

LITURGY BYTES

One More for July



St. Ignatius of Loyola's feast is celebrated on July 31st. He is the founder of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits. Our present Pope, Francis, is a Jesuit.

Ignatius was born in the year 1491 in Loiola, Spain. At that time the village was spelled Loyola—so, the reason Ignatius was referred to with that spelling. He died in 1556 and was canonized a saint on March 12, 1622, by Pope Gregory XV. He was born into wealth and even after the death of his mother, was still considered a member of local aristocracy. By the time he was 18, he became a soldier. He fought in several battles, earned himself recognition, and eventually commanded his own troops. He was severely injured and almost died from his wounds. One of his legs was amputated, and during his convalescence he read whatever books he could find. Most were on the lives of the saints and Christ which had a profound impact on him and helped him become more devout. He was particularly influenced by a book on the life of Christ which suggested a spiritual exercise that required visualization of oneself in the presence of Christ during various episodes of His life. This book inspired Ignatius' own spiritual exercises that are extremely popular today.

Ignatius desired to be a working servant of the Lord, especially to assist in converting people to Christianity. He realized that he needed an education if he wanted to convert people, and so he returned to Barcelona to learn Latin and other subjects. He earned a master's degree at the age of 44. Even though he wanted to attain a Doctorate, he was turned down because of his age.

The circle of friends and his followers went to Rome and presented themselves to the Pope and offered their service. Pope Paul III received the group and approved them as an official religious order in 1540. Ignatius was asked to be their first leader and called themselves the Society of Jesus. The order soon found their niche in education and established many schools. The order was responsible for stopping the spread of the Protestant reformation. They advocated the use of reason to persuade others and to combat heresy.

Today the order has numerous schools and universities around the globe founded in the name of Ignatius and the traditional Jesuit spirit. How many do you know?

Have a blessed, learned, safe and healthy week! ~*Michele Hall*