A Pilgrim's Testament

The Memoirs of
St. Ignatius of Loyola

as transcribed by
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and

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[38] They had such a strong wind at the stern that they reached Gaeta from Barcelona in five days and nights, though they were all thoroughly frightened because of very rough weather. Throughout all that region there was fear of the plague; but as soon as he disembarked he began the journey to Rome. Of those who came on the ship, a mother and her daughter whom she had in boy’s clothing, and another youth, accompanied him. They joined him because they also were begging.

Having reached a lodge, they came upon a great blaze with many soldiers at it, who gave them to eat, and a good deal of wine, coaxing them as if they wanted to warm them up. Later they separated them, the mother and daughter being placed in a room above and the pilgrim and the youth in a stable. But at midnight, he heard loud cries there on top; getting up to see what it was, he found the
mother and her daughter in the courtyard below, wailing and complaining that there was an attempt to violate them. At this such a strong feeling came over him that he began to shout, "Must one put up with this?" and similar protests. He uttered these words with such force that all those in the house were startled, and no one did him any harm. The youth had already fled, and though it was still night, all three got going.

[39] When they arrived at a nearby city, they found it closed. Unable to enter, the three of them spent the night in a leaky church there. In the morning they were refused entry into the city, and they found no alms outside, even though they went to a castle which could be seen nearby. There the pilgrim felt weak because of the hardships on the sea as well as all else, etc.; unable to travel further, he remained there. The mother and her daughter went on to Rome.

That day many people came out of the city; learning that the Lady of the place was coming there, he approached her saying that he was ill only from weakness, and asked her to let him enter the city to seek some cure; which she readily granted. And starting to beg through the city he obtained a fair amount. After two days of recovery there, he set out on his journey again and arrived in Rome on Palm Sunday.

[40] Here all who spoke to him, on discovering that he did not carry any money for Jerusalem, began to dissuade him from making that trip, asserting with many arguments that it was impossible to find passage without money. But he had great assurance in his soul and he could not doubt but that he would in fact find a way to go to Jerusalem. After receiving the blessing of Pope Adrian VI, he set out for Venice eight or nine days after Easter. He did have six or seven ducats which had been given him for the passage from Venice to Jerusalem; he had accepted them, being somewhat overcome by the fears suggested to him that he would not otherwise make the passage. But two days after leaving Rome, he began to realize that this was a lack of trust on his part, and it greatly bothered him that he had accepted the ducats, so he wondered if it would be good to be rid of
them. He finally decided to give them generously to those who approached him, who were beggars usually. He so managed that when he eventually arrived in Venice, he had no more than a small amount which he required that night.

[41] While on the journey to Venice, he slept in doorways because of the guards against the plague. It happened once that when he got up in the morning he ran into a man who, with one look, fled in horror, presumably because he saw him so very pale. Traveling in this way, he came to Chioggia, and with some companions who had joined him, he learned that they would not be allowed to enter Venice. His companions decided to go to Padua to obtain a certificate of health there, so he set out with them. But he could not keep up for they went very fast, leaving him at nightfall in a large field.

While he was there, Christ appeared to him in the manner in which he usually appeared to him, as we have mentioned above, and this brought him much comfort. Consoled in this way, the next morning, without forging a certificate as (I believe) his companions had done, he came to the gates of Padua and entered without the guards asking anything of him. The same thing happened when he left; this greatly astonished his companions who had just got a certificate to go to Venice, about which he did not bother.

[42] When they arrived at Venice, the guards came to the boat to examine them all, one by one, as many as were in it, but him alone they let be. He maintained himself in Venice by begging, and he slept in St. Mark’s Square. But he would never go to the house of the Emperor’s ambassador, nor did he take any special care to seek the means for his passage. He had a great assurance in his soul that God would provide a way for him to go to Jerusalem; this gave him such confidence that no arguments or fears suggested to him could make him doubt.

One day he ran into a rich Spaniard who asked him what he was doing and where he wanted to go. Learning his purpose, the man took him home to dinner, and kept him for a few days till all was set for the departure. Ever since Manresa the pilgrim had the habit when
he ate with anyone, never to speak at table except to answer briefly; but he listened to what was said and noted some things which he took as the occasion to speak about God, and when the meal was finished, he did so.

[43] ¹This was the reason why the worthy gentleman and all his household were so attached to him and wanted him to stay and made an effort to keep him there. This same host brought him to the Doge of Venice so he could speak to him; that is, he obtained entrance and an audience for him. ²When the Doge heard the pilgrim, he ordered that he be given passage on the ship of the government officials who were going to Cyprus.

³Although many pilgrims had come that year for Jerusalem, most of them had returned home because of the recent event which had occurred, the capture of Rhodes. ⁴Even so there were thirteen on the pilgrim ship which sailed first, and eight or nine remained for the government officials' ship. As this was about to leave, our pilgrim had a severe bout of fever but after troubling him a few days, it left him. The ship was sailing on the day he had taken a purge. ⁶The people of the house asked the doctor if he could embark for Jerusalem, and the doctor said that indeed he could embark, if he wanted to be buried there. ⁷But he did embark and sail that day; and he vomited in such a way that he felt much relieved and began to recover completely.

