

2. Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatius of Loyola is one of the Christian tradition's profoundest mystics and perhaps its greatest risen mystagogue, that is, one who leads others into the deepest mystery of the trinity, the crucified and Jesus Christ - and into one's own mystery as a human being.

I. Introduction: May God grant us abundant grace to know his most holy will and perfectly to fulfill it. Brief account of his "secular" biography. Conversion, apostolic, "to help souls" he studied to become a priest. Founder of the Jesuits; he established colleges, universities, and charitable institutions, directed a vast missionary network, and undertook sensitive diplomatic appointments. His apostolic successes have overshadowed the importance of his mysticism. Accused as both a heretical mystic and an overly rigid.

II. The Spiritual Exercises: Aspects of The Spiritual Exercises: The purpose is to seek and to find God's specific will for a person. There is the underlying assumption that God works directly with the person. Meditations on and contemplations of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A dynamic process of simplification and transparency. Ignatius's sacramental, iconistic ("kataphatic") mysticism does not involve forgetting the Christian mysteries.

III. Mystical Events - Four foundational mystical events: Loyola recuperation from war wounds. From this seed grew his famous rules for the discernment of spirits. A transformative vision of the Virgin Mary holding the child Jesus. Infused chastity, A period of severe penance. Mystical gifts. Cardoner River: a foundational period of enlightenment. La Storta: to be with Christ to serve,

Ignatius's mystical Diary: Explicitly Trinitarian (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and Christocentric experiences. Eucharistic context. Reverential love. Experiences of consolation, discernment, judgment, decision making, and confirmation of his decisions. Teaching on the sign of the cross

IV. Conclusion - Ecclesial Mysticism: loving-knowledge of the Church; hyper-papal. Mystical Tears: Ignatius's ambivalence. There are varieties of this mystical phenomenon. Letter to Borgia. Mystical loquela: inner words, pregnant meaning, tone, rhythm, and music. Variety and an aid to discernment. Ignatius's emphasis on mortification, not long hours of prayer. Letter to Jesuits studying for priesthood. A summary statement of Ignatius's spirituality and mysticism: to be with the Trinitarian Christ to serve. Also, gratitude for gifts received thus enabled to love and serve the God in all things.

Reflection Questions

1. How did Ignatius' secular life prior to his conversion impact his spiritual development?
2. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises has a fairly structured form for a mystical text. Does that seem helpful to you?
3. What do you make of Ignatius' emphasis on mortification rather than lengthy prayer as an aid to mystical and spiritual development?