

Session 2: The Call of the King

The second of a series of four podcast reflections on the life of St Ignatius Loyola as seen through The Spiritual Exercises.

Martin Luther King proclaimed “I have a dream” – a dream of all people living peacefully together. President Kennedy called on his fellow-citizens to “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country”. And Nelson Mandela invited young people to be a part of a “great generation” bringing poverty and disease to an end. How do you feel when you hear invitations like these?

Jesus came to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God. Not some kind of fairy tale ideal for when we die; but rather this world, as well as the next, formed in the way God would want it to be. Take a moment to get in touch with your own sense of how that world would look. What, do you think, is God’s dream for our world like?

Jesus didn’t just talk about the Kingdom of God. As he travelled round Palestine he showed, by the way he lived and by how he treated the different people he met, what this Kingdom could be like. And he asked his friends, the disciples, to live in a similar way, so that those who met them would experience the Kingdom too. What idea of the Kingdom of God might someone who met you today get?

At one point Ignatius of Loyola spent several months confined to bed, recovering from a battle wound. During that time he read, and re-read, lives of Jesus and the saints. (His sister-in-law, who was caring for him, had nothing else available.) He was captivated by the image of God he found there, and decided to shape the rest of his life in response to what he saw. What is there about the life and teaching of Christ that speaks most powerfully to you?

The second part of the Spiritual Exercises invites you to pray with gospel accounts of Christ’s life. At the outset, you meet Jesus as he dreams of re-shaping the world, and invites you to join him in making his dream a reality. As this time prayer draws to a close, take a few moments to respond to this invitation that Jesus offers you, speaking honestly, from your heart.