
ADVENT 2022



In the Waiting

A Xaverian Journey Through Advent



XAVERIAN BROTHERS

IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

INTRODUCTION

The 'Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers' advises us to “make God’s word our home.” Through a willingness to set aside time each day for daily prayer, meditation, and reflection, we open ourselves to God's living word. I am once again pleased to provide these personal and heartfelt readings for your use as a vehicle for prayer during the Advent season. During Advent, we wait with patience and hope for God to move in our midst.

Throughout Advent we make a spiritual journey in which we pay close attention to God's word made flesh: Jesus. It is never easy to wait on God, but when we do, we often find God's hand in unexpected ways in the ordinary circumstances of our days. Prayer is a gift; our connection to a deeper appreciation for the many ways God's grace leads us.

This year may your Advent journey give you hope, and help prepare you for the true meaning of Christmas. The Xaverian Brothers, our Associates, and our Partners in Mission pray that the coming of Jesus, our Prince of Peace, gives you peace. We wait with patience and hope for God to reveal his many gifts to us.

God bless you,

Brother Daniel

Brother Daniel Skala, C.F.X.

General Superior

4409 Frederick Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21229
P: 410.644.0034
F: 410.644.2762
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XAVERIAN BROTHERS
IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

Week 1

Nov. 27 - Dec. 3



"Clear, Crisp, Cold"
by Brother Edward Rice, C.F.X.

November 27

“Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!” – Isaiah 2:5

Frequently, I write out a daily “to do” list, only to be pulled in many other ways. I laugh that those other directions were written in invisible ink!!

I’ve learned that God is forever forming and offering opportunities through encounters with “the other” as Pope Francis reminds us.

My initial response to these readings is the challenge to be alert. Alert to the Holy Spirit’s invite to “walk in the light of the Lord” in a variety of relationships.

My faith journey has been an ever-widening understanding of God’s presence – with the Brothers, with adolescent students, with adults in a variety of faith communities, in chaplaincy providing and receiving spiritual care and support.

In honesty, there are times I wonder where God is! The lyrics “hold on through the night” become my prayer when I wonder what the heck I am doing in a situation.

Grace invites me to be present, be open, keep showing up! It’s not what I do, but what God does with me along the way for the good of others.

Like Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and others, we must trust.

This Advent begins with the exhortation “to be alert for the Son Of Man will come in ways that you least expect.”

The Fundamental Principles tell us – we are “formed by God, through the common ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life.”

**Lord, may we walk in Your light and be alert!
Amen.**

Brother Kenney Gorman, C.F.X.

November 28

“Lord, I am not worthy to have You enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed” – Matthew 8:8

As a child, my siblings and I enjoyed decorating our home for Christmas. My favorite task was unwrapping the Holy Family figurines for the small table-top stable from their year-old newspaper. My mother, my touchstone for my faith, would grudgingly allow me to place the three Wise Men with the group, although it was not yet Christmas. Baby Jesus, however, unwrapped from his newspaper, had to remain in a table drawer until Christmas Day. On Christmas Day, the first one of us six children to awake and remember that Baby Jesus was still in the drawer, placed Him in the manger. Even with wrapped gifts waiting, it was a powerful moment. Christ was here! Christmas had arrived! The small stable and figurines, worn from years of use, were transformed by the small representation of the Christ Child.

I am touched by the humility and trust of the centurion seeking aide from Christ for his ailing servant. He speaks for all of us as humans, not worthy but blessed and transformed by Christ's presence in our worn world.

**Christ, thank You for coming despite our unreadiness and our humanity. Open our hearts in love and hope as we prepare to welcome You into our lives once again.
Amen.**

Dr. Catherine Bowes

November 29

"Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I give You praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned You have revealed them to the childlike'" – Luke

10:21

One clear summer evening, I noticed a bright light in the sky. It was too bright to be a star, so I surmised it was most likely a planet. We own a spotting scope that is good enough for bird watching but a poor imitation for a telescope. It took some patience, but I was able to center the object in the center of the field of view and then did my best to focus as sharply as possible. The scope shook with each of my movements, causing my unidentified shining object to violently streak back and forth in my field of vision.

I decided to hold my breath and remain as still as possible, positioned just a hair's breadth away from the eyepiece. The bright object trembled less and finally came to standstill. As the image stopped moving, I could discern a series of faint stripes across it. My bright object was none other than the planet Jupiter!

The Gospel reading today from Luke 10 recounts the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." What will be my experience this Advent Season? Will I eagerly focus on our Lord and Savior with a still and quiet soul? It required patience and focus on the bright light in the sky this past summer. I believe it will require the same effort to see Him.

Dear Lord,

Please help me this Advent Season to reflect quietly, away from the holiday distractions, on You. Help me to have the same experience the disciples did when You said, "For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

Amen.

John Thornburg

November 30

Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle

“He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed Him” – Matthew 4:22

Admittedly, today's Gospel has always been jarring to me. Leave everything: who I am, family, home, security—and start over? Who could do that? Today, we read of the call of Peter and his brother Andrew, who did exactly that.

As I knew very little about Peter's older brother, whose feast we celebrate today, I decided to do some research. Andrew was a man of clear insight, logical thinking, and firm in his decisions, uncomfortable with praise and insincerity. To those characteristics I can easily relate! I suspect I am not alone in being uneasy with praise for the gifts and talents God has granted me. I am equally uneasy in accepting praise for gifts I do not possess. Each of these apostles loved Jesus, and I suspect were drawn to some personality trait they admired.

As followers of Jesus, many people have shared their commitment and talents with me. They have likewise helped form who I have become as an individual. Hopefully, I have been able to have that same effect on others. I think of the lyrics to the song “We are Companions on the Journey,” and how we are blessed to learn from the talents that God has given to others as well as to share with them the gifts we possess. During this season of hope, it is my personal hope not only that we continue to share our gifts with others but also that we are inspired by the talents of all whom we meet each day of our lives.

God, give each of us the ability to recognize and share our talents for the good of all and the building of Your Kingdom.

Amen.

Bill Gorman

December 1

"Everyone who listens to these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock" - Matthew 7:21, 24-27

In today's Gospel, Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount with a call to action. If we are to enter the Kingdom of God, you and I are to do the will of God. Hearing the word of God is not enough! Jesus is proposing ACTION. Of all the analogies that Jesus could have spoken, He refers to building a house. You and I are to emulate the 'wise man' who built his house upon a rock' and not the 'foolish man who built his upon the sand.' Jesus is referring to the rebuilding of the Temple being undertaken in Jerusalem. But as some scripture scholars suggest, Jesus was referring to a different Temple which was to be built... the Church. If we take the Church as the Temple, the very foundation is Christ Himself as St. Paul says, 'they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.' (1 Cor. 10:4). Jesus calls you and me to action, which is rooted in Him, who is love. You and I must not only hear Jesus' words, but you and I must act upon them for 'faith apart from works is dead.' (James 2:26).

What are you and I building today? What actions are we undertaking in the name of our loving God? In 'Evangelii Gaudium', Pope Francis challenges us to evangelize, "For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?" ... with the poor, neglected, the forgotten, and especially prisoners. Francis challenges us to ACT on the Gospel message.

Build your house on the ROCK ... Christ the Lord.

Heavenly Father,

Help us to build our lives on You, our rock and sure foundation.

Amen.

Brother James Connolly, C.F.X.

December 2

"Do you believe that I can do this?' 'Yes, Lord,' they said to Him. Then He touched their eyes and said, 'Let it be done for you according to your faith.' And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, 'See that no one knows about this.' But they went out and spread word of Him through all that land" – Matthew 9:28–31

In many ways, today's Gospel is straightforward. Two blind men follow Jesus, asking for His healing. Jesus, perhaps mindful of the scene that such an event would cause, does not respond to them until He has left the road and entered a house. Inside, He asks them, "Do you believe I can do this?" When they affirm their faith in Him, He touches them, and their blindness is healed.

Jesus brings healing to many during His ministry: He cleanses the leper, heals the paralytic, gives voice to the voiceless, and restores sight to the blind. Often, Jesus heals those who not only ask for healing but also affirm their faith in His identity as a Messiah.

What does a passage about two blind men have to do with the sacred waiting of Advent, especially one in which the blind men defied Jesus' instruction to keep their healing a secret? Jesus must have known that the men would proclaim the good news of their healing – and of their faith! This passage brings to mind a phrase found in *The Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers*: the gift you have received, give as a gift. The two blind men knew the gifts they had been given: sight and faith. In turn, they were so overcome with gratitude and joy that they were compelled to share these gifts with their community, making sure they told everyone of their experience with Jesus, the Messiah.

What gifts have you received that fill you with overflowing joy, compelling you to share that joy with others?

**Jesus, as we practice the sacred waiting of Advent, open our eyes to the healing touch of faith in You. Guide our hearts to notice with gratitude the gifts we have received, and inspire us to share our joy.
Amen.**

Eileen Breeze

December 3

Memorial of St. Francis Xavier

"No longer will your Teacher hide Himself, but with your own eyes you shall see your Teacher... on the day the Lord (Teacher) binds up the wounds of His people, He will heal the bruises left by His blows" – Isaiah

30:19,21

Celebrating the feast of Saint Francis Xavier invites us to reflect on what is happening in the world today with the same reference point that Francis Xavier would have used in his day, namely, Christ the Teacher. We need to find our Teacher so that we may learn again and renew our understanding of the mission of the Church and our ministry to our neighbors and our world. As Francis Xavier developed a relationship with Christ the Teacher who taught him how to relate to other people and cultures, we are also invited to learn from the Master so that we may share what we learn with others.

I ask myself what do I have to give and to share with my sisters and brothers at this time? Many of us have so many questions of what is going on the world. The Covid-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, climate change, political crises in Haiti, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, floods in Pakistan, and many other issues people of God are experiencing in daily life: injustice, poverty, sickness, etc.

Every one of us is wounded or has wounded others and the environment. None of us have the answers or solutions regarding what is happening in the world. Therefore, we need to find the Teacher to heal us and to teach us how to live as "Sequel Christi" in the world today. We need to practice justice and charity, so that we may be able to stop wounding others and the environment; we need to take care of our common good, to live and to move together as children of God. To favor open dialogue, to listen to and to support one another, to pray and to wait for the Lord.

God our Father, help us to continue learning from Your Son Jesus Christ, to be good Christians and missionaries of the good news of Your Kingdom. Send us Your Holy Spirit to heal our wounds and to enable us to take loving care of our common good and the environment. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Brother Dominique Olondo, C.F.X.

Week 2

Dec. 4 - 10



"At Forest's Edge"
by Brother Edward Rice, C.F.X.

December 4

"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Romans 15:5-6

When I was in grade school, I was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Some were young. One who most definitely was not, was Sister Marcellinus. To us, she seemed 100-years-old. We were all a bit afraid of her. More than anything, I remember how every day, with a wrinkled hand fingering her rosary beads, she would ask us to pray for her perseverance. More than 55 years on, her request abides.

As we "prepare the way of the Lord," anticipating the joyful celebration of the Nativity, we acknowledge there are days when it can be a challenge to endure: the outlook is murky, energy is low, spirits are down. In making a simple prayer for perseverance, we give glory to God who helps us through and makes straight our crooked paths.

Scripture tells us that St. Paul's companion on his missionary journeys was St. Barnabas. The name means "son of encouragement." Don't we all need a friend like Barnabas? Encouragement animates the Brothers' motto: In harmony, small things grow. Those of us working with young people in the educational ministry of Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools see the incredible power of just a few affirming words. We love being encouraged ourselves. And we see how faces light up when we express to young people our love for who they are and our belief in all they can accomplish.

