

# IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* AND SELECTED WORKS

---

EDITED BY  
GEORGE E. GANSS, S.J.

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF  
PARMANANDA R. DIVARKAR, S.J., EDWARD J. MALATESTA, S.J.,  
AND MARTIN E. PALMER, S.J.

PREFACE BY  
JOHN W. PADBERG, S.J.



PAULIST PRESS  
NEW YORK • MAHWAH

IGNATIUS'  
WRITINGS

A. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Introduction	67
<i>Contents of the Autobiography</i>	
1. Pamplona and Loyola (Mid-May, 1521–Late February, 1522)	68
2. Road to Montserrat (Late February, 1522)	73
3. Sojourn at Manresa (March 25, 1522–February 17–18? 1523)	76
4. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Mid-March–September 22, 1523)	83
5. The Return Voyage (October 23, 1523–February, 1524)	88
6. Barcelona and Alcalá (February or March, 1524–June 21, 1527)	91
7. Troubles at Salamanca (Mid-July–Mid-September, 1527)	95
8. At the University of Paris (February 2, 1528–April, 1535)	99
9. Farewell to Spain (October–November, 1535)	105
10. Venice and Vicenza (January, 1536–November, 1537)	107
11. The First Year in Rome (1538)	110

## INTRODUCTION

The *Autobiography* is the last of Ignatius' books. Here, however, we place it first because it furnishes so much information basic for the deeper understanding and interpretation of all the rest, particularly in regard to his mystical favors.

In a preface probably written in 1558, Câmara describes the procedure by which the book was produced. Ignatius "began to tell me about his whole life" (Preface no. 2). He narrated with such clarity that the past seemed to become present again. He "dictated while pacing about, as he had always done before" (no. 5). However, this was not a dictation intended for verbatim transcription. Instead, Câmara listened attentively and then immediately after the session he jotted down the main points of what he had heard. He strove "not to put down any words except those that I heard from the Father" (no. 3). Later—perhaps by some days—he expanded these points to what is our present text, and then dictated them to a secretary for verbatim transcription—in Spanish for sections 1–79a, in Italian for 79b–101 because he dictated this section in Genoa, where he had no Spanish amanuensis.

The *Autobiography* is a highly reliable historical source. Even though it is not verbatim transcription, its words approximate those used by Ignatius. He used a simple, straightforward manner of relating events. What resulted is our most fundamental testimony about his life. Most of the statements in the *Autobiography* are corroborated by other documents. Of course, as is often the case with historical sources, problems occur in the harmonization of details that seem to conflict, such as Ignatius' own statements about his age in *Autobiography* 1 and 30. Nevertheless, a statement by Ribadeneira well sums up the whole situation: "Ignatius was completely trustworthy in regard to the substance of his narrative, though in his advanced age he may have had slips of memory in recounting details long past."<sup>1</sup>

In manuscripts of the *Autobiography* there are marginal notes at twelve passages. No doubt they were written by Câmara himself. He added them at different times up to 1562 for various purposes: to supply something he forgot earlier, or to clarify a time or place, or to give something which may have come from Ignatius but at a time other than the narration. The notes on 8 and 30 could well be information obtained

from Ignatius; but the others ought not to be cited as the founder's unless there is some proof.<sup>2</sup>

Copies of the finished portions of this work circulated among Jesuits in Rome before Câmara's departure for Portugal on October 23, 1554. Hence Ignatius probably saw them. In 1557 Nadal had a copy of the complete Spanish-Italian text, and he drew from it in exhortations in Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere. Hannibal du Coudret translated the Spanish-Italian text into Latin, probably between 1559 and 1561.<sup>3</sup> However, almost inexplicably to our modern mentality, the *Autobiography* remained unpublished until the Bollandist Jean Pien printed Coudret's Latin translation at Antwerp in 1731. What caused this long delay? Ribadeneira had been commissioned to write his lengthy life of Ignatius, which appeared in classical Spanish and Latin. The fathers general, probably thinking it more presentable than Ignatius' work, which was unfinished and deficient in literary style, recalled the copies of the *Autobiography* to Rome, where they remained in the Society's archives. Câmara's Spanish-Italian text was first published in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* in 1904; then in a better critical text edited by D. F. Zapico and C. de Dalmases with copious explanatory notes in *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio I* (1943): 67-323, and again by Dalmases in successive editions of *Obras completas de San Ignacio* after 1963. The English translation used here is that of Father Parmananda Divarkar, who for nine years was a General Assistant to Father General Pedro Arrupe and presently resides in St. Mary's, Mazagaon, Bombay, India. The commentary by way of footnotes is by the present editor, who drew heavily from the introduction and commentary of Dalmases in the *Obras completas* and from Joseph N. Tylenda's *A Pilgrim's Journey* (Wilmington, 1985).

