

# Catholic Candle

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## ***Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition***

### **Words of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Blessed Alan de la Roche:**

[L]ukewarmness or negligence in saying the Hail Mary, or a distaste for it, is a probable and proximate sign of eternal damnation, for by this prayer the whole world was restored.

Quoted by St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*, ¶250.



## **Life and Salvation in the Catacombs Without the Sacraments**

Besides Baptism and Marriage, there are no sacraments available to faithful and informed Catholics (at least in most places in the world) because there are so few uncompromising priests. When a Catholic first encounters this situation, he fears that salvation is almost impossible. But in reality, he receives many additional graces because he accepts no compromises to the Faith, and he is standing up for Christ the King.

The devil knows this and he will mount a strong attack, using his greatest efforts. Satan has more time to deal with faithful and informed Catholics because he has already won over most followers of the conciliar church. But, by using the extra help that faithful and informed Catholics can receive, the devil is vanquished.

Faithful and informed Catholics are more conscientious and understand the true Traditional Catholic Faith much better. In the present Great Apostasy, they start to understand how even each venial sin drives a nail into Our Lord's Hands and Feet.

In the catacombs, faithful and informed Catholics start to realize that even the smallest sin is a real problem for salvation, so they "mind their Ps and Qs" even in the most trivial matters. This imitates St. Francis of Assisi who, as legend says, would go out of his way not to accidentally step on the smallest bug (representing the fact that we should fight even the smallest faults).

As *The Imitation of Christ* teaches:

When a man reaches a point where he seeks no solace from any creature, then he begins to relish God perfectly.<sup>1</sup>

Faithful and informed Catholics have much to do to get their minds and consciences informed. Through such efforts, they can have moments of contemplation in which they would rather die than commit a venial sin.

They really appreciate the Faith much more and do not take it for granted. I'm just amazed at all the help and grace one will receive in the catacombs with an informed conscience and a great love for Christ. Such a Catholic is vigilant to avoid committing even the smallest sins. This is hard to believe, but true.

Uncompromising Catholics don't have pangs of conscience because they do not take "soft" positions on faith and morals. They live a happy and holy life. But of course, they always try to increase in their love for Christ, strive for humility, and make efforts to expand and enrich their prayer life. They especially make an effort to avoid distractions while praying. They recite many Spiritual Communions during the day, which is the strong point in their prayer life. Of course, it goes without saying that they are lovingly fulfilling all obligations of their state in life.

In the 1950s, before the "catacombs" of the current Great Apostasy, the availability of Saturday afternoon confession was always in the back of many Catholics' minds when tempted to sin. They might easily salve their consciences that they will soon be back in the state of grace and God will "understand". WRONG! God will not "understand"!

Certainly, a great, additional help to avoid this lukewarm attitude is the weekly Devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. This beautiful devotion was all but eliminated as the result of Vatican II and its conciliar church. I kept a pre-Vatican II prayer card from the old days (which included the whole 15-minute's worth of prayers). I don't know where

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<sup>1</sup> *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, Book I, Chapter 25.

else these prayers are available today. But if you email a request to *Catholic Candle*, we will send it to you. As Our Lord teaches: “ask and you shall receive”.



***Catholic Candle* note:** We should study the Catholic Faith our whole life. Part of this duty is to understand more fully the truths of the Faith we already learned as children. Thus, for example, concerning the question “Who is God?”, we know from our *First Communion Catechism* that “God is the Supreme Being Who made all things.” During our life, we should learn more about God, as best we can, little-by-little, using the opportunities we have.

The article below is an aid to help us to “peer a little more deeply” into a few related truths of the Faith which we already learned in our catechism as children. The article below is merely one more step in the journey of learning our Faith better.

## **Meriting Condignly by Good Works Performed in the State of Sanctifying Grace**

By our Catholic Faith, we know that without Sanctifying Grace, we cannot merit ***anything*** from God.<sup>2</sup> We know that everyone who is without Sanctifying Grace is postured as God’s enemy. Thus, it is not surprising that a person without grace cannot merit since how could God’s enemies ever merit from Him while remaining His enemies and remaining in mortal sin – with their wills turned against Him?

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<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of this, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/06/04/sanctifying-grace-companion-charity/>

Even a little unbaptized baby who is incapable of actual sin<sup>3</sup>, nonetheless has no grace or charity and so is not a friend of God. Sanctifying grace changes a person from being God's enemy into being His friend.<sup>4</sup>

In the present article, we will look at how someone can merit a reward from God *in some way* (called “condignly”), when he is *already* in the state of Sanctifying Grace.

## What is merit?

To “merit” means “to be worthy of, or entitled, or liable to earn”.<sup>5</sup>

Merit is a right to a reward. For example, let us suppose a man discovers a plot to kill and overthrow the king of his country. The man informs the king. This deed deserves praise and reward, and might have not only saved the king himself, but also the whole kingdom. Thus, the king – if he is a just man – might say to the man, “Well done! You have merited a reward and my gratitude.” In that case, the man merited a natural reward from a mere man (*viz.*, the king).

