

2ND DAY OF NOVENA TO ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

THEME: WHO IS IGNATIUS?

- FR ANTONY INICO SJ

INIGO whom we know as **ST. IGNATIUS**, was born in the Castle Loyola, in the Basque country of north-eastern Spain, in 1491. Inigo was the youngest of 13 children, raised in a family culture of high Catholic piety but lax morals. Winning personal glory was his passion. He was a great soldier. In the spring of 1521, a very large French army attacked the fortress town of Pamplona. A tiny band of Spanish soldiers trying to defend the town were ready to surrender; all of them except Inigo of Loyola. He would hold off the French single-handedly. A courageous Inigo wanted to win fame and show his heroism. He would never give up. He would not surrender. But a French cannonball shattered his leg and put an end to his stand. The French admired the courage of Inigo.

Inigo dreamt of becoming a sword-wielding soldier in mail, tights, and a bright red hat. He envisioned himself the champion and admirer of a noble lady. God planted a new dream. The light of God's love brightened his new dream. Transition from Worldly life to Godly life. He dreamt of a life dedicated to God, forsaking all to love and serve God and God's beloved. St. Francis of Assisi, another reformed soldier, inspired him.

Inigo, the man who sought fame, honour, riches and a world of glamour died. A new Inigo was born... Inigo gave up his old style of life and decided to follow Christ. Now he wanted to be known as a Saint. Inigo had to die to his 'EGO'. He had to accept that he was a sinner indeed...He spent much of his time in a cave, in prayer with God-praying as much as seven hours a day. He was blessed with powerful insights into himself and about who God was for him. His insights and experience imprinted in "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

He gradually began to shed his MATERIAL SECURITY. To die to Material Security... Ignatius put his TRUST only in God... It was an act of total SURRENDER ... It is not I who manage 'My Life'...but I let God lead me...

Inigo met Francis Xavier during his University study in Paris and made Francis reflect on "If you win the whole world and lose your soul what will you gain...? He met a group of men: Peter Faber, Francis Xavier, Lainez, Salmerón, Bobadilla and Rodriguez. They were ordained in Venice and left for Rome. They decided that they would introduce themselves as **COMPANIONS OF JESUS** if someone asked.

After three months of prayer, they decided to found the Society and call it the Society of Jesus. The Pope verbally approved it on 27th Sept. 1540. This new Religious Order was named **SOCIETY OF JESUS (SJ)** and they were known as "**JESUITS**". Motto of the Jesuits: To work for the Greater Glory of God - in Latin AMDG – *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*. Thus, St. Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus and became the First Superior General of the Society of Jesus. On 31st July, 1556, St. Ignatius died. St. Ignatius has shown us that it is in dying that one gains TRUE LIFE. It is in 'dying to oneself' that one finds and discovers the full meaning of life. "Dying to self" is transcending one's self-love.

In every human person there is tremendous potential like St. Ignatius. To make our presence felt in this world. We need to work on our dreams vigorously and passionately. St. Ignatius is our Inspiration and Model to follow MAGIS - More and more and to strive for excellence.

TO PONDER OVER...

- ❖ Am I guided by the values of the world?
- ❖ Am I anxious about my ego, image, status?
- ❖ Am I using my talents & skills for my personal glory (OR) for the greater glory of God?
- ❖ Am I still fulfilling my own will (OR) Am I seeking God's will?

Ignatius inspires us to become Men and Women for others. A Spirituality of life to be lived in its fullness. In all thing to love and serve God and His people.