

Feast of St. Ignatius. 67

Founder of the Society of Jesus. July ~~XVII~~  
Sermon I.

"I came to enkindle a fire upon earth, and what do I desire more than that it should burn?" Luke III. 49.

Pope Leo the Great in speaking of the feasts through which, in the course of the ecclesiastical year, we commemorate the mystery of the Redemption, very justly remarks, "It might appear difficult <sup>as</sup> year after year each feast recurs again to deliver an appropriate sermon and yet avoid wearisome repetition, and yet it is by no means so. And why? Because the subject discourses upon is of immeasurable depth, and so deeply significant in regard to our daily life that let the preacher say what he will thereupon he will never have uttered enough."

The very same is applicable to the ever recurring festival commemorative of the saints of God.

Well instructed Christians are indeed

familiar with the lives of these saints,  
at least in a general way, yet as  
we recall them to mind we discover  
new points of interest there in. I aptly  
compare the lives of these heavenly  
citizens to a landscape of such sin-  
glasses beauty that our gaze rests  
there upon with delight. And even  
though year after year we visit,  
and feast upon its beauty, we are  
ever and anew impressed with its  
charms, overwhelmed with admira-  
tion, and enchanted with points  
of interest as yet unperceived.  
This is especially applicable to day  
- this day devoted by the Church to  
the commemoration of the great  
"glorious St. Ignatius."

In presenting some points in that  
wonderful life for your edification  
I will dwell specially upon one cir-  
cumstance, viz. that the saint to  
whom we hasten to pay honor did  
not receive the name "Ignatius" di-  
rectly in baptism, but through veneration  
towards the great-martyr  
Ignatius added it to his own baptismal  
name - John.

John the Evangelist and Ignatius  
the martyr were both distinguished

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for their ardent love to Jesus, the former amongst the apostles, the latter amongst the martyrs - glorious bands!

This name signifies literally - the ardent, or fiery, and most fitting too it is, for he who is thus called shines forth with special brilliancy through the fire of his love for God, amidst all the holy confessors of the Church.

O' Mary, to whom with special confidence Ignatius dedicated himself, bless us with that maternal plenitude and tenderness with which thou didst grant thy blessing to him. Then may the fire of love which burned in his heart - for thee and thy beloved Son - be enkindled in our hearts, and grow ever brighter there.  
I speak in the holy name of Jesus, for the greater glory of God. -

Ignatius, founder of the world renowned Society of Jesus first saw the light of the world in the year 1491. He was born in the Castle of Loyola in the Spanish province of Catalonia of very noble parents, and as he attained the years of early manhood, obtained by his

wisdom and bravery the confidence <sup>TO</sup> of his sovereign " that to such a degree that the King, in a war with the French instructed him with the defence of the citadel of Pamplona.

Through the divine permission he was wounded upon the battle field upon the knee and in consequence was reduced to a very critical condition, but was eventually cured by St. Peter - Prince of the Apostles - who miraculously appeared unto him. Obliged nevertheless to remain at Loyola until he regained his usual strength, with a view to pass the hours which hung so heavily upon his hands, Ignatius requested to have brought to his apartment something to read. interesting and entertaining alike. It proved to be a volume of "The Lives of the Saints", by the perusal of which the Lord enlightened his soul, and he clearly beheld that up to this time he had not lived as the saints lived, although he had preserved his heart free from gross sin. He regretted the worldly mind which had hitherto distinguished him, and especially regretted that passion for honor and glory.

which had prompted him to think  
only of temporal gain. In the si-  
lent watcher of the night when all  
was dim and dark and still  
within the stately castle's walls Ig-  
natio arose from his couch, cast  
himself upon his knees before a pic-  
ture of the Virgin Immaculate, and  
overcome with emotion, implored  
that he might henceforth be her  
true knight, and the faithful  
servant of her beloved Son.

