



NOVENA  
TO  
ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

VIDYANIKETAN

South Indian Common Juniorate

**St. Xavier's College**

**Thiruvananthapuram**

**Kerala**

Day 1

The U-turn through the cannonball experience



Jeevan SJ



## Day 1

### The U-turn through the cannonball experience

#### Opening prayer

Father of my very soul, always caring and solicitous of me, I revere you with all my heart and I humbly pray you as though I had you here present before me, to commend me earnestly and much to God our Lord, that he may grant me light clearly to know his most will, and the grace to fulfil it perfectly. And the same petition I make to all of our Society, especially those I have known here on earth and are now with you in heaven. Amen.

#### Introduction

In life, everything happens for a purpose. The cannonball moment also had a purpose. What is the Cannonball Moment? The Cannonball moment refers to the battle of Pamplona in 1521, in the kingdom of Navarre, Spain, in which St. Ignatius of Loyola suffered severe injuries, when a cannonball fired by the French troops, shattered his right leg, badly damaging his left leg as well. The Battle of Pamplona occurred on May 20, 1521, between the French-backed Navarrese and the Spanish troops. Battle of Pamplona in the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola culled from the autobiography: God takes over his life 'Up to his twenty-sixth year, the heart of Ignatius was enthralled by the vanities of the world. His special delight was in military life and seemed to be by a strong and vain desire of gaining for himself a great name and fame. The citadel of Pamplona was held under siege by the French. All the other soldiers were unanimous in wishing to surrender on condition of freedom to leave since it was impossible to hold out any longer; but Ignatius so persuaded the commander that, against the views of all the other nobles, he decided to hold the citadel against the enemy. When the day of the assault came, Ignatius made his confession to one of the nobles, his companion in arms. The soldier also made his confession to Ignatius. After the walls were destroyed, Ignatius stood fighting bravely until a cannonball of the enemy broke one of his legs and seriously injured the other.' 'When he fell, the citadel was surrendered. When the French took possession of the town, they showed great admiration for Ignatius. After twelve or fifteen days at Pamplona, where he received the best care from the physicians of the French army, he was carried on a stretcher to Loyola.'

