Prayer
Matt. 27:46; John 19:30; Luke 23:46
Hymn: 563 "O Sacred Head"
A Prayer from Ignatius of Loyola

In studying the Counter-Reformation we seek to understand how
the Catholic Church survived the storm of the Protestant Reformation.
There were times when the Catholic Church seemed to be tottering;
Protestants seemed to be gaining country after country. In the end
the spread of Protestantism was stayed. The Catholic Church re-
gained much of the lost territory. What it lost in Europe was more
than offset by gains in the New World. At the end of the Reformation
Period Catholics could boast that the Church was stronger and in
much better condition than when the period began. Roman revival that
produced Roman Reformation and then Counter-Reformation had limited
the Protestant Reformation and had restored the vitality of the
Roman Church. For this victory the Roman Church probably owed more
to Ignatius of Loyola than to any other person. He and his Jesuits
became the leaders in Roman Revival and then became the right arm
of Counter-Reformation.

EARLY YEARS, 1491-1521:
Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491, the youngest son of the noble
of the castle of Loyola in Azpeitia, in the Basque province of
Guipuzcoa in Spain. He became a page in the court of Ferdinand of
Aragon. Then he became an officer of the Spanish army. He was the
commander of the garrison of the fortress of Pampeluna when it was
attacked by strong French forces. The city fathers wanted to
surrender. The young commander would not surrender without a fight.
For six days he held out though greatly out-numbered. On May 19,
1521, a cannon ball ricocheted off a wall and struck his legs, gashing
the left one and badly breaking the right leg. The shattered leg
was badly set and the wounds were very slow to heal. His heart was
so set on a military career that he had the leg broken and reset.
It was still so disfigured that he had it broken again and reset with
boards and weights to stretch the shortened leg. It was all in vain.
At twenty-eight his career as a soldier was over.
During his long recovery Ignatius turned to serious reading.
Up to that point in life his reading had consisted mostly of the
romances of chivalry. He found in his father's library such works
as The Flower of the Saints, a Spanish adaptation of Jacobus de
Foragine's Golden Legend, and Ludolph the Carthusian's Life of Christ.
He read histories of St. Dominic and St. Francis. At first he had
been deeply depressed over the end of his dreams. Then the idea
came to him that God had had other plans for him. God was calling
him to what the great saints had done. He spent long hours looking
down from the summit of the castle at the dark shadows of earth and
up at the beautiful stars. He came to believe that his wound was
God's was of beginning a battle to overcome the evil in his soul.
He could become a knight for the Virgin Mary. He lovingly copied
long passages from the spiritual treatises he was reading, copying the words of the Virgin Mary in blue and those of Christ in red. He spent more and more time in prayer. One night in a vision he saw Mary and the child Jesus. He was filled with great disgust for his past life. He felt his whole life directed to a new goal. Like the great saints he would use all his powers as Christ's knight in a spiritual war against sin and heresy, battling for the glory of the Virgin, her Son, and for the glory of God.

PREPARATION FOR HIS NEW KNIGHTHOOD, 1522-34:

Early in 1522 two servants hoisted him on to a donkey, one foot in a boot, the other in a large soft shoe with leg still bandaged. He was dressed in his officer's uniform. He made his way to the Church of Our Lady of Aranzazu where he spent the whole night in prayer. The next morning he set out for the famous Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat in Catalunya. On the road he met a Moslem gentleman who called in question the virginity of Mary. Ignatius thought of challenging him to a duel. Then the thought came to him that this would not be a Christlike action. Was it cowardly not to defend Mary? He decided to let God speak to him through his donkey. At the next crossroads he did not guide his donkey. He let the donkey choose the way. The donkey did not take the road that the Moor took. He felt God had guided him in the way of the meekness and charity of Christ.

When he arrived at Montserrat he spent a night in vigil in the Church of Our Lady of Montserrat. The next morning he hung his armor on the altar of the Virgin, gave his courtly clothing to a beggar and put on the sack-cloth tunic of a pilgrim. He spent another night in vigil, presented a carefully written confession to one of the monks and received communion—it was the Feast of the Annunciation, 1522. The monk, a Frenchman named Jean Chanones, gave him a copy of Garcia de Cisneros's Exercises of the Spiritual Life, telling him it would lead him faithfully on the road he wished to follow. The young noble changed his name from Inigo, the name given him at his birth, to the name he would wear the rest of his life, Ignatius, the name of the great martyr of Antioch.