Below, we first examine two objections to the idea that we can merit anything from God. After that, we explain the truth and answer those objections.

### **Objection #1: It seems that we cannot merit from God because everything good we do for God is merely doing what we are obliged to do.**

But how can we merit from God? He owns us, including all of our time and energy and everything we have. He is entitled to whatever we have as a matter of *justice*. We always owe Him everything. So, when we give Him what is due to Him, *i.e.*, pay our debts to Him, how can we merit anything by doing that? In a similar way, we would not

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<sup>3</sup> Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas teaches this truth, following and quoting St. Augustine: “whosoever has not charity is wicked, because ‘this gift alone of the Holy Ghost distinguishes the children of the kingdom from the children of perdition’”. *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.178, a.2, *Sed contra*, quoting St. Augustine’s treatise, *De Trinitate*, bk.15, ch.18.

As the psalmist teaches: “I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.” *Psalms*, 50:7. St. Paul teaches that, because of Original Sin, we are all “by nature children of wrath”. *Ephesians*, 2:3.

<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of this, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/06/04/sanctifying-grace-companion-charity/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/merit> (definition of the transitive verb, “merit”).

think that a store check-out clerk would deserve praise or a reward because he returned to us the change due when we pay for our groceries. That clerk is only giving us what he owes to us in justice.

Here is one way that Our Lord shows that everything we owe to God is our debt to Him:

When you have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do.<sup>6</sup>

For this reason, it seems that even a person in the state of Sanctifying Grace cannot merit since we cannot do anything for God beyond what we already owe and we cannot do anything worthy of a reward.

**Objection #2: It seems that we cannot merit from God because God does not need anything we can do for Him and so we cannot benefit Him.**

Further, merit seems to pertain to good services performed, which are needed by the recipient or which benefit the person receiving those services. Hence, in the example above, the king was benefited by the man who uncovered the seditious men's plot to kill the king.

But God is almighty. He can do anything He wants to do. He needs no one's help. It seems that, because God does not need anything we can give Him, there is nothing we can do to benefit God and so we deserve no reward. The psalmist shows that God needs nothing we have, using these words:

I have said to the Lord, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods.

*Psalm, 15:2.*

This is a second reason why it seems that a person cannot merit even in the state of Sanctifying Grace since there is nothing that he can do which can benefit God and thereby merit a reward.

**Solution: We can merit a reward from God condignly.**

Our Catholic Faith teaches us that we can indeed merit from God in some way. For example, God told the prophet Jeremias:

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<sup>6</sup> *St. Luke's Gospel, 17:10.*

Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes from tears: for **there is a reward for thy work**, saith the Lord: and they shall return out of the land of the enemy.

*Jeremias*, 31:16 (emphasis added).

St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, teaches us that:

A person in the state of grace can merit from God **condignly**.<sup>7</sup>

The word “condign” means “appropriate”.<sup>8</sup> Thus, to merit condignly is to merit in some way because it is appropriate to do so.

However, meriting is not merely receiving something as a gift. As shown above, meriting is in some way having a **right** – that is, a **claim in justice** – to receive something. St. Thomas teaches that “condign merit rests on justice”.<sup>9</sup>

St. Paul shows that our meriting from God is a matter of justice in some way. St. Paul calls salvation a matter of justice given to the elect by the just Judge. Here are his words:

As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day.

*2 Timothy*, 4:8.

From the above considerations, we know that people really are able to merit a reward from God as a matter of **justice**, even though everything we have already belongs to God.

## Replies to the Objections

The first objection (above) asks how God can owe us anything since everything we have, we already owe to God. The answer is that God owes a debt to those in the state of grace because He **promised** to give a reward to His friends, in exchange for particular conduct on their part.

That conduct, **in itself**, does not merit from God (and does not make God our Debtor) because God is already entitled to everything His creatures have. Even more so, that

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<sup>7</sup> *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.114, a.6, *respondeo*, (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/condign>

<sup>9</sup> *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.114, a.6, ad 2.

conduct does not merit the extremely great rewards that God gives to the elect. However, the rewards God gives are condign, *i.e.*, are appropriate, and are a matter of justice because God ***promised*** the rewards and it is appropriate for God to keep His promises.

We see many examples of God's condign promises. For example, Our Lord promised:

Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your ***reward*** is very great in heaven.<sup>10</sup>

Here is another of very many examples of God's promises to us:

And you shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake: but ***he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.***<sup>11</sup>

Thus, those in the state of Sanctifying Grace can merit condignly. This is the reason why St. Paul calls salvation a "crown of justice". *2 Timothy*, 4:8.

