



The ball and chains of the Inquisition

Returning in Barcelona in March 1524, Ignatius is teaching the rudiments of Latin to children. He's also giving the Spiritual Exercises to his companions. His **experience of discernment is sharpening**: eg, instead of studying and giving lessons, he is strongly tempted to pray more. Then he realized that this was not aligned with the service of God: he felt himself invited to clearly distinguish between studying time & praying time and not to mix both of them. At that moment, studying was the priority. Two years later, he is continuing his studies in philosophy in Alcalá. Ignatius was harassed by the Inquisition: teaching catechism, having spiritual conversations with people, offering retreats or preaching without a diploma or any authorization, and without belonging to a religious order, all that was wrong in their eyes... **Three lawsuits were filed in court against Ignatius who was imprisoned for several months, although he was allowed to receive visits.**



This was the third cannonball pulverizing his projects: even being released, but because he didn't study enough, he was forbidden to talk about the matters of the Faith, until he would have the time to learn more. Ignatius is not giving up. He has never been condemned, but continues his studies in July 1527 in Salamanca, a more open city. But, there again, he has been arrested, then acquitted and released with the obligation to study for a period of 4 years. Alone, he leaves to Paris in September 1527.

In Paris

Lacking the basics, Ignatius, who is 37 years old at this time, goes back to school with children. He's living on donations thanks to the influence of the network of he built in Spain. **He's giving the Spiritual Exercises to students, including those who are sharing his room, namely François-Xavier and Pierre Favre, which are 15 years younger.**

Ignatius finally receives his Bachelor of Arts degree in January 1532 and his Licentiate of Arts (letters and philosophy) on March 13, 1533. It took him more than 6 years to digest the burden of the inquisition! **On August 15th, 1534**, they were 7 (Ignatius of Loyola, François Xavier, Pierre Favre, Diego Laynez, Nicolas Bobadilla, Simon Rodriguez, Alphonse Salmeron) **to commit themselves to celibacy and poverty in Montmartre, on their way to the priesthood, wanting to help souls.**

Points of reflection...

- What does this story inspire me? Does it echo a situation I have experienced or witnessed?
- Ignatius experiences a subtle temptation: to pray rather than study. Have I come across such spiritual impulses which in the end have not borne fruit and even paradoxically have turned me away from God?
- Ignatius of Loyola made a second discovery: going through humility also gives fruit (in this case studying with children). Have I experienced this, either in my own home or in others?

I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

I prepare for this personal time of prayer:



- As I approach the place of prayer, I remember that I am going to spend a moment of intimacy with the Lord.
- I decide on a time for this prayer (15 minutes? 20 minutes?)
- I look for a space and a position that helps me to be present.
- I am silent, I turn off my mobile phone, I breathe slowly: my whole body calms down.
- I realise that I am entering the presence of the Lord. I look at him as he looks at me.
- After a sign of the cross, I ask the Holy Spirit to support me in listening to the Lord during the time of prayer. May everything that happens help me to find Jesus Christ, to know him better, to love him more and to follow him more closely.



BIBLICAL TEXT: GOSPEL - LUKE 1, 57-66

Introduction

Saint John the Baptist was a forerunner. He did prepare men's hearts for the coming of the Messiah. His first name is an upheaval that announces an even greater one. As I enter this prayer time, I entrust myself to his intercession.

May he help me to prepare my heart today to better receive the Word of the Lord.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Reference of the biblical passage

Today's reading is taken from the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Point 1

I contemplate the scene with Elizabeth. She's pregnant and radiant. Zechariah remains silent. He is probably also radiant. Both are very old. I am overwhelmed by their joy of welcoming a child in their old age. Yes, with this newborn life, the Lord shows them His greatness and His mercy. With the neighbors and the family, I rejoice in all this.

Point 2

"They wanted to call him Zechariah after his father". The child's name seems already to be decided when Elizabeth is opposing traditions for something bigger. She dares to break the others expectations, letting God's voice speak louder, remaining faithful to God's request.

I contemplate this.

Point 3

With all these events, everybody's wondering: "what will this child be?" Everyone has God's promise inside himself. John the Baptist will open the way for the Messiah. It is a beautiful and a great responsibility.

What about me? What am I invited to do? What will this child mean for me?

Introduction to the second listening

I listen again to this passage, I pay attention to how John's life begins, full of contradictions.

Invitation to personal prayer

To conclude, I entrust to the Lord what has particularly touched my heart during this prayer. Just like with a close friend, I share with Him the invitation I may have received to change my vision. I can also ask for His help in broadening my perspective.

Final Prayer

Our Father...

At the end of the prayer

- I take a moment to look at the way it happened, to see if the setting was appropriate (place, time, duration etc.)
- I write down a fruit of the prayer in my notebook
- I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

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