Scarcely had he completed his pray-  
er, than there arose a tumult so  
fearful that it might well strike terror  
to the bravest heart. The castle  
tittered to its very foundation, a por-  
tion of the wall in his apartment  
was overthrown, and the  
many tinted stained glass in the  
windows there in was shattered, and  
flung in ~~glasses~~ gorgeous hues  
upon the floor. Ignatio beheld  
in all this an evidence of the  
rage and fury with which his re-  
volution filled the enemy of souls.  
As soon as he was sufficiently re-  
covered he went to Mont Seral, es-  
pecially to visit one of his friends,  
but having arrived at that favored

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shrine of his chosen Lady, he repaired to a Benedictine Monastery, where he made a general confession of his entire life to a saintly monk of that Order, and received with fervent devotion the Body and Blood of Christ. He kept watch and ward before the altar of Mary through the still hours of the succeeding night and hung up his sword near that spot in token that henceforth he would be a true loyal soldier of the Church, and devote himself entirely to the service of Christ. From thence he went to the little hamlet "Maresej" near to which he discovered a mountain cave, in whose dark and sombre depths for a whole year he dwelt in solitude, and penitential deeds. At times however a heavenly radiance lighted up its gloom, for the Mother of God often appeared to this her true faithful Son. From her lips he learned the high and noble work for which God had destined him. He during that time wrote the world renowned spiritual Exercises, and it was then also that there arose in his heart an ardent

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desire to visit the spots rendered sacred  
by the presence of God. This he  
knew would strengthen him in his  
resolution to become the founder  
of a society for men, the chief  
end and aim of which would be  
the imitation of Christ - and the dif-  
fusion of his Kingdom upon earth.  
This wish was realized. Ignatius  
went to Jerusalem - to Palestine -  
and visited all the spots hallowed  
by the divine ~~foot~~<sup>prints</sup> of the cruci-  
fied. After his return Ignatius be-  
gan to prepare himself for the work  
for which he was destined by God.  
At Barcelona he began, at the age  
of thirty three to study, taking his  
place amongst school children,  
and being, in consequence subject-  
ed to many taunts and severe mo-  
lifications. Finally the saint went  
to Paris, and, in that place completed  
his studies. In the course of time  
some young men, highly educa-  
ted and of superior literary attain-  
ments joined him and thus was  
laid the foundation of the Society  
of Jesus. The sole end and aim  
of this society should be to advance  
the Kingdom of Christ throughout

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all portions of the earth - by the sanctification of ~~the members~~ <sup>the members</sup> and the conversion and sanctification of their neighbor. They made a vow to this effect on Mont Martre at Paris on the feast of our Lady's Assumption in " year 1534 - Then they went from Paris to Rome to proffer their devoted allegiance to the holy Father, and place their undertaking unreservedly in his hands. On the way thither Ignatius went into a way-side chapel to perform some of his accustomed devotions. When lo! Christ our Lord appeared to him and thus addressed him. "I will be favorable to thee at Rome". And so indeed it proved. Arrived at Rome Ignatius threw himself at the feet of the Pope, and offered him the services of himself and companions for what purpose soever he pleased. At this the holy Father was overjoyed and in the year 1540 approved the order which Ignatius was determined to found under the title of Society of Jesus to stem the torrent of Protestantism, to prevent the apostasy of the faithful, and to sanctify

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them by a true Catholic manner of life. Besides this however the members of the new order were to bind themselves by a fourth vow, to place themselves unequivocally at the disposal of the Pope - to go whither he wished to send them - to preach the gospel to the heathen - to go even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. The Order soon began to extend, and was propagated far and wide. Of course hell arose in all its diabolical might, and unceasingly strove to foil the efforts of the saint. The Church in the office for his feast declares thus - "It is scarcely conceivable how many reverses Ignatius accepted, and that with eagerness." Often was he mimured from the clear bright beams of day light in a dreary prison, and yet with joy he called aloud that not yet were forged the fetters which could prevent him, through love of God, from following Christ, the crucified. He walked indeed in those sacred foot prints, - and with most glorious results!

During the sixteen years

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of life which remained to Ignatius  
he beheld one hundred colleges in  
operation, whole tribes in Asia and  
Africa converted to the true faith by  
his spiritual children, nations brought  
to know the true God, and several  
of his sons in the Order glorified  
by the martyr's crown.

Marcellus II, the Roman pontiff un-  
hesitatingly declares that since the  
apostolic age, no hero in our  
holy Church ever lived to behold  
such wonderful results. Pope Greg-  
ory XV in the bull of canoniza-  
tion applied "following words of  
scripture to him - "He was great  
as his name expresses, the greatest  
of those who, chosen by the Lord  
God, battled against the enemy  
"Sons."

