

## Day Five

March 8

### Living with Saint Francis Xavier

In April, 1538, Francis Xavier arrived in Rome, sick with fever, a shadow of his former self. Ignatius had preceded him there. When others arrived, discussions started on initiating a new religious order, the Society of Jesus. Ignatius kept Francis close at hand though the latter began preaching and doing other public ministry in Rome.



Francis was setting an example for future Jesuits. While I spent time teaching in a Jesuit high school in a large American city, my efforts were not limited to that. In addition to trying to encourage students in their studies and their extracurricular activities, I, like many of my fellow priests, went out early in the mornings to say Mass in nearby convents; we helped out in parishes on weekends, preached the Novena of Grace, gave Lenten sermons, and mentored bible study groups of young adults. In addition, coming from a large family as I did, I celebrated many family baptisms, first holy communions, weddings and funerals. It was all part of being a young priest in the 1960's.

And in the wake of the ecumenism fostered by the Second Vatican Council, I was given the opportunity to teach for a full year in a New England Episcopal Prep School. This was a great chance to live in a different environment and to be graced with a whole new group of faculty and student friends. As with the other clergy on the faculty I took my turn leading morning prayer in the chapel that was required of the whole school community; and the nearby Carmelite nuns were happy to have me celebrate Mass for them.