A REFLECTION ON THE IGNATIAN YEAR
(Inspired by https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/ignatian-year/)

This reflection is centered around the theme of the Ignatian Year, which the Jesuits are inviting all of us to celebrate with them through next July. It’s called the Ignatian Year because May 20th of this year marked the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius’ conversion — 500 years since a cannonball struck the soldier, shattered his legs and confined him to bedrest for months. If it hadn’t been for that painful injury, Ignatius never would have read the stories of Christ and the saints, never would have reevaluated his life, committed himself to God’s work, written the Spiritual Exercises or founded the Jesuits, who in turn founded Seattle U.

The invitation of this Ignatian Year is to meditate on the moment in St. Ignatius’ life that caused him to embark on a journey - to re-examine life, discern between spirits, and choose a more authentic and just way of being in the world. This exercise is designed to help us begin to reflect on our own “cannonball moments,” and to discern how we too might be called to see things in a new way and live more fully into who we’re meant to be as we re-enter life and work this quarter.

I ask for the grace of this Ignatian Year, the grace “to see all things new.”

I go back into my memory to recall a moment in my life that felt like a turning point – maybe not as dramatic as being hit by a cannonball - but a time when I might have turned away from a previous way of being and entered more deeply into who I was called to be, my own authentic way of living and serving in the world. It could be a painful event, a significant change in life...a relationship, a child, a new job...or it could be simply a gradual realization that shifted something in me.

Inigo had an overinflated sense of himself before his conversion. As I reflect on the time before my turning point:

• What role might my ego have played? How might it have harmed others or myself?
• In what ways – perhaps painful, perhaps healing – did God/Love/Mystery break through to me?

I reflect on what I am carrying into this new academic year.

• In what ways am I being invited to enter more deeply into my calling, into who I am meant to be in my personal life and/or work life?
• What signs of ego, habits or expectations might I need to let go of?
• How am I being invited to see something new?
• What grace or spiritual gift would I like to ask for moving forward?

I close with this “A Prayer for the Ignatian Year”:

God of all people,

You were there when the cannonball shattered the leg of St. Ignatius, shattered his dreams, and shattered what he assumed his life would be. Even in a moment of pain and uncertainty, doubt and darkness, Ignatius heard your word of peace and light. He was shown a path to you and the person he might become.
We may not be soldiers, standing in the path of a literal cannonball. And yet, we’ve been hit all the same by moments that shatter our own hopes and dreams and expectations.

Like Ignatius, may we hear the compassionate voice of Wisdom in these times. May we seek love and conversion of heart, even when we are hurting or uncertain. May we have the courage required to change and grow.

As we journey through this Ignatian Year, may we be shown a path to live out our own vocation, becoming the person you have invited us to be. Give us the grace to work for healing and reconciliation every day: with you, within ourselves, with others and with the earth. Open our eyes so we might see all things new.

Amen.

Adapted from a prayer to celebrate the Ignatian Year from the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/ignatian-year/)

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