Examining the second objection (above), we see that even though God has no need of anything man can give Him [*see, Psalm*, 15:2], nonetheless, God owes the reward because He ***promised*** it.<sup>12</sup>

This is like a rich man who wants to benefit his nephew and enable his nephew to get a good education. Suppose the rich man promises his nephew that if the nephew would wash the uncle's car, he would pay the nephew's school tuition. If that nephew then washed the uncle's car, the uncle would be obliged in justice to fulfill his promise even though the payment of the tuition was much greater than the usual value of a car wash. That nephew could be said to merit the tuition payment condignly.

## Conclusion

No one can merit unless he is in the state of Sanctifying Grace. Even then, he merits only condignly, *i.e.*, because God promises the reward, not because we benefit God by making Him better off or happier than He otherwise would be. However, because of

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<sup>10</sup> St. Matthew 10: 11-12 (emphasis added).

<sup>11</sup> St. Matthew 10:22 (emphasis added).

<sup>12</sup> It is true that the just man gives glory to God by his good works. That is a blessing and a consolation to the just man – *viz.*, that he can give God this glory. However, God does not need anything or anyone. If that man became evil, he would still manifest God's glory – this time by manifesting God's justice through God punishing that man.

God's promises, the rewards God gives to those in the state of Sanctifying Grace are given to them as a matter of justice.



***Catholic Candle* note:** Because we live in a time of great apostasy in which the normal channels to receive the sacraments and spiritual direction are not available to most of us, the team at the *Catholic Candle* will attempt in a series of articles to pass on the treasure of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Firstly, we will set out a biographical account of St. Ignatius in order to appreciate how God's providence is manifested in giving us these powerful time-tested exercises through St. Ignatius, His chosen instrument. Secondly, we will give a brief overview of the exercises including an explanation of St. Ignatius' *Rules for the Discernment of the Spirits*. Thirdly, we will treat individual Spiritual Exercises.

## ✠ **Mary's School of Sanctity** ✠

### ***Lesson #4 an Introduction of St. Ignatius of Loyola, author of the Spiritual Exercises***

Before we can study the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, it is important to get to know more about him.<sup>13</sup>

- **His early years**

St. Ignatius was born in 1491 in a castle in the Biscay region of Spain. Both his parents were of royal extraction. His father Don Bertram, lord of Oñez and Loyola, was head of one of the most ancient and noble families. His mother was Mary Suez de Balde. They had three daughters and eight sons. Their youngest child Ignito [St. Ignatius] was witty and had discretion above his years. He was sociable and obliging, but had a choleric disposition and an ardent passion for glory.

He was raised in the court of Ferdinand V under the care and protection of his patron and kinsman Antony Manriquez, duke of Najara, a nobleman of first rank in Spain.

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<sup>13</sup> The following biographical synopsis is a compilation of the information given in *Butlers Lives of the Saints*, Vol. 3 under July 31<sup>st</sup>, copyright 1844.



Antony saw St. Ignatius' inclinations, led him to the army, and made sure he was trained to be an accomplished officer.

St. Ignatius, who was aware of his older brothers' valiant service in the wars of Naples, wanted very much to enter the service. He behaved with great conduct and valor in the army, especially in the taking of Najara, a small town on the frontier of Biscay. He generously declined taking any part of the booty. He detested gambling, was dexterous in the management of financial and other affairs, and had an excellent talent for settling the differences among the soldiers. He was generous even to the enemy, but was addicted to gallantry, and was full of the maxims of worldly honor, vanity, and pleasures.

- **His initial conversion**

But God had other plans for St. Ignatius. It came to be that when Charles V succeeded king Ferdinand and was chosen emperor, he was obliged to go to Germany. Francis I, king of France, resented this appointment as emperor, and became an enemy to Charles. Francis declared war against Charles. Francis wanted to retake Navarre. Thus, it was in 1521 that Francis sent an army into Spain and laid siege to Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre. St. Ignatius at this time was stationed in Pampeluna by the viceroy. He was not given a position to command the garrison but tried in vain to convince the garrison to defend the city against the attack. When St. Ignatius saw that the garrison opened the gates to the enemy, he and the only officer who would follow him, went up into the citadel. The garrison of this fortress deliberated whether they should surrender; St. Ignatius persuaded them to hold their ground. The French attacked the fortress with great fury and made a wide hole in the wall with their artillery and attempted to take the fortress by assault. St. Ignatius appeared in the breach, at the head of the bravest part of the garrison and, with his sword in hand, endeavored to drive back the enemy. But in the heat of combat, a shot from a cannon broke a stone from the wall and bruised his left leg. The cannonball, on the rebound, broke and shattered his right leg. The garrison surrendered when they saw St. Ignatius fall.

The French used their victory with moderation and treated the prisoners well, especially St. Ignatius, in consideration of his quality and valor. They carried him to the general's quarters, and soon after sent him, in a litter carried by two men, to the castle of Loyola, which was not far from Pampeluna. Upon arriving there, St. Ignatius was in great pain because his bones had been set badly on the battlefield. The surgeons judged it best to break the bone again, which St. Ignatius suffered without any concern. But a violent fever followed the second setting, which was attended with dangerous symptoms, and reduced him to an extreme degree of weakness, so that the physicians declared that he could not live many days. He received the sacraments on the eve of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and it was believed he could not hold out till the next morning. St. Ignatius always had a singular devotion to St. Peter and implored St. Peter's intercession in the present distress with great confidence. In the night St. Ignatius thought he saw in a

dream St. Peter touch him and cure him. When he awoke, he was out of danger and his pains left him and his strength began to return so he always looked upon his recovery as a miracle.

