

« Walking with Ignatius... to Rome. »



Walking the 1523 Ignatian spiritual workshop with Fr. Josep Lluís Iriberry, sj.

Pilgrims' book – Verdú to Rome

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## 1. Pilgrims Song

### “The Servant Song”

Brother, sister let me serve you.  
Let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I might have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too.

*We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We're companions on the road.  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and share the load.*

I will hold the Christ-light for you  
In the night time of your fear.  
I will hold my hand out to you;  
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping.  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,  
We shall find such harmony  
Born of all we've known together  
Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister let me serve you.  
Let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I might have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too.

Richard Gillard, New Zealand 1976

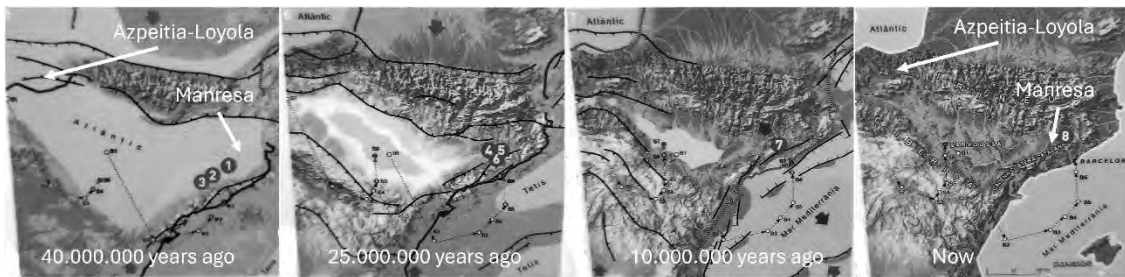
## 2. Planning: 18 days pilgrimage with Ignatius.

| Date                                    | Step                     |    | Breakfast                                 | Lunch   | Dinner   | Lodging – sleep at night  | Activities   |
|---|--------------------------|----|---|---|--|---|--|
| 28 March<br>Friday                      | Meeting in<br>Barcelona. |    |   |   | Retreat house -<br>Religiosas de<br>María<br>Inmaculada      | Religiosas María<br>Inmaculada –<br>Claretianas,<br>C/ Major de Sarrià 169,<br>Tel: +34 932037212 | Pilgrims arrive along the<br>day. If any help is<br>needed, ask the Pilgrims<br>Office.<br>19:00 First meeting.<br>Pilgrims buy some food<br>for next lunch in Verdú                               |
| 29 March                                | Bellpuig - Verdú         | 12 | Religiosas de<br>María<br>Inmaculada      | At Pilgrim's<br>Shelter –<br>Verdú. On<br>your own. | Restaurant<br>Magic's  | Pilgrim's Shelter Saint<br>Peter Claver 687 095<br>070  | Private bus from<br>Barcelona to Bellpuig.<br>Start walking. Visit Saint<br>Peter Claver' Shrine.<br>Private transportation for<br>the luggage from here to<br>Barcelona.                          |
| 30<br>SUNDAY<br>Change to<br>Summertime | Verdú - Cervera          | 18 | Restaurant<br>Magic's                     | Pilgrim's<br>Hostel<br>Sagrada<br>Familia           | Pilgrim's Hostel<br>Sagrada Familia                          | Pilgrim's Hostel<br>Residencia Religiosas<br>Sagrada Familia, Calle<br>Mayor, 57. 973 530<br>805. | Guided visit of Tàrrega<br>old town & Church in<br>Cervera.  |
| 31                                      | Cervera – Jorba          | 33 | Residencia<br>Sagrada<br>Familia          | Bar La<br>Panadella<br>(sandwich)                   | Refuge Saint<br>James  | Pilgrim's Hostel Saint<br>James Plaza de la<br>Fuente, 3, 93 809 41 01                            |  |
| 1 April                                 | Jorba –<br>Montserrat    | 18 | Refuge Saint<br>James                     | Refuge Saint<br>James Lunch<br>pack                 | Montserrat   | Pilgrim's Hostel Abat<br>Oliva, Montserrat  | Bus to shorten the step.<br>Prayer of the monks at<br>6:45 PM.   |
| 2                                       | Montserrat               |    | Pilgrim's<br>Hostel Abat<br>Oliva         | Restaurant in<br>Abat Oliva<br>Montserrat           | Restaurant Abad<br>Oliva,<br>Montserrat                      | Pilgrim's Hostel Abat<br>Oliva, Montserrat  | 11 AM Mass at the<br>monastery. 9:45 PM Vigil<br>of our Lady – Saint<br>Ignatius. Pilgrims can go<br>up to the top of the<br>mountain if they wish.<br>Free day. Visit Museum<br>of Religious Art. |
| 3                                       | Montserrat -<br>Manresa  | 25 | Pilgrim's<br>Hostel Abat<br>Oliva         | Bar Castellolí,<br>(sandwich)                       | Retreat house -<br>Casa de<br>Espiritualidad SJ<br>– La Cova | Casa de Espiritualidad<br>SJ – La Cova, Camí de la<br>Cova, 17. 938 720 422.                      | Visit La Cova Shrine   |
| 4                                       | Manresa                  |    | Casa de<br>Espiritualidad<br>SJ – La Cova | Casa de<br>Espiritualidad<br>SJ – La Cova           | Casa de<br>Espiritualidad SJ<br>– La Cova                    | Casa de Espiritualidad<br>SJ – La Cova  | 7:45 Visit the Tort Cross<br>and the Well of Light.<br>Visit Ignatian Manresa.<br>Free day for personal<br>retreat. Relax.   |

|                       |                                   |    |  |  |   |  |   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----|--|--|---|--|---|
| 5                     | Manresa – Castellbell i el Vilar  | 21 | Casa de Espiritualidad SJ – La Cova            | La Cova Lunch pack   | Casa de Espiritualidad SJ – La Cova               | Casa de Espiritualidad SJ – La Cova            | Walk to Pont de Vilomara. At the end of the step, we take the train back to Manresa, and we start again by train on the next morning  |
| 6<br>SUNDAY           | Castellbell i el Vilar - Terrassa | 25 | Casa de Espiritualidad SJ – La Cova            | La Cova Lunch pack   | Pilgrims' Shelter Valldeparadis Terrassa          | Pilgrims' Shelter Valldeparadis Terrassa       | Take one small bag with all the things needed for two steps. Leave all the luggage ready in Manresa to be driven to Barcelona directly.   |
| 7                     | Terrassa - Barcelona              | 33 | Pilgrims' Shelter Valldeparadis Terrassa       | Lunch on your own in Bar Viena Sant Cugat                    | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                    | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                 | Bus inside of the city  |
| 8                     | Barcelona                         |    | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                 | On your own  | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                    | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                 | Visit Sagrada Familia Gaudí Church. Visit Barcelona on your own. Buy some food for your next lunch.   |
| 9                     | Barcelona - Sutri                 |    | Religiosas de María Inmaculada                 | Lunch on your own  | Restaurant in Sutri                               | Residence in Sutri                             | Flight from Barcelona to Roma-Fiumicino. Private bus from Fiumicino to Sutri. Bring something to eat along the journey. Walk around Sutri (small town). Visit Roman ruins. Buy some food at the supermarket for the next day. |
| 10                    | Sutri – Campagno di Roma          | 25 | Pilgrim's Hostel in Sutri                      | Lunch on the way (on your own)                               | Pasta in a Bar in Campagno di Roma                | Pilgrim's Hostel in Campagno di Roma           | Walk around Campagno. Buy some food at the supermarket for the next day.  |
| 11                    | Campagno di Roma – La Storta      | 24 | In a Bar in Campagno                           | Lunch on the way (on your own)                               | Residence of Our Lady of Sacro Cuore in La Storta | Residence Our Lady of Sacro Cuore in La Storta | In the afternoon, mass at La Storta. Buy some food at the supermarket for the next day.   |
| 12<br>SATURDAY        | La Storta – Roma                  | 22 | Residence Our Lady of Sacro Cuore in La Storta | La Siciliana Bar in Rome                                     | On your own                                       | Gesù Hostel in Rome                            | Walk around the city. Buy some food for next breakfast and lunch.   |
| 13<br>PALMS<br>SUNDAY | Roma                              | 22 | Gesù Hostel in Rome on our own                 | At St Paul Basilica you can buy something to eat on your own | Pizza in restaurant Rosso Pomodoro                | Gesù Hostel in Rome                            | The pilgrimage of the 7 churches in Rome City. Buy something for next breakfast and dinner.   |
| 14                    | Roma                              | 10 | Gesù Hostel in Rome on our own                 | Last meal together: Pasta in "Primizia san Giovanni"         | On your own                                       | Gesù Hostel in Rome                            | In the morning, Ignatian Rome and final mass at the Gesù. Free afternoon – evening. Buy something for next breakfast.   |
| 15                    | Flight back home                  | 0  | Gesù Hostel in Rome on our own                 | Free visit in Rome or flight back home                       |   |  |   |

*Let's walk with Ignatius, living in the Present Moment!*

«**The present moment** is, then, like a desert, where the simple soul only sees God, and He enjoys it, without taking care of anything other than what He wants of it: everything else is left aside, forgotten, abandoned to Providence. » *Jean-Pierre de Caussade sj. (†1751)*



*The Ignatian Way under the Ocean.*

As we begin this spiritual journey



together, let us pray this prayer of St. Anselm of Canterbury, which he made to God as he began one of his theological works:

Teach me to seek you,  
and reveal yourself to me as I seek;  
for unless you instruct me  
I cannot seek you,  
and unless you reveal yourself  
I cannot find you.  
Let me seek you in desiring you;  
let me desire you in seeking you.

Let me find you in loving you;  
let me love you in finding you.

### 3. Understanding our pilgrimage

(We adapt the text and take the ideas and methodology from the "Red Book" of the Jesuit MAGIS experience 2011)

#### 3.1. Being a pilgrim

##### 3.1.1. Going on a pilgrimage

A pilgrim is someone who undertakes a long journey with a holy or spiritual motive. Pilgrims often travel across foreign lands, towards places that have a religious significance. The great religions have their pilgrims and their places of pilgrimage. The Koran requires Muslims to journey to Mecca once during their lives if at all possible. Jews and Christians journey to Jerusalem and visit the Holy Land. Other traditional pilgrimage destinations for Christians have been Rome, Canterbury, or Santiago de Compostela. Some Marian shrines are also goals for pilgrimage, such as Fatima in Portugal (5 million pilgrims every year!), where the Virgin Mary appeared to three young shepherds, Lourdes in France (7 million pilgrims every year!), Walsingham in England and Czestochowa in Poland. And many young people in recent decades have found in Santiago de Compostela (3 million pilgrims) or Taizé, France, another key spot in their spiritual quest.

Being a pilgrim and going on pilgrimage are metaphors for the spiritual journey that each person makes during his or her life. As human beings we travel an internal path towards Christ and an external one that leads us, each day, towards others. St Augustine expresses this well when he says: "Our heart is restless till it rests in thee". In the Autobiography, St Ignatius calls himself "the pilgrim" and describes himself as he who seeks his comfort and strength in God alone.

Being a pilgrim requires courage - the courage to leave the familiar for the unknown. The pilgrim must trust in God as he or she encounters new places and new people along the way. Being a pilgrim is difficult. You must travel long distances. You have few possessions and carry little baggage. You may come across the unexpected and will have to face difficulties. You will constantly be meeting other people on your pilgrimage. Sharing with and supporting one another is a great help in turning strangers into companions. God makes himself present through the people the pilgrim encounters on his or her journey. Pilgrims must stay attentive for the signs, on the watch to recognize the presence and guidance of God in countless small details on the way.

And so, the «Ignatian Way» is meant to be a pilgrimage, shared in by elders and young people from all over the world, who undertake, together, a spiritual journey.

##### 3.1.2. Ignatius of Loyola: the pilgrim

Ignatius of Loyola was born in 1491. He was the youngest son of a big family of Basque nobility (he was the 13th son). Growing up he was educated in the ideals of medieval chivalry: honor, renown and bravery. At 30 years old his right knee was destroyed by a cannon ball, thus ending his military career. The process of recuperation lasted months and needed painful operations. Facing the possibility of death and failure during this process Ignatius, convalescing in the family tower

house of Loyola, began to reflect on his past and think about the future. He started to sense God in a new way and had his first intuitions about the different spirits - the interior movements of God in his soul. The lives of the saints left him fascinated, and little by little he realized the need to direct his life for the greater glory of God. Ignatius became a pilgrim. He stayed almost a year at Manresa, near Montserrat, in prayer and penance. He immersed himself in the depths of human experience, which included a profound depression, remorse over his past life to the point of suicidal thoughts. Nevertheless, during this time God was guiding him, and he came to see that the life God gives us has nothing to do with grand heroics, but rather with peace, balance, hope and trust. Coming to realize that after the storm comes light and joy, he was led by all he had come through to see human nature, the world and God in a new way. All these experiences and insights were set out in his Spiritual Exercises.

Following a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was not allowed to remain, Ignatius decided to study firstly in Barcelona and after that in Alcalá and Salamanca. He wanted to be a priest so as to help others discover God. Finally, his studies took him from Spain to Paris. Together with six friends he took vows of poverty and chastity in 1534. Not being able to go on pilgrimage together to Jerusalem with the idea of staying there, as was their original intention, in 1538 they offered themselves to Pope Paul III so as he could send them to any part of the world. In 1539 they founded the Society ("Company") of Jesus, which was approved the following year by the Pope. A year later Ignatius was elected first Superior General of the Order. From that time, he continued on in Rome. He died on 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1556, at the head of an Order which by now counted more than 1000 members throughout the world. In 1622 he was canonized, and his feast is celebrated on 31<sup>st</sup> July.

### 3.1.3. The MAGIS (more) of Ignatius in our pilgrimage

«Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» is something that appeals us to go further "magis", more, to us all. St Ignatius too wanted more - to be a saint, even better than those he read about while he was recovering at Loyola. In order to be a saint, he thought about fasting more, praying more, doing more penance... until he came to realize that that wasn't what God wanted.

The more that Ignatius discovered was one which helps in making proper decisions. He grasped that the difficult choices we normally have to make are not between good and bad (taking for granted that we must always choose the good), but between one good thing and another. In such dilemmas he understood the "magis" as being to choose that which is "for the greater glory of God". In other words, whichever brings us closer to what God hopes of us.

The «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» experience is different for every pilgrim, since each one of us has a unique and distinct relation with God, and a vocation that is personal. There is no just one homogeneous standard experience which serves for everybody. Comparisons cannot be made. Living the pilgrimage is trying to know yourself and to be aware of your interior life. It entails trusting in God's guidance, and knowing he has a dream for you. Living the pilgrimage means opening yourself to discovering what God wants to teach you. At times it is what we least want to admit. But for each one of us, as for Ignatius, the greatest happiness is learning, more and more clearly, to discover God in our lives.

### 3.1.4. How to live the MAGIS (the more) today?

What about today - is it still possible to live the ignatian "magis"? The answer is "yes!". Like Ignatius we can learn to seek what brings us closer to God. God is still present at the crossroads of history and in the hearts of men and women of our day. His Spirit calls us to live a "life in fullness", committed to the unceasing yet absorbing task of discovering his traces in everything, and of working with him for a world that is more just and fraternal. Superficiality and complacency are our greatest enemies, and we run the risk of remaining stuck in a mediocre life, "satisfied" with what we have or do. And in this "going out into the open" towards others and the commitment to the Kingdom, we are surprised to discover that it is giving (and giving oneself!) which fills us with happiness and joy.

Perhaps the age in which we find ourselves living, when it seems God is known less, may be a "time of grace", an opportunity to (re)discover the presence of Jesus in the depth of our hearts, in the desires and dreams living within us. And it is Him we ask: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Karl Rahner wrote that "the Christian of the XXI century will either be a mystic, or not Christian at all". To live the "magis" today entails firstly to discover the love of God in our lives, and to make Him our light and our way, our source of peace and trust.

But this path we do not take alone. It is with others that we build the Church and work for a world of greater solidarity. The first thing that Jesus did was look for companions. And we all have the experience that the path travelled with others is made easier. There is an African saying: "go alone if you want to arrive soon; but go with others if you want to get far". So it is with the Church, the community that follows the Lord. It is a community that is both fragile and diverse, containing a huge amount of variety, where holiness and sinfulness live side by side. Sometimes conflict takes place. Perhaps the easiest thing would be to abandon it and start afresh. But you don't leave your family on discovering the weaknesses of your parents and elder siblings. This is the Church of Jesus, and the "ignatian magis" entails loving it, belonging to it and struggling within it - without ceasing! - to improve it from within, with a critical spirit that is loyal and constructive, and out of it to build up the Kingdom.

Living the "magis" today means, lastly, being very clear in our mind that the world needs us, and being ready for whatever

God may happen to call us, with the people and in the contexts, we live in. Ours is a world split apart by poverty, marginalization and inequality. A world very different from the dream God has for it, and where He needs our hands and our capacity to love so as to change it - so as to turn it into a home where all human beings may live as, and feel themselves to be, children of the same Father, the God of Love.

## 3.2. Inspiring principles

### 3.2.1. Pilgrims with Christ in the world and walking together

The “principles” on which «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» is based are:

- On pilgrimage: Throughout history there have been many people who, like Ignatius Loyola, have covered long distances in order to encounter God, in order to seek where he is to be found in the world and in the Church. Following Ignatius' experience, «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» is an invitation to take the path from one's own heart in the direction of the world and God. Going on pilgrimage is a life-giving attitude which leads us to be fuller and better people.
- With Christ: We walk with Christ and in his footsteps. He invites us to be aware of God's action in places and in people we have never before thought of. His path is our path. From Him we receive the Good News in order to be his witnesses.
- In the world: This path leads us towards the world that is our dwelling, the place where we encounter others and God - a world rich and diverse, though torn apart by inequality. In the midst of human suffering God calls us to build bridges and work together in his mission of reconciliation.
- As Pilgrim's Community: In this path the pilgrim discovers other companions engaged in the same pilgrimage. Jointly we discover the grace of being called - and experiencing ourselves as - Church, a community that is fraternal and rich in diversity.

### 3.2.2. Experience - where encounters take place

It has been said that “when it comes to practice, the theory is different”. This is, in fact, what we experience about life. Knowing by heart an instruction manual on driving doesn't mean you will be a good driver. Nor will reading any number of articles about human relations give you the ability and skill to negotiate the richness and complexity of human interactions. The need to “get your hands dirty” applies also to the faith, and for many people their vision of the faith and of God has changed as a result of experiences of sharing on a deep level, or of doing some voluntary work. Action is one place we encounter and can really come to know God, other people and even ourselves more profoundly. The Ignatian Way pilgrimage is, above all, precisely this sort of encounter with people who are new or different, in a unique context.

- The walking experience: «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» is based on the intuition that the walking pilgrimage experience is a place of encounter. The walking experience will take place after the initial meeting in Loyola and it seeks to intensify this encounter with God, with others and with our own selves. The walking experience is an opportunity for trying, testing, risking oneself, as a way of discovering the “magis” - the greater. It is like plunging oneself into a different reality and is based on the idea of Ignatius Loyola - which is still used today in Ignatian training - of putting oneself in new situations one is not familiar with. The result is you broaden your horizons, learn from the lives of others as you walk with them and begin to know God and understand yourself in unexpected ways.
- An experience of faith: It is not always easy to find God in international groups or in whatever kind of activity that takes place. However, that shouldn't discourage anyone. On the contrary, God is present in all things. He is our principle and foundation. Everything that exists has its roots in God. If you take this statement seriously, it means you look for God not only in the familiar, easy or pleasant things of life. It is rather a matter of finding God in new and unknown realities, even those that are hard or difficult to grasp. The specific objective of «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» is to seek and find how to be a people of God in spite of our differences and peculiarities, and how God, the world and we are profoundly linked together.
- Inner journey: During these weeks we shall try also to walk within ourselves. Following the course of the basic journey of Ignatius Loyola, we shall be taking a look at some of the high points that leave traces in each person in his or her search for meaning and purpose in life.

With the Morning Prayer during the pilgrimage is intended to give a definite orientation and focus to the spiritual path of that day. The plan of each day suggests a theme, inspired by the pilgrim life of Ignatius. Sometimes there is

an Ignatian quotation which will serve to illustrate the day with his Autobiography. A little reflection offers some ideas and suggests some points for personal prayer and meditation. Pilgrims should prepare their personal meditation the night before. Some days there are a special theme to meditate and share with other pilgrims.

### 3.2.3. Five Pillars

In any life of faith there are some aspects that are fundamental: action, prayer, the practice of examining one's life by seeking God in it, the joy of celebration and the willingness to share. These features, in one way or another, can make their way into our daily routine. In «Walking with Ignatius... in your Ignatian Way» we shall be trying to bring them in explicitly, so as to include these five elements: Prayer, which helps us seek, listen and relate more explicitly to God and his word. Celebration in which we express together the depth, joy and richness of the faith we share. Pilgrimage which is the specific place of life and its surprises, of learning and encounter. Sharing and placing our experience in common, since what others discover, live and communicate is also source of richness and growth. And lastly, the daily Examen will allow us to cast our eye over each day, so as to seek God in what we have experienced.

These five elements will be present, one way or another, all along of the pilgrimage, so as to help these days become a time for living both without and within, seeking to make them a source of learning for our daily life. How this will be done in practice will depend in each case on the place and moment of the pilgrimage, but the five elements will be there.

#### 1. Morning Silent Prayer

The pilgrims together will work out how to arrange it and how best to meet the needs of the group. It will last about 5-10 minutes as a short introduction of the silent meditation that will follow (2 hours). It might begin with a song. Then, someone can read the text leaving some silence period of reflection. Someone could next read the biblical texts and the Ignatian one if there is one for that day, after which would follow a moment of silence, so as everyone could recall the reflections and the focus of the day given the day before. If it seems suitable, any of the pilgrims can make some additional point, more relevant to what to expect in the day ahead. Perhaps it can follow with a moment of sharing prayers or feelings about the biblical text. To close the meditation of silent walk, the group could gather and say together the Our Father and perhaps a final song. Whatever the case, the important thing is to make it flexible and adapted to the circumstances and characteristics of the group.

#### 2. Celebration

If the group contains at least one priest or the group has the chance to get on time for the parish liturgy in town, then the celebration will usually be the Eucharist of the day. This could take place in some quiet corner, with the same people that are sharing this period of experience, who could work together in preparing the celebration. It is always interesting to participate in the parish liturgy if it is possible. In some places pilgrims can even ask for a special pilgrim's blessing.

It is recommended to celebrate a daily Mass if it is possible but always being flexible. In this daily Mass we are invited to recall and reflect on the love and self-giving of Jesus himself in the Last Supper, as well as being able to offer our every joy, fear and act of love.

#### 3. Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage challenges us in unexpected ways and can lead us to learn much about our own selves. The challenge can come from various directions: it might be that walking puts me in situations that are new, it might be the people I meet, or cultural differences, relationship with my companions, living conditions, being far from home or just weariness.

The organizers have worked hard in preparing the pilgrimage. But they cannot foresee every possible situation that may arise. Things will happen that are out of their control - at the very least, the question of weather or even who takes part in the pilgrimage. And given that not everything can be foreseen or controlled, flexibility, the ability to adapt and make allowances are an indispensable part of the experience.

#### 4. Sharing: The Pilgrim Circle

It gives people the chance to reflect on the experience lived together, and to learn to appreciate and value the richness of each day.

This form of sharing works best when every person is involved and recounts some of his or her personal experience each time. Fundamental to these encounters is the capacity to listen. In the Pilgrim Circle it's not a matter of discussing or responding to whatever each one says. Rather, you make room for others with respect, listening with attention and learning from their experiences and insights. Ideally the Pilgrim Circle should last between 30 and 45 minutes, no more.

The Pilgrim Circle has these steps:

A) A brief reflection. Each person takes a moment to look over the days just past.

B) The first two rounds are for listening only. As each person speaks the others listen; what the person says is not discussed - unless, if necessary, make a request for clarification.

**Round 1.**

How have the days gone for me?

When did I feel great joy?

When did I find things hard?

**Round 2.**

How were the day's themes and the texts read in the morning reflected in the course of the day?

C) In the third round there can be more discussion about what has been said. However, it's not about imposing a point of view or convincing others of a particular opinion. The object is to share experiences and learn from one another.

**Round 3.**

What especially struck me from what someone has said? Is there anything else I'd like to share in the light of what I've heard?

D) Rapid last round. Conclusion. Each one responds to the last question with one word or short phrase: What is my feeling at the end of this Pilgrim Circle?

## 5. The Examen of the Day

Ignatius considered the day's Examen a prayer of great importance, so much so that he wrote that if a Jesuit finds himself short of time to pray, at least he should not omit this Examen.

If you think about it, each day is filled with impressions, encounters and experiences. We go through happiness and disappointment; we feel sadness, desire, enthusiasm, many things besides. It's important we don't make too rapid a judgment on what we experience: God sometimes speaks to us in what energizes us, at other times he does so in what upsets us, and he wants to lead us by means of all these experiences. If we allow ourselves to listen to the voice of God with us, we will be able every day to grow a little freer, more patient and more love filled.

The Ignatian Examen can be made anywhere: on the beach, in a car, at home, in the library. It takes some 10 or 15 minutes, and consists of five very simple steps, which can be set out in various ways. Here is one way:

1. I begin with some sign or gesture, like bowing the head or making the sign of the cross. I thus recall God's presence - even if at that moment I don't feel it.
2. I ask the Spirit for light and assistance, to aid me as I look at the day just past.
3. I review the day, placing it before God. One by one, I allow the events I have experienced through emerge into view. If it helps, I can ask myself:
  - What was the best aspect of the day? Why?
  - What was the worst of the day? Why?
  - What do I think God was trying to say to me in these moments?
4. I thank God for the day I have lived through. I ask for pardon for all that has led me away from him. I ask for his help and his grace in whatever I may feel I need at this moment.
5. I look forward to the next day. I place it in God's hands. I end by praying the Our Father or another prayer, finishing with the same gesture I began with.

## 4. Introductory meeting

«Pilgrimage is a door that opens onto the threshold of a sacred land, where, like Moses, we listen to the creative word. Listening to the Gospel with our feet, ruminating on the Book of Nature, putting our senses to the test by experiencing the world and the angels that populate it, whispering to God, connecting the rhythm of our breath with our steps. A pilgrimage is a kind of detour, or even a wandering, that satisfies and soothes, encouraging us to continue along life's path, with a loving presence in our heart, in our soul, reminding us of the moment when time froze in eternity.»

Jean-Claude Ravet sj.

«The Spiritual Exercises are all the best that I have been able to think out, experience and understand in this life, both for helping somebody to make the most of themselves, as also for being able to bring advantage, help and profit to many others. So, even if you don't feel the need for the first, you will see that they are much more helpful than you might have imagined for the second.»

Letter of St Ignatius to Rev. M Miona, Nov 16, 1536

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### ***Extroverted Mysticism***      ***(Reflection)***

*For ecumenical leader and author Wes Granberg-Michaelson, pilgrimage invites passionate spirituality:*

Pilgrims move in two directions at the same time—an outward direction toward a holy destination and an inward journey seeking an encounter with the sacred. Two of the best academic scholars of pilgrimages, Victor and Edith Turner, explain it in this one sentence: “Pilgrimage may be thought of as extroverted mysticism, just as mysticism is introverted pilgrimage.” Pilgrimages, they suggest, were, and are, no walk in the park, or plain, or mountain. Embarking on such a journey, we become untethered not just from our physical normalcy. These uncertain, trusting steps also move us out of our spiritual familiarity. The pilgrim is invited not only to walk out of boxes of dogmatic beliefs, but also to walk away from practices of comfortable spirituality.

