

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

TWELFTH REFLECTION : ROME TO VENICE
GRACEFUL CONVERSATIONS

Ignatius arrives in Rome on Palm Sunday, 29 March 1523



Context : Arriving on Palm Sunday our Pilgrim was fortunate to spend Holy Week in Rome. While there, some people knowing he wanted to travel to the Holy Land, as we learn from his Autobiography, “ *tried to talk him out of his trip, offering him all kinds of reasons why it would be impossible for him to find a free passage. But he felt a firm certainty within his soul that he would find a way of going to Jerusalem, and of this he had no doubt.*”

The journey was fraught with difficulties – first he had to secure the Permission and Blessing of the Pope to visit the Holy Land, then he had to travel from Rome to Venice through countryside and city-states that were experiencing the devastations of the Plague, and when in Venice he would need to find a ship willing to take him.

He spent Holy Week in prayer, and seeking alms. He was fortunate to meet some Spaniards in the area of the Piazza Navona, a district in which the Spanish Hospice was situated. The Spaniards were undoubtedly supportive, and encouraged him, sensing the *'firm certainty within his soul'*, they collected several ducats for his expenses.



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, also known as San Giacomo degli Spagnoli) is a Catholic church dedicated to the Virgin Mary located in the Piazza Navona. The next step was to get the papal Permission and Benediction.

The Holy Father was Pope Hadrian VI, a Dutchman, who had been elected to the Chair of St Peter on 9 January 1523. Ignatius received the necessary papers after petitioning for the licence- which has since been found in the Vatican archives in which Ignatius is referred to as "Inigo of Loyola, cleric of the Diocese of Pamplona".



Even now people were sceptical that without money it would be absolutely impossible for him to book a passage from Venice to Jerusalem. But nothing could change his mind, because ***'in his soul he had great certainty, which would admit of no doubt, that he would find some way of getting to Jerusalem.'***

About 13 April 1523, Ignatius took the road to Venice with the gold coins that he had been given and which he accepted as he says ***'because of the fear with which others had inspired him of not being able to get to Jerusalem otherwise'***. Two days after he left Rome, he repented of taking the money considering that it showed a lack of confidence. As a consequence he decided to use it for the relief of the poor.

The journey, on foot, through a succession of Italian towns, was made difficult because of the plague. He ate as he could and slept under arches or in the open fields.

When he eventually arrived in Venice, after this hazardous journey, he found other problems. Some of his fellow pilgrims had tried to get a health certificate at Padua, but due to his awkward gait he could not keep up with them. He reported that they left him behind ***'at nightfall in a vast field'***.

He felt totally abandoned, but in the Autobiography he wrote ***'Christ appeared to Him in His usual way'***. This was an evocation of the Manresa experiences when a new 'enlightenment' gave him strength and consolation. Persevering he arrived in Padua, where he had free access to the city without having the required health certificate, and then made his way to Venice. He arrived there in mid-May. In his Autobiography ***"In Venice he supported himself by begging, and he slept in St Mark's Square"***.



'Begging' represents for Ignatius a break from his former life of aristocratic, pleasure seeking vanity. He did not want to use any familial influence or call on 'connections' in the Imperial household or the Spanish Embassy. For him 'metanoia/repentance' was about a complete turn-around in behaviour. In begging Ignatius identifies with the poor, yet it does not always work as he expects. A rich Spaniard who was living in Venice asked him what he was doing there and where he was going. Ignatius accepted the man's invitation to eat in his house, after which he spent several days there as a family guest. Ignatius, the pilgrim, initially remained silent at table, rather listening, eating, and answering the questions he was asked. At the end of the meal, referring to what had been said, Ignatius began to speak about God.

In this way he found new friends. This Spanish gentleman remains unknown yet he was successful in getting Ignatius a private audience with the new Doge of Venice, Andrea Gritti, who had been appointed a few days earlier. The Doge ordered that Ignatius be given a passage aboard a ship, 'The Negrona', which was taking the new Venetian governor, Nicolo Dolfin, to Cyprus.

