

Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491 near Azpeitia in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa in northern Spain. The youngest of 13 children, he was raised in a culture of high Catholic piety but lax morals. When he was about fifteen his father sent him to the household of Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, chief treasurer of the king of Castile, to be trained in courtly manners and all that was expected of an attendant at the royal court. In 1517, however, his patron died, forcing him to seek new employment. Sensing a desire to gain renown by gallantry in battle, he entered the service of Don Antonio Manrique de Lara, Duke of Nájara and Viceroy of Navarre. In May 1521, Ignatius and a small band of Spanish soldiers stood in defense of Pamplona against a massive French army which claimed the territory as its own. The battle was brief, and Pamplona soon surrendered, but not before he was struck by a ricocheting cannonball, shattering one leg and seriously wounding the other. His French captors carried him back to his native Loyola, where he endured two painful operations and hovered near death before he began to recuperate.

Ignatius had already shown himself to be a man of considerable energy and courage, and demonstrated great gifts of initiative and command. Moreover, his years in the court had given him a refinement and gracious manner that would serve him well in the future. But like many in his position, he was vain, proud, and ambitious. He was firm in his Christian belief, but his life was not always consistent with this belief. Years later, a close companion of Ignatius described him during this time as “especially reckless in regard to gambling, dealings with women, and dueling.” And Ignatius would later describe himself as “a man given to worldly vanities with a vain and overpowering desire to gain renown.” And now he had been seriously wounded and faced a long convalescence.

Conversion: Loyola (mid-June 1521 – mid-February 1522)

Looking for something to help pass the time during his convalescence, Ignatius asked to be given some books. He wanted some of the adventure-filled novels of chivalry that he had grown to love, but the only books available were a life of Christ and a book of stories about the saints – but he took them, and began to read.

“Putting his reading aside, he sometimes stopped to think about the things he had read and at other times about the things of the world that he used to think about before. Of the many vain things that presented themselves to him, one took such a hold on his heart that he was absorbed in thinking about it for two or three or four hours without realizing it: he imagined what he would do in the service of a certain lady... Nonetheless, Our Lord assisted him, causing other thoughts that arose from the things that he read to follow these. While reading of Our Lord and the saints, he stopped to think, reasoning within himself: “What if I should do what St. Francis did, what St. Dominic did?” So he pondered many things that he found to be good... But his every thought was to say to himself, “St. Dominic did this; therefore, I have to do it. St. Francis did this; therefore, I have to do it.” These thoughts also lasted a good while, but when other matters intervened, the worldly thoughts mentioned above returned, and he also spent much time on them. ... This succession of such diverse thoughts lasted for a long time.” (*Autobiography*)

Several things stand out in this account. First, it has remarkable vitality. Although more than 30 years had passed, it is obvious that Ignatius had often and seriously pondered these events. Second, the world of chivalry had instilled in him a desire to do great things for a secular leader. Now he experienced the first stirrings of a desire to serve a far greater leader, Christ. He would later develop this theme in the meditation on the Call of the King in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Third, we note the importance of thoughts and thinking in this account. Fourth, he realized that God had been engaged in his reflections: “Our Lord assisted him, causing other thoughts...” Now, although thoughts continue, an important shift takes place: affectivity now comes to the fore, and the stage is set for the moment of grace:

“Yet there was this difference. When he was thinking about the things of the world, he took great delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found that he was dry and discontented. But when he thought of going to Jerusalem, barefoot and eating nothing but herbs and undergoing all the other rigors that he saw that the saints had endured, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside, he remained content and happy.”
(*Autobiography*)

We note that the two contrasting sets of thoughts remain, but Ignatius now begins to focus primarily on the affective experiences that accompany these thoughts. We note that the two sets of thoughts evoked essentially the same affective response *while* he was thinking them – they “delighted” and “consoled” him – yet this was no longer true *after* these thoughts had ended. When he stopped thinking about his worldly desires, he found himself “dry and discontented.” Yet when he stopped thinking about imitating the saints, “he remained content and happy.” And then comes the moment of grace:

“He did not stop to ponder the difference until one time his eyes were opened a little, and he began to marvel at the difference and to reflect upon it, realizing from experience that some thoughts left him sad and others happy. Little by little he came to recognize the difference between the spirits that agitated him, one from the demon, the other from God.” (*Autobiography*)

