

**SAINT FRANCIS
XAVIER, APOSTLE OF
INDIA AND JAPAN**

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Saint Francis Xavier, apostle of India and Japan by John Clement Reville

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JOHN CLEMENT REVILLE

**SAINT FRANCIS
XAVIER, APOSTLE OF
INDIA AND JAPAN**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Saint Francis Xavier

Apostle of India and Japan

By JOHN C. REVILLE, S. J.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF AMERICA

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P R E F A C E

This sketch of the life and character of the Apostle of India and Japan, closely follows the standard lives of the great missionary, that especially of Father A. Brou, S.J., the monumental "*Saint François Xavier*," which combines in an admirable degree the qualities of romantic interest and scholarly research. To Father Brou, the writer has closely adhered, for with his predecessors, Cros and Michel, this most authoritative of all the historians of St. Francis Xavier has said all that need be known of the "giant" of the missions. But other volumes have been consulted, the "*Monumenta Xaveriana*," the "Life and Letters" of the Saint by Father J. H. Coleridge, S.J.; the earlier biographies, the one by Bartoli especially, which is a little given to exaggeration, still manages to thrill its readers with its epic ring; Bouhours' life, known to English readers through Dryden; the fine sketch in dear old Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints"; the one in the first volume of the "*Varones Ilustres de la Compañia de Jesus*," and Father Martindale's review of Xavier's career in the first section of his studies of Jesuit Saints, entitled "In God's Army." No writer dealing with the Saints can neglect the processes of their beatification and canonization: in the case of Xavier, these have been faithfully consulted and followed.

Xavier was a herald of the Cross. This book lays claim neither to originality, scholarship nor research. It asks but one privilege. No matter how narrow a circle, it would like to be the herald of the virtues of this truly great man, one of the noblest heroes and Saints of the Church of God.

J. C. R.

St. Francis Xavier

CHAPTER I

On the Hills of Navarre

(1506-1525)

IN the beginning of the sixteenth century, at the dawn of that epoch when Spain was to become the first power in the world, an old feudal castle might be seen on the southern slope of the western Pyrenees, keeping watch like a faithful sentinel over the highway that led from Upper Navarre into the royal domain of Aragon. With its moat, over which the drawbridge swung from its heavy chains, with its wall of defense crenelated and loop-holed, its four weather-beaten towers clasping in their arms the home of the master, the castle looked like a battle-scarred warrior on duty for country and king. Over the castle itself mountain and hill flung their shadows. Not far from its walls ran the stream that divided Upper Navarre from Aragon. At a short distance was the royal villa of Soz, where Ferdinand the Catholic was born. A few miles away under the marble pavement of the monastery of Leyre, the old Kings of Navarre, "after life's fitful fever" slept the sleep that knows no waking, and the good monks came to pray for the repose of their souls. Away to the north-west frowned the ramparts of Pampeluna and almost due west was the little town of Sangüessa, then famous for its monasteries and its schools.

In this old castle, amid such picturesque surroundings, on the Tuesday of Holy Week, the seventh of April, 1506, a son was born to Doña Maria de Azpilcueta, wife of Don John de Jassu, Counselor to the King John d'Albret, and Lord of Xavier and Ydoeiu.

The boy received in Baptism the name of Francis. Catholics throughout the world venerate him as the greatest of missionaries and apostles since the days of Peter and Paul and their brethren, and call him St. Francis Xavier. He was born a few weeks before Columbus, the great Pathfinder, and the Discoverer of the New World, died in poverty at Valladolid, as if God wished that the man who bore the light of the Gospel to the West should not end his earthly career before a child was given to Spain who should bear the message of the Cross to the remote and pagan East.

The family, in which Francis de Jassu y Xavier was the sixth child, belonged to the nobility of Navarre. It had given, on the father's side, to the service of Church, country and King, magistrates of irreproachable honor, learned doctors, fighting men also, who, with the finest qualities of Basque, Navarrese and Spanish blood mingling in their veins, were never known to turn back from a fight or betray their duty. Doña Maria de Azpilcueta, the mother of Francis, was a soldier's daughter and could trace back her lineage through a long pedigree of feudal lords, to Duke Eridon Aznar, the common ancestor of the Kings of Aragon and Navarre.

But in their fortress home of Xavier, Don John de Jassu and Doña Maria de Azpilcueta seldom thought or spoke of their ancestral honors. They knew how little these honors enhanced their genuine worth, and realized that it was not in them, but in themselves, in their own virtues, in their own life and conduct that they must look for their true merit and greatness.

From all that we can gather from the scanty records of the childhood and boyhood of Francis, the life in the grim stronghold of his race, must have been one of rugged simplicity, surrounded by an atmosphere of profound faith, the faith of Catholic Spain in its days of glory, of loyalty to God and King,

of the tenderest union between the lords and masters of the manor and their children. There is no country in the world where children are treated with such tender care as in Spain. And with his brothers Michael and John, and his sisters Maria, Anna and Magdalena, his seniors by some years, but to whom he was devotedly attached, the early years of the future apostle must have been ideally happy.

For the castle of Xavier sheltered a truly Christian family. The influence of the grave Don John de Jassu and of the gentle Maria de Azpilcueta; the example of the fair Magdalena, who gave up her position as lady-in-waiting to Isabella the Catholic and became a Poor Clare, of his sister Maria, who was to edify the Abbey of Santa Engracia at Pampeluna by her virtues; the priestly life and the learning of his cousin, Doctor Don Martin de Azpilcueta, one of the most eminent canonists of Spain; the lessons of another priestly relative, Don Michael de Azpilcueta; the piety and affection of his maternal aunt, Doña Violanta, who to the manners of a high-born Spanish matron joined the virtues of a recluse, were slowly molding the character of the boy. The household in which he lived was the cradle of those heroic virtues which later on he was to practise. The seed was planted in those early years which produced such splendid harvests in India and Japan.

While the example of that Christian household was molding his character, the ancestral memories and the picturesque nature around him were helping in the task. The boy could roam through the castle and gaze with wondering eyes upon the tapestries which hung on its walls, with their pictures of the deeds done by his ancestors against the Moors, or the legends of the Saints, or the Life of Christ. Often, no doubt, he loitered in the armory where hung the lance and sword of the knights of a bygone age, or knelt with