

Trese, Thomas  
Learn to love : in a private novena...  
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# Learn to Love

in a  
Private  
Novena  
of Grace



by

Thomas Trese, S.J.

A QUEEN'S WORK  
PAMPHLET

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*in a*

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NOVENA  
OF GRACE**

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**THE QUEEN'S WORK**

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THE QUEEN'S WORK

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# FOREWORD

## *Make It by Yourself*

This private Novena of Grace is designed for you who cannot attend the annual public exercises, and for you who at any other time may be led by some urgent need to have recourse to St. Francis Xavier. His way of repaying his devotees is more than phenomenal, as the past four hundred years have shown.

## *A Nine-Day Wonder*

If this is your first Novena of Grace, you will want to know something of its origin and power. St. Francis Xavier himself is the originator. Eleven years after the Saint's canonization, Father Marcello Mastrilli, S. J., of Naples, was superintending the decoration of the royal church for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. While engrossed in this work, the poor father was struck on the temple by a hammer accidentally dropped by one of his co-workers a hundred feet above.

Physicians despaired of his life. But as the priest hovered at the point of death a few days later, St. Francis Xavier appeared and urged him to devote himself to the missions in the Indies. Father Mastrilli accordingly made a vow, in the presence of his religious superior, to go to the Indies if God should see fit to spare his life. There seemed to be small chance, however, of his ever being able to make good his vow, for he was still in critical condition.

Then came January 3, 1634. On that day St. Francis Xavier appeared again. He

exacted of Father Mastrilli a renewal of his vow, assured him of recovery, and foretold his martyrdom in the Indies. During that apparition the Saint promised that all who would earnestly ask his intercession with God for nine days in honor of his canonization, would infallibly experience the effects of his great power in heaven, and would receive whatever they asked that would contribute to their salvation.

When the Saint had disappeared, Father Mastrilli found himself completely cured, sailed for the Indies not long afterwards, and was martyred there as Xavier had predicted. News of the apparitions, the cure, and the Saint's solemn promise spread rapidly through Christendom. Faithful of all lands began to make the novena he had suggested. So innumerable and extraordinary were the temporal and spiritual favors received, that the nine-day prayer came to be known as "The Novena of Grace." Today it is still one of the foremost devotions in the Church, and famed for its efficacy.

### ***Indulgences Too***

Besides specific temporal and spiritual favors, this novena brings the added benefit of indulgences:

On any of nine successive days which the faithful may select for obtaining some grace through the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, if they make use of the Novena Prayer . . . they are granted:

- 1) An indulgence of three years;
- 2) A plenary indulgence, on the usual conditions.

If for good reason you cannot say the Novena Prayer itself, it will suffice to say five times the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. ("Preces et Pia Opera," typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950, page 371.)

The other directions and readings in this booklet may be omitted without forfeiting the indulgences, but will help not a little toward complete novena-success.

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## INTENTION BLANK

(Simply indicate the problems on which you want St. Francis Xavier to exercise his intercessory power.)

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**Temporal Favors:**

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**Spiritual Favors:**

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## FIRST DAY

The favors listed on the petition blank should not be your sole reason for making this novena. Beg also for an increase of Christian strength. This latter request may help greatly to secure your other desires. Begin now by singing (or reciting) the:

### HYMN TO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

*(The melody will be found on the back cover.)*

We hail thee, Francis Xavier,  
Loyola's greatest son,  
Thy daring soul's seraphic love  
Unnumbered souls has won.  
We hail thee, great apostle,  
Whose heart was all afire  
To do for Christ, to die for Christ,  
And Christ alone desire.  
We hail thee, Francis Xavier,  
Our Lady's loyal knight,  
Thy faith, thy love and chastity,  
Rare jewels in her sight.

### Reading for First Day

*(Read aloud, if doing so will disturb no one. Read thoughtfully, to extract those actual graces which God in His providence has caused to be there for you personally.)*

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:37-39). With these words Our Lord puts love of one's fellow-man on a par with love of God.



St. John, the beloved Apostle, phrases it more bluntly: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20).

St. Peter offers a motive: ". . . have a constant mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

St. Paul enhances charity's appeal by listing a galaxy of other virtues she brings with her into the soul: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pre-tentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Charity never fails . . ." (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

St. Francis Xavier's charity was all of that. He was such a lover of both God and man that he became a Saint. A seldom-mentioned sign of this love, for example, was his deliberate acceptance of that loneliness of apostolic exile, which is forever linked to missionary life. In a letter to his friends three weeks before sailing away to a strange hemisphere, he prays that "in a better life our Lord God will bring us together again, who are now parting for His sake. We can hardly hope to meet again in this life. So whoever arrives first in the next, and does not find there the brother whom he loves in the Lord, be sure to beg Christ our King to bring his brother there also, and make us all once more companions in His glory."

