

Today is the memorial of St. Francis Xavier - one of the original seven members of the Company of Jesus formed by St. Ignatius Loyola - known to us today as the Jesuits.

St. Francis Xavier had such an apostolic zeal, that he is credited with baptizing 10s of thousands in the Far East.

The recollections of his efforts in India, Japan, and the areas in-between read like today's Gospel.

It is recorded that four times St. Francis Xavier raised the dead; the administration of Sacraments were often met with miraculous healings - and even the touch of his cassock or his rosary. It was also reported that he would levitate up off the floor while in prayer.

Such conversions and miracles - occurring less than 500 years ago ... are similar to what was recorded in Scripture as occurring 2000 years ago - at the time of Christ and the Apostles.

St. Francis Xavier embraced his mission with such Apostolic zeal and with such Faith, Hope, and Love - that he converted whole nations. And he showed forth the Love of Christ in such a way that the miraculous power of God was unmistakeable in his work.

Today's first reading describes the miraculous transformations predicted by the prophet Isaiah for the time of the Messiah. While in the Gospel, we hear of Our Lord sending out his Apostles to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Who among us can expect to travel the world spreading the Gospel or imitating the miracles of the great Saints?

Yet, I am reminded of a quote from Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta - echoing her namesake, Saint Teresa of Liseaux:

*We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.*

Let us use this time of Advent to embrace this ideal - not minimizing our abilities or neglecting the impact we have as followers of Jesus Christ. But whatever we do - let us do it with great love ... and so demonstrate the Love of God in our own lives ... and become missionaries of God's love to one another.