

# Dear Brothers and Sisters



After high school he enlisted for the military, and saw active combat when fighting for his country.

His tour of duty was cut short when, defending a city under heavy fire, he was hit by a shell.

He survived, but his right shin was broken and his left calf torn open. It was a terrible injury, and unable to defend himself he was captured by the enemy and held for ransom. Receiving rudimentary medical care, his leg

was badly set by his captors, who then thought it necessary to break it again to try and re-set it. The leg healed, but after the second setting a bone stuck out under the knee, a visible deformity.

He was so vain, that he then had the protruding bone cut off, without anesthesia, so that he would still cut a good figure in his leggings.

A native Spanish speaker, his army buddies nick-named him Iggy. He came from the small town of Loyola, not in Texas, California, or New Jersey, but Spain. The battle he was injured in was fought not in Iraq or Afghanistan, but in Castile on May 20, 1521. We know him as Ignatius of Loyola.

His injury was the beginning of his spiritual conversion. While convalescing at home he asked for some reading material. He enjoyed romances and chivalry, but the only the only thing that could be found was a book on the saints. At first, he read just to pass the time away out of boredom, but then began to relish the stories and spent whole days reading them. He said to himself ‘These men were the same frame as I, why then should I not do what they have done?’

As he lay in bed for months recovering from his injuries, he became aware of one thing: when he read the lives of the saints and occupied his mind with thoughts of God his soul was filled with consolation, peace, and tranquility; but when he pondered on other things – e.g. his passion for glory, or his inclination for a lady of high degree - he perceived in his own heart the emptiness of all worldly glory.

Ignatius became the founder the Jesuits, the largest single Order of Religious men in the world today, and of whom our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is a member.

The Feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola is Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. Why not come to Mass that day, or join us on the live-stream, and be inspired and uplifted by this wonderful saint.

Fr. Sean