

St Mary's, Inverness
The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]
The Year of St Ignatius
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TWENTY-FIFTH REFLECTION

LA STORTA

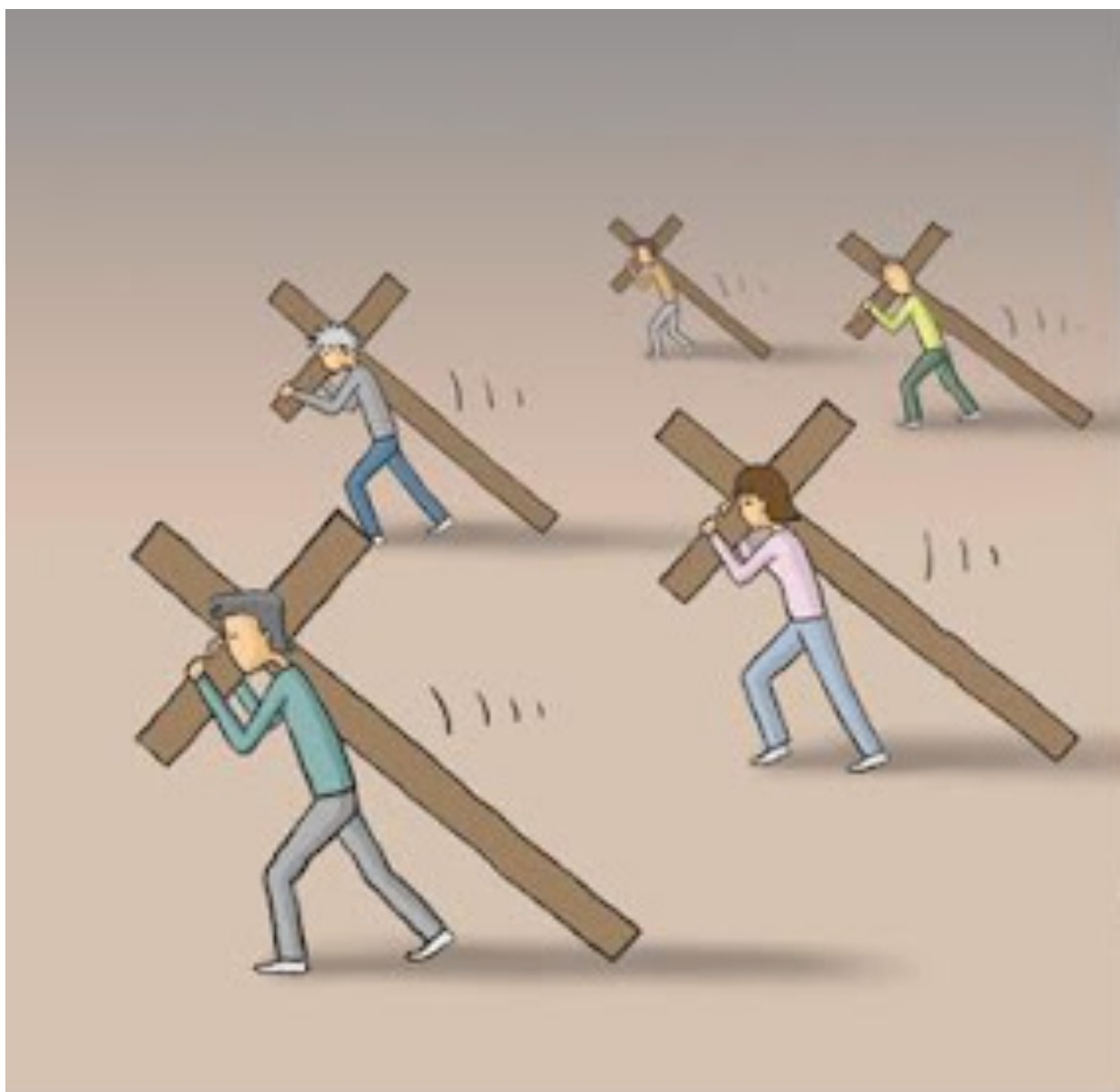
CONTEXT: The Companions set out from Vicenza for Rome in October 1537. They travelled in three or four groups, Ignatius with Frs Favre and Lainez, by way of Siena approaching Rome by the Via Cassia. Eight or so miles from the City of Rome, at a village called La Storta, Ignatius experienced a vision of radical significance. This was to be profoundly determining for Ignatius and the Companions of Jesus. On their way from Vicenza Ignatius had been praying, with Our Lady, that God the Father would place himself with the Son.



At La Storta Ignatius went into a little run-down chapel beside the Village. In prayer Ignatius was bringing the devout fruits of his travelling meditations to God the Father.

Ignatius had been praying the Meditation on the Two Standards [from The Spiritual Exercises]. Ignatius' experience of the battlefield is the background. Consider that on this battlefield there are two opposing armies, an Army under the Banner/Standard of Satan, while against this force is the Army of Christ. Each army has completely different values and methods.

Roger Dawson, SJ, explains this Conflict of Values :



"We see this paradox throughout the Gospels: he calls us into poverty, to take up our cross every day and to renounce ourselves. He tells us that if you really want life you are going to have to lose your life and if you want genuine richness you have to be poor. It may be challenging, but once we make that step, then we begin to share in the richness of God and to see that all we have in this world is given to us by God. When we appreciate these gifts as gifts, rather than something to which we are entitled, we can learn a genuine sense of gratitude, wonder and awe for these gifts, and we can begin to realise that the only possession we ever need is God. In this relationship I see myself as I really am and more importantly know that I am loved for who I am, not because of status, title, job, money or possessions – none of these lasts and ultimately none of these matters. That is what the Meditation on the Two Standards is showing us".