Consider historically the life of peasants or serfs in medieval Europe who were tied to specific places—a manor, and a particular piece of land. Religious life was likewise confined to a local parish, with its repeated, routine practices. As pilgrimage opportunities began to be possible for a wide range of people, their journeys liberated them toward places unknown, with spiritual intensity. Pilgrimage sites were places where miracles had occurred. The bones of saints were living; the apparition of Mary created a rarified space. Healings occurred, continuing the miraculous nature of these sites.

As journeys to Jerusalem became insurmountable or impossible, numerous pilgrimage sites sprang forth throughout Europe. Yet those embarking on pilgrimages faced clear and present dangers. They were walking into liminal space, with a familiar past of place and spirit left behind and a future promise of spiritual power, wedded to tangible, material things, in the distance.

In their own context, this was a reckless spirituality, a form of extroverted mysticism... For most, this was a once-in-a-lifetime embodied quest of spiritual abandonment. In the words of the Turners, “pilgrimage was the great liminal experience of the religious life.”

For today's pilgrim it can be the same. A pilgrimage is a rejection of modernity's expectations and assumptions about time, place, perception, satisfaction, speed, predictability, and the material world. As in ancient times, motives for contemporary pilgrimages are mixed. Lines between pilgrimage and tourism become blurred for some while breaks in employment prompt others to a pilgrimage more than a thirst for embodied forms of holiness. Yet pathways that move simultaneously in inward and outward directions prove irresistible to throngs roaming pilgrimage paths today.

The embodied movement of pilgrimage is an opportunity to step outside our habitual rhythms with God:

The Spirit yearns to break out and to break open our old practices, our protective shells of comfortable spirituality, connecting our inner selves more deeply to God's love and to God's world. Your soul no longer stays still. It's moving with God in the world, and moving toward God, revealed in signs or shrines or saints or surroundings. The pilgrim's walking body holds incarnate this inner journey of the soul.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/extroverted-mysticism-2023-03-07/>

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## ***For the Traveler*** by John O'Donahue

Every time you leave home,  
Another road takes you  
Into a world you were never in.

New strangers on other paths await.  
New places that have never seen you  
Will startle a little at your entry.  
Old places that know you well  
Will pretend nothing  
Changed since your last visit.

When you travel, you find yourself  
Alone in a different way,  
More attentive now  
To the self you bring along,  
Your more subtle eye watching  
You abroad; and how what meets you  
Touches that part of the heart  
That lies low at home:

How you unexpectedly attune  
To the timbre in some voice,  
Opening in conversation  
You want to take in  
To where your longing  
Has pressed hard enough  
Inward, on some unsaid dark,  
To create a crystal of insight  
You could not have known  
You needed  
To illuminate  
Your way.

When you travel,  
A new silence  
Goes with you,  
And if you listen,  
You will hear  
What your heart would  
Love to say.

A journey can become a sacred thing:  
Make sure, before you go,  
To take the time  
To bless your going forth,  
To free your heart of ballast  
So that the compass of your soul  
Might direct you toward  
The territories of spirit  
Where you will discover  
More of your hidden life,  
And the urgencies  
That deserve to claim you.

May you travel in an awakened way,  
Gathered wisely into your inner ground;  
That you may not waste the invitations  
Which wait along the way to transform you.

May you travel safely, arrive refreshed,  
And live your time away to its fullest;  
Return home more enriched, and free  
To balance the gift of days which call you.

<https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=2191>

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## **A CREDO FOR OUR PILGRIMAGE: WE ARE BUILDING A COMMUNITY**

(From: Effectiveness Training Inc. California)

You and I are in a relationship which I value and want to keep. Yet each of us is a separate person with our own unique needs and the right to try to meet those needs. I will try to be genuinely accepting of your behavior both when you are trying to meet your needs and when you are having problems meeting your needs.

When you share your problems, I will try to listen acceptingly and understandingly in a way that will facilitate your finding your own solutions rather than depending upon mine. When you have a problem because my behavior is interfering with your meeting your needs, I encourage you to tell me openly and honestly how you are feeling. At those times, I will listen and then try to modify my behavior.

However, when your behavior interferes with my meeting my own needs, thus causing me to feel unaccepting of you, I will tell you as openly and honestly as I can exactly how I am feeling, trusting that you respect my needs enough to listen and then try to modify your behavior.

At those times when either of us cannot modify our behavior to meet the needs of the other, thus finding that we have a conflict-of-needs in our relationship, let us commit ourselves to resolve each such conflict without ever resorting to the use of either my power or yours to win at the expense of the other losing. I respect your needs, but I also must respect my own. Consequently, let us strive always to search for solutions to our inevitable conflicts that will be acceptable to both of us. In this way, your needs will be met, but so will mine - no one will lose, both will win.

As a result, you can continue to develop as a person through meeting your needs, but so can I. Our relationship can always be a healthy one because it will be mutually satisfying. Thus, each of us can become what we are capable of being and can continue to relate to each other in mutual respect, friendship love and peace.

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## 5. Common prayers

*You have called Me by Name* (Joseph Tetlow sj.)

Oh, Lord my God,  
You called me from the sleep of nothingness  
merely because in your tremendous love  
you want to make good and beautiful beings.  
You have called me by my name in my mother's womb.  
You have given me breath and light and movement  
and walked with me every moment of my existence.  
I am amazed, Lord God of the universe,  
that you attend to me and, more, cherish me.  
Create in me the faithfulness that moves you,  
and I will trust you and yearn for you all my days.  
Amen.

### ***Soul of Christ***

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within thy wounds hide me.  
Permit me not to be separated from thee.  
From the wicked foe defend me.  
At the hour of my death call me.  
And bid me come to thee.  
That with thy saints I may praise thee.  
For ever and ever. Amen.

*Prayer for Generosity* (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do your will.

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### *The Pilgrimage Prayer*

God of Life, as Ignatian pilgrims on the Camino Ignaciano, we gather on the way of Saint Ignatius and turn to you in prayer. Give us generous hearts, Open to the graces with which you wish to bless us: the grace of joyful companionship with one another and with Jesus; the grace of deep spirituality, to grasp how wide and long, how high, and deep is the love of Christ; the grace of loving service in which you call us to give "more" of ourselves.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of ..... Pray for us  
Saint Ignatius of Loyola.... Pray for us  
Saint Peter Claver..... Pray for us

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### *Pilgrim's Blessing*

May the Lord bless and keep you,  
May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
May the Lord look kindly upon you and grant you peace.  
May He enlighten the eyes of your heart,  
So that you may understand the hope to which He calls you,  
And the treasure that awaits you.  
May He help you to overcome all obstacles in this Way and through life,  
And may He accept you to His loving service.

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## *Praying by breathing*

*Breathing along the Ignatian Way* (cf. X. Melloni, *El deseo esencial*)

Breathing is the basis of our life: oxygen is to the body what consciousness is to the mind and what spirit is to the soul: our vital energy source. Without oxygen our body would slowly become contaminated with toxins which would kill us. We breathe to stay alive, and we breathe because it is our life. Prayerful breathing is part of many spiritual traditions, including our Christian tradition.

The four moments of breathing are a metaphor for the essential dynamism of life: inhaling, retention, exhaling, emptiness. As we walk along our Way, our breathing can help us become conscious of how present life is to us. The inhaling should be deep, and the exhaling should last longer than the inhaling. The moments of pause, when we retain the inhaled air and again when our lungs are empty after exhaling, can vary in length, according to our walking pace, but we should be conscious of each moment.

These four phases are a metaphor for the meaning of our existence: receiving and giving, becoming aware of what we have received and experiencing ourselves as needy after giving generously of ourselves. The inhalation is the moment of receiving what we are: our life and our historical existence. We receive, and we become aware that we are receivers of life. The Way makes us receivers of our life. We feel humble in the recognition that we have “received” from others and from the Other. As we inhale, there is a first moment of amazement that places us in the Presence of the Divine Essence.

The retention of the inhaled air allows us a pause, in which we become aware of what we have received: we feel that life is within us and delight in it. Our aim is to unite our inner and outer selves; we want to feel that what used to be outside us now forms part of our very being. Exhalation is the moment of giving, of abandoning ourselves to what existed before us and will continue after us. Exhaling is learning to become detached. A long, profound exhalation helps us to understand that our ultimate meaning lies not in possessing ourselves but in sharing ourselves. The air we inhaled has taken on something of our being and now we share it with the universe. We feel ourselves part of the Whole, collaborators in a fullness of which we have also received.

The fourth phase of breathing, the emptiness that follows exhalation, invites us to desire that fullness which has been promised us and which we hope for. Out of our emptiness we earnestly long to be filled. Emptiness is the condition for receiving. In our emptiness we become aware of how needy we are, and so humility accompanies us on our Ignatian Way. Thanks to our breathing, we can make of our pilgrimage an experience of renunciation and collaboration, of breaking down and building up. Breathing helps us to become ever more aware of what our own Ignatian Way is communicating to us. Let’s breathe!

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## 6. Prayer Guide for the Ignatian Way

*How to begin the meditation?*

1. Begin the meditation by taking a few minutes to put yourself in the presence of God. That is, free yourself of all anxiety and any distractions that might bother you, such as thinking about what you’ll have for your next meal. A favorite piece of spiritual music might help you to get into the right state of soul for prayer, but as soon as you are there, turn off the music so that you can concentrate better on your Way. Spend a few minutes centering yourself just on the natural rhythm of your breathing, your steps, or the birds. Repeat some short prayer that centers you on the presence of God or on your being present in prayer with God.
2. Consider the introductory prayer of the Spiritual Exercises (which is the principal aim of the whole experience) and the special petition for the day.
3. Read the introductory text that provides the setting for the key themes of the day’s meditation.
4. Read the passage of scripture for the day, slowly. Then read it a second or even a third time, dwelling on various points of the day if you feel yourself drawn by them.

Don’t inject a lot of thinking into your prayer. Many people are tempted to make lists with lots of ideas, and then to combine the ideas with one another, and so on. Instead of this, see if you can let God speak with you. Allow him to reach you through prayer. It is important to be patient with yourself and with God. You should be ready to walk in all tranquility until the images, the ideas, or the thoughts begin to filter out. Ignatius says that we should “pause wherever fruit is found” – a very useful suggestion. You may feel attracted or struck by a phrase from scripture or by some idea. Stay there as long as seems

appropriate, savoring the fruit of your reflection. Distractions will inevitably arise – “I wonder what my friends are doing right now” – but just let them pass, without giving them much importance or keeping them in mind.

It will help to observe a regular schedule for prayer – for example, the first hour of each day’s walking. Or it could be a half hour in the morning and another half hour in the afternoon. You should be faithful to whatever schedule you decide on. Apart from the hours of formal prayer, you’ll keep having other related ideas, which you should welcome. For example, in the long stretches by the canals of the Ebro River, there may be moments when by analogy you feel yourself “floating spiritually” downstream. Enjoy those moments of closeness to nature and to God, who speaks to us through nature.

But don’t get obsessive, especially if you are meditating on something hurtful or difficult. A painful idea can get you into a vicious mental circle. Avoid this kind of trap, because it can exhaust you and turn you aside from your path. Sometimes this can happen even with “pious” ideas: Ignatius warns us that at times we may be tempted to stray from our path because of what appears to be a good idea. In other words, we can think about something that appears to be good, but in reality it only wears us down or carries us far from our intended route and the goal of the stage we are on.

5. End each period of prayer with the same formula. First and most important, we should be grateful. We should give thanks for the prayer time we just shared, for the communication that took place, for the other blessings of the day, and for the gifts of the pilgrimage, such as having the free time, the financial resources, the health, and the desire to journey as a pilgrim. End with an Our Father.

Write a daily journal. At the end of each day, or even after each period of prayer if you feel inclined to it, note down the key thoughts or ideas that moved you, the key images from the scriptures, and other meaningful details. A spiritual diary will help you recall and reflect on your experience at the very end of the Ignatian Way in Manresa. Or if you do the pilgrimage in stages, the journal will help you keep track of your experiences from year to year.

If you’re on pilgrimage with a small group, you may want to share with your companions the gifts or the ideas that have struck you most, BUT it is not recommended that you do it every day. Furthermore, such sharing does not mean debating or “intruding”: it should be a moment of communicating and of listening with respect to what God has been doing in the life of each participant. It is not a time to be “playing God” in someone else’s life. The way of the Exercises is essentially personal, something that happens between “the Creator and his creature.”

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### *The Introductory Prayer*

Following Ignatius Loyola, we suggest beginning each period of meditation with a preparatory prayer: *“The Preparatory Prayer is to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty”* (Spiritual Exercises 46).

This recommendation of Ignatius may be adapted to the personal circumstances of each pilgrim. Someone might say, for example, “Lord, may I live for you and not for myself. Let everything I do be solely for your service and praise and not for my own interests.” Or perhaps: “Lord, let the whole of my being turn toward you, let me not be separated from your will either consciously or unconsciously. Orient me completely toward you. Draw me to you.”

What the pilgrim asks for is a gift, a grace. What we are actually asking for is to know ourselves, so that in this self-knowledge we may be oriented toward that happiness which comes from living solely in the presence of God. We therefore ask that our intentions (desires, motivations), our actions (external works), and our activities (reflections, plans, questions, tastes) be oriented toward the Light of Life.

Through the constant repetition of this petition in the course of the Spiritual Exercises, we are creating a magnetic field that orients all our molecules toward the only true source of happiness. Little by little, step by step, the Ignatian Way becomes the Way toward our Origin, toward the God who impels us and attracts us, our beginning and end. The intangible Spirit exerts an orienting force within each pilgrim so that all his/her “intentions, actions, and operations” are for the “glory and praise” of Love.

One of the fruits of the Spiritual Exercises will be experiencing the peace of knowing that one is oriented toward complete happiness, which is already partially experienced now, as the pilgrim journeys along.

## 7. Daily prayers. Spiritual diary from Verdú to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

### **Day 1: Leaving Barcelona. Going to Verdú. Meeting Saint Peter Claver sj.**

**Notes:** Let us begin our journey calmly, taking up our subject seriously. It is very useful to spend some time reflecting on the Preparatory Prayer. If you find “depth” in some word or at some point, it is better not to move on, but to remain there, asking what the Spirit is saying and allowing it to speak to us in our heart. Ignatius tells us that “to know and taste something interiorly” is more important than knowing a lot about it.

Ask for the **Grace** you want for today: Lord, grant me the grace to feel your love in my life interiorly, and to be profoundly grateful for it.

**Reflections:** Spirituality has been defined as «*turning one’s journey through life into a journey towards God.*» We hope to transform our journey through Spain into a spiritual journey.

We begin by contemplating what surrounds us in these beautiful places near Verdú. We walk slowly, aware that it is a gift to be able to dedicate time to this encounter with God, with the world and ourselves. It is a privilege to be able to do these “exercises”! Let our hearts leap in gratitude as we begin our pilgrimage. The One who has loved us from the beginning and leads us in our lives is the One who has brought us here. With this conviction we begin our walk. God who is Father and Mother to us comes to meet us in every person and thing we see. May His presence fill us with gratitude.

#### **Scripture:**

Isaiah 55:1-11. God, in his love for me, invites me to come to Him.

«Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.»

Psalms 63. I respond to God by expressing my desire to meet him.

«O God, you are my God; early will I make my search for you: my soul is dry for need of you, my flesh is wasted with desire for you, as a dry and burning land where no water is; To see your power and your glory, as I have seen you in the holy place. Because your mercy is better than life, my lips will give you praise. So will I go on blessing you all my life, lifting up my hands in your name. My soul will be comforted, as with good food; and my mouth will give you praise with songs of joy; When the memory of you comes to me on my bed, and when I give thought to you in the night-time. Because you have been my help, I will have joy in the shade of your wings. My soul keeps ever near you: your right hand is my support. But those whose desire is my soul's destruction will go down to the lower parts of the earth. They will be cut off by the sword; they will be food for foxes. But the king will have joy in God; everyone who takes an oath by him will have cause for pride; but the false mouth will be stopped. »

**Final Colloquy:** Sum up what I have thought about or felt during my prayer, talking to Jesus as one friend does to another. Be frank with him about what you have experienced and felt (or not felt) during this stage of your walk with him.

#### **May I Be Worthy of Your Trust**

For some strange reason, Lord, you depend upon me.  
What possible need could you have for my shoulder?  
Why should you lean on me? Yet you do just that.  
I am grateful.

It is a challenge and a trust, an inspiration and a call to character.  
If you are willing to depend upon me,

<sup>1</sup> The biblical quotations are from <http://www.biblestudytools.com/esv/>

weak and clumsy as I am,  
I am eager not to fail you.  
Lean on me, dear Lord.  
At least pretend to find me a help.  
May your sweet pretense  
make me worthy of your very real trust.

-Daniel A . Lord SJ. *This prayer is from a series of prayerful reflections Daniel Lord made after he had been diagnosed with cancer.*

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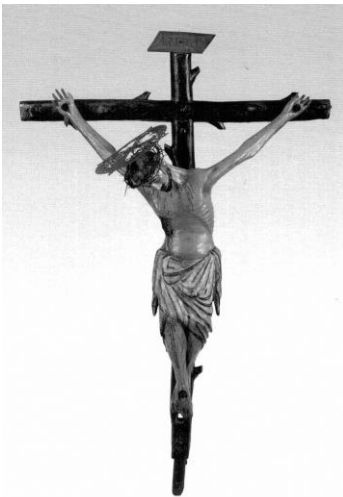
### What should be our Principle and Foundation in life?

The Principle and Foundation (paraphrased by David L. Fleming, sj.): St. Ignatius begins his *Spiritual Exercises* with *The First Principle and Foundation*. While not typically thought of as a prayer, it still contains much that is worth reflecting on.

*The Goal of our life is to live with God forever. God, who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts from God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.*

*But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal. In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.*

*Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want, and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.*



An example of this Principle and Foundation lived on a real life is a Jesuit, who was the saint patron of the Catalonian Jesuit Province. The extraordinary figure of Saint Peter Claver can be summed up in three stages.

1.- To begin, he was baptized on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1580, as it is shown in the Baptismal Registry kept in the Parish Archives in the town of Verdú. The good pastor added to the inscription these words: **"May God make him a good Catholic."** And thus, it was. Following his desire to become a priest, at the age of 17 he moved to Barcelona. There, at the age of 22, he entered the Society of Jesus. He was assigned to the Jesuit College in Palma de Mallorca, where he spent 3 years. While there, Alonso Rodriguez, the door keeper, who was known as a saintly person, became his friend and teacher. He influenced him greatly, and encouraged him to work in the American continent, discovered by Europeans in the previous century. So it was that Peter Claver sailed from Seville on April 15, 1610, and landed in Cartagena de Indias, in what is now known as Colombia.

2.- This was a dark time in history, stained by the injustice and cruelty of slavery. Peter Claver was a witness to the arrival of slave ships and saw how the slaves were treated. He began to go to the port when a ship arrived, welcoming them with an open heart and a smile on his lips, at the same time distributing clothing, food, drink and sweets. As he himself wrote, he spoke to them not with words but with his hands and work. It was useless to speak to them any other way. He would kneel beside the sick, wash them, tend to them, and try to make them happy with as many demonstrations of care that human nature can show to help lighten the burden of a sick person. His life was a beautiful example of human and evangelical love for his dear slaves. He cared for them materially, instructed them in the faith, and baptized them, always considering himself their servant. On April 3, 1622, he made a solemn commitment which he expressed with the following words: **"Slave of the Black Slaves forever."** He signed it and fulfilled it with his life.

3.- He was canonized by Pope Leo XIII, who said that **"since the life of Christ, no life had moved him so deeply as the life of Peter Claver"**.

He lived on earth in poverty and freedom, for 74 years, suffering with those who suffered, a white man among black men, always as a slave of the slaves. He was a Catalan of few words, but prodigious in heroism.

"Seek God in all things and we shall find God always by our side."

-St. Peter Claver SJ. (1580-1654). Encouraged by the advice of Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez SJ. to volunteer to work in the Americas, Peter Claver spent the remainder of his life in Cartagena (in present-day Colombia) teaching and ministering to the enslaved African, of whom it is said to have baptized over 300,000.

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Here you can write your thoughts of today:

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### **Day 2:**

**Notes:** We insist that it is very useful to devote some time to the introductory prayer, which expresses the fundamental objective of our inner pilgrimage. Remember that if you find “depth” in some a word or idea, it is better not to go further, but to remain there, allowing it to talk to us in depth. Today you are recommended pray with gratitude for everything in your life, for the gifts that you have received up to now and, last but not least, for being here!

**Grace:** Lord, grant me the grace to feel your love interiorly in my life, with profound thanksgiving.

**Reflections:** We devote a second day to delving prayerfully into the happy points in our life’s story. As you walk and pray recall moments of happiness and grace, especially those you now see as turning points in your life. Were there moments when you particularly felt God’s presence as you made a major choice, or moments in which you endured a major tribulation that you overcame with the help of God? Were there moments when you felt God was absent, times when you could not believe that God could be with you? Nonetheless, He was always there, as your best friend, as a tender Father, as a nurturing Mother. Take into your heart all those moments and feel filled with great gratitude for the persons and events in your past life: God is always at work in our surroundings. Why not present those moments and all those people to God and give thanks that they were His hands and His arms that held you?

### **Scripture:**

Luke 1, 46-55 With Mary, my soul glorifies the Lord.

Luke 12: 22-34 Lord, You know all my needs. I am not to worry.

**Final Colloquy:** Sum up your meditation in a spirit of prayer, talking to Mary as a son or daughter does to her or his mother. Now that you are close to her shrine, be open with her about what you have discovered during this stage of your journey.

### **Patient Trust**

Above all, trust in the slow work of God  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.  
And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time.

And so, I think it is with you  
your ideas mature gradually — let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don't try to force them on,

as though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)  
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

*-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ (1881-1955)*

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Your thoughts:

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*Day 3:*

**Notes:** We would like to insist on the importance of devoting some time to reflection on the introductory prayer. Remember what Ignatius tells us, that “to know and savor something interiorly” is more important than knowing a lot. So don’t be in a hurry. Today we begin to consider our Principle and Foundation, by reflecting on the purpose for which we were created. An overall vision is essential before going into detail later on.

**Grace:** Lord, grant me the grace to feel your love internally in my life, with profound thanksgiving. Help me, O Lord, to discover the foundation of my life, according to your will.

**Reflections:** We begin by recalling that our whole life has been a spiritual journey. As you walk today, devote some time to remembering again your own life story and letting your mind wander over it prayerfully. Recall your past and let God show you a sort of photo album of key moments in it, some painful, others joyful, which have brought you to this present stage of your life. Who am I? How have I reached this point in my life? What people, events or places have been influential in molding the person I now am? Let these images surface, along with whatever grateful, painful, or prayerful feelings go with them.

In contrast with the good ones, are there moments, people, or aspects of your life that cause feelings of embarrassment, which you want to disown and which you can’t imagine God accepting either. Present those moments to God, with a prayer for acceptance and growth. You don’t have to feel you have become completely reconciled or to “settle” anything today; the people and moments you have recalled and the feelings that have welled up can become matters for consideration and

prayer as you walk with God on this pilgrimage. We are experiencing the process of “holding our whole life up to God”, which may at times fill us with joy and gratitude, and at others with regret and shame. The graces we seek will be gratitude, understanding and acceptance of oneself, and realization that we are accepted by God. Think of yourself as “panning for gold,” sifting through the multitude of ideas that first come up until you find the “nugget”, the aspects of life where you may have something to learn or where you need to grow. God may be leading you to spend time reflecting on them.

**Scripture:**

Hosea 11,1-9. His love for me is a tender love.

«When Israel was a child, he was dear to me; and I took my son out of Egypt. When I sent for them, then they went away from me; they made offerings to the Baals, burning perfumes to images. But I was guiding Ephraim's footsteps; I took them up in my arms, but they were not conscious that I was ready to make them well. I made them come after me with the cords of a man, with the bands of love; I was to them as one who took the yoke from off their mouths, putting meat before them. He will go back to the land of Egypt and the Assyrian will be his king, because they would not come back to me. And the sword will go through his towns, wasting his children and causing destruction because of their evil designs. My people are given up to sinning against me; though their voice goes up on high, no one will be lifting them up. How may I give you up, O Ephraim? how may I be your savior, O Israel? how may I make you like Admah? how may I do to you as I did to Zeboim? My heart is turned in me, it is soft with pity. I will not put into effect the heat of my wrath; I will not again send destruction on Ephraim; for I am God and not man, the Holy One among you; I will not put an end to you.»

Psalms 139, 1-14.17-18. In awe and reverence, I remember how God has cared for me in times of joy and pain, in times of success and failure, in times of faithfulness and infidelity.

«O Lord, you have knowledge of me, searching out all my secrets. You have knowledge when I am seated and when I get up, you see my thoughts from far away. You keep watch over my steps and my sleep, and have knowledge of all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue which is not clear to you, O Lord. I am shut in by you on every side, and you have put your hand on me. Such knowledge is a wonder greater than my powers; it is so high that I may not come near it. Where may I go from your spirit? how may I go in flight from you? If I go up to heaven, you are there: or if I make my bed in the underworld, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and go to the farthest parts of the sea; Even there will I be guided by your hand, and your right hand will keep me. If I say, Only let me be covered by the dark, and the light about me be night; Even the dark is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day: for dark and light are the same to you. My flesh was made by you, and my parts joined together in my mother's body. I will give you praise, for I am strangely and delicately formed; your works are great wonders, and of this my soul is fully conscious. [...] How dear are your thoughts to me, O God! how great is the number of them! If I made up their number, it would be more than the grains of sand; when I am awake, I am still with you.»

Spiritual Exercises, 5. «It is very helpful if those who do the exercises begin them with great courage and generosity towards their Creator and Lord, offering Him all their love and freedom, so that his Divine Majesty may dispose of their person and all they have according to His holy will.»

**Final Colloquy:** Sum up what has come to mind in your time of prayer, talking to Jesus as one friend does to another. Be honest with him about what you have discovered on this stage of your journey.

**You have called me by my name**

Oh, Lord my God,  
You called me from the sleep of nothingness  
merely because in your tremendous Love  
you want to make good and beautiful beings.  
You have called me by my name in my mother's womb.  
You have given me breath and light and movement  
and walked with me every moment of my existence.  
I am amazed, Lord God of the universe,  
that you attend to me and, more, cherish me.  
Create in me the faithfulness that moves you,  
and I will trust you and yearn for you all my days.  
Amen.

-Joseph Tetlow SJ.

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*Day 4:*

**Notes:** We insist again on the need to devote some time to reflection on the introductory prayer. Remember as well what Ignatius tells us -- that "inner knowledge and inner savor" are more important than knowing much. So don't be in a hurry. Today we continue our consideration of our Principle and Foundation.

**Grace:** I beseech you, Lord, to direct all my actions by Your inspiration, to carry them on by Your gracious help, so that every intention and operation of mine may begin always from You and through You be happily ended.

**Reflections:** The previous meditations reminded you where you have been in your life and that God has been and always will remain a faithful presence in your life journey. Today our meditation shifts focus. We reflect on the wider panorama, the bigger and fuller picture of your life, the meaning of our human journey through life. What is God's plan for us humans? What is the purpose of our pilgrimage through this world? In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius gives a straightforward yet profound answer to those questions: *"God created us to praise reverence and serve Him and in this way to save our souls. God created all other creatures to help us achieve this purposes."*

This statement is simple yet profound. God created us for union with Him (to "save our souls," as Ignatius puts it). In this earthly life, we draw close to God by praise and gratitude for the wonders of this planet, by reverencing and showing deep respect for the persons and gifts God has created, and by serving God in our fellow men and women.

I attain full spiritual freedom when I am seized so completely by the love of God that all the desires of my heart and every action, affection, thought and decision which flows from them are directed to God my Father/Mother and His service and praise.

We begin by reflecting on the purpose of our lives: we know what a coffeemaker is for. What are human beings for?

**Scripture:**

Psalms 104. The God who calls me is the God who created me and who made everything else because He loves me.

