

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

FIFTY-EIGHTH IGNATIAN REFLECTION
IGNATIUS : EXPANSION AND MARTYRDOM



Ignatius Loyola, seventeen years after his life was changed by a French cannon ball at the siege of Pamplona, limped into Rome, after having been assured by a vision at La Storta that 'Rome would be favourable' to him. He was by this time a priest [ordained on 24 June 1537] but yet to celebrate his first Mass. This was done appropriately on 25 December 1537 in the Chapel of the Manger in the Roman Basilica of St Mary Major.



When his leg was shattered that calamity in his personal life ended his aspirations to military honour, social esteem and a privileged life in the Royal courts. Yet Ignatius had found the healing Love of God-in-Christ through the attentive prayer and care of others and his own reading of books about Jesus and the saints. In his meditations at Manresa he became familiar with the Jesus of the Gospels. During his meditations by the River Cardoner he

experienced illuminations and insights that were so real that they shaped the rest of his life beginning a life-long conversation with his Master and Lord, Jesus. He began to note the insights gained from his conversations, his heart to heart relationship with God, and the impact of these on his own life, and changing vocational impulses. Gradually ***The Spiritual Exercises*** associated with him took shape. These were developed as Ignatius, **'The Pilgrim'** as he described himself in his Autobiography, began sharing his faith with others. He attracted others by the humility of his life, his generosity of spirit and his attentive conversations listening carefully to people. Gradually through his period of studies at Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca and Paris he gathered folk around him who were companionable friends in Christ. It was while at Paris on the Feast of the Assumption [15 August 1534] that Ignatius with two close friends, Fr Peter Favre and Francis Xavier, and five other companions took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

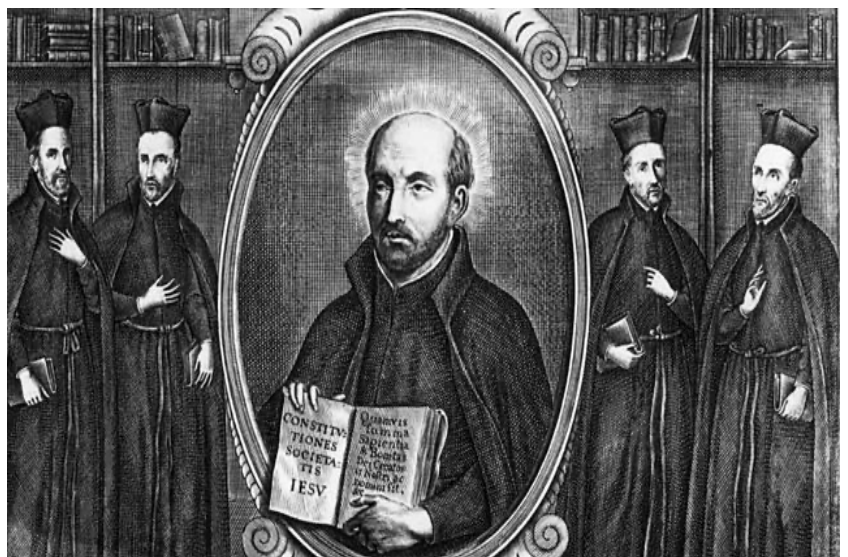


In time these men attracted other Companions and by 1537 they were on their way to Rome to offer themselves in the service of the Church to the Holy Father.

In this way the Society of Jesus was formed in 1540, and later confirmed in 1544 permitting the Society to increase. ***The Spiritual Exercises*** were given approval by Pope Paul III in 1548 and printing of these began. These were to be a means of grace for many as the new Jesuits began their evangelical and missionary activity.

These were empowered days : so many men generously committed their lives to the Standard of Christ, through completing the Exercises, and in becoming Companions of Jesus they gave vigour and impetus to the Missionary and reforming work of the Church.

Missions were established in lands that were in the colonial empires of Portugal and Spain, and from these further outreach to far distant places such as India, Japan, China in the East and in South America.





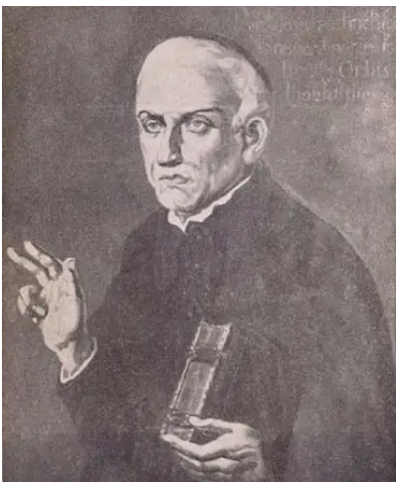
Francis Xavier, one of the first seven members of the Society of Jesus, was the first Jesuit missionary. He worked with poor fishermen in India (1542–45) and with the head-hunters in the Moluccas Islands (1545–48). On the Feast of the Assumption, 15 Aug 1549, Xavier with two other Jesuits, Cosme de Torres and Juan Fernandez arrived in Japan with the intention of establishing a Jesuit Mission. Francis Xavier gained the agreement of the local ruler and work began. The Japanese Emperor was initially supportive but the government

became suspicious and fearful of western influence and began to persecute Catholics. Towards the end of the century Christianity was banned and Japanese converts executed.



On 5 February 1597, St. Paul Miki (1564-1597), a Jesuit scholastic, and twenty-five others were martyred in Nagasaki. This painting shows the Jesuit Martyrs of Japan who were tortured and executed at Nagasaki. It is preserved in the Jesuit Church of the Gesù in Rome. The forty-four Jesuits who were martyred are depicted beginning with the first persecution. There are three separate levels : the top level represents glory: amid the clouds, and flanked by two angels, rise the figures of Francis Xavier, Paul Miki and two companion Jesuits, John Soan de Goto and James Kisai crucified in Nagasaki in 1597. The second level (middle) shows Christians burned at the stake, decapitated and those imprisoned in secret huts and those exiled to a galleon or abandoned on a deserted shore. The third level (bottom) shows people subjected to the "tormento das covas", tortured by being hung above a pit filled with filth. It was a slow and degrading death aimed at breaking the will of those who refused to renounce their faith.

Xavier's missionary imperatives in the East was soon followed by westward expansion across the Atlantic to the Portuguese colonies in South America.



Jose de Anchieta

The first Portuguese Jesuits arrived in what is now Brazil in 1549 led by Fernão Cardim (c.1549–1625), Manuel de Nóbrega (1517–70) and later Jose de Anchieta who arrived in 1553. He was stationed at San Paulo a new Jesuit settlement in the interior that he helped to establish.

After converting more than a million indigenous people, Fr Anchieta sought to protect the natives from the being enslaved. In the Portuguese colony it was becoming a harsh reality in the somewhat brutal plantations which were driving the economy. He was an acclaimed writer, dramatist, and scholar and staged several of his own religious plays at his outpost. He compiled the first grammar of the Indian language [Tupí] and he described the native customs, folklore, and diseases. He catalogued the Brazilian flora and fauna that he encountered. Fr Anchieta also helped to found Rio de Janeiro which was to become one of Brazil's biggest cities.

The Jesuits arrived in Peru in 1568 and in Mexico in 1572. They established missions throughout South and central America, becoming involved in the religious, social, economic, and political activities of each region. Education was an important part of their evangelising so numerous colleges were founded in which the local culture was valued and brought into the new perspective of Christian teaching in every aspect of learning. Jesuit residences [houses for their priests which became centres of mission] were to be found in the most important cities. From these missionary bases new centres of mission were founded, called *Reducciones* [Reductions] in villages among the indigenous populations. These offered a form of 'communalism', or as some would aver an 'early socialism', in which work was rewarded, education was provided, skills were developed in all aspects of art, music and drama. The '**Commonwealth**' provided the basis for stable and sustainable development. The native peoples prospered and thrived in these just societies away from the slavery and degradation of the colonial plantations.

- 1) Yapeyú
- 2) La Cruz
- 3) Santo Tomé
- 4) San Francisco de Borja
- 5) San Nicolás
- 6) San Luis
- 7) San Lorenzo
- 8) San Miguel
- 9) San Juan
- 10) Santo Ángel
- 11) Apóstoles
- 12) Concepción
- 13) Santa María
- 14) San Javier
- 15) Mártires
- 16) San José
- 17) San Carlos
- 18) Candelarias
- 19) Santa Ana
- 20) Loreto
- 21) San Ignacio Mini
- 22) Corpus
- 23) Jesús
- 24) Trinidad
- 25) Itapúa
- 26) San Cosme
- 27) Santiago
- 28) Santa Rosa
- 29) Santa María de Fe
- 30) San Ignacio Guazú



Reducciones jesuíticas



Juan del Castillo, from Toledo in Spain, while studying law at the University of Alcalá, found a new direction in his life. He became a Jesuit in 1614. He and fellow Jesuit Alphonsus Rodrigues arrived in Buenos Aires in 1617. After further studies Del Castillo was ordained a priest. The Jesuits had arrived in Paraguay in 1588, and by 1609 they had a 'Reduction Missions' among the indigenous Guarani people. This area was surrounded by Spanish and Portuguese colonies

in which the settlers were rapacious towards the natives treating them as slaves in the plantations and in other work. The Jesuit fathers were protective of the rights of the natives, especially those working in their own 'Commonwealth'.



His companions in a neighbouring 'reduction-mission' were Fr Roque Gonzalez and Fr Alphonsus Rodriguez. All three were killed within a few days of each other in November 1628 due to the local chieftain's growing mistrust. He was hostile to their missionary endeavours, fearful of loss of his own authority.

The Reduction-Missions were successful and thriving but were eventually destroyed in the eighteenth century due to human greed and political manoeuvring



Over the years hostility had developed between the Jesuits and their native citizens and the Spanish and Portuguese settlers and their colonial protectors. These 'Reductions' were to be found mostly in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.

Eventually the colonial powers suppressed the 'Reductions' destroying a creative endeavour in social, economic and religious polity.

There was much bloodshed and martyrdom. The film "**The Mission**" is set in these times and conveys the general sense and feeling in a fictionalised drama.

Points to Ponder :

- Jesuit missionaries were sensitive to local cultures : Mandarins in China, and appreciation of indigenous art and music in South America are two examples. Catholicism is usually counter-cultural as everything is seen in the perspective of Catholic values as derived from the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. Are there elements of the culture of our times that Catholics need to embrace and develop- e.g., modern media & technology? Parishes may need help with this, not simply live-streaming Masses, but other aspects of social media.
- The early Jesuits were possessed of an imperative towards mission which involved teaching at every level. Jesuit formation involves experiences with education, usually in schools and colleges. Do we have anything to learn from this about priestly formation [in seminary and post-ordination]?

- The early Jesuits in the Reduction-Missions anticipated much of the Catholic Social Gospel of the contemporary Church.

A Brief Summary of Catholic Social Teaching;

- ***Life and Dignity of the Human Person***

The first social teaching proclaims the respect for human life, one of the most fundamental needs in a world distorted by greed and selfishness.

- The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation for all the social teachings.

- ***Call to Family, Community, and Participation***

The second social teaching proclaims that the human person is not only sacred, but also social. It stresses that how we organize society in economics, politics, and law or policy directly affects human dignity and community.

- Society often proclaims the importance of individualism, but Catholic Social Teaching argues that human beings are fulfilled in community and family. The Catholic Church believes we have the responsibility to participate in society and to promote the common good, especially for the poor and vulnerable.

- ***Rights and Responsibilities***

Human dignity can only be protected if all human rights are protected and responsibilities of all human beings are met.

- Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to the basic needs of life.

- ***Option for the Poor and Vulnerable***

This world is shaped by the division between growing prosperity

for some and poverty for others. The Catholic Church proclaims that the basic moral test of a society is how the most vulnerable members are faring. Our society is marred by a deepening division between rich and poor.

- ***The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers***

The Catholic Church teaches that the economy must serve the people. Too often the marketplace takes precedence over the rights of workers. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

- The rights to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative are all part of protecting the dignity of work by protecting the rights of the workers. Respecting these rights promotes an economy that protects human life, defends human rights, and advances the well-being of all.

- ***Solidarity***

Our society often stresses individualism, indifference, and sometimes isolationism in the face of international responsibilities. The Catholic Church proclaims that every human being has a responsibility to our brothers and sisters, wherever they live.

- This virtue was described by ***John Paul II as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all"*** (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, no. 38).

- ***Care for God's Creation***

The Catholic tradition insists that every human being show respect for the Creator by our stewardship of His creation.

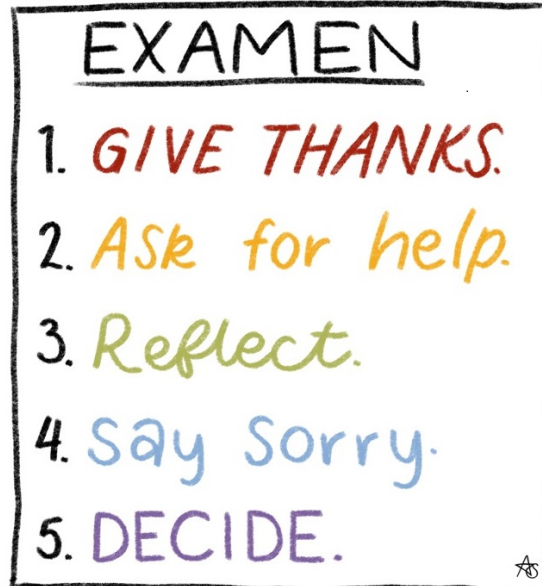
- We are called to protect people and the planet by living our faith with respect for God's creation. In a society with controversy over environmental issues, the Catholic Church believes it is a fundamental moral and ethical challenge that cannot be ignored.



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 ask the Holy Spirit to settle our minds and open our hearts.
- 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;*
- 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.

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, nor about your body, what you shall put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.

³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



Points for Reflection:

- Are we too anxious about ourselves and our possessions and material comfort ? What about radical generosity as a Christian response to the world around us- prudence, enlightened self-interest and the needs of the common good are often held in tension?
- The natural world, God's created delight, is constantly in need of care to prevent the destruction of our common environment. Planet earth is a long-term project : are we sufficiently involved in its care and maintenance ?
- What do we treasure? How do we manage to speak with God, 'heart to heart' about what we really value? This could be an interesting conversation!

Conversational prayer : Opening up to Jesus asking Him for insight into our reflections.....

Then we pray : *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

After a moment of quiet we offer our day and our week:

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.



Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray

Praise God Always