

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

FIFTY-FIRST IGNATIAN REFLECTION

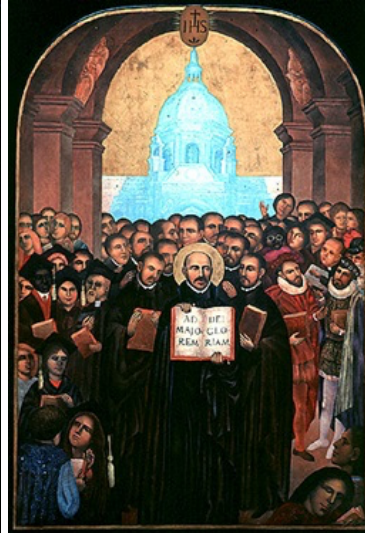
IGNATIUS AND THE RESURRECTION : THE DISCIPLES & PETER



Pamplona



Manresa



Paris



La Storta

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF IGNATIUS LOYOLA: Pamplona to La Storta

Wounded at the Siege of Pamplona in May 1521, the twenty-eight year old Ignatius Loyola, a Gentleman- at Arms from the nobility of the Basque in country northern Spain suffered life-changing injuries. His dreams of a courtly career were shattered. After several operations on his leg, while convalescing at home in the Castle at Loyola, his sister-in-law gave him a copy of The Life of Christ, and lives of the Saints [Dominic and Francis] which led to a dramatic conversion of life. Ignatius at this time in his Autobiography he refers to recording his experiences, both of his prayers to God and his experience of The Holy Virgin, ***“One night as he lay helpless, he clearly saw the likeness of our Lady with the holy Child Jesus, and because of this vision he enjoyed an excess of consolation for a remarkably long time”***

The course of his journey, his Pilgrim years, was to lead to the Shrine at Montserrat where, before the Shrine of Our Lady, he laid aside the accoutrements of war, and the clothes of a nobleman, and dressed in the

rough garb of a pilgrim. From there he went to Manresa where he spent over a year in prayer, penance and solitude.

In August/September of 1523, while sitting by the River Cardoner, Ignatius had a personal illumination : his understanding of the insights he experienced were utterly transformative. He achieved a new balance and purpose and was determined to offer his life to Christ in Pilgrimage [initially to Jerusalem to the Holy Places] and by using his insights and experiences to assist others on the Journey with Jesus. All of that was taken into the ***“The Spiritual Exercises”*** which were used as an approach to deeper conversion in faith to the many people that Ignatius encountered in his journeys. From Manresa to Barcelona, thence to Alcala and Salamanca Ignatius was extending his studies in Latin, Philosophy and Theology. At the same time he was attracting ‘companions’ who shared his vision. When he arrived at the University of Paris in 1528 to complete his theological studies again he attracted ‘companions’, sharing with them in ***The Exercises***. First, Fr Peter Faber, then Francis Xavier, and eventually a group of seven made their vows together at Montmartre on 15 August 1534. From this beginning the group of Companions made their way to Venice [where on 24 June 1537 Ignatius and five of the Companions were ordained to the Priesthood]. While travelling from Venice towards Rome in mid November, at La Storta, a village about eight miles from Rome on the Via Cassia, Ignatius had a vision of God the Father and Jesus carrying the Cross. Ignatius was aware of kindness, and the assurance from God the Father ***“I will be favourable towards you in Rome”***. The La Storta experience convinced Ignatius in his vocation : he would gather Companions to lead people to Christ. The years that followed saw Ignatius being elected as the Superior-General of the new religious order, The Society of Jesus. With the Spiritual Exercises and secure in their embodiment to their rule, in the Jesuit Constitutions, the new Companions became the cutting edge of the Catholic Reformation and Evangelisation both in Europe and in

the 'new world' of the Americas and also in the colonies of European powers in the East.

USING THE EXERCISES : Ignatius and the Companions, particularly in the early days, Fr Peter Faber, brought many to experience the Life of Christ, a Resurrection Experience.

In the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius invites us to reflect prayerfully on the Mystery of Easter.

The Resurrection of Jesus. *Resurrexit ! He is Risen !*

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

It became customary to begin with the prayer

Anima Christi.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Do not allow me to be separated from you.

From the malevolent enemy defend me.

In the hour of my death call me,

and bid me come to you,

that with your saints I may praise you

forever and ever. Amen.

(Translation by George E. Ganss, SJ)

In the Easter period different appearances of the Risen Jesus are recorded. The continuity of Jesus the Christ into history through the Resurrection touches us all. We become involved in His soul, His bodily anguish and His spirited graciousness. The words of St Paul point towards the existential nature of our faith : ***“For me, living is Christ”*** [Philippians 1.21] Elsewhere St Paul affirms this ***“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”*** [Gal.2.20]



On the Road to Damascus Paul experienced the Risen Christ whose challenge resulted in a profound conversion. Paul became the first great missionary to the nations.