⁸He severely condemned some obscenities and indecencies that were openly practiced on the ship.

[44] ¹The Spaniards who were there warned him not to do so, because the ship's crew were planning to leave him on some island. ²But Our Lord deigned that they arrive quickly at Cyprus. Leaving the ship there, they went overland to another port called Las Salinas, ten leagues away. They boarded the pilgrim ship, on which also he brought no more for his maintenance than his hope in God, as he had done on the other.

³During all this time, Our Lord appeared to him often, giving him great consolation and determination; but what he seemed to see was something round and large, as though it were of gold; and this was what presented itself to
him. Having left Cyprus they arrived at Jaffa. 4\Moving on to Jerusalem on their little donkeys, as is usually done, two miles before they reached Jerusalem, a Spaniard—a noble, it would seem, named Diego Manes—suggested with great devotion to all the pilgrims, 5\that since in a little while they would reach the place from which they could see the Holy City, it would be well for all to prepare their consciences and go in silence.

[45] 1\This seemed good to them all, and each one began to be recollected. A little before coming to the place from where it could be seen, they dismounted, because they saw the friars with the cross, awaiting them. On seeing the city the pilgrim felt great consolation; 2\and as the others testified, this was common to them all, with a joy that did not seem natural. He always felt this same devotion on his visits to the holy places.

3\His firm intention was to remain in Jerusalem, continually visiting those holy places; and in addition to this devotion, he also planned to help souls. For this purpose he had brought some letters of recommendation for the Guardian and gave them to him. He told him of his intention to remain there because of his devotion; 4\but not the second part, about wanting to help souls, because he had not told this to anyone, whilst he had frequently made public the first. 5\The Guardian answered that he did not see how he could stay because the house was in such need that it could not support the friars; for that reason, he had decided to send some with the pilgrims, to these parts. 6\The pilgrim replied that he wanted nothing from the house, except only that when he came sometimes to confess, they would hear his confession. 7\With that the Guardian told him that such an arrangement might work, but he would have to wait for the coming of the Provincial (I believe he was the head of the Order in that area), who was at Bethlehem.

[46] 1\By this promise the pilgrim was reassured and began to write letters to Barcelona to spiritual persons. 2\Having already written one and while writing another on the eve of the departure of the pilgrims, he received a summons from the Provincial (for he had arrived) and the Guardian. 3\The Provincial spoke kindly
to him, saying that he knew of his good intention to remain in those holy places, and he had given much thought to the matter; but because of the experience he had had with others, he judged that it was not expedient. For many had had that desire, but some had been captured and others killed, and the Order had later been obliged to ransom the captives. Therefore he should prepare to leave the next day with the pilgrims.

He replied to this that he was very firm in his purpose and was resolved that on no account would he fail to carry it out. He frankly gave them to understand that even though the Provincial thought otherwise, if there was nothing binding him under sin, he would not abandon his intention out of any fear. To this the Provincial replied that they had authority from the Apostolic See to have anyone leave the place, or remain there, as they judged, and to excommunicate anyone who was unwilling to obey them; and that in this case they thought that he should not remain, etc.

[47] He wanted to show him the bulls giving them power to excommunicate, but he said he did not need to see them, as he believed their reverences; in as much as they had so decided with the authority they had, he would obey them. When this was over, returning to where he had been before, he felt a strong desire to visit Mount Olivet again before leaving, since it was not Our Lord’s will that he remain in those holy places. On Mount Olivet there is a stone from which Our Lord rose up to heaven, and his footprints are still seen there; this was what he wanted to see again.

So without saying anything or taking a guide (for those who go without a Turk as guide run a great risk), he slipped away from the others and went alone to Mount Olivet. But the guards would not let him enter. He gave them a penknife that he carried, and after praying with great consolation, he felt the desire to go to Bethphage. While there he remembered that he had not noted on Mount Olivet on what side the right foot was, or on what side the left. Returning there, I think he gave his scissors to the guards so they would let him enter.

[48] When it was learned in the monastery that
he had gone like that without a guide, the friars took steps to find him. So as he was coming down from Mourt Olivet he ran into a “belted” Christian who served in the monastery. He had a large staff and with a great show of annoyance made as if to strike him. When he came up to him he grabbed him tightly by the arm, and he readily let himself be led. The good man, however, never let him go. As he went along this way, held thus by the “belted” Christian, he felt great consolation from Our Lord, so that it seemed to him that he saw Christ over him continually. This lasted all through in great abundance until he reached the monastery.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[44] According to the punctuation that is adopted, Ignatius is either saying that his experience of Christ took place after he left Cyprus from Jaffa, or (as in our translation) stressing that he did not actually see Christ; he is meticulous in his statements.

Scholars have studied in depth, and discussed at length, the nature of Ignatius’s spiritual experiences, both mystical