Xavier's love of God did not dilute his love of merely human beings. Even before

he left Europe for the Indies, the humane character of his love was evident. In a hospital for incurables near Rome he spent days and nights washing sores, dressing wounds, sweeping out wards, begging food for his lepers and other sick, snatching sleep on beds they scorned to use.

During his long voyage to the East, too, this operative charity adapted itself to the needs of his fellows. Not all of the sailors were corrupt, but all were careless. So he preached his crucifix to them, and they responded with their tears. As the days wore on, he proved to them by his Christ-like treatment that they had more than adventurers' vices—they had virtues too.

Fellow-missionaries, too, were objects of his affection. "If the hearts of those who love one another in Christ could be seen in this present life," he wrote to those at Goa, "believe me, my dearest brothers, you would be seen clearly in mine."

You may be wondering, why this emphasis on charity during this novena? Besides its primary importance, indicated in the Scriptural quotations above, there is another reason: Charity is closely connected with the graces we hope to receive here and now. St. John of the Cross tells us that God generally establishes His grace in a soul in proportion to the goodwill of that soul's charity. So whoever wants God to shower him with graces must look to his charity.

There is no question of beginning to love God and your neighbor; you have been doing that for a long time now. But during these days, "we exhort you, breth-

ren, to make even greater progress" (1 Thess. 4:10). With that in mind, recite the:

### NOVENA PRAYER

*(Any prayer may be said in honor of the Saint, but this one is indulgenced and generally recommended.)*

O most amiable and most loving St. Francis Xavier, in union with thee I reverently adore the Divine Majesty. And because I exceedingly rejoice for the special gifts which God bestowed upon thee—of grace in thy lifetime, and of glory after thy death—I give Him devoted thanks. And I beseech thee with all my heart to obtain for me, by thy powerful intercession, the all-important grace of living and dying in a holy manner. I entreat thee to obtain for me (here mention the temporal or spiritual favor, or favors, you wish). But if what I ask is not for the glory of God, or for the greater good of my soul, obtain for me that which is most suitable for both alike. Amen.

Pray for us, St. Francis Xavier, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: O God, who didst deign by the preaching and miracles of St. Francis Xavier to join unto thy Church the nations of the Indies, grant—we beseech thee—that we who reverence his glorious merits may also imitate his example, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*(Add one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, for the Pope's intentions. Then, if circumstances permit, sing the following song.)*

## HYMN TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER

*(The melody is doubtlessly familiar to you. But if not, you will find it in the average hymn-book.)*

Mother dear, O pray for me,  
    Whilst far from heav'n and thee  
I wander in a fragile bark  
    O'er life's tempestuous sea.  
O Virgin Mother, from thy throne,  
    So bright in bliss above,  
Protect thy child, and cheer my path  
    With thy sweet smile of love.  
Mother dear, remember me;  
    And never cease thy care,  
Till in heaven eternally  
    Thy love and bliss I share.

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## SECOND DAY

Be on the alert these days. Don't overlook any natural means that may lead to fulfilling your novena requests. The Saint may arrange to answer your prayer in that way. For it is a known fact that Divine Providence generally answers prayers through the use of natural means. So if your petition is, for example, "Help me find an apartment," don't stop reading the ads in your newspaper. Now sing the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### Reading for Second Day

Yesterday we learned that many other virtues accompany charity. Like courtiers in a royal retinue, they appear as soon as charity stirs from her chamber (i.e., ceases merely to dwell in a soul) and makes a public appearance (i.e., becomes visible in external action).

St. Paul says, "Charity is patient" (1 Cor. 13:4). Let us consider that today: patience, the power of suffering with fortitude. To understand the relationship between charity and patience, visualize charity as an arch in a beautiful church. Patience would then be the power of that arch to support whatever weight is placed upon it. How beautiful the arch is! What graceful lines! What loveliness! But how long, do you suppose, would that beauty last if the arch had no sustaining power? The whole superstructure would soon tumble. Similarly charity's sustaining power—patience—is of prime importance. The stronger that sustaining power (patience), the longer the arch (charity) will stand.

St. Francis Xavier's charity was put to the test of patience for several weeks on a trek from Paris to Rome. He and eight companions, the better to experience actual poverty, had taken with them neither food nor money. Many a night they had no shelter, many a day no food (except pine cones). One of them at times had to use even his shirt or a precious bottle of ink for money. At least once Xavier, it seems, put up his breviary as bond to free his companions from a ferry on which they were detained for lack of fare. To redeem his breviary, then, he went through the nearby market begging until he had the amount necessary.

Trials like this and the hardships of the subsequent voyage to India "turn out to be very great consolations," he wrote later, "when borne for the love of God. . . . How blessed it is to live dying a daily death in order to seek, not what is our own, but what belongs to Jesus Christ."

This way of patience pervaded all his apostolic labors. On the basis of his own experience he advised fellow-missionaries and successors: "Do not get angry with these poor folk [referring to the natives] however much their faults and frailties get on your nerves. I know how extremely annoying it is to be perpetually interrupted when engrossed in some work. Never mind, keep a quiet mind all the time. . . . Just do what you can; and what you can't, do later, or forget it. . . . Carry these people on your shoulders, so to say; treat them with unwearied patience and long-suffering tolerance. Keep them from evil, advance them in good as much as you can, and be content."

A young Japanese merchant, a fellow-passenger on one of Xavier's voyages, habitually addressed Xavier as a fool or a beast. The Saint ignored the abuse until one day he permitted himself to say, "Why do you speak to me like that? Don't you know that I love you very much, and would be very glad to teach you the way of salvation?" What a literal fulfilment of St. Peter's words: "Be . . . lovers of the brethren, merciful, humble; not rendering evil for evil, or abuse for abuse, but contrariwise, blessing; for unto this were you called . . ." (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

Surely patience is a quality we want our charity to have. How readily will the Saint obtain this blessing for us if we ask him to! So include this request among your others (without making special mention of it each day), and may the "God of patience" (Rom. 15:5) grant it beyond your dreams. Now recite the "Novena

Prayer," p. 9; then sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## **THIRD DAY**

Congratulations on your perseverance in confiding in St. Francis Xavier. Should you be tempted to discontinue the novena, remember four centuries of answered prayers vouch for his promise that, "All who earnestly ask my intercession with God for nine days . . . will infallibly experience the effects of my great power in heaven, and will receive whatever they ask which will contribute to their salvation." Let Xavier's fidelity to his word bolster your fidelity to supplication. In this spirit sing the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### **Reading for Third Day**

Charity, St. Paul tells us, is not only patient; it is also kind (1 Cor. 13:4). To be kind is to bring happiness to others, and to avoid causing pain. Kindness is what gives charity its appeal, and is—in this sense—the heart of charity. Understand me. Kindness is not that pseudo-humanitarianism which coddles pets instead of sons and daughters. Nor is kindness, at the other extreme, a kind of love made of glass. Kindness is gentleness in word and act; kindness is practical sympathy with others' needs. It is the action resulting from regard of everyone as one's brother.

This was the quality which endeared St. Francis Xavier to whole cities of strangers. Consider his way of teaching catechism, for

example. Up and down the roads he would go ringing a bell. Then he would explain to the curious at street-corners or cross-roads, "Faithful Christians, for your love of Christ, send your children and servants to catechism class." The novelty of this approach attracted droves of children and unoccupied adults, whom he would pilot into a nearby church, meanwhile singing prayers and catechism which he had translated into the vernacular and put to music. Inside he would teach them the melodies and explain as much of the lyrics as they could take.

His technique of setting truth to music spread everywhere. Children who could barely lisp their name warbled his verses by heart. Natives chanted them while loading wares on the ships in dock. And in the streets at night, boys and girls strolled to and fro singing no other songs than his.

Besides kindness of speech and manner, there is that other kindness urged by the Apostles, Paul, James, and John:

"Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). . . . "If a brother or a sister be naked and in want of daily food, and one of you say to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit?" (Jas. 2:15-16). . . . "He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him? My dear children, let us not love in word, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).



This practical kindness Xavier showed by his efforts one time to get a boatload of food and clothing to some converts dying from exposure, hunger, and thirst along the rocky shores of Cape Comorin. When such high winds arose that he could make no headway either by rowing or towing, he landed to wait for a let-up. "I shall set out again," he wrote to a confrere, "to take what relief I can to those poor creatures, for a man must be harder than iron if he fails to do everything in his power to relieve the misery of these people who are our brethren in the worship of Christ."

Do you think a Saint who speaks like that will help you to be kind? Man has always valued a kind heart. Even Old Testament times knew that "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city" (Prov. 18:19). So "Put on . . . as God's chosen ones . . . a heart of mercy, kindness . . ." (Col. 3:12) and "be kind to one another . . ." (Eph. 4:32), begging the Saint's intercession as you recite the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, and sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## FOURTH DAY

To know some favors others have asked in this novena, may bolster your own hopes. Here are a few: "That I always be self-supporting . . . that my brother recover from nervous collapse . . . the grace to overcome drink and do something worthwhile in my life . . . that my girl-friend soon make up her mind to marry me . . . that my eyesight be restored . . . that I

may walk again . . . that my brother return to his Catholic faith . . . heal my gums . . . cure my high blood pressure . . . cure my arthritis." With such trust as is evident in these petitions, sing now by yourself the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### **Reading for Fourth Day**

An Indian Rajah often supplied St. Francis Xavier with large sums of money, but the Saint, instead of pluming himself, habitually spent it on other poor. He was content to preach from a tree-top if necessary, and celebrate Mass beneath a canopy of boat-rails. Although the same Rajah had decreed that his "own brother, the Great Father," (as he called Xavier) should be obeyed as himself, the Saint never used this power either for personal or even ministerial advantage. Wealth, prestige, worldly power he neither begrudged to others, nor wanted for himself. The reason? His charity was uncovetous, noncompetitive. It did not envy.

Why does St. Paul say, "Charity does not envy" (1 Cor. 13:4)? Because the charitable man rejoices in another's prosperity as in his own, and grieves for another's misfortunes as for his own. The envious man, on the contrary, is discontented at sight of another's excellence or success because he feels he loses what his neighbor gains. So it is, charity decreases wherever envy grows.

St. Francis Xavier was not chagrined when others succeeded even in his own field. He admired them the more for their fruitful zeal, and loved them the more for

their holiness. One of his letters to the King of Portugal was written specifically to defend a zealous bishop in his area, whose enemies were attempting to defame him:

“I observed with what great charity he bears severe bodily exertions, visiting one after another of the villages in his diocese. . . . He certainly discharges his duties to the full, yet for all his laudable works he gets exactly that reward which the world commonly metes out to the saints.”

Similarly when wealthy laymen of Goa pooled their resources to found a Catholic college there, Xavier did not resent their zeal as an infringement on his own. Too large-hearted for that, he cherished their design as though it were his very own pet project.

The bright personal prospects and the secure living conditions of his former companions in Rome, he did not envy them. On the very day he had sailed for India, his thirty-fifth birthday, they had been engaged in electing the first general of the Society of Jesus. Xavier's vote for Father Ignatius, his close friend, had counted with the rest. No envy, no jealousy, not even discontent. How easily by coveting the honor given his friend on that occasion, the Apostle of the Indies could have shrunk from a moral giant into a moral pigmy! But that would not have been St. Francis Xavier. The Saint never begrudged a crown of laurel to anyone; he was content everywhere and at all times with his crown of thorns.

We want our charity to be like that, contented and uncovetous. None of this

petty begrudging others the good fortune that comes their way. Does a mother begrudge her baby his bright eyes and silken hair? Hardly. She rejoices in them as though they were her very own. Does a lover begrudge his beloved her beauty? On the contrary, the more she has, the more he rejoices. So should our charity be. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become desirous of vainglory . . . envying one another" (Gal. 5:25-26). With this in mind, recite the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, and sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## FIFTH DAY

Halfway-mark—a good time to check on the conditions for gaining the plenary indulgence attached to this novena: confession, Holy Communion, a visit to a church or semi-public chapel, and a prayer for the Pope's intentions. The confession and Communion should be made either during the novena or within eight days after its close. If you ordinarily confess twice a month, no additional confession is necessary. If you are an almost daily communicant, no additional Communion is necessary. As regards the visit, if you cannot enter the church because the doors happen to be locked, say prayers at the door; for religious, a visit to their community chapel suffices. The prayers for the Pope we have been saying after the "Novena Prayer." Fulfill these conditions at your earliest convenience. As usual now, sing the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

## Reading for Fifth Day

Love in which self has no part, once found, is never forgotten. It has been likened to a flower, delicate yet dazzling; that is because it is generous, confiding, cheerful, heroic, beautiful. So if you have ever been in love, that love, you know how it is that one who truly loves does not seek anything for himself. You know what St. Paul means when he says, "Charity is not self-seeking" (1 Cor. 13:5).

