

True and pure love is the most powerful motivator known to mankind. If we think about it, many things motivate us to act. Some good, others not so good. For example: hunger, greed, desire for revenge, popularity or fame, pride, peer pressure, pleasure, intellectual curiosity, the instinct for survival, and the list could go on and on. Yet, true love is more powerful than any other motivation.



For example, consider the case of a man who sacrifices his life rather than betray a loved one. Would we not immediately describe this man's action as good and noble? On the other hand, if the man betrayed his friend to save his own life, would we not consider this man to be less than noble, and his love, in some way, defective? The truth is, love is the greatest of the virtues (cf. 1 Cor 13); it is stronger than death; perfect love casts out fear; in fact, God IS Love! With this in mind, we can understand the simple, yet profound, statement of our Lord Jesus in this week's Gospel, "If you love me, you will keep my

commandments" (John 14:15-21). The implication of Jesus's statement is clear: our fidelity, or lack of fidelity, to Jesus' commandments is an indicator of the depth of our love for God – if we want to be more faithful, we must somehow deepen our love for Jesus.

So, we have the most powerful motivation known to mankind (true and pure love – divine love!) at our disposal to enable us to keep God's commandments. In light of this, perhaps a good prayer for us who struggle to keep God's commandments would be: "Lord Jesus, I need to love you more. Teach me, show me how to purify and strengthen my love for you, so that I might more faithfully follow you." How important is this? The dividends for doing God's will are eternal.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. . . .
Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the
one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by
my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

John 14:15, 21

This week, may the good Lord help us all to ponder and understand with mind and heart the simple, yet profound and challenging, words of our Savior: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." By the grace of God, may we all cry out to God, "My Lord and my God, teach me how to love you more!"

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples



Saint Ignatius of Laconi

Feast Day May 11

Born December 17, 1701

Died May 11, 1781

Beatified on June 16, 1940 by Pope Pius XII

Canonized on 21 October 1951 by Pope Pius XII

Ignatius, baptized Francis Ignatius Vincent Peis, entered the world as the second of seven children to peasant parents Mattia and Anna Maria in Laconi, Sardinia (an island west of Italy). His birth followed a difficult pregnancy during which his mother invoked Saint Francis of Assisi, vowing to name her son after the saint and dedicate him to the Capuchins. The Capuchin's are part of the Franciscan tradition and their name comes from the large hood, or cappuccio, on their habit. At age 17, a severe illness struck Ignatius. If healed, he vowed to a Capuchin life. He recovered but delayed his commitment due to family demands. Three years later, a near-fatal horse accident renewed his resolve. His mount miraculously halted, sparing his life, and he joined the Capuchin novitiate. He professed vows at age 21, embracing radical poverty and obedience.

For 15 years, Ignatius performed humble tasks like weaving and monastery labor, shunning prominence. At around age 35, his reputation for self-denial earned him appointment as the friary's official questor, or beggar. Franciscans and Dominicans (including Capuchins), embrace voluntary poverty as a core vow, relying on begging for alms to survive rather than owning property. The practice imitates Christ and the apostles, who traveled without possessions and preached while accepting handouts from those they served. It fosters humility, dependence on God and community, and solidarity with the poor. Ignatius served in this role for 40 years in Cagliari, Sardinia. Daily, he traversed streets with a sack seeking bread and aid for the friars, even as age and blindness afflicted him in his later years. Far from mere collection, his rounds became evangelistic: instructing children, consoling the sick and lonely, reconciling enemies, and converting sinners through wise, prudent, and thoughtful counsel and prophecy; despite being illiterate. The poor adored him, giving from scant means, while he refused alms from the neediest urging them to keep it. Over 120 miracles were attributed to Ignatius while alive, often related to his begging rounds in Cagliari. After dying at age 80, 86 additional miracles occurred at his grave, including healings that fueled his cause for sainthood.

Reflection: Ignatius embodied Capuchin ideals; penance, fraternity, and service to the marginalized during an Italian era of flamboyant excess. Today, he inspires laypeople and religious alike to find holiness in ordinary labor, proving virtue needs no high office. Devotion to Ignatius persists in Sardinia, where statues honor his legacy. The life of Ignatius reminds us that what God considers worthwhile does not have to have a high-paying salary nor self-importance attached to it.