



## UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

*il costituirsi e diffondersi della S.J. e suoi echi (1540 - 1773)*

di A. Pisani

Schede autori Atti costitutivi, ordinamenti, agiografie, etc.

### Ignazio di Loyola

La liturgia così ci presenta S. Ignazio di Loyola nel giorno della sua festa (31 luglio): "Ferito all'assedio di Pamplona (1521) maturò nella lettura della vita di Cristo la decisione di passare dal servizio militare alla sequela del Signore. Fondò a Montmartre (Parigi) nel 1534 la Compagnia di Gesù (Gesuiti) per la maggior gloria di Dio e a servizio della Chiesa, in obbedienza totale al successore di Pietro. La sua esperienza spirituale è espressa negli Esercizi spirituali da lui composti a Manresa (1523), che divennero una classica guida per l'itinerario spirituale. Promosse la catechesi e l'apostolato missionario ed ebbe tra i suoi discepoli [Francesco Saverio](#)". San Francesco Saverio, apostolo dell'Oriente, fu dichiarato Patrono principale delle Missioni Cattoliche, e a lui fu poi associata come Compatrona [S. Teresa di Lisieux](#) (S. Teresa del Bambino Gesù), vissuta tra il 1873 e il 1897.

#### Sua vita nel mondo

Íñigo Lopez de Loyola - tale il suo nome originario, che egli cambiò in Ignazio dopo la sua conversione - nacque, ultimo di 13 figli, nel 1491, nel castello di Loyola, nella Terra dei Baschi della Spagna settentrionale. Ricevette l'educazione cavalleresca propria del suo ceto. Nel 1517 entrò a servizio del Viceré di Navarra. Amava l'avventura e infervorava la sua mente leggendo romanzi cavallereschi. Quando nel 1521 scoppiò la guerra tra [Francesco I di Francia](#) e il giovane Imperatore di Spagna [Carlo V](#), i Francesi entrarono in territorio spagnolo e marciarono alla conquista della città di Pamplona. Ignazio era lì a difenderla; ma il 20 maggio una palla di cannone nemico lo raggiunse, gli sfraccellò la gamba destra e gli ferì anche la sinistra. Alla caduta del loro capitano i soldati spagnoli si arresero. I francesi raccolsero Ignazio e lo mandarono al suo castello a Loyola. Arduo fu il compito del chirurgo nel riassetargli le gambe, e alla fine - temendo di restare zoppo - Ignazio si sottomise a un secondo intervento di "stiramento" della gamba. Ma tutte le cure e i tormenti non gli valsero a impedirgli di zoppicare per il resto della sua vita.



#### Conversione

Durante la lunga convalescenza cercò distrazione nella lettura dei suoi romanzi preferiti di cavalleria, ma per quanto si cercasse, non se ne trovò uno in tutto il castello! Gli furono invece dati due altri libri: la "Legenda aurea" di [Jacopo da Varagine](#), cioè una raccolta di vite di santi; e la "Vita Christi" di [Ludolfo di Sassonia](#). Cominciò a leggerli. La lettura della Passione del Signore lo commuoveva, mentre la lettura delle imprese dei santi lo entusiasmava. Cominciò a chiedersi: "Perché non potrei fare anch'io quello che hanno fatto per il Signore uomini santi come [Francesco d'Assisi](#) e [Domenico di Guzman](#) ♦?". La Grazia lo aveva finalmente raggiunto, ma le vanità terrene lo attiravano dalla loro parte. Fu un duro combattimento, il suo. Alla fine si raccomandò alla Vergine e, liberato dall'oppressione della carne, si arrese completamente a Dio.



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### **Monserrato e Manresa**

Guarito, Ignazio lasciò Loyola e si diresse a Monserrato, nella Catalogna, al santuario della Madonna Nera. Qui volle trascorrere tutta la notte in preghiera. Al mattino depose la spada e il pugnale all'altare della Vergine, e al loro posto si fornì d'un bastone da pellegrino. Fece una lunga preparazione e una dettagliata confessione della sua vita al maestro dei novizi dei Benedettini, poi, cambiati i suoi abiti con il vestito grezzo del penitente, si diresse a Manresa, a meditare e far penitenza. Cominciò a digiunare e autoflagellarsi. Ma presto si accorse che queste mortificazioni non gli giovavano per la serenità dello spirito. Capì così le insidie dello spirito maligno e imparò a sue spese la necessità della direzione spirituale e l'importanza della "giusta misura" in tutte le cose. Si dette pure ad opere di carità per il popolo, insegnando le vie del Signore ai bambini e ai "rozzi". Dalle sue vicissitudini a Manresa nasceranno i suoi famosi *Esercizi Spirituali*, che tanto bene hanno fatto e continuano a fare nella vita spirituale di milioni di persone.

### **Gli Esercizi Spirituali**

Il libretto ignaziano che porta questo titolo fu ufficialmente approvato dalla Santa Sede soltanto nel 1548. Il cammino spirituale degli Esercizi viene fatto in quattro tappe, che vogliono aiutare l'esercitante a "vincere se stesso e mettere ordine nella propria vita, senza lasciarsi influenzare nelle sue scelte da passioni disordinate". Occorre anzitutto riconoscere "le deformità" della propria vita a causa del peccato, e mediante la meditazione delle verità eterne (morte, giudizio e dannazione eterna) scuotersi di dosso il giogo del peccato e rifarsi una nuova vita morale (Prima tappa).

