

**St Mary's, Inverness**  
The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]  
**The Year of St Ignatius**  
**20 MAY 2021 >31 MAY 2022**

**ELEVENTH REFLECTION : GAETA TO ROME**  
**A PERILOUS JOURNEY**



**Context : At Barcelona :** ~In the three weeks Ignatius Loyola spent in Barcelona he managed to secure a berth on a ship, and by begging for alms he was able to buy the provisions he needed for the sea voyage.

Setting out in mid-March it took the ship five days and five nights to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Barcelona to Gaeta, which was about seventy-five miles down the coast from Rome

**The Journey to Rome :** Crossing the sea was a fearful business, not only because of squalls and storms, but also as we learn from the Autobiography : ***“Everywhere in that region there was fear of the plague, but as soon as he disembarked he started walking towards Rome”.***

Ignatius was accompanied by a mother and daughter, and a young man. Arriving at a large farmhouse they found a large group of soldiers beside a blazing fire. They were given food and liberally plied with alcohol, which aroused the suspicions of Ignatius. These were well founded as in the middle of the night he was awakened by the ***“weeping and lamenting because the soldiers had tried to violate them.”*** Ignatius remonstrated forcibly, and he was able to continue with the two ladies [the young man had fled the scene].

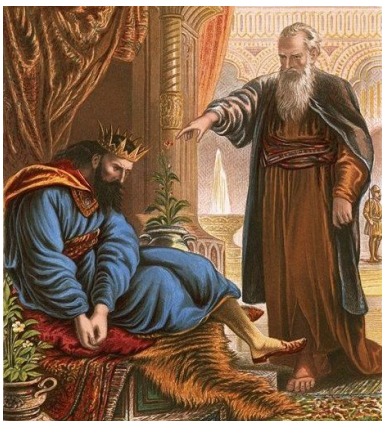
Arriving *“at a nearby city, they found the gates closed, and being unable to enter, all three of them spent the night in a church....When morning came the city was closed to them...they went to a castle that was not far away.”*

Weakened by his travels and exertions Ignatius remained at the Castle for a few days, while the mother and daughter continued on their journey. While at the Castle Ignatius met a Lady, the Chatelaine of the Castle, who gave him permission to enter the city *“ He began begging in the city and collected a good supply of quattrini [low denomination Italian coins]. Feeling his health return after two days, he continued his journey and arrived in Rome on Palm Sunday”* [29 March 1523].

### **Considerations for Reflection:**

How surprisingly contemporary are key aspects of this story.

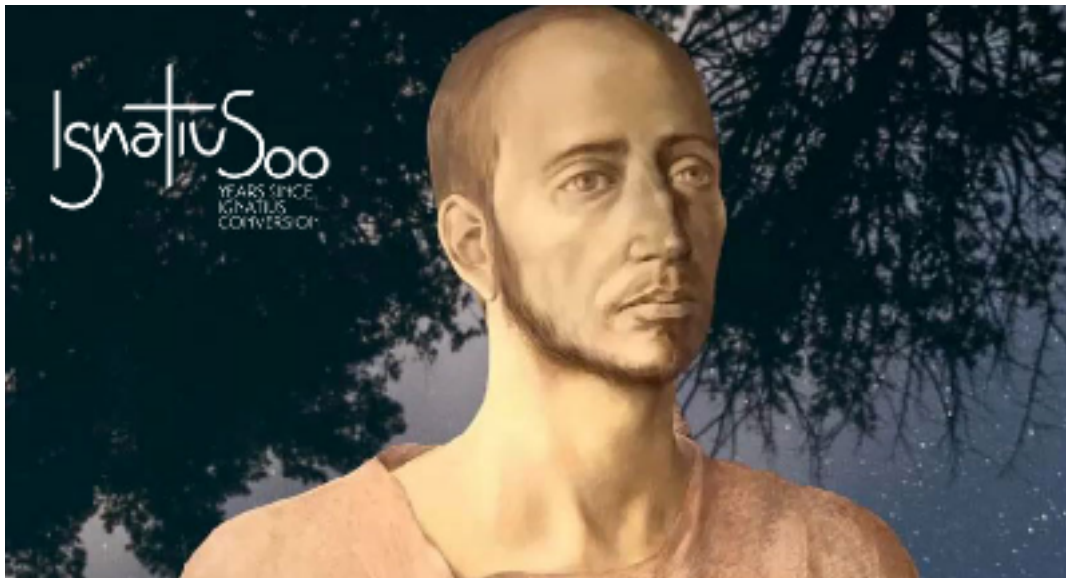
First: Ignatius intervened powerfully at the sexual assault on the women. We are aware that stories of this kind are reported in the press, radio and television daily. Sexual exploitation is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures -we recall the conniving adultery of David with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and the murderous death of her husband. It is a terrible story which provokes the indignation of the prophet Nathan.



