

# Called after Jesus

The Society of Jesus is not called after its founder (as with the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc.) but after Jesus. Also, it is not called the Society of Christ but the Society of the historical Jesus. How was this decision made at the time and why? What is the spirit behind this? And how is it connected to the *Spiritual Exercises*?

## 1 The Call of the King

I will place before my mind a human king, chosen by God our Lord himself, whom all Christian princes and all Christian persons reverence and obey. I will observe how this king speaks to all his people: "Whoever wishes to come with me has to be content with the same food I eat, and the drink, and the clothing, and so forth. So too, each one must labour with me during the day, and keep watch in the night, and so on, so that later each may have a part with me in the victory, just as each has shared in the toil."

*Spiritual Exercises* n.92-93

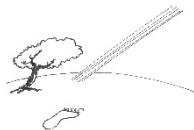
If we give consideration to such a call from the temporal king . . . how much more worthy of our consideration it is to gaze upon Christ our Lord, the eternal king.

*Spiritual Exercises* n.95

## 2 Jerusalem and the Holy Places

When he was thinking of those things of the world, he took much delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found himself dry and dissatisfied (hallábase seco y descontento). But when he thought of going to Jerusalem barefoot, and of eating nothing but plain vegetables and of practising all the other rigors that he saw in the saints, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts but even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful (quedeba contento y alegre).

*Autobiography* n.8



So without saying anything or taking a guide, he slipped away from the others and went to Mount Olivet. . . . and after praying with great consolation, he felt the desire to go to Bethphage. While there, he remembered that he had not noted on Mount Olivet on what side the right foot was, or on what side the left. Returning there . . .

*Autobiography* n.47

### 3 Encounter with Jesus

The first point is to see the persons, that is, to see Our Lady, Joseph, and the maidservant, and the infant Jesus after his birth. I will make myself a **poor, little and unworthy slave, gazing** at them, **contemplating** them, and **serving** them in their needs, just as if I were there, with all possible respect and reverence. Then I will reflect upon myself and draw some profit.

El primer punto es ver las personas, es a saber, ver a Nuestra Señora y a Joseph y a la ancila y al niño Jesús, después de ser nascido, haciéndome yo **un pobrecito y esclavito indigno, mirándolos, contemplándolos y serviéndolos** en sus necesidades, come si presente me hallase, con todo acatamiento y reverencia possible; y después reflectir en mí mismo para sacar algún provecho.

*Spiritual Exercises* n.114

Ignatius uses **imaginative prayer** (the application of the senses) to create an encounter with the historical Jesus:

It is profitable to use (aprovecha el pasar) the imagination and to apply the five senses . . .  
 . . . by the sight of my imagination, I will **see** the persons by meditating and contemplating in detail all the circumstances around them  
 . . . by my hearing, I will **listen** to what they are saying  
 . . . I will **smell** the fragrance and **taste** the sweetness of the Divinity and everything there  
 . . . using the sense of touch I will **embrace** and kiss (abrazar y besar) the places where the persons walk or sit  
 . . . then I will reflect upon myself and draw some profit from this.

*Spiritual Exercises* n.122-125

### 4 La Storta

Then, the year being over and no passage [to Jerusalem] available, they decided to go to Rome, even the Pilgrim . . . they went to Rome divided in to three or four groups, the Pilgrim with Favre and Laínez. On this journey he was visited very especially by God. One day, a few miles before reaching Rome, he was at prayer in a church and experienced such a change in his soul and saw so clearly that God the Father placed him with Christ his Son so that he would not dare to doubt it – that God the Father had placed him with his Son.

*Autobiography* n.96



The Blessed Father took his way towards Rome, on foot, with Father Faber, and Father Laínez in his company . . . one day drawing nigh to the city of Rome, leaving the two Fathers in the field, he went into a deserted and solitary church some mile from the city to pray. There amidst the greatest fervour of his prayers, he felt his heart changed, and God the Father appeared to him, together with his most blessed Son, who carried the Cross upon his shoulders and with the eyes of his soul, illustrated with that resplendent light, he saw that the eternal Father, turning to his only begotten Son, commended Ignatius, and those in his company unto him, with

exceeding great love, putting them into his hands. And our most benign Jesus having received them under his patronage and protection, as he stood in that manner, with his cross, turned to Ignatius and with a loving and mild countenance said unto him: 'Ego vobis Romae propitious ero' ('I will be favourable to you at Rome'). With this divine revelation, our Father remained very much comforted, and strengthened, and he related it afterwards to those in his company, to animate them the more, and to prepare them for the troubles which they were to endure. And, with this vision, together with many other excellent illustrations which he had, the most sacred name of Jesus, was so imprinted in his soul, with an earnest desire to take our Saviour for his Captain, carrying his cross after him, that was the cause, that at his, and the other first fathers humble request, the Apostolic See, at the confirmation of our religion, called it and named it the Society of Jesus.

Pedro Ribadeneira SJ (1527-1611), *Vita Ignatii Loyola* (1616), MHSI 93

Peter Canisius SJ (1521-97) notes that the phrase should be 'Io sarò con voi' ('I will be with you').

## 5 The Company of Jesus



They had all determined what they would do – go to Venice and to Jerusalem, and spend their lives for the good of souls. And if they were not given permission to remain in Jerusalem, then return to Rome and present themselves to the Vicar of Christ so that he could make use of them wherever he thought it would be more for the glory of God and the good of souls.

*Autobiography* n.85

When asked what their group was called, Ignatius and the companions determined that they should say that, "since they had no head except Jesus Christ, whom alone they desired to serve" they were of "the company of Jesus."

*MHSI Fontes Narrativi* I.204

Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our society, which we desire to be designated by the name Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the church, his spouse, under the Roman pontiff, the vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind. He is a member of a society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine . . .

*Formula of the Institute* (1539) n.1

## There is no God without Christ

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power . . . He is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation; . . . For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:11, 15-20 NRSV

**There is no God without Christ.** A God without Christ, 'disincarnate,' is a god that is not real. The reality of God is God made Christ, for us. To save us. And when we distance ourselves from this, from this reality, and we distance ourselves from the cross of Christ, from the truth of the wounds of the Lord, we distance ourselves also from love, from the love of God, from salvation.

Pope Francis, Homily at Mass at Casa Santa Marta, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given us, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us.

Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we **know you** more clearly, **love you** more dearly, and **follow you** more nearly, day by day. Amen.

St Richard of Chichester (1197-1253)