In observing that “our Lord assisted him, causing other thoughts...”, Ignatius understood that God had been actively engaged in this experience. Moreover, his use of the passive voice in describing his new realization – “his eyes *were opened* a little” – expressed the same thing: it was God who had opened his eyes. Yet he realized that there had also been another force at work, the spirit of evil. Employing an imagery common for his time, he sensed the presence and action of two contrary ‘spirits.’ He realized that one ‘spirit’ was drawing him toward God and to what God ultimately desired for him, whereas the other ‘spirit’, whom he understood to be the spirit of evil, was drawing him away from this. He would later develop this understanding in the meditation on the Two Standards in the *Spiritual Exercises*. This was his first intimation of something which would guide him for the remainder of his life: God was not simply active in his life: God was actively ‘at work’ in his life, directing and guiding him, not in words or thoughts, but by his affective responses to the ordinary events of his everyday life. He realized that it was not the events themselves that were significant, but rather the affective responses – the feelings of joy, peace, hope, anxiety, sadness, and fear – they evoked in him. It was precisely in these affective responses, he would later realize, that, through faith, he could discover God’s direction and guidance in his life. More than a year would pass before Ignatius understood the meaning of all that had happened to him during his convalescence at Loyola, yet he had begun to learn the rudiments of discernment.

Once again we need to pause for a few observations. First, Ignatius had earlier stated his understanding that God was actively engaged in all this: “Our Lord assisted him, causing other thoughts...” Now, his use of the passive voice in describing his new realization – “his eyes *were opened* a little” – expresses the same thing: it was God who had opened his eyes. Second, he realized that there was another force at work in this, the spirit of evil. Employing an imagery common for his time, he sensed the presence and action of two contrary ‘spirits.’ He realized that one ‘spirit’ was drawing him toward God and what God ultimately desired for him, whereas the other ‘spirit’, whom he understood to be the spirit of evil, was drawing him away from this. This was an understanding he would later develop in the meditation on the Two Standards in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Third, this was his first intimation of something which would guide him for the remainder of his life: he realized that God was not simply active in his life: God was actively ‘at work’ in his life, directing him and guiding him, not in words or thoughts, but by means of his affective responses to the ordinary events of his everyday life. Moreover, he realized that it was not the events themselves that were significant, but rather the affective responses they evoked in him – the feelings of joy, peace, hope, anxiety, sadness, and fear. It was precisely in these affective responses, he would later realize, that, through faith, he could discover God’s direction and guidance in his life. More

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Ignatius now began to reflect more seriously on his past life and sensed within himself a great desire to do penance for it. A desire to imitate the saints also came to him. His greatest desire upon recovering his health, however, was to go to Jerusalem and to give himself over to a life of fasting and penance “as any generous soul on fire with God is accustomed to do.” He continued his reading and reflections and, for the first time, began to record his reflections in a notebook. He began to speak with the members of the household about the things of God and found that it “brought much profit to their souls.” He later recalled that the greatest consolation he received at this time “was from gazing at the sky and stars, and he did this often and for quite a long time.” He said that the result of this was that “he felt within himself a great desire to serve our Lord.”

Let’s pause for a moment so as to take a closer look at what happened here. In his book, *The Restless Heart*, Ronald Rolheiser makes an important observation: “In our day-to-day lives, when all is well, and health, friends, inner peace, and good cheer are in abundance, we tend to lose our awareness of reality as it really is. . . . Put crassly, when times are good, and we are not lonely, we tend to worry more about our boat and our next vacation to Hawaii than about the wounds that bleed unattended and uncared for in our unfinished world. But when we are lonely, when we have to come face to face with emptiness and lack of meaning, we are given a great opportunity to understand life and ourselves.” A ricocheting cannon ball shattered the world that Ignatius Loyola had simply taken for granted, and the long convalescence that followed upon it afforded the opportunity for him to come “face to face with emptiness and lack of meaning.” Needless to say, what followed was the result of God’s grace and Ignatius’ response to that grace, but for the remainder of his life Ignatius was firm in his belief that God was present and ‘at work’ in the ordinary events of his everyday life.

