

**St Mary's, Inverness**  
**The Year of St Ignatius**  
**20 MAY 2021 >31 MAY 2022**

**SECOND REFLECTION**

**Home and Identity**



**Context :** The Loyola family came from the area known as Guipuzcoa, beautiful mountainous countryside between the border with France and Navarre, with its capital at Pamplona. Inigo was born in 1491 in the ancestral castle of his family near the village of Azpeitia. In the Basque countryside he absorbed the manners, the familiar characteristics of his neighbours and his kith and kin. They were mannerly, straightforward folk, eager to be helpful, and above all tenaciously Catholic.

Even among such God-fearing Catholics the moral laxity of the times meant that there were irregular personal relationships, illegitimacy and feuds and factions, usually based on inheritance issues or some perceived slight in manners.

The young Inigo, at the age of fifteen, already literate, was sent for training as a courtier- to serve at the Court of a relative who was the High

Treasurer at the Court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. In such circles he grew up with a taste for fine clothes, good food and wine and romantic episodes. Add to that a desire to be successful as a nobleman in feats of chivalry and military glory.



Even although not trained as a soldier he took part in the Siege at Pamplona in 1521 when he was so badly wounded that he returned home, a cripple, in need of further surgery.

During this time back at home he read much and indeed his ‘conversion’ at Loyola can be traced to the months between August 1521 and February 1522, a period of reflection on his past life, and a diet of reading and writing; for he made a ‘Copy Book’ about three hundred pages of Quarto paper on which he wrote out in different coloured inks significant points, including the sayings of the saints, particularly Ss Dominic and Francis.



Inigo recalled the vocation of St Francis and his embracing poverty to equip himself *‘with even greater zeal to sow the seeds of the word of God, going about the cities and villages with admirable fervour’*.

St Dominic too was an inspiration : *“He devoted himself to study day and night, ceaselessly entreating God to grant him the grace to spend himself wholly for the salvation of his neighbour’*.

**Prayer : Examen :** Ignatius wrote of himself in his Autobiography : *“ a man given to the follies of the world, and what he enjoyed most was warlike sport, with a great and foolish desire to win fame.”*

Given his noble birth and privileged upbringing like many such people he had a sense of ‘entitlement’. The Pamplona cannon-ball, the injuries, the surgery and the convalescence ended all that, and caused a major Examination of his conscience. Looking at the ‘follies’, the aggression, the vanity and the ambition how do we compare?

How has today been? How are we looking forward and planning for tomorrow?

# POCKET EXAMEN

The Ignatian Examen is a 5-step method for reviewing your day and giving thanks to God.

- 1. CENTER** 

Take a moment to become aware of God, myself and my surroundings.
- 2. GRATITUDE** 

What am I especially thankful for today?
- 3. REVIEW** 

What brought me joy? What challenged me?
- 4. TURN TO GOD** 

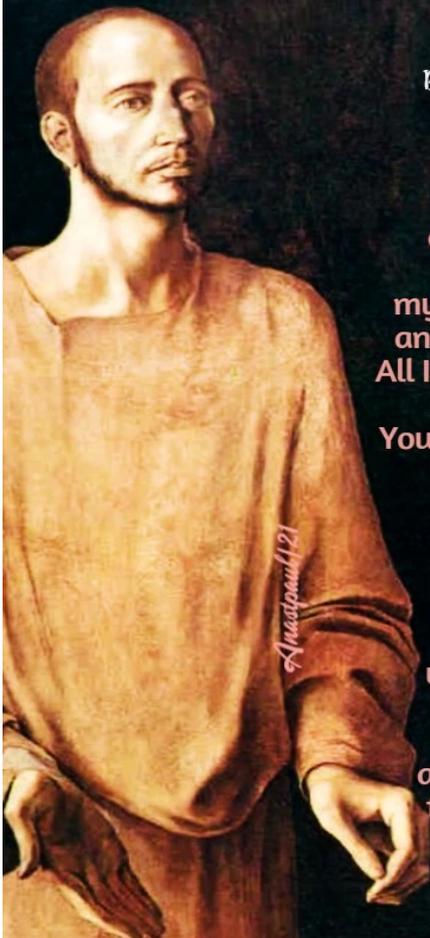
What could I have done or said differently?  
How can I improve?
- 5. LOOK FORWARD** 

In what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow?

