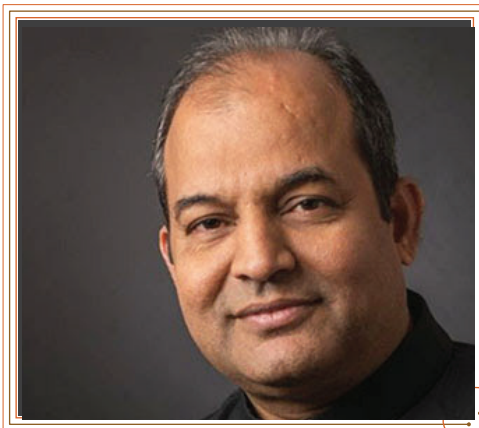


FROM

## POSA'S DESK



Can a short man with a pronounced limp, almost unlettered and born in a hill country, become a person who set millions of hearts afire? Yes, he can. And the example is St Ignatius of Loyola.

The root word of the name Ignatius is 'ignis' meaning fire. Ignatius was indeed a fire and he kindled many other fires. Just see the galaxy of men he formed and sent as missionaries.

The name, 'Ignatius', can be a metaphor, which stands for the fertile imagination, realization of a great dream, fulfilment of a determined effort, achievement of a great goal amidst all odds. Ignatius was a relentless seeker, or a pilgrim as he would say, and this search took him beyond the limits of his time and limitations of his own self.

What enkindled this 'fire' in Ignatius? Through a process of conversion God made him row deep into himself and discover God's spirit, within and without. The conversion of Ignatius was ultimately a conversion to Jesus. Hence, to seek and find him or what he famously said, 'to know him intimately, love him ardently and follow him closely' became an obsession for him.

Once he was placed with Jesus in and through two pious books in Loyola, the person of Jesus enveloped Ignatius. Jesus became the centre of his life, work and choices. Unlike the earlier days, his heart and mind were filled with the thoughts about Galilee, apostles, miracles, bread and fishes, which inspired him to know Jesus better, to love Him more, to live like Him, to speak of Him, to labour with Him, and to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In other words, he had a strong desire to dedicate his life to Jesus.

When he goes to Jerusalem, he makes efforts to stay there; he visits every site and scrupulously observes every detail. His Spiritual Exercises are basically Christo-centric contemplations. His visions including 'La Storta' are basically God's affirmation for him to be a companion of Jesus. And finally, he names his religious order, the Society of Jesus, after the name of Jesus, and gives it a mission to do what Christ did.

In other words, Ignatius who met Jesus, the 'fire' lived like a shadow of Jesus. The proof of it is the pathway to God he has left behind. During the Ignatian Year let us walk that pathway to make our lives meaningful and our ministry fruitful.

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