Ignatius Loyola Speaks to a Modern-Day Parish
By Walter F. Modrys SJ

Karl Rahner SJ is generally acknowledged as one of the greatest Roman Catholic theologians of the 20th century. He died in 1984 at the age of 80. A few years before his death, he wrote a long essay entitled, “Ignatius Loyola Speaks to a Modern Jesuit.” It’s a beautiful piece, one of my all-time favorite spiritual writings. Since the feast of St. Ignatius is rapidly approaching on July 31st I took it down from my bookshelf and reread it.

When I was asked to write a bulletin essay this week anticipating Ignatius Day, I thought of mimicking Rahner’s essay with one entitled, “Ignatius Loyola Speaks to a Modern-Day Parish.” Sounds like a cool idea. Of course, I immediately came up with a problem: I’m no Karl Rahner! Let alone Ignatius Loyola! Nevertheless, trusting the indulgence of the audience, I thought I’d give it a try. What would Ignatius Loyola say to us at Old St. Joseph, all the way from the 16th century? My first reflection was a good starting point: much of what Ignatius says to the Jesuits—in Rahner’s interpretation—can apply just as much to all of us at Old St. Joseph.

Rahner had a knack for capturing the deepest aspect of Ignatius’ vision. So that’s where he begins. And it’s the best part of his essay. So let us begin there, too. Let me dare to switch the voice now and, in a feeble attempt to mimic Rahner’s far more insightful reflections, imagine how Ignatius might speak to our parish. (I hope that’s not too presumptuous).

Ignatius Loyola: The center of my life was my experience of God, the incomprehensible mystery that reaches out to us—a direct encounter with God. It is possible for human beings to know God because God comes directly to his creatures. And only when this happens, at the divine initiative, will they come to know God. They will be aware of the sovereign power of God who calls them into a life of freedom which is beyond anything that human beings can create on their own. From my earliest conversion and from then on, I knew the inscrutable incomprehensibility of God, ever more intensely, ever more purely.

This experience of God in one’s life must be the foundational experience upon which your parish is built. All the bonds of community, all the desiring for togetherness—even more intense now because of all the recent restrictions—indeed every parish activity must reflect this core experience of God’s presence and action in the world and among you. But flowing from this experience comes a mission. Certainly, my Jesuit sons who are called to serve the parish, but just as certainly every member of the parish community, are to be dedicated to the mission of what I called in my day, “helping souls.” This was my great desire: to tell people about God and his grace and about Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen One. His was the experience I longed to communicate to others.

I know that some who came after me made my spirituality—as others came to call it—overly introverted, introspective and individualistic, fashioning it at times even into something of a cult. I regret that development. But properly understood, the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises as I gave them to others was never intended to isolate people from the world or from the community of the church. For you

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at Old St. Joseph, the parish is to be a community of souls inflamed with the foundational sense of God and consumed with this mission of sharing that experience. I worry sometimes, therefore, when the gathering and fellowship is seen as an end in itself, when there is an emphasis only on drawing people together for whatever reason, for growing numbers, for activity for its own sake, but without attending to the soul that is to be helped to its own direct encounter with God. The wider church itself, certainly at times in its history, has been subject to this distortion, the betrayal of its true mission. Your liturgies, for example, can be turned into experiences, crafted more to entertain the senses or attract the mind without centering on the transcendent mystery of God who beckons our deepest being. That is why some of your reactionary contemporaries in the church at large have resisted liturgical reform, seeking the incomprehensible God in an archaic ritual foreign to your own culture and real-life experience.

