



Inigo makes a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the Autobiography of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

*The account of his life dictated to Father Luis Gonzalez de Camara
by
Saint Ignatius of Loyola*

HIS JOURNEY TO ROME, VENICE, JERUSALEM, AND THE HOLY LAND

After a voyage of five days and nights the vessel in which they set out from Barcelona reached Gaeta, and the pilgrim disembarked and started for Rome, although there was danger there on account of the plague. After reaching the city, he found the gates closed. He spent the night in a damp church, and in the morning sought to enter the city, but could not obtain permission. As no alms could be obtained outside of the city, he wished to go on to a neighboring village, but for sheer weakness, the pilgrim could go no farther. On that day it happened that a great procession came out of the city. On inquiry the pilgrim learned that the Duchess was in the throng. He approached her, told her that his malady was simply the effect of weakness, and asked permission to enter the city to get relief. She readily consented. He was successful and his strength returned, and two days later he resumed his journey, reaching Rome on Palm Sunday.

Those whom he met at Rome knew he had no money for his journey to Jerusalem. They tried to dissuade him from his undertaking, alleging that such a journey was impossible without money. He felt assured, however, that everything needed for his voyage would be at hand when required. Accordingly, on the octave of Easter, he received the blessing of Adrian VI and left Rome for Venice. He had in his possession six or seven pieces of gold which they had given him to pay his passage from Venice as far as Jerusalem. He had taken this money with him from Venice only because they had convinced him that without it he could not reach Jerusalem. On the third day from the time he set out from Rome, he realized that this fear had come from a want of confidence, and was sorry he had accepted the money, and was deliberating about giving it away. Finally, however, he determined to spend it on those he met, who were chiefly beggars. The result was that when he came to Venice he had only four coins left, and these were necessary for his lodging that night.

On this journey to Venice, on account of sentinels placed around the cities, he was obliged to sleep outside the walls. The dread of the pestilence was so great that one morning on rising he saw a man fleeing from him in terror. Pursuing his journey, he reached Chizoa with several others who had joined him on the road. There he learned that he would not be allowed to enter the city. He then proceeded with his companions to Padua, to get the testimony of a notary that the party was not stricken with the plague. Ignatius could not, on account of his weakness, keep pace with the others, and was left alone in an open field. Then Christ appeared to him, as He had appeared on former occasions. By this vision he was greatly strengthened and consoled. The next morning, filled with new courage, he came to the gate of the city, and although provided with no certificate, entered unquestioned by the guard. In the same way he left the city unquestioned. His companions were surprised at this, for they had to present a certificate, which he had taken no pains to procure. At Venice they begged their food, and slept in Mark's Square. Ignatius refused to go to the house of the Ambassador, and although he made no effort to get money for his voyage to Jerusalem, he felt sure nevertheless that God would provide him with means.

One day he met a rich Spaniard, who asked him whither he was going, and having learned his intention, brought him to dine at his house. Here he remained for several days. From the time he left Manresa, Ignatius, while seated at table with others, had made it a

practice never to speak except to give a brief answer to questions. However, he heard all that was said, and took occasion after dinner to give the conversation a spiritual turn. His host and all his family were so filled with admiration for him that they tried to induce him to remain with them, and introduced him to the Doge of Venice. The latter offered him accommodations on the government ship about to sail for Cyprus. Many pilgrims had assembled at Venice to go to Jerusalem, but the greater part hesitated through fear, as the Island of Rhodes had fallen into the hands of the Turks. Thirteen sailed in the pilgrims' ship, which was the first to weigh anchor. The government ship carried eight or nine. About the time of departure Ignatius was taken ill with a fever, which lasted several days. On the day of sailing he took the prescribed medicine, and asked the doctor if he could go. The doctor replied he could if he wished the vessel to be his tomb. Nevertheless he went on board, and after a fit of illness soon recovered.



The licentious conduct of those on board Ignatius severely censured. The Spaniards advised him not to do this, as the rest thought of abandoning him on an island. But the wind quickly conveyed them to Cyprus.



From Cyprus they went to another port called Salinae, ten leagues distant. Here he went on board the ship of the pilgrims, with no other provision than his hope in Providence. During all that voyage, the Lord often appeared to him, and gave him great consolation. The visions seemed to take the form of something large, round, and golden. The travelers reached Joppa, and seated on asses, after the custom of that region, they journeyed to Jerusalem. A noble Spanish gentleman, named Didacus Minez, as the pilgrims came in sight of the city, recommended silence and recollection.

