

The Gift of Ignatius of Loyola



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Abbreviations used for quotations:

The Spiritual Exercises TSE

The Spiritual Journal TSJ

Ignatius' Reminiscences IR



- 1491 Born as Inigo Onaz Lopez de Loyola at Loyola (Azpeitia), Basque province of Guipuzcoa
- 1506 At Arevalo with the Royal Treasurer. Was inspired by a love of nature, deeds of valour, stories of romance
- 1516 With the Viceroy of Navarre; chivalrous, warm-blooded and hot-headed
- 1521 Wounded during the Siege of Pamplona 23 May. God's point of entry into Inigo's life, beginnings of Discernment. Devotion to Mary. Intense personal love for Jesus and Mary.
- 1522 Trip to Montserrat. Long retreat from March 1522 to February 1523. The Holy Spirit schooled him like a master with a pupil. Traumatic experiences of scruples leading to suicidal thoughts. Five great mystical experiences, the greatest one by the River Cardoner. Desire to be with Jesus.
- 1523 Pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem via Barcelona
- 1524 Study in Barcelona. Continual reflection and evaluation
- 1526 Examination by the Inquisition
- 1526 Study at Alcala, Valladolid and Salamanca. Continually helping others by 'spiritual exercises'

- 1527 Arrest at Salamanca
- 1528 Study at Sorbonne, Paris. Visits to Flanders and England
- 1534 15 August, first vow taken at Montmartre with six companions. Vow of poverty, a life of service in Jerusalem and offering themselves to the Pope
- 1537 Companions gather in Venice, ordained 24 June. Journey to Rome, great mystical experience at La Storta
- 1540 Foundation of the Society of Jesus. Work on the Constitutions of the expanding Order. Care for orphans, prostitutes, religious education of the poor.
- 1541 Ignatius elected Superior General
- 1548 Pope Paul III approves the Spiritual Exercises
- 1550 Society of Jesus confirmed by Pope Julius III
- 1556 Ignatius dies almost alone at age 65, 31 July
- 1609 Beatified 27 July, Rome by Pope Paul V
- 1622 Canonised 12 March, Rome by Pope Gregory XV



Santiago de
Compostela

Pamplona

Madrid

Barcelona

Sevilla

Valencia

Santiago de
Compostela

Galicia

Portugal

I thought of joining the Carthusians in Seville,

Atlantic Ocean

and of never eating anything but herbs.

Bay of Biscay

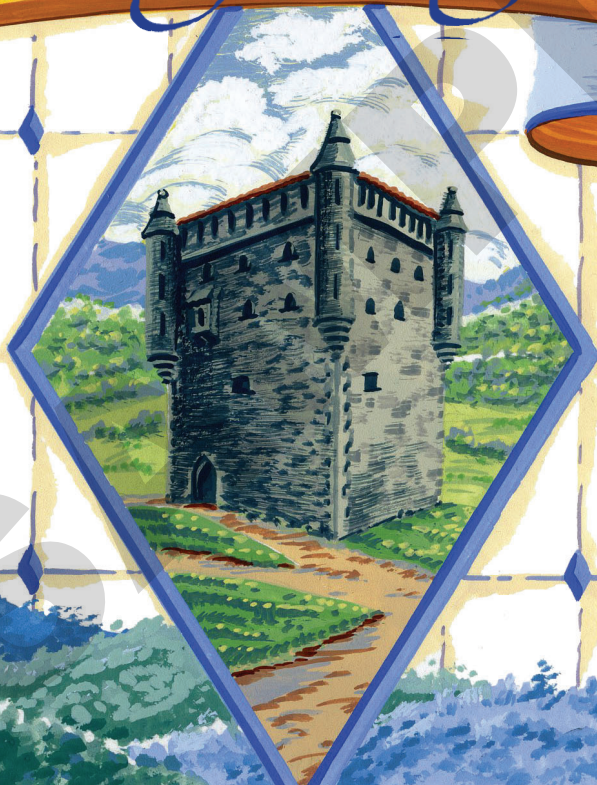
France

IR n 12





Beginnings



Casa Torre, Azpetitia, home to Inigo's family

THE WORLD OF INIGO

Ignatius was born Inigo Onaz Lopez de Loyola in 1491. His parents were Beltran Ibanez de Onaz and Marina Sanchez de Licona. Their way of naming was very different from ours! Onaz and Loyola are really two small districts, or mini-castles, belonging to the same family, in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa in the far north of Spain. The setting is just inland from the vast and wild Bay of Biscay where Spain is joined to France. Inigo's family consisted of five girls and eight boys, of whom Inigo was the youngest. Loyola is in a very beautiful, green valley, with the small castle very close to the banks of the river Urola. This was an ideal spot for Ignatius to begin life with that love of nature which many years later would be a significant part of his spirituality. Towards the end of his life he wrote: "Love God in all creatures and them all in God,



according to God's most holy, divine will" (*Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*).

The Loyola-Onaz family in its two small castles belonged to the minor nobility of this tiny corner of Spain. This time, 1491, was the end of the medieval era of history. This was the period of the Renaissance, right before the great religious ferment of the Reformation. Michelangelo was 16 years older, Raphael and Martin Luther each eight years older than Inigo. The year of Inigo's birth was one year before 'Columbus (sponsored by King Ferdinand of Spain) sailed the ocean blue' to begin the opening up to Europe of the Americas. Already exploration of the East had begun by Europeans rounding the Cape of Good Hope. This all provided a particularly significant historical setting for Ignatius whose vision in years to come would be world-wide, with the Kingdom of God requiring a universal missionary commitment.



THE YOUTHFUL INIGO

Not that Inigo's early life gave indications of his special place to come among the saints of God. His family was typically devout and religious for that time and place (his brother, Pero Lopez, was the local parish priest), but worldly values often took precedence over religious commitment. As a youth Inigo himself was 'warm blooded' and hot-headed, a keen enough student to develop a fine hand for calligraphy, was fond of music, dancing and art, and, in his own words: 'Until the age of twenty-six he was a man given up to the vanities of the world, and his chief delight used to be in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire to gain honour.' Like so many of the greatest saints, he would have to rely on the extraordinary intervention of divine grace in adult life to become the shining light whom we know as St Ignatius.

LIFE AT COURT

By the time the young Inigo was 16 years old, his mother, then his father had both died. A year before Beltran's death, the Royal Treasurer of King Ferdinand, Don Juan de Velasquez invited his friend Beltran to send one of his sons to live with him, to be trained in the



life of court at Arevalo in Castile, much closer to the court of the king himself. The 15-year-old Inigo was chosen by his father to take this great opportunity. Here he developed his love of the arts, poetry, music, and dancing. Inigo immersed himself in the life of a courtier. His main passions became swordplay, romance and rich dressing. Romantic novels were a great pastime, and the outstanding one of these was the great tome of the adventures of Amadis de Gaula, Amadis of Wales. Inigo became a great daydreamer and womaniser, vain and sinful. His own words about this period of his life are: "He was attached to the Catholic faith, but lived nowise in conformity with it." (*Inigo: Story and Songs*, William Hewett sj)

When his patron fell on hard times, Inigo remained steadfastly loyal to him for some years, until in 1517 he was forced by the death of Velasquez to return to his own country, where he took up service at the court of the Duke of Najera, some 90 kilometres south of Loyola. This was a period when France had become well organised into nationhood, and in 1520 Inigo was called upon to join a small force of a few hundred to defend the nearby city of Pamplona against overwhelming numbers of French invaders.

Love shows itself
in deeds
rather than
in words.

