

St Francis Xavier SJ

Today is Tuesday, the 3 December, the Feast of St Francis Xavier SJ, in the First Week of Advent.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo sing Uqinisi! Ubaba: After travelling the whole world, I still come to the same truth that I left at home: God is truth! So why do you doubt? Don't doubt, hold on to him and place your hope in him. Listen to God because he is truth.

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Mark.

These are Jesus' last words to his followers. The Eleven, still shaken by Jesus' crucifixion, must have listened with astonishment. "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." How? They started out from where they were, in Jerusalem.

All of us are called to "go and preach to all nations." Our preaching is not necessarily on distant shores but to our families, our children, our brothers and sisters, our husband or wife, those we work with, our friends, our neighbours. And to preach, not with words, but by our everyday lives. How in my life do I bring the Gospel to those I meet?

Francis Xavier, the 16th century globe-trotting missionary, also started out from where he was. He set sail for the East Indies, landing at Goa, on the west coast of India. For ten years he worked trying to bring the faith to a wide variety of people: Hindus, Malaysians and Japanese. Wherever he went, he lived with the poorest, sharing their food and way of life. He ministered to the sick and the poor, particularly lepers. Truly Francis Xavier lived out the words of the Gospel we shall now listen to again.

Jesus continues to live in our midst. He continues his mission through the community of believers. He wants to continue his mission to reveal the Good News of God's love for the poor through us. What are the signs of Jesus' presence in our midst today? Perhaps today we can pray for the strength to be that sign for others..?

O Wisdom, Lord and Ruler, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Sun, King of the nations, Emmanuel, Come, Lord Jesus.