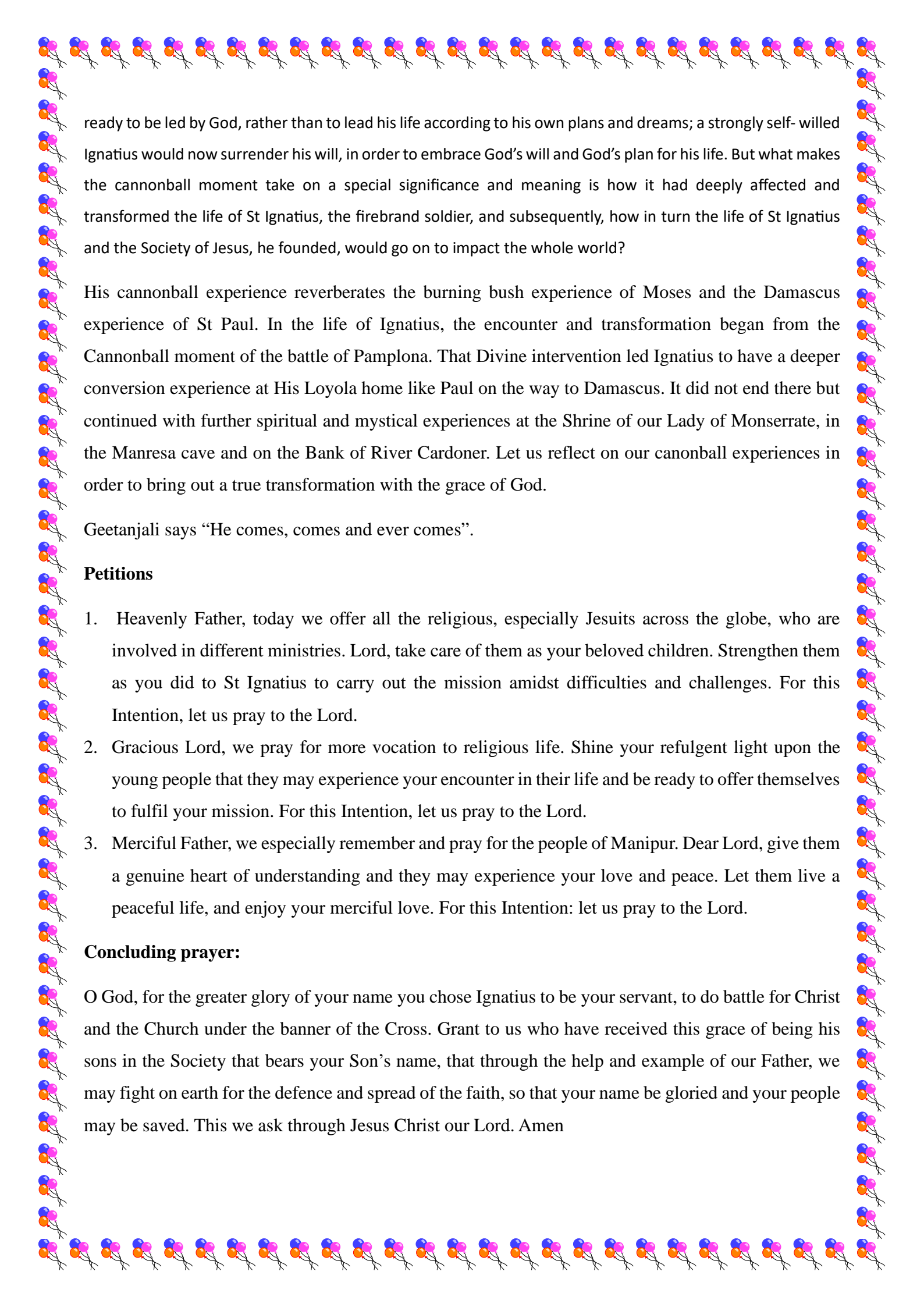
**Hymn:** It's all about a cannonball

**Reading:** ACT 9:10-16

#### Reflection

After this Cannonball moment, Ignatius of Loyola left his life of Careerism for a life of Charism; he relinquished his thirst for self-glory and began his quest for divine glory; that meant therefore, Ignatius of Loyola was now





ready to be led by God, rather than to lead his life according to his own plans and dreams; a strongly self-willed Ignatius would now surrender his will, in order to embrace God's will and God's plan for his life. But what makes the cannonball moment take on a special significance and meaning is how it had deeply affected and transformed the life of St Ignatius, the firebrand soldier, and subsequently, how in turn the life of St Ignatius and the Society of Jesus, he founded, would go on to impact the whole world?

His cannonball experience reverberates the burning bush experience of Moses and the Damascus experience of St Paul. In the life of Ignatius, the encounter and transformation began from the Cannonball moment of the battle of Pamplona. That Divine intervention led Ignatius to have a deeper conversion experience at His Loyola home like Paul on the way to Damascus. It did not end there but continued with further spiritual and mystical experiences at the Shrine of our Lady of Monserrate, in the Manresa cave and on the Bank of River Cardoner. Let us reflect on our cannonball experiences in order to bring out a true transformation with the grace of God.

Geetanjali says "He comes, comes and ever comes".

### **Petitions**

1. Heavenly Father, today we offer all the religious, especially Jesuits across the globe, who are involved in different ministries. Lord, take care of them as your beloved children. Strengthen them as you did to St Ignatius to carry out the mission amidst difficulties and challenges. For this Intention, let us pray to the Lord.
2. Gracious Lord, we pray for more vocation to religious life. Shine your refulgent light upon the young people that they may experience your encounter in their life and be ready to offer themselves to fulfil your mission. For this Intention, let us pray to the Lord.
3. Merciful Father, we especially remember and pray for the people of Manipur. Dear Lord, give them a genuine heart of understanding and they may experience your love and peace. Let them live a peaceful life, and enjoy your merciful love. For this Intention: let us pray to the Lord.

### **Concluding prayer:**

O God, for the greater glory of your name you chose Ignatius to be your servant, to do battle for Christ and the Church under the banner of the Cross. Grant to us who have received this grace of being his sons in the Society that bears your Son's name, that through the help and example of our Father, we may fight on earth for the defence and spread of the faith, so that your name be gloried and your people may be saved. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen