

INTRODUCTION - REFLECTION



I ask for what I desire as we begin this topic



I pray that my entire being become open to God's grace



I imagine these texts being addressed to me, and note my response

Grace: That I learn the true value of my organisation for the service of a higher purpose

Ignatius, that inveterate walker, remained sequestered in Rome, a prisoner of his own work. During the rest of his life, he left the city only on rare occasions. He concentrated on the future and refused to let himself be trapped by the nostalgia of his previous wanderings. It was up to him to carry out the decisions that the companions had made. **He summed up the ends, means and structure of the new congregation** and used the good services of his former retreatant, Cardinal Contarini, to bring the project to the attention of Pope Paul III. This was done toward the end of June 1539. The draft constituted what is a kind of Magna Carta of the Society. Pope Paul III was pleased and touched as he listened to it being read to him, and afterward he was heard to say: 'The finger of God is here!' Thus the pope's verbal approval of the Society took place on 3 September 1539. The approval by the papal Curia of the Formula of the Institute, as it came to be called, was all that was needed for official approbation, and such approval was considered no more than a formality.

Faced with this challenge, Ignatius seemed to grow in stature, implementing a maxim he would later make famous; he put all his hope in God and at the same time began to mobilise all the human resources at his disposal. [...] At last, on 27 September 1540, Paul III signed the bull **approving the Society**. Known later as the **Formula of the Institute**, it was a very rich document indeed. The pope gave complete liberty to the members of the Society to **name their own superior general and to draw up Constitutions especially adapted to the aims and goals of the Society**.

Brian Grogan SJ - The Finger of God

Whoever observes the wind will not sow; and whoever regards the clouds will not reap. Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed, and at evening do not let your hands be idle; for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

Ecclesiastes 11:4-6

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How is the history of my institution relevant for my current challenges? How can this history help me pursue the goals I have as a leader called to life in organisations?
2. What is the value of my institution/unit for the purpose it serves?
3. Do I have the capacity to lead it where it needs to go?