

Missionary Websites

www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org

www.combonimissionaries.org

www.home.maryknoll.org

www.missionariesofthepoor.org

www.salesianmissions.org

www.st.columban.org



Maryknoll Father Mike Bassano serves an Aids patient in Thailand.



Resources used in this pamphlet:

www.americancatholic.org

www.ewtn.com/library

www.holyspiritinteractive.net

God our Father, you called Frances Xavier Cabrini from Italy to serve the immigrants of America. By her example teach us concern for the stranger, the sick and the frustrated. By her prayers help us to see Christ in all the men and women we meet. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



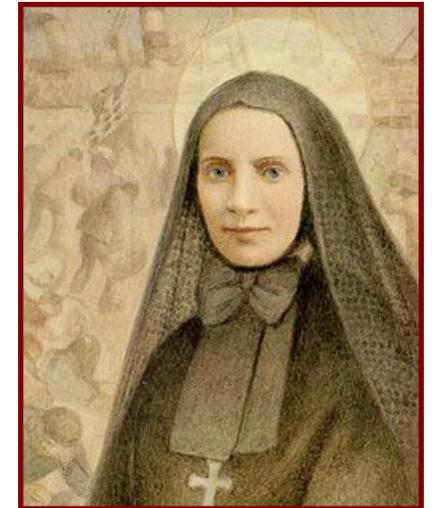
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Evangelization and the Lives of the Saints

**St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
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St. Frances Xavier Cabrini



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St. Frances Xavier Cabrini was the first citizen of our country to be canonized. Although born in a small village in Italy in 1850, her life's journey took her across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States and South America. By the time she died in 1917, she had founded 67 orphanages, schools and hospitals. This all from someone who was thought to be so tiny and sickly at birth that she was brought immediately to the church to be baptized for fear she would not survive!

Little Cecchina, as she was called by her family, had a sweet and sunny disposition. She had an uncle who was a priest who often told her stories of the missions, and as a child she would make paper boats and sail them "off to China" with tiny flower "missionaries" inside. So began a love affair with Christ, and a heart set on bringing His love around the world.

After earning her degree as a teacher, she applied to two convents but was turned down by both, mainly because of her health. Her parish rector, Fr. Antonio Serrati, noted her intelligence and good nature and asked her to help run an orphanage that had been started by two women who had good intentions but no concept of administration. She worked

there for six years until the orphanage was finally disbanded. Still, she had learned much about institutional organization, as well as dealing with the day-to-day problems of children, and their care and education.

By this time the Bishop of Lodi had heard of her work and asked her to start a missionary order of sisters. She felt the prayers of her childhood were being answered; she and several other young women then founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and she officially became Mother Cabrini. She worked very hard to write a rule of order, design simple habits and fix up the abandoned building in which she and her sisters were housed. The sisters actually did the brick-laying themselves, until some of the townspeople saw their laborious efforts and came to their rescue!

Mother Cabrini had not given up her dream to sail to a foreign country, and when her bishop asked her next to consider travelling to America to help the Italian immigrants there, she was eager to be of service. It may not have been China, but it was still mission! She and seven of her sisters came to New York City in 1889. Because of a miscommunication, there was no convent or even any lodging prepared for them, and the young women were forced to spend their first night in a dingy, dirty rooming house. Afraid to even sleep in the beds, they spent that night in prayer and contemplation. Surely they remembered their Savior's birth under similar circumstances.

So began Mother Cabrini's work in America. She and her sisters begged from door to door and were soon able to open the first of their many charitable institutions. She became a U.S. citizen in 1909 and was a friend to all immigrants, bringing Christ to them in their loneliness and sorrow. On December 22, 1917, while preparing for a

children's Christmas party, St. Frances Cabrini died suddenly of a heart attack. She was canonized on July 7, 1946. "The story of St. Frances Cabrini is the story, not only of every missionary, but of every Christian. It is not what she accomplished, or how far she traveled that made her a great missionary saint. It was how she allowed God to accomplish remarkable achievements in and through her. Her immense love of God empowered her to reach out to the poor, the needy and the immigrants." *Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart*

- There is so much about this admirable woman to emulate! Certainly foremost was her desire to please God and bring his Kingdom to the ends of the earth. Being a missionary, however, does not always mean travelling to distant lands. All of us, by virtue of our baptism, are missionaries of Christ's love. We bring the Good News to others when we reach out with an understanding heart to those in pain, when we sacrifice some of our time to visit the elderly or the sick, when we try to offer a cheerful smile even if we feel discouraged ourselves. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to always bless us with Mother Cabrini's missionary spirit.
- Tiny Cecchina was greatly influenced by her uncle's tales of missionaries and their adventures. There are so many men and women today who selflessly leave the lives they were born to in order to live with and serve people in third-world countries. Their amazing stories can be found in missionary magazines (such as Maryknoll) and online at various mission websites. Why not teach these to our children to inspire them to make the most of their own lives for Christ?