

'Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam — For the Greater Glory of God'

Saint Ignatius
of Loyola



A Pastoral Letter Introducing the Ignatian Year
May 20, 2021–July 31, 2022

BY BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES

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'Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam — **For the Greater Glory of God'**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

May 3, 2021

Imagine this story: A fame-driven soldier is holding his position in battle. He is shot and wounded by a cannonball. During his lengthy recuperation, he is left to read the few books nearby – books that happen to be about the life of Christ and the saints.

After his recovery, he experiences a deep spiritual conversion and decides to lay down his weapons for good. His new life with Christ profoundly transforms the Church and world for over 500 years and counting!

Some might say: “That’s impossible!”

Well, that story did happen. That wounded soldier is Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556).

Upon laying down his sword, doing an about-face and becoming

a Catholic priest, Saint Ignatius founded what is today the largest male religious order in the Catholic Church – the Society of Jesus or “the Jesuits.” An order with 16,000-plus priests, brothers, scholastics, and novices worldwide.¹

An order known for sanctity, scholarship in every field and major scientific discoveries.

An order known for its worldwide mission and special fourth vow of obedience to the Pope, the Successor of Peter. This vow of total availability to the Roman Pontiff disposes the order for its characteristic missionary activity, and in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, calls Jesuits “– in the most genuine Ignatian spirit of ‘feeling with the Church and in the Church’ – ‘to love and serve’ the Vicar of Christ on earth.”²



National Shrine of the North American
Martyrs, Auriesville, New York.

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An order where more of its priests have been martyred for their faith than in any other order. In fact, in upstate New York, the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville is dedicated to three Jesuits martyred at the Mohawk Indian Village of Ossernenon in 1642 and 1646, including lay brother Saint Rene Goupil (1608-1642), the priest Saint Isaac Jogues (1607-1646) and lay brother Saint John Lalande (died 1646).

An order whose priests have quite possibly influenced you, your children, or grandchildren. Today, in the U.S., in addition to numerous Jesuit high schools, there is a network of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities with over one million living graduates. Local Jesuit colleges include: Fordham University, Canisius College, College of the Holy Cross, Fairfield University, Boston College, Georgetown University, Le Moyne College, Loyola University, Saint Joseph's University, Saint Peter's University, and The University of Scranton.

An order whose priests have contributed so much to theological

study that is faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. Here in the United States, we think of priests such as Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ, a native of Auburn, New York (1918-2008); another New Yorker, Father John Courtney Murray, SJ (1904-1967), who played a prominent role in the Second Vatican Council's 1965 Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humane*); and Father Walter Ciszek, SJ (1904-1984) a native of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania who survived 15 years in a Russian prison camp – including five in solitary confinement. Father Ciszek grippingly tells his story and how faith gave him courage to endure the Gulag in *With God in Russia* (1964) and in *He Leadeth Me* (1973).

The Church has designated a special time of celebration in recognition of Saint Ignatius. Called an "Ignatian Year," it will mark significant anniversaries associated with this great Spanish saint.

The Ignatian Year begins on May 20, 2021, the 500-year anniversary of Ignatius' wounding and spiritual conversion in Pamplona, Spain,

and concludes on July 21, 2022, the anniversary of Saint Ignatius passing into eternal life. During the Year, the 400-year anniversary of the canonizations of Saint Ignatius and his Jesuit confrere Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552) will be celebrated on March 12, 2022.

In our diocese, several of our young priests are working on a series of reflections that begin an exploration of the life and legacy of Saint Ignatius. They will connect the Ignatian legacy with our legacy in 2021. Look for reflections by:



FATHER MICHAEL BISSEX, associate pastor of Saint Patrick's Parish, Huntington, who looks at Saint Ignatius' conversion following the Battle of Pamplona.



FATHER JOHN WACHOWICZ, associate pastor of Saint Rosalie's Parish, Hampton Bays, who will explore Ignatian Spirituality in World and Church History.



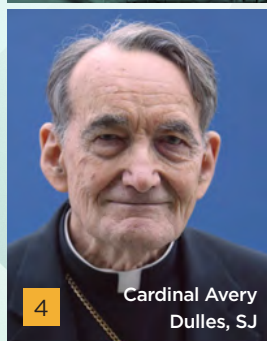
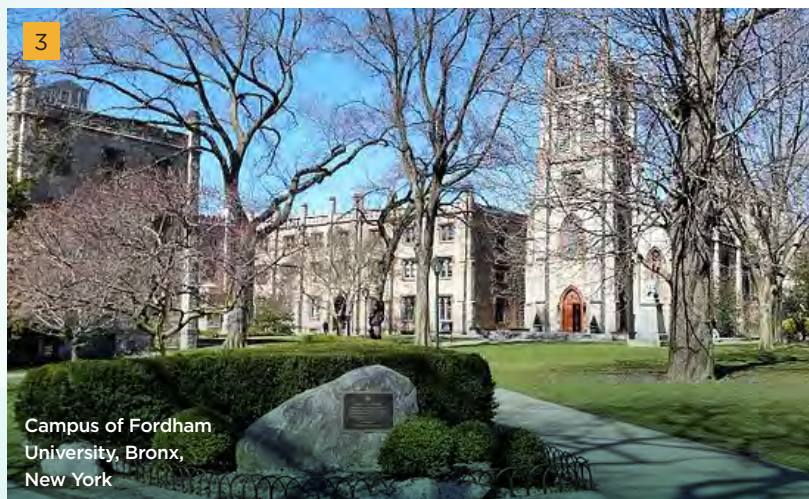
FATHER MICHAEL DUFFY, rector, Saint Agnes Cathedral Parish, Rockville Centre, who will explore the Theological contributions of Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ.