Holy Father,

In this Advent season, may we offer a daily prayer inspired by Your endurance and encouragement.

Amen.

Dr. Paul Barker

December 5

"I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home" – Luke 5:17-26

Our Advent journey holds the anticipation of God's promise to send His son to redeem us. In Luke's Gospel we see the anticipation of four men who are willing to go to great extremes to have their friend healed. The zeal, faith and trust these individuals have for Jesus' compassion and mercy will let nothing hold them back. From a roof they lowered a stretcher with their friend on it into the room in front of Jesus.

During this second week of Advent, do you still have the zeal you felt earlier for this special season of renewal or has a little of it slipped? Are you glorifying God for all the wondrous gifts He has given to you? Are you lost in the crowd of worries, fears, and everything you think you must do? Maybe today you need to put all this 'stuff' on a stretcher, place yourself in front of Jesus and be open to His voice.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and to strengthen our faith and trust. When He says to us, "rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home," we will find the stretcher lighter, it will be easier to stand and walk, to continue our journey with Jesus through this season of Advent.

Today, Lord Jesus, let us be open to Your healing touch, Your compassion and mercy.

Amen.

Mary Joy Hurlburt

December 6

*"Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned"*
- Isaiah 40:1-3

"Comfort ye my people...." these words are the text used by Handel for the first aria in his oratorio "Messiah", music that we shall perhaps hear often in the coming Advent days. It was a favorite of my father; a member of the local choral society, and I often heard it at home or in concert. It always brings back happy memories as well as being a powerful text at any time of the year.

The comfort promised by God to His people, far from Jerusalem is not a superficial balm to soothe an anxious spirit but rather a strengthening and encouragement to believe that whatever the circumstances, God is faithful to His people. Yes, they have suffered but they must hold firm and trust that God's purpose will be accomplished in their lives. And God speaks tenderly, a still, small voice of calm, amid the turbulence of our lives. The Xaverian value of trust calls us to a similar perspective. Brother Ryken prayed, "Lord I cannot understand Your ways but I must adore them." So must we. In these confusing and often troubled days for the church and the world we can take comfort that Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ and that in the words of Julian of Norwich, "all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well."

Loving God, we ask You to look upon us in the confusion and pain of our world. Keep us united in hope and trust, in love and tenderness, to celebrate the birth of Your Son in the sure knowledge that our sins are forgiven, our salvation is at hand.

Amen.

Brother Philip Revell, C.F.X.

December 7

Memorial of St. Ambrose

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest...

For My yoke is easy, and My burden light” – Matthew 11:28

A few years back, I had “one of those weeks.” My wife was experiencing the worst of her chemo treatment for breast cancer. I experienced the loss of an extended family member. Work challenges were immense. And on top of it all, I had to defend my doctoral dissertation. I remember the physical and emotional exhaustion. Consumed with my burdens, it was this scripture passage that I recalled in the moment. It was this passage that made me pause, walk to the school chapel (a blessing of working in Catholic education), and seek rest in Christ.

Even in less dramatic weeks, the demands of life can still be a heavy burden, and necessary rest elusive. Many people have a “kind of tired that sleep won’t fix.” Thus, the imagery of a yoke perhaps symbolizes the daily challenge inherent in our labor. While designed to “manage” the burden of pulling our heavy load, the yoke is nonetheless still taxing and the burden still heavy.

But therein lies what today’s Gospel message tells us. Christ reminds us that if we need help “managing” our burdens, that His yoke is easy, and that true rest can be found in Him. We need to take up His yoke.

Our own Xaverian Fundamental Principles cite, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” The Fundamental Principles, also a source for reflection and prayer this Advent Season, are presented to us to reflect upon and strengthen our courage to follow Christ, place our burdens in His care, and build trust that He will give us rest.

**Lord, grant us the courage to surrender our burdens to You, and freely take up Your yoke. Let us find rest in Your unconditional love.
Amen.**

Dr. Patrick Slattery

December 8

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

"Where are you then?" The man replied, "I heard You in the garden, I got scared because I was naked, and I hid"

– Genesis 3:10

First of all, let me say that we humans find it easy to respond to God in the different circumstances of our lives, when faced with a fault or a sin that we commit, forgetting our responsibility for it!

Do we escape with excuses regardless of our consciously deliberate participation in such an act?

God always comes and knocks at our heart one way or another, but we don't know how to respond to this opportunity. We do not answer Him easily. Don't we always look for red herrings? So, we must imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary who did not calculate how to respond to the will of God.

Secondly, I feel the response of the congregation to this matter of God's will is very similar. At the time of the first visit of Brother Superior General and his council here with us in Lubumbashi, a similar situation occurred for me. During the individual interviews, Brother had asked me if I could continue to be in the leadership of the region? I immediately answered no! So, he was a little surprised because several of my colleagues said how well we had led the region in the last months!

On the last day of the regional assembly, we began to choose the members who would constitute the new regional council. After several discernments, an inner voice was asking me, 'Given all that has been said, if I were elected, what would I do?' This question is related to the reading for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: "Where are you to serve your confreres?" I replied: With the humiliations I have suffered, I feel unfit to serve. So, I let myself be guided by the will of God. Being guided by the will of God better prepares us for the coming of Christ Jesus whom we commemorate each year on Christmas Day. The Church makes Advent available for our benefit.

**God, may Your will guide each of us this Advent season.
Amen.**

Brother Joseph Ngoie, C.F.X.

December 9

"I, the Lord, your God, teach you what is for your good, and lead you on the way you should go"

— Isaiah 48:17

While packing to move last year, I came across a yellowed Boston Globe clipping from April 1994 with an ad from Xaverian Brothers High School seeking a theology teacher. A good friend who knew both the legacy of the Xaverian Brothers and my hope to serve at some point in Catholic secondary education shared the clipping with me. At the time, I was working for the Family Life Apostolate in Boston with no immediate plans to leave. Although I knew nothing about Xaverian, I followed through trusting that I should heed my friend's suggestion that I apply. After an interview with Brother Dan, he called to offer me the job and I accepted. One could say that the rest is history, but that would be an understatement.

