

Lives  
of  
Saints

# St Francis Xavier

1506 - 1552

Feastday: 3rd December



“My God I love  
Thee.”

*St Francis Xavier*

S. D. C.  
S O C I E T A S  
D O C T R I N  
C H R I S T I A N Æ

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I was born in the family castle of Xavier near Sangüesa and Pamplona, in 1506. My family was aristocratic. I was the youngest son of the privy councillor to King John III of Navarre. When Ferdinand of Aragon conquered the kingdom in 1512, the family castle was devastated, and our land was confiscated. My father died in 1515.

When I was 19, I went to study at the University of Paris, where I received a licence ès arts. I then furthered my studies there in theology and became acquainted with Ignatius Loyola. Ignatius, myself, and five others founded the Society of Jesus in 1534, taking a vow of poverty and chastity.

In 1537, I received Holy orders with Ignatius. The Society of Jesus was approved verbally in 1539, and before the written approval was secured I was appointed, by personal request of the King of Portugal, to evangelize the people of the East Indies. I left Rome in 1540, and reached Lisbon about June. On 7 April, 1541, I embarked in a sailing vessel for India, and landed at Goa, 6 May, 1542. I went on from there to Cape Comorin in the south of India. Here I spent three years working among the pearl-fishers of the Fishery Coast. From there I went on to the East Indies, to Malacca and the Moluccas, and, finally, I set out for Japan in 1549. I was animated by a great apostolic zeal, and God wrought many stupendous miracles through me.

I died on the Island of Sancian near the coast of China, in 1552, and was canonized together with Ignatius a century later. I am now the patron of all the missions of the Catholic Church.