Ignatius made his way to Manresa, a large market-town of Catalunya. The Dominicans offered him hospitality but he found a cave near the River Cardoner, where for almost a year he devoted himself to extreme asceticism. He prayed seven times a day—sometimes he prayed for hours at a time. He scourged himself three times a day. He regularly visited the hospital where he devoted himself to the care of the worst cases. He did not comb his hair or cut his nails. He ate little. He was in great anguish of soul and great fear of hell. Frequent confessions brought no relief. He began writing out his confessions to make sure they were complete and so that he could see his sins on the written page. He contemplated suicide. He prayed to God, "Show me, O Lord, where I can find Thee; I will follow like a dog, if I can only learn the way of salvation." He read of a saint who had vowed not to eat until God gave a vision. He resolved to throw himself on the mercy of God. On his way to pray in a church about a mile from Manresa, he sat down by the river. As he gazed at the flowing river the eyes of his conscience began to open. He began to understand many things. God was not calling him to be a hermit. He had other work
for him that he would reveal to him in His own good time. Ignatius was a new man. He began to eat and to comb his hair.

Ignatius later wrote that God dealt with him as a teacher with a scholar. He believed that God had always been with him. With great introspection he studied and analyzed his own soul--his sins, his battles of conscience, the agony of his soul, his moods. He made a careful record of his meditations. His visions were no more of the devil and his terrors. He believed God gave him revelations that made clear to him great mysteries. The Trinity, Transubstantiation, the battle between Christ and the Devil, heaven and hell, Justification. He wrote down from his meditations all that seemed helpful in the battle against evil. He put together a brief manual of warfare for the soldier of Christ. It was the first draft of his Spiritual Exercises. It was about one fourth as large as the first edition of Calvin's Institutes. It was written in the uncouth and rugged Castilian of the Bazques. It was about one hundred pages--one third the length of The Imitation of Christ. The goal of the combat for which the manual was to prepare the Christian soldier was the glory of God.

With his little manual Ignatius left Manresa in February, 1523, to go to the Holy Land to do battle with the infidel. He was ready, he believed, to undergo whatever poverty, hardships, and suffering his Lord might have in store for him. Ignatius renounced all property, left all his money on a bench, and set out pledged to absolute poverty. He supported himself by begging. He walked to Barcelona, limping as he would the rest of his life. He made his way by land to Rome, where on Palm Sunday, March 29, Pope Adrian VI gave him the papal blessing. He reached Venice on July 14. After landing at Jaffa he arrived in Jerusalem in September. He spent a night in prayer at the Holy Sepulchre. He visited Bethany, Bethlehem, and went to the Jordan. When he told the Franciscans he had come to convert the infidel Moslems, the Franciscans, fearing such a fanatical pilgrim would cause trouble with the Moslems, shipped him back to Venice.

The experience made a deep impression on Ignatius. It made him keenly aware of his ignorance and lack of education. He set himself to remedy this. He returned to Barcelona in 1524 to begin a course of study that would last eleven years. At thirty-three, this noble in the garb of a poor man, took a place in the classroom with mere boys, to learn Latin. The boys made fun of him but he was determined to get the preparation necessary to study theology. During his two years studying in Barcelona he looked for opportunities to try to win others for his Lord. He met some lax nuns that he tried to win to better ways. The nuns' lovers gave him a good beating. In Barcelona he did make his first converts, ladies who were willing to undergo the discipline of his Exercises. One of them, Isabella Roser, wife of a noble, Juan Roser, heard him deliver a sermon and persuaded her husband to invite Ignatius to stay in their house. She paid all his expenses while he went to school and then while he attended college in Spain. Later when he went to Paris she and other noble ladies sent him large sums of money to finance his study and to enable him to carry out his plans.

