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Translation of the web page.

(Laura Mor-CR) Coinciding with the feast of St. Ignatius, this Thursday the Jesuits announced the first Jubilee Year of the Ignatian Way that will take place from July 31, 2015 to July 31, 2016. There will also be a second Jubilee Year, between 2021 and 2022, on the occasion of the fifth centenary of the conversion of its founder and his pilgrimage in Manresa.

With this announcement, the new apostolic work of the Ignatian Way (OACI) of the Society of Jesus has been officially established, which will ensure the Ignatian spirituality of this itinerary. The Camino retraces the steps that St. Ignatius took in 1522 and links the sanctuary of Loyola with that of La Cueva de Manresa.

According to the director of the Ignatian Way, Jesuit José Luis Iriberry, this pilgrimage has a peculiarity: "The 700-kilometer journey is fine for nature, but what interests us as a Society is to know and discover the life experience of St. Ignatius. At the root of the proposal is the spiritual background of what he represents, as a model of following Christ".

Therefore, and despite the fact that the route begins and ends at a sanctuary, the aim is not to highlight a specific religious heritage. Iriberry, who is a professor and consiliary at the Faculty of Tourism Sant Ignasi - URL, explains it in a few words: "The goal is to find God," says Iriberry and adds "once the pilgrim finds God, the rest does not matter. The pilgrimage is over. It is his turn to return home and live what he has received".

Spiritual exercises, the backbone

Since it began in 2010, the Jesuits have consolidated the proposal "as an instrument of personal growth, an experience of orientation for one's own life". And they do it from the documented biography of the founder of the Society. Here Iriberry makes a nuance to highlight what makes this experience genuine: "There are other pilgrimages with dubious historicity, which rather respond to a legend."

In the bone of the road is the document that guides Ignatian spirituality: "The Spiritual Exercises are the communication of his vital experience as a pilgrim", synthesizes the Jesuit José Luis.

Charity as a requirement

In this sense, it is not about walking for oneself, as an activity of self-realization, but it is a path for others. Iriberry recalls that "St. Ignatius, as a pilgrim, was always at the side of others; what he received he shared". And he adds that also in the first pilgrimages such as the one to Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims gathered and added the concerns, projects and requests of their families and acquaintances.

Carrying out a work of charity is one of the requirements of this religious itinerary. As the Jesuits explain "the Jubilee of the Ignatian Way comes to those who, fulfilling the conditions established by canon law, make the pilgrimage of the Ignatian Way lived in the spirit of pilgrimage, and following some modality of the Spiritual Exercises, visit one of the Ignatian shrines along the way, and carry out some work of charity, either before or during the pilgrimage."

The Jubilee Year of the Ignatian Way

"Just as you find milestones and signs that mark a path, the Jubilee year is a temporary milestone that calls to participate in the Way. Faced with the routine of daily life, we need temporary calls that remind us that there are nuances and that justify the celebration," explains Iriberry.

To promote the Way as an instrument and to commemorate this 500th anniversary as it deserves, with the approval and support of José Ignacio Munilla Aguirre, Bishop of San Sebastián, and Romà Casanova i Casanova, Bishop of Vic, two years of Jubilee commemorations will be held at the shrines of Loyola and Manresa, as well as along the Ignatian Way understood as a continuous experience of the Spiritual Exercises.

The tradition of pilgrimages to the shrines of Loyola and Manresa, very popular since the 17th century after the canonizations of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, has grown during the 20th and early 21st centuries, along with the increase of piety linked to pilgrimages.