

February 05, 2015



SPIRITUALITY - *“I find safety in busyness, because I get to stay in control when I keep myself busy. It is when I stop being busy — when I stop doing more — that I am at my most vulnerable. It is here that I reveal my imperfect self to God.”* □ Brother Pat Douglas, SJ

January 8, 2015 — Next month, thousands of Jesuits and Ignatian partners will risk the “safety of busyness” by taking part in IGNITING OUR VALUES, the Jesuits' prayer program for Lent 2015. Together, we will prayerfully consider the meaning of discipleship and the significance of Ignatian values in today's dizzyingly distracted world.

Daily reflections will focus our prayerful attention on Jesus himself, who began the task of preparing his disciples for his Passion and death by asking, “Who do you say I am?” As we take up the Lenten journey toward Jerusalem, we will attempt to answer Jesus' question by asking ourselves, “Who do we say we are?”

What, precisely, does it mean to be Ignatian? What role do Jesuit/Ignatian values play in forming our spiritual, personal, familial and civic identities? Are we who we say we are?

IGNITING OUR VALUES will consider six Jesuit/Ignatian values, in light of the Lenten Gospel readings. Short daily reflections and specially composed prayers will focus our attention on Finding God in All Things, the Magis, the Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice, Apostolic Availability, Spiritual Discernment and Men and Women for Others. A carefully curated selection of music, video, art and poetry, as well as a special weekly focus on the Blessed Mother, will enhance the experience. (The reflections and the Gospel readings will be available in Spanish and English.)

Daily reflections were solicited from across the Jesuit/Ignatian spectrum. Our contributors are Jesuits and lay people, men and women, alumni, teachers, administrators, retreat directors, social workers, parish staff, spiritual directors, Ignatian partners and colleagues in mission. Their occupations range from sound editor to general contractor, from nurse to policy advocate, from lawyer to chef. A diverse group of ordinary people who share the extraordinary impact of Ignatian spirituality.

Cassandra Agredo, executive director of New York City's Xavier Mission, tackles the challenge of Ignatian identity head-on: "As a two-time alumna of Jesuit higher education and an employee of a Jesuit institution for the last eight years, I am very familiar with the Ignatian sayings that pepper all of our interactions ... The truth is that these values are not always uplifting. They are not always easy. Sometimes they are hard. They hurt. They take the wind out of your sails. They make you wish you'd gone to that non-Jesuit university instead."

Father James Martin, SJ, editor at large at America magazine and author of "Jesus: A Pilgrimage," addresses the scope of our religious identity: "In giving things over to God we are freed from whatever keeps us enslaved. In fact, God asks for even more. God asks for ourselves ... Hold back, and we are not truly free."

Mirabai Chuldenko, RN, a Loyola Marymount University alum and long-time Jesuit colleague, is a full-time critical care nurse and mother of two young children. Her reflection rings with hard-earned truths: "Finding God in all things is such a vital part of my agreement/covenant for daily life that — without it— I'd be unable to calm my mind, exercise sound judgment and provide excellent patient care" and "Finding God during emergency situations can be especially challenging; but the truth is, God is ALWAYS there."

David Miller, a Loyola University Chicago alum and co-founder and CEO of Iroquois Valley Farms, works for the Magis one acre at a time: "In today's world of global stress and seemingly insurmountable problems, we can lose perspective on the necessity to act. But there is one daily action that we can't forget: the need to eat."

Meg Madrigal Wilson, pastoral minister at Gesu Parish in University Heights, Ohio, speaks from the beating heart of a vibrant faith community: "How readily do I acknowledge or even recognize God in the ugly, the cruel, and the just plain annoying? How often do I even bother to look?"

Ron Dufresne, professor of Leadership, Ethics and Organizational Sustainability at Saint Joseph's University, shares a remarkable insight into becoming a man or woman for others: "This is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Instead, it is something we are all growing into, more today than yesterday ... we need to serve more today than we did yesterday, love more today than we did yesterday, become more humble today than we were yesterday. Through this struggle, we grow closer to who we want to become and we grow closer to those around us."

This Lent, as we follow Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, help us to "grow closer to who we want to become" by joining our prayerful examination of Jesuit/Ignatian identity.

From Ash Wednesday, February 18, through Easter Sunday, April 5, IGNITING OUR VALUES will be available and refreshed daily at jesuits.org/igniting . Or, if you prefer an offline experience, IGNITING OUR VALUES will be available as a daily email or a weekly PDF file. Just click below to subscribe.

IGNITING OUR VALUES: an Ignatian Pilgrimage

Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday 2015

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