Ignatius has been increasingly drawn into the heart of his own Spiritual Exercises, so that when the tired travellers arrive at La Storta, Ignatius on the threshold of Rome prays deeply in the little Chapel.

At Mass he experienced the profound realisation that in Rome God would be propitious/favourable towards him.

His companions observed the change, and it is Fr Diego Lainez who provides some of the details as Ignatius himself was remarkably brief.

He wrote in the Autobiography :

“ One day, a few miles before reaching Rome, he was at prayer in a church and experienced such a change in his soul and saw so clearly that God the Father placed with him with Christ his Son that he would not dare doubt it- that God the Father had placed him with his Son.”

Ignatius himself confirmed the truth of Fr Lainez’s account in a discussion with one of his secretaries, Fr Gonczalves de Camara.

Lainez wrote : ***“ He [Ignatius] told me that it had seemed to him that God the Father had imprinted these words in his heart,***

‘Ego ero vobis Romae propitius’—‘ I will be favourable to you in Rome’.....



Another time he said that it seemed to him he saw Christ with the cross on his shoulder, and the Eternal Father behind, saying to Christ, 'I want you to accept this person as your servant.' And thus Christ accepted him and said, 'I want you to serve us.' "

Ignatius' sense of dedication, his sense of direction, his commitment to the Service of the Lord Christ was confirmed. He was stamped in his soul by a sense of reassurance and confidence, notwithstanding any opposition or persecution he had an inner conviction that all would be well.

Rich in visual detail, a sensory insight in his mind, a vivid picture of being given to Christ with his Cross by the Eternal Father was a 'moment of truth' for Ignatius. This La Storta mystical experience was the fruit of his already strong sense of 'irrevocable dedication', his experience of companionship in prayer, and his recollection of the many graces that he had been shown since the life-changing events at Pamplona, Loyola, Montserrat, Manresa, Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca and Paris. His journey is suffused with spiritual insights and Providential assistance in a whole series of companionable relationships.

La Storta becomes the gateway to Rome, and a new sense of Apostolic ministry with the Companions of Jesus.



Some thoughts to ponder as fellow Pilgrims :

- Constant prayer, keeping in touch with Our Lady as we develop a reflective sense of recollection of Jesus in the Gospel message.
- The journey of faith is a series of encounters with people, 'angels unawares', and the Lord Christ in the Sacraments – reflection on these graces.
- Once we have put our 'hand to the plough' we press onwards, committed to the Jesus who beckons us to follow him through all the difficulties of faith and life – recollect how commitment and resolve are supportive elements in the journey.
- We recall St Anselm's words : 'we believe that we might understand', our journey in faith is a constant search for understanding- are we aware of deepening insight and affirmation of belief?
- Moments of truth/ disclosure situations/when 'the penny drops'/the 'ah, ha' experience when insight floods our minds- we recall and cherish them but let them go as our Faith journey moves on.

Suscipe

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

Prayer for Generosity

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity,
Teach me to serve you as you deserve,
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labour without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward,
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.

Amen.

We review our day and look forward with Jesus

Daily Examen : Looking with quiet sincerity and simplicity of heart at the day:

What comes to mind about today? Think and pray and see the strengths and weaknesses.

Five Daily R's (a daily examen)

R

Relish the moments that went well and all of the gifts you have today.

R

Request the Holy Spirit lead you through your review of the day.

R

Review your day.

R

Repent of any mistakes or failures.

R

Resolve, in concrete ways, to live tomorrow well.

Source:

Reimagining the Ignatian Examen: Fresh Ways to Pray From Your Day
by Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ



Scriptural Reflection : *Mark 9:2-9* [New Revised Standard Version]

The Transfiguration

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one^[a] on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings,^[b] one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved,^[c] listen to him!" ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.



Scriptural Reflection :

A thought for reflection and prayer :

The Transfiguration account (Mark 9:2–8) comes at a critical stage in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus confirms Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, he "softens", in a sense, the scandal of the Cross, and importantly he announces that this is not the end of the journey, a future opens out.

Peter's confession of faith [Mk 8:29] was a turning point, a significant 'moment of truth' after which there is a change in direction. Hitherto Jesus had been teaching and healing. Now he begins his journey to Jerusalem, where he will die. Jesus predicted his death and Resurrection. Peter expressed serious objections [Mk 8:31–33]. This is the occasion for Jesus to teach his disciples the nature of discipleship [Mk 8:34–38]. After these words about sacrificial commitment and death, the Transfiguration reaffirms the identity of Jesus, reveals his glory, and calls the disciples to listen to him. Peter again speaks on behalf of the three disciples on the mountain. ***'Lord, it is good for us to be here'***. However there can be no making a dwelling there, no 'staying in the moment', there is a journey to be made towards Jerusalem.

We can reflect on the Transfiguration, a 'disclosure situation', a 'moment of truth' in which the three disciples see Jesus in a new light- their spiritual insight is transformative for them, for a period. After the Resurrection these three disciples are the leaders of the new followers of Jesus, the first Christian 'companions of Jesus'

We can reflect on the parallels between the visionary experience of La Storta and the Transfiguration of Jesus, and ask ourselves 'what is the meaning for us of the realities behind the words?

Life-changing moments are surely part of everyone's spiritual journey? Are we able to recognise them, evaluate them, and walk confidently with Jesus into our new futures?

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

"For those who love, nothing is too difficult, especially when it is done for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Ignatius Loyola

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray



Praise God Always