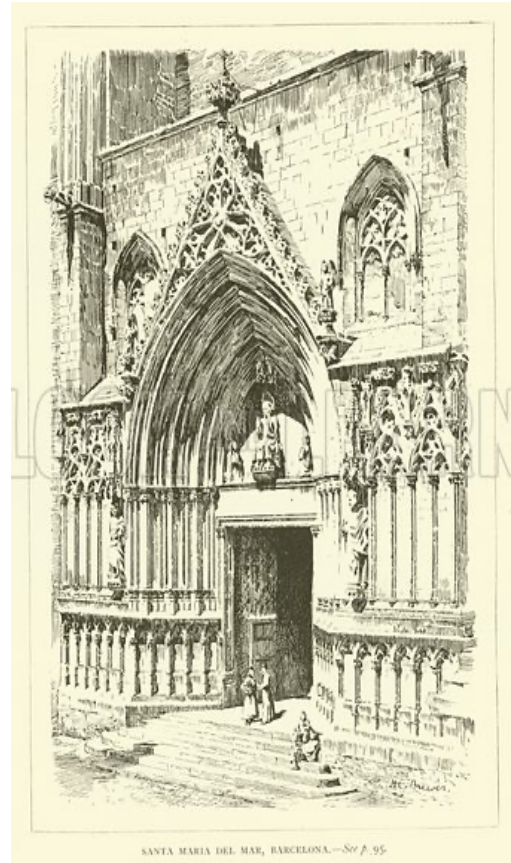


St Mary's, Inverness
The Year of St Ignatius
20 MAY 2021 >31 MAY 2022

TENTH REFLECTION : THREE WEEKS IN BARCELONA
TRUSTING GOD



Context :

The Pilgrim, Ignatius, while at Manresa was deeply affected by his experiences of prayer, his insights or illuminations beside the River Cardoner, and his more profound appreciation of the Sacraments. These strengthened and enhanced his understanding of his spiritual journey and his dedication to persevere in following Christ as a Pilgrim. Leaving Manresa he was ready to travel to the Holy Land, and so about 17 Feb 1523 Ignatius set out for Barcelona. It had been his wish to travel

alone. In his Autobiography.... he wrote : "***he wanted to go by himself. For his desire was to have only God as his refuge.....he wanted to place his trust, love, and hope in God alone.***"

He did not want to be reliant on a human companion, yet for all that initially Fr Antonio Pujol travelling from Manresa took Ignatius to a house near the Church of Santa Maria de Mar which was owned by his sister, a widow, Ines Pascual. Ignatius had already met her at Montserrat, and Ines Pascual was to remain a friend and supporter throughout her life.

At Barcelona : The three weeks Ignatius Loyola spent in Barcelona were marked by several activities: dealing with his internal anxieties as he sought perfection; seeking out as he says in his own words - "***searching out spiritual persons in order to talk to them, even visited those living in hermitages far from the city***"; and, securing a berth on a ship, and begging for alms in order to buy the provisions he needed for the sea voyage to the Holy Land.

He did not find many 'conversationalists' in Barcelona, yet this was an activity which was to remain important to Ignatius throughout his life. Most of us feel the need for 'conversation', when we engage in the free flow of ideas, sharing experiences, or exploring the nature of faith. We know that we can be uplifted by generous and caring conversation, just as we can feel sullied by unworthy or demeaning talk.

Ines Pascual's house was also quite near the Harbour and Ignatius had been active searching out a ship sailing for Italy. He was fortunate, "**he convinced the ship's captain to give him free passage, since he had no money, but on condition that he bring with him enough biscuit to last him throughout the journey**"

Having secured his travel, he then began to have anxious doubts about how God might provide for him.



A discerning confessor advised him to beg for the means to buy the biscuit, [called by sailors 'hard tack'- a form of saltless biscuit which kept well]. His efforts were successful, and he soon had enough to buy the necessary food.

"Arriving at the ship, he found that he still had five or six blancas* left of what he had received begging from door to door- for this was his usual way of supporting himself- and he left the coins on a bench that he found near the shore." **[blancas- the smallest coins in use]*

So, we can see that his determination to find God, by imitating Jesus, was to lead Ignatius into acts of self-abasement, and expressions of genuine humility, throwing himself on the kindness of others. In the mind-set of his time this was a means of grace not only for the beggar but for the giver.

The three weeks or so that Ignatius had spent in Barcelona were fruitful, not only in deepening his understanding of God, and also underlining the pilgrim's dependence on the generosity of others, and in acquiring new friends. Already he had found genuine encouragement in the generous friendship of Ines Pascual and also in Isabella Roser a Catalan noble-woman living in Barcelona. She was to become a much-valued friend and sponsor.

Setting out in mid-March across the Mediterranean Sea it took the ship five days and five nights from Barcelona to Gaeta, about seventy-five miles south of Rome.

We can already see that Ignatius' single-minded perseverance is beginning to take him closer to his physical destination, the Holy Land, yet we can also see that because his fundamental orientation is to Jesus, he is willing to be open to others seeking their help and valuing their friendship. So he is not quite alone as he thought that he wanted, but there is a solitude, an interior place in which each of us is alone with God. Like St Ignatius we seek the all-embracing God-in -Christ who reconciles, heals and takes us to Himself.

Prayerful Reflection :

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.*

Seeking the good and avoiding the evil-
day by day, our daily thanksgiving and
amendment of life.

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

Scriptural Reflection: St Matthew 6.25-34

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Anxiety about food, clothing, shelter and the wherewithal to live, and move about, surely this is natural? Jesus is inviting us to a greater and even radical acceptance of all things, the givens of our existence. Although we trust in God, we need to

take care, to exercise prudence so that we will have enough for our journeys, but also that we have some means by which we can assist others. The values of God's reign encourage us to address the inequalities of life, and that our generous hearts may be sources of blessings to others.

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.*

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray

Praise God Always !





[The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]