However, he still retained the spirit of the world. After the second setting of his leg, the bone stuck out under his knee, which was a visible deformity. St. Ignatius insisted that the surgeons cut off the protuberance simply so he could fit his stocking and boot on handsomely. He suffered this cutting without being held or bound or even changing his countenance despite this sawing and cutting part of his bone being extremely painful. Furthermore, because his right leg was shorter than his left, he was put on a kind of rack, was violently stretched for many days to draw out the leg. This method did not solve the problem, and he was lame his whole life after.

During the cure of his knee, he was confined to bed, though otherwise he was in perfect health. He found the time tedious and asked for some of his favorite type of book – fabulous romantic histories with knight-errantry. The castle only had a book containing the life of Christ and the lives of the saints. At first, he only read these books to pass the time away, but afterward began to relish them. He spent whole days reading them. He admired the love of solitude and the love of the cross displayed in the lives of the saints. He said to himself: “These men were of the same frame I am. Why then should not I do what they have done?”

He thought of visiting the Holy Land and becoming a hermit, but these pious notions soon vanished. His passion for glory, and a secret inclination for a rich lady in Castile, with a view to marriage, again filled his mind with thoughts of the world. Then, returning to the lives of the saints, he perceived in his own heart the emptiness of all worldly glory, and that only God could content his soul.

- **The turning point of his life**

He vacillated between these two inclinations for some time, but he observed a difference. He found that the thoughts which were from God filled his soul with consolation, peace, and tranquility; whereas the others brought indeed some sensible delight, but left a certain bitterness and heaviness in the heart. He explains this difference in his book of *Spiritual Exercises*, as a basis for the rules for the discernment of the Spirit of God, and of the world in all the motions of the soul.

Then at last making a firm resolution to imitate the saints in their heroic practice of virtue, he began to treat his body with all the rigor it was able to bear: he rose at midnight, and spent his retired hours in weeping for his sins. One night, being prostrate before an image of the Blessed Virgin, in extraordinary sentiments of fervor, he consecrated himself to the service of his Redeemer under her patronage, and vowed an inviolable fidelity. When he had ended his prayer, he heard a great noise; the house shook, the windows of his chamber were broken, and a rent was made in the wall which

remained. This might have been a sign that God accepted his sacrifice or perhaps it was the effect of the rage of the devil.

Another night, St. Ignatius saw the Mother of God environed with light, holding the Infant Jesus in her arms. This vision replenished his soul with spiritual delight, and made all sensual pleasure and worldly objects insipid to him ever after.

His eldest brother, at the death of their father, became the lord of Loyola and tried to dissuade St. Ignatius from his intention to quit the world. But after he was cured of his wounds, St. Ignatius went to Najara under pretence of paying a visit to the duke of Najara. When he arrived in Najara, he sent his two servants back to Loyola while he turned his course to Montserrat.

Montserrat was a great abbey of three hundred reformed and austere Benedictine monks. It was on a mountain of difficult access, about four leagues<sup>14</sup> in circumference and two leagues high, in the diocese of Barcelona. The monastery was founded for nuns in the year 880 A.D. but was given to monks in 990 A.D. At this monastery there lived a very holy old monk named John Chamones who became St. Ignatius' director and confessor. After his preparation it took St. Ignatius three days to make his confession because his confession was frequently interrupted by the abundance of his tears. He made a vow of perpetual chastity, and dedicated himself with great fervor to the divine service.

St. Ignatius had bought a long coarse coat, a girdle, a pair of sandals, a wallet, and a pilgrim's staff when he first came to Montserrat in order to disguise himself. He was intending to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. While he was at the monastery, he remained in this disguise. He communicated to his director a plan for the austerities he proposed to practice, and was confirmed by his director in his good resolutions.

St. Ignatius received the Blessed Eucharist early in the morning on the feast of the Annunciation in 1522, and on the same day left Montserrat because he feared to be discovered. He left his horse at the monastery, and hung up his sword on a pillar near the altar in testimony of his renouncing the secular warfare and entering himself in the warfare of Christ.

He travelled with his staff in hand, bare-headed, and with one foot bare, the other being covered because it was yet tender and swollen. He was very pleased that he had cast off the dress of the world and had put on that of Christ. He had bestowed his rich clothes on a beggar upon leaving Montserrat; but the poor man was thrown into prison on suspicion of theft. St. Ignatius was brought back by the magistrates. He told the truth and cleared the man of the accusation. However, St. Ignatius did not divulge his own name.