Many of you experience a tension with what you call the hierarchical church. This is something I, too, experienced through much of my life from the very beginning when I was imprisoned by the inquisition in Spain and when my life-defining project of founding the Jesuit Order was threatened by the destructive interference of the Roman Pontiff. As you have heard before, the church is composed of human actors and so is always subject to the severe limitations of human frailty and even sinfulness. Some have construed my teaching as modeled on military discipline and unquestioned obedience, which is never what I wanted to communicate. For I always understood that the inevitable tension between the authentic spirit freely acting and the constraints of institutional order can never be definitively resolved. The conflict between conscience and obedience can be excruciating. And yet I wanted the Jesuit Order and those touched by the ministries of Jesuits to be men and women of the church. I have heard you speak of your parish as “the last stop on the way out the door.” If Old St. Joseph can serve such a purpose, I congratulate all who have made that possible. But I caution you to avoid any hint of arrogance or prejudice among yourselves. Would it be better for you to become known as “the first step on the way back home”? Your allegiance to the church should never be simply a conformity to institutional directives, no matter the extravagant claims that are sometimes made to support those directives as of divine origin. Still less should any among you see church allegiance as a path to self-aggrandizement, a temptation more open to your clergy than to the laity and sadly one to which even some of my own Jesuits have at times succumbed. But as I emphasized with such insistence in my Spiritual Exercises, all of us are vulnerable to the temptation to pursue power and influence and to conceal one’s selfish desires under the guise of cleverly constructed and intricate bureaucratic procedures, even on the parish level. For you, your participation in the life of the church is to be rooted first in the church’s origin, the in-breaking of the incarnate divine Word; and second in the church’s mission, to be the physical sign of that grace of Christ perduring through human history.

Your parish is admirable for its dedication to what in your own time is called social justice. But as a Christian community your activities are not to resemble the operations of a political association or lobbying group. Although some may have succumbed to this temptation in what you call the pro-life movement, remember that the moral issue you confront is not to be a result of the exercise of power, but rather the witness to the way of mercy and compassion towards your fellow human beings, especially to the poor. Success, therefore, is to be measured not just in external results. For a small organized body such as your parish will probably never dramatically impact the vast social and economic problems that so plague your communities. Rather, building upon the deepest core experience that must animate your efforts, and implementing your mission to share that experience with others, you are to bring compassion and mercy and a thirst for justice to a world in which those qualities are so sadly lacking.

Much more can be said, of course, for your need for wisdom and prudence as you pursue your mission is boundless. But finally, it is not my voice you must most heed, but that of the divine Word who has come into your midst to communicate the Holy Spirit. And as that divine Word has taught you, and as I experienced in my own time, the Spirit will teach you all that you need to know.

So might speak Ignatius, at least in my own imagination. Maybe you would like to add your own thoughts to those of Ignatius. Enjoy Ignatius Day on Friday, the 31st.
Daily Mass Intentions
Monday, July 27: Thomas Gallagher
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ
Tuesday, July 28
Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ
Wednesday, July 29
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ
Thursday, July 30: Marietta Krantz Schmidt
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ
Friday, July 31: Eileen Claudette Eldridge
12:05 PM Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ
6:00 PM Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ (livestreamed only)
Sunday, August 2
7:30 AM Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ
9:30 AM Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ (livestreamed only)
11:30 AM Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ

Scheduling Update
On August 2, Old St. Joseph’s will begin celebrating
7:30 AM Mass each Sunday. Archbishop Nelson Pérez’s
dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass
remains in effect. Guideline for attending Mass at Old
St. Joseph’s are available on our website (or by clicking
here). Please keep these things in mind as you decide
whether it is safe for you to attend public worship.

Please remember our sick and homebound
brothers and sisters,
our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital
and all those who have asked for our prayers.

George Bernato, Debbie Brooks, Ann Crowther,
Jane Crowther, Mary Kay Crowther, Barbara Epting,
Allan May, Jerry McAndrews SJ, Owen Petzelka,
Philip Press, Matthew Smith, Sara Smith, Sharon Winge
and Pat Yusko.

If you wish to have someone included on the parish prayer list,
please call BJ Brown at 215-923-1733
or email bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org.
Announcements

Rev. Bryan Massingale’s
*Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*
Following up the July 13 *Parish Conversation on Race*, Old St. Joseph’s adult education and Ignatian Spirituality Committees invite all members of the parish to read Reverend Bryan Massingale’s book called *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Father Massingale is a professor of applied ethics in the theology department of Fordham University. His research interests include, African American religious ethics, racial justice, liberation theologies, and race and sexuality. Book discussions (by Zoom) are scheduled for **Thursday, September 10 and Tuesday, September 29 at 7:30 PM**. Please join us!

