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Photo: The Xaverian International Lay Volunteers(XAVI) Assembly at the mother house in Parma, Italy

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Please also consider naming the St. Francis Xavier Foreign Mission Society in your Will.

Together we can help St. Guido Conforti's vision to "Make of the World One Family" become a reality.



Upholding the Highest Standards of Abuse Prevention

PEACE BE WITH YOU ALL: TOWARDS AN “UNARMED AND DISARMING” PEACE

Excerpts from the MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV FOR WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let us open ourselves to peace! Let us welcome it and recognize it, rather than believing it to be impossible and beyond our reach. Peace is a presence and a journey... Peace is a principle that guides and defines our choices. Even in places where only rubble remains, and despair seems inevitable, we still find people who have not forgotten peace...

An unarmed peace

Before being arrested, Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives...Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (Jn 14:27). Their distress and fear were certainly connected to the violence soon to befall him. But what troubled the disciples was his nonviolent response: a path that they all, Peter first among them, contested; yet the Master asked them to follow this path to the end... The peace of the risen Jesus is unarmed, because his was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political and social circumstances...

When we treat peace as a distant ideal, we cease to be scandalized when it is denied, or even when war is waged in its name. When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life. Far beyond the principle of legitimate defense, confrontational logic now dominates global politics, deepening instability and unpredictability...

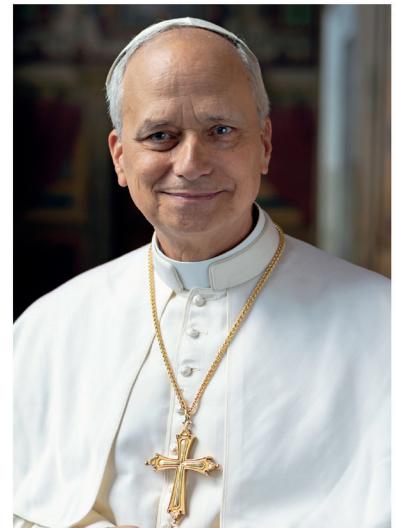
Global military expenditure increased by 9.4% in 2024, reaching a total of \$2718 billion, 2.5% of global GDP. [There is] not only enormous economic investment in rearmament, but also a shift in educational policies. Rather than fostering a culture that preserves awareness of the twentieth century and the millions of victims, we now see communication campaigns and educational programs, at schools, universities and in the media, that spread a perception of threats and promote only an armed notion of defense and security.

...Technological advances and the military implementation of artificial intelligence have worsened the tragedy of armed conflict. Decisions about life and death are increasingly “delegated” to machines. It is necessary to denounce the enormous concentrations of private economic and financial interests that are driving countries in this direction.

The Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* presents St. Francis of Assisi as a model of awakening: Francis was able to welcome true peace into his heart and free himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became A *disarming* peace. Goodness is disarming. Perhaps this is why God became a child. The mystery of the Incarnation, begins in the womb of a young mother and is revealed in the manger in Bethlehem. “Peace on earth,” sing the angels, announcing the presence of a defenseless God, in whom humanity can discover itself as loved only by caring for him (Lk2:13-14)...

John XXIII advocated for “integral disarmament,” achieved through renewal of the heart and mind. In *Pacem in Terris*, he wrote: “Everyone must realize that unless disarmament be thoroughgoing and complete, and reach people’s very souls, it is impossible to stop the arms race, or to reduce armaments, or ultimately to abolish them entirely.

Read the entire message: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2025/12/18/251218a.html>



Leo PP. XIV

XAVI, A Year of Walking Together

By Fr. Alex Brai, sx

The Xaverian International Volunteer Project (XAVI) was born from the General Chapter of 2023 and relaunched at COSUMA in 2024.

An initial evaluation of the program is positive for several reasons. The first is the widespread participation of many Xaverians who are collaborating and actively contributing. Almost all the leaders of the Circumscriptions (Provinces and Delegations) have begun working on raising awareness of the project, involving Xaverian members and communities, training lay people preparing to leave, and welcoming those already volunteering.

Another positive development is the growing desire among many lay people, to consider donating a few months or years of their lives to the mission in the areas where the Xaverian Missionaries operate. Many reasons lead these lay people to consider the mission: social motivations, the desire for an intense human experience, a spiritual journey, and, in many cases, a faith that calls for concrete action and availability in the mission of the Church.

Also positive is the consensus and support of the local Church, who sees in this project not only a contribution to the mission, but also an opportunity for growth, especially for young people.

Moreover, the missionary outreach these lay people undertake continues once they return to their respective countries. The volunteers can become a bridge between their Church and their local reality and the mission itself.

We can therefore state that there is a general enthusiasm, driven by the willingness to commit, that allows the project to take shape

and become an integral part of our Xaverian presence in the world.