Ignatius Loyola was a man of great desires. Yet it was only when he was able to sort out his desires and recognize that some desires were leading him toward God whereas others were leading him away that he was able to open himself to God and allow God to work in his life. His desires not simply to imitate the saints but even outdo them in their efforts revealed his greathearted generosity, yet at this stage of his life his response to God was still largely self-centered and concerned primarily with externals. Yet for all this, he was able to open himself to God’s grace because he was attentive to his inner world and was able to seriously reflect on it. Lastly, he had been brought to understand that the God who was actively engaged in his life was the risen and glorified Christ Jesus.

Purification and Illumination: Manresa (March 25, 1522 - February 17/18, 1523)

When Ignatius well enough to travel – almost ten months had passed since he had been wounded at Pamplona – he journeyed across Spain to the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, where he made a general confession and a vigil before the image of the Black Madonna before proceeding to a small nearby town named Manresa. His intention was to simply spend a few days there before continuing on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As events unfolded, however, he would remain at Manresa for almost eleven months – months that transformed his journal into the *Spiritual Exercises*, the pilgrim into a mystic, and the former courtier and soldier into a student, priest, and eventual founder of the Society of Jesus – so we may very well wonder: What really happened there?

In his spiritual exuberance Ignatius surrendered himself to long periods of prayer and intense bodily penance – and for about four months he basked in a tranquility of unceasing joy. Gradually, however, he began to experience great changes in his soul. Feelings of doubt about his new way of life began to plague him, and he found his emotions seesawing between his previous feelings of tranquility and joy and new feelings of aridity and sadness. Far more troubling, however, was that in his very struggles to free himself from sin, he found himself overwhelmed by a sense of his own sinfulness. Although he had made his confession at Montserrat with great care, he had begun to fear the possibility that he had some

unconfessed sin and that he was ultimately living a lie. He found a wise spiritual guide, but neither his guide's counsel nor his repeated confessions could resolve his scruples.¹ His penchant for reflection, moreover, coupled with his obsessive desire for perfection, closed him in upon himself all the more, eventually making him a prisoner of his self-absorption. His fatigue in this brought him to the point of despair and even to thoughts of suicide. Weeks flowed into months, but his anguish continued unabated.

Suddenly, and in a manner completely unexpected, he awoke as from a dream. He saw his scruples for what they were – simply lies and falsehood – and he was freed from their power. As he reflected on the manner in which this darkness had descended upon him, he discerned with great clarity never to confess his past sins again. As he reflected on his months-long struggle, he realized that the resolution of the crisis was not his doing but God's. It seems that God had brought him face-to-face with his human frailty so that he might realize that “the all-surpassing power” resided in God alone (2 Corinthians 4:7).

His spiritual tranquility returned, and he was graced with many spiritual consolations. He received great illuminations about things that would dominate the remainder of his life – the Trinity, the creation of the world, Eucharistic sacramental presence, and Christ's humanity – but these illuminations seem almost negligible to one that occurred on the banks of the river Cardoner, at a place he described as “where the river ran deep.”

“As he went along, occupied with his devotions, he sat down for a while facing the river which was running deep. While he was seated there, the eyes of his understanding began to be opened, and though he saw no vision, he understood and perceived many things, spiritual matters as well as those of faith and learning, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him. The details of what he understood then, though there were many, he cannot describe, except that he experienced a great clarity in his understanding. This was such that in the whole course of his life, having then completed sixty-two years, even if he gathered up all the various helps he received from God and all the many things he knew, he does not think they would add up to all that he received on that one occasion.” (Autobiography)

In a few terse sentences Ignatius described a spiritual illumination so overwhelming that he seemed at an absolute loss to communicate his experience. The illumination, however, was not simply an experience of “spiritual matters as well as those concerning faith and learning.” It was an experience of *God*, one that he could never speak of without overwhelming emotion. Years later, in a magnificent testament to Ignatius and his spiritual vision, Karl Rahner gave expression to what Ignatius may have wished to say:

“All I can say is that I knew God, nameless and unfathomable, silent and yet near, bestowing himself upon me in his Trinity. I knew God beyond all concrete imaginings. I knew him clearly in such nearness and grace as is impossible to confound or mistake... I truly encountered God, the living and true God..., God himself, not simply human words describing him. I knew God and the freedom which is an integral part of him... I simply tell you that this is how it was.”

