

## FATHER GENERAL OF THE JESUITS

Ignatius was chosen as the first Superior General of his religious order, invested with the title of Father General by the Jesuits. He sent his companions as missionaries around Europe to create schools, colleges, and seminaries. Juana de Vega, the ambassador of Charles V at Rome had met Ignatius there. Esteeming him and the Jesuits, when Vega was appointed Viceroy of Sicily he brought Jesuits with him. A Jesuit college was opened at Messina; success was marked, and its rules and methods were afterwards copied in other colleges. In 1548 *Spiritual Exercises* was finally printed, and he was briefly brought before the Roman Inquisition, but released.

Ignatius wrote the Jesuit Constitutions, adopted in 1540, which created a monarchical organization and stressed absolute self-abnegation and obedience to the Pope and his superiors (*perinde ac cadaver*, "well-disciplined like a corpse" as Ignatius put it). His main principle became the Jesuit motto: *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* ("for the greater glory of God"). He died in Rome on July 31, 1556 as a result of the "Roman Fever", a severe case of malaria that recurred in Rome, Italy at different points in history.

## CANONIZATION AND LEGACY

Ignatius was beatified by Pope Paul V on July 27, 1609 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 13, 1622. Saint Ignatius is venerated as the patron saint of Catholic soldiers.

Of the institutions dedicated to Saint Ignatius, one of the most famous is the *Basilica of St. Ignatius Loyola*, built next to the house where he was born in Azpeitia, the Basque Country. The house itself, now a museum, is incorporated into the basilica complex. His legacy includes many Jesuit schools and educational institutions worldwide.

## FAMOUS QUOTE OF SAINT IGNATIUS

"That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself, if she shall have defined anything to be black which appears to our eyes to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black.

For we must undoubtfully believe, that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Orthodox Church His Spouse, by which Spirit we are governed and directed to Salvation, is the same;..."

## SHIELD OF OÑAZ-LOYOLA

The Shield of Oñaz-Loyola is a symbol of Saint Ignatius family's Oñaz lineage, and is used by many Jesuit institutions around the world.



# Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Confessor

FEAST DAY: JULY 31<sup>ST</sup>



PATRON SAINT OF CATHOLIC SOLDIERS

## **SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA (1491-1556)**

### **EARLY LIFE**

\*Ignacio López de Loyola (sometimes erroneously called Íñigo López de Recalde) was born in the municipality of Azpeitia at the castle of Loyola in today's Basque Country of Gipuzkoa, Spain. He was baptized Íñigo, after St. Eneus (Innicus), Abbot of Oña, a medieval Basque name arguably meaning "My little". It is unclear when he started using Ignatius instead of his baptismal name "Íñigo" (Latin: *Eneus*; Basque: *Eneko*; Spanish: *Íñigo*). Ignatius did not intend to change his name but rather adopted for France and Italy a name which he believed was a simple variant of his own, and which was more acceptable among foreigners.

The youngest of 13 children, Íñigo was only seven years old when his mother died. In 1506, Íñigo adopted the last name "de Loyola" in reference of the Basque city of Loyola where he was born and later became a page in the service of a relative, Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, treasurer (*contador mayor*) of the kingdom of Castile.

In 1509, Íñigo took up arms for Antonio Manrique de Lara, Duke of Nájera and Viceroy of Navarre. According to Thomas Rochford, S.J., his diplomacy and leadership qualities made him a *gentilhombre* very useful to the Duke. Under the Duke's leadership, he participated in many battles without injury to himself. But when the French army, supporting the Navarrese monarchy expelled in 1512, stormed Pamplona's fortress on May 20, 1521, a cannonball wounded one of his legs and broke the other. Heavily injured, Íñigo was returned to the castle. He was very concerned about the injuries to his leg and had several surgical operations, which were very painful in the days before anaesthetics. During this time he read the *De Vita Christi*, by Ludolph of Saxony, in a Catalan edition. This work influenced his whole life. *Ce Vita Christi* is the result of forty years of work by Ludolph. It is a commentary on the life of Jesus Christ, a commentary on the Gospels borrowing extracts from the works of

over sixty of the Fathers of the Church. Ludolph particularly quotes St. Gregory the Great, St. Basil, St. Augustine and the Venerable Bede. Ludolph proposes to the reader that he place himself at the scene of the Gospel story; that he visualize the crib at the Nativity etc. etc. This is known as a method of prayer called Simple Contemplation and is the basis of the method that St. Ignatius sets out in his Spiritual Exercises.

### **RELIGIOUS CONVERSION AND RELIGIOUS LIFE**

During his period of convalescence in 1521, Ignatius read a series of religious texts, on the life of Jesus and on the lives of the saints; he became fired with an ambition to lead a life of self-denying labor and to emulate the heroic deeds of Francis of Assisi and other great monastics. He resolved to devote himself to the conversion of non-Christians in the Holy Land. Upon recovery, he visited the Benedictine monastery, Santa Maria de Montserrat (March 25, 1522), where he hung his military vestments before an image of the Virgin. He then traveled to the town of Manresa, Catalonia and spent several months in a cave near where he practiced rigorous asceticism. Ignatius also began seeing a series of visions in full daylight while in the hospital. These repetitive visions appeared as "a form in the air near him and this form gave him much consolation because it was exceedingly beautiful ... it somehow seemed to have the shape of a serpent and had many things that shone like eyes, but were not eyes. He received much delight and consolation from gazing upon this object ... but when the object vanished he became disconsolate." In 1523, he instituted a pilgrimage to the Holy Land on a path of self denial and sacrifice. He briefly remained from September 3 to 23 but was not permitted to stay. Twelve years later, standing before the Pope with his companions, he again proposed sending his companions as emissaries to Jerusalem.