In 1526 he was able to matriculate at the University of Alcala. With great zeal and joy he devoured philosophy, literature, science, and theology. He visited hospitals and religious houses, ardently talking to fellow students of life in God. Four of the students became close companions. They went about preaching in their poor
clothes. Rumors began to circulate that Ignatius and his friends were "Illuminati"—the name for heretical mystics that were causing much commotion in Spain. The ecclesiastical authorities put the Inquisition on their trail and Ignatius was arrested and imprisoned for two months. After a thorough examination of his doctrine the authorities decided there was nothing forbidden in his teachings. They released him, forbidding him to dress like a religious or to give public instruction.

Ignatius transferred to Salamanca (1527), the intellectual center of Spain. There the Dominicans were in control. Twelve days after his arrival, the Dominicans, alarmed at his preaching, had him arrested and brought before the Inquisition. Some distinguished ladies who had been attracted by his preaching interceded for him. The Dominicans and Inquisition suspected that he was a secret "alambrado" who claimed divine revelations, or a Lutheran or an Erasmian. For three weeks the Inquisition questioned him and carefully scrutinized his Exercises. Failing to discover any error the judges released him, giving him permission to preach within narrow limits—he must make no distinction between mortal and venial sins until he had studied theology for four years. Ignatius felt he must obey but he also felt that this made his work impossible. He made up his mind to go to Paris to study theology. Friends tried to dissuade him—he would be a foreigner and did not know the language and France and Spain were at war. He might escape the Inquisition but he would be in greater danger.

Ignatius arrived in Paris in 1528, driving a donkey loaded with his books and clothes. He enrolled in the College Montaigu, which, under its Principal, Noel Beda, was the most orthodox in Paris. John Calvin had left the college that same year. A little later he took residence at the College Sainte-Barbe, reputed to have a more thorough course in philosophy. George Buchanan was the Regent. Sainte-Barbe had the reputation of being one of the most liberal in Paris. Ignatius also attended Dominican Lectures at Saint-Jacques and those at the new College of the Lecteurs Royaux. For seven years he worked at laying a good educational foundation for his work. He took his licentiate in theology in 1534 and his M.A. in 1535. Ill health kept him from going on to the doctorate in theology.

Ignatius's experiences had taught him to be cautious. He worked very hard. He spent his days listening to lectures and his nights until very late reading and writing. He always had time to help a neighbor. In theological discussions he did more listening than talking. His Latin was clumsy. He spoke very slowly but rapidly gained respect. He did better in small groups. He gained great insights in the science of education and the care of souls. Out of a careful habit of daily introspection and of carefully writing down the good and bad that passed through his own soul and out of his careful listening to others and watching them, he developed a marvelous capacity to penetrate the souls of others. During vacations he visited England and the Netherlands. He took a keen interest in the stormy religious situation in France and beyond. Paris was filled with religious ferment. He became keenly aware of the Lutherans whose books were being read and discussed. Lively theological battles raged in Paris between the Sorbonne and the other schools. To Ignatius everywhere he saw great battles to be fought for his Lord against heretics and those who utterly
rejected the Word of God.

With great care and patience Ignatius gathered about him a devoted band of brilliant younger university men. They all looked to this older, limping Spaniard as their master. He was fifteen years older than the oldest of them. The first in this close circle was the Savoyard, Peter Faber, with whom he shared a very simple room at Sainte-Barbe. Ignatius lived on the gifts from Isabella Roser and her friends in Barcelona and what they were able to collect begging during vacations. Faber had been sent by the Bishop of Geneva to study theology in Paris. In 1534 he was ordained and celebrated his first Mass. Another of Ignatius's roommates at Sainte-Barbe, was the Spaniard, Francis of Xavier in Navarre, a noble of aristocratic bearing. In the circle were three other Spaniards: Diego Laynez, son of a tradesman at Almazan, who had been a student at Alcala; Nicholas from Bohadilla, brilliant but very poor; and Alonzo Salmeron, precocious and gay at nineteen. There was a Portuguese, Simon Rodriguez, of noble descent. He also won two Frenchmen, Jean Codure and Paschase Broet, and another Savoyard, Claude Le Jay. One by one Ignatius led each of these through the discipline of his Exercises.

THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS:

On August 15, 1534, the feast of Our Lady's Assumption, Ignatius led six of his young men up the slopes of Montmartre outside Paris, to the Dominican Abbey of St. Denys. In the chapel Fabre who had been ordained led in the celebration of the Mass. They spent the day in boundless joy discussing their common purpose to serve God. Ignatius led them in pledging themselves that in two years when they had completed their course of study they would all start for Jerusalem to labor for their Lord in the conversion of the Infidels. They would leave the decision to God. Should they find it impossible to go to Jerusalem they offer their services to the Pope. They would throw themselves at the feet of the Holy Father and place themselves absolutely at his disposal. At sunset they returned to their rooms, blessing and praising the Lord. They devoted themselves to their studies and to works of charity with renewed zeal.

In 1537, with permission of the Holy See, all the members of the little band were ordained to the priesthood. Ignatius became ill and the doctors ordered him to return to his home in Spain in hopes that the air of Loyola would cure him. He did not go back to the castle. He lodged in the Magdalen hospital, devoting himself to almsgiving, penance, visiting and ministering to the sick and preaching. He met strong opposition from his family who were ashamed of the shabby relative. The clergy were suspicious of him. As soon as he was able he turned his back on ungrateful Spain, never to return.

Ignatius made his way to Venice where he rejoined his little group. War made it impossible for them to go to Jerusalem so they decided to go to Rome. In Venice Ignatius met Caraffa who tried to persuade him to join the order of the Theatines but Ignatius refused. On the way to Rome while Ignatius was praying in the church of St. Peter in Vivarolo at Vicenzo he experienced another flash of enlightenment. Ringing in his ears were words from God, "I want you to be my servant" and "Go, I will be favourable to you at Rome." Ignatius went on toward Rome with renewed confidence. The little group scattered to beg and preach as they made their way to Rome where they would reunite. Ignatius travelled with Fabre and Laynez.
In Rome Ignatius and his little band presented themselves to Pope Paul III who told them they could serve the Church of God in Italy just as good as in Jerusalem. He gave them permission to preach. They met much criticism and opposition. Caraffa looked on them coldly. They preached against sin. They advocated daily prayer in the churches, frequent confessions, frequent communion, they preached that games of chance should be forbidden by law. They preached against the priests' concubines and urged that they be forbidden to dress as honest women dressed. The noble woman Vittoria Colonna encouraged them. Contarini urged the pope to give them full recognition. The pope began using them for special missions. He sent Broet to reform a monastery at Siena. Bobadilla was sent to restore peace on the island of Ischia. Laynez and Fabre were sent to inspect Parma and then to teach in the new College of Sapienza. LeJay was sent on a mission to Brescia. Fabre was sent with Ortiz as official theologian to the Diet of Worms. Xavier and Rodriguez, upon the request of King John III of Portugal, were sent as missionaries to the Indies. The pope even discussed sending Salmeron and Broet as papal nuncios to Ireland and Scotland.

On September 27, 1540, Pope Paul III issued his bull Regimini militantis Ecclesiae, canonically establishing the Society of Jesus. Ignatius was to draw up a constitution for the order. It was to be a tightly organized holy militia pledged to fight for the papacy against all foes. The society was to be limited to sixty. In a bull, Injunctum nobis, dated March 14, 1543, the limitation on membership was removed.

Ignatius worked diligently to perfect the constitution. It would be an order of spiritual soldiers devoted to spiritual warfare. Each one must strip himself of all earthly affections to live only for the Lord. Out of love for the Lord he must submit entirely to his Superior. To qualify a man had to be healthy, of good appearance, well balanced, prudent, and energetic. The members would be trained in the Spiritual Exercises. It would be a flexible order with no fixed uniform or hours. They would not join in the choral office. Each one would spend two years in a novitiate devoted to training in the Spiritual Exercises. At the end of the novitiate those who won approval would take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Next they became Scholastics, devoting two years to classical studies, three years to philosophy, four to theology, followed by a period of practical testing that could last up to five years. Then he would undergo a final period of probation at the end of which he would publicly renew his vows. At the end of the theological studies the future Jesuit would be ordained a priest. Those who completed the educational course became "Coadjutors". A few from the Coadjutors would be selected to take a fourth vow of total obedience to the Pope. These would be "the Professed of Four Vows." At the head of the order would be the General elected for life by the General Congregation of the Professed. Jesuits were forbidden to accept positions of authority outside the Society. The whole order was arranged in a hierarchy of relationships in which each member had someone to whom he confessed and submitted as his Superior. Each one owed absolute obedience to his Superior.

