

Ignatian Spirituality is lived in two forms.

The spirituality of Ignatius has traveled two distinct religious paths: the Society of Jesus and those religious congregations which follow the Society's Constitutions, and various lay associations but, especially, Christian Life Community. Historically, Ignatius shared his spiritual approach with lay people at Alcala and Salamanca, but it was not until he gathered a group around him at the University of Paris that a permanent community was formed: as mentioned above, it was this group that later became the original members of the Society of Jesus. These men, in turn, went out, gave the Ignatian Exercises to others, and formed groups of these lay people in this spirituality. In Parma in 1540, three months before the Society of Jesus was established as a religious order, Pierre Favre was working with a group of men: and after he left the city, this group became known as the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus. At that time in Europe, there were many confraternities. The early Jesuits modified these confraternities according to their own way of proceeding and called them Marian Congregations or Sodalities. As a result, the Society of Jesus has never had need of a Third Order.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these communities had become so important within the life of the Church that, even when the Jesuits were suppressed, the pope desired these groups to continue. The Sodalities were taken from the jurisdiction of the Jesuits and were placed under the jurisdiction of the local bishops. The suppression of the Society of Jesus also deprived the Sodalities of their source of spirituality: the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. The Sodalities gradually changed into groups for women and children with an emphasis on devotion to Mary, especially with the recitation of the Office of Our Lady; and these groups multiplied.

Sodalities began to return to their primary focus in 1910 when a Jesuit and five of his students in Spain composed the Common Rules. In 1925 the Jesuit General set up a Central Secretariat in Rome to foster this movement throughout the world. In 1948 Pius XII issued the Apostolic Constitution, *Bis Seculari*, in which he upheld the Sodality as Catholic Action. The movement was further strengthened when scholars such as Hugo Rahner in Germany recognized the dramatic impact the

Spiritual Exercises had on the early Sodalists and called their twentieth century counterparts back to this source of Spirituality.

In 1967, in line with the changes accorded by Vatican II, the World Federation of Sodalities became the World Federation of Christian Life Communities, and the Common Rules were replaced with the General Principles. This change emphasized the characteristics of community, spirituality, and service and soon began to have its effect of pruning the total membership.

At present, Christian Life Communities are part of an international community of small groups of committed (mostly Roman Catholic) Christians. Members strive to integrate the features of Ignatian Spirituality within a basis community that has as its mission proclaiming the gospel of justice and love. Although CLC is a lay movement, Jesuits and other religious and priests are also members and frequently assist the groups with spiritual direction and the making of the Spiritual Exercises.

For more information on CLC, [click here](#).