Poi, mediante la contemplazione di Cristo, venuto al mondo per piantarvi il Regno di Dio mediante la potenza del suo Spirito, cercare come donarsi completamente a Lui, per dividerne la missione apostolica (Seconda tappa).

Per contrastare poi le insidie di Satana, che cerca d'impedire la realizzazione dei più belli e nobili ideali, è necessario "consolidarsi" nella decisione presa, contemplando Gesù che fu obbediente fino alla morte di Croce, per la gloria del Padre e la salvezza dei fratelli (Terza tappa).

Infine, la prospettiva della partecipazione alla gloria del Cristo Risorto riempie di gioia il cuore dell'esercitante, che esce dagli Esercizi radicalmente "trasformato". Gli Esercizi terminano con una contemplazione caratteristica ignaziana per ottenere da Dio l'amore più puro e più ardente. Le ultime aspirazioni del cuore di chi esce dagli Esercizi sono: "Prendi tutto, o Signore... Dammi soltanto il tuo amore e la tua grazia: questo mi basta". E bene ricordare che gli Esercizi vanno fatti e non semplicemente letti. Senza una guida ci si troverebbe presto smarriti in un groviglio di strade senza sbocco!

Nota: Su questo argomento vedi anche: "Gli Esercizi Spirituali di S. Ignazio di Loyola", dello stesso autore.

### **Alcalà, Salamanca, Parigi**

Per prepararsi al lavoro apostolico, Ignazio riprese ad Alcalà gli studi interrotti, cominciando dal latino, senza però smettere di dare gli Esercizi. L'inquisizione ne venne a conoscenza e, sospettando Ignazio di eresia, lo mise in prigione. Liberato, passò a Salamanca. Qui si ripeté il sospetto e, di conseguenza, la condanna al carcere. Gli fu ingiunto di non predicare gli Esercizi senza aver prima studiato teologia. Fu così che s'indusse a lasciare la Spagna e trasferirsi a Parigi.



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Qui, presso il Collegio di Santa Barbara, condivise la stanza con altri due studenti: Francesco Saverio (spagnolo come lui) e [Pietro Favre](#) (proveniente dalla Savoia). Con Pietro si trovò subito in perfetta armonia di spirito, mentre col Saverio non fu facile intendersi, avendo questi molte ambizioni di guadagno e carriera.

Ignazio spesso gli ricordava la vanità delle cose terrene, secondo il detto evangelico: "Che cosa giova all'uomo guadagnare il mondo intero, se poi perde la sua stessa anima?". Alla fine Saverio comprese: rinunciò a una sicura prebenda ecclesiastica, si mise alla scuola di Ignazio, con lui fondò la Compagnia, e divenne poi il grande apostolo dell'India e dell'Oriente.

### Montmartre

Ignazio aveva un segreto progetto, che presto comunicò ai suoi due amici: consacrarsi all'apostolato nella terra del Signore, la Palestina, e se ciò non fosse possibile, offrirsi al Santo Padre perché disponesse di loro a suo piacimento. L'idea piacque, e a loro si unirono altri quattro studenti: [Diego Laynez](#), [Simone Rodrigues](#), [Alfonso Salmerón](#) e [Nicola Bobadilla](#). Decisero di formare un gruppo di "Compagni di Gesù". Il 15 agosto 1534 salirono alla Cappella di Montmartre per consacrarsi a Dio. Il Favre, ch'era già sacerdote, celebrò la S. Messa, durante la quale tutti promisero con voto di realizzare in castità e povertà quanto intendevano fare. Quel giorno, possiamo dire, nacque la Compagnia di Gesù.

### Venezia e Roma

Terminati gli studi e ordinati sacerdoti, si diedero appuntamento a Venezia, in attesa della partenza per l'Oriente. Purtroppo, proprio in quel 1537 si riaccese la guerra tra la "Serenissima" e il vicino Oriente, e la partenza fu rimandata "sine die". Misero allora in atto la seconda parte del voto: andare a Roma e offrirsi come "preti rinnovati" al Papa. Ignazio, Laynez e Favre precedettero gli altri. Alle porte di Roma accadde un fatto straordinario, a cui Ignazio annesse sempre grande valore. Entrati a pregare in una Cappella detta La Storta, Ignazio ebbe una visione, in cui contemplò Gesù che portava la Croce con Dio Padre al suo fianco. "Voglio che ci serviate", disse Gesù. il Padre aggiunse: "Vi sarò propizio a Roma"; e Ignazio fu posto a fianco di Gesù. Usciti dalla preghiera, Ignazio disse ai compagni: "Non so che cosa ci attende a Roma, se la persecuzione o la morte". E narrò loro la visione. A Roma il Papa li accolse bene, si fece dar prova della saldezza della loro fede e dottrina cattolica e dette loro il permesso di predicare e celebrare i sacramenti. Ignazio ricordava spesso al Papa il voto di andare in Terra santa. Ma un giorno il Papa stesso gli disse: "Roma può essere benissimo la vostra Gerusalemme, visto il bene che fate e il grave bisogno della città". Queste parole misero fine al sogno di Ignazio.

