



Spiritual Topo #4 related to the impossibility of the first companions to go to Jerusalem: Serving Christ together in a fragile Church

→ [Link to the video of the topo \(with subtitles\)](#)

Episode summary

After his setbacks with the Spanish Inquisition, Ignatius is leaving for Paris where he is studying in order to obtain some solid diplomas. He is also making precious contacts: François-Xavier, Pierre Favre and also some others. On August 15, 1534, walking the path to priesthood, seven of them committed themselves to celibacy and poverty in Montmartre. They decide to reach Jerusalem via Venice, going to the peripheries and risking to suffer martyrdom. If, after a year, they could not reach Jerusalem (the Turks are blocking the Mediterranean Sea), they'll go to Rome, putting themselves at the disposal of the Pope, who has the most universal vision of the Church needs and knows better where they could be the most useful. The "Society of Jesus" was born from there.

What is this exactly all about?

Their desire is truly generous but events are leading them to leave behind their own will which is, in this episode, the fruit of a collective imagination! For them, as for us today, the most important thing is to remain available to God and to serve Him. Not the way we have dreamed about it but by listening to the unexpected needs of the field. One more thing related to the cannonball # 2: the mediation of the Church! In their time as today, it is a true leap of faith to see in a sometimes disappointing Church the privileged way chosen by Christ to associate us to his Salvation work.

What does the Gospel say about it?

Jesus has an amazing reflex: he's choosing to need others to accomplish his mission. From the beginning, he calls disciples (Mt 4:18-22) and entrusts them with his own powers (Mt 10:1-20). And from this group with strong personalities and many fragilities (Peter who denied, Judas who betrayed and Paul the persecutor...) the Church is born: a community of believers which would learn to live by the Holy Spirit. The Community dimension of the Faith is not optional. On one hand, the very presence of Christ is springing from the relation between us ("*When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.*") On the other hand, the mission is always carried out by two people at the same time, just as if to remind us of the danger of becoming the sole owner of Christ's message if we are alone, and of being disconnected from reality.

What's in it for us today?

Multiple questions arise: in the end, what is the purpose of the Church? What does it really convey about Christ? Its fecundity (look to the multiple saints) and its fidelity (via the sacraments) are undoubtedly reinforcing our faith. But its turbulent history (the inquisition, the sexual abuses...) and its cumbersome nature (sexual morality, male government...) are also raising doubts and embarrassment.

Let's get back to Ignatius.

The Society of Jesus was born out of a common founding frustration: they would never go to Jerusalem! Consenting to abandon their beautiful project and deferring to someone else's judgment (although the papacy was anything but virtuous at that time), they would ultimately be sent to all the continents and to all the human peripheries to which they were longing for: education, sciences, arts... With a solid formation, they were able to serve the Church, which was undergoing major upheavals. Without their "non-departure" for Jerusalem, François-Xavier and others would not have been evangelizing at the end of the world, and Pierre Favre and some others would not have worked towards the Reformation of the Church and the reconciliation between peoples.

Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace to trust his Church, in spite of its contradictions and limitations, and the grace to always think of the most "universal" before thinking of my own interests.

Points of reflection...

- What does this story inspire me? Does it echo a situation I have experienced or witnessed?
- What is my image of the Church? For me, how does the Church have the capacity for a broader vision than my own?
- Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace to love his Church, despite its contradictions and limitations, and the grace to always think of the most "universal" before thinking of my own interests.

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.



Giuri Lohmuller

BIBLICAL TEXT: ACTS 11, 1-18

Hook

Today is Friday, May 21

Introduction

Today, we are attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit within the young Church. At the risk of turning our life upside down, nothing and no one can certainly prevent the Holy Spirit from going wherever He wants to go.

I'm opening my heart to His Presence and His Action in me and around me.

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

Reference of the biblical passage

Today's reading is taken from chapter 11 of the Acts of the Apostles.

Point 1

Peter finds himself in front the Church of Jerusalem to testify that the Word of God is accepted by the Gentiles and to justify his behaviour. *"Why do you eat with the Gentiles?"* He is simply telling what happened and how he recognized the Spirit at work when he met with Cornelius. I listen to Peter's joy as he tells that long story again...

Will I too have to tell the story of a such meeting that deeply transformes me?

Point 2

Who am I to obstruct God?

The confession of Peter is the fruit of the Holy Spirit freedom inside him. He allows himself to be led by the Spirit and he becomes aware that his mission, and that of the whole Church, is to remove the obstacles to the work of the Holy Spirit.

What does this inspire me about my mission in the Church today?

Introduction to the second listening session

I listen again to Peter's testimony of this encounter that has transformed his way of witnessing the Holy Spirit's work.

Invitation to personal prayer

At the end of this prayer time, I address the Holy Spirit.

His way of doing things surprised Peter and he let himself be surprised.

And what about me?

Am I able of let myself be surprised by the paths of the Word of God?

I ask the Holy Spirit to help me recognize his action in me and around me.

Final prayer

Glory to the 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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Testimony #8 : Mr Guillaume Sauvage - "From disease to transatlantic. "

→ [Link to the video of the testimony \(with subtitles\)](#)



At the end of the listening session

- What does this testimony evoke in me?
- Does it echo a personal experience or that of someone I know?
- Do I, like William, have a biblical passage that has taken on a particular meaning at some point in my life? I can remember it and meditate on it.
- I can write a reflection in my notebook or leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

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