to have become discouraged over the difficulties encountered in these last 20 months. From the impact of the global pandemic to the political polarization of our time, too many have experienced loss, stress, or mental anguish. The responsibility to fulfill work and family commitments amidst local and global challenges has weighed heavy upon many. There has been more to accomplish than there were hours in the day, and more needs to be met than we had the energy to address. Yet, it is in these times of pressure and worry that we are most in need of prayer and contemplation.

Just as our Fundamental Principles call us to renew our response, today's readings call us to "strengthen our hearts," remain vigilant in our faith, and trust in God's ways. It's an appropriate call to action as we reflect on the start of this Advent season. Rather than be mired in the trials and tribulations of the day, Advent invites us to a new beginning, an invitation to reassess our priorities, and plan for the coming of Christ.

Lord, as we enter a time of deeper contemplation this Advent, may we embrace this daily renewal with hope, effort, and zeal, putting Christ first in our lives of Gospel service so as to keep our hearts strong.

Dr. Patrick Slattery

November 29

“That he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.” – Isaiah 2:3

Every year as Advent begins, I reflect on how to prepare for Jesus’ birth. I often have aspirations for quiet prayer, contemplation and solitude. Inevitably, however, these hopes are dashed with the realities of the hurried pace of daily life and countless Christmas preparations. I find that the peaceful waiting “supposed” to comprise the Advent season is undermined by the demands of everyday life.

Yet, being a part of the Xaverian community has taught me that daily life is the very ground where God meets us and forms us as beloved daughters and sons. As it says in the Fundamental Principles, “If you allow yourself to be formed by God through the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life, you will experience a liberation and a freedom never before imagined.” Mindful of this truth, Advent waiting then is not an unrealistic waiting set apart from daily life but an active waiting that is found precisely in everyday events.

In today’s reading from Isaiah, we hear an invitation to active waiting: “Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain to the house of the God of Jacob, That he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.” Like the climbing of a mountain, Advent waiting is one of engagement. As we climb through our everyday lives, we are instructed in the Lord’s ways. Advent waiting is about allowing God to form us through the daily mountains of our lives. In this way, we may follow God’s paths not in spite of everyday life but in its ordinary flow. This Advent, may we come and climb the mountain of the Lord, actively waiting to be instructed in his ways and faithfully follow in his paths. So that when we celebrate the awaited birth of Jesus, we may “walk in the light of the Lord” in the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life.

Lord, guide our Advent waiting so we may be instructed in your ways and walk in your paths. Amen.

Dr. Carolyn Herman

November 30

Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle

*"(Jesus) said to them, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.'
At once they left their nets and followed Him" - Matthew 4:19-20*

Really? Come on now, it couldn't have been that easy!

That's not my world, that's not my experience. My world demands cost analysis, ZOOM conferences, projections, and assorted other research. I am a reasonable man, I am a practical man. And yet I can't help but to wonder: what did Andrew and the others know that I can't, won't or don't know? What did they see that I am blind to?

I am going to take some solace in noting that this story is remembered several decades after the fact, and the reality of a life lived with Jesus may have made the evangelists memory a little sweeter than the actual event. I am going to believe that the future apostles did somewhat struggle with their decision, but when they remembered - in light of the realization of the Incarnation and the experience of the Resurrection - even the struggles were forgotten, and ultimately they chose a life with the Lord. The same invitation is made to all of us.

My journey for this Advent is beginning. Like each year I have doubts, questions, and struggles but each year it seems a little easier to march forward and believe God will provide. It worked for Andrew and his brother, it worked for Ryken and his brothers, I am pretty sure it will work for me and my family.

Lord give me the strength to let go of the nets of trivia and silliness that bind me and let me embrace only what is truly important.

Amen.

Deacon Kevin McCormack

December 1

"This is the LORD for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!" – Isaiah 25:9

My two-year-old daughter loves to play hide and seek. She forces everyone in the family to hide and will start looking for them right when she counts. When she finds someone, she will exclaim in the loudest voice possible - "I found me." Though this announcement caused laughter for us initially, it led to a deeper reflection later. As followers of Christ, 'finding oneself' should be at the top of our priority list during this season of Advent. This finding involves recognizing oneself as a child of God, noticing the pain and suffering of our brothers and sisters as our own, and a desire to make a difference. But more often, when the busyness of everyday life takes over, we get distracted from focusing on preparing ourselves in welcoming the Incarnate Word of God.

In the gospel reading today, Jesus noticed the pain and suffering of people around him and was filled with pity. Rather than ignoring them, he cured them and even went on to satisfy their physical hunger. The pain of others became his own; the struggles of others became his; He became one with all those in need. Maybe this needs to happen in our own lives, especially during this season of waiting - finding yourself in our brothers and sisters, and tending to their needs, whatever they might be. When that happens, the Incarnate Word takes form in our hearts and lives.

**Child Jesus, may we have the inner eye to see YOU in each other and the grace to rejoice when we find You. In God's name, we pray.
Amen.**

Renju Paul

December 2

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house" - Matthew 7:21, 24-27

In these passages from Matthew's Gospel, we hear Jesus speaking to us about building our houses on rock and not on sand so that they will withstand the rains and the winds that will surely come. This metaphor came alive to me recently when hurricane Ida passed through the southern US and followed a path to the northeast destroying buildings and taking lives. This destruction drew the attention of the nation to its need to address the ever-weakening infrastructure and, in a sense, to rebuild our houses on rock.

But Jesus here is talking to us about our lives, especially the lives of his followers then and now. He calls us to build a strong relationship with him/God that will impel us to respond generously and lovingly to the needs of others and the world.

"Psalm 18 declares "My God is my rock in whom I take refuge..."

Building our lives on this rock isn't a one-time task. We are called daily to pray and listen deeply. In my youth and early religious life, much time was spent in the recitation of prayers, the "Lord, Lord" type that Jesus mentions. This practice did not leave one much time to listen to God's response. I have come to believe prayer is much more of a two-way street and that the Lord, "my rock" has much to say and lead me to consider if only I listen and pay attention.

Oh Lord, help us to be aware of your active presence in our lives and especially in our prayer. And may this interaction give us the courage to respond in love.

Amen.

Brother Paul Murray, C.F.X.

