

*"Knowing is not enough we must apply.
Willing is not enough we must do." Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam*

FEAST DAY OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA WAS CELEBRATED BY CAMPION COMMUNITY.

Main Celebrant- Fr. Mathew VC

31 July, 2015

*Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.*

This popular prayer describes the person of St. Ignatius or fondly called Inigo in his native Spanish. He was a teacher of Spirituality who gave to the Church a set of guidelines for prayer called Spiritual Exercises; he was a soldier who fought for earthly glory and later fought vigorously to guard and defend the church; though he was not a missionary he motivated his companions and sons like St. Francis Xavier to be a great missionaries; above all he was a gentle and generous soul who lived a simple yet a profound life.

Ignatius was born in Spain in the year 1491. Before he was 16 years of age he lost his parents and was brought up by a relative who worked in the royal court of Spain. Having enjoyed the sumptuous and extravagant he was far away from being virtuous and holy. He himself wrote to a friend that he indulged in "gambling, duelling, and affairs." But the Lord called him for a life of holiness and to make holy the Church. Ignatius was an ambitious soldier. During one of his battles he was struck down by a cannonball that shattered his leg. Though he lost his battle he gained his soul. The fall seems to say, "No one falls to the ground without your Father's consent... You are worth much more than many sparrows. (Mt. 10:29-31). He stumbled on a book of scripture and the spiritual classic The Imitation of Christ that changed the course of his life.

The man who dreamt of earthly glory began to dream of God's glory, the man who wanted to defend his earthly city vowed to defend the kingdom of God and God's Church

on earth. He threw away his sword and amour and accepted salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword and glory. When he had fully recovered, Ignatius spent a prolonged period in prayer and contemplation. After a general confession he planned to make a pilgrimage as a sign of his searching for roots of faith and getting closer to the reality of Christ. During this moment he spent a whole night kneeling in prayer before the image of Blessed Mother which became a foundation of his filial devotion to the Mother of God. Later in life Ignatius uses this personal experience to instruct his sons and followers to seek the Lord and pray unceasingly.

Perhaps the work of the Society of Jesus begun by Ignatius that is best known is that of education, yet it is interesting that he had no intention of including teaching among the Jesuits'; works at the beginning. Before 1548 Ignatius had opened schools in Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, and India, but they were intended primarily for the education of the new young Jesuit recruits. Ten such colleges within six years indicated the rapid growth of the Jesuits. Today this eminent society is known for Christian education, theological research and defends of the Church especially at the moments of ideological struggles and conflicts.

Ignatius was beatified on July 27, 1609 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 12, 1622 together with St. Francis Xavier. Ignatius'; feast day is celebrated by the universal Church on July 31, the day he died. May St. Ignatius help us to work for God's glory amidst our own worldly concerns.

- Fr. Virendra Ekka SJ