Resurrexit! He is risen! This proclamation, the Good News, brings new life in the Risen Christ for those who enter in faith- by the grace of Baptism.

The ***Autobiography*** of Ignatius makes clear his own conversion to 'New Life in Christ' of the worldly, vain-glorious, proud and ambitious gentleman-at-arms. The hidden seed of Baptism had been nurtured, cherished and revived through reading a Life of Christ, and the graces of prayer.

In The Spiritual Exercises we walk with Ignatius in the Pilgrim Journey of Faith sharing in his hard-won spiritual insights and the gracious generosity of God.

The Spiritual Exercises presuppose a period of thirty-one days, four weeks of prayerful exercises in which an Ignatian guide accompanies a person making a Retreat.



In our daily life we are able draw on the spiritual resources of the Ignatian Way to deepen our own understanding of God's way with us.

We are on a Pilgrim Journey and Jesus walks with us. As Pope John Paul II famously said, "***We are an Easter people and 'alleluia' is our song,***"

In the Easter period Ignatius sets out his meditations under thirteen Apparitions, appearances of the Risen Lord. We have reflected on the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh of the Apparitions .

Recapping The Sixth Apparition : In St John's account [Chapter 20: 19-23] on the evening of that first Easter Day the disciples, without Thomas, were sheltering behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. The Risen Jesus appears to them with the greeting "***Peace be with you.***" Displaying his wounds the disciples are overjoyed

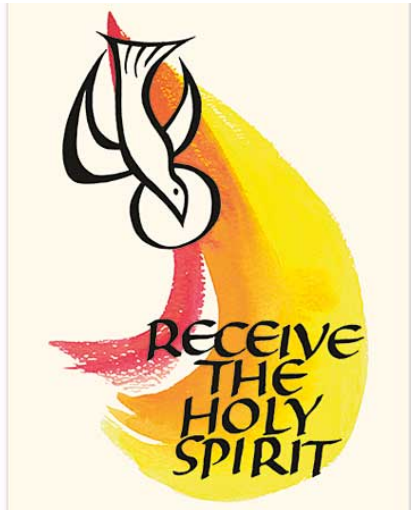
as they realise it is Jesus. "On seeing the Lord the disciples were overjoyed".

Again, Jesus says "***Peace be with you.***"

Then breathing on them He said "***Receive the Holy Spirit***", and gives them the authority to forgive sins.



Ignatius makes three points for our consideration.



First point – The disciples, except for Thomas were gathered together, for ‘Fear of the Jews’”

Second point – Jesus appeared to them, the doors being closed, and standing in their midst said, ‘Peace be with you’.

Third point – He gives them the Holy Spirit saying to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit; Whose sins you shall forgive they shall be forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”



The Seventh Apparition : Thomas, his doubts and his faith.

St John moves the story along, and a week later after the Sixth Apparition Jesus appeared again to the disciples who were still behind locked doors, but this time Thomas was with them. He had previously expressed his incredulity about the Resurrection. Again, the greeting is ***“Peace be with you”*** and then Jesus invites Thomas to touch his wounded hands and his side, and encouraging him to believe.

Thomas said, ***“My Lord and my God !”***

Ignatius makes three points for our imaginative prayer:

First point – Thomas was incredulous since he had not been present at the preceding apparition, and said: “Unless I see...I will not believe”

Second Point – Eight days later Jesus appeared to them, the doors being shut, and said to Thomas “Bring here thy finger and see... and be not unbelieving but believing.”

Third point- Thomas believing, said “my Lord and my God” And Christ said to him : “Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed.”

THE EIGHTH APPARITION : [John 21 ;1-27]

First point - Jesus manifested Himself to seven of his disciples who were fishing. They had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. At His command they cast forth the net and now they were unable to draw it up for the great number of fishes.

Second point – John recognised Him by this miracle, and said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” Peter cast himself into the sea and came to Christ.

Third Point – He gave them part of a broiled fish and bread to eat. After He had questioned Peter three times on his love for Him, He commended His sheep to him, saying “feed my sheep”.

POINTS TO PONDER :

- Jesus has gone before the disciples back to Galilee, now He meets them where they are, getting on with their work. They have reverted to the employment they were called by Jesus to be '**fishers of men**'. After a non-productive night of fishing they do as He says and the net was very full, yet it remained intact. The Lord continues to meet us where we are, whether at home, or work. He remains an attractive teacher beckoning us towards Him by generosity – sheer gracious concern for our good.
- The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "**It is the Lord**", whereupon Peter, gathering his clothes around him rushes towards Jesus. As ever



Peter takes the lead. His grief-stricken acknowledgement of his failure behind him Peter wants to get close to Jesus again. This is exemplary : When we fail, we gather ourselves together and seek out Jesus returning to Him as quickly as we can.

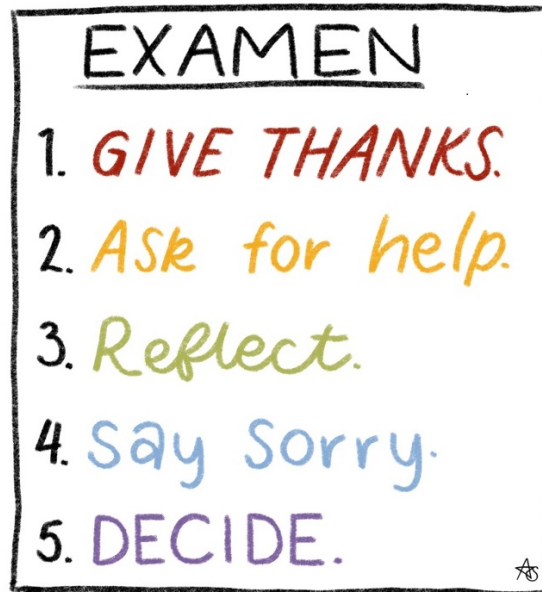
- Just as Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times in the Courtyard of the High-Priest now the Risen Jesus elicits from Peter three pledges of loyalty, and each time Peter is given pastoral care of the Christian Community. The Petrine Office of every successive Bishop of Rome, following Peter, is one of care. The Holy Father is Pastor Pastorum, the Shepherd of the Shepherds. Knowing his great responsibilities Pope Francis urges each of us to get to know 'the sheep'. Pastoral care is the duty of the whole Church, and the local pastors need the collaborative ministry of others to keep the Community together, caring for people of all ages, nationalities, and natures. We share a 'Common Life in the Body of Christ' : are we listening to what the Spirit might be saying to the Churches as the Bishops [pastors] look toward the Synod of 2023 with the Holy Father?
- Jesus invites his disciples, then and now, to eat with Him. He is the Host at every Mass- He feeds us with Himself ***{Jesus Christ God's Son Saviour / ICTHUS the Greek for 'Fish'}*** The Fish Symbol was found engraved in the walls of the earliest Christian assemblies in Rome, in the subterranean catacombs. Jesus in the Resurrection shows Himself to be "ICTHYS". Reverence for Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the altar brings us together into our Common Life. Are we able to devote more time and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament?



THE EXAMINATION OF OUR LIVES [THE EXAMEN]

Daily Examen:

Looking with quiet sincerity and simplicity of heart at the day



GETTING READY FOR THE GIFT OF SCRIPTURE

We place ourselves in the presence of God.

- We ask the Holy Spirit to settle our minds and open our hearts.
- ***Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.***
- Our conversation with God begins as we express our gratitude for our blessings and by expressing our sorrow for personal sin.
- We ask that The Holy Spirit may enliven our reading and understanding.

***Come, Holy Spirit, our souls inspire
and lighten with celestial fire;***

That our hearts may burn within us as the words of scripture take shape in our imaginative prayer.

- We place ourselves into the scene of the Scripture : what we see, what we hear, what it feels like, what we smell, what we might taste.
- Reading silently or aloud we form the words as they take shape in our creative imagination

Passage for Spiritual Reflection : **St Mark 8.1-9 [New RSV]**

Feeding the Four Thousand

8. In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, ² "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way—and some of them have come from a great distance." ⁴ His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" ⁵ He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." ⁶ Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd. ⁷ They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. ⁸ They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ⁹ Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.



Points for Consideration :

- This is a parallel to the feeding of the Five Thousand told a few chapters earlier and in which there is far greater detail. The differences may be significant in that while Jesus in each is demonstrating real compassionate care for his followers in this second account there are suggestions that this is Gospel story is meant to signify that non Jews are also fed : the missionary task of Jesus is universal. Are we ready to search out for the means to feed the bodies, minds and hearts of all those who would seek Jesus? No matter how little we bring, "God gives the increase". The Divine generosity and energy drives the Church in her mission to feed the poor, liberate those held captive, care for the sick, and bring 'Our Daily Bread' to those seeking Holy Communion. How much do these thoughts inspire our own patterns of loving our neighbours?
- Bread and Fish : The Body of Christ : ICTHUS :
This can be a Prayer of Adoration

"Jesus Christ God's Son, Saviour" said quietly, humbly and reverently we can relish the "Sacrament of the Present Moment",

where we find God in all things: in preparing meals, setting them before family and friends, clearing away, in all the routines of our duties there are opportunities for 'communion'.

A Period of Silence in which we pray with St Ignatius, talking conversationally to the Lord Jesus, thanking Him for being 'Our Daily Bread'

"The 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.

"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