

The Life of Saint Ignatius Loyola (Part 3)



When Ignatius returned from his trip to the Holy Land he was really questioning what he should do with his life. He had already left behind one career and he was getting older. On top of that, how could he use his newly found spirituality to spread the love of God the way he wanted? Ignatius took a great step: he went back to school. For the next eleven years he studied in order to become more familiar with the Word of God and the teaching of the Church.

He began in Barcelona, where he was humble enough to sit among the boys in the classroom. In 1526, he continued to the University of Alcalá where he studied philosophy. It was at this university that he was beaten senseless and his companion was killed over a dispute. When his studies were finished at Alcalá, he proceeded on to the University of Salamanca (1527) and suffered through many trials there. He then went on to the University of Paris (June, 1528) where he received the Master of Arts degree on March 14, 1535. He had studied theology in Paris and he was granted a licentiate in that discipline in 1534. His health compelled him to leave the University of Paris before receiving a doctorate in theology, but the experience and knowledge he had gained of theology, philosophy, and education would serve as a good grounding in the work God was calling him to do.

Although Ignatius, using his skill as a commander, had gained followers in both Spain and Paris, the first two groups of people that gathered around him soon left the religious life he favored. The third group that gathered around him, however, would form the nucleus of a new order of religious dedicated to education and the conversion of the people, loyal to the Church and consecrated to Jesus Christ. This third group of followers would never leave him: in fact, they would change the world with their teaching, preaching, prayer and good works. You may recognize some of their names:



1. St. Peter Faber



2. St Francis Xavier



3. James Laynez



4. Nicolas Bobadilla



5. Alonso Salmeron



6. Simon Rodriguez

These men were devoted to Saint Ignatius and to his ideal of living like Christ. They went through the same spiritual and intellectual training as they prepared themselves for the goal that they set out to achieve: to go to the Holy Land. Looking forward to this life, they all took vows of poverty and chastity as well as a third vow: to go to the Holy Land after two years when they had finished their studies. Despite their intentions, the ways of God are not our ways. The little band of consecrated men would be tested in body and soul before God made His will known to them...