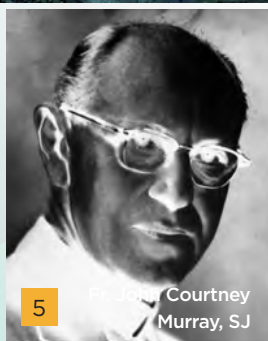
Pontifical North American College
SEMINARIAN LOUIS CONA, currently in his Pastoral Year at Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Center Moriches, who will look at the Theological contributions of Father John Courtney Murray, SJ.



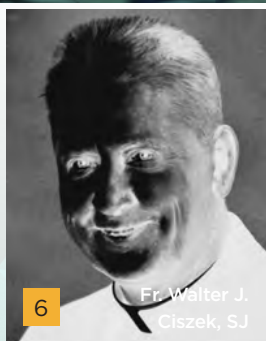
FATHER ROBERT KETCHAM, pastor of Christ the King Parish, Commack, will explore the Spiritual Theology of Father Walter Ciszek, SJ.



Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ



Father John Courtney Murray, SJ



Fr. Walter J. Ciszek, SJ

Additionally, during the Ignatian Year, Sean Dolan, Director of Communications and *The Long Island Catholic* staff, looks at the Jesuit presence and history on Long Island, especially at Saint Ignatius Retreat House – Innisfada.

Finally, Monsignor James Vlaun, CEO and president of the Catholic Faith Network, and I will develop a series of my *Encounter* shows with Jesuit theologians and historians that explores the life, mysticism, missionary spirit and centuries-long influence and inspiration of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.


As we will see over the course of this Ignatian Year, Saint Ignatius stands among the great saints in the breadth and depth of his contributions as well as his witness and effects upon the life of the Catholic Church that continue centuries after his death.

In walking with me and my brother priests on this journey to explore the life and legacy of Saint Ignatius, I invite you to pray with me that the Church recognizes these contributions and names Saint Ignatius of Loyola a “Doctor of the Church.” A Doctor of the Church is someone recognized for making an outstanding theological, spiritual, mystical contribution illustrated in their writings and by their holiness in life and creative influence in and on the mission of the Church, an influence that endures centuries after their death.

If this were to happen, Saint Ignatius would join saints like Saint Ambrose (340-397), Saint John Chrysostom (347-407), Saint Jerome (347-420), Saint Augustine (354-430), Saint Gregory the Great (540-604), Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274), Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), Saint John of the Cross (1542-1591), Saint Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Saint Francis de Sales (1567-1622), Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), and Saint Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897).

Like Saint Ignatius, we Catholics have been experiencing cannonball-like wounds from the suffering brought about by COVID-19. It is my prayer that through these reflections, like Saint Ignatius, whose life was transformed upon reading those books about Jesus and the saints, the Lord will heal our wounds and lead us all to conversion experiences that focus our lives and the mission of the Church for the greater glory of God.

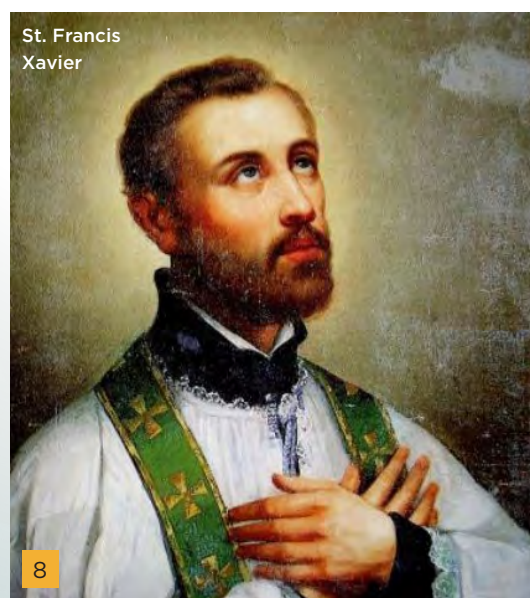
Faithfully in the Lord,



Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre



St. Isaac Jogues



St. Francis
Xavier

REFERENCES:

1. <https://www.jesuits.org/about-us/the-jesuits/>
2. Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Fathers of the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, February 21, 2008.

PHOTOS AND ARTWORK CREDITS:

1. Saint Ignatius of Loyola painting by Francisco Zubaran
2. Interior of the Coliseum at the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs, New York. This work has been released into the public domain by its author, LotR at English Wikipedia.
3. Fordham University in the Bronx is one of 28 Jesuit colleges and Universities in the U.S. with over one million living graduates. <https://commons.wikimedia.org>
4. Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ in 2004. (CNS file photo/Bob Roller)
5. Father John Courtney Murray, SJ. This undated photo from CNS files.
6. Father Walter J. Cizek, SJ in an undated photo. (CNS photo/A.D. Times)
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