

St. Francis is true of us all. We all have our mission in this life. We get a proportionate amount of grace to fulfil it, and our favour with God, the treasures we lay up for ourselves in Heaven, will depend upon the use we now make of that grace. So then, when a saint, especially a wonderful saint such as St. Francis Xavier was, is presented to our view, we may, with profit and interest, study and reflect upon his life—see, as far as may be, the causes that influenced him to make such an excellent use of the grace of God as to enable him to attain such sublime heights of sanctity, for the causes that worked so well for him would doubtless act upon ourselves in a similar manner if we would give them a fair trial.

Well, then, in order to see what those causes were, let us take up his life. We shall find him in early manhood a brilliant student of the University of Paris. He had come from Spain. Though young (he was only 18 years of age), he soon became distinguished. His vigorous intellect enabled him to compete successfully with the brightest minds that he met. He was, however, full of the world. Nobody would dream that he would become what he was in after years. The turning of his career he owed to a remarkable man who was at that time at the university—I mean St. Ignatius Loyola.

Ignatius, at that time, was revolving in his mind a great idea which afterwards assumed practical shape—the idea of forming a company to work for the interests of religion. He saw what Francis Xavier was, and resolved, if possible, to win him over to his side. Xavier had talent, he had learning, but more sanctity was needed. So, Ignatius artfully went to work, and by perseverance succeeded in getting Xavier to think and consult. Then the grace of God did its work in the soul of Xavier. The upshot of it all was that shortly after, in 1534, Francis Xavier united himself with several others, and under St. Ignatius, formed an organization which was the beginning of the Society of Jesus. The following year he performed the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, and performed them so well that his mind was day and night taken up with contemplation of heavenly things.