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<sup>14</sup> A league is any of various units of distance from about 2.4 to 4.6 statute miles. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* ; copyright 1987.

Three leagues from Montserrat is the village of Manresa. The village has a Dominican convent and a hospital without walls for pilgrims and sick persons. He went to this hospital and rejoiced that he was not known and was received among the poor. He began to fast on bread and water, which he begged for the whole week, except Sundays, when he ate a few boiled herbs, but sprinkled over with ashes. He wore an iron girdle, a hair shirt, and disciplined himself three times a day. He slept little and lay on the ground. He attended the entire divine office and spent seven hours a day on his knees in prayer. He received the sacraments every Sunday.

In order to add humiliations to his austerities he pretended to act clownish and went begging about the streets with his face covered with dirt, his hair rough, and his beard and nails grown out to a frightful length. The children threw stones at him and followed him with scornful shouts in the streets. St. Ignatius suffered these insults without saying one word, rejoicing secretly in his heart to share in the reproaches of the cross. The more the disgusting was the hospital and the beggars were, the more violence he offered himself, that he might bear them cheerfully.

The story of the fine clothes given to the beggar at Montserrat got out, and he was soon revered as a holy penitent in disguise. In order to shun this, he hid himself in a dark deep cave in a solitary valley, called the Vale of Paradise, covered with briars, half a mile from the town. Here he increased in mortifications until they nearly killed him. He was accidentally discovered and carried back to the hospital in Manresa.

After enjoying peace of mind ever since the time of his conversion, he was now stricken with a terrible trial of scruples. No amount of prayer, fasting, bodily discipline, and receiving the sacraments gave him any consolation. His soul was overwhelmed in sadness. The Dominicans, out of compassion, took him out of the hospital into their convent, and yet his melancholy increased. He earnestly implored divine assistance, and took no sustenance for seven days until his confessor obliged him to eat. Soon after this, his tranquility of mind was perfectly restored, and his soul overflowed with spiritual joy. From this experience he acquired a particular talent for curing scrupulous consciences and a singular light to discern them.

- **Inspiration for the *Spiritual Exercises***

His prayers were filled with many heavenly raptures. He began to receive from God a supernatural knowledge and sense of sublime divine mysteries; yet he concealed all from the eyes of men. He only divulged himself to his two confessors, the pious monk at Montserrat and a Dominican at Manresa. Nevertheless, the people started to regard him as a living saint to which they particularly testified during violent fevers into which his austerities cast him three times.

It is interesting to note that at this time of St. Ignatius' life God was preparing him for his great work against the Protestants.<sup>15</sup> St. Ignatius, by perfect compunction, humility, self-denial, contempt of the world, severe interior trials, and assiduous meditation, was prepared, by the divine grace, to be raised to an extraordinary gift of supernatural prayer. It is thought that at this time he set down the notes which would eventually become his famous *Spiritual Exercises*. Tradition says that Our Lady gave him the substance of these exercises and the Holy Ghost inspired him.

- **His pilgrimage to the Holy Land**

Because the plague which had been raging in Italy had ceased, St. Ignatius' long planned pilgrimage to the Holy Land was now possible. So after ten months in Manresa, St. Ignatius set out for Barcelona. He boarded a ship in Barcelona. Five days later, he landed at Gaeta. He travelled on foot to Rome, Padua, and Venice through villages because the larger towns were shut for fear of the plague. He spent the Easter at Rome, and sailed from Venice on board the admiral's vessel, which was carrying the governor to Cyprus. The sailors were an immoral crew and when St. Ignatius reproved them, they planned to exile him on an island. However, a gust of wind from the land hindered them from approaching and carrying out their plan.

He arrived at Cyprus and, by Divine Providence, found a ship with pilgrims about ready to sail to the Holy Land. He boarded and sailed to Jaffa in August of 1523, after a journey of forty days. He continued on foot to Jerusalem in four days. The sight of the holy places filled him with joy, devotion, and compunction. He desired to stay and to convert the Muslims, yet the provincial in charge over the pilgrims, ordered St. Ignatius to leave Palestine.

- **His seeking an education so he can serve God better**

He journeyed back to Europe in winter in extreme cold, poorly clad, and came to Venice at the end of January 1524. He made his way back to Barcelona. Because he desired to be able to assist at the altar and help his neighbor spiritually, he began the study of grammar. However, his mind was so fixed on God that when he tried to conjugate the word *amo* [which means "I love"], he kept saying "I love God; I am loved by God." He resisted this as a temptation and persisted in his studies, adding to them contemplation and austerities. He bore the taunts of the little boys, his schoolfellows, with joy.

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<sup>15</sup> Dom Guéranger, in his *Liturgical Year*, says in his entry for July 31, that "The development of St. Ignatius' vocation to holiness followed step by step the defection of Luther. In the spring of 1521 Luther had just quitted Worms, and was defying the world from the Castle of Wartburg, when St. Ignatius received at Pampeluna the wound which was the occasion of his leaving the world and retiring to Manresa."