David's Remorse



The servants of God can do no other than protest at sexual abuse of any kind. It was said of Ignatius *“So strong an emotion took hold of him that he began to shout out : ‘Do we have to put up with this?’ and similar complaints, which he uttered with such effectiveness that everyone was so dumbfounded that no one laid a hand on him.”*



It is clearly a duty laid on us by God to protect the innocent, the weak and the vulnerable. We pray that as a Church we will be exemplary in this regard. The victims of abuse, those wrongly accused, and the abusers themselves are all in need of prayer so that healing may come about through the administration of justice.

Second : We are in familiar territory - caught up in a pandemic we realise that such waves of disease have been prevalent at different times in our history. In Italy during the period 1500-1549 there were forty-two outbreaks of Bubonic Plague, devastating whole areas, cities and the surrounding countryside. The virulence of the surges of infection were such that city-gates remained closed, and strangers were rarely admitted 'without certificates attesting to their good health'. Only the northern Italian city of Ferrara managed to remain plague-free by adopting very strict measures. Critical to the city's success, records suggest, were border controls, sanitary laws and personal hygiene. Since the catastrophic arrival of the Black Death in 1347, Italian cities gradually began to take pro-active public-health measures to isolate the sick, quarantine possible carriers and restrict travel from affected regions [John Henderson, Professor of Italian Renaissance History, University of London].





It was in such circumstances that Ignatius found his journey difficult, with gates closed against unknown travellers. He was fortunate to have gates opened for him so that he could recover his strength and prepare for the next stage of his pilgrim-journey. In our present circumstances we can continue to appreciate the fear of plague [Covid] as it appears to make periodic surges, and it is an egalitarian killer, affecting all levels of society. Just as the Italian city-states took preventative measures we in our turn have the opportunity of full co-operation and engagement with every aspect of disease prevention.



## **Prayerful Reflections :**

**God of endless love,  
ever caring, ever strong,  
always present, always just:**

**You gave your only Son  
to save us by the blood of his cross.**

**Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,  
join to your own suffering  
the pain of all who have been hurt  
in body, mind, and spirit  
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.**

**Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters  
who have been gravely harmed,  
and the cries of those who love them.  
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,  
steady their shaken spirits with faith.  
Grant them justice for their cause,  
enlightened by your truth.**

**Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,  
heal your people's wounds  
and transform brokenness into wholeness.**

**Grant us the courage and wisdom,  
humility and grace, to act with justice.**

**Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labours.**

**Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.**

**We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

God of all,  
we cry out to you for help.  
In your mercy, hear our prayer.  
Protect us, Lord, and be with us  
especially those of us most vulnerable  
during this coronavirus crisis.  
Move us to reach out in love  
to our neighbours near and far.  
So that the humble may be exalted,  
the hungry filled with good things.  
Grant us the courage  
not to rush back to our old ways,  
but to rebuild our world together,  
creating foundations of justice,  
with equality and peace for all.

Amen. *Prayer: Catherine Gorman/CAFOD*



## **We review our day and look forward with Jesus**

**Scriptural Reflection : Mark 1:40-45.** [New International Version]

### **Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy**

<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

<sup>41</sup> Jesus was indignant, He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: <sup>44</sup> "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

**A Comment :** Jesus reacts strongly to the presence of this defiling and demeaning disease, and the leper's request results in an authoritative word, a powerful and cleansing answer to the prayer. Jesus then insists that the current Public Health regulations are observed- getting the necessary declaration from the Temple authorities. Even although Jesus requests secrecy, the gratitude and freedom of the man results in his speaking freely of the healing by Jesus.

**A Period of Silence** in which we pray with St Ignatius seeking understanding and insight, ever searching, ever finding, always willing. Faith seeking understanding

*Lord, teach me to be generous,  
to serve you as you deserve,  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labour and not to look for any reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your holy will.*





**INVERNESS TEST SITE EDEN COURT CAR PARK**



**Easy to use : Keep safe**

**The Lord's Prayer**



*Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray*

*Praise God Always !*