December 3

Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

“Go then to all people everywhere and make them my disciples” – Matthew 28:19

(Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers)

As today we are celebrating our Patron Saint, my thoughts go back to his time. In my active imagination, I am with Saint Francis Xavier as he anticipates going to a far distant land unknown to him. He is happy and excited to leave the familiar world because of his love for Jesus and his fellow human beings. I find myself so full of admiration for him. I see in him, a man who is not attached to the familiar.

Then, in my imagination, I decide to open up a conversation with him. I ask him, “Are you not afraid of moving to the unknown world as a missionary? Are you aware that you will never come back again to your familiar world?”

“No, my friend, I cannot hold what is in me for myself”, he answers me. “I have to share it with others, especially those who I do not know. You know, you do not have to leave one’s land or travel to another land in order to be a missionary. You can just leave behind those things in your familiar world that are preventing you from both growing in your love for Jesus, and having a new perspective in the world that encourages others to love Jesus more and more. This will take time. As for me, I am going to make a long journey. “

I learn two lessons from Saint Francis Xavier. First, by his deed, he teaches me to be ready, for the love of Jesus, to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar world. The second lesson, I learn from this insatiable laborer for souls is the desire to be ready to share with others the gifts God has given me.

And you, what did you learn from Francis Xavier’s life today?

O God, who through the preaching of Saint Francis Xavier brought many peoples to yourself, grant that our hearts may burn with the same zeal for the faith as our patron, Francis Xavier, so that we may be inspired to be missionary disciples.

Amen.

Brother Patrick Fumbisha, C.F.X.

December 4

“The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”—Matthew 9: 37-38

Today’s Gospel reading is a story of both desperation and empowerment. We encounter Christ in the midst of his travels, teaching and healing the communities surrounding Jerusalem. Despite his truly miraculous efforts, the need of the people of God persisted. Christ is moved with pity for the abandoned and lost he continues finds in his path, time and time again. Frustrated and saddened by these circumstances, Christ humbly turns to his disciples and emboldens them to become healers in the name of God in their own right. Sanction by Christ, the disciples were called to give freely of themselves to meet the needs of the world around them.

In my life, I have been blessed to have incredible bosses and mentors. Drawn to their charismatic nature, I yearned to follow in their footsteps in hopes of accomplishing something special. Admittedly, in my youth, I put these individuals on pedestals. I often found myself in the presence of success, but never quite feeling it was my own. Whether it was lack of confidence in my own abilities, or the greatness of theirs’, our achievements were inauthentic as they were not truly shared. It was not until these individuals took the time to recognize my gifts and invite me to share them through our common work, did I feel that the greatness we were striving for was mutual.

It takes courage to achieve greatness individually, but I believe it takes even more to be vulnerable and admit when you need help. Christ is capable of healing all the ailments he encounters, but he sees how god’s kingdom may flourish with the help of others. By empowering his disciples to begin their own ministry of healing, Christ illuminates the God-given grace within each one of us.

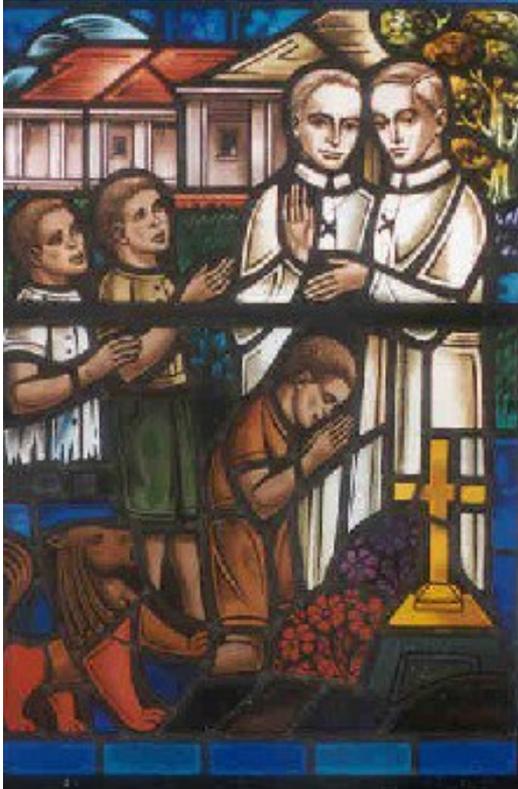
God of compassion and understanding, empower me to use my gifts to bring out the greatness of others.

Amen.

Ben Horgan

Week 2

Dec. 5 - 11



Xaverian House Window: Commemorating the mission to East Africa

December 5

"John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.... "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" - Luke 3:3-4

The church slowly filled that chilly December morning. Parishioners found their usual seats; neighbors greeted neighbors; altar servers lit candles; singers opened choir books; parents shushed fidgety children.

In the back, a young man stood alone, dressed in well-worn jeans, leather belt, a bushy jacket about his shoulders, sandals on his feet. Just as Mass was to begin, he picked up a wooden staff and began walking quickly up the central aisle. "PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD," he shouted repeatedly! "MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATHS!" Faces turned with expressions of indignation, confusion, laughter, or fear. As he reached the altar, the young man turned, faced the congregation, and once again proclaimed: "Prepare the way of the Lord!" As he walked away, the Celebrant intoned: "In the name of the Father..."

Some parishioners later complained it was too theatrical; some said it was not prayerful. But many said it was "...as if they were hearing the Gospel for the very first time."

"It was as if the message was meant just for me!"
"I thought it was just a stunt until my 8-year old asked me how we were going to prepare for Jesus, and I couldn't answer her."
"I was never before so wide awake for the readings and homily."

Today, once again, we are challenged to hear and respond to the Gospel proclamation. Who has helped me hear the Gospel message as if for the first time? What mountains and valleys have I faced — with faith — this past pandemic year? Who were the people (family? friends? teachers? students? neighbors?) who prepared me to make straight my paths? Have I stepped in to help smooth someone else's rough road? How, exactly, will I prepare the way of the Lord this Advent season?

The first reading today explains exactly why we prepare the way of the Lord, why we struggle with the mountains and hills of our life, straightening winding roads, and smoothing rough ways. We prepare the road so we might walk forward with God, who leads us in joy, with mercy and justice for company. (Baruch 5:7, 9)

Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! Help us prepare to walk forward with You in joy, and may mercy and justice be our companions. Amen.

