

IGNATIAN YEAR – A YEAR OF RENEWAL



“PUTTING CHRIST IN THE CENTRE” Jesuits Launch a Special Year of Renewal

On 20 May, the Ignatian Year of the Society of Jesus begins. This year the Jesuits celebrate a very strange event: the wounding of their founder Ignatius of Loyola at a battle in Pamplona in 1521. That event changed the course of his life; it led to the foundation of the Society of Jesus which in turn provoked dramatic changes in the Church and in the history of Catholicism. Read on!

What is celebrated?

The Jesuits are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. It was a different kind of conversion. He went from being a vain nobleman focused on worldly success and fame to being the founder of the largest Catholic religious order. God gave the world and the Church a precious gift through Ignatius: a spirituality that helps to follow the Spirit in all circumstances of life.



Why this celebration?

Celebrating 500 years of the conversion of St. Ignatius is not primarily about the past. It is about the present and the future. It is an opportunity for renewal and rediscovery of the Ignatian roots. It is an opportunity to stop, take stock and put Christ in the centre again. It is about continual and daily conversion.

Fr. General Arturo Sosa says:

It is good to remind ourselves that the wound Ignatius suffered in Pamplona was not so much a happy ending, but rather a happy beginning. Conversion consists sometimes of great moments of change, but it is also a never-ending process. We need to put Christ in the centre every time, again and again. This process is a pilgrimage along winding roads, up and down, sometimes having to retrace our steps, sometimes feeling lost. But meeting people along the road who indicate the way and reach out their hands to us.

Fr. General Arturo Sosa

This Ignatian Year is a pilgrimage of conversion. **Pope Francis**, in his recent book *Let Us Dream*, says a pilgrim is someone “who decentres and so can transcend. She goes out from herself, opens herself to a new horizon, and when she comes home she is no longer the same, and so her home won't be the same. This is a time for pilgrimages.”

We want to set out on the road, letting ourselves be guided gently by the Holy Spirit, centring our lives ever more on Christ and allowing ourselves *to see all things new in Christ*.

About Ignatius, **Pope Francis** said to the Society of Jesus:

All through his life he converted, [...] he put Christ in the centre. And he did so through discernment. Discernment is not about always getting it right from the start, but it's rather about navigating, about having a compass to be able to set out on the road which has many twists and turns, but always letting oneself be guided by the Holy Spirit who leads us to an encounter with the Lord.

Pope Francis



Who is celebrating?

The initiative of this Ignatian Year comes from Fr. General Arturo Sosa of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). But he extends the invitation to everyone, and in particular to all those inspired by the Ignatian spirituality - the larger Ignatian family.

“There is a lot of collaboration with female Ignatian congregations and lay Ignatian organisations such as Christian Life Community (CLC)” says Fr Sosa. “In fact most of the initiatives and events take place on a local level, all around the globe, and are a collaboration between Jesuits and others. That is something we value tremendously.”