



*The Stained Glass Windows*

THE EGAN CHAPEL  
*of*  
ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

Fairfield University



The Egan Chapel was built through the generosity of the Egan family and other benefactors. The chapel is dedicated to the memory of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

*The chapel was designed by Fletcher, Thompson, Inc. of Bridgeport, Connecticut.*

*The stained glass windows were designed, built and installed by  
The Malone Gallery of Newport, Rhode Island.*



**The following is a brief description of  
the stained glass windows in the chapel.**

High above the main altar is the stained glass window of Our Blessed Mother as described in *The Book of Revelation*: “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.”

To the left of the altar is the tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The designs of the stained glass windows surrounding the tabernacle reflect passages and parables pertaining to wheat, bread and life. The Ten Commandments are a reminder of how in the Old Testament the Commandments were kept in the Ark of the Covenant just as the Eucharist is kept in the tabernacle. The Tree of Good and Evil from the Book of Genesis reflects our concern for the food that we eat.

Floating above the tabernacle is the Angel of Sacrifice, holding shafts of wheat and stems of roses: wheat symbolizing the bread which gives us life and hope, the roses in loving memory of those murdered in San Salvador.

Further to the left of the tabernacle area is the Martyr Window dedicated to the six Jesuits and two lay women who were murdered in San Salvador on November 16, 1989.



To the right of the altar is the baptismal area. The windows behind the baptismal font reflect the cleansing of sin and the new birth of innocence received in baptism. The Old Testament scenes are those of Noah's Ark and of Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea. The shell and water in the center window represent the baptism of Christ at the Jordan by John the Baptist. The dogwood tree to the left symbolizes the Town of Fairfield, which is famous for its Dogwood Festival.

The Angel of Knowledge above the baptismal area holds in her hands the Book of Knowledge: a fitting symbol for a university setting.

The window to the right of the baptismal font represents various symbols of the Society of Jesus.

The sixteen stained glass windows in the main body of the church depict the life of St. Ignatius.

### **1491 - The Birth of Ignatius - Azpeitia**

Ignacio de Loyola (he would later be known as Ignatius) was born at his family's ancestral castle in 1491 in the town of Azpeitia in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa in northern Spain. He was the youngest of thirteen children. At the age of sixteen he was sent to serve as a page to Juan Velazquez, the treasurer of the kingdom of Castile. It was during these years that he began to train for the career of a soldier.

The castle as portrayed in the stained glass shows the two types of stone that were used in the building. This was for defensive reasons. The larger stones are at the more vulnerable base of the building and the more elegant bricks are placed at a higher level.

### **1521 - The Wounded Soldier - Pamplona**

On May 21, 1521, while defending the Spanish city of Pamplona from an attack by the French, Ignatius was struck by a cannon ball, wounding one leg and breaking the other. Because they admired his courage, the French soldiers carried him back to recuperate at his home, the castle of Loyola.

During the long weeks of his recuperation, he was extremely bored and asked for something to read. Amongst the books he read was a life of Christ and a book on the saints. The more he read, the more he considered the exploits of the saints worth imitating. Slowly but surely he began to realize that if he could not be a soldier in the service of his earthly king, he could become a soldier in the service of his heavenly king.

### **1522 - The Conversion - Montserrat**

In March of 1522, completely converted from his old desires and plans of romance and worldly conquests and recovered from his wounds enough to travel, he left the Loyola castle for Barcelona where he hoped to get a ship to Italy and eventually to the Holy Land.

The pilgrim (as he liked to call himself) made his way to the Benedictine shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat. Following the rites of chivalry, he made a general confession, and knelt all night in vigil before Our Lady's altar. In the morning, he left his sword at the altar, went out and gave away all his fine clothes to a poor man, and dressed himself in rough clothes with sandals and a staff. His conversion to a new way of life was now complete.