«Give praise to the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great; you are robed with honour and power. You are clothed with light as with a robe; stretching out the heavens like a curtain: The arch of your house is based on the waters; you make the clouds your carriage; you go on the wings of the wind: He makes winds his angels, and flames of fire his servants. He has made the earth strong on its bases, so that it may not be moved for ever and ever; Covering it with the sea as with a robe: the waters were high over the mountains; At the voice of your word they went in flight; at the sound of your thunder they went away in fear; The mountains came up and the valleys went down into the place which you had made ready for them. You made a limit over which they might not go, so that the earth would never again be covered by them. You sent the springs into the valleys; they are flowing between the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the mountain asses come to them for water. The birds of the air have their resting-places by them, and make their song among the branches. He sends down rain from his store-houses on the hills: the earth is full of the fruit of his works. He makes the grass come up for the cattle, and plants for the use of man; so that bread may come out of the earth; And wine to make glad

the heart of man, and oil to make his face shining, and bread giving strength to his heart. The trees of the Lord are full of growth, the cedars of Lebanon of his planting; Where the birds have their resting-places; as for the stork, the tall trees are her house. The high hills are a safe place for the mountain goats, and the rocks for the small beasts. He made the moon for a sign of the divisions of the year; teaching the sun the time of its going down. When you make it dark, it is night, when all the beasts of the woods come quietly out of their secret places. The young lions go thundering after their food; searching for their meat from God. The sun comes up, and they come together, and go back to their secret places to take their rest. Man goes out to his work, and to his business, till the evening. O Lord, how great is the number of your works! in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of the things you have made. There is the great, wide sea, where there are living things, great and small, more than may be numbered. There go the ships; there is that great beast, which you have made as a plaything. All of them are waiting for you, to give them their food in its time. They take what you give them; they are full of the good things which come from your open hand. If your face is veiled, they are troubled; when you take away their breath, they come to an end, and go back to the dust. If you send out your spirit, they are given life; you make new the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be forever; let the Lord have joy in his works: At whose look the earth is shaking; at whose touch the mountains send out smoke. I will make songs to the Lord all my life; I will make melody to my God while I have my being. Let my thoughts be sweet to him: I will be glad in the Lord. Let sinners be cut off from the earth, and let all evil-doers come to an end. Give praise to the Lord, O my soul. Give praise to the Lord.»

Genesis 22:1-18. This text about Abraham's faith and freedom questions my own faith and freedom.

«Now after these things, God put Abraham to the test, and said to him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said to him, Take your son, your dearly loved only son Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and give him as a burned offering on one of the mountains of which I will give you knowledge. And Abraham got up early in the morning, and made ready his ass, and took with him two of his young men and Isaac, his son, and after the wood for the burned offering had been cut, he went on his way to the place of which God had given him word. And on the third day, Abraham, lifting up his eyes, saw the place a long way off. Then he said to his young men, keep here with the ass; and I and the boy will go on and give worship and come back again to you. And Abraham put the wood for the burned offering on his son's back, and he himself took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them went on together. Then Isaac said to Abraham, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, We have wood and fire here, but where is the lamb for the burned offering? And Abraham said, God himself will give the lamb for the burned offering: so they went on together. And they came to the place of which God had given him knowledge; and there Abraham made the altar and put the wood in place on it, and having made tight the bands round Isaac his son, he put him on the wood on the altar. And stretching out his hand, Abraham took the knife to put his son to death. But the voice of the angel of the Lord came from heaven, saying, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Let not your hand be stretched out against the boy to do anything to him; for now I am certain that the fear of God is in your heart, because you have not kept back your son, your only son, from me. And lifting up his eyes, Abraham saw a sheep fixed by its horns in the brushwood: and Abraham took the sheep and made a burned offering of it in place of his son. And Abraham gave that place the name Yahweh-yireh: as it is said to this day, In the mountain the Lord is seen. And the voice of the angel of the Lord came to Abraham a second time from heaven, saying, I have taken an oath by my name, says the Lord, because you have done this and have not kept back from me your dearly loved only son, that I will certainly give you my blessing, and your seed will be increased like the stars of heaven and the sand by the seaside; your seed will take the land of those who are against them; and your seed will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth, because you have done what I gave you orders to do.»

Mark 12:28-34. My Principle and Foundation is the Love of God.

**Final Colloquy:** Sum up what has come to mind in your time of prayer, talking to Jesus as one friend does to another. Be honest with him about what you have discovered on this stage of your journey.

## God of My Life

Only in love can I find you, my God.  
In love the gates of my soul spring open,  
allowing me to breathe a new air of freedom  
and forget my own petty self.  
In love my whole being streams forth  
out of the rigid confines of narrowness and anxious self-assertion,  
which makes me a prisoner of my own poverty and emptiness.  
In love all the powers of my soul flow out toward you,  
wanting never more to return,  
but to lose themselves completely in you,  
since by your love you are the inmost center of my heart,  
closer to me than I am to myself.

But when I love you,  
when I manage to break out of the narrow circle of self  
and leave behind the restless agony of unanswered questions,  
when my blinded eyes no longer look merely from afar  
and from the outside upon your unapproachable brightness,  
and much more when you yourself, O Incomprehensible One,  
have become through love the inmost center of my life,  
then I can bury myself entirely in you, O mysterious God,  
and with myself all my questions.

*-Karl Rahner SJ (1904-84) was a German Jesuit whose theological investigations and prayerful reflections supplied much of the vocabulary for post-Vatican II theology.*

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### **Some Ignatian hints for today: Autobiography of Ignatius: *Igualada***

*It appears that the town of Igualada is the place where Ignatius decided to buy his pilgrim garb, as described several years later:*

«Arriving at a large village not far from Montserrat, he decided to purchase a garment to wear on his journey to Jerusalem. He therefore bought a poorly-woven piece of sackcloth, filled with prickly wooden fibers. Out of this he made a garment that reached his feet. He also bought a pair shoes of coarse material often used to make brooms. He never wore but one shoe, not for the sake of the comfort he derived, but because this leg would be quite swollen from riding on horseback all day since for mortification, he wore a cord tied tightly just below the knee. For this reason, he felt he ought to wear a shoe on that foot. He also bought a pilgrim's staff and a gourd to drink from. These he tied to his saddle.»



*Let us pay close attention to this point. It may be helpful to reflect on all that we “carry with us” and anything else that is burdensome. What are my “good-looking clothes” and other “valuables” that I could “leave” at the feet of the Virgin of Montserrat? Is it possible for me to adopt a lifestyle more in keeping with the pilgrimage that we are making? For me, what would be the equivalent of a pilgrim’s sack cloth and sandals? What can I leave behind, and what do I not want to let go of? This journey has surely helped us to put many things into perspective and to question other realities. What do I leave permanently before the Virgin? Certainly not mere accessories, but rather anything that prevents me from following Jesus more closely — right?*

Engravings from 1805, by Alexandre de Laborde. Montserrat Monastery.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Amen.

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*Day 5: The presence of Mary and walking with Her in solidarity with Jesus (Vigil of prayer)*

**Notes:** We know already that it is very important to reflect on the introductory prayer. We should also bear in mind that we should not be in a hurry while meditating. Today we want to consider all the “means” that God employs to show us His Love, and the use to which we should put these “means”.

**Grace:** I beseech you, Lord, to direct all my actions by Your inspiration, to carry them on by Your gracious help, so that every intention and operation of mine may begin always from You and through You be happily ended.

**Reflections:** Today we reflect further on our human life and how to live in order to achieve its purpose well. Specifically we consider more deeply this sentence from the Exercises of St Ignatius: *«The other things on the face of the earth were created for humans, to help them in pursuing the end for which they were created.»* Here’s how Ignatius reveals some of the challenging implications of that sentence: *«We ought to use these things to the extent that they help us towards our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it. To attain this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things, so that we do not to seek wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short one, and so on. Rather, we ought to desire and choose only that which is most conducive to the end for which we were created.»*

Being ‘indifferent,’ in Ignatius’s words, means being ‘free’: that is we are free from being so attached, addicted, enslaved or bewitched by any created or merely human thing that it gets in the way of living according to our purpose. That is, we do not want to become so obsessed with living a successful earthly life that our life becomes about serving ourselves and not serving God and following His plan. We want to be free from anything that could prevent us from being free for our true purpose. We want to put the love of God above any merely human love. We want to live a balanced, ordered life: a life in which we have a proper relationship with other persons, with money and with things, so that we don’t become enslaved by an attachment to any of them. While created things can help us achieve our purpose, they can also distract us from it if we become focused on them rather than on our greater purpose. We shouldn’t confuse earthly ambitions with the purpose of life and allow them to take the place of God.

Make a list of people you admire in this regard. What is it that you admire in them? Maybe you can picture holy people of the past or people you know now, whose lives show this healthy balance and freedom. This is not the time to judge yourself

on where you may be falling short (you will reflect on your own performance later). For the moment, we are trying to develop a clear sense of purpose, and a clear sense of the ideals we want to aspire to in our life.

**Scripture:**

Psalm 8. What is a frail human, that you should be mindful of him?

«O Lord, our Lord, whose glory is higher than the heavens, how noble is your name in all the earth! You have made clear your strength even out of the mouths of babies at the breast, because of those who are against you; so that you may put to shame the cruel and violent man. When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have put in their places; What is man, that you keep him in mind? the son of man, that you take him into account? For you have made him only a little lower than the gods, crowning him with glory and honour. You have made him ruler over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet; All sheep and oxen, and all the beasts of the field; The birds of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatever goes through the deep waters of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how noble is your name in all the earth!»

Romans 8: 5-6; 12-18. All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Philippians 1:21-26; 3:7-16; 4:10-13. Here and now, how closely can I identify with the attitude of Saint Paul?

**Final Colloquy:** Sum up what has come to mind in your time of prayer, talking to Jesus as one friend does to another. Be honest with him about what you have discovered on this stage of your journey.

**Perfect Resignation by St. Joseph Pignatelli SJ**

My God,  
I do not know what must come to me today.  
But I am certain that nothing can happen to me that you have not foreseen,  
decreed, and ordained from all eternity.  
That is sufficient for me.  
I adore your impenetrable and eternal designs,  
to which I submit with all my heart.  
I desire, I accept them all,  
and I unite my sacrifice to that of Jesus Christ, my divine Savior.  
I ask in his name and through his infinite merits, patience in my trials,  
and perfect and entire submission to all that comes to me by your good pleasure. Amen.

*-St. Joseph Pignatelli SJ (1737-1811) remained faithful to his Jesuit vocation even after the Society of Jesus was suppressed in 1773. Trusting in the providence of God, he found many ways to keep in contact with the dispersed members of the Society. The Society of Jesus was restored on August 7, 1814, by Pope Pius VII.*



Church of the Monastery in 1805, before the destruction of the Napoleon Troops.

**Some Ignatian hints** for today:  
Autobiography of Saint Ignatius,  
*Montserrat*

*In Montserrat we are a very special place for Ignatius of Loyola and many other pilgrims of his time. The mountain of Montserrat is recognized by many as a place of great spiritual presence. Called “Magic Mountain” by some, tradition remembers it as a place where the presence of the Spirit is “natural.” Let each of us be carried forward by the flow of this same spiritual force as was Ignatius.*

*Let us present to the Black Madonna our personal offering to follow Jesus, with great freedom of heart for his greater service.*

«He continued on his journey to Montserrat, thinking as usual of the great deeds he was going to do for the love of God. As his mind was filled with the adventures of Amadis of Gaul and such books, thoughts about these adventures came to his mind. He determined, therefore, to spend the entire night in a watch of arms, without ever sitting or lying down, but standing a while and then kneeling before the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat. There he would lay aside his fine attire and clothe himself with the armor of Christ. When he arrived at Montserrat, he spent a long time in prayer. With the consent of his confessor, he spent three whole days writing a general confession of his sins. With the permission of his confessor, he arranged to give up his horse and to hang up his sword and his dagger in the church, at the altar of Our Lady. This confessor was the first person he talked about his resolution to devote himself to the spiritual life. Up to then he had not revealed this purpose to any confessor.

On the eve of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady, March 24 in the year 1522, he approached a beggar. He removed his costly clothes and gave them to this man. He then put on the pilgrim's robe he had previously bought and went to kneel before the altar of Our Lady. Alternating between kneeling and standing, he spent the entire night with his staff in hand. »

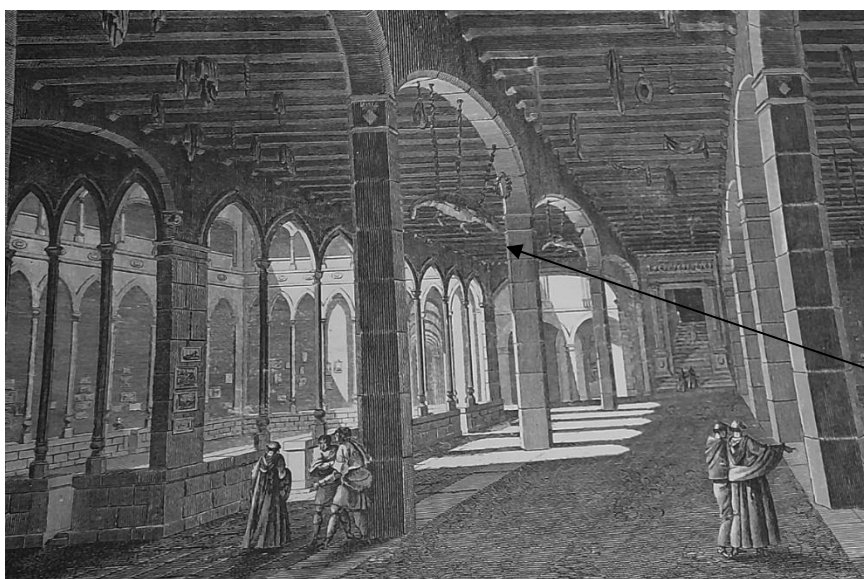
*Spend a longer period of prayer in the chapel of the Virgin of Montserrat. Pray with the text of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, begging God to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives, all for the greater glory of God. Here we also change our old clothes and put on those which we "discovered" in Igualada: a new life needs new clothes! What do I leave behind here in Montserrat? What am I going to bring back home?*

*The Basilica of Montserrat was destroyed and rebuilt at various times in its history, following the rhythm of the wars that plagued the region. Each time the church was rebuilt a little further back, closer to the mountain. At the entrance portico by the atrium of the current church, near the statue of Ignatius, you will see a black circle on the ground with a worn quote written on the floor that reminds us that it was here that Ignatius made his offering to the Virgin.*

## A Prayer of Reconciliation

Lord Christ, help us to see what it is  
that joins us together, not what separates us.  
For when we see only what it is that makes us different,  
we too often become aware of what is wrong with others.  
We see only their faults and weaknesses,  
interpreting their actions as flowing from malice or hatred rather than fear.  
Even when confronted with evil, Lord,  
you forgave and sacrificed yourself rather than sought revenge.  
Teach us to do the same by the power of your Spirit.

-William Breault SJ, is a writer and artist who resides in California. He has published books of prayerful reflections.



Cloister with ex-vows of the Montserrat monastery before its destruction in 1811. There we can observe the presence of a dragon, a dissected Komodo dragon that hangs from the ceiling, an offering that was deposited by a devotee Catalan sailor to Our Lady of Montserrat in the middle of the 16th century.



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*Day 6: going down to Manresa, with the Joy of the Spirit*

**Notes:** Great joy stays with us during this stage of the “outer” journey. The long-cherished goal of Manresa is at hand! Remember the “introductory prayer” and the final colloquy both at the end of the prayer and also during the day. May our hearts be filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit here in Montserrat and going down to Manresa, and may the Spirit’s strength go with us on this milestone day in our lives. The Ignatian path for today invites us to continue our inner pilgrimage.

**Grace:** I beg God that I may rejoice deeply with Christ since I have also been sent into the world to serve His mission. I pray to receive the Holy Spirit so I can better accompany Jesus in His mission to reconcile the world and bring life to all persons.

**Reflections:** Every day the Spirit of God confirms us in the mission we have received from Christ. Moreover, the same Spirit remains with us and strengthens us in any difficulties that come our way. We follow the dynamics of previous days: Jesus, our Principle and Foundation, the true King, invites us to accompany him in his conquest of good against the absurd destruction of all that is human. The Spirit strengthens us in our journey across the world, preaching the Good News.

The Spirit breaks down barriers and opens pathways. The Spirit creates fraternity, creates community, and brings forth the Image of God in the world. The Spirit awakens us, enlightens us, and removes our deafness and blindness. The Spirit launches us and pushes us forward and does not allow us to sit still for very long. The Spirit challenges us, pulls us away from our creature comforts, and breaks through our well-planned schemes. The Spirit fills us with compassion, love, and the desire for solidarity. The Spirit raises us up, helps us to dream, and exalts us. In the Spirit we can hope for everything, we can bear everything, we can accomplish everything. The Spirit is the actual presence of God in our daily lives.

Since the beginning of our pilgrimage we have been “breathing in” the Spirit. Today we beg for a deep awareness of the Holy Spirit’s presence within us. Where do I find the Spirit working within me? Within others? Do I recognize the “action” of the Spirit within the world? Remember to beg for this important grace.

**Scripture:**

John 16:5-15. I recall the words of Jesus about the work of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-21. The promise of the Spirit’s coming is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 10:44-48. While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came down upon all those who were listening. The work of evangelization had begun. I ask to embrace this challenge with energy and commitment.

Luke 4:14-20. Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the power of the Spirit. I pray that my return home will also be filled with the Spirit. I need God's Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of God's Kingdom.

**Final colloquy:** At this stage of our interior pilgrimage, we are accustomed to walk with our friend and Lord, Jesus Christ, speaking freely as one friend does with another. Conclude with the "Our Father."

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### **Some Ignatian hints** for today: Autobiography of Saint Ignatius: *Manresa*

*We are now on the road to Manresa, with a new outfit and a deep inner desire to do everything for the greater glory of God. Yet we also experience quite strongly that good resolves are never easy, even when they are made with best intentions of the heart.*

«After receiving the Blessed Sacrament, he left at daybreak. To avoid being recognized he avoided the direct route that leads to Barcelona since he might have met those who knew him and honored him. Instead, he took a byway that led him to a town called Manresa. Here he decided to stay a few days in the hospital and to write down some notes in a small book which for his own consolation he very carefully carried with him. About three miles from Montserrat, he was overtaken by a man who came after him in great haste. This man asked whether he had given some clothing to a poor man, as the man said he had. The Pilgrim answered that he had in fact given them to a beggar. When he learned that this man had been ill-treated because he was suspected of stealing the clothes, the Pilgrim's eyes filled with tears of compassion for this beggar. And no matter how much he tried to avoid praise and esteem, it did not take long in Manresa before people began telling great things about him because of what happened at Montserrat. His reputation increased day by day. It was not long before people were saying more than was true, declaring that he had given up a large fortune, and similar things that were not factual. »

*The "some days" that Ignatius first planned to spend in Manresa became more than ten months of personal growth. God was in no hurry with him and, thanks be to God, Ignatius was not overly eager to leave this city that welcomed him with open arms despite his eccentricities. The Ignatian pilgrim may well want to imitate some qualities of this "converted gentleman." Perhaps it is time to stop at a barber shop to get a good haircut.*

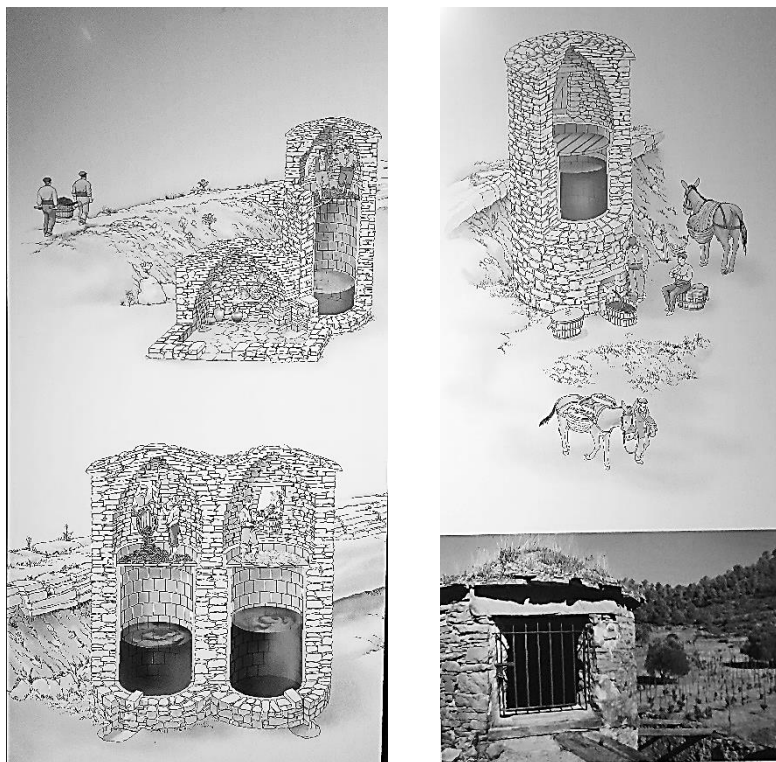
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### **The Sunflower by Leslie Savage** (an Ignatian pilgrim)

*Walking through a beautiful garden surrounding a labyrinth, I came upon a sole sunflower, so poetic and beautiful in its reverence to the sun. Its solid, firm stem of strength and radiant yellow petals streaming outward from a rich brown center facing directly into the sun took my breath away. It seemed to worship its connection to this life source, energy for its existence.*

*It seemed unabashed, bold, uninhibited, and strong, showing its devotion to God, its creator and life source – reverent, open, and exposed in its worship. The image of the sunflower connected to something so powerful in me that I cannot refute this same connection to the Divine. Like the sunflower that so boldly admits and submits without shame that its alignment and dependence for life is the sun, it spiritually mirrors my inner connection and dependence on the Divine as my life source.*

*Have you realized that we have a sunflower at the entrance of The Cave of Saint Ignatius? Have you realized that our Ignatian Sun of the Ignatian Way is our Sunflower as well?*



Production of wine close to the vineyards

### Day 7: Manresa

**Notes:** Today we begin to consider the presence of evil in our lives. We are called to feel the pain of our sinful ways. It is a “gloomy day”, when we discover that serious reality. Ignatius asks us to be in that mood during our meditation, our walk, our day. The Jesuits have defined themselves as follows: *«What is it to be a Jesuit? It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was. What is it to be a companion of Jesus today? It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and the struggle for justice which it includes.»* (General Congregation 32:11-12)

**Grace:** Having become aware of the purpose for which I was created and of the vocation to which God invites me, I beg Him for a deeply felt understanding of the sin in me and of the disordered tendencies in my life, so that I may feel shame and confusion, and turn to Him for healing and forgiveness.

**Reflections:** Today we will pray for the grace of a deeper understanding of the reality of our sinful world. Today we take on an uncomfortable, awkward reality: My own sin. That we are sinners is true not only of reprobate criminals: each of us is a sinner, starting with the Pope down to whatever disgraced reprobate occupies this morning’s news. Each of us has habitual patterns of rebellion against God’s plan: what are mine? One psalm declares, “The Lord hears the cry of the poor.” What about me? Are there ways in which I have habitually not listened to “those in need” who have crossed my path: the poor, elderly, unpopular, marginalized, etc.? Have there been ways in which I have used or abused other persons in order to satisfy my own need for attention, money, sex, approval, comfort?

Today we seek the grace of understanding our own sinfulness. Too often, our culture “anesthetizes” us from taking responsibility for our own false way of thinking and our wrongdoing. Aristotle once declared that the “unexamined life is not worth living.” We need to scrutinize our shortcomings and habitual failings: the pockets of darkness in our lives, the habits which have become “normal”. The ones which drag us down and hold us back from living in proper relationship with God, others and God’s world. We might pray to God for the courage to discover our blind spots, to confront ourselves and our sinfulness, in order to abhor it.

Be sure to talk to God and Jesus. To feel abandoned in our sin is exactly the opposite of the grace we seek for this day. Our sinfulness should not leave us wallowing in self-pity or depressed; rather, we pray for exactly the opposite grace—a sense of wonder and gratitude that I am a “sinner who is loved,” so loved by God that He gave His only begotten Son for me, so loved that, although He knows fully the extent of my sins, His love remains undimmed and His desire for partnership and friendship with me is utterly unchanged. From his own experience here in Manresa, Ignatius invites me to experience genuine shame for my sinfulness, coupled with great wonder that I am still here and alive: the wonder that I am a sinner but also loved and redeemed. I seek an *inner healing*, knowing that I am a sinner who is loved.

**Scripture:**

Luke 15:1-7. Jesus receives sinners and eats with them.

Luke 5:1-11. I say to Jesus: Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinner!

2Cor 12:8-10. When I am weak, then I am strong.

**Final Colloquy:** *«Imagining Christ our Lord before me, hanging on a cross, speak to Him, asking Him how the Creator became man for me, and came from eternal life to temporal death, and so died for my sins. Likewise, looking at myself, ask what I have done for Christ, what I am doing for Christ, what I should do for Christ; and so, seeing Him like this, hanging on the cross, discuss what occurs to me. The dialogue is held as one friend speaks to another, or a servant to his Master; sometimes asking for some grace, sometimes blaming myself for some wrong, sometimes discussing my affairs and asking advice about them. Conclude by saying an Our Father. »*

**Prayer for New Life through Death to Sin**

Through your most holy passion and death,  
I beg of you, Lord, to grant me a most holy life,  
and a most complete death to all my vices  
and passions and self-love,  
and to grant me sight of your holy faith, hope and charity.

*-St. Alphonsus Rodriguez SJ (1531-1617) was a Spanish Jesuit lay brother and spiritual director. Under his influence, Peter Claver, who lived with him for some time at Majorca, followed his advice in asking for the missions of South America.*

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**Some Ignatian hints** for today: Autobiography of Saint Ignatius: *Ignatius the sinner ... and yet loved by God*

Although he had fled so anxiously from the praise of men, he did not remain long at Manresa before many marvelous things were narrated of him. This fame arose from what had occurred at Montserrat. His reputation increased day by day. Men vied with each other in adding some particulars about his sanctity, declaring that he had abandoned immense revenues, and other wonderful things without much regard to real facts.

At Manresa he lived on the alms that he daily begged. He never ate meat nor partook of wine, though they were offered him. On Sundays, however, he never fasted, and if wine were offered him, he drank of it sparingly. In former days he had been very careful of his hair, which he had worn, and, indeed, not unbecomingly, in the fashionable manner of the young men of his age; but now he determined to cease to care for it, neither to comb it nor to cut it, and to dispense with all covering for his head both day and night. To punish himself for the too great nicety which he had formerly had in the care of his hands and feet, he now resolved to neglect them.

It was while he was living at the hospital at Manresa that the following strange event took place. Very frequently on a clear moonlight night there appeared in the courtyard before him an indistinct shape which he could not see clearly enough to tell what it was. Yet it appeared so symmetrical and beautiful that his soul was filled with pleasure and joy as he gazed at it. It had something of the form of a serpent with glittering eyes, and yet they were not eyes. He felt an indescribable joy steal over him at the sight of this object. The oftener he saw it, the greater was the consolation he derived from it, and when the vision left him, his soul was filled with sorrow and sadness.

Up to this period he had remained in a constant state of tranquility and consolation, without any interior knowledge of the trials that beset the spiritual life. But during the time that the vision lasted, sometimes for days, or a little previous to that time, his soul was violently agitated by a thought that brought him no little uneasiness. There flashed upon his mind the idea of the difficulty that attended the kind of life he had begun, and he felt as if he heard someone whispering to him, "How can you keep up for seventy years of your life these practices which you have begun?" Knowing that this thought was a temptation of the evil one, he expelled it by this answer: "Can you, wretched one, promise me one hour of life?" In this manner he overcame the temptation, and his soul was restored to peace. This was his first trial besides what has already been narrated, and it came upon him suddenly one day as he was entering the church. He was accustomed to hear Mass daily, and to assist at Vespers and Compline—devotions from which he derived much consolation. During Mass, he always read over the history of the Passion, and his soul was filled with a joyful feeling of uninterrupted calm.