Coming across this clipping reminded me of the many times that God has "led me in the way I should go." I do believe that God called me to serve at Xaverian to use my gifts to benefit the community. But I also trust that God led me to Xaverian for my own spiritual growth since coming to know the Brothers and the Xaverian family has had a profound impact on my life.

Advent reminds us that the light of Christ breaks into the common, ordinary flow of our lives, often at unexpected times. God used my friend's attentive concern for me to "teach me what is for my good." May we all trust that this light will break into our lives just when we need to know where God is leading us next.

Jesus,

Your light leads us toward what is genuinely good for us. Help us to trust that You will always lead us where we need to go at each moment of our lives.

Amen.

James Conley

December 10

“In his zeal he [Elijah] reduced them to straits” – Sirach 8:2

A dear friend of mine, Gordon Zahn, was a conscientious objector in World War II and later a professor of sociology at both Loyola-Chicago, and UMass, Boston. Along with Dorothy Day, he lobbied in Rome during Vatican II for the Church to recognize the right of Catholics to conscientious objection to war. He was a co-founder of Pax Christi USA and wrote two significant and influential books: *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars* and *In Solitary Witness*, the life of Austrian peasant Franz Jagerstatter, who refused to serve in Hitler's army, was beheaded, and then beatified by Pope Benedict in 2007. His story was depicted in Terrence Malick's stunning 2019 film, *A Hidden Life*.

Gordon Zahn's life was imbued with quiet religious zeal. Unlike Elijah and John the Baptist, mentioned in today's liturgical readings, who were fiery, in-your-face provocateurs of political leaders such as King Ahab and King Herod, Gordon's zeal was quiet, respectful, grounded in deep religious faith and fortified by rock-solid conviction. He had a Spirit-fueled persistence no less steely and forthright as that of our biblical prophets. Zeal is a faith-based Xaverian value that animated Theodore James Ryken and his Brothers and is hopefully embraced by his present-day followers, old and young alike. Every Christian is sacramentally anointed with the gift of a faith-driven zeal that can be quiet and passionate, single-minded, and tenacious.

Are our spiritual lives still charged with that fire of zeal bestowed upon us at our baptism and confirmation and maintained and strengthened by the Eucharist?

Lord, may we, like St. Paul after his conversion to Christ-like nonviolence, be continuously filled with Your holy zeal so as to radiate the warmth of Your love to a cold, violent and indifferent world.

Amen.

Brother Paul Feeney, C.F.X.

Week 3

Dec. 11 - 17



"After the Storm"
by Brother Edward Rice, C.F.X.

December 11

"The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers...they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God"

- Isaiah 35: 1-2

When I retired from active ministry, I moved back home to Indiana. In the Midwest, one of the striking things is the abundance of land and nature; the farmland and fields are all around. When I first arrived back, it was at the beginning of spring. The fields were barren and black. The land was flat and parched awaiting the time for the farmers to plow the soil and plant the corn, wheat and soybeans. That spring and summer, I could not help but watch the sprouting of the plants and hear the worried farmers hoping for the needed rain. As the year continued to late August, the yield was spectacular with an abundance which could not be ignored.

When I think of the land of my birth, I cannot help but "see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God." During this Advent season here in the Midwest, the land is again barren and black. But like our wait for the coming of the Lord this Christmas, I wait, yet again, for the abundance of the fields.

**Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation, for through Your goodness we have received the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands.
Amen.**

Alice Hession

December 12

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

"The angel said to her 'Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age,' . . . and Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste" – Luke 1: 37, 39

The alternative readings for today's feast link the two scenes we know as the Annunciation and the Visitation. Having just heard the unfathomable and disturbing news of her own pregnancy, Mary also learns of Elizabeth's unlikely pregnancy and quickly travels to be with her. The passage gives no hint of what motivated a young, newly-pregnant girl to undertake this trip at a time when such travel was both difficult and dangerous.

Like each of us, Mary's motives were probably mixed – a desire to help with an unexpected late-life pregnancy; an impulse to "get out of town" before her own unexplainable pregnancy became obvious; a hope that her cousin's mysterious situation could somehow help her understand more of her own. The rendition of their initial encounter in Luke's Gospel reflects the faithful response of each of them, including Mary's Magnificat. But I somehow wonder what the dialog in the following days might have been like, as they each struggled to "make sense" out of what was happening to them.

But Scripture passages are not historical accounts nor usually clear story lines. So, in my own "prayer of imagination" as if overhearing their conversations, I have to believe that they shared bewilderment and anxiety as much as a faithful willingness to embrace the unknown. And that is what faithful friends have done with me and for me throughout my life – not providing answers or making sense of life's messiness and unknowns, but standing and staying with me so I can believe that I am not alone and that somehow "all will be well" in ways still unclear.

Mary, please help me to find the trust to share my insecurities and anxieties with others and to be grateful for their companionship on my journey of faith.

Amen.

Brother Arthur Caliman, C.F.X.

December 13

Memorial of St. Lucy

"Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe Him" – Matthew 21:32

"Because it's 30 degrees outside," I responded with a coldness reflective of the frigid December morning. Yet, there we sat at the negotiating table having a familiar conversation. The defendant, my 10-year-old son, stood before the prosecution asking why he couldn't wear shorts to school. I thought this might be a lesson best learned through experience, so I acquiesced as an act of justice, not mercy: "Fine. Wear shorts." And that afternoon as he ran in from the bus stop, legs as red as lobster claws (they also had outdoor recess), no words needed to be exchanged; lesson learned. The next day? Pants...with a jacket, to boot.

