

December 3, 2025



Daily Reflections



Center for
Spiritual
Development

THE COMMISSION

By Julie Mussché

From the Gospel of Matthew

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20

Reflection

As a child living in Japan in the early 1960s, there were a variety of TV shows to marvel at. First off, this was the era where the *manga* or cartoon series *Astro Boy* and *Gigantor* series ran. There were *Sumo* matches, musical variety shows, and *Kabuki*. There were also dramas about *samurai* that were very popular, usually showcasing the “good guys” vs. the “bad guys.” Historically,

Samurai were mercenaries paid by a *daimyo* (landlord reporting to a *Shogun*) to protect a feudal property. They wore armor, carried very large swords, practiced the martial arts and *bushido*. While there was a lot of sword-play and violent action on these shows, they also depicted the ethics and nobility of the *samurai* and a cultural ideal from the past. A rough analogy, think of 1960s westerns.

During the 1500s, civil war broke out among feudal states throughout Japan and *samurai* grew in number and often formed militia fighting forces to do battle. It was a time of constant warfare and instability. It was into this environment that St. Francis Xavier came to preach the Gospel and mission in Japan. Francis followed the Portuguese trade routes and missioned in southern India, the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia and then Japan. In addition to the unstable political climate, he was challenged by language and a very different cultural and theological context. While it helped that Francis was a representative of the King of Portugal, that only gave him so much headway. Francis persevered and adapted to the people and culture of Japan, preached the Gospel and brought many souls to Christianity.

As you might imagine, St. Francis Xavier is the patron saint of Japan as well as other places he missioned. He helped to found the Jesuits and is the patron of missionaries and, with Therese of Lisieux, copatron of missions. Today is the Memorial of St. Francis Xavier -- happy feast day!



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For Pondering

- How are you inspired to go “make disciples of all nations?”
 - Where and how do you mission?
-

For Prayer

My Lord Jesus

O my Lord Jesus!
Teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve You as you deserve;
to give, and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to ask for rest;
to labour, seeking no reward,
save that of knowing that I do Thy will.
Amen.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

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