

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 500 years ago in Castile, Spain, on May 20th 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 thing available was a life of the saints. Out of boredom, to pass time, he began to read. He was surprised that he 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. This set the groundwork for what became known as the Spiritual Exercises.

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 Wednesday, July 31st. Why not come to Mass that day and be inspired and uplifted by this wonderful saint.

Fr. Sean