

# Ignatius: his legacy in campus sculpture

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Over the past 10 years a number of sculptures of St. Ignatius have appeared on different campuses in the United States. In this presentation we would like to show four of them. The first one at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles), the second at Creighton University (Omaha); the third one at Santa Clara University (Santa Clara) and the fourth at Boston College (Boston). All four present us with rich insights into the 400 year legacy of the saint and founder of the Jesuits.<sup>1</sup>

## Loyola Marymount University



When the Jesuit community at Loyola Marymount University built their new Jesuit Commons on the campus (1999) they placed a bronze sculpture of Ignatius (above) in front of their main entrance. The sculpture which sits on a concrete pedestal is approximately 5 feet (1.5 m) high. As one walks towards the front door of the community's administration

<sup>1</sup> Except for the images of the Santa Clara University sculpture which were done by the author all other images come through the courtesy of the respective Universities.

building it is placed on one's left, as if it is crossing in front of the building, reminding the incoming Jesuit and visitor of the Jesuit charism. Ignatius leans forward at about a 60 degree angle with determination in his step.



A plaque reads, *“St. Ignatius Loyola, the first Jesuit, leans into the winds blowing from the ends of the earth manifestations of God’s power and the wonder of the Incarnation. The letter in his hand symbolizes the need that all humans need to communicate with one another and to discover Christ in each other. Adventurous, yet reflective, St. Ignatius meets God’s challenges as the contemplative in action finding God in all creation.”*

When we view the sculpture we see that with his left hand that he holds his cloak tightly to his chest creating a sunburst pattern of diagonal folds which reveal a “radiating heart”. His lowered right arm, covered by his cloak, is close to his body. His hand holds a small book-like object with one corner bent over or cut



off, a letter or a manuscript of his Spiritual Exercises. The flared out cloak, the tightness of his grip on it, the web-like pattern of his cassock between his legs reveal a forceful headwind. His weight is clearly on his left leg whose physical form is made clear by the frontal winds. The tilt of his shoulders, the gesture of his right leg and oddly placed foot signal a limp which alludes to his leg damaged by a cannon ball at Pamplona.

His bald head and sunken cheeks are features from his death mask (right); his neck is ringed with his cassock and cloak collars. The head is



cocked to the left and tilted slightly upward; his line of sight is upward suggesting thoughts of heavenly things. His diminutive stature, his limp, his cloak and cassock, even his slipper-like shoes, all point to the historical Ignatius. His strength lies not in



his physically small and wounded body, but in his inner self, in a heart that radiates love and a determination. A will to move counter to the strong head winds, the worldly forces of his times, armed with his spiritual vision and message. He is a humble countercultural and holy visionary.

### Creighton University



On the campus of Creighton University another sculpture of Ignatius (above) can be found along the mall between the Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library and the fountain in front of St. John's Church. Littleton Alston, an Associate Professor of Fine and Performing Arts executed the work. Finished in 2004, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus Fr. Kolvenbach, formally blessed the work while visiting the campus.

The artist writes about his work: *"I represent Saint Ignatius as a pilgrim moving forcefully into an unknown future empowered and energized and nourished by the teachings of Jesus. He carries under (sic) his arm his Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions for the Society of Jesus, which will guide his followers and the future Jesuit order. His cape is blown by the winds of change as he walks with resolve. In his eyes is the burning determination of a great saint who had lived through the adversity and tragedy of his own day. I have tried to sculpt Ignatius of Loyola as a visionary who calls a multitude of men and women to become fellow pilgrims inspired by Christ's command to love one another with a love that bears fruit."*



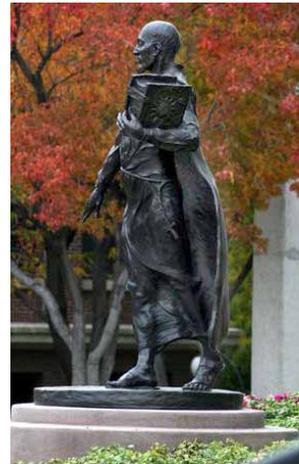


Our first impression is that of a physically well-conditioned traveler who walks confidently on sandal-clad feet the sign of a religious pilgrim. We also become aware that figure wears three levels of clothing. The inner most level is a long sleeved shirt with what looks like form-fitting pants down to just above his ankles, but really is a taught cassock which reveals the anatomy of his well developed legs. This is covered with a sleeveless vest-like garment with an open collar that reaches down and splits over his upper right thigh. This garment reveals a physically solid upper body and chest. The garment splits over the upper right thigh, one curved edge wraps around the thigh to our left while the other curved edge wraps smoothly around his left thigh above the knee. This upside down “V” split emphasizing the muscular leg and the powerful step forward, as if the leg demanded more freedom to move forward. The physical

anatomy of the figure is not that of Ignatius whose wound at Pamplona left him with a life-long limp. Nor does the physical anatomy signal the traditional ascetic and man of prayer.