### Una scuola per i poveri

I Compagni si dispersero per varie città e insegnavano ai "rudi", alla povera gente, le verità basilari della fede. A quei tempi molti ragazzi crescevano senza istruzione per mancanza di mezzi, per cui Ignazio fece apporre un avviso dove egli abitava: "Scuola gratuita". Una "novità" che gli darà non poche seccature, da parte di altri "interessati" al guadagno. Fu l'inizio d'una serie interminabile di Scuole e Collegi che copriranno l'Italia e l'Europa e daranno lustro alla cosiddetta "Scuola dei Gesuiti".

### Missioni vicine e lontane



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A Roma e nelle altre città i Compagni insegnavano, predicavano, si prendevano cura degli orfani, dei poveri, dei malati negli ospedali. Ignazio pensò anche a recuperare uomini e donne dalla prostituzione. All'estero, Ignazio si preoccupava molto per l'eresia in Germania. Vi mandò il Favre, che vi spese le migliori energie, fino a morire sulla breccia dopo pochi anni. Vi mandò pure un uomo coltissimo e zelante, il [Canisio](#), che tenne fronte al luteranesimo, riuscendo a salvare metà della Germania dall'invadente eresia. Nel 1540 fu fatta richiesta al Papa, da parte del re del Portogallo, di mandare missionari in India. All'ambasciatore interessato, il Papa rispose: "Rivolgetevi a Ignazio". E Ignazio sacrificò il suo figlio più caro, Francesco Saverio, segno del suo ardore di salvare tutti.

### Generale dei Gesuiti

Approvata la Compagnia di Gesù da [Paolo III](#) il 27 settembre 1540, si pensò subito all'elezione del Generale. Saverio lasciò il suo voto in iscritto prima di salpare per l'India. Tutti, eccetto Ignazio, votarono per il Fondatore. Dietro le reiterate insistenze di tutti i compagni, Ignazio finalmente accettò l'incarico, che per comune decisione, doveva essere a vita! Primo suo compito fu quello di scrivere le [Costituzioni](#) del nuovo Ordine, il cui nome era - e doveva rimanere - "Compagnia di Gesù", il cui spirito animatore doveva essere quello degli Esercizi spirituali: la maggior gloria di Dio (AMDG: "Ad maiorem Dei gloriam") e il maggior servizio delle anime. Quanto alla parte pratica riguardante la vita religiosa, Ignazio non ebbe fretta, volendo egli stesso imparare dall'esperienza. E così la parola "fine" non arrivò mai, pensando sempre a qualche novità da aggiungere o cambiare. Le Costituzioni furono perciò pubblicate postume, e senza conclusione. Il nuovo stile libero di vita religiosa non piacque a tutti nella chiesa. Lo stesso Cardinale Carafa, cofondatore dei Teatini (insieme a S. Gaetano Thiene) ripeteva: "Ma che religiosi siete se non avete neppure il canto e la preghiera corale?". E fatto papa col nome di [Paolo IV](#), si astenne dall'intervenire finché visse Ignazio. Poi introdusse la preghiera corale anche tra i Gesuiti. La quale però fu tolta dal suo successore, e si tornò allo stile voluto da Ignazio.

### La morte di un Santo

Ignazio soffriva da tempo di gravi disturbi all'apparato digerente, ma i medici non diagnosticarono mai l'origine del suo malessere. Solo dopo la sua morte gli furono scoperti tre grossi calcoli nel fegato. Eppure il santo non smise mai di lavorare, nonostante i lancinanti dolori. Quando finalmente fu costretto a letto, ridotto in fin di vita, chiese gli ultimi sacramenti. Chiesto il parere del medico curante, il segretario [P. Polanco](#) disse a Ignazio di non esserci urgenza. L'ultima notte, Ignazio, sentendo approssimarsi la fine, pregò il Polanco di recarsi dal S. Padre (Paolo IV) e chiedergli la benedizione "in articulo mortis". Di nuovo il Polanco si consultò col medico, che rispose la morte non essere imminente. E tutto fu rimandato al giorno dopo. Ma all'alba del nuovo giorno, 31 luglio 1556, Ignazio entrò in agonia. Polanco, avvisato, si affrettò al palazzo del Papa, che dette di cuore la sua benedizione per il morente. Polanco tornò di corsa a casa, ma quando vi giunse Ignazio era già spirato. La notizia si sparse subito per tutta Roma: "E' morto il santo!", si ripeteva ovunque. Sì, Ignazio era morto da santo, nel dolore e nella solitudine, abbandonato al volere totale del suo Dio, secondo le parole della sua preghiera di offerta: "Prendi, o Signore, e accetta tutta la mia libertà, la memoria, l'intelletto e ogni mia volontà..." L'offerta era stata davvero totale fino a quest'ultimo, in cui non nessuno dei suoi figli era accanto al suo letto, eccetto il religioso che lo aveva vegliato per la notte.





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Ignazio fu canonizzato il 12 marzo del 1622 insieme a S. Francesco Saverio, [S. Filippo Neri](#), [S. Teresa d'Avila](#) e [S. Isidoro](#) il contadino. Di lui fu detto: "Aveva il cuore più grande del mondo".

**Cfr.:** Gaetano Iannaccone s.j., *S. Ignazio di Loyola fondatore della Compagnia di Gesù*, <http://www.moscati.it/Italiano/Ignazio.html> (ultima consultazione 25.04.2012).

ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus. Inigo Lopez de Recalde, son of Beltran, lord of the noble houses of Loyola and Onaz, was born, according to the generally accepted opinion, on the 24th of December 1491 at the castle of Loyola, which is situated on the river Urola, about 1 m. from the town of Azpeitia, in the province of Guipuzcoa. He was the youngest of a family of thirteen. As soon as he had learnt the elements of reading and writing, he was sent as a page to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella; afterwards, until his twenty-sixth year, he took service with Antonio Maurique, duke of Nagera, and followed the career of arms. He was free in his relations with women, gambled and fought; but he also gave indications of that courage, constancy and prudence which marked his after life. In a political mission to settle certain disputes in the province he showed his dexterity in managing men.

Despite the treaty of Noyon (1516), Charles V. kept Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre. Andre de Foix, at the head of the French troops, laid siege to the town in 1521 and Ignatius was one of the defending garrison. In the hour of danger, the claims of religion reasserted themselves on the young soldier, and, following a custom when no priest was at hand, he made his confession to a brother officer, who in turn also confessed to him. During the final assault on the 19th of May 1521 a cannon ball struck him, shattering one of his legs and badly wounding the other. The victorious French treated him kindly for nearly two weeks, and then sent him in a litter to Loyola. The doctors declared that the leg needed to be broken and set again; and the operation was borne without a sign of pain beyond a clenching of his fist. His vanity made him order the surgeons to cut out a bone which protruded below the knee and spoil the symmetry of his leg. He was lame for the rest of his days. Serious illness followed the operations, and, his life being despaired of, he received the last sacraments on the 28th of June. That night, however, he began to mend, and in a few days he was out of danger. During convalescence two books that were to influence his life were brought to him. These were a Castilian translation of The Life of Christ by Ludolphus of Saxony, and the popular Flowers of the Saints, a series of pious biographies. He gradually became interested in these books, and a mental struggle began. Sometimes he would pass hours thinking of a certain illustrious lady, devising means of seeing her and of doing deeds that would win her favour; at other times the thoughts suggested by the books got the upper hand. He began to recognize that his career of arms was over: so he would become the knight of Christ. He determined to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to practise all the austerities that he read of in The Flowers of the Saints. Expiating his sins was not so much his aim as to accomplish great deeds for God. During the struggle that went on in his soul, he began to take note of his psychological state; and this was the first time that he exercised his reason on spiritual things; the experience thus painfully gained he found of great use afterwards in directing others. One night while he lay awake, he tells us, he saw the likeness of the Blessed Virgin with her divine Son; and immediately a loathing seized him for the former deeds of his life, especially for those relating to carnal desires; and he asserts that for the future he never yielded to any such desires. This was the first of many visions. Ignatius proposed after returning



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from Jerusalem to join the Carthusian order at Seville as a lay brother. About the same time Martin Luther was in the full course of his protest against the papal supremacy and had already burnt the pope's bull at Worms. The two opponents were girding themselves for the struggle; and what the Church of Rome was losing by the defection of the Augustinian was being counterbalanced by the conversion of the founder of the Society of Jesus.

As soon as Ignatius had regained strength, he started ostensibly to rejoin the duke of Nagera, but in reality to visit the great Benedictine abbey of Montserrat, a famous place of pilgrimage. On the way, he was joined by a Moor, who began to jest at some of the Christian doctrines, especially at the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin. Ignatius was no controversialist; and the Moor rode off victorious. The chivalrous nature of Ignatius was aroused. Seized with a longing to pursue and kill the Moor on account of his insulting language, Ignatius, still doubting as to his best course, left the matter to his mule, which at the dividing of the ways took the path to the abbey, leaving the open road which the Moor had taken. Before reaching Montserrat, Ignatius purchased some sackcloth for a garment and hempen shoes, which, with a staff and gourd, formed the usual pilgrim's dress. Approaching the abbey he resolved to do as his favourite hero Amadis de Gaul did - keep a vigil all night before the Lady altar and then lay aside his worldly armour to put on that of Christ. He arrived at the abbey just about the feast of St Benedict (the 21st of March 1522), and there made a confession of his life to a priest belonging to the monastery. He found in use for the pilgrims a translation of the Spiritual Exercises of the former abbot, Garcia di Cisneros (d. 1510); and this book evidently gave Ignatius the first idea of his more famous work under the same title. Leaving his mule to the abbey, and giving away his worldly clothes to a beggar, he kept his watch in the church during the night of the 24th-25th of March, and placed on the Lady altar his sword and dagger. Early the next morning he received the Holy Eucharist and left before any one could recognize him, going to the neighbouring town of Manresa, where he first lived in the hospice. Here began a series of heavy spiritual trials which assailed him for many months. Seven hours a day he spent on his knees in prayer and three times a day he scourged his emaciated body. One day, almost overcome with scruples, he was tempted to end his miseries by suicide. At another time, for the same reason, he kept an absolute fast for a week. He tells us that, at this time, God wrought with him as a master with a schoolboy whom he teaches. But his energies were not confined to himself. He assisted others who came to him for spiritual advice; and seeing the fruit reaped from helping his neighbour, he gave up the extreme severities in which he had delighted and began to take more care of his person, so as not needlessly to offend those whom he might influence for good.