How vivid their must have been  
the solace which overwhelmed  
"heart of Ignatius, soldier of Christ"  
as he was, when on the last day  
of July 1554, one hour after the  
sun had begun to vivify the earth,  
with his eyes directed toward heaven,  
he received the papal benediction  
and triumphantly breathed forth  
his holy soul. O! what a reward.<sup>10</sup>

awarded him for his entire life had been dedicated to the service of God! What a fulfillment of the promise of the Lord - "I will glorify thee who have glorified me".

If it might be asked, what inspired Ignatius with courage and strength to perform such wonderful things for the honor of God and the welfare of the Church, as also for the sanctification and salvation of souls I say his name will afford a sufficient reply - He received in baptism the name John, after the holy Evangelist, the disciple whom Jesus loved - the disciple of love.

Later on he added to that appellation - "Ignatius" through devotion to that martyr whose heart was consumed with love for Jesus - upon whose lips trembled three times that holy name amid the angry roars of the furious lions as they buried their cruel teeth deep in his quivering flesh.

John the Evangelist - Ah this name was indeed significant for the saint because the spirit which animated the disciple of love was also his as a very great saint - Magdalen

de Parigi remarked - She beheld once in  
 a vision the two saints united in  
 heaven, and called aloud - "The spirit  
 of St. John the Evangelist and that of  
 St. Ignatius are the same on account  
 of their equally great love for Jesus".  
 In regard to the name Ignatius  
 literally translated it means the fiery.  
 The life of the martyr Ignatius,  
 his never ceasing struggles vividly  
 demonstrate his love for Jesus -  
 and so it is with Ignatius Loyola.  
 "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth  
 speaketh". Whenever Ignatius instruct-  
 ed the children, and elucidated the  
 truths of our holy faith at Rome,  
 to those of mature years he con-  
 cluded his discourse with the words.  
 "O! then let the love of God consume  
 your inmost heart, penetrate to  
 the deepest recesses of your under-  
 standing, and let all your  
 strength be spent in the effort  
 to love him more and more  
 dearly every day". This was ut-  
 tered with such enthusiasm that  
 each word pierced like a fiery  
 dart, the hearts of all who heard him  
 and enkindled there in the fire of  
 divine love.

He was also accustomed to send forth his spiritual children on their missions with these touching words:

"Go, far and enkindle the fire of divine love throughout the entire world." Truly Ignatius might apply to his own life work those words of our Lord. "I have come to enkindle a fire upon the earth, and what do I desire, but that it burn."

This was the fire which consumed his own ardent heart, and filled it with such an extraordinary desire to save souls. - The fire of love for Christ - for his Blessed Mother and for the souls ransomed by the precious blood of a God.

I say first, his love of God. The extent thereof is manifested especially by the wonderful light he received in regard to the divine essence, especially the mystery of the Blessed Trinity - upon which some fragments were even written by the saint. His intention of adding to these was subsequently abandoned through humility lest the world might know and extol the great favors bestowed upon him by the Lord. But it is the knowledge

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of the infinite perfections which he  
feels and above all enkindles the  
fire of love for God. And this fire  
of itself inflamed the heart of Ignatius  
with that overpowering desire to glo-  
rify him. Secondly what conde-  
red the saint - so active and zealous  
in seeking to save souls, so eager to  
sustain the Church, so solicitous  
to diffuse it, to defend it - was his  
love for Jesus. How mighty did  
this fire burn in that noble heart!  
We can form some extent of  
its ardor from an ecstasy into  
which he fell whilst at Manresa  
and which continued a week.  
The hours passed on; yet he took  
no note of time, neither eat-  
ing, nor drinking, nor giving  
any sign of life - except a very  
faint pulsation of the heart. When  
at last this sweet union of love  
with his Savior was dissolved he  
returned to life with the sweet-  
name of Jesus upon his lips,  
thus proving what had been the  
subject of his thoughts during  
eight days of that ecstatic ~~ecclasi-~~  
vision. Another proof of that great  
love was that he gave to his

order the name Society of Jesus.  
 Thirdly. It was the ardor of his love  
 for his dear Lady which inflamed  
 his heart and made of him a  
 beacon light in the Kingdom of God.  
 This is already shown in his Conver-  
 sion, in its very beginning - by his  
 pilgrimage to the celebrated Shrine  
 of Mary at Mont-Sainte-Croix - where he  
 held vigil before her altar, and  
 there hung up his sword in token  
 that henceforth he would spread and  
 propagate, with the sword of the  
 spirit, her veneration to the utmost  
 of his power. The feast of "Assump-  
tion was the day he chose for  
 The actual establishment of his or-  
 der - at Mont-Martin, Paris.

