
3 Monday

MONDAY, 1st Week of Advent
Feast of St Francis Xavier

1 Cor 9: 16-19, 22-23
Ps 116: 1 – 2 Mk 16:15
Mark 16: 15-20

“Go, proclaim the Good News to all creation”. We think of St Francis Xavier, whose feastday is today, as the “patron” of this mission of God’s people, the church. And so he is; but it’s a mission that began long before Xavier’s day, and belongs to all of us. His life, though, was an extraordinary example of a Christian “on mission”, and for very many Christians in south and south-east Asia, he really is our “father in faith”, the one from whom our faith has been handed down to us. So we praise and thank God for him, as we celebrate the date on which he died waiting longingly to enter China. But how strange God’s ways are: for, Xavier’s coming to Asia was, in human terms, quite an accident. He was not the first or even the second choice for the mission, and he had no special preparation. Yet, in the short space of 11 years he physically covered a huge amount of territory, an extraordinary feat in itself. Everywhere he was driven by the urge to proclaim the Good News, by concern and love for people he thought of as ‘lost’ or abandoned. His missionary “methods” were what seemed best to him at the time --- there was no “plan”. Not all his methods were valid or successful. And, in the end, partly because of criticism of his ways, he was recalled to Rome. But the Lord seemed better satisfied, and had called him to Himself before that letter arrived. Let us pray today for our church, that the zeal, courage and stamina of Xavier may live anew in all our hearts.