

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

**SIXTEENTH REFLECTION**  
**BACK IN BARCELONA AND BACK TO SCHOOL**



**Context :** Our Pilgrim has now safely landed at Barcelona where he is to spend about two years from late February 1524 until July 1526. He renewed contact with the wealthy businesswoman whom he had met at Montserrat, Dona Ines Pascual, she who had given him a room in her home on his previous visit to Barcelona. Again she provided for him. Providence is holding out for Ignatius.



Ignatius quickly found his way around this busy and prosperous port from which wines and other goods were exported around the Mediterranean. It had been a centre of political power. When the two Royal families of the separate kingdoms were united by the marriage in

1469 of Ferdinand II [Aragon] and Isabella I [Castile] Madrid became the centre of political power. This saw a slight decline in Barcelona's importance and when the Spanish *conquistadores* began the colonisation of the Americas, the Mediterranean trade was reduced somewhat although Barcelona remained a centre of commerce and education.



**View of Barcelona by Anton van den Wyngaerde commissioned by Philip II (1563).**

Dona Inés Pascual played a significant role in the life of St. Ignatius. She saw that he received food, shelter, and medical care. As Ignatius prepared for his studies she went with him on many of his "begging tours." She became fundraiser on his behalf using her considerable business acumen and contacts. Ignatius throughout his life wrote many letters to his companions and to those who were his supporters. It is likely that she was the only woman he ever called "mother." The maternal care she gave was recognised and appreciated.

It was an interesting period : the young son of Dona Ines, Juan Pascual, was so intrigued by their strange house-guest that he would creep up to the door of Ignatius' room, and peep through the key-hole at the

Pilgrim Ignatius as he said his prayers. The boy said that he saw Ignatius 'surrounded by a strange and beautiful light'.

Ignatius was well respected, even perhaps venerated, because of his kindly concern for the poor. Like them he begged his food daily and because of the affection in which he was held by the people of Barcelona he had always more food than he could use. Ignatius ensured that the best of the donations of food and clothing were given to the poor. Dona Ines frequently objected to this arrangement, but her guest would answer, ***"Senora, if our Lord Jesus Christ were to ask you for alms, would you give Him the worst of what you had?"***

Ignatius was kind : he wanted good things for people, he wanted them to be free from hunger and to live securely.

His practical kindness was supported by his teaching as he explained stories about Jesus. He was keen to teach people about the Gospels and that Light of Christ which had given him a new vision and encouraged him after the shattering injuries at Pamplona had changed his life.

Ignatius realised that if he were to embark on his life ambition to be an effective Soldier for Christ then he would need to prepare for this by securing a better education.

Already he had found genuine encouragement in the generous friendship of Ines Pascual. His other benefactor, Isabella Roser the Catalan noble-woman resident in Barcelona, a much-valued friend and sponsor, introduced Ignatius to Master Jeronimo Ardevol, who taught him Latin grammar. This was at first done privately, then in Ardevol's classes at the Estudio General where the thirty-three year old nobleman, the ex Courtier and soldier, sat among the teenage boys.

It was not always easy, returning to study after a life of activity, yet encouraged by his supporters he persevered. He found sources of strength and inspiration in his daily prayers, at the Church of Our Lady of the Sea near to the Pascual shop and home.

After two years of Latin study he was examined by one of the Classical doctors, a Professor, who gave him the same advice as Master Ardevol, that he was now ready to embark on a University course at Alcala. After saying farewell to friends and benefactors Ignatius set out on the hot and dusty road, three hundred miles to Alcala, accompanied by three like-minded companions.

**Considerations for Reflection:** Ignatius Loyola was born into a life of privilege, and his early career was gilded, a courtier, then a soldier with much glamour and excellent prospects of fame and prosperity. The life-changing injuries at Pamplona changed all that. The secure safety of his noble home, surrounded by caring relatives, and the best surgical care that could be found meant that he recovered, albeit with a limp. He convalesced amid books and a supporting family. Even when setting out to Montserrat to offer his life to God, and in his further period of rehabilitation at Manresa when he seeks to deepen his understanding of spiritual things, people are attracted to support him. Ignatius at one and the same time is embracing the poverty of the poor, begging, and practising austerities as well as having access to support and spiritual direction from leading figures. He in turn comes back to stability in regard to dressing simply and looking after his personal health and hygiene. All the while people find him attractive, and persuasive. The gifts of birth, of connections, do not give him any sense of 'entitlement',

as he relies more and more on God's grace. Yet a kindly Providence is always there for him. For instance recall the fellow Basque, an officer in French service, who told his soldiers ***"Take him, give him something to eat, and treat him kindly."*** Again when Ignatius arrived at Genoa he met Rodrigo Portuondo, the Captain-General of the Spanish galleys. They had known each other from the Royal Court when the young Ignatius had been a courtier in the retinue of a relative. This resulted in ***"This man secured passage for him on a ship going to Barcelona."***

Ignatius has set his mind wholeheartedly on serving God in Christ and wherever it takes him, from Spain, to Italy, to the Holy Land and back we are aware of Ignatius' own realisation of his good fortune. In an exchange with Dona Ines Pascual, Ignatius says to her ***"Dona Ines, you are sent from God"***. She replies, ***"So I am"***.

**The Prayer for Generosity** attributed to St Ignatius surely reflects his own consecrated dedication, his unswerving commitment to loving God and all his brothers and sisters. There seems to be reciprocity of loving-kindness, of commitment, and generosity flowing between Ignatius, the poor, his supporters and benefactors. It is a form of 'the common good', all for one and one for all, a selfless community of care.

***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



Scriptural Reflection : Matthew 25:31-46

*<sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick*

*and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’<sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’<sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’<sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’<sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> you did it to me.’*

*<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’<sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’<sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’<sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*



**A Comment:** This is a challenging parable inviting us to consider how we behave. Are we like the sheep, who follow the Shepherd? That is are we the kind of people who do what Jesus does, true disciples of the Good Shepherd whose concern for others is deeply compassionate and ultimately so self-denying as to be sacrificial, costing not less than everything?

Or are we 'goat-like', wilful, headstrong, even as in Hebrew thought wild, lustful and devilish? Such people are unlikely to be mindful of the needs of others as their preoccupations are entirely selfish.

The parable is a story, designed to excite our imagination, teasing us like a riddle, so that we work out our own responses to the story.

**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*