

Memorial of St. Ignatius of Loyola
The Year of St. Ignatius of Loyola
Remarks of Bishop John Barres
St. Agnes Cathedral
July 31, 2021

Father Stockdale, thank you for your inspiring homily and many thanks for the presence of your brother priests from Saint Anthony's Church in Oceanside - Father John Crabb, S.J., and Father Peter Murray, S.J. Please express my gratitude and fraternal best wishes to Father Vincent Biaggi, S.J. and to your pastor Father James Donovan, S.J.

Thank you to Father Daniel O'Brien, S.J., associate pastor of the shared parishes of Saint Martha, Uniondale and Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Roosevelt for your presence here today.

Together, Bishop William Murphy, Bishop Robert Coyle, Bishop Luis Romero, Fr. Bright, Fr. Herman, Fr. Alessandro da Luz, seminarian Louis Cona and I celebrate this historic moment with you, with our Holy Father Pope Francis, with Jesuits around the world, and with the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre and the universal Church.

It was in 1978 that Father Joseph Austin, S.J. arrived at Saint Anthony's in Oceanside as a new pastor with two other members of the Society of Jesus.¹ Our diocese and generations of Saint Anthony's parishioners have been blessed by the spiritual charism and evangelizing spirit of the Society of Jesus.

Founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the Society of Jesus or "the Jesuits", of which our Holy Father Pope Francis is a member, is the largest male religious order in the Catholic Church. It is a worldwide order of 16,000-plus priests, brothers, scholastics, and novices known for sanctity, a spirit of global mission, and intellectual charity and scholarship in every field as well as major scientific discoveries.

¹ My gratitude to Sean Dolan, Director of Communications, the *Long Island Catholic* staff, and Fr. Lachlan Cameron for their research and assistance in preparing these remarks.

Their ministry is one of courageous dedication to mission and faithful service to the Church. The vast number of Jesuit martyrs over the centuries shows this clearly. Indeed, more Jesuits have been martyred for the Faith than members of any other order.

These martyrs are close to us on Long Island for only a four-hour car ride away in upstate New York, the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville is dedicated to three Jesuits martyred at Ossernenon in 1642 and 1646, including the lay brother Saint Rene Goupil, the priest Saint Isaac Jogues and the lay brother Saint John Lalande.

Many Jesuits have given their lives to teaching, and perhaps the Jesuit teaching charism and such initiatives as the *Jesuit Volunteer Corp* have influenced you, your children, and grandchildren. Today, in the United States, in addition to numerous Jesuit high schools, there is a network of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities with over one million living graduates.

The Jesuits have also contributed so much to faithful theological study in the United States. We can think of priests such as Avery Cardinal Dulles S.J., a native of Auburn, New York; another New Yorker, Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., who played a prominent role in the Second Vatican Council's 1965 Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humane*); and Father Walter Ciszek, S.J., a native of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania who survived 15 years in a Russian prison camp – including five in solitary confinement. Father Ciszek grippingly tells his story in these books: *With God in Russia* and *He Leadeth Me*.

The 43 years of faithfully ministering with their Ignatian spirituality, charisms and pastoral sensitivity to the People of God at Saint Anthony's in Oceanside is a continuation of this long and rich history of service and commitment to mission that the Society of Jesus has had on Long Island long before the establishment of the diocese in 1957.

Here on Long Island, the Jesuit presence was most associated with the Gatsby-era Gold Coast Mansion off Searingtown Road in Manhasset.

Nicknamed *Inisfada* (Gaelic for "Long Island"), this 87-room, 90,000-square-foot mansion nestled within 300 acres on Long Island's North Shore was built between 1916-1920 by Genevieve Brady and her industrialist, philanthropist, husband, Nicholas.

The Bradys hosted grand parties for friends and dignitaries at their estate, but they were better known as a quiet Catholic couple who generously donated their time and substantial financial resources to the Church.

The Bradys built *Inisfada* with a beautiful chapel inside. Mass was celebrated every day — for the Bradys and their friends, as well as their staff. The chapel was kept open throughout the day for anyone to visit. Nicholas, a former Episcopalian who converted to Catholicism before he wed Genevieve, insisted on serving at the daily Masses.

While *Inisfada* was well known, less known was the fact that a future Pope visited Long Island and stayed as a special guest at *Inisfada* in October 1936. Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli — who would become Pope Pius XII fewer than three years later — was at the time the highest-ranking Vatican official to visit the United States.

Following the premature death of her husband at age 52, and without any children to pass it on to, Genevieve offered the house and property to the New York Province of the Society of Jesus. In 1937 the Jesuits accepted her gift. The Bradys also donated the buildings and grounds of the *Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth* located in Wernersville, Pennsylvania in the Diocese of Allentown.

The Jesuits decided to use the house at *Inisfada* as a seminary. In the fall of 1937, the Saint Ignatius House of Studies/Saint Ignatius College welcomed its first class of 43 seminarians. It remained a house of studies for first-year seminarians for only three years, however, before the Jesuits opened the house to the rest of the Order. For the next 22 years the house became a home base for Jesuits who served in missions and for conducting the retreats.

As the Jesuits faced increasing costs to maintain a mansion the size of *Inisfada*, they knew they would need some sort of income to maintain the property. In 1962, the mansion was turned into Saint Ignatius Retreat House.

For the next 50 years the house opened its doors to attendees of a wide variety of programs, lectures, and retreats. Married couples, families, teenagers, young adults, religious and priests from Long Island, the New York area and beyond encountered God on retreat there.

Such retreats were held every weekend and even during the week — traditional Jesuit retreats based on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Additionally, days of recollection for area high-school students and meetings for groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous were held at the retreat center.

During the 1970s, Marriage Encounter weekends and family retreats were popular, as were retreats for single parents. The house hosted speakers such as Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., as well as Jesuit priests and professors from Fordham University and other Jesuit institutions.

Innisfada was closed in 2012 due to a decline in revenue and inability to maintain the house and property. Sadly, it was sold and torn down. However, the chapel was preserved and its contents moved to Fordham University in the Bronx.

As we continue to celebrate this Ignatian Year, I invite each one of you to walk with me as we continue to explore the life and legacy of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this Mass, please join me in prayer that in the near future our Church will proclaim Saint Ignatius of Loyola to be a Doctor of the Church.

Like Saint Ignatius, whose life was transformed by reading about Jesus and the saints, may the Lord lead us all to conversion experiences that deeply focus our lives and the mission of the Church for the greater glory of God.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us!

St. Joseph, pray for us!

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us!

Saint Francis Xavier, pray for us!

Saint Rene Goupil, pray for us!

Saint Isaac Jogues, pray for us!

Saint John Lalande, pray for us!

All Jesuit saints, pray for us!