During his stay at Manresa, he lived for the most part in a cell at the Dominican convent; and here, evidently, he had severe illnesses. He recounts the details of at least two of these attacks, but says nothing about the much-quoted swoon of eight days, during which he is supposed to have seen in vision the scheme of the future Society. Neither does he refer in any way to the famous cave in which, according to the Ignatian myth, the Spiritual Exercises were written. Fortunately we have the first-hand evidence of his autobiography, which is a surer guide than the lines written by untrustworthy disciples. Ignatius remained at Manresa for about a year, and in the spring of 1523 set out for Barcelona on his way to Rome, where he arrived on Palm Sunday. After two weeks he left, having received the blessing of Pope Adrian VI., and proceeded by Padua to Venice, where he begged his bread and slept in the Piazza di San Marco until a rich Spaniard gave him shelter and obtained an order from the doge for a passage in a pilgrim ship bound for Cyprus, whence he could



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get to Jaffa. In due course Ignatius arrived at Jerusalem, where he intended to remain, in order continuously to visit the holy places and help souls. For this end he had obtained letters of recommendation to the guardian, to whom, however, he only spoke of his desire of satisfying his devotion, not hinting his other motive. The Franciscans gave him no encouragement to remain; and the provincial threatened him with excommunication if he persisted. Not only had the friars great difficulty in supporting themselves, but they dreaded an outbreak from the fanatical Turks who resented some imprudent manifestations of Loyola's zeal. Ignatius returned to Venice in the middle of January 1524; and, determining to devote himself for a while to study, he set out for Barcelona, where he arrived in Lent. Here he consulted Isabella Roser, a lady of high rank and piety, and also the master of a grammar school. These both approved his plan; the one promised to teach him without payment and the other to provide him with the necessities of life. Here, in his thirty-third year, he began to learn Latin, and after two years his master urged him to go to Alcalá to begin philosophy. During his stay of a year and a half in this university, besides his classes, he found occasion to give to some companions his Spiritual Exercises in the form they had then taken and certain instructions in Christian doctrine. On account of these discourses Ignatius came into conflict with the Inquisition. He and his companions were denounced as belonging to the sects of Sagati and Illuminati. Their mode of life and dress was peculiar and hinted at innovation. But, always ready to obey authority, Ignatius was able to disarm any charges that, now and at other times, were brought against him. The Inquisition merely advised him and his companions to dress in a less extraordinary manner and to go shod. Four months later he was suddenly cast into prison; and, after seventeen days, he learnt that he was falsely accused of sending two noble ladies on a pilgrimage to Jaen. During their absence, from the 21st of April 1527 to the 1st of June, he remained in prison, and was then set free with a prohibition against instructing others until he had spent four years in study.

Seeing his way thus barred at Alcalá, he went with his companions to Salamanca. Here the Dominicans, doubting the orthodoxy of the new-corners, had them put into prison, where they were chained foot to foot and fastened to a stake set up in the middle of the cell. Some days afterwards Ignatius was examined and found without fault. His patience won him many friends; and when he and his companions remained in prison while the other prisoners managed to escape, their conduct excited much admiration. After twenty-two days they were called up to receive sentence. No fault was found in their life and teaching; but they were forbidden to define any sins as being mortal or venial until they had studied for four years. Hampered again by such an order, Ignatius determined to go to Paris to continue his studies. Up to the present he was far from having any idea of founding a society. The only question before him now was whether he should join an order, or continue his wandering existence. He decided upon Paris for the present, and before leaving Salamanca he agreed with his companions that they should wait where they were until he returned; for he only meant to see whether he could find any means by which they all might give themselves to study. He left Barcelona and, travelling on foot to Paris, he arrived there in February 1528. The university of Paris had reached its zenith at the time of the council of Constance (1418), and was now losing its intellectual leadership under the attacks of the Renaissance and the Reformation. In 1521 the university had condemned Luther's Babylonish Captivity, and in 1527 Erasmus's Colloquies met with the same fate. Soon after his arrival, Ignatius may have seen in the Place de Greve the burning of Louis de Berquin for heresy.' At this period there were between twelve and fifteen thousand students attending the university, and the life was an extraordinary mixture of licentiousness and devout zeal. When Ignatius arrived in Paris, he lodged at first with some fellow-countrymen; and



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for two years attended the lectures on humanities at the college de Montaigu, supporting himself at first by the charity of Isabella Roser; but, a fellowlodger defrauding him of his stock, he found himself destitute and compelled to beg his bread. He retired to the hospice ' Louis de Berquin, who died on the 17th of April 1529, belonged to a noble family of Artois. He was a man of exemplary life and a friend of Erasmus and the humanists, besides being a persona grata at the court of Louise of Savoy and Francis I. His main offence was that he attacked the monks and clergy, and that he advocated the reading of the Scriptures by the people in the vulgar tongue. - (W. A. P.) of St Jacques; and, following the advice of a Spanish monk, spent his vacations in Flanders, where he was helped by the rich Spanish merchants. At Bruges he became acquainted with the famous Spanish scholar, Juan Luis Vives, with whom he lodged. In the summer of 1530 he went to London, where he received alms more abundantly than elsewhere. As he could only support himself at Paris with difficulty, it was impossible to send for his companions in Salamanca. Others, however, joined him in Paris, and to some of them he gave the Spiritual Exercises, with the result that the Inquisition made him give up speaking on religious subjects during the time he was a student. At the end of 1529 he came into contact with the men who were eventually to become the first fathers of the Society of Jesus. He won over the Savoyard Pierre Lefevre (Faber), whose room he shared, and the Navarrese Francis Xavier, who taught philosophy in the college of St Barbara. Afterwards he became acquainted with the young Castilian, Diego Laynez, who had heard of him at Acala and found him out in Paris. With Laynez came two other young men, the Toledan Alfonso Salmeron and the Portuguese Simon Rodriguez. Nicholas Bobadilla, a poor Spaniard who had finished his studies, was the next to join him. The little company of seven determined to consecrate their union by vows. On the 15th of August 1534, the Feast of the Assumption, they assembled in the crypt of the church of St Mary on Montmartre, and Faber, the only one who was a priest, said Mass. They then took the vows of poverty and chastity, and pledged themselves to go to the Holy Land as missionaries or for the purpose of tending the sick; or if this design should prove impracticable, to go to Rome and place themselves at the disposal of the pope for any purpose. But, whatever may have been the private opinion of Ignatius, there was on this occasion no foundation of any society. The vows were individual obligations which could be kept quite apart from membership in a society. A provision was made that if, after waiting a year at Venice, they were unable to go to Jerusalem, this part of the vow should be cancelled and they should at once betake themselves to Rome.