It is the human condition to see what is in front of us and still not believe. Imagine being alive during the time of Jesus and seeing His ministry—and some still did not change their minds. Why? We might miss the implicit message of today's Gospel: Christ does not ask us to change who we are without first asking us to change who we think He is. Change is more than wearing pants on a cold winter morning; it is about the conversion of our hearts. The beauty of Advent is the reminder that each day holds the possibility of Christ being born anew in us. We are invited to accept this divine gift—the very love of God born into this world and into our lives. Indeed, we have seen. Do we believe?

**Saint Lucy, patron saint of the blind, give us the eyes of faith and allow us to see the love of Jesus at work in our lives.
Amen.**

Dr. Michael Nicholson

December 14

Memorial of St. John of the Cross

"Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Savior" – Isaiah 45:8

This verse from Isaiah recurs several times in the liturgies of these last weeks of Advent. Composed during a desperate period in Jewish history when "Sion is deserted, Jerusalem desolate" (Isaiah 64:10). It is a powerful cry for a Savior, the Just One who will inaugurate a reign of truth and justice, "tzedek" or righteousness. It expresses the most confident hope that God will do what He has promised.

Every year as I reflect on the antiphons in the Liturgy of the Hours and the reading from the Prophets, I feel encouraged and renewed. Justice and mercy, righteousness, and peace: this is the vocabulary of the Prophets and of the Beatitudes of the Kingdom which Jesus, the Messiah has inaugurated. For 20 years I worked as a Prison Chaplain, first as a volunteer and later full-time. Every Christmas was a time of mixed emotions for the men and boys in Manchester or London. Our privilege as Chaplains was to share with them the Good News, "today a Savior is born for you." There is no evil in this world which is more powerful than the grace and the righteousness of God, despite all appearances to the contrary. I continue to pray for prisoners, justly or unjustly condemned by the justice of men and ask that reconciliation may overcome our society's insistence on punishment and vengeance.

Loving God,

Let our lives be living witness to the justice which You desire for all men and women. On our broken world pour out Your spirit of righteousness and peace and bring forth the rich fruits of the earth for all.

Amen.

Brother Philip Revell, C.F.X.

December 15

“Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, My love shall never leave you nor My covenant of peace be shaken, says the Lord, who has mercy on you”

—Isaiah 54:10

Isaiah is speaking to the people of God during a tumultuous period in their history. The Assyrians are expanding their empire into Israel's Northern Kingdom and downward. Isaiah says to the defeated Israel, “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child” (Isaiah 54:1). Are the people supposed to be joyful when they are not fruitful, their covenant with God silent?

Perhaps we can understand the despair the people of Israel were experiencing. It would be understandable with all that is going on in our world, country, and maybe even in our own personal lives. Feelings of loss, fear, guilt, failure and even hopelessness may creep into our thoughts. Some nights, when I pray for my children, grandchildren, students, the poor, the world, I am overwhelmed with fear. I have to take a deep breath and pray for peace. Isaiah reminds us of God's faithfulness. God, the birth of Christ, is light in our darkness.

Theodore James Ryken's words, “March on in faith,” are prophetic. During this season of Advent, of hope, of joy, we pray with confidence,

**Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, Your love, Lord, shall never leave us, nor Your covenant of peace be shaken.
Amen.**

Karen White

December 16

“...John was a lamp that burns and illuminates, and for a moment you felt good with his light. But I have a better recommendation than that of John...” – John 5:33-36

One day I was at a friend's house for a visit. After our chat, I made my way back. So, my friend decided to accompany me. Along the way, he showed me a dark hallway, reassuring me that he would lead me to the other end. So, I made the decision to go ahead. As I walked, the light bulbs came on, the hallway became brighter and brighter, suddenly ceasing to be dark. I was overjoyed to find the exit door.

Light is essential to our lives. Deprived of light, we will find it difficult to carry out the simplest acts. Thanks to light, we can move around easily, be aware of the dangers around us and avoid them.

Today's Gospel presents Jesus' discourse on the theme of light. John, brought the light of Christ to the world, calling us to repentance.

Jesus, on the other hand, reflects the Light of the Father and invites people to offer their lives to the Father. Everything we do must be done in the way of Jesus, that is, for the glory of God the Father. Jesus Himself sets the example by witnessing to His Love and Mercy, and by doing the will of the Father; He invites us thereby, to be firm on the path of truth, to remain in the providence of the Father, always depending on Him, because it is He who will light our road to Christmas.

Lord Jesus,

Make me a caring disciple during this time of Advent.

Light up the lives of those who are alone or sad, so that they can find joy in You.

Amen.

Brother Adolph Kabulo, C.F.X.

December 17

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the son of Abraham.....” – Matthew 1:1

Today we are just one week away from Christmas. We are reminded of why we celebrate Christmas and what we are preparing for during this Advent Season. Today we learn the truth of the identity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, born into this world as Son and heir of Adam, Abraham and David. Many times, I have heard today's Gospel referred to as one of the dullest readings of the year. But it has one very clear message: Jesus fully entered our human condition, with all its vices and virtues. Matthew's genealogy shows the continuity of Jesus in the history and tradition of Israel. Jesus was no upstart. It is not a complete genealogy. The names appear one way or another in the Hebrew Testament. Four women are mentioned. Each of them characters in their own right. The list includes scoundrels. Even David, a servant of God who was an adulterer and a murderer.

In speaking with my inmates, I point out that the Son of God became one of us. Matthew makes no effort to “sanitize” His origins or members of His lineage. There is no shortage of skeletons in Jesus' closet. When John says, “The Word became a human being and lived among us,” he said no less than the truth.

If Jesus was totally incarnated in our world, then we too must be totally incarnated and enflesh the values and concerns of the Kingdom in the way we live our lives.

**Father,
We thank You that Your Word was made flesh and pitched His tent among us!
Amen.**

Brother James Connolly, C.F.X.

Week 4

Dec. 18 - 25



"Winter Reflections"
by Brother Edward Rice, C.F.X.

December 18

“Joseph her husband, since he was a just man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly” — Matthew 1:19

I find myself dwelling on this verse, which stands just before the angel “solves” Joseph’s conundrum with the good news that Mary’s pregnancy was indeed “of God.” But the time between Joseph’s learning of the pregnancy and the angel’s puzzling explanation must have been tumultuous for him – a jumble of shock, betrayal, anger, sadness, disappointment – with no clear path of how he should react. A just and righteous man, he knew the law of his religion and norms of his time and culture. Yet he could not bring himself to follow that law to its letter and expose someone he loved to the consequences.

I wonder how he moved through his confusion and hurt to come to his decision to “divorce her quietly.” How long did his inner struggle go on? Did he consult with anyone else or search the Scriptures? How did he pray for guidance? There are no clear answers to these questions in that single verse from Matthew.

As I sit with these questions, I realize I sometimes struggle with situations where religious, cultural, and even legal norms indicate one course of action, but my heart and my “gut” tug at me to find a more merciful way to respond. At times I have found consolation in the words of Pope Francis, “Who am I to judge?” But I know that he doesn’t mean that as a simplistic “escape hatch” from the hard work of discernment in uncharted waters but calls me to struggle with the baffling ways to blend justice and mercy without forsaking either polarity. I know that polarities, while seeming to be opposites, are really two values that both must be held in tension. But that intellectual insight doesn’t offer any easy resolution or certainty that a decision is right. And I have never had an angelic message that alleviated the tension.

So, I continue to struggle with my own doubts and hesitancy as I try to dwell in an honest and faithful discernment. And trust that the outcome will be acceptable to our God who is the source of all justice and mercy.

Joseph, righteous and merciful, pray for me – pray for us!

Amen.

Brother Arthur Caliman, C.F.X.

December 19

"After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, 'So has the Lord done for me at a time when He has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others'" – Luke 1:5

A couple of years ago, I attended an Advent Reflection evening and the leader, our own Xaverian Associate, Chuck Belzner, likened the Advent season to pregnancy. This was not simply because we celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas, but because the season itself is filled with the kind of anticipation, preparation, and 'expectancy' you experience when you are 'expecting'!

Advent is a time of waiting and preparing to make room in our hearts for the Christ Child who promises peace, joy, and healing to a broken world. This is not unlike the actual physical preparations that couples and families go through to welcome a child; readying the room in their home that is already filled in their hearts!

But like the women in today's readings, this time of year, so beautifully focused on family and children, can be experienced as a painful reminder of the emptiness of infertility. There is an agonizing, all-consuming rhythm to the literal cycle of hope and disappointment that couples experience when they are unable to conceive a child. Time, the very thing we try to treasure during Advent, can feel like an enemy; and the loneliness amid joy is often devastating.

I was struck by the final lines in Luke's Gospel. Upon receiving the miraculous news that after a lifetime of baroness, with no realistic hope that she would ever be a mother, Elizabeth chooses seclusion. Why? Because she sees her infertility as a disgrace. Some might argue that such a stigma is no longer attached to childlessness. One need only walk with someone who has experienced it to hear the perception of failure and deep sadness that women share.

But embedded in the readings and in this season is the call to trust that God's time is not always our time. And perhaps more importantly, to remind all of us to be watchful for those who feel lost and alone during this time of hope and joy.

God, in Your tender compassion, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Amen.

Mary Abdo

December 20

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you” – Luke 1: 28

Love is an essential human need and experience. Love is transformative! In today’s scripture, Mary encounters the Living God in her ordinary life. What a shock that must have been. She was greatly troubled at what was said.

Then Mary humbly says, “yes” by accepting this invitation. She is amazed to learn of her cousin Elizabeth’s pregnancy. She heads off to visit with her, and she is warmly encouraged by Elizabeth’s greeting.

Every person and event one encounters can be a grace-filled occasion. Mary and Elizabeth renewed a sense of family and community. Mary burst out with the canticle of the Magnificat.

Some years ago, a fellow chaplain suggested that in singing Christmas carols or songs, I recall when I first heard them, who I was with, where I was. Feelings of gratitude for memories of relatives, family, teachers, fellow classmates, and faithful companions filled my heart. I recalled parish Christmas pageants, the Sisters and teachers, my family decorating the tree – all alive and encouraging once again.

Some memories are painful. I’ve learned to forgive or ask forgiveness to let them go. May I suggest you recall these songs in gratitude this blessed Christmas Season.

Remember Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, and we – are at times on the margin. Pope Francis invites us to accompany those on the margins, mindful that the Spirit is at work in their lives too – even in our families.

May we, like Mary, magnify the Lord in us!

Let us sing a joyful song!

Amen.

Brother Kenney Gorman, C.F.X.

December 21

"The LORD has removed the judgment against you, He has turned away your enemies" – Zephaniah 3:15

The Advent season as I see it is a thoughtfully planned season with beautiful readings to allow the church members to get into the moment of hope. One of the greatest questions to us all is whether this season of Advent is really in us, as anticipated by the church.

In the first reading of today for instance, Prophet Zephaniah gives us a clear picture of what is God's plan for His people. Reading the same message as believers, God communicates to us through the church that His plans for us are plans for restoration.

In the Gospel too, we see God affirming that for sure He has chosen one among human to fulfill His promise to humanity (Luke 1:43). The promise of returning the hope that was lost through original sin. Therefore, the season of Advent is a great season for us as believers because it is a season of hope.

A quote from the Fundamental Principles states:

*Can a mother forget her infant
or be without tenderness
for the child of her womb?*

*I will never forget you.
I have branded you
on the palm of my hands*

During this season we are called to remember that regardless of all that we may be going through, God who is our Father is not going to leave us alone. The Fundamental Principles, similarly, are built on the same blueprint, that we should remain with hope!

Dear God, who called Theodore James Ryken and gave him a heart of hope at a time when the situation could not vindicate him, enkindle in us the spike of hope. Let us await the coming of Your Son our Lord, with undeterred resilience.