All followed his suggestion, and when they saw a monk approaching with a crucifix, dismounted. On beholding the city, Ignatius was deeply affected, and the rest affirmed that they experienced a sort of heavenly joy. He always felt this same devotion whenever he visited the holy places. He decided to remain in Jerusalem, in order to visit the holy places often. For this purpose he had taken with him letters of recommendation to the Father Guardian. On presenting them, he said that he intended to remain there to satisfy his own devotion, but said nothing of his purpose of helping others. The Father Guardian told him he did not see how this could be possible, as his house was not even capable of providing for his own Religious, and he intended to send some away from the Holy Land. Ignatius said he wished him merely to hear his confession, since he had come to make it.

The Father Guardian said this could be done, but he should wait for the arrival of the Provincial, who was then at Bethlehem. Relying on this promise, Ignatius began to write letters to spiritual persons at Barcelona. He had written some on the day before he was to depart, when he was summoned in the name of the Father Guardian and the Provincial. Then the Provincial, addressing him kindly, said he had heard of his pious determination to remain in the holy places, and had given it serious thought. Many others had the same desire, some had died, others had been taken prisoners, and to his Order was left the work of ransoming captives, wherefore he should prepare himself to resume his journey with the pilgrims on the following day. To this Ignatius answered that his resolution was very fixed, and he did not think that anything would keep him from executing it. If the precept did not bind him under pain of sin, he would not allow any fear to keep him from carrying out his desire. The Provincial said he had authority from the Holy See to detain those he thought fit, and to even excommunicate those who would not obey when stopped by him, and he thought in this case it was better for him not to remain. When he wished to show the pontifical papers giving him power to excommunicate, Ignatius said there was no need, as he believed his word. If they had the authority, he would obey.



After this, returning to where he was before, he was seized with a great longing to visit Mount Olivet again before he departed, since the Divine Will would not suffer him to remain in those holy places. On that mountain is a rock from which Our Lord ascended to heaven, on which even now His footprints are visible. And this is what he wished to see again. Therefore, without telling any one, and without a guide, although it was a dangerous thing to go without a Turkish guard, secretly withdrawing he went to Mount Olivet alone. As the guards would not allow him to enter, he gave them his knife. After great consolation in prayer he desired to go to Bethphage. When he reached that place, he thought that on Mount Olivet he had not noticed the position of the right foot of Our Lord and that of the left. He came a second time, and gave his scissors to the guards to allow him to enter. Afterward when at the monastery it was discovered he had gone without a guide, a great search was made for him. Coming down from Mount Olivet he met a girdled Christian, those who are bound to wear a girdle to distinguish them from the Mussulmans; this man, pretending to be very angry, threatened him with a large stick, and approaching, firmly grasped him by the arm. He allowed himself to be led, but the good man once he had hold of him did not let him go. In the meantime, as he was thus led along a captive, he was visited with great consolation, as he seemed to see Christ walking above him. And this continued until he reached the monastery.

On the following day the pilgrims took their departure, and arriving at Cyprus, were assigned to different vessels. In the harbor of that place were three or four ships bound for Venice. Of these one belonged to some Turks; another was too small; but the third, the property of a wealthy Venetian, was very large and strong.

Some of the band asked the captain of this last to take the pilgrim aboard; but, finding that no pay was to be offered, he refused, in spite of the fact that many begged him and

were loud in their praises of the pilgrim. His reply was, that if the pilgrim were indeed a holy man, he might cross the sea as St. James did.



The favor they asked was easily obtained of the captain of the smaller ship.

On a certain day they set sail with a favorable wind, but toward evening a storm arose, which tossed the vessels about in different directions. The large ship, whose captain had refused to take Ignatius, was driven by the tempest against the Island of Cyprus, and dashed to pieces. A like fate overtook the Turkish vessel. The small ship, however, though for a long time severely tried by wind and waves, finally reached the shores of Apulia in safety.

Although the winter had set in with intense cold and a heavy fall of snow, Ignatius had no garments save a pair of knee-breeches of a very rough texture, leaving the legs naked, a black waistcoat open and quite ragged about his shoulders, a light cloak made of coarse hair, and a pair of shoes. He arrived at Venice about the middle of January, having spent a good part of the preceding month and all of November aboard the ship which carried him from Cyprus.

At Venice, he met a friend who had been kind to him on his way to Jerusalem. From him

he received alms and some cloth, which he wrapped about his body as a protection against the intense cold.

When Ignatius understood that God did not wish him to remain at Jerusalem, he began to consider what he should do. The plan he approved and adopted was to enter upon a course of study in order to be better fitted to save souls. For this purpose he determined to go to Barcelona, and setting out from Venice he traveled toward Genoa.