St. Francis Xavier's love met that specification. Instances of his charity cited so far show this lack of selfishness:

1. His motive for going to the missions: to wear himself out saving souls.
2. His manner of living before embarking: He refused to live in the king's palace because those who needed him lodged in a hospital. He chose a confessional rather than the court pulpit, because the latter had already too many incumbents and the former not enough.
3. His manner of living at sea: He relied on the providence of God, and for that reason had refused the king's offer to satisfy whatever needs he might list. For similar reason he had refused the services of a valet, preferring to prepare his own meals and do his own laundry, "since there is no occupation so lowly that I would not glory in it before all the world."
4. His fidelity to his work: Even visits to fellow-missionaries were given second place: "God knows how much happier I'd be spending a few days with

you, but I must settle certain quarrels here. . . . So we'll have to postpone the consolation of seeing one another, to the great advantage to God's service expected from this peace which I hope to effect. Be glad that (though not where we might wish to be) we are where God's will and the interests of His kingdom require."

5. His enthusiasm even when humiliated because of his love: When the Saint landed after that insulting voyage with the Japanese merchant, nobody gave him shelter even though asked. So he went to a pine wood in the suburbs and put up a lean-to, which served until some gesture of hospitality was made. This last was permission to continue traveling, as one of many lackeys in a cortege to a nearby town. Never before did Father Francis look so gay, recorded a fellow-groom, as that day he had to run at a gallop. Love does not consider her position a sorry one, you see, while undergoing humiliation for the Beloved.

All this selfless behavior, was it light-headedness? or lightheartedness? Self-preference would have dictated behavior conducive to his own interest, advantage, or pleasure. Yet Xavier was not addicted to such motives. Noble blood, academic degrees, routed career-dreams — nothing was allowed to dim or divert his singleness of purpose.

Our love, too, should be of that type—in which self has no part. This may demand heroism at times. Very well, if God wants you to be a hero (or heroine),

be a hero (or heroine). There are many occasions for unselfishness. Unless you are living alone on a desert isle, you will find them every day, maybe every hour. The closer the bond, the greater the obligation; charity still begins at home. "I cannot practice such charity," you say? You can. To practice it is easier than to read day after day what I have written about it—and you have been reading for five days now! So don't despair. Include this among your other novena desires as you recite the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, and sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## SIXTH DAY

Are you making use of natural means to obtain your novena favors? God expects you to. Do not trust natural means alone, of course, but do not neglect them either. For natural means, no less than miracles, are gifts from God. Once the ordinary has been thoroughly tried, you can more readily expect it to be supplemented by the extraordinary. With this principle clearly understood, continue with your novena, singing now the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### Reading for Sixth Day

Not so long ago there was a Jesuit riding a streetcar in one of our southern states. He was reading his breviary when he noticed opposite him a young lady wearing a cynical smile. Here was concrete evidence, he thought, of the southern bigotry he had heard so much about. He continued reading, but at the end of a Psalm looked up again; she was still wear-

ing that expression of scornful tolerance. He was on the point of politely offering to stop praying, since it apparently pained her so much, when from farther back in the car an elderly lady came up to the young lady and said, "The next stop is ours, dear," and guided her to the door. In a flash it dawned on the priest: the young lady was blind. She had not even seen him, much less resented his piety. She had simply been trying her best to look pleasant.

How often we, too, are guilty of such suspicion and misjudgment! How criminal we feel when we discover our mistake! . . . But who can count the times we never find out?

Yet "charity thinks no evil," St. Paul tells us (1 Cor. 13:5). Charity believes the best about its neighbors until evidence forces it to think otherwise. Charity leaves to God, the Searcher of hearts, the job of passing judgment on man's secret intentions.

Let us suppose you arrive late at a movie. An usher guides you to a vacant seat about eighth from the aisle. You pick your way to it, trying not to step on anyone's toes. But of course you cannot miss them all. Were the injured party to blame you for stepping on his toes, how absurd! (As though you had done it intentionally! As though you had come to the movie for that express purpose!) The situation is typical of many in our daily routine. Circumstances are often such that, though we try our best to avoid it, somebody is bound to be hurt. Should you ever be that somebody, remember: No one



comes into the theater of your life just to walk over you.

There is a story told about a thirteenth-century saint who was always deep in study. One day he heard a knock at his door. It was one of his religious brothers who, with assorted exclamations, urged the scholar to come over to his window, for outside it a horse was actually flying around. The saint promptly left his books to see such an extraordinary phenomenon. But as he looked out the window, the brother broke out laughing and the saint knew he had been butted by a joke. Then it was that he got off his, since famous, saying: "I'd sooner believe that a horse could fly, than that my brother would tell a lie."