Shortly after the temptation just spoken of, he began to experience great changes in his soul. At one time he was deprived of all consolation, so that he found no pleasure in vocal prayer, in hearing Mass, or in any spiritual exercise. At another, on the contrary, he suddenly felt as if all sorrow and desolation were taken from him, experiencing the relief of one from whose shoulders a heavy cloak had suddenly been lifted. On noticing all this, he was surprised, wondering what could be the import of these changes which he had never before experienced, and he said to himself, "What new kind of life is this upon which I am entering?"

He was in constant anxiety [thinking about his past life]. At that time he lived in the Dominican monastery, in a little cell which the Fathers had allotted to him. He kept up his usual custom of praying on bended knees for seven hours a day, and scourged himself three times a day and during the night. But all this did not remove his scruples, which had been tormenting him for months. One day, when terribly tormented, he began to pray. During his prayer, he cried out to God in a loud voice: "O Lord, help me, for I find no remedy among men, nor in any creature! If I thought I could find one, no labor would seem too great to me. Show me some one! O Lord! where may I find one? I am willing to do anything to find relief."

While tortured by these thoughts, several times he was violently tempted to cast himself out of the large window of his cell. This window was quite near the place where he was praying. But since he knew that it would be a sin to take his own life, he began to pray, "O Lord, I will not do anything to offend Thee." He repeated these words frequently with his former prayer, when there came to his mind the story of a certain holy man, who, to obtain of God some favor which he ardently desired, spent many days without food, until he obtained the favor he asked. He determined to do the same. He resolved in his heart neither to eat nor drink until God should look upon him in mercy, or until he should find himself at the point of death; then only should he eat.

This resolution was taken on a Sunday after communion, and for a whole week he neither ate nor drank anything; in the meantime he practiced his usual penances, recited the Divine Office, prayed on bended knees at the appointed times, and rose at midnight. On the following Sunday, when about to make his usual confession, as he had been in the habit of making known to his confessor everything he had done, even the smallest detail, he told him that he had not eaten anything during the past week. Hereupon his confessor bade him break his fast. Although he felt that he still had sufficient strength to continue without food, nevertheless he obeyed his confessor, and on that day and the next he was free from scruples. On the third day, however, which was Tuesday, while standing in prayer, the remembrance of his sins came back to him. One suggested another, until he passed in review, one after another, all his past sins. He then thought he ought to repeat his general confession. After these thoughts a sort of disgust seized him, so that he felt an inclination to give up the life he was leading. While in this state, God was pleased to arouse him as it were from sleep, and to relieve him of his trouble. As he had acquired some experience in the discernment of spirits, he profited by the lessons he had learned of God, and began to examine how that spirit had entered into possession of his soul; then he resolved never again to speak of his past sins in confession. From that day he was free from scruples, and felt certain that it was the will of our merciful Lord to deliver him from his trouble of soul.

Besides the seven hours devoted to prayer, he spent a portion of his time in assisting souls who came to him for advice. During the rest of the day he gave his thoughts to God, pondering on what he had read or meditated that day. When he retired, it often happened that wonderful illuminations and great spiritual consolations came to him, so that he abridged the short time he had already allotted to sleep. Once while thinking over this matter he concluded that he had given sufficient time for conversation with God, and that moreover the whole day was also given to Him. Then he began to doubt whether these illuminations were from the Good Spirit. Finally he came to the conclusion that it would be better to give up a portion and to give sufficient time to sleep. This he did.

At that period God dealt with him as a teacher instructing a pupil. Was this on account of his ignorance or dullness, or because he had no one else to teach him? Or on account of the fixed resolve he had of serving God, with which God Himself had inspired him, for the light given him could not possibly be greater? He was firmly convinced, both then and afterward, that God had treated him thus because it was the better spiritual training for him.

*Ignatius lived a process here in Manresa: how do you feel about your own process? How about the sin in our lives? Can the story of Ignatius bring some light to your own inner path?*

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#### RAPTURE – ECSTASY OF ÍÑIGO DE LOYOLA

Be Still, My Soul (Kathrina von Schlegel,  
translated into English by Jane Borthwick  
(1855))



Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in ev'ry change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'nly friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul; your God will undertake  
to guide the future as he has the past;  
your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;  
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know  
His voice who ruled them while he lived below.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning on  
when we shall be forever with the Lord,  
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still my soul; when change and tears are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Psalm 23:

The Lord takes care of me as his/her son/daughter; I will not be without any good thing.

He makes a resting-place for me in the green fields; he is my guide by the quiet waters.

He gives new life to my soul: he is my guide in the ways of righteousness because of his name.

Yes, though I go through the valley of deep shade, I will have no fear of evil; for you are with me, your rod and your support are my comfort.

You put oil on my head; my cup is overflowing.

Truly, blessing and mercy will be with me all the days of my life;

and I will have a place in the house of the Lord all my days.

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*Day 8:*

**Notes:** We continue considering the presence of evil in life, but now we look at the evil in the world. We try to become aware of our own faults and the faults of our people and the society at large. Ignatius advises again us to keep a “gloomy day”, as an aid to discovering the sin in our world and experiencing its reality. So, we maintain that “sad mood” for meditation, to help us get better into this consideration of evil.

**Grace:** Aware of the end for which I was created and of the call which God makes to me, I beg Him for a deeply felt understanding of the sins of the world and of the disordered tendencies in my life, so that I may feel shame and confusion, and turn to Him for healing and forgiveness.

**Reflections:** In past days we have been reflecting on God’s plan for humans and the harmony that results when our relationships to other people and the world are in good order. Today we reflect on the reality of sin: that is that there is gross disorder in our world. Sin is not just an accident or a mistake. Rather, sin means that people are deliberately choosing to bring disorder and chaos into their own and others’ lives because of some gross attachment: the salesperson who cheats customers to enrich himself, the pimp who sells children into sex slavery, the government official who steals money and allows citizens to live in squalor, the spouse whose children don’t get the love they deserve, the politician who lies and cheats for the sake of power.....

Reflect today not so much on your own personal history as a sinner, but on the harsh, cruel reality of sin in our world and the disorder, pain, and chaos it causes. Sin has consequences. Reflect as well on the reality of Christ hanging on the cross, an image that is enshrined at the center, above the altar in every Catholic Church. Christ entered history and suffered in response to human sinfulness, to redeem humans and show them a better path. Try to appreciate what our culture has lost today: an awareness of the reality of sin. Call to mind images of our World in Pain, suffering because of the injustice that is at work in nearly every relationship and human interchange. Go through the economic crisis and its causes. Think of the roots of sin and selfishness in the World. As you walk along, pray to have a clear vision of the Sin at work without shame in our lives. And pray that you will feel the disorder in your own life and the shame of it.

**Scripture:**

Jeremiah 18:1-10. The clay vessel he was making was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel.

«The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Up! go down to the potter's house, and there I will let my words come to your ears. Then I went down to the potter's house, and he was doing his work on the stones. And when the vessel, which he was forming out of earth, got damaged in the hand of the potter, he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O Israel, am I not able to do with you as this potter does? says the Lord. See, like earth in the potter's hand are you in my hands, O Israel. Whenever I say anything about uprooting a nation or a kingdom and smashing it and sending destruction on it; If, in that very minute, that nation of which I was talking is turned away from its evil, my purpose of doing evil to them will be changed. And whenever I say anything about building up a nation or a kingdom, and planting it; If, in that very minute, it does evil in my eyes, going against my orders, then my good purpose, which I said I would do for them, will be changed. »

1 John 1:5-2:2. If we say, “We are without sin,” we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we acknowledge our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.

**Final Colloquy:** «*Imagining Christ our Lord before me nailed to the Cross, to ask why the Creator became man and from eternal life came to temporal death, so as to die for my sins. Likewise, looking at myself, ask what I have done for Christ, what I am doing for Christ, what I should do for Christ; and seeing Him like this hanging on the cross, I reflect on what occurs to me. The Conversation/Prayer is made speaking as one friend speaks to another, or a servant to his Master, asking for some grace, or blaming myself for some wrong, or bringing my concerns before Him and asking for advice about them. Conclude by saying an Our Father.*»

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**Some Ignatian hints** for today: Autobiography of Saint Ignatius: *Ignatius and his Great Illumination – the Cardoner experience*



One day he went to the Church of St. Paul, situated about a mile from Manresa. Near the road is a stream, on the bank of which he sat, and gazed at the deep waters flowing by. While seated there, the eyes of his soul were opened. He did not have any special vision, but his mind was enlightened on many subjects, spiritual and intellectual. So clear was this knowledge that from that day everything appeared to him in a new light. Such was the abundance of this light in his mind that all the divine helps received, and all the knowledge acquired up to his sixty-second year, were not equal to it.



From that day he seemed to be quite another man and possessed of a new intellect. This illumination lasted a long time.



While kneeling in thanksgiving for this grace, there appeared to him that object which he had often seen before but had never understood. It seemed to be something most beautiful, and, as it were, gleaming with many eyes. This is how it always appeared.

There was a cross near which he was praying, and he noticed that near the cross the vision had lost some of its former beautiful color. He understood from this that the apparition was the work of the devil, and whenever the vision appeared to him after that, as it did several times, he dispelled it with his staff.



Ignacio had arrived in Manresa arrogant and ignorant of the things of God. He arrived experiencing a strong self-centeredness, and with great confidence in his own abilities and possibilities. He left Manresa humble and confident in the value of discerning spirits and in his ability to help others find God in their lives. The internal pilgrimage of the eleven months in Manresa is founding and will be collected later in a pedagogical way in his "Spiritual Exercises".

In mid-February the Pilgrim leaves the city and sets out for Barcelona, passing through Viladordis. In the port of Barcelona he hopes to find a boat to go to Italy. From Manresa to Pont de Vilomara, Ignacio will make the journey accompanied by many people, friends and admirers who do not want him to leave. It is a path that they take together, remembering the year they have lived together.

Arriving in Viladordis, Ignacio went to the church of Nuestra Señora de la Salud and left her his rope belt, saying: *"My Lady, I have offered you my weapons in Montserrat, and I gave my clothes to a poor man. I only have the belt left, which I give you now at this moment"* and he asked the Marcetes family, from the house near the church, to keep that offering, which he left as a memory of the help received in that place from the Virgin and by the hand of that family. Tradition says that Ignacio told them that if they kept the belt and continued helping the poor, that family would not lack anything to live with dignity.

The farewell is certainly very emotional: Íñigo left Loyola-Azpeitia almost without saying goodbye, so as not to explain himself, and now that he says goodbye in front of everyone, he doesn't know what to say either. They say that *« upon reaching the bridge in the town of Vilomara, unable to speak due to emotion, he placed his left hand over his heart, while with his right he pointed to the sky, as if to say: "As long as I live, I will take you inside my heart. When I am in heaven, I will always pray for you". »* And crossing the bridge with his friend's priest, Pujol, and with a few crusts of bread stuffed into the bag that the Amigants had given him, he left his friends to follow Jesus on his way to Rome.

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#### Day 9:

**Notes:** We are still considering the presence of evil in our lives, but today in an entirely different way. We now open ourselves to the mercy of our Father. Ignatius invites us to experience the wonder to be felt when, in spite of the reality of our own sin, we come face to face with the infinite mercy of God. Today our attitude on our Walk is that of a repentant sinner, but above all of a sinner who is immensely loved.

**Grace:** Dear Father, I ask you for the gift of an interior, felt knowledge of my sinfulness so that I may experience also your love for me, as well as a growing desire to turn towards you and a renewed enthusiasm for following Jesus.

**Reflections:** You have reflected on the reality of human sin and your own sinfulness. Today you are invited to reflect on the awesome reality of God's mercy. You are loved and forgiven, completely. "Repent and believe the Good News." The two go hand in hand. That is, we first accept the reality of our sinfulness and repent truly that we have brought disharmony and disorder to our own life and to the world. We then believe the Good News: God is merciful, always has been and always will be. What ultimately matters is not that we are faithful to God (none of us is capable of complete fidelity) but that God is faithful to us. It is the same God who accompanies you: at your best moments, when you behave well and earn praise from all sides and at your most shameful moments, when you know there is good reason for you to be disgraced. You cannot earn God's love, and you do not have to! God's love is freely given, so freely given that seems impossible to us! The father in the

parable, though he has every reason to be angry, harbors no resentment. His younger son has offended him and squandered what he worked so hard to accumulate, a thing we humans find almost impossible to accept. Indeed, the elder son cannot accept the forgiving attitude of the father.

In your life as sinner, you are not alone. You are forgiven. You are loved. And this is what drives us to repentance, to the desire to make amends. But we must know that we need God's grace to repent and desire to do so: we do not know and follow the right way by our own wisdom and strength. Ask Jesus. Pray that you may be willing and able to accept fully what God offers so freely: forgiveness. We humans often go through life saddled with crippling guilt. God asks us instead to walk in freedom.

**Scripture:**

Luke 15: 11-32. This son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.

Luke 5: 17-26. When Jesus saw their faith he said (*to the paralytic*), "Your sins are forgiven."

John 8: 2-11. And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and do not sin again."

Romans 5: 1-8. God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

**Final Colloquy:** I talk to Jesus as one friend does to another, experiencing with growing feeling the wonder of being alive at this moment, and feeling that I live in a world that is called to be saved by the love of God. I contemplate its creation and history. Then, after meditating on the destruction of sin, I speak with Jesus about the grace of the forgiveness I have received. It is a dialogue about mercy, in which I reflect and give thanks to God our Lord, because he has given me life until now, and I propose with His grace to amend my life from now on. To conclude, I say a heartfelt *Our Father*.

**An Act of Contrition**

My God, I love you above all things  
and I hate and detest with my whole soul  
the sins by which I have offended you,  
because they are displeasing in your sight,  
who are supremely good and worthy to be loved.  
I acknowledge that I should love you  
with a love beyond all others,  
and that I should try to prove this love to you.  
I consider you in my mind as infinitely greater than everything in the world,  
no matter how precious or beautiful.  
I therefore firmly and irrevocably resolve never to consent to offend you  
or do anything that may displease your sovereign goodness  
and place me in danger of falling from your holy grace,  
in which I am fully determined  
to persevere to my dying breath. Amen.

-St. Francis Xavier SJ (1506-52)

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*Day 10:*

**Notes:** Today we begin the “second week” of the Spiritual Exercises. Our point of entry is through a meditation that invites us to follow Christ the King. We are walking through a big city, so we can see the wonders of a “worldly kingdom” and imagine the Kingdom of God. Today we meditate on how our life is oriented: are we walking with Jesus or are we following other leaders?

**The grace we ask for:** Despite my limitations, yet aware of the love of the Father for me, I ask for the grace to feel personally called to journey alongside Jesus as his companion and co-laborer.

**Reflection:** A deep awareness of God’s merciful love (yesterday’s grace), often leads to a desire to respond to that love. Today we begin to meditate on Jesus’ invitation to walk beside him in his work. In the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius places God’s call to work with him just after the meditations that touch on our own human sinfulness; the juxtaposition is important: God calls us to work close to him while he knows us fully yet loves us as we are. He calls us ‘loved sinners;’ just as St Paul tells us when he asked the Lord to help him the Lord replied, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So Paul said, “I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor 12:9). So, despite being sinners, today we feel called to work in that same world touched by our sin, and work for peace and justice, with the support of the merciful love we have received. We believe in a God who is justice because He is love. The road to justice and the road to faith in our world are inseparable. In the Gospel, Faith and justice are undivided. We are deeply conscious of how often and how grievously we ourselves have sinned against the Gospel, yet it remains our ambition to proclaim it worthily: that is, in love, in poverty, and in humility. This is what the Jesuit General Congregation 32 said.

In his famous meditation “The Call of the King”, Ignatius imagines how compelling would be the call of a truly worthy king, working in our world just for faith and justice. After that consideration, we turn to Jesus, whose call is even more worthy still because Christ our Lord, the eternal King calls each person in particular and says: “My will is to bring together the best in the whole world and build the Kingdom of Eternal Love”. Ignatius sees that all those who wish to throw in their lot with Christ the King must labor with Him, so that following Him in pain they may also follow Him in the glory of his Kingdom.

The call of the King is the call to become his companion, to learn more about Him, to experience His loving care and to join Him in serving His people. And this King comes to us as one of us, all the more able to share our lot. Today we focus on the marvel of being called and on the nature of the call; tomorrow you can begin to focus on your response to this call.

**Scripture Texts:**

Psalms 120. The Lord is kind and full of compassion.

In my trouble my cry went up to the Lord, and he gave me an answer.

«O Lord, be the saviour of my soul from false lips, and from the tongue of deceit. What punishment will he give you? what more will he do to you, you false tongue? Sharp arrows of the strong, and burning fire. Sorrow is mine because I am strange in Meshech, and living in the tents of Kedar. My soul has long been living with the haters of peace. I am for peace: but when I say so, they are for war.»

Luke 5: 27-32. Follow me.

Micah 5:1-4. A mighty king will come to free his flock with the power of Yahweh.

«Now you will give yourselves deep wounds for grief; they will put up a wall round us: they will give the judge of Israel a blow on the face with a rod. And you, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, the least among the families of Judah, out of you one will come to me who is to be ruler in Israel; whose going out has been purposed from time past, from the eternal days. For this cause he will give them up till the time when she who is with child has given birth: then the rest of his brothers will come back to the children of Israel. And he will take his place and give food to his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the glory of the name of the Lord his God; and their resting-place will be safe: for now he will be great to the ends of the earth.»

**Closing Colloquy:** As a friend speaks to a friend, so we speak with Jesus. We bring together our thoughts and emotions from our meditation on the Kingdom and on the value of following Jesus. We discuss with Jesus and, if we so feel, we ask Him to invite us to walk with him.

**Teach Me Your Ways**

Teach me your way of looking at people:  
as you glanced at Peter after his denial,  
as you penetrated the heart of the rich young man  
and the hearts of your disciples.  
I would like to meet you as you really are,

since your image changes those with whom  
 you come into contact.  
 Remember John the Baptist's first meeting with you?  
 And the centurion's feeling of unworthiness?  
 And the amazement of all those who saw miracles and other wonders?  
 How you impressed your disciples,  
 the rabble in the Garden of Olives,  
 Pilate and his wife  
 and the centurion at the foot of the cross....  
 I would like to hear and be impressed by your manner of speaking,  
 listening, for example, to your discourse  
 in the synagogue in Capharnaum  
 or the Sermon on the Mount  
 where your audience felt you "taught as one who has authority."

-Pedro Arrupe (1907-91) was the superior general of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983.

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On our way to Barcelona, we encounter the magnificent parish church of **Sant Cugat** (pop. 91,000) was founded by the Romans who established a fortress on the crossroads of the Via Augusta. This connected the Pyrenees to Cádiz in the South and the Via Egara linking Terrassa (previously known as Egara) to Barcino (the Roman name for Barcelona). According to tradition, Sant Cugat (Saint Cucuphas) died a martyr in this fortress in 313AD, just before the promulgation of the Edict of Milan authorized Christian worship in the Roman Empire.



Shortly afterwards, a small church was built here so the faithful could come and venerate the martyrs. It was run by a small community of monks who fled when the Muslims invaded.



Subsequently, they destroyed the church. The first community of Benedictine monks was established here in the year 785 after Charlemagne drove out the Moors. They returned to destroy the monastery in 825, but it was later rebuilt. In the 10th century, the monastery was enlarged following the acquisition of numerous properties. In 985, Almanzor “the Victorious”, ruler of the caliphate of Cordoba, once more destroyed the North of Spain. He attacked the monastery but caused little damage. The 11th century was the golden age for the monastic community under the helm of Abbot Odón. Like a true feudal lord, the abbot would ride into battle at the slightest opportunity. The monastery became more powerful still in the 12th century, after acquiring other monasteries including St Cecilia of Montserrat, whose lands Sant Cugat opened up for public use. The new church was built in full-blown Gothic style in the 13th and 14th centuries. Yet the monastery began to decline at the end of the 14th century. Its excessive power and wealth had won it enemies and proved a source of controversy. The monks began to pay the price for these clashes once they lost the right to choose their own abbot. The Pope or the reigning monarch could choose whoever they pleased for the role. Invariably, their chosen candidates were cardinals who never set foot in the monastery. The monks lost their independence, and lacking any real authority to manage their monastery, lost their influence. When Íñigo visited in 1523, the monastery still enjoyed a certain prestige but was completely subject to royal control. The wars ravaging Spain affected the monastery too. The Mendizábal law of 1836 forced the monks to leave. That sounded the death knell for the monastery. The buildings were sacked, used as storehouses, as military barracks and as a school until they were rebuilt after the Civil War. Today, the monastery is a parish church. The minute we walk inside, we feel overwhelmed by the sense of splendour. The décor is plain. As a pilgrim, nonetheless, you naturally sense the building is steeped in centuries of a living spirituality and intuit the anguished prayers uttered by so many believers amid its exquisite columns.

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### **Some Ignatian hints for today: Autobiography of Saint Ignatius: *Ignatius in Barcelona***

In the beginning of the year 1523, therefore, he set out for Barcelona. Many offered to accompany him, but he refused, as he wished to go alone. He expected to derive great advantage from placing his whole trust in God alone. Several were very earnest, and insisted that as he knew neither Latin nor Italian, he should not go alone, but should take with him a certain companion whom they praised very much. The Pilgrim replied that even if he were the son or brother of the Duke of Cordova, he would not take him as a companion, as he wished only three virtues, — Faith, Hope, and Charity. If he took a companion, when hungry he would look to his companion for food; if exhausted, he would call on his companion for help; and so he would confide in his companion, and have some affection for him: whereas he wished to place all this confidence, hope, and affection in God alone. These words were not a mere expression of the lips, but they were the true sentiments of his heart. For these reasons he wished to embark not only alone, but even without any provision for the voyage. When he arranged about his passage, the captain agreed to take him free, as he had no money; but on condition that he should take with him as much sailors' bread as would suffice for his sustenance. Were it not for this condition imposed by the captain, the Pilgrim would have refused to take with him any provision at all.

When he thought of procuring bread, he was much troubled with scruples. “Is this your hope and faith in God, who, you were sure, would not fail you?” The force and violence of the temptation were such that he was greatly distressed. Good reasons on both sides presented themselves. Finally, in his perplexity, he determined to leave the matter to his confessor. He told him first of his great desire to go to Jerusalem, and to do everything for the greater glory of God. Then he gave the reasons for not taking provisions for the voyage. His confessor decided that he ought to beg what was necessary and take it with him. He went to a lady of rank to ask for what he needed. When she asked where he was going, he hesitated a little about telling his final destination, and replied that he was going to Italy and Rome. She was somewhat astonished at this, and replied: “To Rome? Why, as to those who go there—well, I do not like to say what they are when they return.” She meant by this that as most of those who went to Rome did not go through motives of piety and devotion, when they returned they were not much better. The reason of his not openly declaring that he intended to go to the holy city of Jerusalem was his dread of yielding to vain glory. In fact, he was so much troubled by this fear that he was afraid to make known even the place of his birth or the name of his family. When he had secured the bread, before going on board he took care to leave behind him, on a bench on the wharf, five or six Spanish coins, which had been given to him as alms.

He was obliged to remain at Barcelona more than twenty days before the ship was ready to sail. During that time, in accordance with his custom, in order to speak with spiritual men about his soul, he sought them out even though dwelling in hermitages at a long distance from the city. But neither then, nor during the whole time of his stay at Manresa, could he find anyone who could help him to advance as he wished. He met one woman, however, who seemed to be thoroughly acquainted with the spiritual life. She promised to pray to Jesus Christ and to ask Him to appear to the Pilgrim in person. In consequence of this promise, after leaving Barcelona, he gave up all anxiety about finding souls advanced in the spiritual life.

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**Notes:** We keep walking with Jesus, in order to see more clearly, love Him more deeply and follow Him more closely. Do not forget the "introductory prayer" both before we pray and throughout the day. Starting today, the final conversation is becoming even more important: we move into this interior knowledge of Jesus who is to strengthen our commitment to life. We talk about this with our "friend" at the end of our prayer and during the day.

**Grace:** I ask the Father for three things that I need and that only He can grant: a more intimate knowledge of Jesus who has become one of us; a more personal experience of His love for me so that I may love Him more tenderly; and a closer union with Jesus in His mission of bringing salvation to humankind.

**Reflection:** Jesus as a person who heals people may be the image that stands out most clearly in public life. The healing ministry of Jesus is also a saving ministry. Jesus heals bodies, spirits, and broken relationships with God and with others by means of forgiveness. Jesus tells a paralytic to get up and walk, rubs mud over a blind man's eyes. His concern is not just for the withered limb or the non-functioning organ. It is also that the one whom He heals may turn from sin and believe in Him. We know His wonderful compassion, his willingness to touch and engage with the outcasts and untouchables of ancient society. Use the Ignatian practice of contemplation: that is, imagine one or more of these healing scenes from Jesus' ministry, and imagine yourself in the scene, perhaps as a companion traveling with Jesus, or perhaps people bring me to Jesus - What is it that I want Jesus to do to heal me? On entering into these mysteries in my pilgrimage, I present myself to Jesus as one in need of healing in body, mind and spirit. I wish to keep on asking for the grace of this day.

**Scripture Texts:**

Luke 18: 35-43. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

John 5:1-9. Jesus' question to a sick and crippled man is, in my contemplation, addressed also to me: "Do you want to be healed?" I show the Lord my need for healing: my pettiness, my pride, my ambition, my need for security and control, my self-deception. Yes, Lord, I want to be healed.

Luke 8:40-56. I beg Jesus to come to my home. I try to touch the hem of His cloak.

**Closing Colloquy:** Make a summary of the things I have meditated upon during my time of prayer, talking to Jesus as a friend talks to a friend. Be honest with him about the items I dealt with at this time. Ask Him to accept you under His banner and to become a healer like Him. End with the "Our Father".

**Prayer for Detachment**

I beg of you, my Lord,  
to remove anything which separates me from you, and you from me.  
Remove anything that makes me unworthy  
of your sight, your control, your reprehension; of your speech and conversation,  
of your benevolence and love.

Cast from me every evil  
that stands in the way of my seeing you, hearing, tasting, savoring, and touching you;  
fearing and being mindful of you;  
knowing, trusting, loving, and possessing you;  
being conscious of your presence  
and, as far as may be, enjoying you.

This is what I ask for myself  
and earnestly desire from you. Amen.

*-Blessed Peter Faber SJ. (1506-46), he was one of the original companions of St. Ignatius. Ignatius considered Faber most gifted in directing the spiritual exercises.*

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### ***Ignatius and Barcelona***

Barcelona is a big city. To help the pilgrim to be situated in the Ignatian Barcelona, it is only fair to offer a succinct guide for the Ignatian visit, so that we can follow in some detail a tour of the Ignacio neighborhood in Barcelona. Let's go by points, describing a brief itinerary through the city.

Barcelona has considerable importance in the life of Saint Ignatius. After his long stay in Manresa, he spent a few weeks in Barcelona to prepare for the continuation of his trip to the Holy Land. Ignacio's odyssey does not stop here: he set sail from Barcelona on his way to Rome and the Holy Land. When the Franciscan friars, who supervised the pilgrims in the Holy Land, brought him back after just three weeks, Ignacio found himself back in Barcelona, where he completed two years of basic Latin grammar studies. Altogether, Ignacio visited Barcelona on five occasions, and in the city, he made many friends and found benefactor families who helped him abundantly in his years of study and in the beginnings of the Society of Jesus. For this reason, he wrote: «It seems to me, and I do not doubt, that I have more responsibility and debt to that population of Barcelona than to any other town in this life».