Years later, a close companion of his observed that as a result of his experience at the Cardoner, Ignatius seemed like a new man with a new intellect and that he had begun to look on all that he had learned with new eyes. The rich testimony about these events that we find in Ignatius' writings and those of his early companions points to a common truth. What happened to Ignatius at Manresa was a profound spiritual awakening to an entirely new level of consciousness, and it was because of this that he came to perceive and understand God, himself, and all created reality in a totally new light. This was not simply an event, however, no matter how overwhelming or how much his memory of it may have pervaded the remainder of his life. It was not something that simply happened to him; it was who he became. It introduced him into a new way of being.

1 “Scruples” are unwarranted fears that something is sinful.

Ignatius would later refer to the months he spent at Manresa as his “primitive church.” As he reflected on that time from the perspective of more than thirty years, he realized that God had treated him “as a teacher deals with a child whom he is teaching.” Moreover, his *Autobiography* makes it clear that his sense of being taught by God didn’t begin with his experiences at Manresa but rather with his “first reflection on the things of God” at Loyola.

Almost from the moment he arrived in Manresa Ignatius had spoken with others about spiritual matters. Now as he reflected on how God was acting in his life, he began to record notes on his experiences so as to help others. He would continue to refine his notes over the course of the next fifteen years, yet by the time Ignatius left Manresa in mid-March 1523, his small notebook held the structure of what we know today as the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem (March 1523 - Lent 1524)

In mid-February of 1523 Ignatius left Manresa and made his way to Barcelona. During his months of prayer, he had found himself increasingly drawn to making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. With great effort he traveled there and, once there, wanted to remain. But when the Franciscan superior who had authority over the Christians there learned of his plans, he forbade him to even consider it, explaining that the situation there under the Turkish government was very tenuous. At first, Ignatius didn’t want to be put off, explaining that God would protect him. But when the Franciscan superior explained that he possessed the authority of the Church, Ignatius realized that God was directing him elsewhere. So he returned to Spain, now sensing within himself a desire to study so that he might better minister to others. His stay in Jerusalem had been short-lived, yet it had a profound effect on him. He would never forget his being near Christ in his historical existence. This Christ-centeredness would be foundational for his spirituality. We note, moreover, that a significant transformation had occurred. Although at Loyola and Manresa he had spoken with many about the things of God, he does not seem to have understood this as a ministry. But now, he sensed a desire to study so that he might better minister to others. He had come to understand the ministry of Jesus as ‘laboring’ to help men and women achieve the fullness of life for which God had created them, a ministry which he felt drawn to share. God, it seemed, had drawn Ignatius out of himself, bringing him to now understand himself as a companion of Jesus, and he had begun to sense a desire to labor ‘with Jesus.’

Studies and Rome (1524 - 1538)

Since he could not start studies until he had mastered the rudiments of Latin, at the age of thirty-three he enrolled in an elementary school in Barcelona. For two years he begged his food and shelter until he had sufficiently mastered Latin. He then moved to Alcalá for university studies. There his zeal got him into trouble. He would gather students and adults to explain the Gospels to them and instruct them in prayer. His efforts, however, were noticed by the Inquisition and he was thrown into jail for more than forty days. When he was released he was prohibited from teaching others. Because such ministry was so important to him, he moved on to the university at Salamanca. Within weeks of his arrival, however, he found himself in prison again. Though the Inquisition could find no heresy in what he taught, he was severely restricted in what he could say and do. Realizing that he could not do studies and ministry in Spain, he left Spain for Paris.

Ignatius arrived in Paris on February 2, 1528, and for a year and a half studied grammar and literature at the Collège Montaigu before matriculating to the Collège Sainte-Barbe. There he began sharing a room with two fellow-students, Francisco de Javier from Navarre and Pierre Favre from Savoy, with whom he soon established warm friendships. He greatly influenced a few other students, directing each of them for thirty days in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Eventually, he and six companions – ‘friends in the Lord,’ they called themselves – took vows of chastity and poverty and their intention to go to the Holy Land. Their vow included a condition that if after a year they were unable to go to the Holy Land, they would go to Rome and put themselves at the disposal of the Pope. For a year they waited, but because of a war

