

## Reflection Saturday Week 17 St Ignatius Loyola 2021

**St Ignatius (1491 - 1556)** was born in Loyola (Spanish Basque country). He was wounded in the battle of Pamplona aged 30. While convalescing, he read a life of Christ and lives of the saints, discovering that his true vocation was to devote his life wholly to God. He spent a year's retreat in a Dominican friary, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and started learning Latin. His enthusiasm caused grave suspicion among the Spanish authorities who questioned and imprisoned him more than once. In 1528 he continued his studies in Paris. In 1534, Ignatius and six companions vowed to become missionaries to the Muslims in Palestine. However, war made the journey impossible, so they offered their services to the Pope. Some were ordained. All were assigned various tasks. Eventually, they formed the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in 1540. Ignatius was Superior General until his death. They responded to the challenges of the Reformation: a tough task, given the debilitated state of the Church, but one which Ignatius said had to be undertaken "*without hard words or contempt for people's errors*". Ignatius inspired friendship and received deep spiritual insights. He wrote the Spiritual Exercises, a systematic step-by-step retreat that can be followed by anyone. Ignatius' life reflected the words of St Paul: *Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God. Never do anything offensive to anyone – to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.* (1 cor 10) Given that everybody, without exception, will carry a cross in this life, rather than choose one of our own, we are offered a cross by Christ. With Jesus' cross we need not worry because Christ journeys with us. He guides and helps us through all the joys and sorrows, successes and failures. We are supported by Christ's goodness and love every step of the way, just as Ignatius was.