

# *A Coffee with Alessio*



## **Saint Ignatius of Loyola**

Today is the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and so I am departing from commenting on the Sunday Lectionary this week.

Ignatius was born in Loyola in the Spanish Basque country. He was a soldier, but was wounded in the battle of Pamplona (against the French) at the age of 30. During a long period of convalescence he read about the life of Christ and the lives of saints, and decided to emulate them. During this time he discovered that his true vocation was to devote his life wholly to God. He was as systematic about this as he had been about his military career: he spent a year's retreat in a Dominican friary, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and then set about learning Latin. Before making his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he laid his military equipment before a statue of Mary at Montserrat, and spent several months in a cave near Manresa.

After enrolling in the University of Paris, he gathered six companions together, who would become the first members of the Jesuit Order (the Society of Jesus). In 1534 Ignatius and these six companions bound themselves to become missionaries to the Muslims in Palestine. By the time they were ready to set out, war made the journey impossible and so the group (which by this time had increased to ten) offered their services to the Pope in any capacity he might choose. Some of these men were ordained and they were assigned various tasks.

Ignatius was the first Superior General of the Jesuits and held that post until his death. He is known for writing the Spiritual Exercises, a systematic step-by-step retreat that can be followed by anyone.

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In last week's column, I mentioned that the great Italian film composer, Ennio Morricone passed away during the school holidays. In last week's column I said that I would write more about him

today since he would tie in better with the topic of my column. I hope I do justice to making the connection between him and the column. He is to the Italian film industry what John Williams is to the American film industry. Both men's film scores are examples of top quality music and have a way of hitting the spot and fitting the scene in the movie. My favourite piece by Morricone is *Gabriel's Oboe* from the film "The Mission".

"The Mission" is set during the Jesuit Reductions, a program by which Jesuit missionaries set up missions independent of the Spanish state to teach Christianity to the natives in South America. It tells the story of a Spanish Jesuit priest, Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons), who enters the South American jungle to build a mission and convert a community of Guaraní Indians to Christianity.

In the opening scene, a Jesuit missionary is lashed to a cross by the Guarani Indians who live above the spectacular Iguazu Falls. The missionary is then sent over the falls, cross and all, while praying fervently to God. His martyrdom inspires the gentle Father Gabriel to scale the hazardous falls and try to reach out to the tribe. Initially, the Guarani warriors prepare to kill him, but after Gabriel plays an unforgettable solo on his oboe, they allow him to live and he gradually wins their trust.

The previous two paragraphs have been taken from

[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091530/plotsummary?ref=tt\\_stry\\_pl#synopsis](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091530/plotsummary?ref=tt_stry_pl#synopsis)

The YouTube video of the scene from the film can be found at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAoT2ktM2H0&has\\_verified=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAoT2ktM2H0&has_verified=1)

So the work begun by Saint Ignatius Loyola, who himself needed conversion, has seen a long tradition of missionary activity since the Jesuits were founded in 1534. Whilst we may not all be called to go to South America or other "missionary countries" and risk our lives, nonetheless, each day the Lord calls us to be missionaries of his Gospel right here in our own city. I find it really interesting that the Guaraní Indians were converted by the musicianship of Father Gabriel. That ought to serve as a reminder to those of us who are liturgical musicians that we can win people over to Christ by our good choice of music and by our outstanding presentation of it as well. Let us use the power of music to inspire people for Christ. Just this week I answered a phone call from a young person (in their early twenties) who would like to join the Catholic Church. Whilst this Archdiocese, like many around the world, has its own Office for Christian Initiation, we shouldn't underestimate the power of our deeds and words to winning souls for Christ. You would think that with all the bad press the Church has received in recent times no one would be interested in joining. On the contrary, people want to follow Christ. Sometime, I would like to interview these young people who are joining the Church to find out what made them join.

So, in this coming week let us, like Saint Ignatius, the Jesuit missionaries and Father Gabriel, use our knowledge and talents to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in a world that is so deaf to His message, but we need to drown out the deafness by wearing our Catholic faith on our sleeve.

I visited Sherbert's Café in Maylands a couple of times during the holidays and enjoyed the company of a couple of good, young and faith-filled friends! Their apple and custard slice was truly delicious and a treat worth trying on this feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. That with a flat-white and good company was a treat!

So, I hope you enjoy your coffee and cake this weekend, and while you're at it, listen to a piece of Ennio Morricone's music. It will be well worth it!

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Pray for us.

Mr Alessio Loiacono  
Music Field Officer

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