At this time Ignatius was again suffering from his former imprudent austerities; and he was urged to return for a while to his native air. He left Paris for Spain in the autumn of 1535, leaving Faber in charge of his companions to finish their studies. During the absence of Ignatius, Faber gained three more adherents. But before leaving Paris Ignatius heard once more that complaints had been lodged against him at the Inquisition; but these like the others were found to be without any foundation. When he arrived near Loyola he would not go to the castle, but lived at the public hospice at Azpeitia, and began his usual life of teaching Christian doctrine and reforming morals. Falling ill again he went to other parts of Spain to transact business for his companions. Then, sailing from Valencia to Genoa, he made his way to Venice, where he arrived during the last days of 1535. Here he waited for a year until his companions could join him, and meanwhile he occupied himself in his usual good works, gaining several more companions and meeting Giovanni Piero Caraffa [sic!], afterwards Paul IV., who had lately founded the Theatines. What happened between the two does not appear; but henceforth Caraffa seems to have borne ill will towards Ignatius and his companions. At Venice Ignatius was again accused of heresy, and it was said that he had escaped from the





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Inquisition in Spain and had been burnt in effigy at Paris. These charges he met successfully by insisting that the nuncio should thoroughly inquire into the matter.

After a journey of fifty-four days his companions arrived at Venice in January 1537; and here they remained until the beginning of Lent, when Ignatius sent them to Rome to get money for the proposed voyage to Palestine. He himself stayed behind, as he feared that, if he went with them, Caraffa at Rome, together with Dr Ortiz, a German opponent in Paris and now Charles V.'s ambassador at the Vatican, would prejudice the pope against them. But Ortiz proved a friend and presented them to Paul III., who gave them leave to go to Palestine to preach the Gospel, bestowing upon them abundant alms. He likewise gave licence for those not yet priests to be ordained by any catholic bishop on the title of poverty. They had returned to Venice where Ignatius and the others were ordained priests on the 24th of June 1537, after having renewed their vows of poverty and chastity to the legate Verallo. Ignatius, now a priest, waited for eighteen months before saying Mass, which he did for the first time on the 25th of December 1538 in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

The year of waiting passed away without any chance of going to the Holy Land. Finding it impossible to keep this part of their vow, the fathers met at Vicenza, where Ignatius was staying in a ruined monastery; and here after deliberation it was determined that he, Laynez and Faber should go to Rome to place the little band at the disposal of the pope. It was now that the Society began to take some visible form. A common rule was devised and a name adopted. Ignatius declared that having assembled in the name of Jesus, the association should henceforth bear the name of the "Company of Jesus." The word used shows Loyola's military ideal of the duties and methods of the nascent society.

On the road to Rome a famous vision took place, as to which we have the evidence of Ignatius himself. In a certain church, a few miles before Rome, whilst in prayer he was aware of a stirring and a change in his soul; and so openly did he see God the Father placing him with Christ, that he could not dare to doubt that God the Father had so placed him. Subsequent writers add that Christ, looking at him with a benign countenance, said: "I shall be propitious to you"; while others add the significant words, "at Rome." Ignatius, however, says nothing about so important a matter; indeed he understood the vision to mean that many things would be adverse to them, and told his companions when they reached the city that he saw the windows there closed against him. He also said: "We must of necessity proceed with caution; and we must not make the acquaintance of women unless they be of very high rank." They arrived in Rome in October 1537; and lived at first in a little cottage in a vineyard and near the Trinita dei Monti. The pope appointed Faber to teach Holy Scripture, and Laynez scholastic theology, in the university of the Sapienza. Ignatius was left free to carry on his spiritual work, which became so large that he was obliged to call his other companions to Rome. During the absence of the pope, a certain hermit began to spread heresy and was opposed by Ignatius and his companions. In revenge the hermit brought up the former accusations concerning the relations to the Inquisition, and proclaimed Ignatius and his friends to be false, designing men and no better than concealed heretics. The matter was examined and the legate ordered the suit to be quashed. But this did not suit Ignatius. It was necessary for his own good repute and the future of his work that a definitive sentence should be pronounced and his name



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cleared once and for all. The legate demurred; but on the pope's return sentence was formally given in his favour.