From behind his neck, we have a third piece of clothing: a high-collared cloak hangs down off of his shoulders and rolls back at its outer edges with his forward movement. His solid body prevents the cloak from billowing out which is unlike the LMU sculpture: this Ignatius does not engage a head wind, or any resistance. From a front view of the sculpture one realizes that the line of the cloak’s left edge and its convex form echoes the outside line of his right side and the volume of his thigh. Likewise, the line and volume of the right side of the cloak echoes the volume of his left thigh. It is like there is a huge set of legs behind him that powerfully reinforces his stepping out. This adds another dimension of forcefulness to his step.

From left side of the sculpture the cloak drops down diagonally at about a 15 degree angle and with the imagined center-line of his erect posture forms a slender right angle triangle (see the above left image) This triangle is reinforced by a smaller but similar triangle formed by his pulled back left leg and the vertical right leg. This design adds great stability and balance to the figure as he steps forward.



His right arm extends outward from his body, angled downward with his hand and fingers extended outward, a gesture that steadies his confident step. A muscular arm is marked off by the cassock sleeve which has a series of folds at his wrist and shoulder. The palm is turned down and faces towards the rear, as if putting some-thing behind him.



Above and below the cincture is an unusual pattern of garment folds. Emblazoned across his stomach area is a burst of long flame-like forms whose small center carries an incised letter, "H". On the front and back of the large book a similar symbol appears: a large raised disc with the letters "IHS" and alternating radiating flames and light. These letters are the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. Both allude to Ignatius' logo for the Society of Jesus (left). While one marks the book with the wisdom of Jesus proper to Ignatius, the other marks the very viscera of Ignatius: Like biblical anthropology which locates the heart in the viscera, Jesus is at the very heart of his life. Just below the small center of the pattern the cincture dips down to the right and leads us to a small swinging cross, the major Christian symbol for Christ. For Ignatius the charism of his religious order of Jesuits is precisely being com-panions of the human Jesus who suffered and died for us on the cross.



His left forearm and hand supports a book, very thick, bound with textured-leather that has three end clasps or fasteners, two by his hand, and one near his chest. It is a compact object marked by the name of Jesus. The large book a symbol of wisdom identifies his spiritual legacy: the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* which is known mainly to the Jesuits. His left hand loosely grasps the spine of the book which is cantilevered at a high angle and we wonder how he manages to carry it. Visually the book and his right arm are associated by their similar imaginary center-lines which are parallel diagonals. Balance is affected around the central axis of the body: on one side the long right arm wants to rotate clockwise while the short large book wants to rotate counter clockwise.



His head perfectly balanced on his level shoulders emerges from an out-cropping of upturned collars; his weight is solidly placed on his right foot. His face inspired by the Ignatian death mask has a light mustache and a disheveled beard. His pronounced cheekbones, which form an angular setting for his eyes, affect a focusing or concentration of his sight. The eyes stare outward to the future, but also an in-ward seeing as he strides forward. Ignatius is a physically strong and confident figure, the 'pilgrim' (as he refers to himself in his spiritual auto-biography) that leads the way into the world with perfect inner and outer balance, a profound integration of self (suggested initially by the circular base). He is inflamed with the love of Jesus and armed with and his Jesus-wisdom, found in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions*.

## Santa Clara University

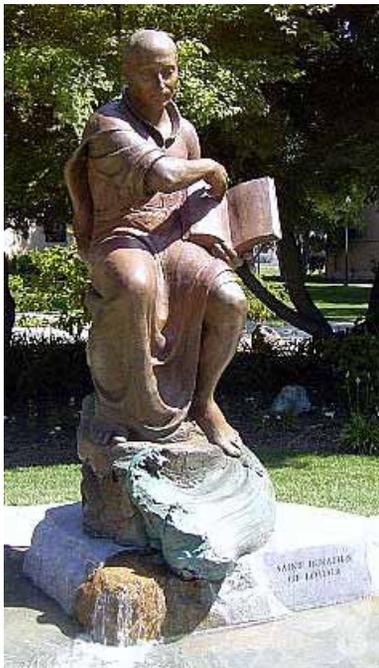


In contrast to these visions of St. Ignatius there is a monumental sculpture of Ignatius done by Lisa Reinertson (UC at Davis) on the Santa Clara University campus (2002). The work was commissioned by Janice and William Terry both alumni of the university who requested that Ignatius not be presented as a soldier saint. The isolated bronze sculpture is located behind the administration building in a quiet garden of the campus. It sits in a shallow dish-like container that holds a few inches of water creating a target or centering effect for the sculpture which is similar to the circular base of Creighton's Ignatius.



As one approaches it from the front one is struck by its Michelangelesque style. It reminds one of the beautiful fresco of the prophet Isaiah painted by Raphael in the style of Michelangelo. (St. Augustine's Church, Rome). This monumentally human Ignatius is not only reminiscent of Raphael's Isaiah but also of Michelangelo's Moses (St. Peter's in Chains, Rome). Reinertson's bold way of presenting the mystic and founder of the Jesuits is striking. The sculpture seven feet high (eight with its pedestal) towers over the viewer and shocks us when we recall the diminutive Ignatius in real life (ca. 5' 3", 1.6m).

The figure is seated with its head slightly lowered and turned to our left, beautifully reflecting the traditional features of the bald head and the nose-bum found in Ignatius' death mask. There is a stillness and silence to his demeanor that speaks of contemplation. In the classic *contraposto* position the shoulders are rotated in the opposite direction to the plane of the head with the right arm raised, its muscular forearm crossing in front of his chest with a hand pointing to an open book angled for the viewer to read. (The hand points to a blank page but leads the eye to the in-scription on the adjacent page.) The book is supported by the re-ceding left forearm and hand which cups the bottom of the volume. The hips, frontally view-ed, are seen as turned against the rotating shoulders. The right leg, in line with the turned head, is covered with the cloth of his cassock which in a classic way reveals the forms of the anatomy beneath it. The left leg is uncovered, exposing both its natural muscular form and its pulled-back position. The bare foot bridges the land and water (actually disturbing the water's flow) and seems oversized, drawing attention to it and to the idea of travel. There are no signs of wounds from the cannonball (right leg) which forced Ignatius into convalescence and eventually led to his conversion. The pulled-back left leg suggests the moment of rising, of action, or decision, a typical focus on the human will found in Renaissance art.



opening hidden behind the flared-out end surrounding the work with gently flowing water.

One expects that the open book is the *Spiritual Exercises* or the *Constitutions* bearing the traditional letters, "A. M. D. G.", *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, "For the greater glory of God." However upon examination the page reads in simple script, "*The more universal the good ~ the more it is Divine.*" This quote from Ignatius reflects more the great endeavors of humankind with which Ignatius and his companions identified than with the consciously Christian mission of the Church. From a theological point of view, the mystery of the Incarnation is stressed rather than Jesus' death and resurrection. This emphasis is so appropriate to Ignatius and the Jesuits early commitment to education of the whole person, of laboring with humankind and finding God in all things.

At the base of the seated figure against the bronze color of the sculpture one finds the teal-blue form indicative of flowing water, a river splashing out-wards. Indeed water emerges from an



As one follows this teal-blue form, one is led to the side and eventually up and around to the back of this massive figure. The source of this rapidly diminishing river-form finally reaches into the juncture of thigh and calf found at the back of the right knee, revealing that the source of this river is Ignatius himself, his interior. The water-form evokes the river Cardoner, along side of which, Ignatius experienced his Trinitarian vision. It is here that one is struck by what can only be called a series of bas-reliefs integrated into the back of the figure and its rock-like support.



What first catches the eye is the frontal pose of the figure of Jesus with a halo over his head which follows the surface contours across the broad back of the sculpture. The lightly beard-ed Jesus has one hand clasped to his heart and the other with an open gesture down by his right side. Interestingly this figure is not in a cruciform pose but seems to speak simply about the human spirit-filled Jesus. Below the figure is a series of eight crosses which begin under his lowered open hand and flow upward following the curve of Ignatius' outer garment. The two dimensional image of Jesus is literally on Ignatius' back, and integrated into the contours of his body. One could say that he literally 'wears' Jesus and the multiple crosses below like a habit. This symbolic habit, hidden from the frontal view, and often missed by the viewer, serves to specify the monumental human form with the spirit of Jesus, a spirit that is hidden

at the heart of Ignatius' humanity— the deep mystical source of his greatness.