Michael Buckley & Jeannette Sufliata

December 6

"And some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; they were trying to bring him in and set him in His presence. But not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, "As for you, your sins are forgiven." But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the one who was paralyzed, "I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home." He stood up immediately before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God" - Luke 5:18-20, 24-26

What a great scene presented to us in today's Gospel reading. This complicated, colorful event has inspired artists, spiritual writers and preachers throughout the ages. Jesus is in a crowded house with people who are there for many different reasons; the sick and crippled hoping for a cure; the Pharisees to catch Jesus blaspheming; and probably the majority were curious on-lookers who just came to see this man, whom they have heard does and says the most amazing things.

In a recent reading of these passages, I began to focus on the paralyzed man. What was he thinking? Did he hear about Jesus' reputation as a healer? Was it the idea of his family and friends that he come? What was the man's reaction as he was let down in the midst of this noisy crowd? And then, reading the minds of the Pharisees, Jesus said ' "Your sins are forgiven you". Did the paralytic think "That's not really why I came!"? Happily, Jesus does cure him and sends him home glorifying God.

Reflecting on this encounter, I sense that Jesus is revealing himself to us as a God of surprises. We go to him for one reason or another and we encounter God in a way we may never have expected. This amazed reaction of the crowd is described in the final verse:

Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God, and, struck with awe, they said, "We have seen incredible things today."

Jesus, in my prayer, reflection and interaction with others, help me to be sensitive to the not so obvious ways that You may be communicating Yourself to me.

Amen.

Brother Paul Murray, C.F.X.

December 7

Memorial of Saint Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

"In just the same way, it is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost" - Matthew 18:14

The first day of school in my first year of teaching, I welcomed students into my classroom. The freshmen students appeared just as excited and anxious as I was. Theology class wasn't one of the most exciting subjects they would have, but I knew that the first step in being a good teacher at a Xaverian school was to form relationships. I greeted each one by name and showed them their seats. All was going well until one young man, Paul, came in. Paul was very overweight and could not fit into any of the desks in the room. One student jumped in to offer help immediately and went across the hall to the Guidance Department to get a chair. The class bonded together as they showed dignity and respect to each other, especially to Paul in beautiful ways.

Paul lived with his grandmother and had to take two buses each way to school. He had difficulty interacting with his peers and stayed to himself quite a lot. To me, he was the lost sheep - the one who began to stray and become invisible. That class didn't let that happen. Paul became engaged with the class. However, sophomore year was a different story. For some reason, Paul didn't make it through that year. He left our school and I never did know why or what became of him for a long time, until about 15 years later. Our school participates in the St. Joseph of Arimathea Society, which assists in burials of those who are poor, alone, or experience homelessness. We provide prayer, serve as pall bearers, and comfort those who attend the burial. One day we received the name of someone we would be burying that week; it was Paul. My heart was filled with sadness at this loss of someone so young. This experience taught me to never lose sight of the invisible student in my class or someone who I may have not paid enough attention to.

Today's scripture reminds us that those who have strayed must be sought out, and, if possible, brought back to the community, Paul went astray, but it was God's providence that he be brought back to our community, even upon death. There are many times we see people on the side of the road seeking help. Do we try to be invisible to them? Do we pretend to not see them? Or do we find a way to look into their eyes and let them know we care, that they aren't invisible to us?

Lord, help us to seek the one who is lost and do as our Heavenly Father asks... see them and bring them back to You. Amen.

Cathy Reynolds

December 8

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

"I am the immaculate conception," (Luke 1:26 – 38) says Mary to Bernadette Sibirous.

There are many mothers whose sons have been famous and many women who have exerted influence in the fields of power, art or science. Today it is in Mary alone that we exalt and venerate. It is in her alone above all creatures in whom we rejoice. The word of God speaks to us today of Mary in terms of her being worthy of our greatest attention. God consecrated Mary in His work of salvation. God chose Mary and she knew how to say yes to His call. It was God who inspired Mary to offer herself completely to Him. God aroused in Mary zeal for His house by an intimate union with him.

Like Mary, let us open our hearts to the Lord, open our door to Jesus, let us invite Jesus to enter. Jesus wishes to establish bonds of trust with each and every one of us. Mary invites us to imitate Jesus her son. This imitation is possible, but it becomes difficult when we cling to people and things that take us away from God. Mary also challenges us by helping us to realize that at times what we are doing is not right. We may even find it difficult to change. May this day when we celebrate Mary without sin allow us to sing about the wonders that God has accomplished in her.

**O Immaculate Virgin, you are all beautiful. And God has always loved you.
With respect, with love, we greet you, Mary full of grace.**

Amen.

Brother Vincent Ilunga, C.F.X.

December 9

“I am the LORD, your God, who grasp your right hand; It is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’” – Isaiah 41:13

God speaks to us with tenderness; ‘fear not, I will help you.’ Not only is God within call, but He is constantly present with us. If we are weak, we can lean on His strength. If we are lonely or in need, we can trust Him to provide for us in ways and times that are best for us, even if we do not realize it in the moment. Like a good Father, He knows what’s best for us, and He surely knows us better than we know ourselves.

Many times, throughout my life I recall moments of fear and uncertainty. In these instances, I thought I knew what was best for myself. I thought if a certain problem was solved the way I wanted it or I got what I had hoped for, all would be well. God often reminds us that our ways are not His, (Isaiah 55:8-10) and His are far better than ours. Rather than live in fear and uncertainty, God teaches me repeatedly to trust Him (Isaiah 26:4). The spirit of fear lies to us, telling us that we can’t trust or believe God. Throughout the scriptures we hear the phrase reiterated, “do not fear” or “fear not.” Fear leads down a spiraling path of bondage that brings on doubt, confusion, and a desperate grapple for self-preservation rather than leaning on and trusting God amid all circumstances. He promises us that if we lean on Him and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will make our paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6). He tells us that all things work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). That means even the bad things can be turned around to work for our good. The greatest example of this is of course the cross of Christ: a horrific tragedy that was turned on its head, bringing about freedom and salvation and access to God (Hebrews 12:2).

When fear creeps into our lives, where will we turn? Will we bow down and cower to its demands, or will we turn away from it and towards Jesus in whom no fear dwells? Let us remember to put fear in its place, and keep our eyes set on the Lord, who is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Dear Jesus, we know that in You is the perfect love that casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). Help us to never submit, bow down, or live under the lies and oppression of fear, but rather turn to You who promises to uphold us and give us the peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7). Amen.