There are many Ignatian places in Barcelona. During the visit we must bear in mind that Ignacio's Barcelona had a number of inhabitants that was around thirty-five thousand, instead of one million six hundred thousand today (Manresa had less than five thousand at that time). The city had its center in what is now called Barri Gòtic. Since he spent more than two years in Barcelona, we can assume that Ignacio would walk most of the streets of the old city. Walking through the Ribera neighborhood, an economic center of the city in its time, next to Santa María del Mar, or through the Gothic quarter, we can soak up the atmosphere of the place, which maintains many of the buildings and streets of the 1500. The gateway to the walled medieval city was in the Plaza de Sant Agustí Vell, where the street of Portal Nou ends. Ignacio would surely stop at the Marcús chapel (from the 12th century, at the confluence of Carders and Montcada streets), where travelers venerated an image of the Mother of God of the Guide.

A small and short street runs parallel to Via Laietana, called Sant Ignasi Street. In Ignacio's time, Inés Pascual, her great friend and benefactor from Manresa, lived in a house that stood where Sant Ignasi Street intersects with Princesa Street. The house was demolished when the new street was built. Ignatius studied Latin with a teacher named Jeroni Ardèvol, who lived in the Ribera district, on Calle dels Mirallers. The Basilica of Santa María del Mar (14th century) is another important Ignatian site. Next to the left side door there is a chapel dedicated to Saint Ignatius and, right there, a plaque that commemorates the place where the Saint used to beg for alms. Another important church is the basilica of Saint Martyrs Justo y Pastor, where Ignacio liked to sit, often in the company of children, listening to the sermons of the Franciscans. In this basilica, his devotion attracted the attention of Isabel Roser, who over time became a good friend and important benefactress. Her house was opposite the basilica, in the building that has floral motifs on the facade. Other Ignatian places can be pointed out in the city, but we only highlight one more. In Calle Casp, 27, is the Jesuit Church of the Sacred Heart. On the altar dedicated to Saint Ignatius, the sword that Ignatius offered to La Moreneta in the sanctuary of Montserrat can be seen.

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## **THE CHURCH OF SAGRADA FAMILIA**

It is one of the few basilicas still under construction. In 1882, the architect Francesco Villar undertook the construction of a neo-Gothic sanctuary. A year later, Gaudí takes over the project. From then on, the Sagrada Família became his obsession. He constantly revised the plans and even lived on the site for 16 years. He died in 1926 and rests in the crypt of his masterpiece.

The architecture of the Sagrada Família can be defined as exuberant and deeply symbolic. This basilica has become the emblem of Barcelona, a city that claims its uniqueness and makes it a force.

After the completion of Parc Güell in 1911, Gaudí vowed that his architecture would not be devoted to secular aims. He was assisted by architects Berenguer, Rubió, Jujol, Canaleta and Ràfols, and in the last stage, by Suguñes and Quintana; these last continued with the work after his death in 1926, until the towers of the Nativity facade were completed. Work continued on the church based on Gaudí's general plan and studies. Unlike many churches, it survived during the Spanish Civil War, when many churches were burned; it was and is seen as a kind of symbol for the city of Barcelona. After the Civil War, progress continued under Quintana, Puig i Boada and Bonet Garí, with the help of Bergós, Martinell and Dapena. In most recent decades, it has been Cardoner and Bonet Armengol assisted by architects Margarit, Buixadé and Gómez.

### ***The facade of the Nativity***

It is the only facade completed by Gaudí, out of the three originally planned. It was completed in 1935. It is characterized by the presence of three portals representing Faith, Hope and Charity. Gaudí poured all his fantastical ideas into the Nativity façade. He included any number of shapes from nature, from rounded rocks reminiscent of the Montserrat massif, to human figures and plants, to achieve an unrivalled effect. The façade has four towers and three doors. Its outstanding feature is the elaborate decoration, replete with Christian symbols. The sculptures extend from the bottom of the façade to where the bell towers start to rise. Through them, the façade depicts the birth of Christ. The images that appear include the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary under the invocation of the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, the Star of Bethlehem, the Three Wise Men, the shepherds and the Tree of Life. The sculptures were made by various artists and perfectly incorporated in the façade's Gothic design.

### ***The facade of the Passion***

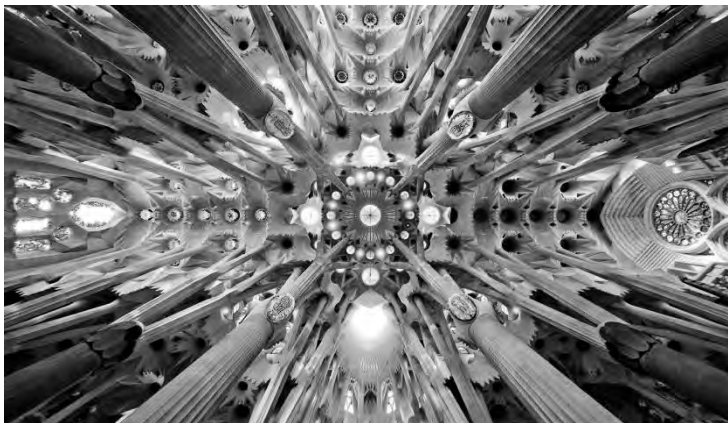
It was completed in 1986. The sculptures are by the artist Josep Maria Subirachs. The Passion façade was built after the project which Gaudí planned in 1917. Gaudí's plan stipulated a portico supported by six leaning columns. This relatively plain facade lacks decoration with emphasis totally on the sculptural groupings spaced along the facade. These sculptures focus on the last days of Jesus' life and are arranged chronologically, moving from the bottom left to the right, then right to left in the middle register, and then back right on the top level--in an enormous "S". The sculptural narrative and characters are striking for their simplicity and drama with angular facets conveying torment and pain. At the last supper you can see that a dog is included usually interpreted as fidelity (Fido) since this is the moment when Christ recognizes Judas' betrayal. The snake, a traditional symbol of Evil or the Devil, is placed behind Judas. The cryptogram contains 16 numbers. The sum of these, in 310 different combinations, always add up to 33, Christ's age when



he died. The three women may suggest the three times that Peter denied Christ when the people asked him about his relationship with Jesus. The rooster reminds us of the prediction that Peter would deny Jesus before the cock would crow. The sculptor has conveyed powerfully the shame that Peter feels with the cloth and the pose. Christ's solitude during the flagellation is depicted by his position: this figure is placed between the denial of Peter and the betrayal of Judas. It is the most important sculpture on the lower level and is therefore five meters high and sculpted in travertine marble. The cane on the base alludes to the soldiers' ridicule when giving him a cane instead of a scepter. The column is in four parts symbolizing the four arms of the cross. The middle level represents the path to the crucifixion showing Veronica in the center

with the veil on which Jesus' face appears. Oddly, her face is blank as Gaudí asked to do. Note the figures of the soldiers... Star Wars? The profile of the evangelist on the far left is that as well of the honored architect Gaudí. You can see there Longinus and the Three Marys and Simon the Cyrene. Longinus was the soldier who speared Jesus in the side but later converted to Christianity while Simon helped the fallen Jesus carry the cross. The depiction of the crucifixion is traditional with Mary Magdalene kneeling and John comforting the Virgin Mary, also on the left side. The moon on the top right indicates it is a night scene and the skull at the bottom signifies Golgotha. The bronze veil is at the very top representing the separation between the sacred place in the Temple of Jerusalem and the rest of the rooms.

**The interior of the basilica** has a large nave with an impressive forest of pillars rising towards the roof, with numerous ramifications. Supporting columns are tilted and branched like trees. The interior has been described as an enormous stone forest. The Sagrada should be able to accommodate more than 13,000 people, and the stands, on the aisles, a choir of 1,500 people. The whole building is an allegory of the Christian religion. The 12 arrows, for example, symbolize the 12 apostles, while the other 5 towers evoke the Virgin Mary and the four evangelists, while the huge 170-meter-high spire will embody Christ. The crossing rests on the four central columns of red porphyry, a very hard volcanic rock. Each column has the image of the 4 Gospels. In contrast to former cathedrals, whose vaults were robust and had to support a lot of weight, Gaudí wanted Sagrada Familia's vaults to be light-weight and illuminate the temple interior. The vaults emerge from tree-like columns and form palm leaves which represent the symbol of martyrdom. The assembly point of the leaves, some concave and others convex, also allow the filtering of light into the temple.



**Antoni Gaudí** (June 25, 1852 – June 10, 1926) has long been misunderstood and his whole work has been discredited. He had lost everything during the last days of his life. No family, no money, no property. This is why he dedicated his last moments of life entirely to the Sagrada Família. Gaudí had also bad health conditions at the time and was usually mistaken for a beggar. On June 7, 1926, while he was going to the Sant-Felipe Neri church on the Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, Gaudí was knocked down by a tram. Due to his neglected aspect and because he had no identity papers, everybody mixed him up with a hobo. A civil guard finally called a taxi to get him to the Santa Creu hospital where he was recognized and died of his wounds at the age of 73. He was buried on June 12 in a crypt in the Sagrada Família, surrounded by thousands of people. After he had died, his works was criticized and completely forgotten. It was only in 1950, when artists such as Salvador Dalí or the architect Josep Lluís Sert paid homage to him, that Antoni Gaudí was recognized for his whole work.

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*Day 12: Leaving Barcelona. Journey to Italy.*

**Notes:** We continue to walk with Jesus, in order to see more Him more clearly, love Him more deeply and follow Him more closely. There is no further need to remind you to say the "introductory prayer" before you begin and throughout the day. Remember also that the final conversation is becoming more and more important as we move into this interior knowledge

of Jesus who is strengthening our commitment to life. This is discussed with our "friend" Jesus in our conversation at the end of our prayer and during the day.

**Grace:** I will ask the Father for three things that I need and that only He can grant: a more intimate knowledge of Jesus who has become one of us; a more personal experience of His love for me so that I may love Him more tenderly; and a closer union with Jesus in His mission of bringing salvation to humankind.

**Reflection:** After watching Jesus healing, another great image of Jesus to admire is his preaching: He was a real innovator as well as a really free man! Admire the clarity and purity of Jesus' message, and his courage in proclaiming it, even though he was well aware of the danger he was courting. Jesus maintains his unyielding focus on the justice of God's kingdom. He accepts no hypocrisy, no double dealing. He rejects legalistic or ritualistic positions that raise the letter of law above its true spirit.

Jesus promulgates his new alliance, his plan for living, his plan of action for how we, his followers, will help restore this world to what God originally planned for how human beings would treat one another. The famed "Sermon on the Mount" or "the Manifesto of the Kingdom" comes early in Jesus' ministry. We have heard these words before, but do not let its familiarity detract from its radical appeal. Listening reverently to this discourse I allow the seed of Jesus' word to be implanted in me and to take root. Imagine yourself sitting among the impoverished people who gathered on a hillside to listen to Jesus comprehensively laying out his path, his "Way." Then as now, his way is highly counterintuitive; he is inviting us to be and to live for values that are exactly the opposite of what contemporary culture and advertising tell us to do. In His time, Jesus was in contradiction to His world.

#### **Scripture Texts:**

Matthew 23: 11-12; 23-24. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Matthew 5: 1-48. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

John 12:44-50. I gear myself up to listen to Jesus, for when I hear His message, I hear the Father.

**Closing Conversation:** Make a summary of the things I have meditated on during my prayer, talking to Jesus as a friend talks to a friend. Be candid with him about the things I have just found at this time of prayer. If that is how I feel, ask Him to be accepted under His banner. Finish with the Our Father.

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#### **Some Ignatian hints for today: Autobiography, in Italy!**

After a voyage of five days and nights the vessel in which they set out from Barcelona reached Gaeta, and the pilgrim disembarked and started for Rome, although there was danger there on account of the plague. (...) After reaching one city, he found the gates closed. He spent the night in a damp church, and in the morning sought to enter the city, but could not obtain permission. (...) As no alms could be obtained outside of the city, he wished to go on to a neighboring village, but for sheer weakness, the pilgrim could go no farther. On that day it happened that a great procession came out of the city. On inquiry the pilgrim learned that the Duchess was in the throng. He approached her, told her that his malady was simply the effect of weakness, and asked permission to enter the city to get relief. She readily consented. He was successful and his strength returned, and two days later he resumed his journey, reaching Rome on Palm Sunday.

Those whom he met at Rome knew he had no money for his journey to Jerusalem. They tried to dissuade him from his undertaking, alleging that such a journey was impossible without money. He felt assured, however, that everything needed for his voyage would be at hand when required. Accordingly, on the octave of Easter, he received the blessing of Adrian VI and left Rome for Venice. He had in his possession six or seven pieces of gold which they had given him to pay his passage from Venice as far as Jerusalem. He had taken this money with him from Venice only because they had convinced him that without it he could not reach Jerusalem. On the third day from the time he set out from Rome, he realized that this fear had come from a want of confidence, and was sorry he had accepted the money, and was deliberating about giving it away. Finally, however, he determined to spend it on those he met, who were chiefly beggars. The result was that when he came to Venice he had only four coins left, and these were necessary for his lodging that night.

On this journey to Venice, on account of sentinels placed around the cities, he was obliged to sleep outside the walls. The dread of the pestilence was so great that one morning on rising he saw a man fleeing from him in terror. Pursuing his journey, he reached Chizoa with several others who had joined him on the road. There he learned that he would not be allowed to enter the city. He then proceeded with his companions to Padua, to get the testimony of a notary that the party was not stricken with the plague. The Pilgrim could not, on account of his weakness, keep pace with the others, and was left alone in an open field. Then Christ appeared to him, as He had appeared on former occasions. By this vision he was greatly strengthened and consoled. The next morning, filled with new courage, he came to the gate of the city, and although provided with no certificate, entered unquestioned by the guard. In the same way he left the city unquestioned. His companions were surprised at this, for they had to present a certificate, which he had taken no pains to procure. (...) At Venice they begged their food, and slept in St. Mark's Square. The Pilgrim refused to go to the house of the Ambassador, and although he made no effort to get money for his voyage to Jerusalem, he felt sure nevertheless that God would provide him with means.

(...) One day he met a rich Spaniard, who asked him whether he was going, and having learned his intention, brought him to dine at his house. Here he remained for several days. From the time he left Manresa, the Pilgrim, while seated at table with others, had made it a practice never to speak except to give a brief answer to questions. However, he heard all that was said, and took occasion after dinner to give the conversation a spiritual turn. His host and all his family were so filled with admiration for him that they tried to induce him to remain with them, and introduced him to the Doge of Venice. The latter offered him accommodations on the government ship about to sail for Cyprus. Many pilgrims had assembled at Venice to go to Jerusalem, but the greater part hesitated through fear, as the Island of Rhodes had fallen into the hands of the Turks. Thirteen sailed in the pilgrims' ship, which was the first to weigh anchor. The government ship carried eight or nine. About the time of departure the Pilgrim was taken ill with a fever, which lasted several days. On the day of sailing he took the prescribed medicine, and asked the doctor if he could go. The doctor replied he could if he wished the vessel to be his tomb. Nevertheless he went on board, and after a fit of illness soon recovered.

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## Church of the Madonna del Parto – Sutri

### Background

South-east of Sutri, near the ancient amphitheater, is the church of Santa Maria del Parto (Our Lady of the Child-bearing).

The building is identified by many scholars as a *Mithraeum*, later readapted into a Christian church; the identification finds confirmation in the structural characteristics of the room used for worship, which resembles the places dedicated to the god *Mithras*.

The very narrow aisles, the steps in front of the altar, the niche for housing the bas-relief with *Mithras* sacrificing the *Cosmic Bull*, and the *fossa sanguinis*, where to pour the sacrificial blood, are the elements that can be recognized as common to all *Mithraic* places of worship.

The church, entirely excavated in the tuff, is part of a real rocky agglomeration characterized by a large number of rooms distributed on two largely inaccessible levels.



### From outside

The exterior is quite different from the usual typology of the churches that one is used to seeing, instead resembling a rock tomb complex.

At first the church was dedicated to the cult of the Archangel Michael, later to the Madonna and today it bears the name of Santa Maria del Parto.

### From inside

Once the entrance was via a side staircase, today it is accessed via a door, originally non-existent, which leads to a vestibule, formerly not reachable from the outside and separated from the rest of the church of which it probably constituted an annexed chapel.

Here are preserved some of the most significant frescoes, attributable to the fourteenth century, depicting: the Madonna and Child between St. James the Greater and St. Michael, below, the client kneeling in prayer.

Above the door, the Theory of pilgrims and the legend of the foundation of the sanctuary of San Michele on Mount Gargano, finally, to the right of the entrance, San Cristoforo with the Child Jesus.

It is interesting to note that in the fresco of San Michele del Gargano the main actor, in addition to the Archangel, is a bull, a possible connection to the ancient rite of the tauroctony practiced in the temples dedicated to the god *Mithras*. The cult area itself is divided into three naves by two rows of quadrangular pillars, the central nave is wider, with a lowered barrel vault, the lateral ones with a flat ceiling. To the left of the current entrance, a series of scenes from the life of Jesus are depicted in three registers, on the left in the middle register, the Flight into Egypt, under the Flagellation and the Crucifixion, are recognized. An unrecognizable figure can be seen on the left wall alongside a Madonna and Child, also very deteriorated. Three other unreadable figures follow, then another triptych with a Holy Bishop, Madonna and Child and unreadable figure. Then again, a triptych with a Holy Bishop and below the figure of the client, Madonna enthroned with Child and illegible figure. After a small door, the Madonna and Child can still be seen, then a niche opens up with other frescoes that are difficult to read, only a Holy Bishop can be recognized.

At the end of the left wall is the ancient access to the *Mithraeum*.

The central nave still retains a small portion of the original pavement, in earthenware.

On the vault of the presbytery are depicted St. Michael the Archangel, characterized by a face in relief, and Christ Pantocrator, surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists.

In the apse, where once there was a depiction of *the god Mithras with a Phrygian cap* in the act of killing the bull, whose testicles are attacked by a scorpion, we can now admire a scene from the Nativity.

The replacement took place in the early 14th century, when the relief depicting the bullfighting was detached from the back wall of the church and replaced by the current panel with the Nativity which is still proudly displayed near the altar today.

The tufa slab with the original relief is preserved more than ten kilometers from Sutri, walled up outside a farmhouse located along the Via Cassia, in the hamlet of "La Bote" a few meters from the road.

Other frescoes remain on the right pillars, a small nucleus dating back to the first centuries of the Christian era, with images of a fish of Essene origin, a peacock and a jeweled cross.

Written by Silvio Sorcini

<https://www.iluoghidelsilenzio.it/chiesa-della-madonna-del-parto-sutri-vt/nggallery/page/2>

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### Day 13:

**Notes:** Remember that the aim of these meditations of week 2 is to see Jesus more clearly, to love Him more deeply and follow him more closely. Let us not forget the "Introductory Prayer," the ultimate fruit of this entire exercise. Use this prayer of contemplation to enter into the gospel account of the Baptism of Jesus.

**Grace:** I ask the Father for three things that I need and that only He can give: a more intimate knowledge of Jesus who has become one of us; a more personal experience of His love for me so that I may love Him more tenderly; and a closer union with Jesus in His mission to bring salvation to humankind.

**Reflection:** Around thirty years of age, Jesus left his work and home to begin his public ministry. Try to imagine what thoughts he might have had.

Jesus' public life began with a journey, a kind of pilgrimage. He left his home in Nazareth, and traveled south-east to the River Jordan where he was baptized by John the Baptist. John's ministry was calling sinners to repentance. John was well known and respected: certainly Jesus knew of John's message as a prophet of God sent to the Jewish people. Jesus knew what John was doing. Ponder the message that Jesus, the sinless one, chooses to launch his ministry by placing himself in solidarity with sinners. The symbolism of these early verses from the gospel summons up a rich imagery of a pilgrimage along a new way of life. John the Baptist's ministry is introduced with the words of Isaiah: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John calls sinners to repentance and to conversion. It is a word with roots that suggest a "turning point." John is inviting us to turn in a new direction and to follow a new path in life. At some moment, Jesus makes a conscious and deliberate choice to begin his ministry, to change his worldly life in Nazareth; imagine what might have been going through his mind, what he saw around him to make him feel this was the right moment. Consider too how he chooses to begin his ministry, not with a speech or a miracle, but by traveling to be baptized by John. And also consider the experience of Jesus in the Jordan, His discovery, His understanding of the mission which the Father invites Him to carry out fully.

You can beg the Father to place you with Jesus, His Son, in line with John the Baptist. Imagine that you are one of His companions and that you are right behind Him, because you want to know Him better, love Him more and be more faithful in serving Him and humanity. Try to contemplate the gospel scene. What is John telling us?

**Scripture:**

Romans 6:3-4. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so that we too might walk in newness of life.

Luke 3:1-22. "Then what are we to do?" At the moment of His baptism by John God's voice confirms His sonship and His mission.

Matthew 3:13-17. Jesus, having pondered in His heart the mystery of the Fatherhood of God and the mission given Him by the Father, decides to leave Nazareth. I try to be present to Him as He reaches this decision, shares it with His mother, makes His farewells and leaves all that has helped to form Him as an adult and responsible human being. Let us walk with Him towards the Jordan River and stay on the river bank contemplating His baptism. What is it that I hear? What should I understand?

**Closing Colloquy:** Make a summary of what I have meditated upon during my time of prayer, talking to Jesus as a friend talks to a friend, being candid with him about the items found at this stage of the journey we have done. End with the Our Father.

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**Some Ignatian hints for today:** Autobiography, *Italy*.



Having gone aboard a vessel, a great storm arose during the voyage. This was mentioned before, where the Pilgrim describes the three occasions on which he was in danger of death. On this journey he suffered a great deal, as I shall now relate. One day after landing he wandered from his path and followed a road which ran along the bank of a river. The road was high, while far below was the river deep and sluggish. The farther he advanced, the narrower grew the road. At last he came to a spot where he could neither go forward nor backward. He then began to advance on hands and feet and continued thus for a long time, full of fear. For as often as he moved it seemed to him that he would fall into the river. This was the greatest of all the bodily labors that he ever experienced. At last he escaped, but just as he was entering Bologna he fell from a little bridge and was so wet and dirty from the mud and water as to afford much laughter to a great crowd who observed the accident. From his entrance into Bologna until his departure he begged for alms, and though he went through the whole city, he did not receive so much as a farthing. As he was ill, he rested for a while at Bologna. Thence he directed his steps toward Venice, traveling always in the same way. At Venice he spent his time in giving the Exercises and in other spiritual works. Those to whom he gave the

Exercises were Peter Contarini, Gaspar Doctis, Rozes a Spaniard, and another Spaniard named Hozes, who, like the pilgrim, was a great friend of the bishop. Hozes at first would not make the Exercises, although he felt drawn to do so. At last, he resolved to undertake the work, and on the third or fourth day he opened his mind to the Pilgrim. He said that he had feared that by the Exercises his mind might be imbued with false doctrines. Indeed, he had been persuaded by a man to be on his guard, and for this reason he had brought along with him a book to use in case he were imposed on. He made great progress in the Exercises, and finally embraced that manner of life which the Pilgrim had established. He was the first of the companions of the Saint to die.

At Venice another persecution was stirred up against the Pilgrim. Some asserted that he had been burned in effigy both in Spain and in Paris. The matter went so far that he was brought to trial, but obtained a favorable sentence.

At the beginning of the year 1537 the nine companions came to Venice and were scattered about the city in various hospitals to minister to the sick. After two or three months all journeyed to Rome to receive the Pope's blessing before going to Jerusalem. The Pilgrim, however, did not go to Rome on account of Doctor Ortiz and the Theatine Cardinal recently raised to that dignity. The companions on their return brought the value of two or three hundred gold crowns which had been given to them as alms for their projected journey to Jerusalem. They would accept it only in the form of bills, and when they were unable to make the voyage to Jerusalem they returned it to those who had made the gift. They returned to Venice in the same manner that they had set out for Rome. They traveled on foot and begging, divided into three parties, as they were of different nationalities.

Those who were not priests were ordained at Venice, having received faculties from the Nuncio, who was then in that city and who was afterward called Cardinal Verallus. They were promoted to the priesthood *sub titulo paupertatis*, having made vows of poverty and chastity. That year no ships left for the East, on account of the breach of the treaty between the Venetians and Turks. When, therefore, they saw their hopes deferred, they dispersed into various parts of the Venetian territory, with the understanding that they should wait one year, as they had previously resolved; when that time had elapsed, they were to return to Rome if it was not possible to make the voyage. Vicenza fell to the lot of the Pilgrim. His companions were Faber and Laynez. Outside of the city they found a house that had neither door nor windows. Here they lived, sleeping on a little straw which they had brought with them. Two of the three entered the city twice daily, in the morning and evening, to ask for alms. They returned with so little that it hardly sufficed for their nourishment. Their usual food was bread, when they could get it. The one who chanced to remain at home did the baking. In this way they spent forty days, intent upon nothing but prayer.

After the forty days were over, Master John Coduri arrived, and the four determined to begin preaching. On the same day and at the same hour, in different squares, all began to preach, having first uttered a great cry, and having waved their hats with their hands to call the people. These sermons caused great talk in the city, and led many citizens to a devout life. Now the needed nourishment was supplied to them more abundantly.

While the pilgrim was at Vicenza, he had many spiritual visions. Consolations were sent to him in great number. This was especially so at Venice, while he was preparing for the priesthood and for celebrating Mass. On all his journeys, he received great supernatural visitations, like those which he had been wont to receive at Manresa.

While still at Venice he learned that one of his companions was sick unto death at Bassanum. He was himself ill with fever, still he undertook the journey, and walked so rapidly that Peter Faber, his companion, was unable to keep up with him. On the way he received an assurance from God that his companion would not die of this illness. As soon as they arrived at Bassanum, the sick man was very much consoled, and not long after grew better. After this, all returned to Vicenza, and there the ten tarried for a while, some going about the neighboring towns to beg for alms.

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#### *Day 14: The Storta Day*

**Notes:** Once more, we persist in making the introductory prayer. Today we make enter a consideration typical of the Spiritual Exercises: the meditation titled "The Two Standards." Saint Ignatius offers us an exercise of contrast to see what our life is opting for, in our following of Jesus. Throughout the day we can be considering and asking the grace of this exercise and feel that Jesus wants us to go on pilgrimage with Him. The typical "Triple Discussion" that Saint Ignatius offers in the exercises, can be done as it is set out here... or done as your heart tells you, in accordance with the layout of the pilgrimage that we are engaged in.

**Grace:** As a friend of Jesus, I ask God to allow me to share the gift of being able to recognize the deceits of the devil so that I can guard against them; I also ask for a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, my true Leader and Lord, and the grace to imitate Him.

**Reflection:** We have been walking with Jesus, seeing his way of living and watching Him working in accordance with the values of the Kingdom. Today we take a meditation commonly known as the "two standards" (standard as in a banner). We can imagine Jesus prepared to set out on his own journey, poised at a critical fork in the road. He has no doubt which way he is going, and he figuratively asks us to join him. Jesus' values and Jesus' "Way" is the way of simplicity (even of poverty), leading so many times to dishonor and to humility: in other words, it is the way of those who share their life with God and hope for everything from Him. The other way, is the worldly choice of riches, honor, and pride: in other words, to have the things and prestige that makes us feel important in the world, to turn ourselves into the gods of our own life, and be "the only ones in the world". Earlier in this spiritual pilgrimage, Ignatius invited us to make a fundamental choice: to be faithful to our Principle and Foundation. This is not a new choice, a "do over," rather, it is a reminder, a deeper insight into the Way of Jesus and to check our desire to follow Him, choosing a way that it is fundamentally different to the ways of the world. Who are we: are we our possessions and reputation? Or are we God's beloved creation? Why are we important? Is it because others know us, or because God has chosen us? Jesus is inviting us to lighten our load so as to be able to walk beside him freely on our spiritual pilgrimage through life.