\* \* \*

### Ch. 1. PAMPLONA AND LOYOLA Mid-May, 1521—Late February, 1522

1. Up to the age of twenty-six<sup>1</sup> he was a man given to the vanities of the world; and what he enjoyed most was warlike sport, with a great and foolish desire to win fame.

And so, whilst in a fortress that the French were attacking, when all were of the view that they should surrender, with their lives safeguarded—for they saw clearly that they could not offer resistance—he gave so many reasons to the commander that he actually persuaded him to resist, even against this view of all the officers, who drew courage from his spirit and determination.

When the day came on which the bombardment was expected, he confessed to one of these companions in arms.<sup>2</sup> And after the bombardment had lasted a good while, a shot struck him on one leg, shattering it completely; and as the cannon ball passed between both legs, the other also was badly injured.

2. So with his fall those in the fortress soon surrendered to the French, who on taking possession of it treated the wounded man very well—treated him with courtesy and kindness. And after he had been in Pamplona for twelve or fifteen days, they took him home in a litter. Here he felt quite unwell. All the doctors and surgeons who were summoned from many places decided that the leg ought to be broken again and the bones reset, saying that because they had been badly set the other time, or had got broken on the road, they were out of place, and this way he could not mend. And once again this butchery was gone through. During it, as in all the others he underwent before or after, he never said a word nor showed any sign of pain other than to clench his fists tightly.

3. Yet he kept getting worse, not being able to eat, and with the other symptoms that usually point to death. When St. John's day came, because the doctors were far from confident about his health, he was advised to confess. He received the sacraments on the eve of St. Peter and St. Paul. The doctors said that if he did not feel any improvement by midnight, he could be taken for dead. It happened that this sick man was devoted to St. Peter, so Our Lord deigned that he should begin to get better that very midnight. His improvement proceeded so well that some days later it was judged that he was out of danger of death.

4. And his bones having knit together, one bone below the knee was left riding on another, which made the leg shorter. The bone protruded so much that it was an ugly business. He could not bear such a thing because he was set on a worldly career and thought that this would deform him; he asked the surgeons if it could be cut away. They said that it could indeed be cut away, but that the pain would be greater than all that he had suffered, because it was already healed and it would take a

Yet as much as he avoided favorable notice, he could not remain long in Manresa before people had a big story to tell (their ideas coming from what happened at Montserrat). And soon the tale grew into saying more than the truth: That he had given up a large income, and the like.

### Ch. 3. SOJOURN AT MANRESA March 25, 1522–February 17–18? 1523

19. He begged alms in Manresa every day. He did not eat meat nor drink wine, even though they were offered to him. He did not fast on Sundays, and if they gave him a little wine, he drank it. Because he had been very fastidious in taking care of his hair, as was the fashion at that time (and his was handsome), he decided to let it go its way according to nature without combing or cutting it or covering it with anything by night or day. For the same reason he let the nails grow on toes and fingers because he had been fastidious in this too.

While in this hospice it often happened that in broad daylight he saw something in the air near him. It gave him great consolation because it was very beautiful—remarkably so. He could not discern very well the kind of thing it was, but in a way it seemed to him to have the form of a serpent with many things that shone like eyes, though they were not. He found great pleasure and consolation in seeing this thing, and the oftener he saw it the more his consolation grew. When it disappeared, he was displeased.<sup>7</sup>

20. Until this time he had remained always in nearly the same interior state of very steady joy, without having any knowledge of interior things of the spirit. The days while that vision lasted or somewhat before it began (for it lasted many days), a forceful thought came to trouble him by pointing out the hardships of his life, like a voice within his soul, "How will you be able to endure this life for the seventy years you have to live?" Sensing that it was from the enemy, he answered interiorly with great vehemence, "Wretch! Can you promise me an hour of life?" So he overcame the temptation and remained at peace. This was the first temptation that came to him after what is mentioned above. It happened when he was entering a church where he heard High Mass each day and Vespers and Compline, all sung, finding in this great comfort. Usually he read the Passion at Mass, always retaining his serenity.

21. But soon after the temptation noted above, he began to have great changes in his soul. Sometimes he felt so out of sorts that he found

no relish in saying prayers nor in hearing Mass nor in any other devotion he might practice. At other times quite the opposite of this came over him so suddenly that he seemed to have thrown off sadness and desolation just as one snatches a cape from another's shoulders. Now he started getting perturbed by these changes that he had never experienced before, and he said to himself, "What new life is this that we are now beginning?"