Joshua Kinney

December 10

“To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, ‘He is possessed by a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, ‘Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is vindicated by her works” – Matthew 11:16–19

Have you tossed up your hands in disbelief at times this past year with an incredulous gasp – that lies would be vehemently upheld as truths, that millions would allow perpetuation of a deadly, preventable pandemic rather than accept the responsibility of recommended health measures, that a deadly, violent assault on democracy could be characterized as a peaceful protest? “To what shall I compare this generation!” you may have wondered. I certainly have!

Jesus likened his nay-sayers, the Pharisees, to fickle, obstinate children who would not do the right thing. They could not be pleased by anything contrary to their slavish and narrow understanding of the Law. With both John the Baptist and Jesus, they would see one behavior and automatically demand the opposite. For the sake of the power that they craved to maintain, they sacrificed, renounced, the wisdom Jesus proclaimed by his caring actions among “sinners.” Their “wisdom” was earthly and not “from above.”

James tells us, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (3:13–18). Each generation, each of us, must find its heaven-inspired wisdom – or face Jesus’s indictment; every generation must be open to the Spirit’s promptings toward peace, community, inclusion, brother–and sisterhood. May our good works and care for others during this Advent season -- and beyond -- prove, vindicate, the wisdom that Jesus modeled.

Loving God, help me not to be obstinate, to seek and find Your truth, to be open to wisdom from above, demonstrated in daily acts of care.

Amen.

Brother Thomas Puccio, C.F.X.

December 11

“Let us see your face and we shall be saved” – Psalm 80:3

The hardest part of teaching these past two years was not being able to see the faces of students. I realized that; I rely on facial cues in understanding the mind of students. So in these COVID times, face-covering and masks have made it difficult to recognize the needs of students and, as a result, caused difficulty in creating a deeper rapport with students. When we look at someone's face, most times, we recognize the feeling behind those faces - joy, sorrow, anguish, and so on. When I experimented with creating sculptures and painting, the hardest part of the work was creating a face - the one that portrays and shares a message and a story.

In today's reading, the psalmist exclaims that “let us see your face, so that we shall be saved”. What does the face of God look like? What does that face tell us? How do you differentiate God's face from others? The answer to that question is in the day's gospel - the face of God is that of a suffering human. It speaks of the sins of each of us - past, present, and the future. When we join in solidarity with the pain of others, Christ's face is revealed to us in our brothers and sisters. The season of Advent is also a reminder to see the other so that the face of Christ becomes visible to us. When we notice Christ in others, salvation becomes a reality to us.

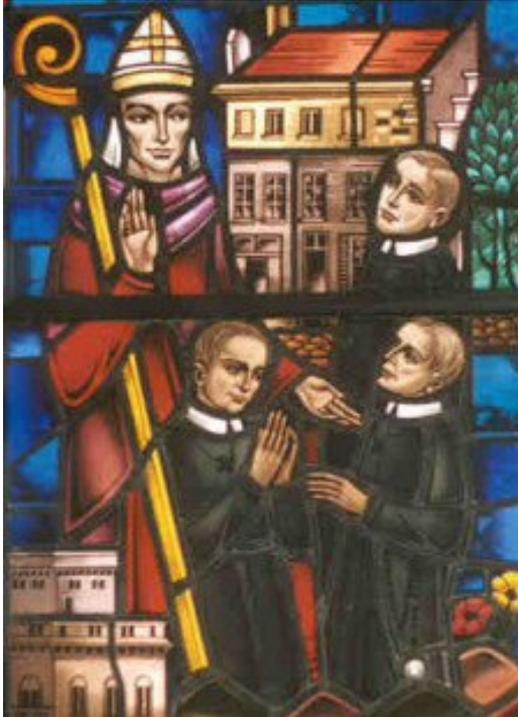
Loving God, in solidarity with all those suffering, may we offer our lives as a witness and share Your face to all those we meet and greet.

Amen.

Renju Paul

Week 3

Dec. 12 - 18



Xaverian House Window: Commemorating the
Foundation on Ezelsraat in Bruges in 1839

December 12

My soul proclaims the goodness of the Lord; My spirit rejoices in God my Savior!" - Luke 1:46-47

The Visitation is one of my favorite scenes in Scripture. Mary is with her cousin Elizabeth and they are celebrating their most unlikely pregnancies.

This time of year, we are inundated with Christmas miracle stories from George Bailey to Charlie Brown and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. - and so so so many more. But, the older I get, the easier it is to say that it is all saccharine and make believe.

The story in today's Gospel, of a young girl and an older woman are not bound by what must be but, rather, on what may be! According to Luke, their sons, John and Jesus, will change the world, and nothing will be the same. But is that true, or is it just another vapid Christmas special?

Well, a life of faith is not at all vapid or saccharin or make believe, and it is full of miracles. The key, however, is accepting the imagination of faith, specifically believing that God works with the world, not despite it. Mary and Elizabeth are real women, really pregnant and really dealing with all the joys and hopes and the grief and anguish that their lives have. They march forward, confident in their Lord.

That is the essence of Advent - to help us strengthen our imagination of faith and belief that the ultimate miracle - God sharing with us our human essence - is real.

You know maybe I'm a little hard on George, Chuck, Rudolph and all the other characters that offer hope of new beginnings and limitless possibilities. It seems they are just paying homage to the Gospel writers, the original writers of such things.

Lord, please open my eyes to see, my ears to hear, and my heart to believe what many can't, won't, or don't!

Amen.

Deacon Kevin McCormack

December 13

Memorial of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

"Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior" - Psalm 25

We are now in the third week of Advent and light the pink candle on the Advent wreath - the candle of joy. In a special way, this third week of Advent calls us to prepare and wait with joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus. We are called to look for joy in our daily lives and to be people of joy in the world. As we witness injustice, sickness and death in our world today, it can be challenging to be joyful. So how might we as people of faith live with Advent joy?

Psalm 25 offers some guidance and wisdom. Joy comes from being guided in truth and learning the Lord's ways. As the psalmist tells us, the ways of the Lord are compassion and kindness. The Lord shows sinners the way and guides the humble to justice. Advent is a time of joyful waiting - a joy that comes from being taught the Lord's ways, being guided in his truth, and living out his compassion and kindness in a sinful, unjust world.

Today, we celebrate the feast of Saint Lucy who lived the wisdom of psalm 25. Guided in the Lord's paths, Saint Lucy joyfully maintained her faith in God even to the point of death. Known as the patron saint of the blind, Saint Lucy had a spiritual sight which allowed her to know and follow God's ways. May Saint Lucy pray for us that we may see the Lord's paths and live with compassion, kindness and joy this Advent season and always.