One remarkable incident at this period was when St. Ignatius heard that a poor man, Lasano, had hanged himself; St. Ignatius ran to him and cut him down. To all the bystanders, this man seemed dead. St. Ignatius prayed next to the man until the man came to himself. Lasano made his confession, received the sacraments, and soon after expired. In the city this was considered a miracle.

- **The influence of his good examples on others**

After studying in Barcelona, he went to study at the university at Alcala. He attended lectures in logic, physics, and divinity. Even though he studied night and day, he learned nothing at all. He lodged in a chamber of a hospital, lived by begging a small subsistence, and wore a coarse grey habit, in which he was imitated by four companions. He catechized children, held assemblies of devotion in the hospital, and by his mild reprehensions converted many cowardly people, including one of the richest prelates in Spain. Some accused him of sorcery, and of a certain heresy which was then prevalent in Spain under the title of the Illuminati or “Men of New Light”. However, upon being questioned, he was cleared of all the charges.

Because he was teaching the catechism, being a man without learning or authority, he was accused to the bishop’s grand vicar, and thrown into prison for forty-two days. He was declared innocent on June 1, 1527, but was forbidden to wear any singular habit or to give instruction because he and his companions were illiterate. St. Ignatius was glad to suffer in prison even though he was innocent.

He then went about the streets begging money to buy a scholar’s dress and rejoiced at the insults and affronts he was given. He went to the archbishop of Toledo, who liked him. The archbishop advised him to go to Salamanca and promised to protect him.

At this time St. Ignatius began to draw many to virtue and many followed him. This following again exposed him to suspicions of introducing dangerous practices, and the grand vicar of Salamanca imprisoned him. However, after twenty-two days he declared him innocent and released him. Upon his release he resolved to leave Spain.

He began to wear shoes from this time on and received money sent to him by his friends. In the middle of winter, he travelled on foot to Paris and arrived there in the beginning of February, 1528. He spent two years in perfecting himself in the Latin language. Then he went through a course of Philosophy. At first, he lived in Montaigne college but then after being robbed of his money, he lodged at the St. James hospital and begged his bread day to day. In the vacation time he was obliged to go to Flanders and to England to beg charities from the Spanish merchants that settled there. From these men and from friends at Barcelona he received sufficient supplies.

- **St. Ignatius' gift of directing souls is recognized**

He studied philosophy three and a half years in the college of St. Barbara. He had convinced many of his schoolfellows to spend the Sundays and holy-days in prayer and to apply themselves more fervently to the practice of good works. Unfortunately, Pegna, his master at the school, didn't like these practices, incited Goyea, the principal at the college to have St. Ignatius flogged publicly. Pegna hoped that this public humiliation would deter others from following St. Ignatius. The saint offered himself joyfully to suffer all things, and yet, because he didn't want those he was trying to convert to be scandalized about him being accused of being a corrupter of youth, he went to humbly lay his case privately to the principal of the school.

Goyea took St. Ignatius by the hand and led him out in front of the whole college. When everybody saw the principal enter, they expected the sign for the punishment, but he threw himself at St. Ignatius' feet, begging his pardon for having too lightly believed such false reports. Then rising publicly, he declared that St. Ignatius was a living saint who had no other desire than the salvation of souls, and was ready to suffer joyfully any infamous punishment. Such a reparation of honor gave St. Ignatius the highest reputation, and even the ancient and experienced doctors asked his advice on spiritual matters. Pegna himself was ever after his great admirer and friend. He appointed Peter Faber, a young man of great virtue and gifted intelligence to help St. Ignatius in his school exercises. With Peter Faber's help, St. Ignatius finished his philosophy course and his master of arts in three and a half years with high honors. After this, St. Ignatius took his degree in divinity with the Dominicans.

- **St. Ignatius begins to conquer souls for Christ**

This Peter Faber had made a vow of chastity in his childhood. He kept his vow but was troubled by violent temptations which even rigorous fasting would not alleviate. He also had temptations to vain-glory and labored under horrific scruples. St. Ignatius gave him heavenly advice, led Peter through a course of his spiritual exercises, taught him the practices of meditation, how to do a particular examination of his conscience for his predominant fault, and basically through all the means of the interior life.

Francis Xavier was another conquest of St. Ignatius. Francis, a young master of philosophy, was full of the vanity of the schools. St. Ignatius made him sensible that all mortal glory is emptiness; only that which is eternal deserves our regard.

St. Ignatius was successful in converting many sinners. One very striking example, was of a particular man who was involved with a woman. When this young man would not listen to St. Ignatius' exhortations, the saint stood in a freezing pond up to his neck and yelled to the young man as he was passing by, "Whither are you going? Do you not hear the thunder of divine justice over your head, ready to break upon you? Go then; satisfy your brutish passion; here I will suffer for you, to appease heaven." The lewd young man,

at first frightened, then confounded, turned back and changed his life.

