

THE IGNATIAN WAY PASSES THROUGH NAVARRETE

This Fact Sheet is distributed by the Navarrete City Council Culture Department (*Sección de Cultura del Ayuntamiento de Navarrete*), Navarrete Parish, cultural advisors and other entities in Navarrete. (17 June, 2013).

The Ignatian Way is that which Ignatius of Loyola travelled in his first months of conversion to Christianity (1522). (See www.caminoignaciano.org and page 267 of the book mentioned below). Navarrete witnessed the two stages of the life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: before and after conversion. Various famous figures passed through Navarrete, but it was Ignatius who lived there the longest.

THE IGNATIAN ROUTE IN NAVARRETE

We start from the church. Here there are two of the three images that are claimed to have been restored by Ignatius de Loyola after his conversion: 'Santa María' [*Saint Mary*] (originally in the chapel *Santa María de Jesús* on the way to Nájera); and 'Virgen del Sagrario' [*Virgen of the Sanctuary*] (perhaps from the old parish church). The third image is the 'Virgin of Good Success,' which was found next to the road to Entrena, and currently is in a private residence outside Navarrete (See pages 246, 163-167).

On leaving the church the path continues right on the street called Calle Major Alta (p. 246). On that street transited the *Alumbrados* (Spanish mystical sect) in times of Ignatius (p. 167-168). On the right is a hill, in whose castle was imprisoned the last Commune leader of Ignatius' time (p. 246, 124-125).

In the square called *Plaza del Arco* on the left is the palace of the Duke of Najera with its shield on the corner. It is the only palace of the Duke of Najera currently in existence. Ignatius was under him as a gentleman for four years (1517-1521). He accompanied him on his visits to the king, helped him regain Nájera (although he would not participate in the spoils of war) and defended Pamplona from the French, as the Duke was also Viceroy of Navarre. There he fell wounded and was taken to Loyola, where he converted to Christianity reading the Gospels and stories of the lives of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis. He decided to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, because Jesus lived there.

Passing Navarrete, he asked the Duke for his corresponding pay. "And I was paid the money, ordering for them to be shared amongst certain people ... and part to an image of *Our Lady*, so that she may to be well decorated." (p.162-163).

It has been speculated about who these people were to whom Ignatius distributed money. In the will of Aldonza, daughter of the Duke, Maria Villarreal de Loyola appears. Someone suggested it might be the illegitimate daughter of Ignatius. In Navarrete it is said that Ignatius was staying at an inn located on the corner of the Plaza del Arco no. 1, next to the Duke's palace, and had an affair with the landlady. After his conversion, Ignatius would not have stayed at the same inn, but further down at the recently renovated no. 4 of the street called Calle Arrabal. Arguments for and against the existence of an illegitimate daughter before Ignatius' conversion are confused. This does not take away any merit from Ignatius de Loyola. The problem is that there is no document that testifies the fact. Moreover, it was then customary to recognize illegitimate children, and Ignatius never alluded to this.

Once converted, Ignatius left Navarrete for Manresa, where he began writing his Spiritual Exercises. Years later he studied in Paris, and formed a group of university graduates who were later called the *Society of Jesus* or Jesuits.

The above data is expanded and documented in the recent book "Los Años Riojanos de Iñigo de Loyola" [*The Riojan Years of Ignatius of Loyola*] by José Martínez de Toda, SJ, which is available in Logroño (ARS bookshop, C. Caballerías, 31-33; Tel 941 25 51 47) and Nájera (Maria Teresa bookshop, C. Mayor, 11, Tel 941-36 28 35).