The purpose of this meditation is to become aware of the strategies of Jesus and of the Evil One so that I may accurately discern the spirits which I often experience when I have to make a decision in my life: In what direction am I going? Am I going with Jesus? As Ignatius says: "We shall in our next exercise observe the intention of Christ our Lord and, in contrast, that of the Evil One, the enemy of human nature... Imagine that the leader of all the enemies in that great plain of Babylon calling all his supporters... and sending them to tempt people to covet riches, so that they may more easily come to vain honor from the world, and finally to surging pride. And from there all the disasters in the world are guaranteed. Similarly, by contrast, gaze in imagination on the supreme and true leader, who is Christ our Lord summoning all His people... sending them to attract all persons, first, into the most perfect spiritual poverty, and also, if the Divine Majesty should be served and should wish to choose them for it, even to no less a degree of actual poverty; and second, by attracting them to a desire of

reproaches and contempt, since from these humility results. And from there true humility will follow.” We should consider these two banners and make a choice from our heart: Shall I go with Jesus? Do I really feel that? Is that what I desire?

**Scripture texts:**

1 Tim 6: 6-10. Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Galatians 5:16-25. I pray to know what it is like to be with and without the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:10-20. War of the spirit.

Luke 11:15-26. Jesus and Satan in opposite sides.

**Final Triple Colloquy:** «1st A discussion with Our Lady that she obtain for me from her son and Lord the grace, to be received under his banner, and first in spiritual poverty, and if His Divine Majesty would be served and He wishes to choose me and be received no less in actual poverty, and second, to spend more insults and slander in order to imitate him, only if that could happen without sin on the part of any person or displeasure of His Divine Majesty, and with it a Hail Mary.

2nd conversation: Ask the same of the Son, that he may obtain it from the Father, and with it say an Anima Christi.

3rd conversation. Ask the same of the Father, that he grant it to me, and say an Our Father.»

[‘Anima Christi’ prayer. It is a prayer from around the 14th century. It is still widely used after receiving the body and blood of Our Lord, Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. Certainly, Saint Ignatius prayed with it very often and that’s why he wrote it in the Spiritual Exercises.]

**To See Everything New**

Grant me, O Lord,  
to see everything now with new eyes,  
to discern and test the spirits  
that help me read the signs of the times,  
to relish the things that are yours,  
and to communicate them to others.  
Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius.

*-Pedro Arrupe SJ (1907-91) was the superior general of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983.*

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## The Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sorbo. (on our way to La Storta)

The Sanctuary is perched on the top of a well-defended cliff in the valleys of the Sorbo, on the border between the municipalities of Campagnano and Formello. The place was inhabited since the Middle Ages, but the first news dates back to 996 when it is mentioned as "castellum" (castle), perhaps arose as a result of the Saracen invasions of the 10th century. The castle during the XI-XIV centuries first belonged to the Monastery of S. Paul and then to the Orsini family. In 1427 it will, however, already be abandoned, and it was then that Martin V allowed the Friars of Carmel to erect a monastery, at the primitive church dedicated to Beatae Mariae Castri Sorbi, which became a pilgrimage sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna. The Marian cult was probably invigorated through legend that tells of a handless guardian who used pigs grazing in the Sorbo Valley. One day, looking for one of the sows that had moved away, he found it at a rowan tree, where the Madonna appeared to him. The Virgin, re-growing the hand to the young man, said to him: "Go and convince your villagers to build a sanctuary on this hill. Whoever comes here in procession will have my grace. If they don't believe you, show them your hand." Miraculously, the shepherd's hands had appeared on his crippled arms.



The Sanctuary consists of the monastery with renovations until the eighteenth century, and the church dating back to the fifteenth century. At 1682 two altars on a project by Carlo Fontana date back. Of value is the table of the Madonna with the child (XI-XIII century), now preserved in the Parish Museum of Campagnano.

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### Some Ignatian hints for today: Autobiography, *the Storta Experience*



«In the year that passed, as no means could be had of journeying to Jerusalem, they set out on their way to Rome, divided into three or four parties. On the journey the Pilgrim experienced singular visitations from God.

After his reception of the priesthood, he had resolved to put off the offering of his first Mass for one year, in order to prepare himself better, and to ask the Most Blessed Virgin to place him near her Son. One day, when he was a few miles from Rome, he entered a church to pray, and there felt his soul so moved and changed, and saw so clearly that God the Father placed him with Christ His Son, that he did not dare to doubt it.»

When the Pilgrim was told that several other details were related by Laynez, he replied: "Whatever Laynez said about the matter is true. For my part, I do not remember the particulars; but," he added, "I know for certain that when I related what happened I told nothing but the truth." These were his words about the vision. He referred me [Gonzalo Camara] to Laynez to verify what he narrated.»

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In the Storta, a solitary and abandoned chapel in the suburbs of Rome, a poor pilgrim with two other companions stops to pray. In the depths of his soul, in the secret of his spirit, the Trinity communicated to Ignatius a very elevated grace, a summary of his mystical life up to that moment, and one of the most decisive for the Foundation of the Society of Jesus.

Ignatius had incessantly asked Our Lady for many years to "place him with her Son". This request now achieves his effect and in a more sublime way than he would have imagined.

In the Storta Ignacio deeply feels that his vocation is to be a companion of Jesus and that the Trinity accepts him to serve as a servant of Jesus.

It is the same Eternal Father who prints this acceptance on Ignacio's soul and promises him his special protection by telling him those words that Lainez kept: "I will be propitious to you in Rome", or the expression, even stronger and more significant, that we read in Nadal and Canisio (his first companions): "I will be with you".

Then addressing Jesus Christ, who is shown loaded with the cross, the Eternal Father says pointing to Ignacio: "I want you to receive this as your servant", to which Jesus responds looking at Ignacio: "I want you to serve us".

This Trinitarian scene, so briefly described, reveals to us the granting of a very high mystical grace, which, as such, it will be impossible to adequately express in human words. Ignacio himself recognizes it. And this is the cause of the various versions that have been made of this unique and fundamentally true fact.

Analyzing, however, some details of the grace of the Storta, we will be able to discover something of how much is contained in it.

Ignacio's request is heard by none other than the Eternal Father himself. It is the Father who prints in Ignacio the deep and unmistakable feeling of divine protection. The "I will be with you" is like an echo of the biblical promises. This is how the God of Hosts assured Gideon: "I will be with you and you will defeat Midian"; thus the God of Israel to the prophets: "Do not fear, for I will be with you" (Is 41, 10); "Do not be afraid of them, for I will be with you" (Jer 1, 8 and 19). Thus, the Angel assured Mary: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you." This is how Christ promised his apostles: "Behold, I will be with you always until the end of the world" (Mt 28, 20), and to Paul in Corinth: "Do not fear, do not be silent, for I am with you" (Acts 18, 9-10).

Ignacio can be sure. If God is in favor of him, who can defeat him? (Rom 8, 31)

It is a key request and very dear to Ignatius that of "being placed with the Son". This phrase, grammatically somewhat forced and hard, expresses the aspiration to a closer proximity than the one he already had with Jesus Christ, to a very particular reciprocal interiority with Him.

The Eternal Father takes the initiative and exposes Ignacio's desire to Jesus Christ: "I want you to receive this one in your service": And in turn Jesus Christ, who always does the will of the Father, responds addressing Ignacio: "I want you to serve". He does not say to him: "that you serve me", but "that you serve us", thus taking Ignacio to his service and to that of the Trinity.

Ignatius' oblation is thus accepted by the Incarnate Word. A very profound transformation took place in Ignacio's soul, more intimate than the one experienced in Cardoner [Manresa]: there it seemed to him that his understanding had changed, here he felt accepted and introduced into Trinitarian life, in that intimate "circle" of the Trinity, from which he is sent out with Christ to serve him in favor of souls, a new service that he will later define in the Formula of the Institute as "serving the Church under the Roman Pontiff", or as "defense and propagation of the faith".

That word "serve", so characteristic of Ignatius, which expresses the very end of the Exercises and summarizes the offering of the Kingdom, of the Two Banners, of the three degrees of humility, acquires full dignity. To serve will henceforth dedicate oneself entirely to the service of the Trinity as companions of Jesus in poverty, in total self-denial, on the cross. Ignatius understands the profound meaning of his vocation and that of his companions and he feels not only called and accepted, but also penetrated and transformed internally as the Apostles were [on receiving his call]. Such was his inner strength that he felt capable of even dying because: "I don't know what awaits us in Rome", he repeated, "I don't know if we will be crucified".

The grace of the Storta always illuminates the spiritual trajectory of the Society [and of all Ignatian spirituality] and helps us understand the meaning of our vocation in each new historical perspective: service to the Trinity in the poor Christ.

Today the world needs those men and women with faith, strong, selfless, confident, willing to give their lives for others. This is not done without special graces; our Christian vocation in today's world is too difficult. That is why we ask Mary "to place us with her Son", that is, to reach you from the Eternal Father, as she reached for Ignatius, that special reciprocal intimacy, absolutely necessary not only to resist the world, but to bring it to Christ. A grace that verifies in our soul the interior transformation, that is a "re-creation" of our faculties, an identification with Christ such that it achieves, using the words of Nadal, "that we understand by his understanding, we want by his will, we remember for his memory, and that all our being, our living and acting is not in us, but in Christ". An interior transformation that leads us to love the Trinity, [Jesus]Christ, the Church and souls more, and thus reach the Ignatian level of true companions of Jesus.

*(Adapted from fragments of the speech of Fr. Arrupe, sj. on the devotion to the Heart of Jesus and the Storta, 06/09/1972, The Identity of the Jesuit in Our Times, p. 441-444)*

*(from the Stanbrook Abbey Hymnal)*

Lord God and Maker of all things,  
Creation is upheld by you.  
While all must change and know decay,  
You are unchanging, always new.

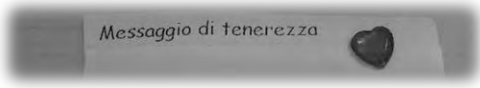
You are man's solace and his shield,  
His Rock secure on which to build.  
You are the spirit's tranquil home,

In you alone is hope fulfilled.

To God the Father and the Son  
And Holy Spirit render praise:  
Blest Trinity, from age to age  
The strength of all our living days.

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*Messaggio di Tenerezza* (Message of Tenderness from the Nativity "Oratorio", in Fornello town)



Footprints in the sand (Carolyn Joyce Carty)

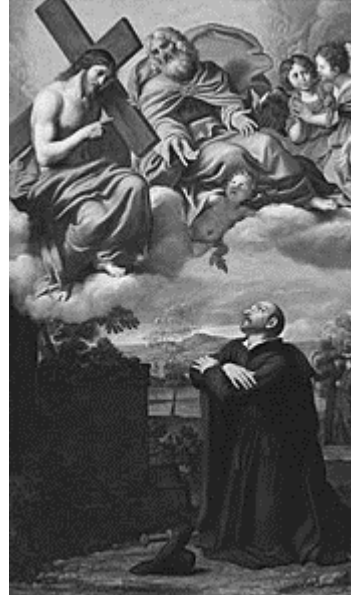
One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD.  
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the LORD.  
When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints.  
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.  
This really bothered him, and he questioned the LORD about it:  
"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."  
The LORD replied: "My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

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**La Storta** – ÍÑIGO of LOYOLA with Jesús & The Father

Be Still, My Soul (Kathrina von Schlegel, translated into English by Jane Borthwick (1855))

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in ev'ry change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'nly friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.



Be still, my soul; your God will undertake  
to guide the future as he has the past;  
your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;  
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know  
His voice who ruled them while he lived below.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning on  
when we shall be forever with the Lord,  
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still my soul; when change and tears are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

#### Psalm 23:

The Lord takes care of me as his/her son/daughter; I will not be without any good thing.  
He makes a resting-place for me in the green fields: he is my guide by the quiet waters.  
He gives new life to my soul: he is my guide in the ways of righteousness because of his name.  
Yes, though I go through the valley of deep shade, I will have no fear of evil; for you are with me, your rod and your support are my comfort.  
You put oil on my head; my cup is overflowing.  
Truly, blessing and mercy will be with me all the days of my life;  
and I will have a place in the house of the Lord all my days.

#### Gospel of John, 14

Let not your heart be troubled: have faith in God and have faith in me.  
In my Father's house are rooms enough; if it was not so, would I have said that I am going to make ready a place for you? And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to be with me, so that you may be where I am. And you all have knowledge of where I am going, and of the way to it.  
Thomas said, Lord, we have no knowledge of where you are going; how may we have knowledge of the way?  
Jesus said to him, I am the true and living way: no one comes to the Father but by me. If you had knowledge of me, you would have knowledge of my Father: you have knowledge of him now and have seen him.



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#### Day 15: Rome

**Notes:** We continue our journey with Jesus *going to Rome!*, so we may see Him more clearly, love Him more deeply, and follow Him more closely in His and our Way. Remember the “introductory prayer” before beginning prayer as well as during the day. Remember that the final conversation with God at the end of prayer becomes very important. We beg to grow in our interior knowledge of Jesus who strengthens our commitment to life. We discuss all of this with our “friend” Jesus in the dialogue at the end of prayer, as well as throughout the day.

**Grace:** I beg the Father to draw me closer to Jesus so I may hear and understand His challenge, thrill to the adventure he invites, and ardently desire to serve Him and His people, all the while sharing His mission.

**Reflections:** The gospels tell us that, as Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He called two disciples who were casting their nets into the sea. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of all people." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. So mysteriously compelling is this

Jesus, we are told, that two fishermen simply drop their nets, leave the past behind, and follow Jesus toward a new life, a new pilgrimage. We pray to know this Jesus better, and to have deeper insight into the attractiveness of His call. We also beg for a growing desire to be with Jesus, so that an important criterion in my life choices will become less "what would please me," but rather "what will help me to walk with and to become like Jesus." Much will be asked of the King's followers. There will be the challenge to discover "the one thing necessary" and the "one thing more." Pondering these challenges, I pay attention to the interior movements that are taking place within me during this pilgrimage. Do I know where I am headed? Does this matter to me?

**Scripture:**

Luke 9:57-62. I pray not to be a half-hearted follower of Jesus.

Luke 10: 1-9. After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of Him.

Luke 10:38-41. Jesus says to me: "One thing alone is required." My challenge is to include both "Martha and Mary" in my life, as I become the contemplative-in-action whose work for the Lord is animated by constant intimacy with Him.

Mark 10:17-27. As Jesus looks with love on a good man whose life has been a model of goodness and fidelity, Jesus challenges him – as He also challenges me -- with these words: "There is one thing more you must do." I know what He said to the man in the gospel. I listen now as Jesus tells me in my own heart what one thing more is asked of me.

**Final Colloquy:** Make a summary of your thoughts in this time of prayer, speaking to Jesus as one friend does with another. Open your heart to Him about what you have discovered within during this pilgrimage. As you are able, invite Jesus to accept you under His banner. End with the "Our Father".

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**Some Ignatian hints** for today: Autobiography, living in Rome.

Once the Pilgrim left Rome for Monte Cassino, to give the Exercises to Doctor Ortiz, and spent forty days there. One day, at a certain hour, in a vision, he saw Hozes [death of one of the firsts companions] entering heaven. In this vision he shed abundant tears of consolation. He saw this so clearly that if he were to say the contrary, it would seem to him as if he were telling a lie. He brought with him from Monte Cassino Francis Strada.

After his return to Rome, he labored for the help of souls, and gave the Exercises to two different persons, one of whom dwelt near the Sixtine Bridge, the other near the Church of St. Mary Major. Soon the people began to persecute the Pilgrim and his companions. Michael [former servant of Francis Xavier] was the first of all to be troublesome and to speak wickedly of the Pilgrim, and had him summoned before the governor for trial. The Pilgrim showed the governor a letter written by the same Michael, in which he commended the Pilgrim very highly. The governor examined Michael, and the result was that he was exiled from Rome.

After him followed Mindarra and Berrera, who said that the Pilgrim and his companions were fugitives from Spain, Paris, and Venice. Finally, however, in the presence of the governor and ambassador then at Rome, both acknowledged that they had nothing which they could say against them with regard to their doctrines or their lives. The ambassador ordered this lawsuit

to be abandoned. The Pilgrim objected, saying that he wished the sentence to be made clear and public. This did not please the ambassador and the governor, nor even those who had previously taken sides with the Pilgrim. A few months afterward the Roman Pontiff returned. While he was at Tusculum the Pilgrim was admitted to an audience with the Holy Father, and having given some of his reasons, he obtained what he wished. The Pope ordered sentence to be passed, and it was given in favor of the Pilgrim and his companions.

Through the labors of the Pilgrim and his companions, certain pious works were established at Rome, as that of Catechumens, that of St. Martha, and that of the Orphans. Master Nadal [first companion] can tell the rest.

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*Day 16: In Rome. The Pilgrimage of the 7 Churches. Ignatius and his first companions make their vows.*

**Notes:** The practice of these spiritual exercises along the pilgrimage has already given each of us a personal experience. Each pilgrim has found his or her own way forward along this “inner pilgrimage.” Certainly once back home you will find a lot of materials and practices that can help you continue to grow in your own spirituality. Seeking such advice is always helpful!

**Grace:** I ask the Father to give me an interior knowledge of the many gifts I have received from God. Filled with gratitude for these blessings, I pray that in all things I may love and serve the Divine Majesty. I also pray that the spiritual experience of St. Ignatius of Loyola will help guide me along my own path of life.

**Reflections:** Today we propose the meditation called “to attain love” in the exercises, focusing this time on the pilgrimage we have completed. The Ignatian Way has certainly offered us an experience of God’s love in its many forms. So, we spend our prayer time using this contemplation of God’s love to review the various stages of our journey. We thank God for so many experiences and blessings as we prepare to return to our everyday routine back home.

#### **CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN LOVE in our pilgrimage.**

Two realities should be noted at the outset: The first is that love is expressed more in actions than in words. The second is that love is a communication between two persons. It is to know, to give, and to communicate from the lover to the one loved, and vice versa, whatever one has or is able to have. So, if one has wisdom, he shares this with the one who needs it, or honors and riches from the one who has to the one who does not. Then go back to the introductory prayer and ask that everything can be directed to God’s will.

Next I center myself in the prayer. I imagine that I stand before God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Spirit of Love that created me in all my humanity. Today I ask the Father to give me an intimate knowledge of the many gifts I have received so that, filled with gratitude for all of these, I may love and serve the Divine Majesty in everything I undertake.

I begin the prayer. **The first point** is to call to mind all the blessings I have received from God throughout this time of pilgrimage. I recall both the ones that seemed good to me from the very beginning and others that I now realize were really not so bad after all. Aware of this personal reality, I consider with much reason and justice what I must give of myself as an offering to His Divine Majesty – that is to say all my possessions and all of my life. Also, as you wish, consider that anyone wanting to be more responsive to the Lord will make the following loving response: *“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 everything to me. To You, Lord, I return it to do with as you will. Give me only your love and grace. This is enough for me.”*

Completing the first point, Ignatius proposes a **second point**: notice how God is present and alive in each meeting and experience, around me and inside of me as I think about myself and the way I live, in all that I accomplish and in those I serve. Finish this point by returning to the previous prayer of self-offering: “Take Lord and receive...”

In **the third point**, I consider how God has labored for me in all created things and persons I have met on this pilgrimage. After considering this point I ask myself what I can do to become a more loving person. I conclude this third point by returning to the prayer of self-offering: “Take, Lord, and receive...”

**The fourth**: notice how every good gift descends from above, and my own strength comes only from God’s infinite power. Thus justice, goodness, mercy, all other good gifts that I recognize in myself as well as in the world (like the rays from the sun, our water supply, etc.) all come from God. After considering the origins of all this goodness, I consider myself and the way I will make a return for all that I have received during this pilgrimage. I end this reflection by returning to the self-offering prayer above: “Take Lord and receive ...”

**Final Colloquy**: Summarize your thoughts during this time of prayer, speaking with Jesus as one friend does with another. Be honest with him about the desires and decisions you found in your heart during these days of pilgrimage and prayer. Conclude with the “Our Father.”

### **A Hollowed Space to Be Filled**

A cup must be empty before it can be filled.  
If it is already full, it can't be filled again except by emptying it out.  
In order to fill anything, there must be a hollowed-out space.  
Otherwise it can't receive.  
This is especially true of God's word.  
In order to receive it, we must be hollowed out.  
We must be capable of receiving it,  
emptied of the false self and its endless demands.  
When Christ came, there was no room in the inn.  
It was full. The inn is a symbol of the heart.  
God's word, Christ, can take root only in a hollow.

*-William Breault SJ*

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### **The Seven Churches Pilgrimage in Rome and Ignatius and the first Jesuit companions.**

Comments on the churches by Jean-Paul Hernández S.I. Translation into English by Dr. Kinga Araya. Comments from the book for pilgrims written by Centro San Lorenzo, 2015, and from the booklet about *Pellegrini Alle Sette Chiese* from the Ufficio Nazionale Per la Pastorale del Tempo Libero, Turismo e Sport as well.

**A BIT OF HISTORY**: In the footsteps of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Filippo Neri.

The pilgrimage to the Seven Churches is known to most thanks to S. Filippo Neri. However, it is a processional tradition prior to St. Philip, dated by some to the 7th-8th century and by others to the 14th, at the time of the first Jubilees.

Already around 1140, Benedict, canon of St. Peter's Basilica, reports in his guide *Mirabilia urbis Romae* the description of the seven Basilicas with their relics. And another guide, the comfort of pilgrims, written in 1450 by the Augustinian John Capgrave, as well as presenting the Seven Churches and the spiritual treasures they contain, also deals with the indulgences that it is possible to gain in relation to liturgical times (for example, thousand years for those who visit St. Peter's Basilica on the Feast of the Annunciation, on Monday, Thursday or on the saint's feast day).

St. Ignatius of Loyola, who arrived on Palm Sunday in 1523 to ask the pope for permission to travel to Jerusalem, spent the Holy Week also dedicating himself to the pilgrimage to the Seven Churches. On April 22, 1541, Ignatius and his six companions – the Jesuits of the first hour – go to the Seven Churches and take the vows of belonging to the Society of Jesus in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls. That the pilgrimage was known and that pilgrims could obtain indulgences is confirmed by a letter from St. Francis Xavier dated 20 September 1542, sent from Goa to Ignatius of Loyola, in which the writer requests that His Holiness grant the Governor of the Indies (delegated by the King of Portugal) and his family the privilege of receiving – every time they go to confession – «those indulgences that they would obtain if they visited the Seven Churches of Rome».

On the day of Pentecost in 1544, during one of his pilgrimages, S. Filippo Neri suffered cardiac dilatation in the catacombs of S. Sebastiano. Since Philip was ordained a priest on 23 May 1551, almost 36 years old, it is evident that he went to the Seven Churches even before becoming a priest: he went there alone and sometimes at night, crossing risky areas, with a loaf of bread and a few books to read in the light of the moon. But the official beginning of this practice of pilgrimage was on February 25, 1552 (Fat Thursday): with a small group of friends, gradually more and more numerous (up to 6 thousand people), he leaves from Via Monserrato (near Piazza Farnese), from the church of San Gerolamo della Carita, in whose convent Filippo lives (only in 1583 Pope Gregorio XIII convinces him to move to S. Maria in Vallicella, or Chiesa Nuova).

Praying in the streets and in the squares, making the name of Jesus resound in the midst of the Romans: this is the program of St. Philip. Which makes the pilgrimage last two days. In the late afternoon of the first day, after crossing the S. Angelo bridge, you visit the sick of the S. Spirito hospital and arrive at S. Pietro. Early the next morning, starting again from Porta S. Spirito, we head to S. Paolo, where we take what is now called "Via delle Sette Chiese" to reach S. Sebastiano. There the Holy Mass is celebrated (then moved to the Celia, in the church of S. Stefano Rotonda, with the increase of pilgrims). Lunch is eaten first in the Savelli vineyard, near the Caffarella, later in the garden of Villa Mattei, the current Villa Celimontana (in the premises of the New Church a colored wooden outline of S. Filippo is still preserved, exhibited at Villa Mattei to make it present even when dead in the moment of greatest conviviality).

Then continue to S. Giovanni in Laterano and S. Croce in Gerusalemme. Through Porta Maggiore you exit the city walls again, reaching the Agro Verano, where the Basilica of S. Lorenzo is located. Finally, we return to the city, heading to S. Maria Maggiore, where the pilgrimage ends with the singing of the *Salve Regina*. The journey could (and can) open up to new stages: for example, stopping at the Tiber Island, where the apostle S. Bartolomeo is buried, or at the church of Ss. Nereo and Achilleo, in the Celia district, not far from the Baths of Caracalla, built where St. Peter would have lost a bandage on his foot during his escape to avoid martyrdom.

Along the way there are two tombstones, in front of which it is worth stopping: one, on Via Ostiense (between street numbers 106 and 108), commemorates the last meeting between St. Peter and St. Paul, before their martyrdom at the Janiculum Hill and at the Acque Salvie. The other, in the Garbatella district, where "Via delle Sette Chiese" passes, recalls the meeting between S. Filippo Neri and S. Carla Borromeo, who traveled the road in the opposite direction.

Perhaps the real innovation brought about by St. Philip was to transform visits to the Seven Churches into a collective practice, which the Church adopted on the occasion of the Jubilee of 1575, the first after the Council of Trent (see Lafréry's press).

The pilgrimage is also a symbolic tour of the Christian world. S. Giovanni in Laterano was the seat of the supreme pastor. Four basilicas represented the patriarchal sees of antiquity (S. Pietro, Constantinople; S. Paolo, Alexandria; S. Lorenzo, Jerusalem; S. Maria Maggiore, Antioch). Finally, S. Sebastiano and S. Croce were added, which were on the road, to complete the "mystic sense" of the number 7 according to Sisto V. Seven are the Churches of the Apocalypse of Saint John (Ephesus, Laodicea, Smyrna, Filadelfia, Sardis, Tiatiri, Pergamo), which God enriches with the Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Seven hours of walking, marked by the Seven bloodsheds of Jesus (circumcision, sweat in the garden, flagellation, crowning with thorns, crucifixion of hands and feet, opening of the side) or by the Seven pains of Mary. Seven are also the steps of Jesus during the Passion and Seven the words of Jesus on the cross.

In every church, in addition to one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, liberation from one of the Seven deadly sins is asked and the opposite Seven virtues are contemplated. Each stage underlines, on the one hand, that our heart is inclined towards vice (one could almost say that we "are" the vice). But, on the other hand, it underlines that we have a desire for virtue: everyone, without exclusion, desires it (one could say that we "are" this desire for virtue). Christ is he who possesses the Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He extends to us.

## 1.- Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican

On the Vatican Hill, Nero (Emperor from 54 to 68 A.C.) had built his private circus where the gladiatorial fights and capital executions of the rebels and traitors were taking place. Therefore, a necropolis had been created nearby to bury the victims. Among them, many Christians were thrown into the beasts or consumed as living torches. According to ancient sources, the first systematic persecution of Christians took place precisely under Nero, after the great fire of Rome in 64. It is probable that Simon Petro was one of the victims of the first persecution (others argue for Peter's Death in 68 A.C.). In any case, it is in this necropolis that during the excavations of 1953 Margherita Guarducci discovers what most archaeologists recognize today as the Tomb of saint Peter. It is marked by a Greek inscription ("Peter is here") and by many other indications that confirm the importance of the deceased for the first Christian generations. In regard to the presence of the remains of saint Peter and Paul in Rome, Eusebius of Caesarea will report the words of a priest from the beginning of the second century. III who states: "... I can show you the burial places ("trophea") of the Apostles. If you want to go to the Vatican or on Ostiense street, you will find the tombs of those who founded this Church."

The tomb discovered in 1953 is situated exactly upright under the Altar of the first saint Peter's Basilica built by Constantine between 320 and 333. To build the Basilica, the Emperor had levelled the entire necropolis, a gesture that historians consider to be unusual, yet it only confirms the exceptionality of the tomb preserved there.

In 1450 the restructuring of the Basilica began, interrupted several times, they were never completed. In 1506 Pope Giulio II reopened the reconstruction work of the Basilica with a new project directed by the Architect Bramante. It consisted of a central Greekstyle plan following the "Martyria" model (referring to the early millennium buildings and oriental traditions to honour the martyrs) but dominated by a huge dome inspired by the Pantheon. symbolically, Peter's martyrdom became the fulcrum of universal unity pre-figured by the unity of the Empire. In order to realize his project, Bramante began demolishing the Constantinian Basilica causing numerous criticisms, such as those of Erasmus in Rotterdam.

During his visit to Rome in 1510 Luther also criticized the reconstruction work and later denounced the Church of Rome for the sale of indulgences that served to finance the Basilica.

In 1514 Rafael Sanzio replaces Bramante with the reconstruction of the Basilica. However, he returns to a Basilica model that disregards the Bramante project. After some interruptions related to the sack of Rome in 1527, the works resumes under *Antonio di Sangallo il Giovane*, who proposes a synthesis between the model of Bramante and that of Rafael. In 1546, Michelangelo Buonarroti, in charge of the Basilica, returns to the central plan model and concentrates on the dome, completed by Giacomo della Porta only in 1590. The dome, which Michelangelo designed, is still the world's tallest dome standing at 136 meters. Around the drum of the dome are the words in Latin of St. Matthew's Gospel chapter 16, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church... and I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven." Finally, in 1607 Carlo Maderno assumes the reconstruction work with a plan that combines the central plan of an oriental inspiration with that of the basilica, a typical architectural model in Rome and in the West.

Between 1657 and 1667 Gian Lorenzo Bernini creates the saint Peter's square, with the most celebrated colonnade. In the famous words of both Bernini and Pope Alexander VII compare the colonnade to the arms of the Mother Church. some authors also sought resemblance with the Temple of Solomon, in view of the concentric rows of columns that seem to re-propose many concentric courtyards of the Temple of Jerusalem. The obelisk however, located at the centre of the oval square brings the spectator directly to the origins of the entire building. It is in fact an Egyptian red granite obelisk that Pliny the Elder had already situated on the central "spine" in the Circus of Nero. We can say that it is perhaps "the last thing Simon Peter saw before dying on the Circus of Nero. The obelisk remained for centuries on the south side of the Basilica before being moved in front of Maderno's facade in 1586. The Bernini oval thus forms a new type of a "circus" where pilgrims arrived onto the square are the new "martyrs" (which in Greek means "witnesses"). They are called to witness the faith no longer under the eyes of a hostile public, but under a "heavenly court" formed by 140 saints represented on the cornice.

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### **The grace of the place:**

Peter was a Jewish man from Galilee. He was not a man of high education, but a simple fisherman working with his hands. Nevertheless, God called him and made him the first among the apostles. The very fact that St Peter's Basilica is so tremendous, considering the simplicity of the apostle, is very eloquent. It shows us the paradox of the Most High God who calls us and humbles Himself to encounter the little ones. Today, just as He called Peter, God comes to me and desires to

make my life magnificent. Throughout this pilgrimage, God invites me to listen to the call of Jesus who wants to stay at my house. I am invited to listen to God who calls me by name. If I am attending this pilgrimage, it is because God wants me to be here; it is not an accident. Jesus has called me to this situation at this moment. As He called Peter, He invites me now to follow Him. He desires me and wants to make me a sign for the world!

**The grace to ask for:**

Jesus is calling me for something secret and mysterious. He is calling me to a place where only He and I have access. He has a plan for me and a path that only I can take. Ask Him for the grace to understand better that someone is calling me. And that "someone" is Jesus!

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Fear of the Lord.

**Vice:** Gluttony.

**Virtue:** Temperance, disposes us to avoid every kind of excess.

Abstinence and the ability to set limits. Without borders, really, we are not free. A nation is free even when it knows how to defend its borders. Being afraid to go out of bounds is a healthy thing. That is, there is a positive value of fear. Abstinence is the ability to be free, knowing the limits.

Christ was truly endowed with fear of God, but he was not afraid of doing God's will. Therefore, in his life he knew how to enjoy things, but also to renounce them, according to God's will.

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## 2.- Basilica of Saint Paul's outside-the-Walls

The first Basilica dedicated to saint Paul was built by the emperor Constantine in 324, the same years when saint Peter's Basilica was being built in Vatican. As in saint Peter's case, this Basilica stands on the burial site of the Martyr. The size of the present-day Basilica is slightly bigger than the previous one. Approximately fifty years later, under Theodosius, it was completely rebuilt not only to accommodate in a better way the pilgrims, but foremost because at the end of the IV century the intellectual world and the Christian faith began to enter more and more into a dialogue and the Apostle Paul became a symbol of this dialogue. This is not only because Paul of Tarsus is known for having to open the Church to the pagans, but also because his letters express an intellectual richness with which the educated pagans could find more compatible, rather than with Simon Peter, a humble fisherman. Building the Basilica of saint Paul in a very similar way to that of saint Peter's, there was a desire to emphasize the double Apostolic nature of Rome: that of the fisherman Peter and of the intellectual Paul. Over time, structural changes were made and the most important one was done by Gregory I, who raised the floor of the Church. In 1823 a fire destroyed the Basilica almost completely. During the subsequent reconstruction there was a consideration given to maintain both the architectural structure and the iconographic program.

The basilica is made up of a Latin cross divided into five naves accessible via four-sided portico. The garden that is inside the portico is kind of a transition between exterior and interior, and re-introduces to those who enter it an image of a "ordered world", a return to the origins, a "*paradeisos*" (which in Greek means "garden"). In the centre of the garden, there is a huge statue of the Apostle with His iconographic attribute: the sword. It recalls the instrument of His martyrdom (according to

tradition, saint Paul was beheaded where there is now a nearby "Abbey of the Three Fountains"). Moreover, the sword also recalls the expression in which the Letter to the Hebrews (in Antiquity attributed to saint Paul) compares the Word to a "double-edged sword" (Eb, 4,12).

Inside the Basilica, the decoration of the Triumphal Arch was rebuilt after the fire, consulting the drawings from the 1500s. At the centre of the Arch there is a Christ-sun, surrounded by a triple halo that indicates the Trinity. Above it, there are the four living beings, which indicate the four evangelists, but they are also the four presences that we find in the Book of Ezekiel who are witness to the opening of the sky.

There are also 24 elderly people (Acts 4-5). Those on the right are veiled, those on the left are not. Those veiled are the righteous and prophets of the AT (Jews veil themselves when praying). Below them we recognize the Apostle Peter. The twelve non-veiled represent the converted pagans. Thus, saint Paul is represented below them.

On the cross vaults, under the ciborium of Arnolfo di Cambio (1285), it is possible to access a lower level in respect to the floor of the Basilica: it is an ancient floor, one preceding Gregory I. In front, we find the sarcophagus of Paul, in which, almost certainly there are his remains. They have been identified by a convergence of factors including the presence of gold threads traces, identical to those found on the remains of saint Peter in the Vatican necropolis. This coincidence is due to the period when the relics of the two Apostles were reunited and stored in a precious cloth in the "Memoria Apostolorum" in the Basilica of saint Sebastian on the Appian Way, before being separated and brought back to their original place of martyrdom as "foundation stone" of their respective Basilicas.

This Basilica is the site of the ecumenical evening vespers to conclude the week of Christian Unity every January. In recent years this has included the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the orthodox Patriarch praying for Christian unity and asking for the prayers of St. Paul.

#### IGNATIAN HINT:

Once the Society of Jesus was approved by the papal bull, the first superior general of the order was elected. All the companions wanted Ignatius to be the one chosen, but he found it very difficult to accept the position. Once he accepted the burden that fell on his shoulders, they all agreed that the following Friday, April 22, 1541, they would go around "the seven stations of the seven churches of Rome," and that, at one of them, namely, at St. Paul's, they would make their profession by emitting the vows specified in the bull. Why at St. Paul's outside the walls, and not at St. Peter's, to which Loyola had had such devotion from his youth? Without a doubt, to avoid the noise of the people in that unfinished basilica.

Father García Villoslada SJ says in his "Saint Ignatius of Loyola, New Biography" that «During that long tour they made through almost all of Rome, visiting the seven churches, they were all so smiling and exultant with joy that they seemed filled with the Holy Spirit, each in his own way. The novice Ribadeneira was most impressed by the Provençal Codure. Let us copy his words: "I do not want to fail to mention the extraordinary and excessive devotion that Master Juan Coduri felt that day, with such vehement and divine consolation that he could in no way repress it within himself, but rather it came out in torrents... Juan Coduri went before us in the company of Laínez through those fields; we heard him fill the sky with sighs and tears; He cried out to God in such a way that it seemed to us that he was fainting and would burst from the great force of the affection he suffered, as if he were giving signs that he would soon be freed from this prison of the mortal body. Because in this same year of 1541, in Rome, the one who was the first to make his profession after our Blessed Father Ignatius was also the first of the ten who passed away from this life, on August 29th.»

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#### **The grace of the place:**

We know that St. Paul proclaimed the Gospel wherever he went - in his words and his deeds. He provided a great witness to a world that did not know Christ. With the opportunity to ask his intercession at this basilica, let us pray for the grace to always live the faith courageously wherever we are.

#### **The grace to ask for:**

Lord, help me to turn away from sin as Saul did. Help me to become Paul, a witness of your love for others. Lord, help me to hear the voice of your son and be open to whatever he wants from me.

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Piety.

**Vice:** Anger.

**Virtue:** Patience, disposes us to be open to mercy.

The vice is all ours. In anger we blaspheme what we lack. We complain. The virtue of patience, however, is the ability to bless the existing, waiting for the fullness that God will give. The virtue of patience is our real desire, and no culture actually

approves anger. Christ has the gift of mercy: he has a life full of mercy, he blesses everything that exists (we see it in the multiplication of the loaves). He doesn't get often angry, but patiently transforms what exists into good. Sometimes pity strengthens the virtue of patience.

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### 3.- Basilica of Saint Sebastian at the Catacombs

To commemorate the relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, "pillars of the Church", the first of that of the Jews, the second of that of the Gentiles, pilgrims were coming to this church. Since, in the summer of 257, the emperor Valeriano had forbidden Christians to gather in their places of worship, they transferred the relics to the catacombs of San Sebastiano. The first feast of the two saints together is dated June 29, 258.

St. Sebastian, converted to the Christian faith in 288, is buried in the Basilica. He lived and died under the government of the emperor Diocletian, whose first army cohort he commanded. The cult of Sebastiano developed in many European countries, so the crypt where his body was kept was the destination of numerous pilgrimages. St. Sebastian suffered martyrdom under the pagan authorities who shot him with arrows and tied him to a tree.

It was at the catacombs of S. Sebastiano that the heart palpitation that struck San Filippo Neri occurred around 1544, on the day of Pentecost: an outpouring of the Holy Spirit caused his heart to dilate (two and a half times its normal size) and the arching of two ribs (attested by doctors after his death).

The current Basilica, from 1608, is the renovation of a Basilica from the Constantinian period (4<sup>th</sup> century).

Deserves attention:

- The altar with the urn of the body of St. Sebastian.
- The Chapel of the Relics, with one of the arrows that hit the Saint, and the column to which he was tied.
- The bust of Christ the Savior, last work by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (just before 1680).
- The original stone with the footprints believed to be Christ's, relating to the *Quo vadis* episode.

Worth to visit the nearby *Quo vadis* church, on the road that leads to San Giovanni in Laterano. The Church of the "**Domine Quo Vadis**" is one of the first churches located on the Via Appia Antica, about 800 meters beyond Porta San Sebastiano. The Church has medieval origins but was built in 1600. It takes its name from the oral tradition according to which the apostle Peter, fleeing from the city to avoid martyrdom, meets Jesus to whom he addresses the following words "Domine quo vadis"? (Lord, where are you going?). And the Lord replied "Venio Romam iterum crucifigi" (I am coming to Rome to be crucified again). Peter, aware of the rebuke, turns back to face his destiny and Jesus disappears but, in disappearing, he leaves the impressions of his footprints on the road.

As evidence of the incident, within the Church there is a stone with the imprints "of His holy feet", left by Jesus precisely on the site where the Church now stands. The stone is actually a copy: the original is in fact preserved in the Basilica of San Sebastiano. The second name with which the church is known: "Santa Maria delle Piante" (footprint) derives from this episode. Saint Peter was crucified on June 29<sup>th</sup> 67 at the Vatican hill.

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#### **The grace of the place:**

A Christian martyr like Sebastian is a witness not to death but to life. The martyrs were able to sacrifice their lives because they were convinced of the resurrection of Christ. They knew that Jesus was and is the way, the truth and the life, and so they imitated, Jesus' love for us and gave their lives to him. We are called to do the same, to give our lives, to open our hearts to Jesus and to the life that Jesus brings us.

#### **The grace to ask for:**

Let's ask the Holy Spirit to pour into our heart and enlarge it to God's dimension of love, asking for a special gift we need or perhaps some people we know. Let's ask it in the praise with all our heart.

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Knowledge.

**Vice:** Lust.

**Virtue:** Chastity, disposes us to be free to love everyone with a full heart of Love.

The gift of science (knowledge) is the ability to know and look at the other as Christ looks at him. In lust we make an object of the other, a projection of ourselves. In chastity, on the other hand, we really love him. The value of chastity is better understood as soon as one becomes a parent, because it is not tolerated that a daughter or son is just an object to be used by someone. Love looks at the other as God looks at him. Science thus strengthens virtue and teaches us to look at women, men, Creation, things, money... as Christ looked at them.

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#### 4.- Saint John in Lateran's Basilica: Sancta Sanctorum and the Baptistery

The Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome is not saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican, but saint John in Lateran. From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, this was the place to live for all the Popes. This basilica, rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century takes its name from St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and the surname of the family who has once used this property. The consecration of the Basilica in Lateran is still a Liturgical Feast (November 9th) because right here, for the first time, Christianity was aware of the power of the metaphor materialized in building a church. The church, the first one build in the world and mother of all the churches, is an image of the whole Church and in turn is the "Body of Christ". The Gospel of John, Jesus already compares His body to a Temple (John 2,21). Peter's First Letter speaks of Christians as "living stones" of a spiritual building (1Peter 2,5). Moreover, the same form chosen for this "first cathedral" is rich with theological significance. The choice of the basilica is the choice of a civil and not a religious building. It is certainly a desire to distance itself from a pagan religiosity, but above all it is to affirm that the God of Jesus Christ is the God that one meets in the everydayness of the "square" (that is, in the covered part of the forum that is the basilica) because it is an Incarnated God. Moreover, the Roman basilica was also an ancient place of justice. Praying in the basilica was therefore to understand prayer as a legal process. This corresponds exactly with a theology of the Gospels, and in particular with the Gospel of John, in which the reader is involved in the process of Jesus and where one speaks of the prosecutor (in Hebrew "satan") and of the defence lawyer (in Greek "Parakleitos" a name of the Holy spirit). The Gospel reader, just as one who enters a basilica to pray, realizes that historical process of Jesus continues in one's heart, where Jesus is accused of being an impostor. Spiritual life will consist of recognizing the two voices and constituting oneself as a "witness" (in Greek "martyr") of Christ inside this ongoing process.

Today the interior of the basilica appears in its Baroque decoration largely due to Borromini. The twelve statues of the Apostles in the niches of the pilasters were executed by several artists in the early 1700s. They exalt the role of the Apostles as the "pillars" of the Church. If the Creed speaks of an "Apostolic" Church it is, first of all, because none of us has ever seen the Resurrected, but the Christian faith in the Risen one in fact, is the faith in the faith of the other, who in his/her turn trusted someone else, going back to the Apostles, the only eyewitnesses of the Resurrected.

The mosaic of the hemispherical vault of the apse is a result of various remakes, but it most likely preserves the central themes of the first version. It goes back to Constantine himself and wants to highlight the glorious Cross. The vision of the Cross that the emperor had with the words "*In hoc signo vinces*" ("In this sign you will win") before the battle at the Milvian Bridge (where Constantine won against his rival Maxentius). This sign is now made bigger so all the people can to contemplate it, but no longer for the sake of a military victory, but rather the interior one. A part of the initial project probably consisted of an image of the bust and a face of Christ, hardly represented before Constantine. The four rivers and the deer are also a part of the early Christian iconographic language. While many other elements are attributed to Jacopo Torriti's refinement

at the end of the 1200. Finally, in the XX century the mosaics were moved again and modified by Leo XIII. The remains of the Episcopal Palace in Lateran nowadays consists of a sanctuary comprised of an internal Chapel dedicated to saint Lawrence and it is called *Sancta Sanctorum* for the precious relics that are preserved there.

One climbs up the stairs on the Holy stair – *la Scala Santa*. According to tradition Jesus climbed the very same stairs before His trial. The *Scala Santa* would have been transported to Rome by the Empress, Saint Helen, the mother of Constantine, in 326 A.D. The pilgrims climb up the stairs on their knees. In a Christian context, any staircase symbolizes the “staircase of Heaven”, that is the ladder in the dream of Jacob (Genesis, 28,12) reinterpreted in the Gospel of John as the Cross of Jesus and His Passion (John, 1,51), a passage for all humanity between the earth and heaven.

The *Sancta Sanctorum* was built in the time of Constantine and it was restructured in the XIII century. On the altar there is the image of “Acheiropoieta” (=not painted with human hands) of the Redeemer that tradition believes it was painted by the angels. It is a wooden icon, which dates back to the VI-VII century. It testifies to the desire of every believer, expressed in the Psalms: “Lord, Your face I seek”.

On the other side of the Piazza one can visit the Baptistery made built by Sixtus III between 432 and 440 A.D. on an ancient Baptistery site from the Constantine era. Even though the interior was modified many times the external structure of the V century remains. The architectural model it fashioned after that of a pagan mausoleum. Whoever enters the baptistery can experience what the women had experienced in the morning of the Resurrection after his Crucifixion, as if stepping into the empty tomb. Who enters in the baptistery thinks that it is a place of death, but discovers that the baptismal bathtub is like an empty tomb, which helps to experience Resurrection. Its octagonal shape underlines the symbol that is commented by the Fathers of the Church of the “Eighth Day” (the day after Saturday) which is the day to Resurrection. The adjacent chapels preserve the mosaics from the Early Christian time.

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**The grace of the place:**

We stand before the Church of St. John Lateran – the mother Church of Rome. It is important because of a chair inside – the cathedra of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. The Cathedra is the symbol of a Bishop's teaching authority in his Diocese. In this Church, we pray in a special way for our Pope and for all of the bishops of our own Dioceses. May the Lord continue to bless them and give them the grace to guide us all in faith.

**The grace to ask for:**

Let's reflect on how this process of guidance is present in our lives. When we do things, when we are active preaching or giving catechism to others, or simply talking about our faith, do we also withdraw and let Jesus shine through what we do or say?

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Counsel.

**Vice:** Greed.

**Virtue:** Gratitude, disposes us to be generous and give without expectations.

When faced with a crossroads, a council is needed to decide. Christ, in Capernaum, when he is told to return to the city, replies that one must go and preach elsewhere: he has the gift of advice which guides decisions. We are often greedy: we don't make a decision, because making it means giving up something. In the moment of vocation, many are paralyzed by renunciation. On the other hand, prodigality – the ability to give and to give yourself, freely and generously – is the virtue of knowing how to give up something, when you are well advised, when you understand what God's will is.

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We arrive here to commemorate the Passion and Death of Jesus, thanks to the relics conserved here: the most important are three fragments of the cross, a nail, a fragment of the *titulus* (INRI) and two thorns from the crown. It is not a sepulchral Basilica, but a place to celebrate the mysteries of faith: if for St. John in Lateran it is the Resurrection and Redemption, for St. Cross it is the Passion and Death, which made the other two possible.

Founded by Constantine and his mother, Saint Helena, or their immediate descendants, on the site where a *Palatium* once stood, owned by the emperor, known as Sessoriano. Elena, in 325, had found on Golgotha the remains of the wood of the cross and other relics, placed in a chapel on whose floor a layer of earth from Calvary was spread, "stained by the blood of the Lord". The Basilica, in its original structure, intended to follow that of Jerusalem.

Deserves attention:

- ✓ The Cosmatesque floor (from very famous family of marble workers, the Cosmati, in Lazio).
- ✓ The Renaissance ceiling.
- ✓ In the apse, the lower band with the Legend of the true cross, also narrated by Piero della Francesca in Arezzo and St. Ambrose in the 5<sup>th</sup> century as well. Having found the three crosses of Jesus and of the thieves, the problem was to discern which one was the Lord's: St. Helena had the corpse of a young man stretched out on each cross and, in contact with that of Jesus, the dead man came back to life and gave glory to God.
- ✓ The Chapel of the Relics.
- ✓ The Cappella della Pietà (or Gregoriana), semi-subterranean like that of Saint Helena, with a precious reliquary in the shape of a triptych, which carries, in the centre, an ancient *Imago pietatis*.

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#### **The grace of the place:**

Today, we can often think of faith as something distant or abstract, but this Church proclaims the concrete reality of our faith. This Church, founded on dirt brought from Jerusalem, is dedicated to the historical instrument of our Lord's passion, the Holy Cross. Christ's selfless and sacrificial love for us was manifested in a real way, and His desire to show mercy upon us and enter into a friendship with us is a reality which becomes a foundation for our entire life. Do we respond by allowing Christ to be a reality in our daily lives?

#### **The grace to ask for:**

Ask for the grace to understand how much God loved me through the cross. Also ask the grace to understand from the perspective of suffering. God did not want the suffering, but He did endure it. We cannot explain it or understand it theoretically. When we look at the cross, we see that God has not abandoned suffering humanity. God is present in suffering because He included it first. We also can endure our suffering with Him and offer it up for Him. We can discover that with Him, even in the suffering, our lives are fruitful.

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Fortitude.

**Vice:** Sloth.

**Virtue:** Diligence, disposes us to action and to be engaged like Jesús, to the end.

Christ has the gift of fortitude, he has the gift of being an "oak tree", of bearing guilt. The vice of sloth manifests itself in misadventures: when they come, you no longer play, you retire from the game. Fervor is a desire for commitment, but sometimes it is lacking if we are not given the gift of fortitude by Christ.

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We are here to commemorate the martyrdom of Saint Lawrence and the unity he was able to achieve between faith and charity. Victim – on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 258 – of the persecutions of Valerian, he was one of the 7 deacons, responsible for the care of 1,500 poor people and widows helped by the Christian community in Rome, as well as for the administration of goods and cemeteries. Some Popes of the time were not chosen from among the presbyters but from the group of deacons. According to tradition, when Valerian asked S. Lawrence to hand over all the properties of the Church, he presented the poor, the sick and the lame to the Emperor as the treasures of the Church and was subsequently martyred by being enflamed upon an iron grill.

Around 330, Constantine had a small oratory built over the tomb of Lorenzo, with a double stairway to accommodate pilgrims. Nearby he then had a large cemetery Basilica built on which, around 580-90, Pope Pelagius II raised a new Basilica. And Honorius III (1216-1227) added another one, which is the one from which you currently enter.

In the Basilica there is also the memory of another deacon, the protomartyr Saint Stephen (†34), of the philosopher Saint Justin (†114), animated by intellectual charity, and of Alcide Degasperi (politician, founder of the Christian Democratic Party and promoter of the European Union, died in †1954), to remember the charity of politics.

Deserves attention:

- ✓ The narthex of the Vassallettos, Roman marble workers active in Rome between the 12th and 13th centuries, for some coinciding with the Cosmati's. There are thirteenth-century frescoes, which narrate the stories of S. Lorenzo and S. Stefano in parallel, and the tomb of Degasperi, by Giacomo Manzù.
- ✓ The Cosmatesque floor, from the Cosmati's marble workers (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries).
- ✓ The *ciborium*, from 1148.
- ✓ The two *ambos* in the nave, one reserved for non-evangelical texts and the other for the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ✓ The candlestick for the paschal candle.
- ✓ The mosaic of the triumphal arch (6<sup>th</sup> century), visible in the presbytery towards the inside: it represents the Majesty of Christ.
- ✓ The crypt with the tomb of Saints Lawrence, Stephen, and Justin.
- ✓ The Funerary Chapel of Pius IX.
- ✓ The 12<sup>th</sup> century cloister.

The Basilica, bombed in 1943, suffered serious damage, partially restored between 1946 and 1950.

*Campo Verano* cemetery is located on the side of the basilica and was visited by Pope Francis in 2015 and celebrated a Mass for the Souls of the dead.

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#### **The grace of the place:**

"You did it to me." These five words are the words that Jesus says at the last judgment. St. Lawrence had these words engraved on his heart. For, when asked to give the treasures of the Church to the emperor he gathered Rome's poor and presented them to the emperor. He saw Christ in the poor. Christ is the only treasure of the Church. My prayer at this church is that I might see Jesus in the distressing disguise of any kind of poor. "You did it to me."

#### **The grace to ask for:**

I ask for the grace to love more sincerely those around me, in their richness and in their poverty. I ask for the grace, through the intercession of Saint Lawrence, to love the Church as it is. If the Church sometimes seems to me to be poor, it may be first of all be so because I'm part of it!

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**Gift of the Spirit:** Understanding.

**Vice:** Envy.

**Virtue:** Gratitude, disposes us to live the fraternal charity.

The gift of the intellect (understanding) consists in becoming aware of the presence of the other, in being able to see that he is there. In envy one always sees him with an evil eye, or as an enemy. In fraternal love, on the other hand, one manages to see him as a brother. Christ has the gift of understanding and invites us to love one another as he has loved us.

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## 7.- Basilica of Saint Mary Major

The Basilica of saint Mary Major is one of the first dedicated to Mary in Christendom. It was constructed, shortly after the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.) that declared Mary "Theotokos" (Mother of God) in underline that Jesus is God right from His conception and hence the human body of Jesus has been an expression of God. A story passed on says that on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, the Virgin Mary appeared to Pope Liberio in a dream asking that a church be built in her honor and mentioning that a miraculous sign would indicate exactly where to build the church. On that August 5<sup>th</sup> 358 a miraculous snow fall is said to have occurred only here on the Equilino hill.

Many of the mosaics preserved in the Basilica are dated to 432 A.D. on the right-hand side of the central nave we have the story of the Exodus and on the left-hand side, the story of the Patriarchs. These two great visual narratives correspond to the catechesis of the Fathers of the Church and comment on the promises of Israel as a long path that leads to the Incarnation. And it is precisely the Incarnation that is being represented on the Triumphal Arch, the entrance of God in form of human body thus rendering every human body "capable of God". The scenes are mostly taken from the apocryphal gospels such as the Annunciation in which Mary is knitting with a red thread. The "Proto-Gospel of James" recounts in fact that Mary, at the moment of Annunciation was knitting the red veil of the Temple of Jerusalem, the same veil that was torn apart during the Crucifixion.

The mosaics of the apse were created by Jacopo Torriti (XIII century). In the lower part, among the windows, the mosaics represent various episodes from Mary's Life. In the hemisphere vault of the apse, on a starry background, the mosaic represents the crowning of Mary as the fulfilment of a life where all Her body became an instrument of God. With the "Marian apse", saint Mary Major interprets the Eucharist as the continuation of the Incarnation, and the body of every human being as the place where God manifest Himself.

In one side chapel, going down some steps that lead a decorated reliquary, there are some bits of wood from the cradle of Baby Jesus. Saint Ignatius celebrated here, on that altar, his first mass as a priest. Because of his devotion to the Nativity, he wanted to celebrate in Bethlehem, but it was impossible to make the journey to Holy Land at that time. Nowadays the altar is divided in some pieces in a side chapel, close to the main entrance, on the right side going out.

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### **The grace of the place:**

Mary kept the many mysteries of her life with Jesus in her heart. The many encounters, the many events that she shared with Jesus which she did not yet fully understand she kept in her heart. God Himself dwelt inside her and walked beside her. She did the most ordinary and mundane events of her daily life with her little Son – Jesus – at her side. She saw him turn water into wine and she saw water and blood flow from her dear Son's pierced heart on the cross. Today, we have encountered Jesus in varied ways. May Mary's example lead us to ponder in our hearts these encounters and discoveries as we return to our normal day to day life at home. Do not forget that our whole lives are a pilgrimage to our heavenly homeland.