At this time he still conversed occasionally with spiritual persons who had regard for him and wanted to talk to him, because even though he had no knowledge of spiritual matters, yet in his speech he revealed great fervor and eagerness to go forward in God's service. At that time there was at Manresa a woman of great age, with a long record also as a servant of God, and known as such in many parts of Spain, so much so that the Catholic King had summoned her once to communicate something. One day this woman, speaking to the new soldier of Christ, said to him, "Oh! May my Lord Jesus Christ deign to appear to you some day." But he was startled at this, taking the matter quite literally, "How would Jesus Christ appear to me?" He persevered steadily in his usual confession and communion each Sunday.<sup>8</sup>

22. But here he began to have much trouble from scruples,<sup>9</sup> for even though the general confession he had made at Montserrat had been quite carefully done and all in writing, as has been said, still at times it seemed to him that he had not confessed certain things. This caused him much distress, because although he had confessed them all, he was not satisfied. Thus he began to look for some spiritual men who could cure him of these scruples, but nothing helped him. Finally a doctor of the cathedral, a very spiritual man who preached there, told him one day in confession to write down everything he could remember. He did so, but after confession the scruples still returned, becoming increasingly minute so that he was in great distress.

Although he was practically convinced that those scruples did him much harm and that it would be good to be rid of them, he could not break himself off. Sometimes he thought it would cure him if his confessor ordered him in the name of Jesus Christ not to confess anything of the past; he wanted his confessor to order him thus, but he did not dare say this to his confessor.

23. But without his saying so his confessor ordered him not to confess anything of the past, unless it was something quite clear. But since he found all those things to be very clear, this order was of no use to him, and so he continued with the difficulty. At this time he was

staying in a small room that the Dominicans had given him in their monastery. He persevered in his seven hours of prayer on his knees, getting up regularly at midnight, and in all the other exercises mentioned earlier. But in none of them did he find any cure for his scruples, and it was many months that they were tormenting him.

Once when he was very distressed by them, he began to pray, and roused to fervor he shouted out loud to God, saying, "Help me, Lord, for I find no remedy in men nor in any creature; yet if I thought I could find it, no labor would be hard for me. Yourself, Lord, show me where I may find it; even though I should have to chase after a puppy that it may give me the remedy, I will do it."

24. While he had these thoughts, the temptation often came over him with great force to throw himself through a large hole in his room, next to the place where he was praying. But realizing that it was a sin to kill oneself, he shouted again, "Lord, I will do nothing that offends you," repeating these words many times, as well as the previous ones. Then there came to his mind the story of a saint who, in order to obtain from God something that he wanted very much, went without eating many days until he got it. Thinking about this for a good while, he at last decided to do it, telling himself that he would not eat nor drink until God succored him, or until he saw that death was quite close. For should it happen that he found himself at the extreme limit, so that he would soon die if he did not eat, then he thought to ask for bread and to eat (as if indeed at that limit he would be able to ask or to eat).

25. This happened one Sunday after he had received Communion; he persevered the whole week without putting anything into his mouth, not ceasing to do his usual exercises, even going to divine office and saying his prayers on his knees, even at midnight, and the like. But when the next Sunday came and he had to go to confession, since he used to tell his confessor in great detail what he had done, he also told him how he had eaten nothing during that week. His confessor ordered him to break that fast; and though he still felt strong, he nevertheless obeyed his confessor. And that day and the next he felt free from scruples. But on the third day, which was Tuesday, while at prayer he began to remember his sins; and so, as in a process of threading, he went on thinking of sin after sin from his past and felt he was obliged to confess them again. But after these thoughts, disgust for the life he led came over him, with impulses to give it up.

In this way the Lord deigned that he awake, as from sleep. As he now had some experience of the diversity of spirits from the lessons

God had given him, he began to examine the means by which that spirit had come. He thus decided with great lucidity not to confess anything from the past anymore; and so from that day forward he remained free of those scruples and held it for certain that Our Lord had mercifully deigned to deliver him.