Amen.

Brother Festus Mulu, C.F.X.

December 22

“From this day all generations will call me blessed: The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name” — Luke 1:48

In today’s Gospel reading we find the pregnant Virgin Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth. So moved by her shared experience of grace with her cousin, Mary breaks out into song, proclaiming the goodness of the Lord. In this passage, Mary sings what would become the Magnificat, Latin for “magnifying” the Lord. Mary’s song speaks of the greatness of God’s mercy and God’s promised protection to those most in need. Mary also speaks about how God will remove the powerful, scatter the proud, and send away the rich. At first glance, it appears that Mary proclaims that only those who suffer will know God’s love, and those who are privileged will be punished. In my experience of faith, however, I believe that God’s love is to be given to each of us in the way that we need. Sometimes this gift comes as an addition to our life, and other times it comes out of subtraction. Despite the approach, a transformation of the spirit occurs.

As I look back on my relationship with Jesus, I have never felt closer to Him than when I had nothing, was lonely, or suffered great humiliation. In moments of great pain and embarrassment, I have found God patiently waiting for me there. These painful experiences simplified my life and allowed me to become more dependent on God. I do not believe that Jesus planned to intentionally inflict pain so that I would return my focus to Him. Rather, I believe that God was always there waiting for me. All I had to do was notice and magnify God’s presence in my life. As ministers and scholars of Christianity have previously pointed out: God loves us for who we are but does not leave us as we are. When we allow ourselves to become more dependent on God, we magnify our humanity and our inherent divinity.

**God of compassion and understanding, lift us and invite us to grow in our dependence on You.
Amen.**

Dr. Ben Horgan

December 23

"When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son" – Luke 1:57

Everyone was created in the likeness of God. Every person is born with a purpose and a calling, which they can either fully realize or utterly miss. Christian lives are impacted by the Holy Spirit, which helps us understand His intentions for us. When the Spirit confirms that we are in the appropriate place at the right time for our assigned calling, we experience serenity and boldness.

The objective of John the Baptist's birth was to announce the coming of Jesus. His miraculous conception demonstrates God's kindness and generosity. When he wrote on the tablet to verify the accuracy of the child's name that his wife had already mentioned, Zechariah's ability to speak once again returned. Do I hesitate to proclaim accurate revelation? Do my desires to appease particular people prevent God's plan and promises from being realized in my life and the lives of those around me? Am I kind both in my words and in my actions? Do I comprehend all the mercies God has shown me during the years? Do I enjoy and find fulfilment in being humble and sharing Jesus' message, like John did?

The ultimate source of all significance in the universe is Jesus Christ. All people will be guided to the Father via Christ. How can we hope to create a society where everyone follows God's path? Only when men and women work together to fulfil the oneness Christ's atonement promises us.

**Father, through the virgin birth of Christ, You display the magnificence of Your glory to the world. Give us genuine faith and love so we can celebrate the wonder of God becoming human.
Amen.**

Brother Christopher Mwima, C.F.X.

December 24

*"In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace"*

– Luke 1:78-79

Light is an integral part of our Advent and Christmas seasons. We light the candles of our Advent wreath, we decorate our trees, homes, and yards with a variety of bright lights, and we recall the Star of Bethlehem shining brightly over the place where Jesus was born. On this eve of Christmas, let us pause and reflect on our Advent journey, a journey focused on preparing our hearts for the birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

For me, light is a symbol of God's love – it can shine upon us as well as emanate from us. God calls us to be light to the world. According to St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "There is a light in this world, a healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter." Our faith journey allows us to find this light inside of ourselves and others. This light is essential "to guide our feet into the way of peace." As Pope Francis noted, "Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey."

As we bring closure to our Advent journey and look forward to the birth of Jesus, let us take a moment to pause and reflect:

- How have I prepared my heart this advent season to be a unique expression of God's love?
- How is my faith illuminating my path as well as the path of others?
- How can I share my light so others can emerge from whatever their moments of "darkness" may be?
- How do I model God's care and compassion to all I encounter along my journey in life?

God of light and love, bless us with the strength and courage to share our light with others. Let our faith illuminate paths that lead to promoting justice and peace. Grace us with a compassionate heart so we may be unique expressions of Your love to all those we meet along our journey. Amen.

Dr. Keith Crowley

December 25

The Nativity of the Lord

"You will find an infant ... lying in a manger" – Luke 2:12

Even as a little child, I knew our family Christmas crib was special. Each December it took pride of place in our living room. It was quite large and well-constructed, with a low-watt bulb illuminating its interior. The figurines were life-like and gorgeous. My parents, sister and I were always captivated by the crib's magnetic, mysterious power.

There was baby Jesus lying in a bassinet, between Mary and Joseph, eyes wide open looking straight at me, His tiny arms extended in a gesture of love and hospitality, tenderly drawing me into the scene.

There were a couple of shepherds, hardly observant Jews, most likely uneducated, from the lowest class of society, rubbing shoulders with three "kings" or wise men, Gentiles all, highly educated, able to afford camel travel from great distances. One of the figurines was black, Gaspar, by name, from Ethiopia, according to Sister Maria George. It didn't seem to matter to Jesus or His parents whether the ones gathered there on that cold, damp night were rich, poor, of a different color, of another religion, or none. His little arms gestured that they and, by extension, we, the people of the world, were all welcome. A peace-filled Christian community was being formed on that holy night.

Gerhard Lohfink in a recent book observes that "the peace all nations so long for, comes only from God – and the helpless child in the manger is the true bringer of peace. With this it is clear: He only comes through absolute nonviolence."

Rejoice! Today the nonviolent Christ is born! Let us adore, glorify, and imitate Him!

Dear Jesus,

May we continually learn at Your crib – and at Your cross – how to live as Your faithful, loving disciples.

Amen.

Brother Paul Feeney, C.F.X.