In this third week of Advent, teach me Your ways, O Lord, that I may live with great joy.

Amen.

Dr. Carolyn Herman

December 14

Memorial of Saint John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

“Which of the two did his father’s will?” They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you” – Matthew 21:31

You know the story. The two brothers. Their father asks both to go work in the vineyard. The first says “no,” but later, changes his mind and gets the job done. The other, says “yes” but does not go. Jesus then turns to the listening pharisees and elders, cloaked in their public esteem, and shocks by saying that outcasts and sinners have a better chance of entering the kingdom than they!

At a simple level, the parable calls us to personal integrity; being good for our word; doing what we say we’ll do; being the people we profess to be. Whether for a nation that reneges on an agreement, an institution that promises more than it can really give, a person who signs a contract then suddenly breaks it, or the parent who makes no time for his child, integrity is at risk where one does not follow through on a spoken commitment, where one’s word is hollow. Truly, the fullness of intention is action. Proof is in the doing!

At another level, and perhaps more significantly, this parable cautions against giving lip service to God! Who, after all, does the Father’s will? Which brother? Who will gain entry into the Kingdom? The answer: those who work in the vineyard. Those whose beliefs take root in Jesus and whose daily behaviors align with His; whose lives demonstrate faith-in-action, and not those who appear most righteous, who only talk a “good game.” The Pharisees and elders say they do God’s will and probably have convinced themselves that their ways are God’s ways. Jesus tells them otherwise! Jesus calls us to a living discipleship built on care and love, especially for those most in need.

It’s interesting to me that the first brother “changes his mind” and perhaps enters the task somewhat reluctantly. But he does it! Doing the right thing sometimes does not come easily. Sometimes we don’t get it right the first time. God knows we’re not perfect at it and allows us the grace – and the time – to figure things out. Our forgiving God gives “do-overs”! If I were scripting a movie scene for this parable that called for an accompanying song, I’d probably come up with some quiet Willie Nelson tune about outlaws and desperadoes searching for redemption and second chances. God would welcome them in their imperfections. Good gracious – prostitutes and tax collectors made it! Could Met fans be next?!

Loving God, grant me continued grace to see Your way for me.. to say “yes” to what You ask... to act on that “yes” and so honor Your Son by sharing His love with others each day. Amen.

Brother Thomas Puccio, C.F.X.

December 15

"I am the LORD, there is no other" - Isaiah 45:6

Years back, when my children were in grade school, we were gathered around the television on Good Friday, watching a movie on the life of Christ. My son, maybe 8-9 years old at that time, was seated on the floor in front of us. The movie reached a climactic scene where Peter denies Christ for the third time. The rooster crows. The camera zooms in on Peter's face as he realizes his denial, and the movie cuts away to a commercial. After a brief pause, and while his eyes are still fixated on the tv, my son announces, to no one in particular, "If I were ever in that position, I hope I would not deny Christ."

My wife and I had no immediate response other than a startled look at each other. Is this the same kid who an hour earlier thought life was coming to an end because he was forced to eat all his vegetables at dinner? And now he's uttering something pretty profound for his age?

In our reading from Isaiah, we hear, "Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of the earth, for I am God; there is no other!" How often do we turn to God for safety and help? Too often, I fail to put my trust in Him or His plan. Too often I underestimate the power of prayer. But this is what I admire about my son's faith. Not only has he turned toward God, but he continues to possess a comfort in his faith that is beyond his years. He accepts God's will for his life with unquestioning trust. And I see that relationship with God strengthened by the intentionality he brings to prayer, his faith life, and personal contemplation.

Dear Lord, may this Advent season be a time for all of us to slow down and build our relationship with You, the one true God. May Advent afford us opportunities to better trust our in You and Your plan for us. Amen.

Dr. Patrick Slattery

December 16

“You changed my mourning into dancing; O Lord, my God, forever will I give You thanks” – Psalm 30:11

The Psalms of David were my grandmother’s favorite. She loved the poetic writing of a man expressing his relationship and walk with God in the good and bad, through a variety of emotions and experiences. The raw honesty and prophetic wisdom of the Psalms captured her attention.

This year, as my grandmother faced her last days on earth, I sat at her bedside and read to her from the Psalms. I watched as she relaxed while the words were spoken. I delighted in just the two of us gathered before the Lord (Matthew 18:20). These were small, seemingly insignificant moments I will treasure forever. After a summer of struggle, my loving grandmother finally passed into eternity. There are not enough words to describe what she meant to me. For 33 years I had the privilege of calling her mine. The first of nine grandchildren, she smothered me with unconditional love and affection until the very end. Her faith, wisdom, compassion, care, and life-giving advice were unrivaled. Up until her last day she was still allowing herself to be used by God to bring people together, minister to their lives, heal wounds, and show us what really matters in life. When it finally hit me that this woman who had been such a solid rock in my life was gone, I was filled with mourning. However, as I turned to God and laid my pain down at His feet, I delighted in the truth of where my grandmother was.

What was mortal was swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:4). I could be confident, living by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:6-7). For the body that is sown perishable is raised imperishable; sown in dishonor but raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. The perishable has been clothed with imperishable, and the mortal with immortality (1 Corinthians 15:42-53). Because of Jesus, death has been swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). The light and momentary afflictions in this life are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17). God took me outside my emotions so I could rest on the truth that my grandmother’s passing was actually her Resurrection Day, and that was a reason to celebrate.

Dear God, thank You that You turn our mourning into dancing. Thank You that in Jesus, we have the promise of being resurrected with You and to dwell with You forever. Amen.

Joshua Kinney

December 17

"Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace forever" – Psalm 72:7

Every time we assemble for Eucharist, we are challenged to focus and listen attentively to the proclamation of the word of God, the message and the proclaimer. For it is in the word of God and the account of salvation history that we come to know both who we are and what our lives are all about. As I read and ponder the family record of Jesus, I witness the people who were just and some who were unjust. It is a messy genealogy yet it reflects the history of all our families.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we get the sequence of names. Christ becomes incarnated in the history of a people. This link teaches me also to reject every kind of discrimination. As sons and daughters of the Father, Jesus Christ ennobled both sexes, all races, tribes, ethnic groups among others.