The Pilgrim was now well underway, his persevering faith and his palpable integrity in seeking humility as the best to follow Jesus was attractive to others who became supporters.

Considerations for Reflection : We have noted several features with which we can identify, namely :

- Life at that time, as now, was complicated by Disease [Plague/Pandemic/]
- The greater good of the greater number requires that we accept restrictions on travel and health-care measures for the containment and eradication of disease.
- That generous people support the poor – by the giving of alms, or by ensuring that the hungry are fed, by providing shelter. What we have received we may freely give.
- Whatever difficulties we face in persevering in faith we know that others have walked the road before us, and that when we recall our relationship with Jesus we begin to see circumstances differently
- Our Pilgrim, Ignatius, has become a companion, breaking bread, and sharing in conversation with supporters and friends. In following Jesus closely friendships become places for listening, reflecting especially at Mass when the Word is shared among us and when we recognise the Word becomes Flesh in the Breaking of the Bread.



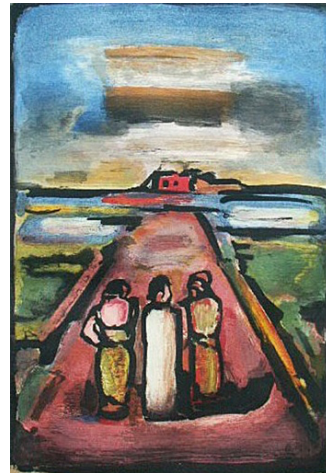
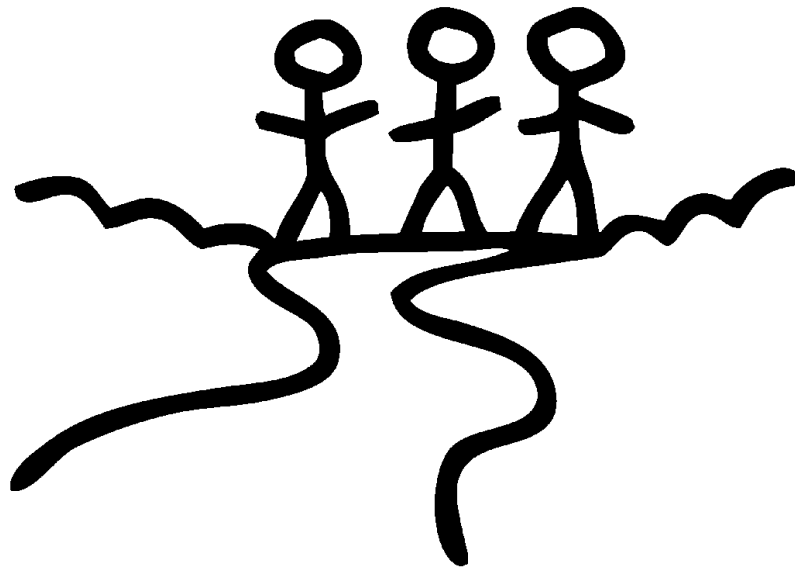
We review our day and look forward with Jesus

Scriptural Reflection : St Luke 24. 13-23 RSV

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning ²³ and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, ²⁹ but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. ³² They said to each other,

“Did not our hearts burn within us^[e] while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?”³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them,³⁴ who said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.



A Comment : Two men on a journey become aware of a stranger who opens their hearts and minds to the scriptures. They listen to him reflectively. Later inside the Inn they recognise Jesus ‘in the breaking of the bread’. Every meal for us, as for Ignatius, as for the travellers on any journey, become occasions of listening. By the ordering of our conversations we may reflect on the gospel truths which may lead ourselves to greater understanding and perhaps bring others to 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.

We make an Offering of ourselves in the 'Suscipe', [a new translation by Fr Daniel Madigan SJ]

*Take hold of me Lord.
Accept this offering of freedom,
of memory, of mind, of will.
These I cling and count as my own.
All are your gifts, Lord, now I return them.
They are yours. Do as you will.
Give me only your free gift of love.
In this you give all; in this you give all*

The Lord's Prayer



Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray

Praise God Always !