About the Authors

Mary Abdo

Mary teaches theology and is an active member of the Campus Ministry program at Mount Saint Joseph High School in Baltimore, MD. She is also involved with the music ministry and along with her colleagues has initiated a spiritual direction program for students as well as for interested teachers.

Dr. Paul Barker

Paul began his career as a Catholic educator in 1980 in his native New Zealand. He is in his 12th year as President of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School in Olney, MD.

Dr. Catherine Bowes

Catherine is principal of St. Mary's Ryken High School in Leonardtown, MD. Previous to her return to her hometown and high school, she was a school administrator in Baltimore.

Eileen Breeze

Eileen is a Campus Minister at St. John's High School, where she coordinates many of the service opportunities for the high school.

Brother Arthur Caliman, C.F.X.

A graduate of Xaverian High School in Brooklyn, Brother Arthur currently serves as the congregational Treasurer at the Generalate and as the Chair of the corporate Members for Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. He has served in the past as Director of XBSS and as General Superior.

James Conley

James is the Director of Campus Ministry at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA where he has served for twenty-eight years. He has also helped to coordinate the annual XBSS Student Retreat since 2005.

Brother James Connolly, C.F.X.

Brother James entered the Xaverian Brothers in 1964. He spent half of his career in high school and college campus ministry. He also served the congregation in vocational ministry. Currently he is semi-retired at Xaverian House and a Chaplain at the Essex Co. Jail in MA.

Dr. Keith Crowley

Keith began his career in Catholic education in 1993. This past academic year marked his 25th year in a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. He currently serves as Principal/Associate Head of School at St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, MA.

Brother Paul Feeney, C.F.X.

Brother Paul has been a Xaverian Brother for 72 years, serving as a high school teacher, an instructor in college, seminary, and provincial. He conducts an adult religious film series at a local parish and continues his involvement in both women's and men's Cursillo weekends.

Brother Kenney Gorman, C.F.X.

Brother Kenney has been a Xaverian Brother for 58 years. His ministries include teaching, parish adult faith formation in KY and FL, and in chaplaincy providing spiritual care support in IL and KY.

Bill Gorman

Bill is a Xaverian Associate and retired teacher at Xaverian, Brooklyn. A married father of four grown children who has resided on the same Brooklyn block his entire life.

Alice Hession

Alice is the former Director of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. She was also the founding Principal of St. John Paul II Catholic High School in Huntsville, AL. She is currently involved in volunteer ministry in Lafayette, IN.

Dr. Benjamin Horgan

Ben was initially formed by the Xaverian Brothers while at St. John's High School in Shrewsbury, MA, and 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.

Mary Joy Hurlburt

Mary Joy served from 1985 through 2019 as an art instructor, Assistant Principal for Academics, Principal, and the last 14 years as President of St. Mary's Ryken High School in Leonardtown, MD.

Brother Adolph Kabulo, C.F.X.

Brother Adolph is a missionary in Haiti and one of the supervisors of the Haitian students who live at Sant Zaverijen. He is also a medical biologist by training.

Brother Christopher Mwima, C.F.X.

Brother Christopher is a Community health and development specialist, a teacher of Biology and Agriculture at St. Patrick Boys High School, Nadapal in South Sudan.

Brother Festus Mulu, C.F.X.

Brother Festus joined the Xaverian Brothers in Kenya in 2015. After his initial formation in Kenya and Congo, he did his undergraduate studies at Xaverian Centre, Nairobi and at Tangaza University College, a constituent college of the Catholic University of East Africa. Upon his graduation he took up the new Xaverian mission in South Sudan at St. Patrick's Boys Secondary School in Nadapal, where he currently serves as principal.

Brother Joseph Ngoie-wa-Nkulu, C.F.X.

Brother Joseph is a member of our Congolese region, where he was a teacher before going to Haiti where he spent several years as an animator for the young people who live with the Brothers at the Xaverian Center. He has recently accepted the assignment of the Regional Coordinator of Congo.

Dr. Michael Nicholson

Michael is the Principal of Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA. He has spent the last 15 years working in Catholic and Xaverian education.

Brother Dominique Olondo, C.F.X.

Brother Dominique studied theology and spirituality at Boston College and has been ministering in the formation program both in Congo and Kenya. Presently he lives in Nairobi and serves as the Director of the international program for third-year postulants.

Brother Philip Revell, C.F.X.

Brother Philip is an English Xaverian Brother educated at Xaverian College, Manchester, where he taught before entering HM Prison Chaplaincy. After a number of years working in Congo, he is now a Religion teacher at Xavier HS in Middletown, CT.

Dr. Patrick Slattery

Patrick 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.

John Thornburg

John is the President of Malden Catholic High School. He has been an educator for over 30 years and has served as a classroom teacher, coach, and principal.

Karen White

Karen has been a theology teacher at St. Xavier High School in Louisville, KY for 29 years. She is also a Xaverian Associate.

Project Contributors

Brother Edward Driscoll, C.F.X.

Brother Edward has served the educational ministry of the Congregation both in the U.S. and Bolivia. After his term as General Superior, he dedicated himself to teaching immigrants English, to the ministry of spiritual direction and to the promotion of racial justice.

Joshua Kinney

Joshua serves the mission of the Xaverian Brothers as the Director of Communications. 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 ex-pat living in Baltimore.

Brother Edward Rice, C.F.X.

Brother Edward is a gifted watercolor artist. Since 1998, he has been recognized as a distinguished local artist and framer who frequently participates in art exhibits and is a regular art instructor at local senior centers. You can find his artwork online at: www.edwardrice.net

Brother Daniel Skala, C.F.X.

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

Stephanie Stricker

Stephanie serves the mission of the Xaverian Brothers as the Associate Director of Mission Advancement. She lives in Frederick, MD, with her husband, Steve, and Schnoodle, Lola.



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.



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.



XAVERIAN BROTHERS

4409 Frederick Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21229

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