In my life and in our works as Xaverian Brothers, together we aspire to the unity and peace of the kingdom of God, ever inspired by our Motto: "In Harmony Small Things Grow." During our initial formation, we participated in the street kids' program, youth ministries, catechetical and teaching. A quick look at the street kids found at various points in Bungoma, Kenya, they live in groups as if some form of nuclear families. They have no structures they call their own. At night, they sleep in their regular dark places, they call "Base." As a means of survival, many of them have mastered the art of theft, they sell their catch at any price they are offered. They use part of their proceeds to buy "glue" which they sniff to keep them warm and awake. Basically, our young Brothers in the initial formation house take the initiative as a ministry to meet these kids, share, encourage and feed them. This has gone well as they feel appreciated, loved and above all remain hopeful.

Let us dream as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters of all.

Jesus, you are the prince of peace, you are the justice of the father. Grant us the courage to emulate your ministry by bringing healing to all our relationship. Grant us the wisdom to know what is pleasing to your father. Amen.

Brother Daniel Ssenyomo, C.F.X.

December 18

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her... When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home” - Matthew 1:20,24

Joseph decided to divorce Mary quietly, not wanting her shamed. Unlikely in a little town like Nazareth though. Tough decision! Why not sleep on it? Who makes a well-thought-out decision, then dreams an entirely different possibility with the help of an angel? That never happens to us; or does it? Have “angels” ever pushed you to do what you were hesitant to do? Have they helped you dream of responding “to the call of God to live a life of love in faith and trust?” (Fundamental Principles)

As we reflected on these questions, we both agreed parents were our first pushy angels, teaching us by the way they lived that family is important, prayer is essential, forgiveness is possible, and life is for service. Over the years, both of us faced painful realities – loss of jobs, illness, loss of family and friends to death or distance. We each became an “angel” to the other, helping dream what the Holy Spirit might conceive in us.

We fondly named Richard and Gwen Costello, and Brothers Bonaventure Scully, and Cosmas Rubencamp as angels who guided the dream of the Associates program. In the company of many Xaverian Brothers and Collaborators, we more clearly see the dream of Ryken to “stand ready to answer when asked if you are available for God to become more present in your life and through you to the world.”

In a larger context, our dreams have been shaped by angels who took great risks in public life. We both watched as Pope Francis, in his address to Congress in 2015, referred to America as “the land of dreams.” He then named Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton as dreamers that helped shape our nation. Each one of us, no doubt, has his or her own public and private list of angels and dreamers.

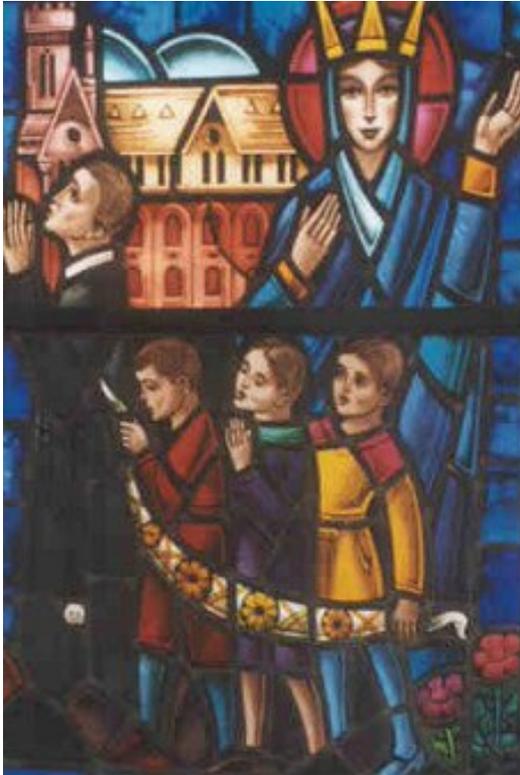
After each of his dreams, Joseph immediately acted in obedience to the angel’s message, trusting that God was leading him. We are asked to do the same: “Above all else remember that your God is forever faithful...For your part, God asks you in return to make the word of God your home.” (FP) Just as Joseph, the dreamer, made a home for the Word of God. Sleep well, and sweet dreams!

Blessed Joseph, man of strength, teach us be humble that we might endure life’s sorrows. Believer in dreams, teach us to believe in God’s faithfulness. Man of action, help us act with compassion and justice in this world. Man of silence, teach us to be still that we might know God. Amen.

Michael Buckley & Jeannette Suflita

Week 4

Dec. 19 - 25



Xaverian House Window: Commemorating the mission to England and Marian processions

December 19

"And how is it to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" - Luke 1:39-45

Through today's gospel, we see Elizabeth discovering Mary as the mother of the Lord. Elizabeth recognizes this dignity of Mary through a very ordinary action: Mary's visit to her. Like Elizabeth, we Xaverian Brothers, are heirs to a tradition in which God calls us and invites us to seek His face in ordinary things of life: a welcome, a smile, a glass of water, a word of encouragement, respect for each person, a service rendered discreetly. Mary is presented today as a person who appears to help others.

In today's world, there are many expectations that are not fully realized. Or they turned out not as we intended. That's why our world still needs a Savior. We need something new: a new life, a new type of human life. Dalai Lama once said that a true religion is the one that makes me more sensitive and makes me a better, more compassionate, more detached, more loving, more human, more responsible person. The cries and laments of those around us are demands for answers, support and help.

The current situation and context of misery in the world invites us to help each other to live in serenity by bringing hope to those who experience sadness, fear, anger, indignation, revolt and by re-energizing those people hampered by the difficulties of life.

Like Mary, today's gospel exhorts us to gaze with love, compassion and sympathy on our fellow men.

O Virgin, Holy Mother of God, come to the aid of your people who wish to rise up. The current moment is yours. Come to our aid and be a refuge and hope for all of us. Amen.

(John Paul II prayer)

Brother Vincent Ilunga, C.F.X.

December 20

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be” - Luke 1:28-29

Today’s Gospel reading from Luke recalls the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. Through this miraculous event, Mary comes to know that God has chosen her to carry and nurture the son of God. Mary is initially startled by the angel’s appearance and greeting and questions the possibility of this miracle. Quickly, however, Mary comes embrace her role in God’s plan, humbly answering Gabriel by saying “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

Despite years studying theology and working in ministry, I did not intimately understand the sentiment of vocation until I found out that I would become a parent. Not unlike Mary, I was initially overwhelmed by the logistics of the event: How did this happen? What does this mean? Am I enough? While I would like to say I had the composure and faith of Mary, my anxieties and insecurities initially inhibited me from seeing the invitation God had given me to find fulfillment of myself through caring for another. I was not able to acknowledge and appreciate this call from God until my wife reminded me that we do not need to know how to be perfect parents, but we need to choose to love our daughter each day.