26. Besides his seven hours of prayer, he busied himself helping in spiritual matters certain souls who came there looking for him. All the rest of the day he spent thinking about the things of God that he had meditated upon or read that day. But when he went to bed, great enlightenment, great spiritual consolations, often came to him; so that they made him lose much of the time he had allotted to sleep, which was not much. Examining this several times, he thought to himself that he had ample time assigned for converse with God, and all the rest of the day as well; and he began to doubt, therefore, whether that enlightenment came from a good spirit. He concluded that it would be better to ignore it and to sleep for the allotted time. And so he did.<sup>10</sup>

27. He continued to abstain from eating meat and was so determined about it that he would not think of changing it for any reason; but one day, when he got up in the morning, edible meat appeared before him as if he saw it with his ordinary eyes, though no desire for it had preceded. At the same time he also had a strong inclination of his will to eat it from then on. Although he remembered his previous intention, he had no doubt about this, but rather a conviction that he ought to eat meat. Later when telling this to his confessor, the confessor told him to consider whether perhaps this was a temptation; but examining it carefully, he could never doubt about it.

God treated him at this time just as a schoolmaster treats a child whom he is teaching.<sup>11</sup> Whether this was because of his lack of education and of brains, or because he had no one to teach him, or because of the strong desire God himself had given him to serve him, he believed without doubt and has always believed that God treated him in this way. Indeed, if he were to doubt this, he would think he offended his Divine Majesty. Something of this can be seen from the five following points.

28. FIRST. He had great devotion to the Most Holy Trinity, and so each day he prayed to the three Persons separately. But as he also prayed to the Most Holy Trinity, the thought came to him: Why did he say four prayers to the Trinity? But this thought gave him little or no difficulty, being hardly important. One day while saying the Office of Our Lady on the steps of the same monastery, his understanding began to be elevated so that he saw the Most Holy Trinity in the form of three

musical keys.<sup>12</sup> This brought on so many tears and so much sobbing that he could not control himself. That morning, while going in a procession that set out from there, he could not hold back his tears until dinner-time; nor after eating could he stop talking about the Most Holy Trinity, using many comparisons in great variety and with much joy and consolation. As a result, the effect has remained with him throughout his life of experiencing great devotion while praying to the Most Holy Trinity.

29. SECOND. Once, the manner in which God had created the world was presented to his understanding with great spiritual joy. He seemed to see something white, from which some rays were coming, and God made light from this. But he did not know how to explain these things, nor did he remember too well the spiritual enlightenment that God was imprinting on his soul at the time.

THIRD. At Manresa too, where he stayed almost a year, after he began to be consoled by God and saw the fruit which he bore in dealing with souls,<sup>13</sup> he gave up those extremes he had formerly practiced, and he now cut his nails and his hair. One day in this town while he was hearing Mass in the church of the monastery mentioned above, at the elevation of the Body of the Lord, he saw with interior eyes something like white rays coming from above. Although he cannot explain this very well after so long a time, nevertheless, what he saw clearly with his understanding was how Jesus Christ our Lord was there in that Most Holy Sacrament.

FOURTH. Often and for a long time, while at prayer, he saw with interior eyes the humanity of Christ. The form that appeared to him was like a white body, neither very large nor very small, but he did not see any distinction of members. He saw it at Manresa many times. If he should say twenty or forty, he would not dare judge it a lie. He has seen this another time in Jerusalem and yet another while traveling near Padua.<sup>14</sup> He has also seen Our Lady in a similar form, without distinguishing parts. These things he saw strengthened him then and always gave him such strength in his faith that he has often thought to himself: If there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he would be resolved to die for them, solely because of what he has seen.

30. FIFTH. Once he was going out of devotion to a church situated a little more than a mile from Manresa; I believe it is called St. Paul's, and the road goes by the river. As he went along occupied with his devotions, he sat down for a little while with his face toward the river, which ran down below. While he was seated there, the eyes of his

understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship,<sup>15</sup> and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.

[*Cámara*]: This left his understanding so very enlightened that he felt as if he were another man with another mind.

The details that he understood then, though there were many, cannot be stated, but only that he experienced a great clarity in his understanding. This was such that in the whole course of his life, after completing sixty-two years, even if he gathered up all the various helps he may have had from God and all the various things he has known, even adding them all together, he does not think he had got as much as at that one time.<sup>16</sup>

31. After this had lasted for a good while, he went to kneel before a nearby cross to give thanks to God. There, the vision that had appeared to him many times but which he had never understood, that is, the thing mentioned above which seemed very beautiful to him, with many eyes, now appeared to him. But while before the cross, he saw clearly that the object did not have its usual beautiful color, and he knew very clearly with a strong agreement of his will that it was the devil. Later it would often appear to him for a long time; and by way of contempt he dispelled it with a staff he used to carry in his hand.<sup>17</sup>

32. Once while he was ill at Manresa, a very severe fever brought him to the point of death, and he fully believed that his soul was about to leave him. At this a thought came to him telling him that he was a just man, but this caused him so much trouble that he constantly rejected it and called his sins to mind. He had more trouble with this thought than with the fever itself, but no matter how much trouble he took to overcome the thought, he could not overcome it. Then somewhat relieved of the fever, he was no longer at the point of expiring, and he began to shout loudly to some ladies who had come there to visit him, that for the love of God, when they next saw him at the point of death, they should shout at him with loud voices, addressing him as sinner: Let him remember the offenses he had committed against God.