There are obstacles to overcome, and improvements to implement. Patience and understanding are required from the Xaverian Missionaries who welcome and accompany the lay people. These young people and adults may have difficulties, limitations, and fears. For our part, the ability to see the beauty and positive contributions they make to the mission is essential.

Other difficulties relate to managing practical aspects, such as paperwork, departure times, and various permits. This often requires making quick decisions. Better collaboration between sending and receiving constituencies can help address some of these challenges.

There is always room for improvement in training. A suggested itinerary is already outlined in the handbook, but it is also important to consider more personalized training. Lay people often come from completely different backgrounds and, in addition to spiritual, psychological, human, and cultural formation, they need personal accompaniment.

There is still much to be done: walking together, involving the local Church that sends and the one that receives, encouraging our communities, and showing ourselves available to accompany the volunteers, so that they can feel part of this project.

What can help us move forward is the goal and purpose of this project: that volunteers share in our Xaverian charism, feel like close collaborators of the Xaverians, and fully live out Conforti's dream of ***making the world one family***.



Journey with us!

Learn more at

<https://xavi.xaverians.org/en>



In several Italian cities, lay Xaverians enthusiastically accepted the Pope's invitation to be "missionaries of hope among the people."



Lay missionaries, Franca and Patrick returned to Italy a few months ago after a year of mission in Bangladesh,

PEACE, A UNIVERSAL VOCATION BROTHERHOOD ACCORDING TO JESUS CHRIST

A simple reflection on mission. Peace as a gift and a duty for every believer.

Peace, in Catholic thought, is not simply the absence of conflict, but that "tranquility of order" that Saint Augustine described as the fruit of justice and charity.

Evangelical and spiritual foundations

For Christians, peace is that which the risen Jesus gave us and which we exchange in the Eucharistic celebration: "The peace of the Lord." Only God can give us this peace, with the salvation wrought by Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. For us, peace is therefore a gift from God to be treasured with gratitude, and also a daily commitment of Christian life to build and spread it.

St. John Henry Newman, reminds us how the understanding of evangelical truth unfolds progressively throughout history, without changing its essence. This principle also applies to peace: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt 5:9) finds new applications today in a globalized and interdependent world. St. Teresa of Calcutta embodied this truth when she stated, "Peace begins with a smile. If we want to cultivate true peace, we must begin with small daily gestures of attention to others."

Universal brotherhood as a path to peace

The philosopher Jacques Maritain, in his *Integral Humanism*, developed the idea of a fraternal community that recognizes the transcendent dignity of every person. As Maritain wrote: "The human person has the right to be respected; „society is made for the person." Peace arises when social structures reflect this truth. The social doctrine of the Church is part of our mission, as is the advocacy of the inestimable value of every human life, created and loved by God.

Justice in human relations: the principle of subsidiarity

Pope Pius XI formulated the principle of subsidiarity: "What individuals can accomplish by their own efforts and industry must not be taken from them and entrusted to the community." Peace requires just relationships that respect the autonomy and dignity of every person and every intermediate community. Benedict XVI, in *Caritas in Veritate*, explored this concept further: "Subsidiarity respects the dignity of the person, in whom it sees a subject always capable of giving something to others."

Justice towards creation and future generations

Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, taught us to recognize a universal brotherhood that embraces all of creation. The greeting "Peace and goodness" encompasses every human and evangelical reality. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, developed the concept of "integral ecology," demonstrating how peace with the earth is inseparable from peace among peoples: "Everything is connected."

Human needs and those of faith

Authentic peace requires integrating the demands of human reason and those of faith. As St. John Henry Newman wrote: "Conscience has rights because it has duties." Becoming peacemakers today means:

1. Always and everywhere recognize the universal brotherhood that binds all human beings.
2. Work for more just social and economic structures that respect the nature of human relationships.
3. Live soberly in line with an integral ecology that protects creation and life.
4. Integrate faith, reason, and concrete life in a coherent way in pursuing the common good.

Gaudium et Spes states: "Peace is not the mere absence of war... but rather the work of justice." In a world marked by division and conflict, we are called to be witnesses of that peace that the world cannot provide, but which is born from recognizing others, including our enemies, who deserve to be loved as brothers and sisters. For Xaverians, committing ourselves to "making the world one family in Jesus Christ" means working every day to build peace, through the First Proclamation of the Gospel wherever we are.

ATION: AN INVITATION TO ORDING TO OUR FAITH

By Fr. Silvano Da Roit, sx



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What kind of synodal Church in Africa?

Xaverian Missionaries Center for African Studies

The Center for African Studies (CAS) of the Xaverian Missionaries has published several journals on the theme of the reception of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality in African churches.