Mary may not fully understand the full extent of what it meant to be the mother of God when the Gabriel appeared to her, but her faith led to trust and commit each day to answering God’s call. The grace of the annunciation is not just in the one “yes” from Mary, but in the million that will follow as she lives into God’s plan for her.

**All Knowing God, give me the confidence, humility, and trust to answer
Your call this day, and every day to come.
Amen.**

Ben Horgan

December 21

“Mary said: ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for He has looked upon His lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of His arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly’” – Luke 1:46-49

Today’s Gospel reading from Luke echoes the feast of the visitation. Mary has just said her “yes” to become the mother of the Savior, learns of her cousin Elizabeth’s late-in-life pregnancy and journeys to help her. In the Magnificat, Mary expresses her gratitude for all she has received including the insights she has gained about how God is present and works in our world.

I was touched by an reflection on this scripture reading by America Media writer Molly Cahill, who said “Mary reminds us that God’s heart is close to those the world might least expect.” And “her strong language about casting down the powerful suggests that God’s power will bring justice to the oppressed not just after death but also in the here and now.”

As I reflect on this perspective, I am confronted with the challenge of seeking God in unexpected places and finding ways to promote justice in a world that continues to ignore those so desperately in need of it. Mary’s Magnificat is indeed our song and a rallying cry to all who follow Christ. Our Fundamental Principles too, urges us to respond to

*“God’s desire to manifest God’s care and compassionate love
to those who are separated and estranged,
not only from their neighbors,
but also from their own uniqueness;
those who suffer want, neglect and injustice:
the poor, the weak and the oppressed of this world*

Let us pray the Magnificat with Mary in gratitude for all God has given us and try, like her, to respond to God’s call with a generous heart. Amen.

Brother Paul Murray, C.F.X.

December 22

Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for He has looked upon His lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name" - Luke 1: 46-47

The Magnificat, taken from Luke's Gospel, is one of my favorite readings in scripture. This occurs right after Mary has been visited by the Angel Gabriel to inform her that she is to be the Mother of God. The Angel Gabriel also tells Mary about the pregnancy of Elizabeth. Mary's devotion to Elizabeth is shown when she takes an arduous journey to visit her many miles away. I admire the fact that Mary was being of service to others by putting Elizabeth before herself. Mary was indeed "magnifying" the Lord's goodness and love.

During this past year, I have seen many people do just that. One of my colleagues was so concerned that her 98 year old mother was not being provided with enough interaction with others in a nursing facility during Covid that she decided to have her mother come live with her. This required so much to adapt and change her home to accommodate her mother. I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that a mothers' love is unconditional, but in this case, a daughter's love proved to be just as unconditional. My friend was also "magnifying" the Lord's goodness and love. As we get ready to conclude this season of Advent, how have others seen Christ's love and goodness in you? How are you allowing God's work within you to accomplish his will? As we celebrate the birth of Christ just a few days from now, may we look into our hearts and glorify the Lord, allowing the Mary's spirit to be in us so that we too, may rejoice in God our Savior.

Lord, may others see Christ's love and goodness through us. Through Your mother, Mary, may we seek her grace to help us magnify You so that we may serve You with holiness and love.

Amen.

Cathy Reynolds

December 23

"What, then, will this child be? For surely the hand of the Lord was with him" – Luke 1:66

God rendered Elizabeth's husband Zechariah mute when he doubted God's messenger, the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to him to say that Elizabeth, though barren and old, would give birth. Gabriel declared, "You are to call him John" (Lk. 1:13). The child, of course, was to be John the Baptist. As foretold, the baby was born. At his circumcision, a time for naming, neighbors and relatives were urging to call him Zechariah, after his father. Elizabeth, however, said to call him John. The decision finally came to the father. When Zechariah, astonishing all, wrote on a tablet, "His name is John," God restored Zechariah's speech: "His mouth was open and his tongue set free" (Lk.1:64). He praised God. Amazed by such signs, all wondered what this child with the hand of the Lord upon him would be. "What, then, will this child be?"

Perhaps in 1865 William Chatterton Dix had this passage in mind when he put words to the tune Greensleeves in the now famous carol "What Child is This." How often, too, Mary and Joseph must have looked at their baby Jesus and wondered, "What will this child be?"

I love the question. What parents have not asked it about their own children. What good teachers have not looked into the eyes of the students in their care and wondered what would they be, who will they become. Aren't we ourselves - all God's children - called to ask and to answer this mysterious question for ourselves each day? "Who will I be? Who am I becoming?" Even now in my seventh decade, the question remains dynamically open to me... and calls for answer.

Miracles, we know, are not reserved just for Biblical antiquity. Surely, "the hand of the Lord" is with us today - and very personally - no less miraculously than it was for Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John! So touched by the holy, touched by God, each of us made in God's image, are we not magnificent creatures capable of inspiring awe in others when we allow God to work through us? Have we not the promise of doing wondrous deeds? How do we fulfill that promise?

John's task was prophesized and clear: to make ready the way for the Lord Jesus, to announce his coming. Our task is similar: to make way in our hearts for the Lord, to be open to the workings of God in our lives, to acknowledge in awe and joy the hand of the Lord upon us, and to "announce" Jesus to others. May we do so gladly!

Lord, as a channel of your grace, with your divine hand upon me, may I reveal Jesus to others in joyful living, in loving action. In cooperation with your will, help me to be your child and messenger, announcing the way of the Lord, stirring wonder in the hearts of others. Amen.

Brother Thomas Puccio, C.F.X.

December 24

"And you, child, will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace" - Luke 1:78-79

As we write this reflection in late August, we realized that for this past year-and-a-half many of us in the United States, and in the world at large, have lived in the shadow of uncertainty, fear, and death for a variety of reasons: the pandemic with its dangerous variants, terrorism, wars and unrest, political instability and polarization, famine, floods, and fires. Simply watching the daily news can be an exhausting and depressing activity. And then there are our own anxieties, illnesses, and sorrows that are part of each of our lives. The famous poet Christina Rossetti in her poem *A Christmas Carol* describes it perfectly:

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

But perhaps, at this holy time, a day of “almost joy” but “not just yet,” on the threshold of Christmas, we can take a moment for hopeful reflection on the reading from Luke above. Because those of us who “sit in darkness and death’s shadow” are the very beloved people whom our God of tender mercy plans to visit. Can you imagine such a visit this Christmas Eve? What fierce light would God’s tender mercy shed on the darkness we carry within us? What compassionate love might heal our hearts or hold our hurts? What new life might be born in us?

