

Day Three

March 6

Living with Saint Francis Xavier



Oh, yes, to get back to those three years that interrupted my studies (see Day 2). Well, I was a teacher in a Jesuit high school, and I would be one again when all my education was over. I was following in the footsteps of St. Francis Xavier. After he had acquired his degree from the University of Paris in 1525, he spent the next few years lecturing on Aristotle at the University. At the same time he studied theology while continuing to live with Peter Favre and Ignatius Loyola. All this time Ignatius was trying to wear Francis down and convert him to a life of grace. He was not an easy conquest.

Teaching is an outstanding profession. I recommend it to all, especially to the young. What you teach is not nearly as important as whom you teach. One reason for that is because you will probably learn more from your students than you will teach them.

But what is even more important is that you will enter into human dialogue with an extraordinary variety of human beings. Many will become very close friends. I have been graced with that for many years. One of the boys I taught in my first year of teaching (that was in 1951-52) became a life-long friend. When I later became involved in ministry to refugees, he asked to go with me on one of my trips to visit Palestinian refugees in Israel and displaced people in the civil-war wracked city of Sarajevo. Not only did he ask to go, he volunteered to pay for the whole trip for the two of us. What a grace! He passed to his reward this past October. I am sure Saint Francis was glad to welcome him.