

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

EIGHTEENTH REFLECTION
SALAMANCA & THE DOMINICANS



Salamanca : Dominican Church and Convent of St Esteban

Context : Ignatius and his four companions arrived in Salamanca from Alcala in mid-July 1527.

They had been in trouble with the Spanish Inquisition while attempting to study at the University at Alcala. The activities of Ignatius, principally teaching small groups about God had attracted attention, and in addition he and his male followers wore clerical style habits with grey hoods. The Spanish Inquisition who took more than an interest in these students of philosophy, theology and dialectics.

Ignatius in the Autobiography explains *“While in Alcala he engaged in giving the Spiritual Exercises and in explaining Christian doctrine, and by these means he brought fruit for the glory of God. Many*

people came to a deep knowledge of and a relish for spiritual things..."

Being under suspicion of possibly being 'reformers', Lutherans, Jewish converts, or members of the Illuminist sects Ignatius and his companions were eventually arrested. These were difficult and perplexing times both socially and within the Church.

Imprisoned for forty-two days Ignatius was released having impressed Don Juan Rodriguez de Figuero [the Vicar General of Toledo and the Chief Inquisitor at Alcala] by his open candour during the detailed questioning. The other four followers of Ignatius also made good impressions. They were not convicted of error or heresy, but restrictions were imposed on them : they could no longer wear clergy habits, they were to dress as other students, no longer should they go barefoot but they had to wear shoes, and for the next four years they were not to discuss, or teach matters of faith. These demands were considered unduly restrictive by Ignatius who now sought the help of the Archbishop of Toledo and he went to see him at Valladolid where he was to be present at a Royal baptism. The Archbishop, a man of great significance, had been impressed by Ignatius' sincerity. As a consequence of their discussions Ignatius decided to leave Alcala for the University at Salamanca, accepting an offer of assistance from the Archbishop who was a generous patron of education. He paid an annual pension to Erasmus with whom he was well acquainted. In the Autobiography Ignatius tells us ***"As he was leaving the Archbishop gave him four escudos"***.

The Archbishop also arranged for the five to be accommodated at the College of St James his foundation for poor students. Their prospects seemed set fair.

Ignatius joined Calixto de Sa, Lope de Caceres, Juan de Arteaga, and Jean Reynalde having completed the seventy-mile journey to Salamanca. Now settled Ignatius sought out a Confessor at the Dominican Church of St Esteban. This was just as he had done earlier at Manresa. This was to have interesting consequences. The Dominicans at the St Esteban Convent began to be interested in the activities of Ignatius and his four colleagues. Ignatius and the others had again begun to gather groups of children for instruction in the faith, and the Dominicans noticed that this activity was developing added to which Ignatius also began to teach adults about God. Again, the old questions arose "Who are these people?"