between Venice and the Turkish powers, no ship sailed that year to the Holy Land. While waiting, they worked in hospitals and taught catechism in various cities of northern Italy. During this time Ignatius was ordained a priest, but he put off saying Mass, hoping to celebrate his first Mass in Jerusalem. After waiting a year in vain, Ignatius and his companions set off in groups for Rome to place themselves in the pope's hands. As Ignatius and two companions were approaching the outskirts of Rome, they stopped at a small wayside chapel in the town of La Storta to pray. While at prayer Ignatius had one of the most profound mystical experiences of his life. He saw clearly God the Father placing him with Christ his Son. This was the grace for which he had been praying since Manresa. Moreover, he heard the Father say to him, "I will be favorable to you in Rome." They soon met with the pope, and their meeting went well. He was delighted with these very well-educated priests and soon put them to work preaching and teaching theology and scripture. It was in Rome, on Christmas morning 1538, that Ignatius, at 47 years of age, celebrated his first Mass in the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Rome (1539 - July 31, 1556)

Early the following year, Ignatius invited all his companions to Rome to discern their future. Many of them were ministering in various parts of Italy, and it seemed that some would soon be sent even further afield. Did they wish to bind themselves together? Did they, in brief, wish to form a religious order? During After almost three months of prayer and discussion, they agreed that they did indeed wish to form a new religious order, one in which they would vow obedience to a superior general who would hold office for life. They would place themselves at the disposal of the pope to go wherever he wished to send them. A vow to this effect was added to the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. their journey to Rome, they had asked one another what they should say to those who wished to know who they were. They agreed that since they considered themselves companions of Jesus, they wished to be known as the Company of Jesus. On September 27, 1540, Pope Paul III formally approved the new order. Except for his own vote, Ignatius was unanimously elected superior. On April 22, 1541, at the Church of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome, Ignatius and his companions pronounced their vows in the newly formed Company of Jesus (the English language equivalent, Society of Jesus, derives from the Latin, *Societatis Iesu*).

Ignatius loved teaching catechism to children, directing adults in the Spiritual Exercises, and working among the poor and in hospitals. For the fifteen years that remained of his life, however, he would for the most part sacrifice this love in order to direct the Society of Jesus as it quickly expanded throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas. He spent years composing the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and would write more than 7000 letters to Jesuits and laypeople all over the world. By the time of his death, the Society of Jesus had grown from its original ten members to over a thousand.

Ignatius had suffered from stomach ailments since his days at Manresa, and they became increasingly worse during his years in Rome. During the summer of 1556 he experienced particularly bad stomach problems, and in late July he took a turn for the worse. Finally, on the morning of July 31, Ignatius died. The former worldly courtier and soldier, who had once dedicated himself to an earthly king, had gone to be with the Eternal King, Jesus Christ, to whom he had dedicated the second half of his life.

Ignatian Spirituality

I hope that our brief look at the life of Ignatius Loyola has illuminated not only his life, but also his lived relationship with God: his spirituality. Ignatius began to open himself to God when he became aware of interior movements – desires, feelings, impulses – which, upon reflection, he realized had their origin in God. Although Ignatius had only begun to open himself to God, I believe that the key elements of what became his spirituality can already be seen in the events of his conversion at Loyola. Allow me to highlight some key elements:

- God is actively engaged in the life of every person, laboring to help her achieve the fullness of life for which God created her: During his long convalescence at Loyola, Ignatius realized that God was actively engaged in his own life. Then, during his stay at Manresa he was slowly brought to understand that God was similarly engaged in the lives of all people.
- God is to be found in the ordinary events of our everyday life: Ignatius came to understand that God normally acts in us, not through extraordinary experiences, but rather through the ordinary events of our everyday lives. But it is not the events themselves that are significant, but rather the feelings they evoke in us – the feelings of joy, peace, hope, sadness, anxiety, and fear which stir within our everyday lives. These are not just fleeting human emotions, but rather the means by which, through faith, we can recognize God’s action in our lives.
- active attentiveness to God joined with prompt responsiveness to God’s direction and guidance: Ignatius realized that if God was actively engaged in his life offering him direction and guidance, he needed to be actively attentive to God and promptly responsive to the direction and guidance which God gave him. Ignatius’ response to this understanding was to seek God’s direction and guidance frequently in the examination of consciousness. This is a prayer of simple attentiveness to God to discern how God is acting in us, to what God may be urging us, and what within us may be resisting God’s action. This is a Spirit-guided prayer that expresses our desire to encounter God in the busyness of our day and to respond as promptly, fully, and generously as we can. It opens us to finding God, not simply in the quiet of prayer, but ultimately in everything.
- The person of Jesus is central: Ignatius’ spiritual journey began with his reading the life of Jesus. From time to time, he set his book aside and allowed his thoughts to wander. At first, he simply daydreamed, but his daydreams soon became more structured imaginings and developed into a form of prayer for which Ignatius is best known: imaginative contemplation. At first, he may have simply imagined a gospel scene, but he soon interjected himself into the scene, first simply as an observer, but eventually as an active participant so that what happened to those who saw and heard Jesus so long ago might happen to him. His prayer became a long, loving look at Jesus, and it was by means of this that he ultimately fell in love with and surrendered himself to Jesus. Yet Ignatius understood that Jesus was not simply an exemplar from the past; he was both present and actively engaged in his life, laboring in him. Ignatius thus understood himself as called to be a companion of Jesus and to labor with him.
- Spiritual Exercises: The *Spiritual Exercises* were born in the heart and soul of Ignatius Loyola: in his reflections on how God had been at work in his life and in his experiences of guiding others in their own spiritual journeys. The text is not a treatise on the spiritual life, but is more correctly a set of guidelines, like a teacher’s notes, intended for the use of a director in guiding a person in ‘making’ the Exercises.

The Exercises are usually made in one of three formats: (1) a 30-day silent retreat in a secluded place which includes 4 hours of contemplative prayer each day and meeting each day with one’s director (described in the 20th Annotation or preliminary observation in the *Spiritual Exercises*); (2) an abbreviated retreat, such as a weekend retreat based on Ignatian themes (an adaptation of the full Exercises described in the 18th Annotation); or (3) in the midst of one’s daily life during which the person devotes an hour each day to prayer for about nine months and meets weekly with her director (described in the 19th Annotation; the so-called ‘19th-Annotation’ retreat).

The Exercises are divided into what Ignatius calls four ‘weeks’ or stages:

preparation days: God’s profound love; not mentioned in the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, but of pivotal importance for all that follows

- Week I: Principle and Foundation: God's creative love, our 'creaturehood,' our indifference (interior freedom) in our use of creation
Sin: the reality of sin: frightful ingratitude toward a loving God, our own sinfulness, shame and confusion for our sinfulness, a heartfelt awareness that we are loved and forgiven sinners
- Week II: The Call of the King: Jesus' call to follow him, our response
Jesus' nativity, infancy, and public ministry: "becoming whom you contemplate"
Election meditations: the Two Standards, the Three Classes of Persons, the Three Degrees of Humility: interior attitudes for discipleship
- Week III: Jesus' passion and death: confirmation of our discipleship
- Week IV: Jesus' risen life: confirmation of our discipleship
Contemplation to Attain Divine Love: finding and loving God in all things

God is ultimately the Director (big 'D'). The person with whom the retreatant meets (her director: small 'd') is simply a companion on her journey. The retreatant, with the help of her director will be able to discern how God is guiding her and to what God is inviting her. The Spiritual Exercises are not a 'one size fits all' program; they are unique to each and every person.

Some Noteworthy Books

- William A. Barry and Robert G. Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002): an insightful consideration of the “polarities” – e.g., prayer and action, companionship and mission, etc. – which Jesuit spirituality holds in tension
- David L. Fleming, *What is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008): brief but excellent descriptions of various aspects of Ignatian spirituality
- David Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000): an excellent introduction to Ignatian spirituality
- Chris Lowney, *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company that Changed the World* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003): an insightful analysis of Jesuit spirituality
- Ignatius Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola*, with notes and commentary by Joseph Tylenda (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001): Ignatius' own story of his conversion, studies, and gathering companions; it concludes about two years before the Society of Jesus was formed; the notes and commentary make this edition particularly good
- James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (New York: HarperOne, 2010): a substantive yet very readable introduction to almost every aspect of Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality