

LITURGY BYTES

The Last Saint for July

On the final day in July, the 31st, the Church honors St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Because of an accident, he shattered a leg, and during his convalescence he started reading about Christ and the saints. This began his journey, although difficult, towards Our Lord. He never felt comfort in prayer and fasting at first, but eventually he gained peace of mind and started the process of conversion. It was during this time that he wrote down material that later became his greatest work, **the Spiritual Exercises**.



He finally achieved his goal to go to the Holy Land but could not remain, as he planned, because of the hostility of the Turks. Ignatius spent 11 years in various European universities, studying with great difficulty. He was questioned by others because of his orthodoxy and even put in jail for brief periods.

When he was 43, along with others, one of whom was St. Francis Xavier, he vowed to live in poverty and chastity and go to the Holy Land. If this became impossible, they vowed to offer themselves to the apostolic service of the Pope. The latter became the only choice. Four years later, Ignatius made the association permanent. The new Society of Jesus was approved by Pope Paul III, and Ignatius was elected as the first general. When companions were sent on various missions by the Pope, Ignatius remained in Rome consolidating the new venture but still finding time to found homes for orphans, those wishing to become Catholic. He founded the Roman college, intended to be the model of all other colleges of the Society.

He was a true mystic. He centered his spiritual life on the essential foundations of Christianity: the Trinity, Christ, and the Eucharist. His spirituality is expressed in the Jesuit motto, “For the greater glory of God.” He is the patron saint of retreats.

Have a spiritual, restful, and blessed week ahead! ~~ *Michele Hall*