

**Ignatian Method**      Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time      Tuesday, July 31, 2018      Jer 14:17-22; Mt 13:36-43      **St. Ignatius of Loyola, priest**      (We could all grow in, is a sense of God's personal direction of our own lives. It does require that we set aside a certain amount of time and reflect.)

Today we are celebrating the memorial of **St. Ignatius of Loyola**. Ignatius was one **who had ears and who learned how to hear**. It didn't come easily for him; it doesn't come easily for anyone.

The whole biblical tradition begins with this sense that **God is graciously inviting people into a personal relationship**. Now in the **Old Testament the framework was communal**; it was the twelve tribes that were invited into relationship. In the New Testament it was **Christ who made things more personal, more intimate**, establishing a small band of disciples who knew him intimately and who after his resurrection carried out his message to the world.

But many Christians lacked a sense of this personal relationship, **this sense of not only a calling, but a direction and a guidance**. They may have used those words, but they didn't actually experience it. That's where Ignatius of Loyola really developed something very substantial, the so-called **Ignatian method**. It's a method of reflecting on one's life, not actually trying to plan or control anything, but **reflecting on: what is God actually already doing? What fruits can we already feel or experience or sense? Where do consolations come from? What causes desolation?** By following this general lead we recognize, or can recognize, that **grace is a constant presence personally leading each person**, each individual, not into isolation at all of course. **Ignatius found God leading him into a new brotherhood, which he called "The Society of Jesus," meaning a group that shared in the society, the companionship, *Societatis*, of Jesus**. So its very distinction was **this sense of the presence of Jesus, the risen Christ, in life**.

This is something **we could all grow in, a sense of God's personal direction of our own lives. It does require that we set aside a certain amount of time and reflect.** Rational creatures, which is what we are supposed to be, are endowed with the power to actually decide what is really good and to follow it.

Now what **sin** is is a breakdown in this process of discerning what is really good and following it. **Either there is no discernment in the first place, or there is but then there is no follow-through.** This two-step process is why we talk about **intellect and will. We have to see what is really good and then really want it.** This is very often, almost always, I would say really always, very different from what initially might appear to be good or worthy of our desire. But even then if we are simply rational, we might live a relatively austere, moral, proper life, but not with the real joy that God wants us to have. And **Ignatius was about that, about finding the joy that God really wants us to have, and to sacrifice absolutely everything in order to have it.**