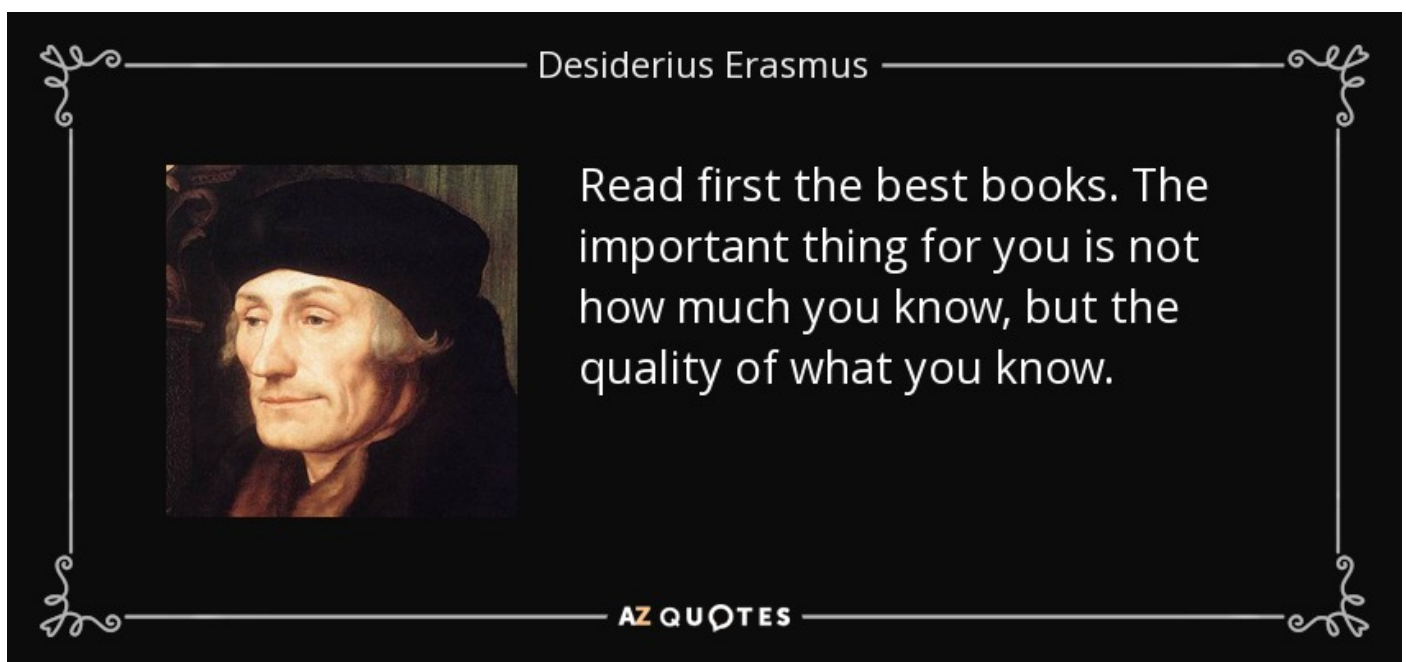
Suspicious were now thoroughly aroused. The Dominicans were determined to investigate.



Having been invited for a meal, the conversation soon became more pointed and following the interrogations at the dinner party the

Dominicans, mostly professors at the University, bastions of Catholic orthodoxy, arranged for Ignatius and his companions to be arrested. Only one managed to avoid imprisonment, Juanico [Jean Reynalde]. The incarceration of the others was in ghastly, squalid conditions in vermin infested dungeons. At one stage there was a riotous escape by some prisoners, which gave an opportunity to Ignatius and his followers to flee also but they did not escape with the convicts and the other prisoners instead remained to face their accusers. These were difficult days, as Reformation ideas were sweeping Europe.

Some of the reforming teaching of the Catholic scholar Desiderius Erasmus was under scrutiny, and anyone associated with him was regarded suspiciously.



There was 'Erasmus Fever' in the air as some people considered that he had opened the door for Martin Luther who had challenged Catholic teaching and was to lead Protestant reform outside the Church.

In addition to demonstrating that he was a conventional Catholic Ignatius and the others had to fight off the suspicion that they were 'Illuminist' heretics. Conversational traps were set for Ignatius with which the interrogators hoped that Ignatius would reveal by his answers that he was an Illuminist [the *alumbrados* who had been condemned for heresy in 1525]. He avoided incriminating himself by skilful and honest answers based on his own spiritual experience.

After twenty-two days of frightful conditions and hostile questioning we learn from the Autobiography "***No error was discovered either in their life style or in their teaching; therefore they could continue as they had been doing, teaching doctrine and speaking about the things of God, as long as they did not determine 'this is a mortal sin' or 'this is a venal sin', until they had completed four years of study'***,

This 'sentence' was given with kindness, but Ignatius while accepting it expressed his disagreement, but agreed that while within the jurisdiction of Salamanca he and his companions would be obedient.

Newly released from prison Ignatius and his friends now considered where their futures lay.

