

## Monday, 05 March 2018

Let us look at the Gospel passage today, in which we heard how the Lord Jesus was rejected in His own village in Nazareth. He has preached to them and even performed miracles before them, but the people hardened their hearts and refused to believe in Him. Why is that so? That is because Jesus hailed from that very village, where all the people likely had known Him in person since when He was very young, after He returned to Nazareth with His foster father St. Joseph and His mother Mary.

That is why they likely assumed that they knew Who He was, the mere Son of a lowly carpenter of the village. At that time, being a carpenter was truly a lowly and undesirable occupation to have, having to work very hard and yet gaining very little, and only contempt and ridicule from others who used his service. And this prejudice continued on to apply to the Lord Himself, Who was likely also a carpenter like His foster father St. Joseph.

We see here the irony of their actions, (Jesus often exclaimed that he had not found such faith in Israel, for example the centurion) those who were at Nazareth who were in fact belonging to God's own people, the descendants of Israel. While Naaman, the Syrian pagan and non-Israelite came to believe in God despite his earlier reservations and doubts, but he believed nonetheless, as compared to the Israelites who hardened their hearts and refused to believe, just as what happened to the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law, the Sadducees and their followers.

My soul is yearning for you my God: when can I enter and see the face of God, was today's Psalm (PS 42/43.)

This is the deepest yearning of the human heart. People often yearn for different things, But sometimes the yearning is lost in the human heart.

Yearning is intrinsic to our lives: for beauty, peace, joy. It's deep in the human heart and in all cultures and peoples.

But, the ultimate yearning ... is for God.

In our impoverished western world, with all its sadness, that ultimate yearning is pushed to the margins. This is what secular society is doing.

We cannot deny, there are good things in secular society but there is this great lack of meaningful substance, faith.

To live by faith in a modern world, despite our weakness and fragility and despite the weakness of our institutional church, we must come to know the figure of Christ and to be uplifted by that and to let that light shine.

That is a wonderful gift.

For God so loved the world that he gave us his beloved son. He gives us everything, in other words ... that we might have eternal life.

Francis Xavier was completely overcome by that love.

He came to Paris and met Ignatius and by accident through the King of Portugal he was sent to India on the Santiago in April 1541.

When he arrived at Goa on the west side of India: he was like a spring uncoiled with his energy and passion.

Today we can see the results of his enduring love and faith, by the beautiful basilica in Goa today where his remains are (Novena there annually before the feast on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

One of his loves was his work with the pearl fishermen who were exploited. These were nominally Christians and Francis loved them. Now classified as among the most backward classes in India: the untouchables, poorest people in India. SFX loved and cared for the untouchables in India.

The light of the Gospel was brought to the East.

We carry the light of the Gospel in some way and that shines.

I would say this: as important as SFX was, I believe that in the story of our own lives and what we've had to cope with. Each of us is important to God and has as important a role as Francis Xavier.

We all have our different gifts and stage of life. The eternal God looks on each of us and calls us by name and brings us into being. If you or I could see it, my goodness, that would be such a wonderful thing.

The journey takes place in different ways. But sometimes we miss the ultimate reality: you have made us for yourself, O Lord and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.!

We join with SFX and with Blessed John Sullivan.

We pray for certain intentions now.

The light of the Gospel shines through each one of us.

We have each our own uniqueness and the love of God is there for each of us.

May we know the love of God and may our hearts reach out.