



Ignatius Portrait

40" x 60" oil and maps on canvas

The contemporary maps embedded in Ignatius's garment represent his close relationship with 'Our Lady of Our Way.' They also represent the worldwide mission work the Jesuits have undertaken and the contemporary relevance of the Jesuit mission.

Adsum

Contemporary paintings on Ignatian spirituality

As an alumna of a Jesuit school, artist Holly Schapker of Cincinnati, Ohio, already had a familiarity and an understanding of who St. Ignatius Loyola was and of Ignatian spirituality. After she graduated from Xavier University with a major in Art, Schapker continued her painting education with a strong focus on painting outdoor scenes. It was only after she completed the Spiritual Exercises with Fr. Darrell Burns, SJ, and attended an Ignatian pilgrimage led by Tom Landy, Director of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture at College of the Holy Cross, that Schapker knew she wanted to create a series of paintings based on the life of St. Ignatius.



Self-portrait
by Holly Schapker

“These paintings represent my interpretation of the mission of St. Ignatius. They incorporate all I know and all I feel about my life as a Catholic and an alumna of a Jesuit university,” said Schapker. “The process of creating this body of work based on Ignatius Loyola has taken me almost three years to complete and is derived from my interpretation as a contemporary American woman of Ignatius Loyola’s life, mission, and Spiritual Exercises.”

Large oils on canvas—the Montserrat Landscape, the largest, is 6 by 4 ft.—they include unique textures created by actual maps, leaves, or twigs. The exhibition is titled *Adsum*, Latin for “Here I am.” The expression is gleaned from Mary’s response to the annunciation event, when the angel Gabriel asked her consent to become the mother of God’s son. Mary’s yes is understood in her open and faith-filled response, “[Here] I am, the Lord’s handmaid. Let it be done to me as you say.”

“Not a word that is well translated in the English language, “Adsum” means being in a state of mind where the person is completely available and willing to serve God,” said Schapker. “St. Ignatius Loyola’s Spiritual Exercises allowed me to approach this state in my painting studio and outside of it.”

Schapker’s work will be on display at the Sixth Heartland-Delta Triennial Conference from May 25–28 at Xavier University in Cincinnati. Hundreds of faculty, staff, and administrators from the network of the 12 Jesuit colleges and universities within the Midwest and Delta provinces will be in attendance. Held since 1994, the conference aims to engage higher education professionals in animating the Jesuit mission in today’s world. This year’s theme, “The World is Our House: Looking Within and Beyond Our Walls,” focuses on the globalization of society and its ever-changing realities on Jesuit campuses.



Eye Slits Landscape

72" x 42" oil on canvas

Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises look to a transformation of consciousness and the freedom that comes with it, which is juxtaposed with the constraints on vision from Ignatius's military origins.

“The greatest consolation that he received at this time was from gazing at the sky and stars, and this he often did and for quite a long time.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #11

“He made holes in the soles of his shoes and kept enlarging them little by little, so that when winter's cold came there was nothing there but the upper part of the shoes.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #55

Shoes

40" x 40" oil and maps on canvas



Ignatius Loyola looked to the stars for inspiration throughout his life, yet he remained grounded walking the earth one step at a time. He was a pilgrim who mapped a path to God.



Black Madonna of Montserrat

36" x 60" oil on canvas

Ignatius Loyola laid his sword at the foot of the statue of the Black Madonna of Montserrat, taking a leap of faith. Today millions of people have visited the Black Madonna of Montserrat in hopes of taking that same leap.



“He continued his way to Montserrat ... and when he arrived at Montserrat, he offered a prayer and arranged for a confessor. • He made a general confession in writing, which lasted three days, and arranged with his confessor to leave his donkey behind and to hang his sword and dagger at our Lady’s altar in the church.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #17



Donkey

36" x 60" oil and maps on canvas

Ignatius Loyola on his way to Montserrat did not know which path to take. He allowed the donkey to decide. This is symbolic of relinquishing traditions that no longer served him.



Montserrat Landscape

72" x 50" oil and maps on canvas

In Montserrat, Ignatius Loyola pondered his life and contemplated his confessions and desires in hopes of a future with God. The landscape represents the vastness of the possibilities opening to him and the contemporary spread of the Jesuit experience.

“While living in this hospital it many times happened that in full daylight he saw a form in the air near him, and this form gave him much consolation because it was exceedingly beautiful. • He did not understand what it really was, but it somehow seemed to have the shape of a serpent and had many things that shone like eyes, but were not eyes.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #19



Serpent

24" x 48" oil on canvas

One of Ignatius Loyola's spiritual visions was a serpent-like creature that helped him understand the differences between good and evil.



“While he was still in Barcelona before embarking, he sought out, as was his practice, all spiritual persons to converse with them, even though they lived in hermitages far from the city. • But neither in Barcelona nor in Manresa during the whole time he was there did he find persons who could help him as much as he wished. • He found in Manresa only that woman mentioned above, who told him she prayed God that Jesus Christ might appear to him. • She alone seemed to him to enter more deeply into spiritual matters.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #21

Unnamed Manresa Woman

24" x 48" oil on canvas

As Ignatius Loyola set out for Manresa from Barcelona, he searched out spiritual persons to speak with. It was only when he reached Manresa that he met with a very old woman, who said to him, “O! May my Lord Jesus Christ design to appear to you some day.”



Epiphany Outside Manresa

40" x 60" oil and maps on canvas

In early Christianity, the butterfly symbolized resurrection. Ignatius had a spiritual epiphany while living in Manresa. One day on his way to a church about a mile from town, he took a break to admire nature. On this single occasion, he experienced a clarity that changed him as a person.



“He was once on his way, out of devotion, to a church a little more than a mile from Manresa, which I think was called St. Paul. • The road followed the path of the river, and he was taken up with his devotions; he sat down for a while facing the river flowing far below him. • As he sat there the eyes of his understanding were opened, and though he saw no vision, he understood and perceived many things, numerous spiritual things as well as matters touching on faith and learning, and this was with an elucidation so bright that all these things seemed new to him. • He cannot expound in detail what he then understood, for there were many things, but he can state that he received such a lucidity in understanding that during the course of his entire life—now having passed his sixty-second year—if he were to gather all the helps he received from God and everything he knew, and add them together, he does not think they would add up to all that he received on that one occasion.”

Autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola, #30

For more on the Heartland-Delta Triennial Conference at Xavier University, visit
www.xavier.edu/heartlanddelta6