

Xavier Society for the Blind
Serving God and the Blind since 1900.
Annual Report 2025



Mission Statement: To provide the Word of God, and the best of Roman Catholic teaching and literature, spiritual and inspirational material, to blind or visually impaired persons of any faith in whatever format best meets their needs at no charge and to continually explore ways to make that material more accessible and available to the widest possible audience of those in need. To offer opportunities for volunteer service for those who wish to help in this work through their donation of time, talent or financial support.

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, Margaret Coffey, a teacher of the blind, and Father Joseph Stadelman, a visionary Jesuit priest in New York City, prayed “that God would inspire someone to take pity on the Catholic blind of the country for whom there was no Catholic book to be had.” God quickly answered their prayer by inspiring them to start Xavier Society for the Blind (XSB). They soon acquired the newest technology of the day, a braille press, to provide the most important Catholic book of their day, *The Baltimore Catechism*.

XSB, more than a century after its founding, continues to use leading edge technology to make important Catholic books and publications available to blind and visually impaired people. In addition to the braille formats that Margaret Coffey and Joseph Stadelman championed, Xavier delivers to its clients spiritual and religious books and publications in large print and audio formats

As we move forward, we have also moved offices! We have relocated to 110 East 30th Street in New York City, which is also home to The JBI Library (fka The Jewish Braille Institute). XSB and JBI are two of the very few long serving, religiously oriented nonprofits providing essential reading materials to blind and visually impaired people of faith. While we will remain separate and distinct organizations, we will share a great deal, including experience, knowledge, best

practices, and a strong mission driven desire to provide quality accessible reading material to people of all faiths.

As a small nonprofit, we cannot always do the work we need to do on our own. We rely on many collaborative relationships to share expertise, best practices, innovative ideas, and resources. We continue to network (formally and informally) with an impressive list of organizations, including:

- Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library, <https://www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell>
- Association of Catholic Publishers, <https://www.catholicpublishers.org/>
- Braille Authority of North America, <https://www.brailleauthority.org/>
- Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, <https://clovernook.org/>
- Daisy Consortium, <https://daisy.org/>
- JBI Library, <https://jbilibrary.org/>
- National Braille Association, <https://www.nationalbraille.org>
- National Braille Press, <https://www.nbp.org/>
- National Catholic Partnership on Disability, <https://www.ncpd.org/>
- National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), Library of Congress (USA), and state network libraries, <https://www.loc.gov/nls/>
- US Conference of Catholic Bishops, <https://www.usccb.org/>

With the efforts of our own staff and these collaborative efforts, in recent years Xavier Society:

- released a professionally recorded version of the New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE) for play on the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled's (NLS) digital talking book machines, and for smart phone download on the NLS BARD application (Xavier Society is an Associated Agency of the NLS)
- reintroduced the NABRE in extra-large (22 point) font, and is preparing a revised version of the NABRE in Unified English Braille, and
- scaled up production of the Mass Propers for our patrons in extra-large print!

With over **1,325** titles, production of quality braille content remains at the heart of its mission. Most of the braille materials Xavier provides, are not available from any other source. Xavier provides a wide array of offerings including the Bible, the Sunday and Feast Day Mass readings and responses (Mass Propers), books on the saints, papal encyclicals, novenas and religious textbooks for faith formation for students. Xavier Society also provides the Sunday Mass readings in Spanish braille. The Sunday Mass Propers in English braille are sent to over 700 clients each month. This amounts to a total of almost 760,000 braille pages annually. A highlight for this year was the release in braille of *Hope: The Autobiography of Pope Francis* (B2032, 4 volumes)

With over **1,400** titles, Xavier's production of audiobooks remains robust. Audiobooks are produced in a variety of ways working with volunteer readers. In addition to contracting with a professional recording studio, XSB has access to the recording studio at the Andrew Heiskell

Braille and Talking Book Library (a branch of the New York Public Library), and The JBI Library, here in New York City. A highlight for this year was the release in audiobook of *Pope Leo XIV: Inside the Conclave and the Dawn of a New Papacy* by Christopher White.

Current Board of Directors Members and Officers:

Paul Fontaine, President
Skylar Covich, Vice President
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Dan Morrison, Secretary
Rev. Denis Donoghue, S.J.
Vivian Fridas
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Financial Summary FYE 12/31/2024:

Total Income: \$1,118,256
Expenses, Program: \$901,443
Expenses, Fundraising: \$201,381
Expenses, Administration: \$253,735
Ending Net Assets: \$19,101,688

Despite a small staff (6 employees and many volunteers), Xavier Society continuously explores ways using technology, free lance experts, and partnerships with other organizations, to offer a greater variety of accessible reading material in English and Spanish, to a wider audience of no vision and low vision people of faith. This has been the mission since our founding in 1900.