Fourthly. It was the fire of his  
 filial love for the Church itself -  
 He looked upon her amidst her  
 dangers as a militant Church  
 encompassed by all the tempests of  
 Protestantism - His idea in forming  
 his Society, literally, Company was  
 that these might ever be at com-  
 mand a regiment of brave  
 devoted souls always in the front-  
 ranks of the Church to take up  
 arms in her behalf.

This was, and is still, well known  
 to the enemies of the Church. "Alas-  
 and woe!" cried Melanchthon, Luther's  
 powerful accomplice: "The whole  
 world will be full of Jesuits, what-  
 then will become "the new gospel."  
 Several papers have declared that an-  
 frequently as some great trouble  
 arises in the Kingdom of God  
 upon earth, the Lord provides men  
 fitted to protect his fold. So did  
 he raise up Ignatius to form a  
 Society to meet the wants of the  
 Church threatened as she was by  
 the protestant reformation. The hopes  
 placed in that regard upon the  
 saint were so fully realized that  
 no one objected to the statue repre-  
 senting him at Prague, at Mol-  
 dan Bridge, erected to do him  
 perpetual honor. Underneath may  
 even be read the words. "Behold  
 him, through whose efforts faith  
 still is left in the world." And the lit-  
 urary of the church attests the same.  
 "O! God for the greater honor of thy  
 name thou hast, in St. Ignatius  
 given a new pillar to support thy  
church." I say, finally it was the  
great love her bore for souls which,

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impelled him to do his utmost to effect their salvation. These efforts were not merely confined to relatives acquaintances, countrymen - No! As Pope Gregory in the bull of canonization declared his zeal for souls extended to every clime. He gazed upon the chart upon which were marked the different countries of the world, and sighed in sore distress that he could not send his subjects to one and all to purchase souls for Christ.

John III, the reigning monarch of England petitioned him to send seven missionaries to " - "Alas said the saint: "When one King alone desires seven of my subjects, what will be left for the rest of the world." His solicitude extended not only to the conversion of the heretics in Germany, but to the heathens all over the world. He strove to effect the conversion of Mahomedans and Jews at Rome, mistreated refugees for fallen women, and havens " those enfeebled by age. He did all he could for the education of the clergy, and indeed looked upon all mankind as brothers in the Lord.

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Added to this he was wont to exert him-self with as much zeal and self-sacrifice to save one soul, as he would have done for millions of human beings.

While still in Paris he learned that a certain youth, when in pursuit of his sinful pleasures, would cross a bridge, and this ardent lover of souls, actually, although it was the depth of winter, plunged into " swift- and icy current", until the miserable creature came in sight. Then in shrilling accents he called to the misguided youth, about to claim his soul with mortal guilt, reminded him of death which was perhaps nearer than he dreamed, and of hell which was eagerly waiting for his soul.

A thorough conversion was the result of this heroic act, an act which affords an insight into the character and extent of the paternal charity which animated Ignatius Loyola. Very justly may we apply to him the words of the Lord regarding Isaac: "From my mother's womb has the Lord been mindful of my name, and said

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unto me. My servant art thou. In  
thee will I be glorified".  
We pray and implore thee O! glori-  
sant to intercede for us before the  
throne of God that we may be in-  
flamed with ardent-love for him,  
and merit too in his heavenly  
realm thy name Ignatius, no  
matter what may be our own  
baptismal name. But pray above  
all that we may be enlightened  
and strengthened that we, like thee,  
witness the prayer of the Church in  
thy honor, after having valiantly  
fought on the battle field of the  
militant Church, may receive the  
victor's crown in heaven.

Amen!

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