



CURIA GENERALIZIA DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GESÙ

Ignatian Year 2021-2022

2019/23

TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY

Dear Brothers,

In 1521, while Ignatius was convalescing at his family home in Loyola from the wound that damaged his leg at the battle of Pamplona, God brought about his conversion and put him on the road that led to Manresa. Together with our friends and the whole Church, the universal Society wants to remember that privileged moment when the Holy Spirit inspired Ignatius of Loyola in his decision to follow Christ, and to deepen our understanding of this pilgrim way in order to 'draw fruit' from it.

To this end, the Ignatian year will open on the 20th of May 2021 (anniversary of the injury at Pamplona). It will conclude on the 31st of July 2022. The 12th of March 2022 will be its centre, marking the IV centenary of the canonization of St Ignatius with St Francis Xavier, St Teresa of Jesus, St Isidore Labrador and St Philip Neri.

It is also my intention to convoke the 71st Congregation of Procurators in the normal way. This will take place in Loyola (Spain) between the 16th and the 22nd of May 2022. It will be preceded by eight days of the Spiritual Exercises for the members of the Congregation. I propose to officially convoke the 71st Congregation of Procurators on the 15th of January 2021 so that Provincial Congregations can be completed by the 15th of December 2021.

It is my desire that at the heart of this Ignatian year we would hear the Lord calling us, and we would allow him to work our conversion inspired by the personal experience of Ignatius. During his convalescence in Loyola (1521-1522) in the Autobiography Ignatius tells us that, *'thus his brother and all the others of the house knew from the change outwardly that there had been a change in his soul inwardly.'* (10) *'They suspected that he wanted to make a very great change.'* Already in Manresa Ignacio asks, *'what new life is this, that is now beginning?'* (21) Further on in the Autobiography Ignatius, recognising this, says that he had come to see *'everything in a new way.'* (30). The Universal Apostolic Preferences (2019-2029) have confirmed the call to our personal, community, and institutional conversion, which is necessary for our greater spiritual and apostolic freedom and adaptability. Let us take this opportunity to let God transform our life-mission, according to his will.

Just as he arrives at Manresa desiring to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Ignatius makes the spiritual journey of every convert, of everyone in search of God. This is also true for us today. Therefore, the motto of our celebration is, *'To see all things new in Christ.'* It highlights that this year is also an opportune time for us to 'be renewed' by the Lord himself. The *Spiritual Exercises* which the Pilgrim begins to compose would become one of the most important fruits of his continuing conversion, a legacy to all humanity, a privileged instrument



to show the way to God. As Pope Francis insisted when he confirmed the Universal Apostolic Preferences, ‘*they assume as fundamental condition the Jesuit’s relationship with the Lord, personal and community life of prayer and discernment.*’¹

The poverty which Ignacio will begin to practice, as well as his personal friendship with the poor and the help he offered them, is one the great signs of the change in his life. I am convinced that this is one of the most urgent calls to the Society of Jesus in our times; it is a clear invitation to us to come closer to the Lord’s own way of life. The Ignatian year 2021-2022, will therefore be for us a privileged occasion to hear the cry of the poor, the excluded, and those whose dignity has not been respected, in all the diverse social and cultural circumstances in which we live and work. It is a listening which moves our hearts and compels us to draw closer to the poor, to walk with them in seeking justice and reconciliation. A dimension of our conversion that the Spirit invites us to live this year, is to discern in common how we can deepen our vow of poverty. In this way we can come closer to the lifestyle which Ignatius and the first companions, in faithfulness to the charism they received, desired for our Society.

The Society of Jesus goes back in its origins to the Ignatian experiences, which we will call to mind in the Ignatian year (2021-2022). It gives us a good opportunity to make known our spiritual root, that spiritual source that feeds and nourishes us in so many different ways and places. Deepening and renewing our own interior freedom and energy for the *magis* opens us to new and enriching perspectives. These can come from accompanying young people, from the hope that drives us to participate in the collective effort that seeks to heal the wounds of nature and prepare a better world for future generations.

I encourage all the Conferences of Major Superiors, the Provinces and Regions, working as closely as possible with our companions in mission, to commemorate with enthusiasm the conversion of our Founder, “*Padre Maestro Ignacio*”. Again, benefiting from this event will provide all of us with an opportunity to know, to love and to follow the Lord of all things. From the General Curia we will support these efforts, especially through the commission I have established for this purpose.²

As for our Father Ignatius, so may our Lady of the Wayside be our guide on this road of conversion. May we be inspired to have the openness of heart that we need to receive the Holy Spirit who wants to gift us the audacity of the impossible.

Arturo Sosa, S.I.
Superior General

Rome, 27 September 2019

Anniversary of the Bulle *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae*

(Original: Spanish)

¹ Letter of the Holy Father Pope Francis, dated 6 February 2019.

² The Commission for the Ignatian Year 2021-2022 comprises Fathers Pascual Cebollada (coordinator), Pierre Bélanger, Cipriano Díaz Marcos, James Grummer and Sister Patricia Murray, IBVM.