



Château de Loyola

« DISCRETA CARIDAD »

This term, dear to Ignatius, links together *charity* (caridad) and *discernment* (discreta) as being inseparable one from the other.

Charity is the stream whose source is the Holy Trinity, flowing from and returning to that same

source. It is, within ourselves, that sense of limitlessness which reminds us that our desires are never realized and leaves « our heart without rest until it rests in God » (St. Augustine). It is, for the apostle, the conviction that what he has done is nothing and that his one wish is to be able to do « more ». It is that spiritual sense which makes it possible to « recognize God in ail things ».

Discernment, for Ignatius, is love incarnate. It is that sense of limitation within us that obliges us to choose among many possible options, so as to be of better service and it translates divine love into a precise human action. It is that humble seeking of what God wants « here and now ».

Charity without discernment is nothing more than a dream which wanders off the path of life only to lose itself in infinite which has no real content or meaning. Discernment without charity is nothing more than a fruitless search, incapable of grasping the finality of human action - and which has to settle for activism.

Only « charity with discernment » together, as perfectly lived by Jesus Christ who is Love Incarnate, can result in a synthesis of contemplation and action, desire and efficacy, universal and the individual.



Jean-Claude Dhôtel, S.J.

*Lord,
Take and receive,
all my liberty,
my memory,
my intelligence
and my entire will,*

all that I have and possess.

*It was You who gave
ail this to me ;
It is to You, Lord,
that I return it.*

*Everything is Yours,
dispose of it
according to Your will.*

*Give me Your love,
and Your grace, That
is enough for me.*

Contemplation to Obtain Divine Love
(Spiritual Exercices)

Ignatius of Loyola Who are you ?



1491

1556

TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST

In 1491, at the time of the Renaissance and Charles V, Ignatius was born in the Basque Country of Spain, the thirteenth and youngest child of the Loyola family.

Ignatius, speaking about himself at the end of his life, said : « *Up until my twenty-seventh birthday I was a man totally given to the vanities of the world* ».

His life would change in 1521, at the siege of Pamplona. A cannon ball, shot by the French, smashed his leg. Unable to move about, he read the *Life of Christ* and the *Lives of the Saints*. Moved by the person of Christ, he dreamt of doing great things in His service, in imitation of the saints.

Wanting to follow Jesus so as to come to know Him better and love Him more, he decided to go to the Holy Land to live, setting sail from Barcelona. He spent three days at the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, a town in the hills only a short distance from the city, but unable to secure passage right away he decided to spend a year (in prayer and penance) in the nearby town of Manresa. There God « *taught him as a teacher teaches a student* », enabling him « *to find God in all things* » and to become « *a contemplative in action* ».

1522-1523 : MANRESA

TO HELP SOULS

Every action requires a choice. Ignatius sought what it was God was asking of him « *here and now* ».

He discovered that « *God gives happiness* » and chose poverty so as to live as Jesus did. His desire was « *to help souls* ». His spiritual experiences, collected together and shared with others, gave birth to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

After a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, unable to live there as he had hoped, he decided to study so as to better « *help souls* », and at the age of thirty-three he became a student at Barcelona, Alcala and Salamanca. Because of the Spanish Inquisition, he went to Paris in February of 1528 to study at St. Barbe, close to St. Genevieve.

In Paris, other students joined up with him. His first companions were Peter Faber from Savoy and Francis Xavier from Aragon. Together with four others - the first seven companions - they pronounced their vows at the Martyrs Chapel at Montmartre, committing themselves to serve the Church with joy and zeal « *for the glory of God and the salvation of souls* ».

1528-1536 : PARIS

SERVE THE CHURCH

At the time of Luther and Calvin, Ignatius became the man so needed by the Church and the world. He would work to reform the Church from within.

In 1538 the first companions were together in Rome, ready to be sent on mission, either individually or as a group. Ignatius and his companions wanted to make themselves available for whatever the universal Church might ask of them, committing themselves by vow to be at the disposition of the Holy Father, « *Christ's Vicar* » here on earth.

The Holy Father gave his approval to the Society of Jesus in 1540 and to the Spiritual Exercises in 1547. Francis Xavier left for India, then on to Japan. Others went to Brazil and to other countries in Europe. In 1541 Ignatius was elected General of the Society. To this day the Spiritual Exercises remain the fundamental text by which the Society lives and works. In 1556, the year when Charles V abdicated, Ignatius died.

At the time of his death there were more than one thousand Jesuits. They went « *throughout the world* », wherever there were souls « *differing one from another in their customs and attitudes ; some at peace, others laughing ; some healthy, others sick ; some being born, others dying...* »

1537-1556 : ROME