

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

FIFTEENTH REFLECTION

Perils and dangers by day and by night.



Context : Ignatius has been staying again with the generous families who accommodated him before he had left for the Holy Land. Both the Venetian Senator and the Spanish grandee gave him food and material support. This security gave him time to reflect prayerfully, and our Pilgrim says in his Autobiography he ***"came to realise that it was God's will that he not remain in Jerusalem, he kept wondering what he ought to do, and finally he was inclined toward spending some time in studies in order to help souls; and so he decided to go to Barcelona."*** That decision meant that Ignatius had to travel across the north of Italy at a time when this disunited country was riven by warfare and violence. The main struggle which affected every aspect of life was the intense rivalry between Francis I of France and his cousin Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Each man had wished to be elected as Holy Roman Emperor (an election that Charles won) and early in his reign Charles had commented: ***'My cousin Francis and I are in complete accord; he wants Milan and so do I'***. During the early decades of the

sixteenth century Europe was a military cauldron in which the competing dynasties fought each other for supremacy, supported by a series of ever-changing alliances between the smaller states. Italy was seriously divided. 'The most important states were the Republic of Venice, with its maritime empire, the Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Florence, the Papal States and the kingdom of Naples'. Savoy, Genoa, Ferrara and other smaller city states were dependent on each other and foreign mercenaries for their protection. Italian rulers tended to side with whichever power seemed to offer the best chance for material gain and security. A pattern emerges of alliances breaking up, either over the spoils of war or over fear of French domination. Then in due course the Italian states and their ruling families would become concerned about Austrian control of Italy. Pope Clement VII commented that most Italians did '*not wish the eagle [Austria] to land in Italy or the cock [France] to crow there*'.



The different communities of northern Italy were damaged by this calamitous warfare which was made worse by the rulers' frequent practice of changing sides. They were fearful of first one foreign power and then another. The prolonged city sieges and the devastation of the countryside had a massive impact on food supplies as fields were laid waste, the economy was shattered, and traditional markets were closed. There was widespread poverty, with homeless people wandering in search of food, shelter and security. In addition to these afflictions

the presence of so many foreign troops caused the spread of disease, including Cholera, the Plague and an increase in sexually transmitted infections.

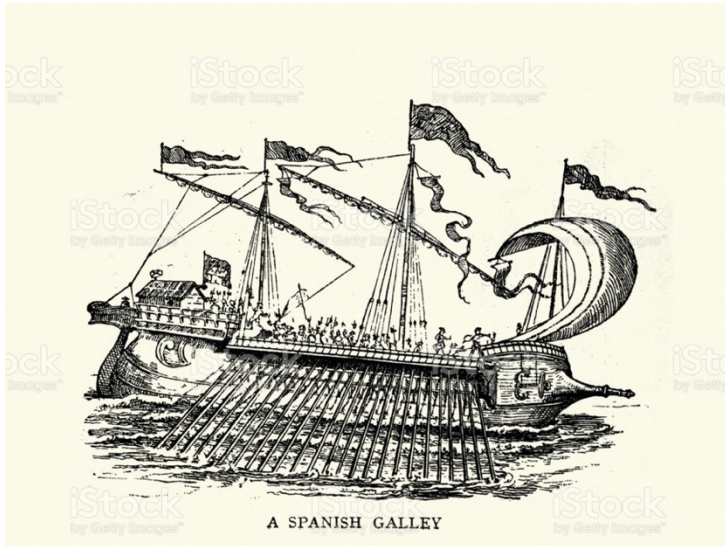
In the 1520s when Ignatius was crossing the north Italian plains it was stated by the contemporary political thinker Niccolo Machiavelli that Italy was **'leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, over-run'**.



Ignatius during his journey on foot passed through areas of complete devastation. He was surrounded by beggars. He gave away all that he had and apologised profusely when he could give no more. Travelling through the area between the marauding armies, 'no-man's land', he was advised to keep more to the Spanish/Imperial sides of the war zones. As he tells us in the Autobiography he went his own way and unable to find anything to eat he approached ***"a walled town where the guards immediately seized him, thinking that he was a spy."*** After a brief interrogation and an interview with the Commanding Officer he was dismissed as probably being a 'madman'. After this brush with authority he was apprehended by two French soldiers who took him to their captain. This gentleman was from Bayonne, a fellow Basque, who Ignatius tells us that he said ***"Take him, give him something to eat, and treat him kindly."***

Such was the protective Providence. When Ignatius arrived in the port of Genoa his providential good fortune was sustained. There he met Rodrigo Portuondo, the Captain-General of the Spanish galleys. They had known each other through the

Royal Court when the young Ignatius had been a courtier in the retinue of the Royal Treasurer, a relative. This connection resulted in ***“This man secured passage for him on a ship going to Barcelona.”*** Again, the protective fortune that seemed to accompany Ignatius prevented the ship being captured when it was chased by the Genoese Admiral, Andrea Doria, who was by this time supporting the French.



