



Saint of the Week

Ignatius of Loyola

1491 – 1556

Feast Date—July 31

Born in his family's ancestral Basque castle, Inigo Lopez de Loyola was a page in Castile and a soldier wounded in battle before he experienced a personal conversion that has had profound consequences for the church ever since. While convalescing, he read about Christ and the saints, made a long retreat at Manresa and journeyed to Jerusalem. He studied for 10 years in Barcelona

and Paris, where he became Ignatius and was the center of a group of like-minded men. They founded the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, to be active missionaries and meet the challenges of the Reformation. Ignatius, superior general of the new order, also wrote "Spiritual Exercises," which is still a popular guide. He is the patron saint of retreats and soldiers.



Sculpture of St. Ignatius of Loyola by Juan Martínez Montañés and Francisco Pacheco. (CNS/Nancy Wiechec)

“Our Jesuit coat of arms is a monogram bearing the acronym of ‘Jesus Hominum Salvator’ . . . But this coat of arms constantly reminds us of a reality we must never forget: the centrality of Christ, for each one of us and for the whole Society which St Ignatius wanted to call, precisely, ‘of Jesus’ to indicate its point of reference. . . Because there is always a temptation to think that we are at the center; and when a Jesuit puts himself and not Christ at the center he errs.”

—Pope Francis, homily, July 31, 2013