The African reception of the Synod on Synodality

With the publication of the Final Document (DF) of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality: *Communion, Participation, and Mission* last October, the synodal process has entered its phase of reception, deepening, and implementation. It is now time for each local Church to welcome the fruits of this time of consultative discernment within the Church. The Synod proved to be more ambitious, going so far as to propose reforms in the Church. The hope is that these reforms are not misunderstood.

A possible misunderstanding

The enthusiasm with which the synodal process has been received is not without misunderstanding. Recently, during an ongoing formation meeting for young missionaries, I heard a young Xaverian priest say that, given the decline in missionary personnel, it was appropriate to involve lay people in pastoral activities. This, he said, was a way of implementing the Synod's guidelines on synodality. In his view, lay people are only being called upon to meet a need for manpower. At the same meeting, a laywoman invited to share her experience of collaboration between clergy and laity referred to the recent synod as a remedy for what she described as "too much power for priests." In her view, synodality would instead require a sharing of this power between lay people and clergy, with a large share going to lay people. For, she asserted, they constitute the majority of the faithful in the Church.

These remarks cannot be dismissed out of hand. If the synod desired by Pope Francis aimed at the participation of all the baptized in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel,

it would be wrong to think of synodality in terms of the political categories of democracy and parliamentarianism. Thus, in the comments of various parties, we can see a risk of distorting or misunderstanding the objectives of the synod on synodality, an event that nevertheless offers itself as a providential moment for the life of the Churches and Christians engaged in proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel.

If we lose sight of mission as the horizon of this ecclesial event, we run the risk of turning the synod into a call to share power. In the context of the marginalization of the laity and the temptation to overvalue the sacrament of Holy Orders, as is the case in some African churches, vigilance is needed to avoid distorting the primary goal of the synodal process.

The criteria for true reform

To avoid caricaturing the synodal path, it is useful to keep in mind the criteria for true and false reform in the Church. According to the French Dominican, Fr. Yves Congar, the true criteria are: 1) The primacy of charity and pastoral care; 2) Communion with the whole Church; 3) Patience with respect for the call to holiness and conversion; 4) Fidelity to Tradition. Whereas false reform can be recognized by the following signs: 1) The spirit of rupture or contestation; 2) The search for human success or efficiency; 3) The refusal of patience and the rejection of the institution; 4) The substitution of the political for the spiritual; 5) The self-justification of the reforming group.

A threefold structure for these studies

In line with the work of the study groups requested by the Synod for the continuation of the process that has begun, Xaverian journals aim to contribute to the synodal spirit. The contributions are organized into three sections. The Final Document of the Synod is read, welcomed, and projected from the perspective of the issues facing African churches and societies. The

publications have a common thread: the primacy of mission.

After their work, the participants in the Synod (2021-2024), together with Pope Francis, expressed how much the idea of synodality had delighted them: "Step by step, we have come to understand that at the heart of the Synod (...) there is a call to joy and renewal of the Church in following the Lord, in commitment to the service of his mission and in the search for ways to be faithful to him" (Synod Final Document).

As a first step, reflection allows us to identify the signs in the churches of Africa that corroborate this feeling of joy that arose at the Synod of Bishops. At the same time, we seek to indicate the points of attention that call for listening to what the Spirit is telling the churches (Rev 2:7). One of the crucial points on which the conversion of our churches is expected is to allow the baptismal grace of women to unfold, attesting that women claim nothing other than to trust in the Spirit of God who acts creatively in them for the good of the ecclesial body.

Starting from the Final Document, the second focus clarifies the catholic meaning of synodality and its purpose. It therefore highlights fundamental ecclesiological questions that the recent Synod of Bishops has helped to rediscover. The third axis is more forward-looking. It points to aspects of our churches in Africa that call for a decisive step of conversion, without which it is difficult to imagine a new call to mission. The contribution of the charism of consecrated life, the delicate relationship, and the evangelical use of church property. An article on the structures of co-responsibility in our churches—the various diocesan and parish councils—would have been necessary. We hope to return to this topic in a future journal dedicated to the question of "power in the churches of Africa."



Above photo was taken by Fr. Joeven Matugas, sx at the Divine Mercy Eucharistic Congress in Sierra Leone in 2013.
Photo below is courtesy of the Xaverian Missionaries General Direction, 2025



MissioNET Series



In Taiwan, freedom of faith is for everyone. On this Pacific Island, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism sit alongside Christian and Muslim minorities and other traditions.

The first episode, "Religious Diversity in Taiwan," takes us into the island's rich multireligious landscape, where syncretism is especially visible in the temples – places where different traditions meet and blend. Taiwanese people do not usually bind themselves rigidly to a single religion; rather, they prefer to preserve and practice their family inherited traditions, especially the veneration of ancestors. In this episode, we see how this tradition finds its fullest expression during the Qingming Festival, the day of the dead. Cities empty out while cemeteries fill with families bringing gifts and offerings to their departed loved ones. These rituals reveal a living syncretism that goes beyond individual religious identities.

In the second episode, "Traditional Religions in Taiwan," we explore the traditions of faith that have uniquely shaped the island's religious and cultural

fabric: Folk Religion, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Popular devotions to local temple deities sit alongside the calm of Japanese Zen, the non-dogmatic openness of Taoism, and Confucianism's focus on human relationships. Together, they shape daily life in Taiwan. The result is a rich, diverse religious landscape that encourages openness and hospitality. It's fertile ground where once-distant faiths – like Christianity and Islam – have taken root and now live side by side.

In the third episode, "The Christian Faith in Taiwan," we focus on the island's first major religious minority: the Catholic Church, numbering about 300,000 faithful – less than 1% of the population. Small in numbers yet significant and well regarded, as described by Fr. Edi Foschiatto, a Xaverian missionary interviewed for this episode. The service of charity and attention to the least are the most eloquent signs of the Church's commitment within Taiwanese society. Moreover, the Catholic community has sought to value local traditions, reinterpreting them in a Christian key and integrating them into its rituals and religious practices. This is a path of dialogue and inculculation that bears witness to the richness of the Gospel in a

land with many spiritual voices.

In the fourth episode, "Islam in Taiwan," we meet another minority religious community. Through the interview with Abdullah Cheng, imam of the Taipei Grand Mosque, we discover the rich intercultural variety of Taiwanese Islam: Indonesians, Taiwanese, Central Asians, as well as Muslims from Canada and the United States. The imam emphasizes that in Taiwan the Muslim community can live its faith freely, both in daily prayer and in public celebrations.

In the final video we offer an overall look at the island's religious freedom and diversity, showing how different traditions can live in dialogue and in harmony. All of this is made possible by the religious freedom guaranteed by Taiwan's constitution, which allows the various communities to express their faith freely.

View the entire series at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLweRn5C9Nrlc6kWz7SUdO1NzWAjbVmfo>

USA NEWS

DELEGATION HOUSE, XAVIER KNOLL FRANKLIN, WI

New Leadership of the USA Xaverian Missionaries

The Xaverian Missionaries USA concluded their annual assembly at The Missionary Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, which took place from November 2 – 6, 2025. Our superiors from Rome joined us. They include Fr. Mauro Loda, Vicar General of the Xaverian Missionaries worldwide, and Fr. Felipe de Jesús López Orozco, General Council. It was a marvelous occasion to come together from our mission centers in Holliston, MA, and Franklin, WI. The Xaverian Sisters of Mary also joined us on Founder's Day, November 5th, for a special celebration. The General Direction appointed new leadership for our USA Delegation. Fr. Alex Rodriguez is the Superior Delegate, Fr. Carl Chudy is the Vice Delegate, and Br. Kornel Glossanto is a Councilor. Their term runs from 2025 to 2028. (Not pictured in photo on the right: Fr. Rocco Puopolo, Fr. Adolph Menendez, and Fr. Frank Grappoli)



Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob visits Xavier Knoll

The Xaverian fathers, the Xavier Knoll advisory board, and other friends gathered on December 9, 2025, for a short prayer and dinner to welcome the archbishop, who visited the community to learn about the Xaverian Missionaries.

Lay Xaverians

"Missionary Disciples: The Xaverian Way," shares the basics of who is a Lay Xaverian, what they do, and how the Xaverian charism has guided people through their lives. Lay Xaverians are an integral part of Xavier Knoll. Email Fr. Alex for more information. fralex@xaverianmissionaries.org



OUR LADY OF FATIMA SHRINE, HOLLISTON , MA

Father Rocco Honored

On November 23, 2025, Fr. Rocco Puopolo, sx, received the Cheverus Award for service to the Church and God's people, along with others throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. Fr. Rocco is pictured at the Holy Cross Cathedral, Boston, with Archbishop Richard Henning.

Lenten Services

- Ash Wednesday Mass at 7:30 AM and 12:10 PM
- Confessions Wednesday evening 6 PM and Saturday afternoon at 3 PM
- Ecumenical Lenten Bible study every Thursday at noon, February 19 - March 26
- Way of the Cross every Friday starting February 20 at 5 PM
- Soup and Mission featuring Lenten Speaker (date, time and speaker TBA)
- World Day of Prayer with Protestant Neighbors, March 6
- Interfaith Iftar (Breaking of Fast with our Muslim Neighbors) March 15, 6 PM
- Easter Sunday Celebration 10 AM



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Xaverian Lay Volunteers in Bangladesh: <https://www.laicatosaveriano.it/2025/04/15/insieme-e-meglio.html>

"Together is better": Find meaning in your life with the Xaverian Laity

contact: fralex@xaverianmissionaries.org; frrocco@xaverianmissionaries.org

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