

October 2026

At this time of year, I seem to often ask myself “Where did the summer go?” I hear others asking that same thing — “Where did the summer go?” What happened to less hectic days? September, as we all know, is the month that activities begin to once again kick into full gear, and by October, well, we’re into the full swing of things; at work, at school, at home and at Church. This is not bad — along with it is also vibrancy — a sense of enthusiasm and excitement in the air.

And yet, once October rolls around, it’s easy to find oneself bound up in one activity after another; running in multiple directions at once. This is no new phenomenon and it’s a place where the wisdom of St. Ignatius of Loyola can be useful. The foundation of Ignatius’ extensive thought is discernment; that is, discerning the movements within one’s own self — simply put, he learned to pay attention to his own feelings.

The story goes that the young Ignatius, a rather arrogant and brazen 16th century soldier who wished to become a great knight, instead found himself laid up for months due to a cannonball shot to the leg; an injury incurred during a battle in which many others died. During his convalescence, Ignatius asked for reading materials. He had in mind some of the romance novels that were popular at the time but instead the only things available were *The Life of Christ* and *Lives of the Saints*. As Ignatius read about Jesus, and about people like St. Francis and St. Dominic, something surprising began to happen inside him. He noticed that when he imagined returning to his old life of seeking fame and glory, he became greatly excited — and yet, after a brief time that excitement would fade and he once again felt miserable. But on the other hand, when he imagined living a life like that of the saints, he felt a joy and deep peace that did not fade. This experience over many months led Ignatius to realize that God speaks to people through the movements of their hearts; that is, God speaks to each of us through our own desires, consolations and even our restlessness. Recognizing these different movements within himself, Ignatius realized he had the power to make a choice as to his own response and actions — he began to learn to say “yes” to ways of being and activities that left him with feelings of fulfillment and long lasting peace; and to say “no” to those ways of being and activities that left him feeling anxious and unhappy, even if they had initially seemed good. This realization, that he had a choice in regard to his own response, set him on a life long path of discovering his own true self; the person whom he believed God had created him to be. By consistently paying attention to the movements within, Ignatius gradually lived into the person he was meant to be. He was able to become uniquely Ignatius of Loyola; not a famous worldly knight, nor even another Francis or Dominic, instead, simply Ignatius.

There is an old Rabbinic story that goes something like this:

A rabbi named Zusya died and was worried about judgment. He feared God would ask him “Why weren’t you Moses, or Solomon or David?” But when God appeared he said simply “Why weren’t you Zusya?”

In the midst of the myriad of responsibilities and activities facing you this Fall, what are the movements of your own heart telling you? Who are they calling you to be?

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