With some relief the Pilgrim, Ignatius, arrived in Barcelona in either late February or early March 1524. He again found support from Isabel Roser, an aristocratic lady whose generosity was to extend through the days of study and beyond.

Ignatius now takes steps to begin a new phase of serious study, which will take him to the Universities at Alcalá, Salamanca and Paris.

Considerations for Reflection : After Pamplona Ignatius had always sought a life in which he fully accepted Jesus as his captain. He wanted to give himself entirely to the work of Jesus. Since his own illuminations at the River



Cardoner, at Manresa, Ignatius wanted others to share his insights into the Life of Jesus, and how these could change their lives. After the Pilgrim Year that took him to the Holy Land and then back to Spain he was determined to be equipped properly for this, and so began his earnest quest for a good education.

At this point it can be seen that many problems with which we are familiar are hauntingly similar to those that confronted Ignatius:

- The tragedy of warfare wherein so many young men and women lose their lives or suffer life-changing injuries. {Iraq and Afghanistan}
- The bitterness of religious divisions, particularly the Christian and Islamic hostility in the Holy Land {the resurgence of militant Islam and international terrorism}
- The plight of refugees and those whose homes are destroyed and who become fugitives even in their own land {Syria, Iran, Afghanistan.}
- The prevalence and fear of diseases that are difficult to control {Covid}

How we make our Ignatian informed response to all of this will surely begin in being in prayerful communion with Jesus Christ. With the aid of St Ignatius, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit we might be led to some internal discussion, and then conversation with others as to how we can do the Lord's work. We need some silence for this as we begin with the prayer, attributed to St Ignatius.

***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.***

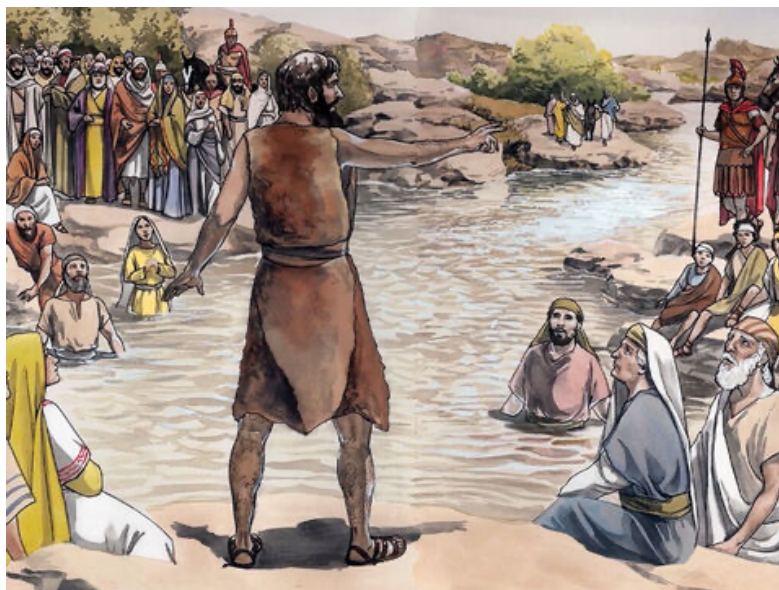
We review our day and look forward with Jesus

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 : Luke 3:1-20 The Proclamation of John the Baptist



In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of

Abilene, ²during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

*"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.*

*⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;*

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' ¹¹In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' ¹²Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' ¹³He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation and be satisfied with your wages.'

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing-fork is in his hand,*

to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

A Comment : We notice that '*the word of God came to John*'. He is empowered by the urgent necessity of calling people to repentance, turning their lives around away from every kind of wickedness. Those who thronged to him from every section of society were baptised in the River Jordan as a sign of their cleansing and commitment. As the passage from St Luke shows John the Baptist links the Prophecy of the Hebrew Scriptures with the Coming of the Messiah- Jesus. The content of John's preaching is a radical statement of the values of '*the word of God*'. John proclaims in forceful language the urgent necessity for an end to violence, greedy compulsion, lying, corruption and injustice. We might consider our contemporary world and reflect on the parallels between now and the events of Ignatius' travels. John's preaching addresses people of every age as he demonstrates the Gospel and shows us Jesus. The darkness at the heart of so much human existence calls for the radical love that will share everything - even the spare clothes, or resources of any kind. The costly simplicity of love begins at the personal level but its effects are societal – and life-transforming.

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

The Lord's Prayer



Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray

Praise God Always