CHURCH MINISTRY

**An Ignatian Offering of Life :**

**Suscipe** - a prayer of radical, self-less offering of every aspect of ourselves.



**Suscipe**  
By ST IGNATIUS LOYOLA  
(1491-1556)

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.  
Amen

*Anastasiou 21*

*The Gospel According  
to  
St. John*



Symbol of John: The eagle

### **The Word Became Flesh**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God; <sup>3</sup> all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light but came to bear witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness to him, and cried, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup>And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only Son,<sup>[b]</sup> who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

**Comment :** These verses, the introduction to the Fourth Gospel, are usually called ‘The Prologue’.

In them we have a theological meditation on who Jesus Christ actually is. The argument demonstrates that the Eternal Wisdom of God, the Creative mind, Word [Logos] calls everything that exists into being. This same Word/Logos has taken human flesh and is embodied in Jesus Christ. So, all the majestic transcendence of God becomes visible to humanity through the human form of Jesus.

The first verse with its vocabulary and structure echo the Creation narrative of Genesis Chapter 1.1.

In the verses that follow we find glimpses of ideas from the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew scriptures concerning Life and Light.

When in verse 14 we read ‘and the Word became flesh’ we are aware of the simple profundity that ‘God became a man. ‘Became flesh’ in this context means ‘human nature’.

At the Creed we kneel at the words ‘incarnatus est’ / ‘he was incarnate’ / en-fleshed, expressing our reverent awe before the majesty of this simple statement.

There are further ideas to be explored and teased out, as to the meaning of ‘and dwelt among us’: this is linguistically

‘tabernacled’/ ‘lived in a tent’. These ideas reflect Jewish history of the time of Moses when God’s Glory was with the people in signs of fire and clouds and also, thinking about God’s glory from the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel. They were looking forward to the new heavens and new earth that would be at the End of time when the glory of God would be seen by all the nations.

We are here in the realms of Cosmic significance, the Glory of God, the Doxa/Glory- the visible brightness of the Divine Presence is transcendent, overarching all time and space.

The Incarnation brings into the here and now all of this glory- a means of grace, not only here in the gospel, but we are also brought into the splendour of Truth. This word Truth is a favourite word in St John’s Gospel and it conveys the idea of the liberating, saving revelation of God in Christ. [See St John 8.32]

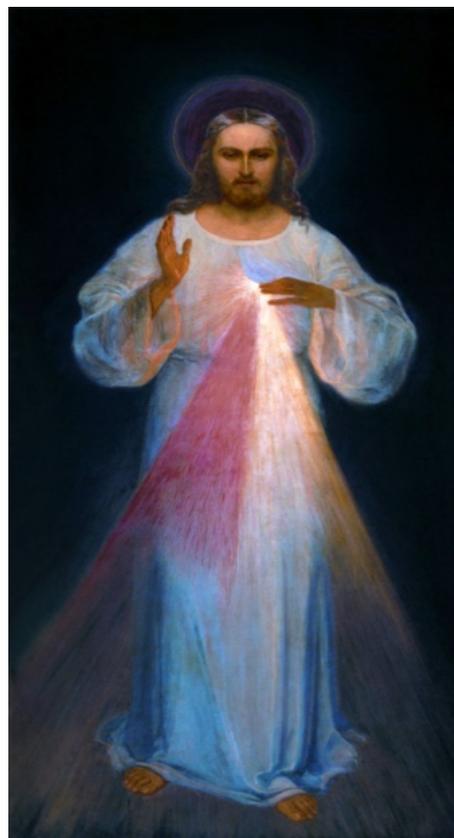
No man has seen God, verse 18 : the Invisible God has been revealed in Christ.

While Ignatius was at Loyola Castle he was also reading ‘Vita Jesu Christi’/Life of Christ, by the Carthusian monk, Ludolph of Saxony. Ignatius would have read his commentary on the Prologue where he writes of *‘the light that shines in the darkness of this world, because ‘the Creator is seen in his creatures’, and conversely, in this life ‘creatures are a mirror reflecting the Creator, and in it we contemplate him.’*

Ludolph also comments on the order that can be seen in the world that God has created.

When we read St John’s Prologue we could profitably consider just how such insights might excite our imaginations. In reading St John we too, as creatures, might see God in ourselves and how we might reflect his image in us to other people. “To see ourselves as others see us”.

**A Period of Silence** in which we pray with St Ignatius seeking understanding, insight and a conversation with Jesus about what we might do this week.



*Jesu, I trust in You*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray*

*Praise God Always !*



[The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]