

**Quarterly Newsletter
Bridges Foundation
of St. Louis**

www.bridgesfoundation.org



Fall, 2019

**Bridges Retreat and
Magis Program Have Begun**

The Bridges Retreat for 2019-2020 has begun at every site. There are four Bridges sites at the present time offering the Spiritual Exercises to 25 who have enrolled, distributed as follows:

Annunziata - 7 retreatants
St. Francis Xavier - 9
St Matthew the Apostle - 3
Webster Groves Christian Church - 6

The Bridges Magis Program began on September 21 with an enrollment of 57 participants and 8 facilitators. Vicki Harpring is now facilitator of Magis as a function of her new role as Associate to the Director. This year there are five small groups, including *Being Christ Today in The Form of Compassion*, *Inner Compass: Finding Our Creativity in the Spiritual Exercises*, *Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises*, *Prayer Companion Training*, and *Interfacing the Spiritual Exercises with 12 Step Spirituality*. Speakers scheduled to appear in the first part of each Magis session include Danielle Harrison, Sr. Madeleine Lane, Steve Givens, Rev. Dave Harpring, Anthony Wieck, S.J., Chris Collins, S.J., Michael Dooley, S.J. and Sr. Carla Mae Streeter, OP.

Bridges continues to offer its fine programs to those who wish to enrich themselves with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Δ

**Bridges 30th Anniversary Celebration
October 4, 2019**

Join us for the Bridges 30th Anniversary Celebration to be held on Friday, October 4, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in Faris Hall (patio entrance) at the Church of the Annunziata, 9305 Clayton Rd, St. Louis, MO 63124. We are honoring long-time Bridges contributor Joe Tetlow, S.J. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Further information is available online at <http://bridgesfoundation.org/anniversary/>. Δ



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St. Francis Xavier, S.J.

(1506-1552)

St. Francis Xavier is arguably the greatest of the Roman Catholic missionaries. A close friend and roommate of St. Ignatius of Loyola at the University of Paris, he was a founder and one of the first seven members of the Society of Jesus in 1534. Francis Xavier was instrumental in the establishment of Christianity in India, Japan, Borneo and the Malay Archipelago.

Francis was born on April 7, 1506 in the Basque country in the Kingdom of Navarre near present day Sanguesa, Spain. He grew up in the family castle at Xavier speaking the Basque language like his friend later in life, Ignatius of Loyola. In 1525 he moved to the theological center of Europe to begin studies at the University of Paris.

Four years later Ignatius, 15 years his senior and who had enrolled at the same University, was assigned as Francis' roommate. After some time, Ignatius began to influence Francis' thinking. He gave his Spiritual Exercises to Francis and set the latter's motivation that would guide him on a path that led to his life's work. Francis, Ignatius and five others from the University met in the chapel at Montmartre in Paris, on August 15, 1534, and took vows of poverty and celibacy in imitation of Christ, thereby creating the Society of Jesus. The seven picked up some supporters and after completing their studies set about healing the sick in central Italy in preparation for hopefully journeying to the Holy Land, with the intent of converting the indigenous people there to Christianity. They picked up new recruits as their work and their preaching was viewed favorably by many, as well as gaining support from some of the Catholic royalty of Europe.

King John III of Portugal was seeking priests to evangelize to the people in his new domains in Asia and asked for help from Ignatius, who designated his friend Francis Xavier for the task. The next day, March 15, 1540, Francis and another Jesuit left Rome for the Indies, and later that year Pope Paul III gave formal recognition to Ignatius' group as the newly formed religious order, the Society of Jesus. After a stop in Lisbon, Portugal, Francis arrived in Goa in May 1542 and set about working in southeastern India for the next three years. He worked with the Paravas, who were pearl fishermen, and later with the Macuans on the southwest coast. Using a small catechism that he had had translated into the local Tamil language, Francis travelled from town to town, instructing the locals in faith, helping them



St. Francis Xavier, S.J.

whenever he could, establishing schools and winning their trust. He succeeded in baptizing more than 10,000 of the local citizens. Seeing the opportunity for more conversions to Christianity, he went to the Malay Archipelago (mostly present-day Malaysia) where he founded missions among the Malays as well as the headhunters he found in the Spice Islands. Francis returned to India in 1548 where more and more Jesuits had come to join him. He used

(continues on page 3)

St. Francis Xavier, S.J.

(continued from page 2)

the existing College of Holy Faith in Goa as a base for the Jesuits, in order to educate native priests and catechists to disburse among the diocese of Goa, which covered a large amount of that part of the world stretching from southern Africa all the way to China.

He next set his sights on Japan, a land where the Europeans had arrived only five years previously. While in Malacca he had become friends with Anjirō, a Japanese man who had developed a strong interest in Christianity. Francis learned that the Japanese were a sophisticated, very cultured people. In 1549 he arrived on a Portuguese ship in the port of Kagoshima in Japan along with Anjirō and a small band of supporters. He quickly learned that his poverty, which had been appealing to the Paravas and the Macuans, was unattractive to the Japanese, so he adapted his ways to suit them. He became fascinated with the Japanese people, and established missions in five different communities there. Francis returned for a time to India in 1551, where he was once again able to exchange mail with his associates back in Europe. He served as provincial of the Jesuit Province of the Indies.

Francis learned that the Japanese people looked to the Chinese for wisdom, and that the key to converting those in Japan to Christianity lay in China. So, he next worked on securing entrance to that great nation, a lengthy process as China was closed to foreigners. Unfortunately, he never quite made it to China. He waited on Sancian (now Shangchuan) Island off the coast of China, where he contracted a fever and died at the age of 46 on December 2, 1552.

An estimate made in the 20th century credited Francis Xavier with having baptized approximately 30,000 people. His method was to found missions and to make sure they were sustained, rather than to abandon them. Dealing with various languages was not one of his strong suits; he encountered problems with language nearly everywhere he went. There are many areas that he converted in India that are still following the Catholic religion. Some of his missions in the Moluccas and Japan have been destroyed due to a changing political landscape, particularly in the 17th century. During his lifetime he was regarded by many as a saint. Francis Xavier, S.J. was beatified by Pope Paul V on October 25, 1619 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 12, 1622, at the same time as Ignatius of Loyola. Francis' tomb is located at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa. Δ

This is the newsletter of the Bridges Foundation of St. Louis. The newsletter is published quarterly and distributed as a PDF file via email, free to anyone who would like to receive it. Thank you to the contributors to this issue: Sue Givens, Linda Leib and Tom Simon.

Quarterly issues are sent late in the months of March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submission of material is on the 15th day of each of those months for inclusion in the issue to be mailed later that month. Look for your next issue around the time that the seasons change.

The deadline for submissions to the next issue of the Bridges Newsletter is December 15, 2019. Please send articles, letters, mailing list additions and deletions, and other correspondence to: Tom Simon, Editor, 1730 Derrynane, Manchester, MO 63021, or by email to tsimon@tsimon.com.