

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jul 31st 2015

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Priest

Today's Gospel works well with the feast of St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus and a most remarkable man. In the Gospel, people in the crowd begin to question Jesus' credentials. Who is he to tell them what to do? Where does he, a carpenter's son, get off preaching in the synagogue? Jesus' response: "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house." This fits with St. Ignatius because if you knew him as a young man, you would not have figured him for a saint. A nobleman, a soldier. — he seemed destined for a different life. The road he eventually chose wasn't always easy.

Things don't work out always as we have planned. Even Jesus had to preach to some pretty tough crowds. Ignatius turned away from a very different life to find what fulfilled him on deeper level. I have always admired Ignatius, the Spiritual Exercises and the ideals of the Jesuit charisms that I am lucky enough to be surrounded by at Creighton University. But it wasn't until I went to Rome on a vacation a number of years ago that I really connected with Ignatius. A Jesuit friend gave me a booklet that traced the steps of Ignatius and some of his companions in Rome. I found I could pull that book out almost anywhere and find traces of Ignatius. He wrote the Spiritual Exercises in his rooms right above here. He preached on this corner. He helped unmarried pregnant women there. He taught people here. He did everything. I came to really appreciate the man during those walks over the cobblestone streets of Rome. In the midst of the traffic and trappings of a modern city, I could sense the power of this man who lived hundreds of years ago. What he taught and lived resonated in a way that has stayed with me.

What really stuck with me is Ignatius' contemplation in action with emphasis on action. Ignatius did things. It is important that I live my faith in action. I try to see God in all things. I work at being a woman for and with others. I work at discerning what is God's will. It is not always easy. But I find that saying yes to God and yes to what I wasn't sure I could do has opened my world and me to things I never thought possible. One of my favorite prayers is this attributed to Father Pedro Arrupe, S.J.. I pray that I continue to look for and find God and that I am amazed with joy and gratitude.

Nothing is more practical than
finding God, than
falling in Love
in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.
It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read,
whom you know,
what breaks your heart,

and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in Love,

stay in love,

and it will decide everything.

Carol Zuegner-Creighton University's Department of Journalism