Each of the eight crosses carries a name: the first is "Ramos", then "Ramos" again referring to the two lay women (Julia Elba Ramos, a cook, and her young daughter Cecilia Ramos) martyred in El Salvador. The next name "Ellacuria, S. J." the only name that carries the "S. J." which visually serves to indicate that the following crosses are those of the six Jesuit priests that were also martyred: Ignacio Ellacuria, a Spanish born Salvadorian citizen, was the rector of the Central American University; the cross that carries "Martin Baro" (Ignacio Martin-Baro), also a Spanish-born Salvadoran citizen who was the university's vice rector. Above the latter is "Lopez Lopez" (Joaquin Lopez y Lopez), a Salvadoran-born Jesuit who was director of a center for humanitarian assistance affiliated with the university.



Following the curve of the garment, we see "Moreno", (Juan Ramon Moreno), a Spaniard who was director of two university-related programs; "Montes" (Segundo Montes), a Spanish-born sociology professor; and finally "Lopez" (Arnando Lopez), a Spanish-born philosophy professor. One familiar with the Santa Clara campus (8 simple white crosses in

front of the Mission Church) and with the tragic event easily recognizes the eight Salvadorians brutally executed by military forces on November 17, 1989. This symbolic imagery of crosses alluding to the cross of Jesus; and of the proper names speak of the Ignatian or Jesuit spirit today, “the service of faith and the promotion of justice (GC 32).”

As on the statue’s front, words appear on the posterior, an inscription that follows the upward curve of the garment: “*Faith and Education in the service of justice.*” All of the formulation lie in the inside curve of the cloak’s edge-- except the word “of” which is placed on the outside of a small curl of the cloak. This little detail seems to reveal the artist’s desire to integrate the words within the sculpted forms or surfaces themselves. Like the 2-dimensional image of Jesus, which rests on the figure’s back and follows the contours of its surface; the words are inscribed into the sculpted forms themselves. The effect integrates verbal meaning into the form itself, investing and specifying the monumental human shape with its significance, appropriate for the Jesuit education apostolate. These words reinforce and make explicit the Salvadorian martyrdom in service of higher education and justice.



As one examines the support or seat of the sculpture one sees at the base, below the river form, a bas-relief of the Black Madonna of Manresa with the kneeling Ignatius laying down his sword. Sculpted into the stone is this famous statue of Mary and the child in her lap seated under an arch. Just like the original (right) she and the boy Jesus each hold a globe. The iconography speaks of the newly converted Ignatius’ midnight vigil in the monastery at Montserrat in which he dedicated himself to the Virgin Mother of God. Devotion to Mary had a special place in the life of Ignatius and the Jesuits which continues down to this day.



To the left of this bas-relief one sees another relief also under an archway. Here the cloaked Ignatius kneels on one knee extending his arm and hand toward a standing, amply robed, figure. There is a book-like object in Ignatius’ hand as well as a scroll in the left hand of the standing figure. In the background are outlined six figures, the early companions of Ignatius. The iconography suggests both the acceptance of the Formula of the Institute (scroll) of the early Jesuits by Pope Paul III (1540) and the giving of the Constitutions (book) years later to Pope Julius III. This relief essentially places the Jesuit religious order at the service of the universal Church.

As one moves to the left a third bas-relief is found above the wavy water, or river form. A seated figure offers a bowl to a child who lies covered with blankets and at the same time supports the child's head with his other hand. This simple iconography recalls the ministry to the sick or the corporal works of mercy exercised by Ignatius and his early companions.



If one looks carefully above and to the right of this depiction of care for the sick child there is another scene, a distant landscape, which is etched into the seat under Ignatius' cloak. One sees a distant fortress-like building sketched into the surface, a castle or palace, with a simple road-form widening and curving to meet the teal-blue river-form. This simple 'sketch' indicates the castle of Loyola; the place of his convalescence and conversion, and the simple road leading away from it to the river-form suggests the early pilgrim-nature of his life. The fact that it is more like a drawing than a bas-relief and that it is in the distance indicates the idea of origin. When one con-siders the monumental nature of the figure of Ignatius in relation to this hidden and distant scene one may be shocked by the



contrast between the origin of Ignatius' holiness and the end and nature of his sanctity. The great humanness of Ignatius comes from his religious conversion.

Jesus is the largest of the figures in the five scenes depicted, suggesting, in the imagery of Byzantine art, his theological primacy. His gesture of one hand open and one clasped over his heart declares the crosses (the martyrs) are close to his heart. Jesus is the font or source of the spirit of the martyrs, a spirit which flows down to con-temporary times. Also iconographically this Jesus-spirit is the spirit of devotion to Mary, service of the universal church, the corporal works of mercy, and his religious conversion. All of this iconography is visually linked to the monumental human form of Ignatius through the river-form the "Cardoner", symbolic of the mystical vision of Ignatius. The water passes through them (two below and two above) and emerges on the front side of the work increasing in size till it terminates in an open splash to the flowing water and the natural ambience.



After one has explored all of the iconographical meaning of the work, on the back, one is struck how two different art forms, sculpture and bas-relief, have been integrated together. The two-dimensional media of bas-relief has been integrated with the three-dimensional media of sculpture. From the front, the work speaks simply of a great or monumental humanity expressed in Renaissance style which is identified with the portrait of Ignatius. If this is all the viewer sees, one could easily come away asking if we have now made Ignatius simply a secular figure, one without any clear reference to God and Christianity. And who would initially expect to discover anything of interest on the back of

the sculpture? However, if you circle the sculpture, or follow the river-form to its back, you are surprised at what you see-- we can truly say it is a "revelation." The overwhelming effect of viewing the back is the story in art, that is, it gives us specific meaning and content. Our intellect grasps the idea of the human Jesus, the Salvadorian martyrs, and the key events according to the artist in the life of Ignatius. Just like we intellectually recognize the face of the monumental human figure as that of Ignatius, we now clearly recognize the subject matter, the intellectual content, of the novel rear view of the seated human figure.

Just like Baroque art which organically attempts to integrate the three plastic arts of architecture, sculpture and painting the artist has integrated two art forms, sculpture and bas-relief. And just as painting, (because it is two dimensional), is seen as more spiritual (non-material) in the hierarchy of the plastic arts, so too you may see that the two dimensional bas-reliefs (and even more so the incised building and road) are more 'spiritual' than the sculptural form of the human figure. So now one may sense the 'spiritual' form of the iconography, of the story. The spirit of the human Jesus intimately incorporated into the back of a human body, the spirit of the martyrs (of the cross), as intimate and symbolic as clothes are to the body, are both made clear in the truth of 'faith and education in the service of justice.' The seat or foundation of the figure speaks of four special or life-forming events in the life of Ignatius, the place of his conversion, his devotion to Mary, his dedication to the service of the universal Church and his ministry to the sick and the poor.

All of this is experienced as a revelation which characterizes and imbues the monumental humanity of the figure, of the human being called Ignatius. He is holy or saintly precisely through his humanness whose greatness owes itself to his love of and dedication to Jesus, to Mary, to the Church and to the poor and sick of society. His sanctity is hidden deeply in the monumental greatness of his humanness which issues forth in his vision of the created and redeemed goodness of all humankind: *"The more universal the good ~ the more it is Divine."*

## Boston College

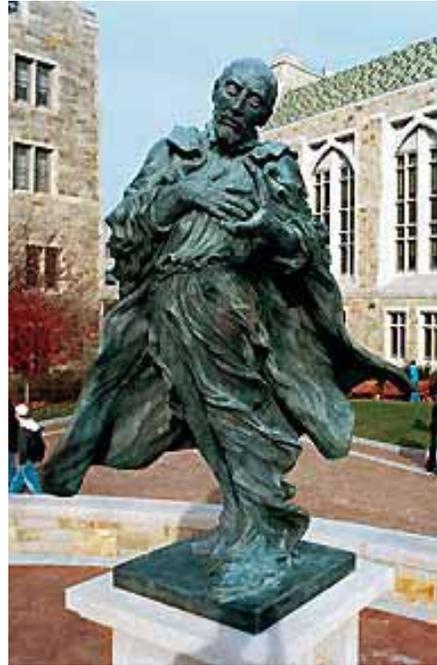


A recent addition to the Boston College campus is a 10-foot bronze sculpture which portrays St. Ignatius of Loyola as a teacher (2006). The work was executed by Pablo Eduardo, a Bolivian-born artist who lives in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The sculpture (above), is set atop a five-foot granite pedestal on the Higgins green. It was commissioned by the University's Committee on Christian Art, chaired by father T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. who commented, "Usually, you see St. Ignatius with a sword and shield, a reference to his once being a soldier" however, "We wanted something different: his interior, meditative side, as well as the strength of his personality. The idea was to show an older Ignatius, well on his way to fulfilling his vocation." (Excerpts from the *Boston College Magazine*, Winter 2006.)

Just as the Santa Clara work borrows much of its visual forms from the Italian Renaissance period this work borrows from the Baroque period. It is this powerful, almost overwhelming, Baroque style that strikes the viewer immediately. With its energetic movement and dynamic design it affects a grandness that both delights and challenges the eye.

Ignatius wears two pieces of clothing: a long cassock tied with a cincture, which begins with a short upright collar and ends around his ankles covering a good part of his feet; and a billowing and undulating cloak with a wide wavy collar whose ends sit on each shoulder. Both collars effect a transition from the heavily articulated clothing to the tilted head. One can imagine a smooth convex center-line through his legs, upper body and head cresting at his cincture-bound waist. The overall body gesture has an uplifting effect as if the figure wants to fly.

The folds of the cassock hide the physical anatomy of the straight left leg except for a hint of a knee joint. It is as if there is no muscle mass to the leg indicating an ascetic body underneath. The tiered pattern of the elaborate articulation of the many folds of the cloth create a flame-like upward movement adding to the uplifting effect of the body gesture, a kind of ethereal rising up. Interestingly, though still covered by the cassock, the right leg reveals more of its physical form. However both legs offer a spindly but firm underpinning for the rest of the figure.



On the right side of the sculpture, these flame-like folds carry over into what seems to be a large dipping fold in his cloak, spreading this ethereal effect. Looking at his right arm (viewer's left), the sleeve of the cassock is an accretion of layered folds with pockets of negative space. The profile of the sleeve reveals a series of concave curves which again deemphasizes the physical anatomy underneath indicating a non-material or spiritual body.



At the cincture line of the waist the rising tiers of diagonal flame-like folds change their direction and move diagonally backward, accentuating the crest of the body posture. The cincture funnels the movement, or energy, into a sweeping movement (an array of curved folds) up to and underneath his open right hand placed over his heart. The ray-like fingers of the hand again redirects the movement. The external energy generated by the lower part of the cassock is now directed into an internal energy of the covered heart. However the movement doesn't stop there for the placement of the left hand with the palm upward, extended out in front of the covered heart, signals a giving out, as if an offering is being made to those who view the work. The ethereal or spiritual energy focused in Ignatius' heart is offered to the viewer, and to the world. Knowing the life of the saint and his mystical experience this symbolizes a love informed Triune God.



On both sides of the frontal view, the cloak billows, undulates and floats and flies outward away from his body as if they were two non-natural wings, that defy or play with the law of gravity, adding to the feeling that the figure wants to rise up and fly. The cassock that is over the left leg not only presents an ascending flame-like pattern but it encircles behind the leg curving and flaring out at places. This can be seen especially at the calf and ankle which mimics the tip of the cloak on the right side, reinforcing a sense of rising up even at its most earth bound point. Mysteriously he seems to have a solid stance, one foot slightly in front of the other, and yet his body

seems to hover in another space. It is as if he grows or stretches from a firm earthly footing into an ethereal reality. This could be seen as the maturation of his natural humanness into his saintliness.

His head which is tilted to the viewer's right and at the end of the smooth convex center-line alludes to the Ignatian death mask. An older Ignatius is depicted with his fuller beard seemingly divided; and a broader, fuller three part mustache whose balanced ends curve down and extend beyond the face. It is interesting to note that even the little hair found on the sides of his temples reveal a wave like pattern. His eyes stare out in the direction of his extended hand, and his demeanor hints of a longing for engagement with his spirit-filled heart. We have an Ignatius who invites us to join him in the process of spiritual maturation—of becoming spirit-filled Christians or “other Christs”.



### **Epilogue:**

This sampling of four contemporary artistic treatments of St. Ignatius on Jesuit campuses signals a rediscovery, or rebirth of the relevance of the saint for the public, for the universal viewing which is apropos of a Jesuit campus. It is not the Church that commissions the works for its own devotional setting nor is it a patron for the setting of a museum. In the over 400 year old legacy of St. Ignatius, each school presents a work of art which finds something of its own vision of the humanity and the spirituality of the saint for the secular world to behold.