It’s Christmas Eve, and like the shepherds and the magi, we are drawn to the Christ, and we trust that our feet will be guided into the path of peace. May the simplicity of the last stanza of Rossetti’s poem be our prayer this Christmas Eve.

**What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.**

Jeannette Suflita & Michael Buckley

December 25

The Nativity of the Lord

*“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us”
– Matthew 1:23*

During Advent we wait for God to break through our world. We look for signs of God’s presence in our lives. Throughout these days, we listen for the still small voice speaking to us in our contemplation. Our Advent journey ends today with Christmas as “the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The angels proclaim, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” Christmas reveals a deep reality and a remarkable gift, which God shares with us in Emmanuel, God with us. This mystery opens our hearts to the love in us and around us.

Growing up in a large family with so many traditions was a special time of hope and harmony. This stretch of peace as well as the sights and sounds of the season pulled us into the spirit of Christmas. In our love and care for one another, we learned that Emmanuel is not remote, but a God who cares, who is with us in our everyday lives. The depth of God’s love for us is beyond anything we can measure, much like a parent’s love or familial affection. We were more patient and optimistically looked beyond the obvious in our support for one another. I still cherish these memories.

Like the journey of the Magi, all of us are looking for the signs of the Christmas season. We look for an anchor to our deepest desires, something that will sustain us as we move forward. Our journey is often difficult to plan and not easily understood. As we make our way, Christmas, like family, touches us right where we are and whispers words of hope. What we have been looking for, Emmanuel, unfolds before us in the ordinary blessings of our lives. At Christmas, what ultimately matters most, is that we love everyone for who they are, not for who we want them to be. That is the real “Christmas miracle”. There in the depths of our hearts, we find God’s gift of love, being born in us once again. You can see in the small things, the treasure, God has given you over and over again.

Blessed Christmas to you and your family.

**We pray in gratitude for the gifts of faith, hope and love born in our hearts
this Christmas day.**

Amen.

Brother Daniel Skala, C.F.X.

About the Authors

Brother Patrick Fumbisha, C.F.X.

Brother Patrick Fumbisha is from the Democratic Republic of Congo and has served the Congregation as a teacher, formator and member of the General Council since 2013. Brother Patrick is presently the Vicar General and is the Novice Director.

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Dr. Carolyn Herman is the Director of Staff Formation at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA. She also has a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Boston College and facilitates online courses for the Boston College Crossroads program.

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Initially formed by the Xaverian Brothers while at St. John's High School in Shrewsbury, MA, Ben returned to the network to serve as the Formation Director for the XBSS in 2018. He currently lives in Baltimore, MD, with his wife Hillary and daughter Finley.

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Brother Vincent is from Democratic Republic of Congo where he served the Congregation as a teacher, formator and regional superior. Brother Vincent has been serving our mission in Haiti for the past several years.

Josh Kinney

Josh serves as the Director of Communications for the Xaverian Brothers. He is a storyteller, writer, photographer, and world traveler who has spent his career working in mission-driven, faith-based organizations. He is a Philadelphia expat living in Baltimore.

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Kevin McCormack has been at Xaverian in Brooklyn since 1985 and has been the Principal there for the last 12 years. He is also a deacon for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

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Brother Paul has been Xaverian Brother for fifty-eight years serving over thirty years as a teacher and administrator in Catholic education. Since 2007, he has been a member of the leadership team at the Xaverian Brothers Generalate in Baltimore.

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Renju Paul is a campus minister and Theology teacher at Saint Johns High School in Shrewsbury, MA. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Theology and Ministry from Boston University. In his free time, he enjoys painting, hiking, and spending time with his family.

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Brother Thomas Puccio, CFX, Ed.D., has been a Xaverian Brother since 1968. Following 14 years of teaching English at St. John's Preparatory School, he joined the administrative team at Malden Catholic, where he has served as Dean of Studies, longtime Principal, Acting Headmaster, and currently Director of Mission Integration and Theology teacher.

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Catherine Reynolds is the Director for Mission and Identity at Saint Xavier High School as well as AP Psychology teacher. She has also taught Theology and been Director of Campus Ministry throughout her 26 years at Saint Xavier.

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Elected to serve as General Superior in 2019, Brother Dan had served as teacher, administrator and headmaster for over 40 years. Since 2007, he had served on the leadership council of the Congregation.

Dr. Patrick Slattery

Dr. Patrick Slattery is the Executive Director of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School network. A graduate of Xavier High School in Middletown, CT, Patrick credits the Xaverian Brothers for igniting his interest in teaching and working in Catholic education.

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Currently a member of the Kenya Regional council and also the regional treasurer. He is the assistant Postulant's director (Kenya region), a teacher of English literature and the deputy principal at St. Xavier High School- Bungoma, Kenya.

Michael Buckley and Jeannette Suflita

Mike and Jeannette are married and live in Ellicott City, Md. Mike taught at the Xaverian Brothers schools of Holy Cross, Brooklyn and Our Lady of Good Counsel, MD. He worked in various parishes in MD as Adult Formation Director and as a Sales Representative for several educational publishing firms. Jeannette was a Director of Religious Education in several parishes in Buffalo, NY, and an Associate Director of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD. She joined the Department of Nursing at The Johns Hopkins Hospital as Organization Development Consultant.

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About the Xaverian Brothers



The Xaverian Brothers are a community of consecrated laymen who as religious Brothers participate in the Roman Catholic Church's mission of evangelization. Founded in Belgium by Theodore James Ryken in 1839 to be missionaries, the Brothers have been educators in the U.S. since 1854. The ministry in the U.S. includes 13 Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools, as well as many activities of the Brothers in direct service to refugees, prisoners, adult education, and the homeless. Xaverian Brothers have expanded their ministry work among the poor in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti, while continuing their historic connection with schools in Belgium and the U.K. The Xaverian mission touches the lives of the most vulnerable wherever the Brothers serve.

Notes



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Notes



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May your Advent
journey give you hope,
and help prepare you
for the real meaning of
Christmas, and may the
coming of Jesus give
you peace.



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