- **The formation of the future Society of Jesus**

Four students, all Spaniards and students of divinity at Paris, associated themselves with St. Ignatius in his exercises. A Portuguese student soon joined them. These fervent students, who were moved by the pressing instances and exhortations of St. Ignatius, made all together a vow to renounce the world, to go to preach the gospel in Palestine, or if they could not go thither within a year after they had finished their studies, to offer themselves to his Holiness to be employed in the service of God in what manner the Pope would judge best.

They fixed for the end of their studies January 25, 1537 and pronounced their vow aloud in the holy subterranean chapel of Montmartre, after they had all received Holy Communion from Fr. Peter Faber who had recently been ordained a priest. This was done on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady in 1534. St. Ignatius continued frequent conferences and joint exercises, to animate his companions in their good purposes, but was soon ordered by the physicians to try his native air, for a cure of a lingering illness.

He left Paris in the beginning of the year 1525 and was honorably received in Guipuscoa by his eldest brother Garcia, his nephews, and by all the clergy. However, he refused to stay in the castle. At the sight of the places where he was reminded of his earlier worldliness, he chastised his body with a rough hair shirt, iron chains, disciplines, and watching and praying. He recovered his health in a short time and catechized and instructed the poor with incredible fruit.

In his youth he had robbed an orchard and another man was falsely accused of it and had to pay the damages. St. Ignatius, in his first discourse, accused himself publicly of this crime and declared that the man who was present had been falsely accused. In reparation, St. Ignatius gave the man two farms which belonged to him and publicly begged this man's forgiveness, telling the people that this was one of the reasons he had come there.

In the meantime, Fr. Faber exhorted three others, also doctors of divinity, to join the group that was already started in Paris. So now there were ten in number, including Fr. Faber and St. Ignatius. St. Ignatius, after a tedious and dangerous journey both by sea and land, arrived at Venice about the end of the year 1536. His nine companions from Paris met him there on January 8, 1537. They employed themselves in the hospitals. All but St. Ignatius went to Rome, where Pope Paul III received them graciously, and granted those who were not yet priests, permission to be ordained by any Bishop they chose. They were accordingly ordained at Venice by the bishop of Arbe. St. Ignatius was included in this number.



After their ordination, they retired to a cottage near Vicenza, to prepare themselves in solitude by fasting and prayer for the holy ministry of the altar. The rest said their first Masses in September and October, but St. Ignatius prepared a whole year before saying his first Mass.

- **The Society of Jesus becomes official**

After this they dispersed themselves into several places about Verona and Vicenza, preaching penance to the people, and living on a little bread which they begged. Because the emperor and the Venetians had declared war on the Turks, their pilgrimage to the Holy Land became impracticable. The year elapsed before St. Ignatius, Fr. Faber, and Fr. Lainez [one of the Spaniards] threw themselves at the feet of the Pope and offered to do whatever work he judged best for them. St. Ignatius had told his companions at Vicenza that if anyone should ask the name of their institute, they might answer, “the Society of Jesus” because they were united to fight against heresies and vice under the standard of Christ. On the road from Vicenza to Rome, when he was praying in a little chapel between Sienna and Rome, he, in an ecstasy, seemed to see the eternal Father, who affectionately commended him to His Son. Jesus Christ appeared at the same time, also shining with an unspeakable light but loaded with a heavy cross, and sweetly said to St. Ignatius: “I will be favorable to you at Rome.”

The Pope indeed received them graciously. He appointed Fr. Faber to teach scholastic divinity at the Sapienza at Rome, Fr. Lainez to explain the Holy Scripture, and St. Ignatius to labor to reform the morals of the people by means of his spiritual exercises and instructions.

St. Ignatius, in order to perpetuate the work of God, called to Rome all his companions, and proposed to them his design and motives of forming themselves into a religious order. After recommending the matter to God by fasting and prayer, all agreed on the proposal, and resolved, first, besides the vows of poverty and chastity, already made by them, to add a third of perpetual obedience, the more perfectly to conform themselves to the Son of God. They agreed that they should be under a general and then directly under the Pope. It was further agreed that they should own no real estate property or revenues either in particular or in common.

Three cardinals opposed the Order, saying that there were already too many orders, but suddenly changed their opinion and Pope Paul III approved the Order under the title, “The Society of Jesus” in a bull issued September 27, 1540. St. Ignatius was chosen the first general, but agreed only at the urging of his confessor. He entered upon his office on Easter-day, 1541, and the members all made their religious vows according to the bull of their institution.

St. Ignatius then set himself to write a constitution or rule for this Society. St. Ignatius set down that the first purpose of the Order is the sanctification of their souls by joining

together the active and contemplative life. Their second purpose is to labor for the salvation and perfection of their neighbor, especially by catechizing the ignorant but also by the instructing the youth. Their third purpose is the direction of consciences, missions, and similar things.

