

1. LOYOLA HISTORY

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Ignatius was born in 1491 in the ancestral castle at Loyola to a noble family, which was loyal to the Spanish crown. He was raised to be a courtier. In 1521 when Ignatius was trying to defend the fortress town of Pamplona, he was very badly wounded in his leg. While he recuperated, he read the books on the Life of Christ and the Lives of the Saints. So much he was impacted that he laid aside the “sword of war” and took up the “sword of Christ.”

In 1537, he was ordained in Venice. He founded the Society of Jesus in 1540 with a circle of friends with whom he dedicated himself to the greater glory of God and the good of humanity. Together, they placed themselves at the service of the Pope, who could send them wherever there was a need.

He contributed greatly to the Catholic revival of the sixteenth century and to the renewal of the Church's missionary activity. He died in Rome in 1556, and was canonized by Gregory XV in 1622.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

Ignatian spirituality is a tool that guides us to realize a meaningful journey of life. It is a set of values, attitudes and insights and not hard and fast rules on how to pray. The central theme is that God is present everywhere - in all moments of life, fields of work, in delight, in grief, relationships, culture, intellect and beautiful creation. What is more important is discerning His presence in the routine of ordinary life and adding deeper value to our experiences. And the value addition is gained when we become “men and women for others.”

SOCIETY OF JESUS

The Society of Jesus (in Latin: *Societas Iesu*) is a Christian male religious congregation of the Catholic Church. The members are called Jesuits. It is an Anglicized version of the Latin *Jesuista* which is the combination of the two Latin words *Jesu* and *Ita* that means “Yes, Jesus.” Their names end with a title: SJ, which abbreviates ‘Society of Jesus’.

The Portuguese, who had political control over certain regions in the Indian sub-continent from 16th Century, supported the Catholic Church and the Jesuit Mission in many respects. Due to Political and ideological conflicts in Europe, on 21st July 1773, the Society of Jesus was suppressed by Pope Clement XVI. But after 41 years, Pope Pius VII restored the Society of Jesus in 1814 and the Jesuit order was re-established throughout the world.

Today, there are more than 16,000 Jesuits in 111 countries in 6 continents of whom around 500 are working at schools and colleges of Madurai Province. The Jesuits are well-known for their involvement in theology, education, missionary work and publishing with fervent focus on social justice and human rights.

MISSION

“One mission, many ministries”, is the popular maxim about the Jesuits’ mission throughout the world.

In the beginning they started as missionaries to the Asian, African and American continents. Today, the Jesuits are best known for their colleges, universities, and high schools. With the spirit of a fierce Spanish soldier, Ignatius instructed the early Jesuits to go out and “find God in all things.” Nothing binds their endeavor and passion. They are propelled to commit themselves

in anything “For the Greater Glory of God” (*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*).

Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes this commitment in his message to the 35th General Congregation of Jesuits: “The Church needs you, counts on you, and continues to turn to you with confidence, particularly to reach the geographical and spiritual places where others do not reach or find it difficult to reach.”

STRUCTURE

The Society of Jesus is spread all over the world. The headquarter lies in Rome, known as, *Curia*, which is headed by Superior general. There are ten ‘assistancies’ which are known as regions that might include a continent or a part of a continent. Each assistancy is made up of territories called ‘provinces’. There are 83 Jesuit provinces around the world. Each province is headed by ‘the Provincial,’ who reports directly to the Curia.

MADURAI PROVINCE

With effect from 15th August, 1952, an independent Jesuit Madurai Province came into existence. It was the first independent province of the new society in Asia.

Jesuit presence in this land of Tamils began since the times of St Francis Xavier on his arrival in Goa on 6th May, 1542.

OLD MADURA MISSION

When Robert de Nobili, a saintly scholar, visited the southern city of Madurai in 1606, he founded a mission, which he called it the ‘Madura Mission’. After Nobili, the Jesuits worked in the Madurai Mission till 1759. When Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus on 21st July, 1773, the Jesuits ceased to exist openly and officially anywhere.

NEW MADURAI MISSION

The Society of Jesus was re-established on 7th Aug, 1814 by Pope Pius VII. Fr. J. Roothann, General of the Society of Jesus, entrusted the Madura Mission – the new Madurai Mission - to the Provincial of France, Fr. Francis Renault.

Therefore the two Madura Missions - the ‘Old Madura Mission’ (1606–1759–1773) run by the Portuguese Jesuits (before the suppression) and the “New Madura Mission’ (1937 – 1952) by the French Jesuits of the Society (after its revival) – became eventually the Madurai Province.

