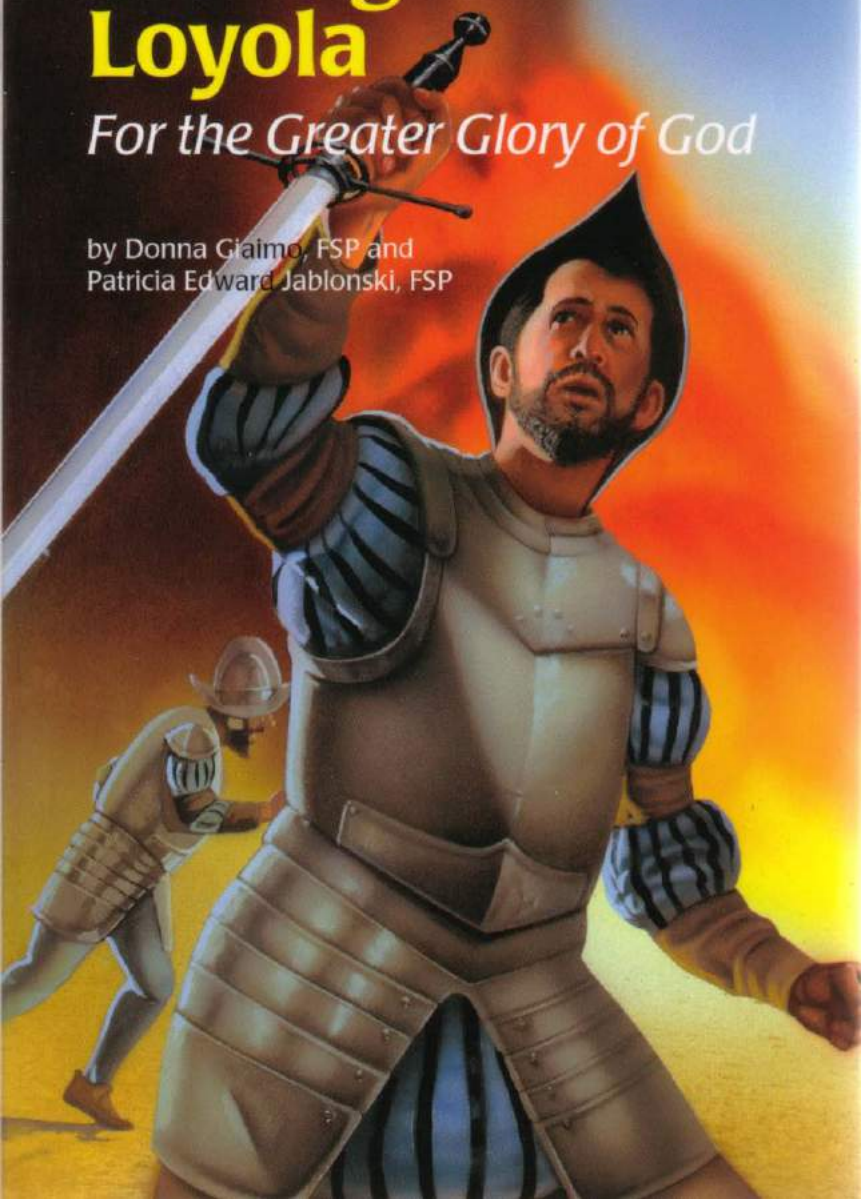


Saint Ignatius of Loyola

For the Greater Glory of God

by Donna Giaimo, FSP and
Patricia Edward Jablonski, FSP



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Donna Giaimo, FSP
and
Patricia Edward Jablonski, FSP

Illustrated by
Patrick Kelley

AN UNEXPECTED LETTER

"Inigo, hurry home! Your father is looking for you!"

The figure at the top of the hill waved in answer, and the servant, satisfied at having fulfilled her mission, returned to the castle.

"Your son will be here any minute, Don Beltrán," Luisa reported. "He's up on the hill."

"Now what's he doing *there*?" Señor de Loyola mumbled. "But thank you, Luisa. You may continue preparing supper."

It was late summer, 1506. The warm Castilian sun shone brilliantly on the countryside. Inigo turned once more to take in the scene. He sighed as he headed toward the castle just below. The castle he called home.

I wonder why Father wants me, he thought as he ran.

At the door he paused just long enough to brush back a strand of light hair. Beltrán de Loyola liked to see his children neat and perfectly mannered.

Inigo met an impatient Luisa in the hall, clicking her tongue that supper would be

late because of him. "Your father is waiting for you, and the food is all ready. This news had better be important!" she warned.