33. Another time, while he was going by sea from Valencia to Italy in a violent storm, the rudder of the ship was broken, and the situation reached such a pass that in his judgment and that of many others who sailed on the ship, they could not by natural means escape death. At this time, examining himself carefully and preparing to die, he could not feel afraid for his sins or of being condemned, but he did feel embarrassment

and sorrow, as he believed he had not used well the gifts and graces which God our Lord had granted him.

Another time, in the year '50, he was very bad with a very severe illness which in his opinion as well as in that of many others would be the last. At this time, thinking about death, he felt such joy and such spiritual consolation at having to die that he dissolved entirely into tears. This became so habitual that he often stopped thinking about death so as not to feel so much of that consolation.

34. When winter came he was down with a very severe illness, and for treatment the town put him in a house of the father of one Ferrera, who was later in the service of Baltasar de Faria. There he was cared for with great attention; and many prominent ladies, because of the deep regard they now had for him, came to watch over him by night. Though he recovered from this illness, he was still very weak and with frequent stomach pains. For these reasons, therefore, and because the winter was very cold, they made him dress up and wear shoes and cover his head; so they made him use two brown jackets of very coarse cloth and a cap of the same, something like a beret. At this time there was a long period during which he was very eager to converse on spiritual matters and to find persons who could deal with them. Meanwhile, the time was approaching when he planned to set out for Jerusalem.

35. So at the beginning of the year '23 he set out for Barcelona to take ship. Although various people offered to accompany him, he wanted to go quite alone, for his whole idea was to have God alone as refuge. One day some persons were strongly urging him to take a companion, since he did not know either the Italian or the Latin language. They told him how much this would help him and praised a certain person highly. He replied that even if the companion were the son or the brother of the Duke of Cardona, he would not go in his company. For he wanted to practice three virtues—charity, faith, and hope; and if he took a companion, he would expect help from him when he was hungry; if he fell down, the man would help him get up. He himself, too, would trust the companion and feel attachment to him on this account. But he wanted to place that trust, attachment, and expectation in God alone.

What he said in this way he felt just so in his heart. With these thoughts he not only had the desire to set out alone but to go without any provisions. When he began to arrange for his passage, he got round the master of the ship to carry him free, as he had no money, but on

condition that he brought to the ship some biscuit for his sustenance; otherwise, for nothing in the world would they accept him.

36. When he went to obtain the biscuit, great scruples came over him: "Is this the hope and faith you had in God who would not fail you?" and the like. This was so powerful as to trouble him greatly; at last, not knowing what to do because he saw probable reasons on both sides, he decided to place himself in the hands of his confessor. So he told him how much he wanted to seek perfection and whatever would be more to the glory of God, and the reasons that caused him to doubt whether he ought to take any provisions. The confessor decided that he should beg what was necessary and take it with him.

As he begged from a lady, she asked where he was planning to travel. He hesitated a bit whether he would tell her, but at last he ventured to say no more than that he was going to Italy and to Rome. And as if in amazement, she said, "You want to go to Rome? Well, I don't know how those who go there come back." (She meant to say that in Rome one profited little in spiritual things.) Now the reason why he did not dare say that he was going to Jerusalem was fear of vainglory. This fear haunted him so much that he never dared say to what country or to what family he belonged. At last, having the biscuit, he went on board. But at the shore he found he had five or six *blancas*<sup>18</sup> left from what he was given begging from door to door (for he used to live that way). He left them on a bench that he came across there by the shore.

37. So he embarked, having been in Barcelona a little more than twenty days. While he was still in Barcelona before embarking, he sought out, as was his practice, all spiritual persons to converse with them, even though they lived in hermitages far from the city. But neither in Barcelona nor in Manresa during the whole time he was there did he find persons who could help him as much as he wished. He found in Manresa only that woman mentioned above, who told him she prayed God that Jesus Christ might appear to him. She alone seemed to him to enter more deeply into spiritual matters. Therefore, after leaving Barcelona, he completely lost this eagerness to seek out spiritual persons.

#### Ch. 4. PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM

Mid-March–September 22, 1523

38. They had such a strong wind at the stern that they reached Gaeta from Barcelona in five days and nights, though they were all thoroughly frightened because of very rough weather. Throughout all