The life of Ignatius is now mainly identified with the formation and growth of his Society (see JEsuITs), but his zeal found other outlets in Rome. He founded institutions for rescuing fallen women, started orphanages and organized catechetical instructions.. He obtained, after difficulty, the official recognition of his Society from Paul III. on the 27th of September 1540, and successfully steered it through many perils that beset it in its early days. He was unanimously elected the first general in April 1541; and on the 22nd of that month received the first vows of the Society in the church of *San Paolo fuori la mura*. Two works now chiefly occupied the remainder of his life: the final completion of the Spiritual Exercises and the drawing up of the Constitutions, which received their final form after his death. These two are so constantly connected that the one cannot be understood without the other. The Constitutions are discussed in the article on the Jesuits. In these he taught his followers to respond to the call; by the Spiritual Exercises he moulded their character.

The Book of the Spiritual Exercises has been one of the world-moving books. In its strict conception it is only an application of the Gospel precepts to the individual soul. Its object is to convince a man of sin, of justice and of judgment. The idea of the book is not original to Ignatius. At Montserrat he had found in use a popular translation of the *Exercitatorio de la vida spiritual* (1500), written in Latin by Abbot Garcias de Cisneros (d. 1510), and divided into three ways or periods during which purity of soul, enlightenment and union are to be worked for; a fourth part is added on contemplation. This book evidently afforded the root idea of the Ignatian and more famous book. But the differences are great. While taking the title, the idea of division by periods and the subjects of most of the meditations from the older work, Ignatius skilfully adapted it to his own requirements. Above all the methods of the two are essentially different. The Benedictine work follows the old monastic tradition of the direct intercourse of the soul with God. Ignatius, with his military instinct and views of obedience, intervenes with a director who gives the exercises to the person who in turn receives them. If this introduction of the director is essential to the end for which Ignatius framed his Exercises, in it we also find dangers. A director, whose aim is only the personal advantage of the one who is receiving the exercises, will be the faithful interpreter of his founder's intentions: but in the case of one whose esprit de corps is unbalanced, the temporary and pecuniary advantage of the Society may be made of more importance than that of the exercitant. Another danger may come when minuteness of direction takes away the wholesome sense of responsibility. Apart from these abuses the Spiritual Exercises have proved their value over and over again, and have received the sincerest form of flattery in countless imitations. The original parts of the book are principally to be found in the meditations, which are clearly Ignatian in conception as well as method. These are The Reign of Christ, wherein Christ as an earthly king calls his subjects to war: and Two Standards, one of Jesus Christ and the other of Lucifer. Besides these there are various additions to the series of meditations, which are mostly the practical results of the experiences which Ignatius went through in the early stages of his conversion. He gives various methods of prayer; methods of making an election; his series of rules for the discernment of spirits; rules for the distribution of alms and the treatment of scruples; tests of orthodoxy. These additions are skilfully worked into the series of meditations; so that when the exercitant by meditation has moved his soul to act, here are practical directions at hand.



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The exercises are divided into four series of meditations technically called "weeks," each of which may last as long as the director considers necessary to achieve the end for which each week is destined. But the whole period is generally concluded in the space of a month. The first week is the foundation, and has to do with the consideration of the end of man, sin, death, judgment and hell. Having purified the soul from sin and obtained a detestation thereof, the second week treats of the kingdom of Christ, and is meant to lead the soul to make an election of the service of God. The third and fourth weeks are intended to confirm the soul in the new way chosen, to teach how difficulties can be overcome, to inflame it with the love of God and to help it to persevere.

The Book of the Spiritual Exercises was not written at Manresa, although there is in that place an inscription testifying to the supposed fact. Ignatius was constantly adding to his work as his own personal experience increased, and as he watched the effects of his method on the souls of those to whom he gave the exercises. The latest critics, even those of the Society itself, give 1548 as the date when the book received its final touches; though Father Roothaan gives Rome, the 9th of July 1541, as the date at the end of the ancient MS. version. Ignatius wrote originally in Spanish, but the book was twice translated into Latin during his lifetime. The more elegant version (known as the common edition) differs but slightly from the Spanish. [Francisco Borgia](#), while duke of Gandia, petitioned Paul III to have the book examined and approved. The pope appointed censors for both translations, who found the work to be replete with piety and holiness, highly useful and wholesome. Paul III on receiving this report confirmed it on the 31st of July 1548 by the breve *Pastoralis officii cura*. This book, which is rightly called the spiritual arm of the Society, was the first book published by the Jesuits.

The progress of the Society of Jesus in Loyola's lifetime was rapid. Having always had an attraction for a life of prayer and retirement, in 1547 he tried to resign the generalship, and again in 1550, but the fathers unanimously opposed the project. One of his last trials was to see in 1556 the election as pope of his old opponent Caraffa, who soon showed his intention of reforming certain points in the Society that Ignatius considered vital. But at this difficult crisis he never lost his peace of mind. He said: "If this misfortune were to fall upon me, provided it happened without any fault of mine, even if the Society were to melt away like salt in water, I believe that a quarter of an hour's recollection in God would be sufficient to console me and to reestablish peace within me." It is clear that Ignatius never dreamed of putting his Society before the church nor of identifying the two institutions.

In the beginning of 1556 Ignatius grew very weak and resigned the active government to three fathers, Polanco, [Madrid](#) and Natal. Fever laid hold of him, and he died somewhat suddenly on the 31st of July 1556, without receiving or asking for the last sacraments. He was beatified in 1609 by [Paul V.](#) and canonized in 1628 by [Gregory XV.](#) His body lies under the altar in the north transept of the Gesù in Rome.

