



December 3

Commemoration: Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552

Francis Xavier, born Francisco de Jasso y Azpilicueta (7 April 1506 – 3 December 1552) was a pioneering Roman Catholic missionary born in the Kingdom of Navarre (currently Spain-France) and co-founder of the Society of Jesus. He was a student of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and one of the first seven Jesuits, dedicated at Montmartre in 1534. He led an extensive mission into Asia, mainly in the Portuguese Empire of the time. He was influential in the spreading and upkeep of Catholicism most notably in India, but also ventured into Japan, Borneo, the Moluccas, and other areas which had thus far not been visited by Christian missionaries. In these areas, being a pioneer and struggling to learn the local languages in the face of opposition, he had less success than he had enjoyed in India. Xavier's legacy in India is controversial in that his presence in Goa led to the Goa Inquisition, albeit after his death.

Francis Xavier, fragment of St Gregory the Great with Sts Ignatius and Francis Xavier. Date: 1626

Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (February 8, 1591 – December 22, 1666), best known as Guercino or Il Guercino, was an Italian Baroque painter from the region of Emilia, and active in Rome and Bologna. Guercino is Italian for 'squinter', a nickname that was given to him because he was cross-eyed. He is especially noted for his many drawings.