



Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

WEEK BEGINNING 2ND DECEMBER

**Prayers for the
Week Ahead**



Light the candle of
Hope

Tuesday 2nd
December

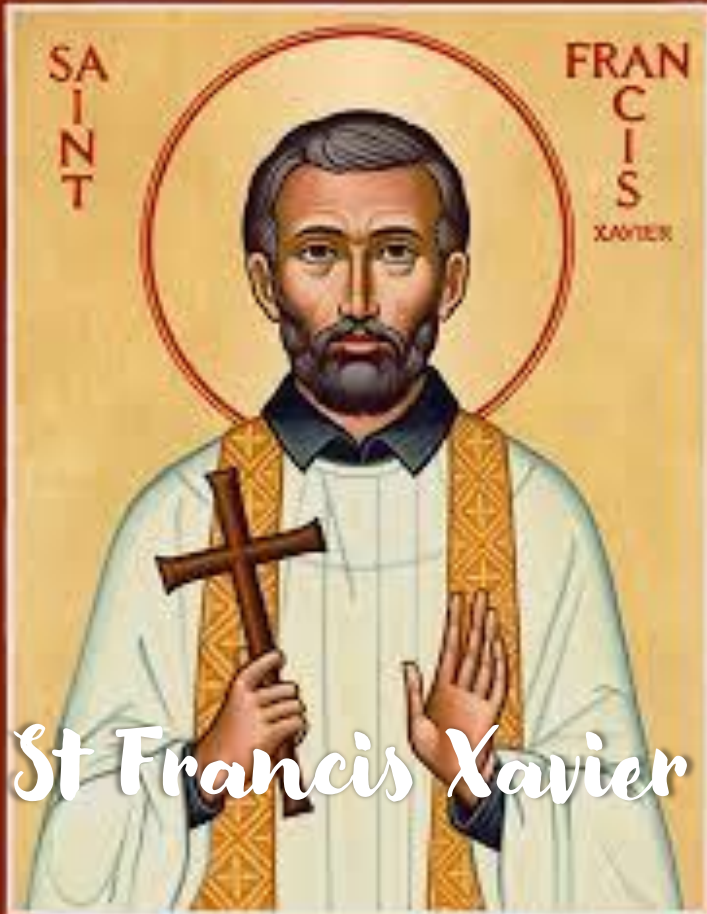
Like the prophets in the Old Testament, we hope for a Messiah to save us from the sin in the world (Isaiah 9:6-7). We anticipate our Saviour's arrival. This candle assures us we can have hope that God will fulfil the prophecies declared in the Old Testament about Jesus. Hope doesn't disappoint us (Romans 5:5).

In this day and age, where evil abounds and all seems lost, we can also hope that the prophecies about Jesus' second arrival to earth will also be fulfilled. The sombre purple colour on the candle represents repentance and fasting as we anticipate the Lord's coming. Purple doubles as a colour for royalty throughout the Bible, a symbol of God's kingship and reign.

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday 3rd

December



Francis Xavier, a Basque nobleman, left his home at the age of 19 to study at the University of Paris. There he met Saint Ignatius of Loyola who convinced the worldly young man to dedicate himself to the service of Christ.

With Ignatius and five others, on August 15, 1534, Francis took a vow to consecrate his life to the service of Christ, and the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) was born. He went with Ignatius and his companions to Rome in 1538 and in 1541 embarked on a long and dangerous voyage to Goa, India where he landed 13 months later.

His missionary work in Goa and the southern and western coast of India bore an abundance of fruits, with tens of thousands of pagans being baptized into the Church. He also went further east and made it all the way to Japan where he established Christian communities.

His entire missionary life – which lasted a little more than ten years until his death in 1552 was abundant in miracles and magnificent apostolic feats, but he also experienced much opposition from many European officials, most of whom had been exploiting the native populations. In 1552 he set out for China and landed on the island of Sancian within sight of the mainland coast, but he died before he was able set sail on December 2, 1552. He was canonized in 1622 and is the patron saint of all missions.

Our Father ...

Thursday 4th

December



St John Damascene

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John spent most of his life in the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem, and all of his life under Muslim rule, indeed protected by it. He was born in Damascus, received a classical and theological education, and followed his father in a government position under the Arabs. After a few years, he resigned and went to the Monastery of Saint Sabas.

He is famous in three areas:

First, he is known for his writings against the iconoclasts, who opposed the veneration of images. Paradoxically, it was the Eastern Christian emperor Leo who forbade the practice, and it was because John lived in Muslim territory that his enemies could not silence him.

Second, he is famous for his treatise, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, a summary of the Greek Fathers, of which he became the last. It is said that this book is for Eastern schools what the *Summa* of Aquinas became for the West.

Third, he is known as a poet, one of the two greatest of the Eastern Church, the other being Romanus the Melodist. His devotion to the Blessed Mother and his sermons on her feasts are well known.

John defended the Church's understanding of the veneration of images and explained the faith of the Church in several other controversies. For over 30 years, he combined a life of prayer with these defenses and his other writings. His holiness expressed itself in putting his literary and preaching talents at the service of the Lord.

Our Father ...

Friday 5th December



OFFICIAL

Philip met Don Bosco at age 5, and apparently instinctively understood the importance of the future saint. Though he felt a call to a religious vocation, Philip was torn, and was seriously considering marriage when he decided to become a disciple of Don Bosco at age 22. The Christian Brothers immediately saw something in him, and made him an assistant novice master even before he took his vows as a Salesian on 13 August 1880. Though he had no intention to become a priest, his superiors, who saw his potential better than he did, ordered him to study and take the tests, and he was ordained on 23 December 1882.

In addition to his work as novice master, Philip was placed in charge of the "late" vocations, those like himself who came to the Order as adults. As director of the Salesian community of Sarriá, Spain in 1889 he opened several new houses, and brought in many new vocations. He was the Salesian provincial director in Spain from 1892 to 1901 and he began publication of *Lecturas Catolicas* in 1895.

Philip founded centres to minister to the daily and spiritual needs of young women and he helped found the World Federations of Past-Pupils, and assisted the Salesian Sisters. With Zelatrici di Maria Ausiliatrice he helped found the group that would evolve into the Volunteers of Don Bosco.

Philip was the Rector Major of the Salesians in 1922 and the third successor to Don Bosco, and the last one to have been personally trained by him. From that position he worked to bring Don Bosco's vision to the 20th century, and the 20th century to the vision, doing all he could to spread Salesian spirituality and trust in God. He sent many young Salesians to learn foreign languages and customs so they would become more effective missionaries, and he asked Pope Pius XI to grant the "indulgence for sanctified work". He travelled extensively, preaching, encouraging vocations and the spiritual life of the laity. During his tenure the number of Salesians went from 6,000 to 10,000, there were 250 new houses and centres opened, and his teacher Don Bosco was recognized as a saint.

Our Father...