We need not subscribe unreservedly to that principle, but it does show the direction in which we should lean. We are so often mistaken in thinking evil of others, why not for a change err at the other extreme?

St. Francis Xavier had excusing others down to a fine art. He never allowed himself, for example, to doubt the good intentions of lapsed converts. A fellow-missionary once wrote him that some of his (Xavier's) converts were again carving idols. "If from the beginning of their conversion," the Saint replied, "the poor wretches had had diligent teachers to teach them what is necessary as you are now doing, they would certainly have been infinitely better Christians than they are." Either this reply simply indicated the excusing cause, or intimated also that the current lapse might be due to their present pastor's own negligence.

At any rate there is a tip for us: Why do we see the speck in our neighbor's eye, but disregard the beam in our own? Attend to our own foibles, and there will be no time for filing other people's.

A second step toward the habit of charitable judgment: Stop yourself from uttering **even one** uncharitable word. This effort will force you to scout mentally around for better ways of expressing yourself, and this deliberate process of research will gradually become spontaneous. You will then see roses (at least one, surely) on the thornbush, instead of a rosebush full of thorns.

A third step toward charity which "thinks no evil": Go the limit to find excusing causes for others' "indefensible" words and actions, despite evidence warranting condemnation. Only this technique could have saved the blind girl, for example, from being misjudged. So bend over backwards to keep out of the rut of rash judgment. In that way you will probably end up closer to the truth, and **certainly** closer to charity. With that resolve, say the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, and sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## SEVENTH DAY

Another sampling of petitions, showing again what brand of confidence is best: "That my family remain in the state of grace always . . . that I find a good position after graduation . . . that my husband love me and never leave me . . . grace to overcome an impure habit . . . that two blind babies be cured . . . that I find a

good Catholic husband . . . that I regain a lost friendship . . . a house for a family of ten . . . courage to get my teeth out . . . safe delivery of a second child . . . that N. and N. be united in wedlock if it be God's will . . . that my family find their places in life." With like trust, sing the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### Reading for Seventh Day

"It racks me with intense pain," writes St. Francis Xavier, "every time I see or hear how these tender babes of the Church are exposed to every kind of outrage from the very persons in whom such conduct is most shameful. Wherever I go I carry this grief like a pain which eats out my heart." Xavier refers to the exploitation of Christian natives by pseudo-Christian European officials in India. Time and again, reckless "born-Catholics" would commandeer native converts, with never a thought for the good name of Christianity or the danger to the Gospel. With good reason, then, did the Saint grieve over this doing of devils' work.

That is charity's way—to be pained by evil-doing. St. Paul puts it: "Charity does not rejoice over wickedness" (1 Cor. 3:6). But unfortunately, my dear friends, there are some Christians who do rejoice over wickedness. They are the ones who give bad example. I refer to careless Catholics who are so careful to keep out of earshot of the truth. Far from striving for perfection, they neglect even what is essential for salvation.

But let us return to St. Francis Xavier. Another source of grief to him was the

fact that so many Indians remained pagan simply because there was no one to baptize them. So few were the missionaries, as contrasted with the surplus of students in Europe, that he was often tempted to make a circuit of the European universities, and shout like a madman to the scholars there (whose learning was so much greater than their charity), "Oh, how many souls are shut out of heaven through your fault! You who labor so hard to get knowledge, give as much thought to the account you must give some day on the use you have made of it."

Xavier regretted, too, the religious indifference of adults in general. But he rejoiced because, although he could not get grown-up folks to go to paradise either by threat of punishment or promise of reward, still there was an endless number of newborn babies he could baptize. For since most of them would leave their little bodies before the age of reason, paradise would be peopled by their souls at least.

This was the Saint whose zeal for souls even as a young man had made him cry out, "More! more!" when in a dream he had seen a preview of the danger and disillusion he would suffer laboring for souls. Such was he whose intercession we are now seeking. Surely he will help us to rejoice only with the Truth, and not with wickedness, as St. Paul says we should. So in this type of charity, as you recite the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, pray for the conversion of all bad-example Catholics, who seldom pray—even for themselves; and so sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

## EIGHTH DAY

The first novena ever made in the Church was made at Christ's command. He told the Apostles to return to Jerusalem after His ascension, and stay there until they received the Holy Ghost. This they did, spending the time "steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). Their prayer lasted exactly nine days. The Holy Ghost descended at that time in answer to the persevering prayer of that original "little flock." Keep their example in mind during these closing days, and sing the "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### Reading for Eighth Day

St. Francis Xavier had the knack of making friends. As a result, many winsome, though wayward, characters appear in the pages of his life. One of these was a soldier of terrible life and tongue, habituated to most of the sins Xavier preached against.