Inigo nodded and smiled as the woman scurried toward the kitchen. "Yes, Luisa. I promise we won't be long."

Walking down the hall, Inigo again wondered what his father could want.

He stopped before an elaborately carved door and knocked.

"Come in," a voice within answered.

Inigo pushed open the heavy door. "You called for me, Father?"

"Yes. Yes. Come in."

Señor de Loyola stood by an open window holding a letter in his hand. He smiled as he motioned for his son to enter.

"I have good news for you, Inigo. Sit down."

Inigo took a seat in one of the large leather chairs. His father sat facing him.

"Take a look at this!" Señor de Loyola boomed as he leaned forward and handed Inigo the letter. "My old friend, Don Juan Velázquez, the treasurer of Castile, has asked me to send him one of my sons to act as his page. You will learn good manners and when the time comes, Don Juan will introduce you to the world of the court."

Señor de Loyola paused and studied Inigo. *God has blessed me with a wonderful family, he thought, a good wife—now, I'm sure, in heaven—seven sons and six daughters. But there is something special and different about this youngest son of mine. Perhaps it's his thirst for adventure, or his keen interest in chivalry and knighthood. Or maybe it's that far-off look that sometimes comes into his eyes...*

Inigo's excited voice broke into his father's thoughts.

"Father, are you choosing *me* to go to Don Juan's castle?"

"Yes, Inigo," Señor de Loyola smiled broadly. "I'm choosing you."

LEAVING HOME

Ever since he could remember, Inigo had wanted to be a knight...a warrior who would fight in the king's army. In his childhood he used to play court and knights with his older brothers. At that time they hadn't let him be anything but a page, or an armor-bearer at best. "But someday," he had assured them, "I'll be a knight. I promise you that!"

One of Inigo's favorite hobbies was reading novels. In their pages knights and nobles came to life. He relived their adventures over and over in his imagination. Excitement, action, even danger—these were what appealed to Inigo. His dream was to share the same kind of fame and greatness described in the novels. Now at last he was being sent to prepare for life at court!

Inigo was excited and frightened at the same time. He wanted to go, but he *would* miss his family, especially his father and Doña Magdalena.

Inigo had never really known his mother, Doña Marina. She had died when he was

very young. After her death, his father had brought Inigo to the Garíns, a family that lived a short distance from the Loyola castle. Inigo had grown up there, with his father visiting him often and María de Garín caring for him as if he were one of her own children. When Inigo's older brother Martín married Magdalena de Araoz in 1498, Martín brought her to live at the family castle. Inigo went home to the castle shortly after, and Magdalena became like a second mother to him.

Magdalena wanted what was best for Inigo. But she was concerned about his leaving the family at such a young age. One night, she was unusually quiet at supper. Don Beltrán took her aside after the meal. "What is it, Magdalena? Is something wrong?"

"No, nothing...it's just that Inigo is so young!" Magdalena burst out. "I worry about him more than your other children. He seems to want to grow up too quickly..."

"Now, Magdalena," Don Beltrán gently chided, "it will be good for Inigo to spend some time away from home. He'll never mature if he stays here. After all, the boy is sixteen. Juan Velázquez will help him grow into a fine man. And what's more, he'll be

trained as a soldier. One day he'll be given a good position as an officer of rank. You know that's what he's always wanted."

"Yes, but all Inigo sees is the glamor of war. He knows nothing of the hardships to be faced..."

"That's because we've sheltered and pampered him all his life," Don Beltrán interrupted. "We must encourage and support him now that he's accepted the offer to live at court. You'll see, Magdalena, it will be for the best."

Magdalena sighed and nodded. "I suppose you're right. But I'll miss him."

"I will too," Don Beltrán quietly admitted.



There were days of anxious waiting until a carriage finally arrived from the Velázquez castle. Inigo loaded his belongings and said a tearful goodbye to the family.

"God be with you," Magdalena whispered as she embraced him.

"Be sure to write," his brother Martín reminded.

Don Beltrán grasped Inigo firmly by the shoulders.



*"I'll make you proud, Father, you and
the entire House of Loyola."*

"Goodbye, Father," Inigo murmured. "I'll try my hardest to make you proud of me—you and the entire House of Loyola."

"I know you will," Don Beltrán answered in a husky voice.

Swallowing the lump in his own throat, Inigo swung open the door of the carriage and jumped in. The coachman shut it behind him. In a moment they were off. Inigo leaned out the window and waved until a curve in the road blocked his view.

What adventures lay ahead of him?

He wondered.