On April 4, 1541, six of the original ten (four were absent from Rome) unanimously elected Ignatius as their General. He declined the honor but was again elected on April 7. He gave way and on April 22, 1541, received the vows of his associates in the Church of
St. Paul Outside the Walls.

The Society of Jesus grew rapidly. Scornfully the members were nicknamed "Jesuits." The name stuck and they became proud of it. Throughout Italy Jesuit preachers scattered to preach the Ten Commandments and the pains of hell and the joys of heaven. They won the love and respect of the common people and stirred bitter jealousy among other orders and many of the clergy. They made important converts. Ortiz, Ambassador of Charles V at Rome, became a member, submitting to the discipline.

Ignatius prepared his Directory, a manual to guide Jesuits in their use of the Spiritual Exercises. He worked to perfect the Spiritual Exercises and translated them into Latin. He continued to improve the Constitution. When Laynez was chosen to succeed Ignatius on July 2, 1558, he secured papal sanction from Pope Pius IV.

The Jesuits quickly spread and became a powerful leading force in revival and reform. Laynez was sent to Venice to preach against the Protestants; he went on to Brescia and Val Tellina. Jay was sent to Ferrara to combat the Calvinism of Renee. Salmeron went to Naples and Sicily. Xavier and Rodriguez won King John of Portugal. He gave them control of his new university at Coimbra and they staffed it with Jesuit professors.

Spain proved very difficult but Francis Borgia, Duke of Candia and Viceroy of Catalonia, became a Jesuit. He put Jesuits over his new university. At the death of Laynez he became the third General of the Jesuits.

Progress was slow in France where they were strongly opposed by the Dominicans and Franciscans of the Sorbonne. Jesuits founded their own colleges at St. Omer, Douai and Rheims.

Noadilla, Faber and Jay were sent to Germany where they became counsellors of William, Duke of Bavaria and of Ferdinand of Austria. They converted the Humanist, Peter Canisius, who became the able theologian of the Counter-Reformation in Germany.

Ignatius began a very active program of social reforms in Italy. He took great interest in the care of orphans and established industrial schools for poor boys and girls. He formed charitable associations to end begging. He established homes for fallen women. They became known as "Martha Houses." He took great interest in ransoming Christians held captive by Moslems.

Great pressures were put on Ignatius to found an order for women. Ignatius declared there would never be Jesuit nuns. The direction of women's souls took too much time. Women were too emotional for the Spiritual Exercises. The Jesuit must stand on one foot with the other raised for the first step wherever he was dispatched. Women were unfit for the battles. Isabella Roser came to Rome in 1543 with a large sum of money sorely needed by Ignatius for the work. She wanted him to establish a Society of women with her as the head. When he refused there was a great quarrel and she took him to court to try to recover her money. She lost the case and returned in anger to Spain. Finally she forgave him.

Ignatius died at sixty-five, thirty-five years after his conversion, and sixteen after his Order had received papal approval. Twelve Provinces had been established: Portugal, Castile, Aragon, Andalusia, Italy, Naples, Sicily, Germany, Flanders, France, Brazil and the East Indies. The order had over 1,000 members and over a hundred houses.

The program Ignatius had established concentrated on four areas: 1) Preaching—they were pledged to out preach the Protestants;
2) Frequent confession and communion; 3) Excellent schools; 
4) Foreign Missions. By the time of Ignatius' death the Jesuits 
already had the reputation of being the leading educators of 
Europe. They concentrated on schools for the young who would be 
the leaders of the future. Especially Ignatius and his men gave 
attention to the education of the well-born, the future princes. 
They became the counsellors of all in high places. 
Jesuits boast that during the lifetime of Ignatius, they were 
not responsible for the death of a single person for his faith. As 
Jesuits became the right arm of Counter-Reformation they guided 
Catholic princes in the effective use of Inquisition.