- **St. Ignatius as General of the Society of Jesus**

It is interesting to note the humility of St. Ignatius. He tried on several occasions to resign as general. Finally, the Pope forbade him to attempt this. Thence he was general of the Society for the rest of his life. As the general he had prudence and charity. He judged wisely when it was beneficial to defend his institution from the calumnies and violent persecutions. For example, when Henry II asked for the Society to come into France, the parliament of Paris rebuked the King. Even the faculty of the Sorbonne virulently opposed the Jesuits coming to France. The fathers at Rome thought it necessary to answer these censures, but St. Ignatius would have nothing printed about it. He said that it was better to commit their cause to God and that the slanders about them would fall to pieces. The result was exactly as St. Ignatius predicted. On other occasions, he modestly defended his institution.

St. Ignatius always showed the affection of a most tender parent towards his brethren. He won the hearts of all his religious. His commands seem rather entreaties. He was gifted to see everyone's particular genius. The mildness with which he tempered his reproofs gave sweetness to his corrections, while at the same time won the affection of others.

He explained to his religious that when they strictly guarded their exterior actions, it showed how well they guarded their interior actions. Furthermore, he showed that this means was absolutely necessary for regulating the interior life and governing the senses and the passions.

He was most gentle with the sick and took delight in attending to them himself.

- **Special precautions against worldliness that St. Ignatius set in the Rules of the Society**

The virtue of obedience was highly esteemed in the Society. When they first came, they were told to leave their self-will and private judgment behind them. St. Ignatius told his members that if they were outdone in fasting or watching, they must yield to none in obedience. Regarding their vows, the Jesuits took not only vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but also a fourth vow of undertaking any missions, whether among the faithful or infidels, if enjoined by the pope.

Also, the virtue of humility was given prime importance. One of the rules for the Society was the rule of Manifestation, by which everyone was bound to disclose his interior inclinations to his superior. Another rule was that every Jesuit renounces his right to his own reputation with his superior. This included every Jesuit giving his fellow Jesuits permission to disclose any of his faults to the superior.

St. Ignatius instructed the members to be careful above all things to preserve modesty and humility, and to shun all contentiousness or empty display of learning. Likewise, he told them to dedicate their lives to labor for the greater honor and glory of God.

In fact, St. Ignatius was so cautious about the humility of the members that he asked the pope explicitly that the Jesuits be excluded from all ecclesiastical dignities, namely, not be made bishops. He said that this would be a means to preserve them in a spirit of humility and poverty, which is the very soul and perfection of their state. He also said that being missionaries, it was more advantageous to the church that they should remain always ready to fly from pole to pole, as the public necessities should require. Thus, he obliged all professed Jesuits to bind themselves by a simple vow never to seek prelatures, and to refuse them when offered, unless compelled by a precept of the pope to accept them.

There was an instance of one of his priests trying to convert the royalty in Spain in order to win their favor to his ministry. St. Ignatius rebuked him sharply telling him to fear damnation through contact with the great ones of the world. He used to say that prosperity caused in him more fear than joy; that when a persecution ceased, he should be apprehensive lest the Society should somewhat relax in the observance of its regular discipline; that good fortune is never to be trusted; and that we have most to fear when things go according to our own desires.

St. Ignatius himself was all on fire with an “excess” of charity and had a restless desire of gaining souls to God. He wore himself out in the service of his neighbor, always laboring to extirpate vice, and to promote virtue in all.

- **St. Ignatius’ remarkable virtues were manifested to all**

Once when St. Ignatius heard someone explain that the gift of contemplation was given to one who was certainly a man of prayer, St. Ignatius corrected him by saying, “Call him rather a man of the most perfect self-denial.”

It is interesting to note that St. Ignatius himself was this type of man because his heart was emptied of itself. He had the habitual practice of exterior mortification of his senses, an interior mortification of his will and passions. He embraced humility with the utmost ardor.

He made it a science to hide his virtues and the favors that God was continually bestowing on him. Yet, in spite of his modesty in not revealing to others the wonderful things that God had and was doing for him, many testified that he had a light shining from his face. St. Philip Neri, a friend of St. Ignatius, used assure his friends that he had seen St. Ignatius' face shining with bright rays of light.

St. Ignatius had a remarkable grace of devotion. When he was saying Holy Mass and reciting the divine office, there would be a shower of tears streaming from his eyes.

- **His death and words of advice for those who seek the shortest way to perfection**

When St. Ignatius was asked what was the shortest way to perfection, he replied, "to endure for the love of Christ many and grievous afflictions. Ask this grace of Our Lord; on whosoever He bestoweth it, He does him many other signal favors, that always attend this grace".

St. Ignatius died on July 31, 1556, at the age of 65. The people esteemed him a saint both when he was alive and after his death because of the many miracles which were attributed to him.

- **Conclusion**

Let us be grateful to God for giving us such a wonderful saint to esteem and imitate. In our next lesson we will look at an overview of the Spiritual Exercises and begin to discuss St. Ignatius' *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* which are so crucial in the battle we fight in the trenches of the Church Militant.

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