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April 12, 2026 | Second Sunday of Easter

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## Pope Francis and His Jesuit Plan for the Church

Jesuits seem to attract conspiracy theories. One factor, from the earliest days of the Society, is probably our occasional proximity to power: How is that confessor manipulating that king? Another is the quality of our international organization and coordination, with frequent letters between St. Ignatius Loyola in Rome and Jesuits all over the world, making it easy to imagine us plotting something that required careful coordination. Over the centuries that followed, elaborate tales of nefarious Jesuits scheming behind the scenes became a stock element of anti-Catholic propaganda. (Other related tropes about Jesuits as too-clever-by-half moralists who could find an excuse for anything, as in the case of Blaise Pascal, fed into intra-Catholic propaganda as well.)

These days, Jesuits often treat these attacks, tongue-in-cheek, as badges of honor. When I was in theology studies in Boston, our house had a framed facsimile copy of a colonial-era law which banned Jesuits from the Massachusetts Bay Colony because, in its words, of the “secret underminings, and solicitations of those of the Jesuitical Order” which had so disrupted European peace.

Most Jesuits, I think, enjoy our reputation for such skullduggery largely because it is so absurd. When I am asked directly about Jesuit conspiracy theories, my standard response is to point out that most Jesuit communities struggle to agree on how many different kinds of breakfast cereal to buy.

No matter how outlandish they might be, Pope Francis’ election in 2013 as the first Jesuit pope fanned such conspiracist tropes into flame again. Rather than plotting to control governments, however, the speculation was about plans to change the church.

Almost everyone, it seemed, had some church teaching or issue that they were either passionately hoping or fearfully dreading that Pope Francis would change. His moves and comments, especially around the Synod on Synodality, were often parsed to figure out what he was assumed to be orchestrating.

While this approach to understanding Pope Francis is perhaps less absurd than 17th-century Jesuit conspiracy theories, it still obscures significant lessons to be learned from understanding Pope Francis as a *Jesuit*, because his most important Jesuit characteristic is not how he strategized to do things according to his own plan, but how he tried to cooperate with what God was already doing.

I think the single greatest misunderstanding about Pope Francis is the idea that he was playing, or even attempting to play, some complicated game of three-dimensional chess with the church. Instead, I will stand by something I wrote for *The Jesuit Post* during the week after his election, that rather than focusing on changing the teaching of the church, Pope Francis, “who believe[d] profoundly in the power of the Gospel to change lives and to make possible a new kind of freedom, a freedom for an encounter with Christ,” was far more interested in how we would be changed ourselves.

Many people who analyzed Pope Francis, expecting to decode his grand strategy were frustrated, and in that frustration, some came to criticize him as being “confusing.” But looking at Pope Francis as a Jesuit, I saw something different going on: Francis was “discerning the spirits,” as we Jesuits say, with a deep trust that God was already at work in the church and in the world, in the lives of believers and seekers.

In the 15th annotation of the *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius counsels that the one giving the *Exercises* ought to be cautious about trying to orchestrate what the retreatant will experience or decide, but instead should “allow the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord.”

Pope Francis was at his most Jesuit, I believe, in the fact that he did not have a grand plan. What he had instead was the faith and courage to cooperate with how God is dealing with us, trusting that it will be better than any plan we could make on our own.

— Rev. Sam Sawyer, S.J.  
Editor-in-Chief, *America Magazine*

## Parish Mission Statement

*The love of Christ impels us to welcome all,  
to worship joyfully and pray fervently,  
to walk together with those in need, and  
to reverence God in the wonder of Creation.*

### This Week at a Glance

#### MONDAY, APRIL 13th

**Francis the Jesuit: A Look at the Jesuit Roots  
and Ignatian Spirituality.**

7 PM. Wallace Hall. *Details on page 3.*

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 14th

**Discover the Glories of Central Park.**

1 PM. Wallace Hall. *Details on page 3.*

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15th

**The Importance of Faith:  
Muslim & Christian Perspectives.**

7 PM. Wallace Hall. *Details on page 3.*

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul Meeting.**

6:30 PM. Parish House.

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 17th

**A Visit From the Holy Land: Fr. Rami Asakrieh, OFM.**

7 PM. Wallace Hall. *Details on page 3.*

### The Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood: Spirituality, Ecology, and Justice in Action

Thursday, April 30th at 6:30 PM  
Wallace Hall

Christine Massi and Nico Carl of the Ecology Department will offer an overview of sustainability, setting the stage for a deeper conversation. Following the presentation, Fr. Hallinan will interview Sister Karen Burke, CSJ, EdD, Director of the Sisters of St. Joseph Sustainability Department, who will reflect on the passion, commitment, and perseverance that guide efforts in preservation and conservation.

