

St Mary's, Inverness
The Year of St Ignatius
20 MAY 2021 >31 MAY 2022

EIGHTH REFLECTION: TAUGHT BY GOD AT MANRESA



Context :

Initially, while at Manresa, Ignatius was residing at the Hospice of St Lucy something akin to the light of God caught him. In his Autobiography he writes of himself *“During this period God was dealing with him in the same way as a schoolteacher deals with a child while instructing him...”* .

About 1 April 1522 he moved into a Dominican house and while there he was attending Mass and saying the Divine Office at the Basilica de la Seu..

Ignatius was zealously trying to become the perfect Pilgrim-Soldier, spending up to seven hours a day in prayer while with austere personal devotions. He continued with the mortification of his body by letting his hair and nails grow. In this rigorous enthusiasm he experienced different changes of mood.

Sometimes he felt low and dejected and at other times ***“the exact opposite happened to him and so suddenly that it seemed he had stripped away all sadness and desolation, just as one strips a cloak from one’s shoulders.”***

Ignatius was now entering a new stage in his spiritual development, in which he experienced profound dejection. Some of this he described ***“Now he began to be greatly troubled with scruples”***. This disordered preoccupation with past sin was doing him much harm. He kept going back in his mind to his three-day confessional encounters with the Montserrat monk, worrying about possible omissions which he thought might detract from the completeness of his repentance. His agitated memory was not yet reconciled.

This obsessive behaviour gradually came to an end when he experienced, over a period, what might be called ‘The Five Graces’.

1. One day about to enter the Dominican church, while saying the Office of Our Lady, he felt an elevated sense of the Holy Trinity : this experience moved him to tears, and he felt compelled to talk about it, wanting others to share his joy and consolation.
2. On another day, he gained insight into the Mystery of Creation- the light of the world seemed to radiate from a ***‘white object’***: surely an imaginative depiction of the intense power through which God creates and sustains our world?

3. Realising that his extreme behaviour was neither fruitful for himself, nor others who sought his help, Ignatius says of himself he ***'abandoned those extremes he had previously practised and began to cut his nails and hair. One day...attending Mass in the Church... he saw with inward eyes, at the time of elevation of the Body of the Lord, some white ray coming from above.'***

This clear illumination of the Mystery profoundly affected Ignatius, enhancing his inward vision of the Real Presence. We find this expressed in the words of the great hymn of Aquinas -

***Now, my tongue, the mystery telling,
Of the glorious body sing,
And the blood, all price excelling,
Which all mankind's Lord and king,
In a virgin's womb once dwelling,
Shed for this world's ransoming.***

4. Ignatius was now praying for extended periods of time, and while at Manresa between August 1522 and March 1523 he began to have personal illuminations into the humanity of Jesus: he ***"saw with inward eyes the humanity of Christ, whose form appeared to him as a white body, neither very large nor very small - nor did he see any differentiation of members"*** Clearly, these highly personal insights into, or illuminations upon, the mysteries of faith reflect a focussed intelligence, with a settled imagination quietly being open to God. Some call this mystical- being at the interface of the human and divine, being in 'a thin place', where earth and heaven meet.

5. The Cardoner Experience was the profound and affirming realisation of his vocation. It happened like this, as Ignatius says in his own words, ***“The road followed the path of the river, and he was taken up with his devotions; he sat down for a while facing the river flowing far below him. As he sat there the eyes of his understanding were opened, and though he saw no vision, he understood and perceived many things...”***

This 'Fifth Grace' was instructive for Ignatius as it enhanced his understanding of his spiritual journey so far, it confirmed him in his dedication to his vocation, and it gave him a sense of determination to persevere in following Christ.

Prayerful Reflections:

The Holy Trinity

As we keep company with Ignatius, invoking his prayers, we may recollect that we are all caught up in the Mystery of the Trinity- Baptised into Christ, we Pray with Him to Our Father, the Spirit moving us and gracing the movement of our hearts and minds.

***Firmly I believe and truly,
God is Three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.***

***Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong,
And I love supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.***

*And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church as His creation,
And her teachings are His own.*

The Mystery of Creation – Gerard Manley Hopkins

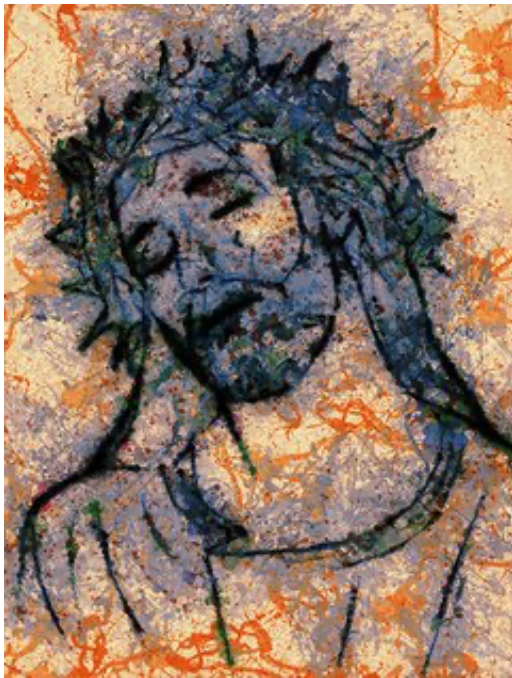
*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;...
.....There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs --
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

The Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament



The Sacred Humanity of Jesus

"Draw close to Jesus in his humanity and divinity"



The Manresa and River Cardoner Insights

Ignatius' experiences by the River Cardoner and his recalling of his many graces led to him *"finding God in all things."* As we recollect and reflect on our own graces and insights the Spirit, praying within us, enables us to see the finger of God, the trace of Him in our lives. With Ignatius we can perhaps have a more integrated sense of vocation, awareness of life and profound thanksgiving for our many graces and blessings.

RECONCILING MEMORIES We can use the process of **The Examen** to see how much we are at one with God, we are set free from our burden of sin.

Proverbs 17:9 *"Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends."*

1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

POCKET EXAMEN

The Ignatian Examen is a 5-step method for reviewing your day and giving thanks to God.

1. CENTER

Take a moment to become aware of God, myself and my surroundings.

2. GRATITUDE

What am I especially thankful for today?

3. REVIEW

What brought me joy? What challenged me?

4. TURN TO GOD

What could I have done or said differently?
How can I improve?

5. LOOK FORWARD

In what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow?

CAMPUS
MINISTRY

“You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.”

Scriptural Reflection:

The Parable of the Prodigal Son in St Luke Chapter 15 is probably the most well-known parable of Jesus about forgiveness.

“A father had two sons and the youngest begged that he give him his inheritance early. So he did.

The son soon left his father and went to a far away country. He spent all of his inheritance foolishly with sinful living.

After his money was spent, there came a famine in the land and the son was in need. He began working in the fields and was so hungry that the pig feed began to look good to him.

Coming to his senses, he decides to go back home. His attitude is humble and he is prepared to ask forgiveness and a job as a servant.

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. (Luke 15:20-24)”

A Period of Silence in which we pray with St Ignatius seeking understanding and insight. We are always welcome at the home of the Father, the House of God is ever open.

The Lord’s Prayer



Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray

Praise God Always !