

# Philippine Jesuits honour order's founder

*Society of Jesus launches special events to mark the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius of Loyola's conversion*

Joseph Peter Calleja, Manila



Jesuit Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of Cagayan de Oro blesses 500 saplings at a tree nursery opened on May 20 to mark the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The Jesuits in the Philippines have begun a special year to commemorate the conversion of their founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, by launching a series of events to support their mission in the predominantly Catholic country.

The saint converted after being wounded in the Battle of Pamplona while fighting for the Spanish against the French in 1521. A cannonball ricocheted off a wall and shattered his leg.

While recovering, Ignatius found religion in reading the Bible and about the lives of saints.

“May 20, 2021, marks the 500th anniversary of that fateful day when Ignatius the soldier, struck by a cannonball, began his transformation into Ignatius the pilgrim,” the Jesuits in the Philippines said in a social media post announcing events to mark the anniversary.

They invited Filipino Catholics to experience a deeper conversion by “finding God in all things,” particularly in the poor.

“God continues to invite each of us into a deepening relationship, to ongoing conversion. We believe that by embracing this invitation, we embrace God who calls us to act in new, bold ways that reconcile our world, bring justice, peace and compassion. For this Ignatian year, we ask for the grace to see all things new in Christ,” they said.

***Jesuits in Mindanao opened a nursery with 500 tree saplings to mark the 500th anniversary of the saint's conversion and the arrival of Christianity***

Jesuit Communications, one of the biggest Catholic media corporations in the country, announced it would conduct a free screening of *Ignacio de Loyola*, a film about the life of the saint.

They also launched a fundraising drive to help care for elderly and infirm Jesuits in the Philippines.

On May 20, Jesuits in Mindanao opened a nursery with 500 tree saplings to mark the 500th anniversary of the saint's conversion and the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines.

The event was attended by Jesuits [Archbishop Antonio Ledesma](#), archbishop emeritus of [Cagayan de Oro](#), and Father Mateo Sanchez, a

missionary to indigenous people in Bukidnon province in the southern region.

The nursery was named after Father Sanchez in recognition of his efforts to care for indigenous people and fight for their ancestral lands.