

St. Francis Xavier
Georgetown University, 1789
Washington, D.C.

Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552), one of the first companions of St. Ignatius, became one of the greatest missionaries of the Church. He carried Christianity throughout the Indies and Japan, and died in sight of China, his next objective.

Francis, whose family was of minor nobility, grew up in a small castle in Navarre, Spain. He took up studies at the University of Paris intending to prepare for a business career. One of his roommates at the university was Ignatius of Loyola, who guided him through the Spiritual Exercises. Francis' interests changed so much from this experience that he became a dedicated "man for others," and with Ignatius, was one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus.

When the Pope asked the Jesuits to send missionaries to India, Francis unhesitatingly went when Ignatius asked him to accept the assignment. In the small space of 14 years he travelled from Italy by sailing ship to India, then 4000 miles south to the Molucca Islands of eastern Indonesia, and finally all the way north to Japan, with his sights set on China. In every place he visited, Francis set up Jesuit missions to serve the needs of the people, using their own languages and acting in accord with their customs.

In religious art, St. Francis is consistently pictured with a crucifix in hand and often with his right hand raised in blessing. In this window, a baptism font is depicted below to signify his missionary work.

The seal of the University of Georgetown includes the Great Seal of the United States: thirteen stars and stripes representing the original thirteen states. The stars surrounding the stripes indicate the unity of the whole. These symbols were chosen to emphasize the close connection between Georgetown and the nation because the date of the University's foundation coincides with that of the adoption of the Constitution. An eagle with spread wings grasps in its claws a globe and a cross to indicate the activities by which the whole person is developed: the globe for knowledge and the cross for religion. The inscription reads: Georgetown University, Washington, D.C; the foundation date is 1789. The school colors are gray and blue.