His portrait is well known. The olive complexion, a face emaciated by austerities, the large forehead, the brilliant and small eyes, the high bald head tell their own tale. He was of medium height and carried himself so well that his lameness was hardly noticeable. His character was naturally impetuous and enthusiastic, but became marked with great self-control as he gradually brought his



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will under his reason. There was always that love of overcoming difficulty inherent in a chivalrous nature; and this also accounts for that desire of surpassing every one else that marked his early days. Whilst other Christians, following St Paul, were content to do all things for the glory of God, Ignatius set himself and his followers to strive after the greater glory. Learning by his own experience and errors, he wisely developed a sovereign prudence which nicely adjusted means to the end in view. He impressed on his followers the doctrine that in all things the end was to be considered. Never would Ignatius have countenanced so perverted an idea as that the end justified the means, for with his spiritual light and zeal for God's glory he saw clearly that means in themselves unjust were opposed to the very end he held in view. As a ruler he displayed the same common sense. Obedience he made one of his great instruments, yet he never intended it to be a galling yoke. His doctrine on the subject is found in the well-known letter to the Portuguese Jesuits in 15J3, and if this be read carefully together with the Constitutions his meaning is clear. If he says that a subject is to allow himself to be moved and directed, under God, by a superior just as though he were a corpse or as a staff in the hands of an old man, he is also careful to say that the obedience is only due in all things "wherein it cannot be defined (as it is said) that any kind of sin appears." The way in which his teaching on obedience is practically carried out is the best corrective of the false ideas that have arisen from misconceptions of its nature. His high ideas on the subject made him a stern ruler. There are certain instances in his life which, taken by themselves, show a hardness in treating individuals who would not obey; but as a rule, he tempered his authority to the capacity of those with whom he had to deal. When he had to choose between the welfare of the Society and the feelings of an individual it was clear to which side the balance would fall.

There was in his character a peculiar mixture of conservatism and a keen sense of the requirements of the day. In intellectual matters he was not in advance of his day. The Jesuit system of education, set forth in the *Ratio studiorum*, owes nothing to him. While he did not reject any approved learning, he abhorred any intellectual culture that destroyed or lessened piety. He wished to secure uniformity in the judgment of the Society even in points left open and free by the church: "Let us all think in the same way, let us all speak in the same manner if possible." *Bartoli*, the official biographer of Ignatius, says that he would not permit any innovation in the studies; and that, were he to live five hundred years, he would always repeat "no novelties" in theology, in philosophy or in logic - not even in grammar. The revival of learning had led many away from Christ; intellectual culture must be used as a means of bringing them back. The new learning in religion had divided Christendom; the old learning of the faith, once delivered to the saints, was to reconcile them. This was the problem that faced Ignatius, and in his endeavour to effect a needed reformation in the individual and in society his work and the success that crowned it place him among the moral heroes of humanity.

**Bibliography.** - The Ignatian literature is very large. Fortunately we have in the *Acta quaedam* what is in effect the autobiography of the saint. This has been translated into English under the title of The testament of Ignatius Loyola, being sundry acts of our Father Ignatius, under God, the first founder of the Society of Jesus, taken down from the Saint's own lips by Luis Gonzales (London, 1900); and the above account of Ignatius is taken in most places directly from this, which is not only the best of all sources but also a valuable corrective of the later and more imaginative works. Next to the *Acta quaedam* comes in value Polanco's *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, which is published in the *Monumenta historica Societatis Jesu* now in progress. Polanco was the saint's secretary towards the





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end of his life. [Ribadeneira](#), who as a youth had been associated with the founder, wrote his *Vida del S. Ignacio de Loyola* (Madrid, 1594), based on an early Latin work (Naples, 1572). Bartole, the official biographer, wrote his *Della vita e dell' istituto di S. Ignatio* (Rome, 1650, 1659) Genelli wrote *Das Leben des heiligen Ignatius von Loyola* (Innsbruck, 1848); [Nicolas Orlandinus](#) gives a life in the first volume of the *Historiae Societatis Jesu* (Rome, 1615). It would be impossible to give a list even of the other lives, most of which are without value as histories, being written mainly for edification. But the student may be referred to the modern books Henri Joli's *St Ignace de Loyola* (Paris, 1899), which is based on the best authorities, and to H. Mailer's curious *Les Origines de la Compagnie de Jesus* (Paris, 1898), in which the author tries to establish a Mahommedan origin for many of the ideas adopted by the saint.

The literature connected with the *Spiritual Exercises* is also large. It will be sufficient here to mention: *A Book of Spiritual Exercises*, written by Garcias de Cisneros (London, 1876); the official Latin text in the third volume of the Avignon edition of the *Constitutions* (1830); Roothaan's *Exercitia spiritualia S. P. Ignatii de Loyola, cum versione litterali ex autographo Hispanico, notis illustrata* (Namur, 1841); Diertino, *Historia exercitiorum S. P. Ignatii de Loyola* (1887). Especially worthy of notice is P. Watrigant's *La Genese des exercices de Saint Ignace de Loyola*, republished from Les Etudes (1<sup>st</sup> May, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1897). (E. TN.)

Cfr.: *The 1911 Classic Encyclopedia*, [http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/St. Ignatius of Loyola](http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/St._Ignatius_of_Loyola)

Vedi anche: [Profilo biografico di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola nel sito dell'Enciclopedia Treccani](#)  
[Cronologia della vita di S. Ignazio di Loyola nel sito ufficiale dei Gesuiti italiani](#)