

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On July 31, the Church celebrates the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, priest and founder of the Society of Jesus. We are walking as a pilgrim people, discovering the living God who calls us by name, just as He called Ignatius. His life is a powerful announcement of the Kerygma: God can take a wounded, ambitious man and transform him into a servant totally abandoned to His will.

Ignatius was born in 1491 in the Basque country of Spain. A soldier full of dreams of glory and honor, his life changed forever when a cannonball shattered his leg during the Battle of Pamplona. While recovering in the castle of Loyola, he asked for books of chivalry but was given instead the Life of Christ and the Golden Legend, stories of the saints. As he read, the Lord began to work in his heart. He discovered that the vanities of the world left him empty, while thoughts of God filled him with lasting joy. This was the beginning of his conversion: a man who had lived for himself began to desire to live only for the greater glory of God: *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam*.

In Manresa, after a deep crisis and pilgrimage, Ignatius spent months in prayer and penance. There the Lord gave him the grace of the Spiritual Exercises, a school of discernment and contemplation that has formed countless Christians. Through the Exercises, we learn to contemplate the mysteries of

Christ, to recognize the movements of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and to choose freely what leads us closer to the Lord. It is a gradual initiation into the faith, where the Word of God, the Eucharist, and fraternal communion form us anew according to the Gospel.

Saint Ignatius did not remain alone. He gathered companions, Peter Faber, Francis Xavier, and others, and together they placed themselves at the service of the Pope, ready to go wherever the Church needed them most. Their motto was clear: to serve the Lord in the world in poverty, chastity, and obedience, always seeking “the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”

Brothers and sisters, the feast of Saint Ignatius comes to us as a strong call in the midst of our own itinerary. Many of us, like Ignatius, have experienced wounds, failures, or emptiness. The Lord is not afraid of our history. He visits us precisely there, in the hospital bed of our life, to offer us a greater dream: to become His companions on the way, to announce the Gospel with our lives. Let us ask Saint Ignatius to intercede for us so that, like him, we may allow the Word of God to wound our hearts and convert us, learn to discern the will of God in the daily choices of our families and community, and live the joy of a faith that is not abstract but incarnated in service, mission, and fraternal love.

May the Virgin Mary, whom Ignatius loved with tender devotion, accompany us. May she help us to have courage, as she did, so that Christ may be born in us and through us in the world. Let us go forward with joy, because the Lord who called Ignatius is the same Lord who walks with us today.

Peace, 