The northern region of the Jesuit Madurai Province in Tamilnadu State was officially created as the Jesuit Chennai Mission in June 2007 in order to strengthen and enhance the mission, launched in 1990s, of empowering the marginalized, especially the rural poor and the Dalits who are considered and treated as untouchable in the society. The goal is meaningful liberation with human dignity and economic stability and paving the way for social equality so that the oppressed could become the decision making leaders of the society they live in.

LOYOLA COLLEGE

FOUNDATION

Loyola College, Chennai, is a Jesuit institution. Rev. Fr. Francis Bertram and a band of dedicated Jesuits, who came over to Chennai at the invitation of the Most Rev. Dr. J. Aelen, Archbishop of Chennai to open a Catholic College for young men in the State Capital, founded it. The foundation stone was laid on 10th March 1924 and the college started functioning in July of the following year (1925) with 75 students on the rolls in the undergraduate courses of Mathematics, History and Economics. It is owned by

the Loyola College Society, is registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 No. S.228/1973 and has its office in Chennai.

THE NAME, 'LOYOLA'

The name 'Loyola' comes from the ancestral castle that was the family home in Spain where Saint Ignatius was born in 1491.

AUTONOMY

Loyola College became autonomous in 1978. It continues to be an affiliated college of the University of Madras and is autonomous in the sense that it is free to frame its own courses of studies and to adopt innovative methods of teaching and evaluation. The university confers the degrees to the students after passing the examinations held by the college and the name of the college is indicated in the degrees by the University of Madras.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of Loyola College is to provide university education in a Christian atmosphere to deserving students, especially those belonging to the Catholic Christian Community. Although this college is meant primarily for Catholics, it does admit students of other creeds. The college aims at training young men and women of quality to be leaders in all walks of life and to serve their fellowmen in justice, truth and love. It is expected that this training would play a vital role in bringing about the desired change for the betterment of the people of our country, more particularly the poorer and the marginalized sections of society and especially dalits. Further it fosters an atmosphere of intellectual vigour and moral rectitude in which the young men and women of our country may find their fulfilment and achieve greatness as eminent men and women for and with others.

THE COAT OF ARMS

The coat of arms of the college consists of a shield divided into four quarters with a torch and an open book motif. The crest is the monogram and seal of the Society of Jesus: IHS (*iota-eta-sigma*), being the first three letters in Greek of the name, JESUS. The crest is in yellow, a colour that represents sunshine, joy and happiness. The laurel leaves above the crest do stand for victory and prosperity. The open book representing obtaining wisdom and other forms of intellectual information and the burning torch symbolising knowledge and searching for enlightenment are the fundamental tenets of the education imparted in this college, which challenges the students to live up to the college motto: LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE (Matthew: 5.16) by their learning and good example so that they may become beacon-lights of hope and liberation to others.

JESUIT EDUCATION

Jesuit Education in the Madurai Province today draws its inspiration from the two epoch making statements: Vision Statement and Preamble to Jesuit Higher Education that originated in the Madurai Province Meet of 1985.

EXCERPTS FROM THE VISION STATEMENT

The political freedom of our country achieved in 1947 has failed to break the bondage of our people over the years. Today about 60% of our people have been made poor and kept illiterate. They are deprived of the basic necessities of life and education, of human dignity and the power to decide their own future. There is a degrading inequality caused primarily by caste discrimination... We understand that the contemporary equivalent of the mission of salvation is the integral liberation of man...which

is crystallised for us today in an ardent desire to work TOWARDS LIBERATION - TOGETHER WITH THE POOR.

The preferential option for the poor means, that we cast our lot with them through concerted social action. Our love is, indeed for all human beings, but assumes different forms. We love the oppressed by espousing their cause and we love the oppressor by emancipating him from his greed and domination which dehumanize him.

EXCERPTS FROM THE PREAMBLE TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Our educational institutions will shape our students into agents of social change, preparing them for concerted social action and thus paving the way to mass movements, which will bring about the desired liberation. They will, in their admission policies actualize our preferential option for the poor, by “giving a privileged place to the weak” who are poor, economically and academically and form them “as men for others, stamped with the Ignatian hallmark of excellence and relevance”; they will challenge the existing educational system into reorienting itself in order to respond to the crying needs of today’s society. They will also promote research in those branches of arts, sciences and relevant pedagogy which would help build a just social order. Aware as we are of the great structural constraints we work under, we have real apprehensions as to how effective our educational institutions could be in bringing about the desired social change through social action. Yet, responding to the greater call to be pioneers and prophets, we engage ourselves in the momentous task of liberation with a readiness to pay the price the kingdom demands.