### **1523 - The Pilgrimage - Jerusalem**

Ignatius continued towards Barcelona but stopped at the town of Manresa. It was while here that the ideas for his book, the Spiritual Exercises, began to take shape. It was also in Manresa that he had a vision which seems to have been an encounter with God as He really is, so that all creation was seen in a new light and acquired a new meaning and relevance. This vision of finding God in all things is one of the central characteristics of Jesuit spirituality.

When he arrived in Jerusalem he wanted to remain, but was told by religious authorities there that the situation was too dangerous for him to remain. Jerusalem, at that time, was ruled by Turkish Muslims. They ordered Ignatius to leave. Ignatius refused but when threatened with excommunication, he obediently departed.

## 1534 - Vows of First Jesuits - *Montmartre*

In 1524, he was 33 years old and determined to study for the priesthood. Lacking any formal education, however, he had to begin with the study of Latin grammar at a school for young children in Barcelona. In 1528, ready to begin his final studies for the priesthood, he enrolled at the University of Paris.

It was in Paris that he met Francis Xavier and greatly influenced him and a number of other students by directing them for thirty days in the Spiritual Exercises. On the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1534, Ignatius and his companions in a small chapel on the side of the hill of Montmartre in Paris took vows of poverty, chastity and a third vow to go to the Holy Land.

## 1537 - Ordination - *Venice*

While waiting for a ship to the Holy Land they spent some time working in hospitals and teaching catechism in various cities of northern Italy. It was in Venice on the Feast of St. John the Baptist that Ignatius was ordained a priest, but he did not say Mass for another year. It is thought that he wanted to say his first Mass in Jerusalem in the land where Jesus himself had lived.

The small group then proceeded to Rome where Ignatius met with the Pope, who was very happy to put these dedicated men to work teaching scripture and theology and preaching. It was in Rome on Christmas morning, 1538, that Ignatius celebrated his first Mass at the church of St. Mary Major.

## 1540 - Papal Approval of Jesuit Order - *Rome*

During the year 1539 the first Jesuits began to plan out their future. After many weeks of prayer and discussion, they decided to form a religious community. Along with the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, they decided to take a fourth vow to go anywhere in the world that the Pope might send them. Formal approval of the new order was given by Pope Paul III on September 27, 1540.

The group took as their name the Society of Jesus, or more popularly, the Jesuits. Ignatius was elected the first superior general. On the Friday of Easter week, April 22, 1541, at the Church of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls, the friends pronounced their vows in the newly formed Order.

## 1556 - Death of Ignatius - *Rome*

For the next fifteen years Ignatius lived in Rome directing this new society. He would write the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, his own autobiography and thousands of letters to his fellow Jesuits and to his many lay friends. From his tiny quarters in Rome he would live to see the Society of Jesus grow to a thousand Jesuits, with colleges and houses all over the world.

On July 31, 1556, the former worldly courtier and soldier who had turned his gaze to another court and a different type of battle gave his soul into the hands of God. Ignatius was beatified on July 27, 1609 and canonized on March 12, 1622 together with St. Francis Xavier. Ignatius' feast day is celebrated on July 31, the day he died.



If you want to know more about Saint Ignatius there are a number of good full-length biographies and other books available. A few of them are listed below.



John W. O'Malley, S.J.  
*The First Jesuits.*  
Harvard University Press. Cambridge, 1993.

Philip Caraman, S.J.  
*Ignatius Loyola.*  
Harper & Row. New York, 1990.

Andre Ravier, S.J.  
*Ignatius Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus.*  
Ignatius Press. San Francisco, 1987.

Candido de Dalmases, S.J.  
*Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits.*  
Institute of Jesuit Sources. St. Louis, 1985.

Hugo Rahner, S.J. and Leonard von Matt.  
*St. Ignatius of Loyola.*  
Henry Regnery. Chicago, 1956.

James Brodrick, S.J.  
*The Origin of the Jesuits.*  
Loyola University Press. Chicago, 1986.  
"This is a reprint of the original 1940 edition and contains good short accounts of both St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier."



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