For Ignatius the recurring problem was his lack of formal education. The early recognition of this had led him from Barcelona to Alcala, thence to Salamanca. Ignatius decided now that he would go to the University of Paris. The others were not so sure, but Ignatius was committed to the path of a University education at Paris then possibly the leading University for Philosophy and Theology. The other four remained where they were while Ignatius went ahead '***to see if he could find a means by which they could also study.'***'

In about mid-September 1527, just about two months after his arrival in Salamanca Ignatius took to the roads again, to Paris, but first of all to Barcelona where he had friends. The Autobiography is descriptive of this period : ***“ Many prominent individuals begged him not to leave, but they could never convince him. Fifteen or twenty days after leaving prison, he set out by himself, carrying some books on a donkey..”***



Considerations for Reflection :

- While attracting attention from the custodians of Catholic orthodoxy Ignatius and his followers seem 'liberated' by their own personal relationships with God and are suspected of being 'reformers'.
- The new reforming spirit of the age was also present within the Catholic Church. People like Erasmus in the Netherlands, Bishop John Fisher in England, the Franciscan John Mair in Scotland

were encouraging closer study of the Scriptures. Reform of some church institutions was underway. The Devotio Moderna, had been influential as a spiritual movement of personal piety and community reform.

Ignatius was clearly in the mainstream of the new movement towards reform, yet this frequently attracted more than criticism. Often it was outright hostility. It is interesting to consider how a '*church always in need of reforming*' [*ecclesia semper reformanda est*] can sustain this charitably in peace and concord. In Lumen Gentium, the Second Vatican Council document on the Church we find this same imperative

*"While Christ, holy, innocent and undefiled knew nothing of sin, but came to expiate only the sins of the people, the Church, embracing in its bosom sinners, at the same time holy and **always in need of being purified**, always follows the way of penance and renewal."*

- Ignatius had his mind-set firmly ordered towards following Jesus in a particular way. This had begun with the life-changing events at Pamplona with his shattered leg, then his shattered life was put back together with convalescence at his family home at Loyola. Thereafter the deliberate rejection of a military and courtly life by his consecration of himself at the Shrine of the Black Madonna at Montserrat was the prelude to the utterly transformative events at Manresa. By the banks of the River Cardener Ignatius had experienced illuminative insights, which he referred to as having '*received such a lucidity in*

understanding that other experiences would never add up to that experience of divine affirmation. There followed a path of irrevocable dedication that took him to Barcelona, Venice, the Holy Land, Genoa, Barcelona and Alcala. Ignatius is both driven by his insights and by his utter conviction that he has a mission to accomplish.

- He has always attracted supporters wherever he has travelled, and building up relationships of cordial affection are important to him.
- The four 'companions' of Alcala and Salamanca after Ignatius' departure for Barcelona and Paris have to find their own way. It is interesting to note how their careers/vocations developed :
 1. Calixto de Sa – he had already been to the Holy Land before Ignatius. They met in Barcelona and shared the experiences of Alcala and Salamanca. Calixto changed his mind about following Ignatius to Paris. He made two visits to Mexico from which he returned a wealthy man. He later settled in Salamanca.
 2. Lope de Caceres had been a courtier of the Viceroy of Catalonia [Barcelona]. After Ignatius's departure for Paris he returned to his native Segovia where he spent the rest of his life as a Spanish gentleman.

3. Juan de Arteaga remained with the others in Salamanca when Ignatius left for Paris. He was eventually ordained and in 1540 Pope Paul III appointed him as Bishop of Chiapas in Mexico. Sadly after only a year he died and was buried in Mexico City's Cathedral.

4. Jean Reynalde [Juanico] had been a page in the Court of the Viceroy of Navarre, and when he was in Alcalá for studies he met Ignatius at the Antezana Hospital where he was staying at that time. He had been injured in a student brawl. When he had recovered he became a member of Ignatius' group. We learn from the Autobiography that Juanico later became a Franciscan friar.

