

in an accident. Prayers were offered to St Francis Xavier and Fr Mastrilli recovered.

In his own prayer, Fr Mastrilli heard the promise that whoever took time each year to complete the nine days of the Novena would 'experience Francis's protection and might hope with great assurance that any grace they asked of God would be granted, provided it be for their good and the glory of God.'

Fr Mastrilli is credited with recovering the body of Francis Xavier from Sancian Island, off the coast of China, and taking it to Goa where it remains today.

Fr Mastrilli was himself martyred at Nagasaki in Japan on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1637 during the Tokugawa shogunate which had banned Christianity in 1614.

The Novena of Grace is traditionally prayed either from 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March (the day Francis was declared a saint in 1622) or from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December (St Francis Xavier's feast day). But it is a devotion that may be prayed at any time.

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