Faith in Action:
*International Pandemic Relief*
The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is advocating that the US Congress allocate at least $12 billion for international aid in its coronavirus relief legislation. The USCCB wants to see this money directed to refugee communities and for clean water, nutrition and protective equipment in poor communities. You can add your voice to theirs by clicking on the USCCB Department of Peace, Justice and Human Development’s [Action Center](https://usccb.org/catholic-action) to email your Senators and Representative.

Philly Counts
Why should you take part of the 2020 census? Census data determines how many representatives each state has in Congress and how congressional district boundaries get drawn. Federal funding for infrastructure and services is based on census data. Business, non-profits and local governments base their planning and policies on census data too. Philadelphia’s future depends on the census. Get counted at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) or by calling 1-844-330-2020.

St. Ignatius Day Zoom Social
We will miss Old St. Joseph’s annual St. Ignatius Day dinner this year. But let’s not miss an opportunity to see one another; please join a Parish Zoom Social from **5:00-5:45 PM on Friday, July 31**, just before the live-streamed feast day **Mass at 6:00 PM on vimeo.com/osjphl**. The format will be simple, with time for introductions and sharing news updates; and breakout rooms if the crowd gets awkwardly large. Sign up [here](https://usccb.org/catholic-action) to receive the Zoom link at noon on Friday, July 31. See you then!

Catholics, Jews, and the Issues of Our Time
Join the Saint Joseph University Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations for a conversation between Archbishop Nelson Pérez and SJU professor Rabbi Abraham Skorka on **Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 7:30 PM**. As they discuss pressing issues facing both communities in American society today. Pre-registration is required at [sju.edu/ijcr](https://sju.edu/ijcr).
INFORMATION

Pastor
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar
Fr. Francis Hannafey SJ (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence
Br. Robert Carson SJ
Fr. Ed O’Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

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BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager
Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music
Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices
(office@oldstjoseph.org)

Religious Education (PREP) Coordinator
Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director
Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Hospital Ministry
Tom Volkert (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Rectory Office Hours
Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Mass Times
Monday–Friday at 12:05 PM.
Live-streamed at 9:30 AM Sunday; at vimeo.com/osjphl.
Public Mass at 7:30 AM and 11:30 AM Sunday.

Medical Emergency
In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements
Old St. Joseph’s is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

Registration
Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org. They can be returned to the parish office by mail or in person.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Priests are available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday by appointment; please call the parish offices.

Sacrament of Baptism
To arrange a baptism, please contact Fr. Hannafey (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org) at least two months before the desired date.

Eucharist for the Homebound
To arrange to receive Communion at home, please contact the parish offices.

The Sacrament of Anointing
Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony
If you want to be married at Old St. Joseph’s, please visit our website, oldstjoseph.org and read the material under the heading Weddings. Please call the parish office at 215-923-1766 at least nine months before your desired wedding date.

Rite of Christian Initiation
If you are an adult wishing to be baptized, or to receive First Eucharist and Confirmation, or are a baptized non-Catholic seeking full communion with Catholic Church, please call the parish office or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

Mass of Christian Burial
To schedule a funeral or memorial Mass, ask your funeral director to call the parish office.

Parish Pastoral Council
(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council
Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

Adult Education
Rita O’Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo
(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership
Pat Nelson (eldership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life
Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation
Len Mancini (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship
Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community
(osjyac@gmail.com)

Altar Servers
Maria Ramirez (altarserver@oldstjoseph.org)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Bill Stewart (EM@oldstjoseph.org)

Hospital Ministry
Luanne Balestrucci (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Homebound Ministry
Neal Hébert (homeEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Lectors
Lou Anne Bulik (lectors@oldstjoseph.org)

Ushers
Nikola Sizgorich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)
God Bless America

Please Continue To Pray For

World Peace

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