

Manresa

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Ignatius spent almost a year in Manresa, a time of profound enlightenment where he developed much of the core of his Spiritual Exercises. He had visited the famed monastery at Montserrat, and laid down his sword at the shrine of the Black Madonna there, a symbolic embodiment of his surrendering his former courtly and military life for a new life devoted to the service of Jesus.

After his stay at Montserrat, he headed to Manresa for a short rest before he would head to the port city of Barcelona for a ship to Rome. But his short detour to Manresa stretched out for months. Late in life, he dictated a short Autobiography; in it, he summarized the depth of his experiences at Manresa, and in particular while he sat beside the River Cardener: “he sat down for a little while with his face toward the river...While he was seated there, the eyes of his understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learned many things...with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.” He added, “even if he gathered up all the various helps he may have had from God, he does not think he had got as much as at that one time.”

Manresa is in many respects the cradle of Ignatian spirituality. Some years later, Ignatius would meet his first companions at Paris, and together with them, found the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). But even though the Jesuits’ corporate foundation came years after Manresa, Jesuit spirituality largely traces to these months Ignatius spent in Manresa.

You can learn more about the historic [city of Manresa](#) from its website, and you can learn more about the Ignatian sites and tradition of Manresa here: [website of La Cova de Manresa](#), where you will find a PDF with all the information. Sanctuary tel: 938 751 579.

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