



Thursday 3 December 2020

In Christian art, Francis Xavier is often depicted holding a crucifix aloft to represent the zeal he felt for bringing Christ's Gospel to those who had not heard it.

Francis held worldly ambitions until, at the age of 19, he met St Ignatius Loyola (who had founded the Jesuits) and decided to become a priest. He was one of Ignatius' first Companions and became a Jesuit in 1534. He was ordained later in 1537.

Soon afterwards, King John of Portugal asked Ignatius to send missionaries to India. He chose Francis.

Francis arrived in Goa in May 1542. From there, he went to the East Indies, then in 1549 set out for Japan. Francis created flourishing Christian communities wherever he went in Asia. Most survive to this day.

Francis has been called 'the greatest missionary since Saint Paul'. He died on this day in 1552.

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 **Tell out my soul**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

It's usual to omit the Gloria during advent

The Collect for the Francis Xavier

O God, who through the preaching of Saint Francis Xavier
won many peoples to yourself,
grant that the hearts of the faithful
may burn with the same zeal for the faith
and that Holy Church may everywhere rejoice
in an abundance of offspring.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city;

he sets up victory
like walls and bulwarks.

Open the gates,

so that the righteous nation that keeps faith
may enter in.

Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—

in peace because they trust in you.

Trust in the Lord for ever,

for in the Lord God
you have an everlasting rock.

For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height;

the lofty city he lays low.

He lays it low to the ground,

casts it to the dust.

The foot tramples it,

the feet of the poor,
the steps of the needy. *Isaiah 26:1–6*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means

save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified. *1 Corinthians 9:16–27*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Veni sancta spiritus

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to the eleven, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptised will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.’

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it. *Mark 16:15–20*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

The Church talks about Evangelism fairly often. Jesus himself, the very last time he spoke to his disciples, instructed us to share our faith. And St Paul’s letter takes the ideas further with detailed instructions.

Evangelism is a response to love. One of Jesus’ more startling phrases—startling to his opponents, that is—was to say that he did not come for the righteous but for sinners. So, before we start, we must remind ourselves that God clearly loves those

who are lost. He does not so much *demand* the lost come home as *desire* their return. **Evangelism is about love**

St Paul in our second passage is also talking about evangelism. Paul, the master evangelist, is sharing his own secrets about how to bring in the lost.

First, we see Paul exhorting us to run the race—which race? The race for souls. ‘Do you not know that many run this race but only one gets the prize?’ Paul wants us to know that a soul can only be ‘owned’ by one. Jesus said the same thing: ‘A man cannot have two masters, either he will love the one and hate the other, or he will hate the first and love the second’. So we, as evangelists, must see that we are to snatch souls away from the powers of evil.

Every single soul is coveted. God wants souls won for His Kingdom; the powers of evil wants them won for his. So we, as Christians, must compete against others: materialism—advertisers and advocates of buy, spend, and own; other religions—Islam, Hinduism, the cults, the New Age movement. Each of these want human souls to be theirs. Paul says that we, as evangelists, are in the same race as these others. We and these other concerns all run after the same souls.

Such a race can only have one winner so only one can win the prize. If a person’s soul can only be won by one ‘winner’ then the race is urgent. Materialism is insistent, so we must also be insistent. We must run so as to win the prize. There must be an urgency as we go about our race to save souls.

Scripture shows God’s urgency: think about the parable of the Prodigal Son. As soon as the Father (who depicts God) sees his son (the human in need of salvation), he *runs* toward him and flings his arms around him. Indeed, the parable implies God is overwhelmed with compassion for the lost.

‘Run so as to get the prize’ means that **evangelism is urgent**.

Evangelism is love and evangelism is urgent. But Paul then says, ‘I bruise my body, and make it my own master’ because he wants to emphasise how evangelise can be costly—no pain, no gain.

Paul tells us to become like the people we meet, and the Gospels illustrate the sheer costliness of doing so. For example, Jesus went so far as to heal lepers (see **Luke 17**)! Even today, we use the word ‘leper’ to suggest we regard someone as ‘untouchable’. And Jesus healed lepers only *after* he’d touched them. By touching a leper Jesus was making himself ritually unclean which debarred him from worship in a Synagogue or Temple. So, as always, Jesus refused the soft option, to the extent he took our sin onto himself on the Cross. Paul’s phrase, ‘I bruise my body and make it my own master’ therefore points to the way that **evangelism is costly**.

Next, the passage tells us, 'Do not beat the air'. We're not to pull our punches, because too much is at stake. There is a trend these days toward so-called 'low-criinge' evangelism, which usually means a form of compromise. Paul would have had none of that. Do not compromise; let every punch count. Tell them straight. We must not pretend to be a boxer; we must not pretend to be evangelists; we must not pretend to love as Jesus loved. Until we are willing be like Jesus our evangelism will be seen for what it is: cheap pretence. **Evangelism requires truth.**

It's ultimately a matter of obedience. Is our evangelism based on love? Is it urgent? Is our evangelism sacrificial in its cost? Are we truthful as speak of a need for Jesus?

If we *are* willing to evangelise like this then Jesus himself tells us how we will be received when we die. We will come before God in awesome judgement, and He will say to us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant: come inside, and enjoy my rest.'

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

United in the company of all the faithful and looking for the coming of the kingdom, let us offer our prayers to God, the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord, strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Bless our bishop and all ministers of your Church that, by faithful proclamation of your word, we may be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets into a holy temple in the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Empower us by the gift of your Holy and life-giving Spirit that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ from glory to glory. We thank you for the example Francis Xavier.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love in the service of the poor and needy; all who minister to the sick and dying; and all who bring light to those in darkness.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin or disfigured by pain, that, raised from death to life in Christ, their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity; preserve in your faith your servants on earth, guide us to your kingdom, and grant us your peace at all times.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Hasten the day when many will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit at table in your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the whole company of your saints in glory, included Francis Xavier, with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises; by your grace

may we, like them, be made perfect in your love.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The peace

May the God of peace sanctify you:
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before him
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN Turn your eyes upon Jesus (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints, pour upon you
the riches of his grace.

All Amen

May he give you joy in their fellowship and a share in their praises.

All Amen

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness and to come to the
full radiance of glory.

All Amen

And the blessing of God the Almighty: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now
and remain with you always.

All Amen

HYMN 4 The Lord's my shepherd (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.
In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Francis Xavier and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,

and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

May your mysteries, O God,
kindle in us that fire of charity
with which Saint Francis Xavier burned for the salvation of souls,
so that, walking ever more worthily in our vocation,
we may obtain with him the reward you promise
to those who labour well in your harvest.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work

**to your praise and glory.
Amen.**