During one of the Saint's voyages they became boon companions. The soldier gambled day and night, but Xavier stood by, glad at his success and sad at his losses. These latter, of course, stimulated the poor fellow's language, but Xavier appeared not to hear. Shipmates were so amazed at the priest's unconcern, they decided the soldier had cast a spell on him.

Finally Xavier found his opportunity. He asked the soldier confidentially when he had been to confession last. "Eighteen years," the fellow stammered. He had tried once to go to the vicar general at

Goa, but the shocked prelate had refused absolution. Xavier assured the soldier that, however many or gross his sins, God would forgive him provided he were sincerely repentant.

Naturally the soldier was deeply moved, but there was not enough privacy aboard for confession. So the next time the fleet anchored, Xavier and his friend went ashore to a grove of trees along the beach, unaware that they were followed by some of the curious. Xavier seated himself under a tree, the soldier knelt at his side and made his confession, with many sighs and thumping of breast. Afterwards Xavier went farther into the wood, for (as the soldier later told the crew) the Saint had given his penitent only one Our Father and Hail Mary for penance and had assumed the rest of the penance himself. When a frightful beating noise reached the soldier's ears, he ran to the priest's defense fearing he had been attacked by beasts. But there was Xavier flogging himself with a chain. Abashed the poor soldier bared his own back and soon mingled his blood with his confessor's.

Father Francis Xavier could touch hearts like this soldier's, because his charity was the type that hopes all things and acts accordingly. He saw goodness in every creature, as true charity always does, for (as St. Paul says) "Charity believes all things, hopes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). Such hope is kin to audacity, stumped by no obstacle, fearless of danger, undaunted by delay.

Many making this novena are doubtless hoping for someone's return to the sacra-

ments. Such hope is reasonable. While winter still rages, we look for spring. We do not say, "Oh, this is winter; there will be no spring." No, all winter long we say, "Spring is coming!" We are sure of that. So should be our hope of bringing back wayward relatives. No matter how severe a winter rages in the souls you are praying for, never despair. Care for that dormant seed of faith hidden in them: by the sunny warmth of your affection, the rain of your tears, and the soft wakening west wind of your hope. For no matter how dead the soul may seem, no matter how much debris of bygone winters is heaped over it, remember "nature is never spent. There lies the dearest freshness, deep down." You will bring back to it, at long last, its springtime. For love, as they say even in the world, will find a way. God's love (and Xavier's) will find a way in this matter.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). Recite now the "Novena Prayer," p. 9, and sing the "Hymn to Our Blessed Mother."

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## NINTH DAY

A final word about your petitions: Experience shows that, if not granted during the novena itself, they are usually granted on the day after. (The Holy Ghost descended on the infant Church the day after the first novena.) Some of your petitions by their very nature require passage of time, but others call for prompt action. Whichever type yours may be, know that

the age of miracles has not passed (contrary to the opinion of the non-Catholic world). As your favor is granted, tell others about it. That is a simple way of showing your gratitude, and at the same time spreading confidence in your new-found benefactor. Notify me also, if you can conveniently, so I can add your report to the growing list of favors the Saint has obtained in modern times. (Address me in care of the publisher of this pamphlet.) Henceforth you will be included in the memento I make at Mass each day for all who have ever made this novena. Now sing, on this last day, our "Hymn to St. Francis Xavier," p. 6.

### **Reading for Last Day**

St. Paul ends his list of charity's companions by saying, "Charity never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8). That, too, can be said of St. Francis Xavier's charity; it was guided by the instinct of sanctity which never gives out or gives up. Many the night he could barely raise his arm, because of the number of baptisms it had performed that day. Many the week he repeated prayers and sacramental formulae so often he temporarily lost his voice.

But more heroic than his constancy in success was his constancy through failure. A good example is his expedition to China. In Japan he had too often heard the retort, "If your doctrine is so valuable, why have we not heard of it from the Chinese?" The influential faction in Japan in those days was so enamored of Chinese culture, that only a doctrine espoused by China could make headway among the Japanese. Very well, he would go to China.



That was in 1552. He was forty-six years old. His hair was already white, but he was as active as ever and determined to run all risks. He was exposing himself to slavery, he knew, for the land was forbidden to foreigners—as dungeons of daring trespassers could tell. But his courage sprang from the thought that “It is infinitely preferable to be captive in chains for the love of God, than to purchase delicious liberty by deserting the cross of Jesus Christ.”

