Pignatelli is rightly credited with making a major contribution to the survival of the Ignatian ideal during the Suppression era although this role was not always straightforward. Significant tensions emerged within the Italian Jesuit communities over the route towards restoration (in terms of both speed and extent) and concerning the identity of any restored order. Some, notably Gaetano Aragìlini (1748-1816), wanted a restored Society to retain its Constitutions but to develop a revised administrative structure. This was just one aspect of a simmering conflict between the exiled community and their hosts, and between the new and the old guard. There was also tension between different Iberian communities, with the Castilian Manuel Luengo charging Pignatelli with favoring his Aragonese countrymen. In any event, however, Pignatelli's contribution during the Suppression period was momentous, and there was sadness in the fact that Pignatelli did not live to see the global restoration of the Order in 1814. His chief goal, throughout his long exile, was to ensure that any restored Society of Jesus was, in every available sense, the direct continuation of the Order founded by Ignatius of Loyola in the sixteenth century. He took care to renew interest in the Spiritual Exercises, the order's original rules, and the Ratio studiorum. He would presumably have looked askance at the notion of his being regarded as one of the Jesuits' "second founders." For Pignatelli, beatified in 1933 and canonized by Pius XII in 1954, such a second foundation was not necessary: the original foundation remained fully operative.

See also Italy; Saints; Suppression


Jonathan Wright

Pilgrimage (in the Life of Ignatius and the Early Jesuits)

Pilgrimages figured prominently among the early Jesuits. It was a means of instilling the Ignatian principles of personal interior development and, as such, very effective in spiritual formation. As a result, the early Jesuits came to conceive of themselves primarily as "pilgrims," or as "apostles" who, like St. Paul, traveled from one place to another to spread the teachings of the Gospel. They essentially saw themselves as itinerant preachers, like Jesus and his disciples, and were mainly concerned with inculcating holiness in the hearts of their listeners, converting them to the "true path." This ideal remained central to the Jesuit creed.

Rome (the holy city of Christianity), Jerusalem, and the Holy Land ranked highly as pilgrim destinations. This was due, in part, to the fact that in the early phase of his vocation – from the 1520s to the 1530s – Ignatius of Loyola was convinced that his true vocation was to travel to the Holy Land and spend the rest of his life in devotion and penance in Jerusalem. In a sense, Ignatius was following an ideal common among many
devout Catholics of his times. Going to Jerusalem and the Holy Land meant experiencing the life of Christ, the Virgin, and the Apostles as well as reliving the many Old Testament events which took place in that special holy region.

Ignatius did go to Jerusalem, but he had to return to Spain soon after for reasons beyond his control. In 1554, when Loyola and his six companions took their vows at Montmarre, they resolved to travel to Jerusalem. However, the raging conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean disrupted their plans. Ignatius and his companions never managed to go to Jerusalem.

They turned their attention instead to Protestantism which was then gaining ground and spreading fast, especially throughout the central and northern parts of Europe. The early Jesuits devoted their efforts to promulgating the teachings of the Catholic faith and inculcating among the masses frequent confession, devotion to the Eucharistic, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Forty Hours Devotion, and other practices such as those to the Sacred Heart of Mary and the saints.

Among the Jesuits themselves, periodic pilgrimages to sanctuaries, in the vicinity, or further away, were seen as a way to help strengthen and maintain unity among the Jesuit brothers. Jesuits who wished to go on a pilgrimage were often made to go poorly clothed. They were to travel on foot, without money, and under all weather conditions.
They had to beg for alms. Pilgrimages were often directed to Marian sanctuaries which heightened their devotion to the Virgin. But although they revered the Virgin, as she was much more than other saints, their main focus was obviously on Jesus, as their name implies.

The significance of pilgrimage among the early Jesuits is best appreciated within the context of the wide range of activities which they conducted in line with the principles of the Council of Trent. The Council sought to revive the cult of the saints, especially the Marian cult, which had suffered in popularity after the spread of Protestantism. This is why the Jesuits set up Marian congregations and encouraged them to go on pilgrimages to sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin. The congregations, under the direction of the Jesuit community, were advised to seek the protection of the Virgin. Devotional statues, distributed along the route to the place of pilgrimage, coupled with indulgences for those who prayed fervently for their salvation, helped to keep the devotees in a state of grace. The frequent pilgrimages to sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin helped to make these places highly regarded among the masses.

These Jesuit-run congregations were, therefore, very much in line with the ideology of the Council of Trent. And so, through their efforts in organizing pilgrimages, mainly directed to Marian sanctuaries, the Jesuits had thus come to play a vital role in Catholic piety until the early decades of the twentieth century.

See also Loyola, Ignatius of, SJ, St.; Marian Congregations; Middle East; Rome


Carmel Cassar

Pius VII

Pius VII, Barnaba Chiaramonti, who brought about the universal restoration of the Society of Jesus, was born on August 14, 1742, at Cesena in Italy. After entering the Benedictines in 1756, he studied at Padua and Rome, and then taught philosophy and Church history in Parma and Rome. In 1783 Pope Pius VI appointed him bishop of Tivoli, and in 1758, cardinal and bishop of Imola.

After the French Revolution broke out in 1789, it became for more than the next quarter century part of the context of the life and accomplishments of Pius VII. His firmness with principles, his flexibility in their implementation, and, above all, his concern for the spiritual needs of those committed to his care stood him in good stead when the French invaded the Papal States in 1796.

After Pius VI died in 1799, a prisoner of revolutionary France, the papal conclave began on December 8, 1799, in Venice because French troops were occupying Rome. The meeting deadlocked for thirteen weeks, between the so-called politicani and zelanti cardinals. The former recognized that the Church had to deal with a world changed in many ways by the revolution. The latter longed to restore a pre-revolutionary world and Church. The deadlock finally was broken on March 14, 1800, by the election of