



Saint Francis Xavier relic touches tens of thousands, reaches out to millions coast to coast

Ottawa, February 3, 2018 – Saint Francis Xavier’s right forearm is returning to its normal resting place in Rome after an exceptionally busy month of mission in Canada. The major relic of one of history’s most prolific and renowned international missionaries travelled to 15 Canadian cities between December 26, 2017 and February 3, 2018 as part of a visit organized by the Archdiocese of Ottawa, the Jesuits of Canada and Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) to celebrate Canada’s 150th year and CCO’s 30th year.

“The response from pilgrims across the country has been overwhelming,” says Terrence Prendergast, Archbishop of Ottawa. “Attendance at these events has been a wonderful witness of the faith in Canada and I have been touched myself by my experience of the relic.”

Organizers estimate that more than 70,000 Canadians made the special pilgrimage to see, touch and pray with the sacred relic while millions more learned about the saint and the practice of veneration through headlines and news reports in media across the country. It has been a very busy month of events, and the close of the tour is especially emotional.

“It’s going to be tough to say goodbye,” said D’Arcy Murphy, the guardian of the relic during its time in Canada. “Saint Francis really feels like a close friend, and the memories of this experience will stay with me for the rest of my life. It has been a very powerful month.”

“It has been incredible to watch Saint Francis Xavier inspire so many Canadians in their faith,” says Angèle Regnier, co-founder of CCO. “Through this relic, Saint Francis has been on a true mission, reviving hope.”

Video and photo recaps of the unique pilgrimage are available at cco.ca/relic.

Archdiocese of Ottawa

The Archdiocese of Ottawa is one of the larger dioceses of the Catholic Church in Canada. Under the spiritual care of Archbishop Terrence Prendergast since 2007, the Archdiocese is comprised of some 400,000 faithful, in 107 parishes, numerous Catholic schools (public and private), deacons and a large number of female and male religious congregations and orders.

Jesuits of Canada

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was founded in 1540 by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a Basque nobleman and soldier, and six of his companions, including Saint Francis Xavier, who placed themselves at the service of the Church for wherever the need was greatest. They

first came to Canada at Port Royal in Nova Scotia in 1611, founded the first parish and school in Quebec in 1635 and now are present across the country. Today there are almost 17,000 Jesuits serving the Church in 112 nations, making them the largest male religious order in the Catholic Church. In Canada, there are more than 200 Jesuits responsible for the direction of schools, churches, retreat centres, and a variety of ministries from St. John's, NL to Vancouver, BC. In Canada, the Jesuits serve the anglophone and francophone communities all across the country

Catholic Christian Outreach

Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) is a university student movement dedicated to evangelization. CCO challenges students to live in the fullness of faith with a strong emphasis on becoming leaders in the renewal of the world. CCO began in 1988 at the University of Saskatchewan. Now in its 30th year, CCO reaches out to thousands of students on 15 campuses across Canada. Saint Francis Xavier and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux are patron saints of CCO as well as the Church's patron saints of foreign missions.

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