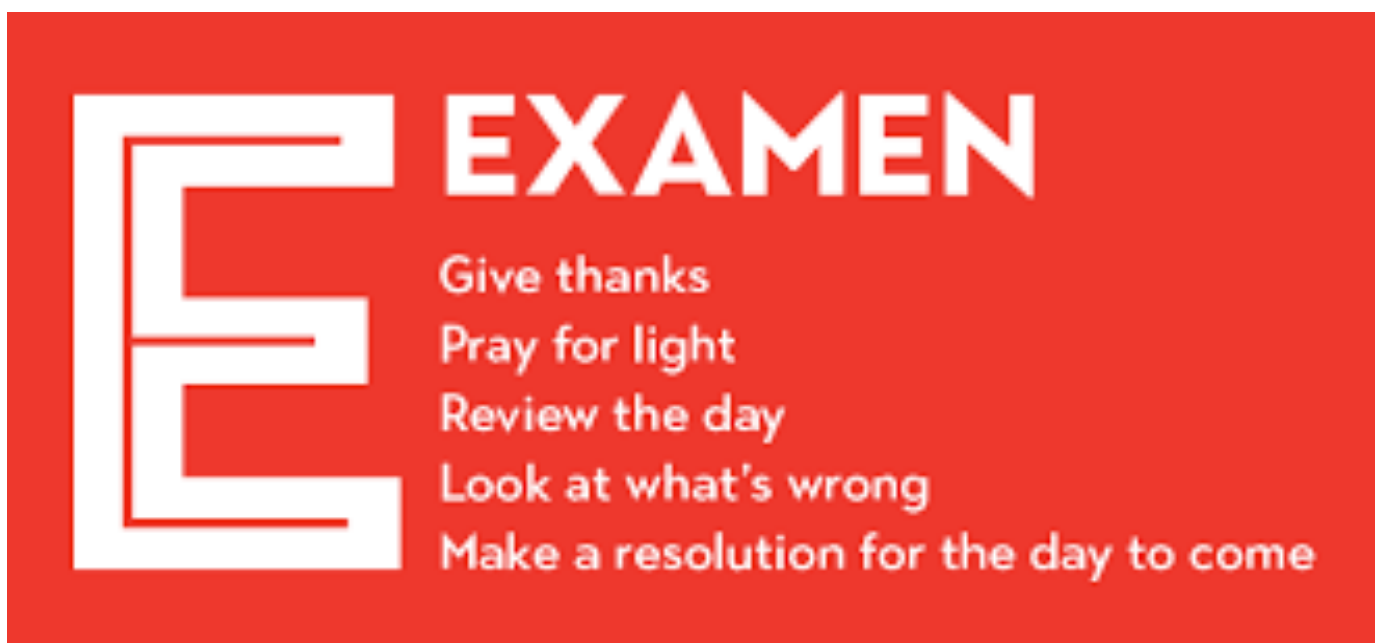
- Vocations are worked out over the years in prayer and fellowship. The formative period of the Ignatian Group, the Alcalá set, was clearly fruitful. Two of the four found their life's work in lay, secular work, while two became clerics, a bishop and a friar. Ignatius' style was always to let the man grow in his own way, supporting each other in prayer and sharing a common life and a commitment to the poor. From the insights and experiences of Ignatius and his friends we can see how the finger of God might be writing in our own lives.
- ***Cordial affection*** within groups and in relationships encourages and strengthens our own sense of purpose as we delight in each other's growth and their sense of vocation.

A Prayer of St Ignatius : [Knowing God's will

May it pleased the supreme and Divine Goodness to give each of us abundant grace ever to know his most holy will and enable us perfectly to fulfil it.

[This prayer was added to the end of many letters that Ignatius wrote]

We review our day and look forward with Jesus



Scriptural Reflection : Mark 4:26-32 English Standard Version

The Parable of the Seed Growing

²⁶ And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷ He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹ But when

the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."



A Comment : The seeds of vocation are often buried deep, they take time to grow, and are the hidden work of God. All seeds need nourishment, the refreshing waters of Baptism, and sacramental grace. The clear air of a good conscience strengthens upward growth encouraged by the Light of God in Christ.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."



A Comment: From the smallest beginnings the seeds of vocation can grow as described above, and 'God gives the increase'. In the generosity of God's goodness there is space for every kind of vocation. Each person finds a way of belonging and fulfilment in the Kingdom of God's love. We share a 'Common Life in the Body of Christ' whatever our role, function, employment – in all our work we can find God.

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