### **The grace to ask for:**

I ask Mary, at the end of this pilgrimage, to help me keep in my heart what I have come to understand all along this experience. Mary, take me by the hand and, from this moment on, remain with me forever.

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### **Gift of the Spirit:** Wisdom.

**Vice:** Pride – Vanity.

**Virtue:** Humility, disposes us to walk behind Christ and not before Him, following humble His own humbling path, as Saint Ignatius recalls in the Spiritual Exercises.

Christ is wisdom: "Learn from me that I am humble and meek of heart". We, on the other hand, are proud. And it is our desire to defeat pride: as soon as someone has a hint of pride, he appears repulsive to us. Humility is already theological, but the gift of wisdom brings it to completion.

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*Day 17: Go back to Galilee !*

**Notes:** We maintain the same positive spirit as we continue to contemplate the Love of God in all its fullness at the end of this pilgrimage in Rome. There is nothing that can hinder us on our path to freedom and eternal happiness in God's love. We rejoice in every flower, bird, smile, extended hand, church, street, etc. Remember the "introductory prayer" as we enter into prayer, as well as throughout the day. Pay attention to the final colloquy: we ask an interior knowledge of the Love of God who strengthens our commitment to life eternal. We discuss this with our "friend" Jesus in the colloquy at the end of prayer, and during the day.

**Grace:** I beg the Father for this gift: to enter into the joy of the risen and victorious Christ. To be able to contemplate the fullness of life that Jesus has achieved for us. I ask to rejoice deeply with Christ, and to be sent into the world to serve the mission of Jesus Christ.

**Reflections:** The grace of being alive, the grace of experiencing the resurrection within you is not just a personal gift. Rather, with great energy, this grace must be shared with others and placed at the service of Jesus' Mission: to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Today we feel renewed as in the same moment we commit ourselves with Jesus, our best "friend," to help realize His mission on earth. The Father continues to pour out the Spirit of Christ upon the men and women of our day. Jesus consoles us always and sends us forth on mission to console the suffering, the poor, and all who long for salvation. As it is written: "When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. (Psalm 104:30). We pray today to our God that we may enter into the joy and consoling mission of the Risen Jesus.

In Matthew's gospel we find Jesus asking the disciples to go to Galilee and assist him there. The disciples were those sinners He had invited to become His companions, the same ones who were traitors at the very end. We are now one with them, as disciples in our pilgrimage to the Kingdom. We are also united with others, perhaps more sinful or more faithful than ourselves. But this doesn't really matter since our strength and wisdom is centered in Christ. Do not be afraid to answer His call. We gather now at the mountain, that meeting place between God and His people. For us this place can be a slum, a lab, a church, a clinic, an office, a parlor, a classroom. Jesus gives us our mission: go forth, baptize, teach, love, and bring God's Compassion as reconciliation for all of humanity. We are invited to fulfill this mission in every moment and circumstance of life. And Jesus speaks the most wonderful words to us: He promises that He will be with us always, in each joyful and painful moment. Even though I may not feel worthy to accept His presence, Jesus will always stay close to me. Even if I am a sinful person, unfaithful and limited, Jesus is going to send His Spirit to transform every human situation as an experience of growth.

Even though our faith may be small, Jesus counts on us. Thomas had to recognize his lack of faith before being sent to the world. We pray to answer the call of Jesus, inviting us to follow him to the beach and stay with Him. We join the disciples there in receiving His commission and His blessing.

**Scripture:**

Matthew 28: 16-20: "I will be with you always, until the end of time."

John 20: 24-29: Tolerant of my darkness and unbelief as He was of Thomas, Jesus delights in consoling me with the gift of renewed faith. In His loving presence, I say: "My Lord and my God!"

John 21: 1-17: A moment of joy – "It is the Lord!" A moment of companionship – "Come and eat your meal." A moment of intimacy and decision – "Do you love me?" A moment of mission – "Feed my sheep!"

Romans 8:31-39. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

**Final Colloquy:** At this point in our interior pilgrimage, we are accustomed to walk with our friend and Lord Jesus Christ, speaking freely just as one friend does with another. If you honestly experience the strength and grace within you, beg Jesus to accept you under His banner, thus to build the Kingdom of God at His side. Finish with the "Our Father."

**Help Us to Remain Close to You**

Lord Jesus, we ask you now  
to help us to remain with you always,  
to be close to you with all the ardor of our hearts,  
to take up joyfully the mission you entrust to us  
and that is to continue your presence  
and spread the good news of your Resurrection.

-Carlo Maria Martini SJ

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*Jacopino del Conte* in 1556, just after the death of Ignatius, made this picture, with the coffin of Ignatius still in the Jesuits House. Once finished the paint, the first companions didn't like it. From their point of view, it was not a true portrait of Ignatius.

### **The Ignatian Rome:**

#### **1.- The Church of Il Gesù**

It is the Mother Church of the Jesuits, built in 1568, that is, 12 years after saint Ignatius' death. The founder had insisted that the order does not take his name ("Ignatists") but would rather be named after Jesus: a society of Jesus. so the church is dedicated to the name of Jesus. The name is represented in many parts of the church with the monogram of Christ, "IHS". IHS stands for "Iesus Hominum Salvator" (Jesus Saviour of Man). IHS also denotes the first three characters of Jesus' name in Greek.

Insisting on the "name of Jesus", the Jesuits refer to a tradition of the Early Christians. For them, the name of Jesus is already a prayer and its frequent repetition would become in the Christians in the East "a prayer of the name" known also as a "prayer of esichasmo" (peace of the heart). In the late Medieval times it was saint Bernard of Siena who popularized the prayer with the use of the acrostic IHS. The Jesuits wanted to present this prayer as a direct relationship with God who can be called "by name" and with whom one can converse "as friend speaks to a friend", according to saint Ignatius' sentence written in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The IHS is present on the façade of the Church and it is repeated at the centre of the fresco of the vault, painted by the Genoese artist Baciccia around 1672. The fresco proposes an illusion of an open sky where the IHS coincides with the shape of the Eucharistic Host as the source of light for everyone. In other words, God's intimacy that permits his being called by the first name can be experienced particularly in the Eucharist. This intimacy eliminates every distance that separates the heavens from the earth. In fact, beyond the cornice of the open skies, there are represented seven vices that divide heaven from earth and that are expelled by the light emitted by the Eucharist name of Jesus.

In the dome, Baciccia represents the saints of paradise, one of them, on the left hand side, is recognizable saint Ignatius presented to Christ by saint Peter. On the right there is saint Francis Xavier presented to Christ by st. Paul. The early Christian mosaics had already represented Peter and Paul as Intercessors of the saints in paradise, but in this case, the iconography of st. Ignatius, as a General of the society of Jesus, is assimilated to that of saint Peter, the first Pope. Saint Francis Xavier, however, the Apostle of the distant lands is compared to the Apostle of the people, the gentiles. In the dome, the two Jesuit saints conclude a vertical itinerary that started from their respective altars to the sides of the transept. The Altar of saint Ignatius preserves the body of the founder while the saint Francis' altar preserves his arm with which the saint baptised thousands of people in India and in the Far East.

Other frescoes of Baciccia, worth noticing, are on the Arch of the Presbytery in which the name of Jesus is compared to a "music for listening" and that of the Apse in which the 24 Elderly of the Apocalypse present to the sacrificial Lamb the prayers of the faithful in the form of incense. Even the pendentives are worth noticing. In particular the two of them that look at the viewer who enters into the church represent respectively the warriors of Israel on the left and the prophets on the right. It is another way of saying that we are in the presence of "Moses and the prophets" or "Moses and Elijah," and therefore, we are on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The church as a whole transmits a feeling of harmony and welcoming due to the architectural lines that respect the golden section ratio and also because the Jesuits imposed on the architect a single nave (called a church "ad aula") to facilitate the preaching.

#### **2.- The Rooms of Saint Ignatius**

This is the place where saint Ignatius spent the last years of his life. From here he sent some 7000 letters, mostly to Jesuits around the world. He, who had travelled a lot through the streets of Europe and who for years signed his letters as "the poor pilgrim Ignatius", continued his interior pilgrimage in this place seeking in every way to do God's will. The letters written in this place always implore God to obtain "the gift of recognition of His will and the strength to live it".

In this place, Ignatius also wrote the Constitutions of the society of Jesus. And it is here that Ignatius was “born to heaven” on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1556, repeating the name of Jesus. His room was transformed into a chapel with a small balcony. And from this window or from another window close to the balcony, Ignatius prayed with abundant tears contemplating the starred skies.

In 1682, the Jesuit brother Andrea Pozzo decorated the corridor outside the rooms of st. Ignatius. He is considered to be the master of “optical illusions”, a technique he used amply to decorate this place. These tricks oblige the viewer to find the precise point where he can observe the frescoes in full harmony. One notices that in order to observe the world through the right perspective one needs to place oneself in the “flower” represented on the ground, between the two “stylized eyes”. This flower symbolizes Christ, the only “point of view” and the only Truth.

### 3.- Saint Ignatius Church

The Church of saint Ignatius was built in 1626 as the church for the students of the adjacent “*Collegio Romano*”, the Jesuit institution for higher education in Rome. The architect was the Jesuit mathematician orazio Grassi. The large part of the interior decoration was completed by the Jesuit brother Andrea Pozzo starting from 1685. The painting of the central vault represents through an “optical illusion” an open sky with an architecture that gives the impression that the skies and the earth are unified. It is the definition of prayer that Pozzo gives through an image.

At the geometrical centre of the nave, we recognize Christ carrying the Cross. A ray of light beams out of it and reaches saint Ignatius’s chest and through the latter the ray is further divided into four rays that reach the four continents lying in the four corners of the Church. It is the allegory of the mission of the society of Jesus that spreads the light of Christ to the four corners of the world. The numerous flames represented in the fresco refer to the fire of the spirit, which descends on earth in a new Pentecost. They allude also to the name of st. Ignatius (from the Latin word “*Ignis*”). It is no coincidence that on both sides of the vault we read the verse of Luke 12, 49: “I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning”. Till this date, the Jesuits refer to their mission as “a fire that kindles other fires”.

Beside the vault, Pozzo designs the famous fake dome painted on two-dimensional canvas that deceives the viewer. It is based on four pendentives where four weak figures of the Old Testament are represented in a way that their frailty becomes the instrument of God who saves His people like David against Goliath, Samson or Judith.

The lateral altars in the transept are dedicated to the devotion of the Jesuit saints that studied at the *Collegio Romano*. on the left is buried John Berchmans, known for his ability to encounter the Lord in the ordinary situations of his life. He incarnates the final grace of the spiritual Exercises: “to seek and find God in all things”. The altar on the right is dedicated to saint Aloysius Gonzaga, a young Jesuit in formation who during his theology years assisted the plague victims and contracted the disease himself that led to his death.

In the apse we notice the allegory of the death of Ignatius, in the presence of all the poor of the city of Rome whom Ignatius had assisted. He used to call the poor, “the Eternal King’s best friends”. It is them, and no other great works, that bring Ignatius to Heaven. The architectural background of this apse image recalls the famous fresco of the “school of Athens” that Rafael Sanzio had painted nearly two centuries before in the “Vatican Rooms”. But in saint Ignatius’s Church, instead of the philosophers that Rafael places on the stairs and on the monumental arches, we see the poor people of Rome. The image seems to suggest that they are the true “philosophers”. They were the true “masters” of Ignatius.

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#### A Prayer for Spiritual Freedom

O Spirit of God, we ask you to help orient  
all our actions by your inspirations,  
carry them on by your gracious assistance,  
that every prayer and work of ours  
may always begin from you  
and through you be happily ended.

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#### Center of Our Hearts

O God, what will you do to conquer  
the fearful hardness of our hearts?  
Lord, you must give us new hearts,  
tender hearts, sensitive hearts,  
to replace hearts that are made of marble and of bronze.  
You must give us your own Heart, Jesus.

Come, lovable Heart of Jesus.  
Place your Heart deep in the center of our hearts  
and enkindle in each heart a flame of love  
as strong, as great, as the sum of all the reasons that I have for loving you, my God.  
O holy Heart of Jesus,  
dwell hidden in my heart,  
so that I may live only in you and only for you,  
so that, in the end, I may live with you eternally in heaven. Amen.

*-St. Claude La Colombiere SJ (1641-1682) confessor of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. He was a missionary and ascetical writer who left a large number of writings.*

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Some final notes?



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## Vigil of Our Lady following Ignacio

« [In Manresa] He was accustomed to hear Mass daily, and to assist at Vespers and Compline—devotions from which he derived much consolation. During Mass, **he always read over the history of the Passion**, and his soul was filled with a joyful feeling of uninterrupted calm. » *Autobiography of St. Ignatius, chapter 2, 20.*

### Prayer in Montserrat, close of our Lady of Montserrat – the Moreneta (Brunette)

We walk with Mary and Ignatius following Jesus on his Way of the Cross

*(Reflections from “The Way of the Cross” from Hans-Urs Von Balthasar, and the Collaborative Ministry from www.creighton.edu)*

Mary takes us through the Pasion of Christ: we join Mary for a reflection on the Stations, as she guides us through the Stations through her eyes then, and through her eyes now

### STARTING PRAYER (together)

Grant, O Lord, that in our contemplation of the mystery of your Passion  
we do not run away from the essential things.  
Help us to contemplate you,  
your Eucharistic love,  
your crucified love as the sum reality necessary to understand all the rest,  
as the one reality from which  
all the others receive light and clarity.

We ask you this through the intercession  
of the one who had the eye to see all essential things: Mary, your mother.

*-Carlo Maria Martini SJ (1927-2012), Prayer to Mary to Understand the Cross*

### OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, every day we receive in the holy Eucharist the body and blood which you left us as a memorial of your passion and death on the cross. Often we do not consider how much this great gift to your Church had cost you. You accept us with the same love with which you embraced the cross. Give us now the courage to reverently follow in your footsteps so that we may come to share in the fruits of your redemption.

Holy and merciful Father, grant that we may follow the way of the cross in faith and love, so that we may share in Christ's passion and together with him reach the glory of your kingdom. We ask you this through your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The First Station: Jesus is condemned to die

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“Pilate, wishing to please the multitude, released Barabbas to them, and handed over Jesus, when he had flogged him, to be crucified.” (Mk 15:15)

My Son stood before Pilate as an innocent man. But, throughout his life he entered more and more deeply into the condition of sinful flesh. It was not enough that he was born of a human mother like me. He grew up in

obscurity in Nazareth. And, they always judged him there. They always judged that it wasn't right that he was conceived before Joseph and I were married. Even when he began his public ministry, the religious leaders didn't accept him. His reflection of God didn't fit their self-serving picture of God. Finally, his own followers abandoned him. I never imagined he would have to experience solidarity with prisoners beaten and tortured, but he did. I'll never forget the blood he shed and the pain he experienced at the hands of the Roman guards. Jesus began this journey by becoming one with every powerless person, mocked and made fun of by others. He did nothing that deserves capital punishment, or the abuse he was given.

His "yes" – his surrender to God's will - ultimately destroyed the power of sin and death. While he was growing up, I told him many times how I had been graced to say "let it be done to me, according to your word." I never could have imagined that this would be the sword that would ultimately pass through my heart: to watch my Son say Yes to God, so completely and fully, for the salvation of the world.

Now that he is condemned to death, reflect with me on each station of his journey – entering more and more completely into our humanity and death itself. Let us ask for God's grace to be with him and to accompany him on his journey to more fully understand it and be more fully grateful for its gift.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ At the cross her station keeping  
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,  
Close to Jesus to the last.

#### The Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"He went out, bearing his cross, to the place called "The Place of a Skull", which is called in Hebrew, "Golgotha"" (Jn 19:17)

My Son was forced to carry the cross on which he would be nailed, ridiculed and executed. We must pause here to remember what it represents. For this journey, he takes up the weight of all of our crosses, all of our senseless suffering, and the weight of all of the sin in the world – past, present and future. Each step he took cut deeply into his already battered shoulders. I couldn't believe he could manage even a few steps.

We can look back now and remember that this is all for us. Each of us can say it was "for me." As we imagine each step he takes, we can pause now to say "thank you," in our own words, deep in our hearts.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,  
All his bitter anguish bearing,  
Now at length the sword had passed.

#### The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." (Jn 12:24)

I can barely express to you what it was like to see my Son fall under the weight of that cross. Everything within me wanted to make them stop. This was already too much. But, there was nothing I could do but watch him lay on the ground.

Of course, I now know that if he was to enter completely into our lives, he would have to surrender to the crushing weight of the burdens so many in their world suffer. All the people of the earth who are overcome by unfair burdens will always know that, laying there on the ground, Jesus knew and would always understand their powerlessness. Unable to get himself up, he entered into and forever understands our fatigue and whatever unfairly defeats us.

I understand your sorrow and feeling of guilt at reflecting upon my Son's way to Calvary. Please, just be grateful. My Son simply wants us to remember how he loved then and loves us now. This is all about his mercy and the gift of life we have in him.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Oh, how sad and sore distressed  
Was that Mother highly blest  
Of the sole-begotten one!

#### The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"Simeon said to Mary, Jesus mother, "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against. Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Lk 2:34-35)

As I pushed and shoved to move through the crowds to be as close to my Son as I could, we came to a place in the road where he stopped. He saw me. And we looked into each other's eyes. I didn't want him to see my tears or know my pain, but I long ago accepted how thoroughly he knew me. The love from my heart poured out in the only embrace I could give him. My lips quietly said the prayer he taught us: "Father, may your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He nodded so slightly, took a deep breath and moved on up the hill. The sword passing through my heart had blessed his mission, and I knew he knew it.

Thank him with me, even now, that he took up that mission for us. Thank him that he has tasted the separation and loss that every person in the world knows who has lost a loved one. And, he has understood the heart of every loving mother who grieves at the suffering of her children. He has become so completely one with us.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Christ above in torment hangs,  
She beneath beholds the pangs  
Of her dying glorious Son.

#### The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"They compelled one passing by, coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross." (Mk 15:21)

Now reflect with me on what it must have been like for my Son to simply not be able to carry the cross any further alone. I was so relieved that he was getting help at the time, even though my heart went out to Simon who was drawn into Jesus' journey.

As we look back, we can give thanks that Jesus entered into our life, even in this gesture of help. Jesus came to know the experience of all of us who must depend upon others, who can't make it alone. Even in this final journey, Jesus would not even have the satisfaction of being able to do this on his own.

Let's pause for a moment to express to him now, whatever is in our hearts.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Is there anyone who would not weep,  
Whelmed in miseries so deep,  
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"He has no good looks or majesty. When we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of suffering, and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face." (Is 53:2-3)

I can't describe his face, with the blood and the sweat, and the bruises and swelling from the beatings. As a mother, I can hardly tell you that there was even spit on his face. It was the face of solidarity with all who have ever experienced abuse and violence. Then, out of the crowd came a woman whose compassion for my Son was so great that she pushed passed the Roman soldiers and wiped his face with her veil. Oh, how I loved her for that. The look between them touched me deeply. His clean face, for a moment, revealed the loving face of the Son I loved.

As he smiled at the woman and continued on the journey, those of us nearby looked at her veil and saw the gift he gave her. There on her veil was a stunning likeness, a true icon of the cost of his sacrifice and the depth of his solidarity with all who suffer. This image is his gift to us forever, to always contemplate his likeness, his union with us in our worst rejection and suffering.

As you remember with me how his face was so covered with punishment and violence, let us give thanks for his solidarity with us in every aspect of our lives.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Can the human heart refrain  
From partaking in her pain,  
In that Mother's pain untold?

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“Jesus said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.” ...Jesus went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him.” (Mk 14:34-35)

When my Son fell the second time, my heart sank as he seemed to just lose control and stumble and crumble to the ground. The way he fell to his knees on the hard stones, I could feel the jarring pain through my whole body. Helpless to help him, I again wondered if he could make it.

As I look back with you today, I imagine that this fall placed him together with people with disabilities, with people suffering from all kinds of physical diseases that weaken them, and with all who are aging and must confront the limits of their bodies. My prayer is that all God’s people who know the suffering of these disabilities might know that they can always turn to my Son for understanding and comfort.

With gratitude in our hearts, we take a few moments to find the words to express our feelings to him.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled  
She beheld her tender Child  
All with bloody scourges rent.

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“A great multitude of the people followed him, including women who also mourned and lamented him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Lk 23:27-28)

This moving scene filled my mother’s heart with even more love for him. As I had seen him comfort so many groups of people during his life, now he comforts this group of women and children in Jerusalem. They aren’t here to condemn him. What a remarkable meeting. They try to comfort him, as he looks on them with love and compassion. During his ministry he had come to grieve for Jerusalem. Now, my son gives them a special mission. Soon they would understand that this suffering they witnessed so closely was for them. Soon they would witness the suffering of Jerusalem and have their chance to bring their compassion and faith to their children and the people of their city.

It is good to reflect here, with him, on the mission each of us has that can be shaped by this encounter with his suffering, death and resurrection “for me.” Thank him for this brief time to recall the gift we have received.

Silence //

O Mary our mother,  
you too wept and lamented  
on Calvary with the women  
of Jerusalem.

You weep not for yourself,  
because, in faith and in obedience,  
you did the Father’s will;  
nor did you lament over

the death of your Son,  
the innocent and holy One.

You weep instead for the sins  
of your children.

We have seen your tears,  
heard your warnings and entreaties:  
“do not suppress truth,  
do not persecute the innocent,  
do not smother love”.

Our Father...

V/ Let me share with you his pain  
Who for all my sins was slain  
Who for me in torment died.

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30)

I will always remember this final fall. Having endured such a beating and having lost so much blood, my son simply collapses. I saw him lay there on the ground and I thought he was dead. His arms spread out and his face in the dirt, Jesus found himself in solidarity with all who fall in any way.

Contemplating how the soldiers roughly pulled Jesus up and made him take the last steps to Calvary, take a few moments to speak with him, expressing your gratitude for his understanding for every weakness or failure you have ever experienced.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ O my Mother, found of love,  
Touch my spirit from above;  
Make my heart with yours accord.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“Crucifying him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots on them, what each should take.” (Mk 15:24)

The sword passed through my heart again to watch my son so violated this way. They intended to shame him even more by executing him naked. They simply had to strip him of any dignity a human being could have left. I remember looking at this body I had bathed and cared for, now with all his wounds re-opened and bleeding, so exposed for everyone to see. Now I see all the people in the world who are vulnerable and without any defense, all those whose dignity is violated, and I see this act of stripping as placing my son so completely with those who suffer. His incarnation was about to be complete.

Please pause to express what is in your heart and to give him thanks that this is all so that you might be free from the power of sin and death.

Silence // Our Father...

V/     Make me feel as you have felt,  
       Make my soul to glow and melt  
       With the love of Christ my Lord.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“It was the third hour, and they crucified him. The superscription of his accusation was written over him, “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” 27 With him they crucified two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left.” (Mk 15:25-27)

Today, as I remember him lying on the cross, with his arms outstretched, it is the sound of the hammer hitting the nails that stays with me. I remember pulling the first of many wood splinters from his fingers as a child working in Joseph’s shop. Against his precious hands and wrists, that touched and healed so many, a nail was placed, and a hammer pounded the nail through his flesh and into the wood of the cross. The sound – metal against metal – that ring – and the look on his face – the spasm of his whole body – I will never forget. Then, the other hand and finally his feet are nailed to the cross.

Spend some time with him now, imagining how they lifted him up on the cross, nailed there, that you might be free.

Silence // Our Father...

V/     Holy Mother, pierce me through;  
       In my heart each wound renew  
       Of my Saviour crucified.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is, being interpreted, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Some of those who stood by, when they heard it, said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” One ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Let him be. Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down.” Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit. The veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. When the centurion, who stood by opposite him, saw that he cried out like this and breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mk 15:33-39)

The sword of helplessness split my heart in two as I watched him struggle to breathe, pulling himself up to let air out of his lungs. With incredible courage and compassion, he spoke of mercy and love. There on that cross he gave me to John, and gave me to the Spirit filled Church that would be born on Pentecost. Then, after he gave himself into God's hands one last time, he took his last breath and he died. It is unforgettable to watch life leave the body of someone you love.

At the foot of his cross today, listen to my son tell you of his love for you. Speak to him from your heart.

Silence //

Holy Mary, Virgin of the cross:  
by the tree of life, you are humanity itself:  
obedient and faithful, receptive to the word,  
resolute and dutiful, open to the Spirit.

Reveal to us the mystery of the "Hour" of your Son:  
of his glory in disgrace,  
of his majesty in service,  
of our life in his death.

But it is also your "Hour", O Virgin Mary:  
the hour of birth – in faith, in pain, in the Spirit;  
for that new birth, Jesus, dying on the cross,  
said: "Woman, behold your son."

Our Father...

V/ For the sins of his own nation  
She saw him hang in desolation  
Till his spirit forth he sent.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross.

*V/ We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

*R/ Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene... the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they didn't break his legs. However one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out... After these things, Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission. He came therefore and took away his body." (Jn 19:25.32-34.38)

We waited what seemed like a long time before we had permission to take his lifeless body off that cross. And, it took so long to remove the nails, and to finally lower his body to the ground. Someone removed that horrible crown of thorns from his head. They pulled his hair back and wiped his face clean before letting me hold his body one last time. He had been given to me for only a brief time. When he left home three years before, I was so proud of him and excited to experience what God would do through him. There at the foot of the cross, my heart torn by grief, but always trusting in God's promise, I asked only to be God's servant for what was ahead. After the Ascension, when we would gather in homes for the Breaking of the Bread, I again held his broken body in my hands, now full of consolation that his promise was fulfilled: he would always be with us.

Let yourself join me in receiving this mystery of the death of Jesus being so real and complete. Knowing the rest of the story, join me in speaking with him, heart to heart, about our gratitude for how he has transformed the power of death.

Silence //

Holy Mary,  
in your virginal bosom,  
lies your dead Son;  
you are the living *pieta*,  
who maternally embrace  
all your lost children,  
the wounded, and the dead.

Teach us, O Mary,  
how to show true compassion,  
a compassion nourished  
by love alone;  
that immense compassion  
which knows no bounds;  
active compassion which –  
gazing on human suffering –  
raises suppliant eyes to heaven.

Our Father...

V/ Let me mingle tears with you  
Mourning him who mourned for me,  
All the days that I may live.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb.

V/ *We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*  
R/ *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

“When he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. He bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid.” (Mk 15:45-47)

No mother should ever have to bury a child. Just a short time before this day, Jesus looked into Lazarus’ tomb. He must have known he would be laid in a tomb like that soon. And when he thanked God for hearing his prayer, he must have known that the Father who sent him would give him life that would never die. In just a few days, this tomb would be empty and forever a sign of Jesus’ surrender to the forces of sin and death, for us.

As we picture this scene, let us place the image of the empty tomb before our eyes. Whenever you are tempted to stand outside any tomb and grieve, remember this empty tomb and know that, through the eyes of faith, all tombs are empty. Today, join me in giving him thanks. Join me in signing ourselves with the sign of his cross, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Silence // Our Father...

V/ While my body here decays,  
May my soul your goodness praise,  
Safe in paradise with you. Amen.

Closing prayer (together)

Holy Mary, my Queen, I recommend myself  
to your blessed protection and special keeping,  
and to the bosom of your mercy,  
today and every day and at the hour of my death.  
My soul and my body I recommend to you.  
I entrust to you my hope and consolation,  
my distress and my misery, my life and its termination.  
Through your most holy intercession  
and through your merits may all my actions  
be directed according to your will and that of your Son. Amen.



***My Mother**, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga SJ (1568-91) came from a noble background to become a Jesuit. During his studies he begged alms for the plague-stricken and worked directly with the sick. He died after becoming infected with the disease.*

Glory be...  
Our Lady of Montserrat...  
Saint Ignatius of Loyola...