His chance of even reaching China was extremely slim. Only a handful of Chinese smugglers would hazard landing anyone there. So with hard cash Xavier persuaded one of them to ferry him from San Chan, an island six miles off the coast, where the smugglers came for Portuguese trade. To calm the Portuguese merchants’ fear of reprisals against themselves, the Saint promised not to budge until they were safe on the high seas.

On the appointed day Xavier, true to his word, waited at the pre-arranged rendezvous. He stood on the beach, a parcel of clothes and books at his feet. Dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, evening: still no sign of the smuggler’s sail. With the dark came conviction: his Chinese confidante was not coming. Like a child there seeped into his bones, too, the suspicion that his dream of entering the forbidden land was just a dream. “At that very moment,” noted a companion, “he began to be sick.” Two weeks later he was dead.

A scrutiny of those two weeks reveals (surprising perhaps to some) that St. Francis Xavier was human. He took refuge in a

shanty left by the merchants. He lay intermittently conscious there on a cot beneath a small window, through which he glanced toward the heavens as he talked tenderly to the crucifix in his hand. A Chinese lad who attended him recognized some of Xavier's prayers as ones he himself had learned at the college at Goa: "O most holy Trinity!" "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" "Mary, show thyself a mother!" The Saint breathed his last, uttering the last line of "Te Deum," that hymn of thanks, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded in eternity."

To emphasize the lesson in Xavier's death is unnecessary. That galaxy of virtues which all his life enhanced his charity, they were there in that hour, winking and blinking like the stars (those tremendous little things) seen twinkling through the window by his bed, twinkling even in the gloaming of his life, like a glorious Milky Way: patience, kindness, gentleness, magnanimity, justice, unselfishness, forgiveness, sympathy, hope, understanding, perseverance. "Be you, therefore, imitators [of St. Francis Xavier] as very dear children and **WALK IN LOVE**" (Eph. 5:1).

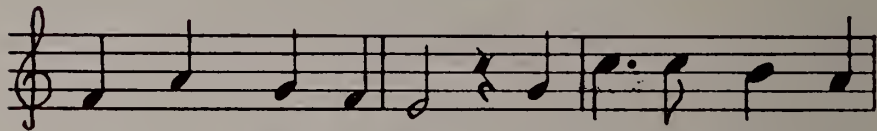
Recite the prayer, and sing the hymn.



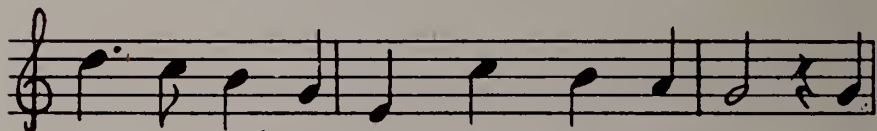
## HYMN TO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER



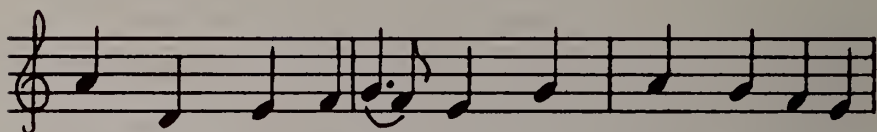
We hail thee, Fran-cis Xav-ier, Lo-



yo - la's great-est son, Thy dar-ing soul's se-



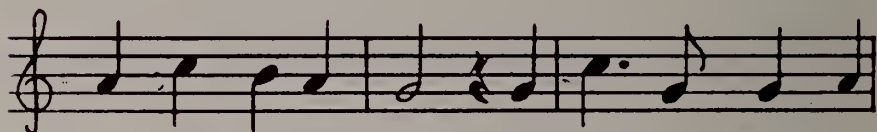
raph-ic love Un-num-bered souls has won. We



hail thee, great a-pos-tle, Whose heart was all a-



fire To do for Christ, to die for Christ, And



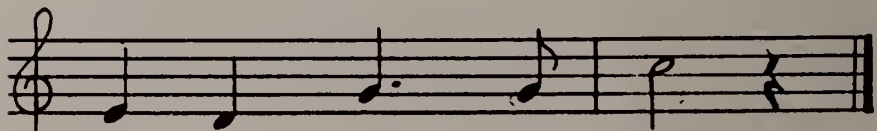
Christ a - lone de - sire. We hail thee, Fran-cis



Xav - ier, Our La - dy's loy - al knight, Thy



faith, thy love and chas - ti - ty, Rare



jew - els in her sight.