### Interfaith Trip to Spain

October 10th to 18th

Please join us on a tour of sacred Christian, Muslim, and Jewish heritage sites in Spain. The tour is co-sponsored by the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Temple Emanu-El, and Peace Islands Institute New York. To express your



interest, scan the QR code at left. Please respond by Wednesday, April 15th.

*- Fr. Gesalonia*

### The Overlooked Books of the New Testament

Wednesdays, April 22nd to May 13th at 7 PM  
Parish House & Zoom

What are the qualifications to be a leader in the church? How should Christians handle wealth? How do we find meaning in suffering? How do we challenge unjust social structures? The letters to Philemon, Timothy, and Titus contemplate these still-relevant questions. Our gatherings will explore historical and spiritual interpretations of these often overlooked yet deeply fascinating texts.

Brian B. Pinter, Pastoral Associate, will present.

To register, email [pinterb@nycignatius.org](mailto:pinterb@nycignatius.org).

### Laudato Si'/Care of Creation Ministry

#### Earth Day Walk in Central Park with George

Sunday, April 19th

Following the 11 AM Masses

Meeting Point: Wallace Hall

We'll gather in Wallace Hall after the 11 AM Masses for a brief introduction, then head to Central Park to explore highlights including the Conservatory Garden and the North Woods. Along the way, we'll step away from the pace of city life and immerse ourselves in two inspiring landscapes, reflecting on the glory of God's creation. Designed to evoke the Adirondacks, the North Woods offers a peaceful retreat of trees, winding paths, and water features. Join us for a Spring Sunday in the Park with George. Bring a brown bag lunch. The walk lasts about 90 minutes.

Please RSVP to Jean Santopatre, Pastoral Associate,  
at [santopatrej@nycignatius.org](mailto:santopatrej@nycignatius.org).

### Pope's Prayer Intention for April

In his prayer intention for the month of April, Pope Leo XIV invites us to pray for priests experiencing a crisis, that they might experience the nearness of God and his people, and rediscover hope and joy in their vocation.

The Holy Father thinks especially of priests "when loneliness weighs heavily, when doubt clouds their hearts, and when exhaustion seems stronger than hope." He prays that they might rediscover that "they are not mere functionaries or lonely heroes, but beloved sons...and pastors sustained by the prayer of their people." Likewise, he invites the entire community to care for them, recognizing that they too need to be supported on their journey.

## The Importance of Faith: Muslim & Christian Perspectives

Wednesday, April 15th at 7 PM  
Wallace Hall

### PRESENTERS



Fr. Dennis Yesalonia,  
S.J., Pastor &  
Hakan Yesilova,  
Editor, *The Fountain*



It is faith that settles the soul in times of uncertainty and opens one's heart to behold the inherent goodness of all God's creation and the promise of good things to come. Faith is the lens through which the radiance of hope is experienced. For without faith, there can be no hope. Join us for a discussion of what faith means to Muslims and Christians as a gift from God that is shared in common.

## Circle of Friends

### Discover the Glories of Central Park

Tuesday, April 14th at 1 PM  
Wallace Hall

Central Park may be New York's most beloved green space, yet even lifelong New Yorkers are often surprised by the secluded gardens hidden within its 843 acres. From the formal elegance of the Conservancy Garden to the poetic beauty of the Shakespeare Garden, these spaces reveal the artistry, history, and seasonal color that make Central Park one of the city's most enchanting landscapes.

Join Circle of Friends for a richly illustrated presentation by George Rudenauer, a dedicated member of the Central Park Conservancy and a tour guide of Central Park.

**There is no charge for the program, though a free-will donation is appreciated. Registration is required at [silcircleoffriends@gmail.com](mailto:silcircleoffriends@gmail.com).**

## Bread for the World 2026 Annual Offering of Letters

Please join us in signing letters to our Senators and Representatives after all Masses on **Saturday and Sunday, April 18th and 19th** to support "Bread for the World's" 2026 campaign to continue to promote policies that provide vital food assistance to working families and school lunch programs that are currently under threat of vast reductions in funding. Our faith calls us to stand alongside impacted people in our community and around the world.

## Lectures at St. Ignatius

### Francis the Jesuit: A Look at the Jesuit Roots and Ignatian Spirituality of Pope Francis

Monday, April 13th at 7 PM  
Wallace Hall

### PRESENTERS



Fr. James Martin, S.J. &  
Fr. Sam Sawyer, S.J.  
Editors, *America Media*

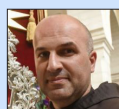


What did it mean for the Pope to be a Jesuit? How did this influence his papacy and the church?

### A Visit From the Holy Land: Fr. Rami Asakrieh, OFM

Friday, April 17th  
7 PM

Wallace Hall



Join us for a conversation with the former pastor of St. Catherine's at the Church of the Nativity, our sister-parish in Bethlehem.

Fr. Rami will share about his experiences ministering to the Palestinian-Christian community, the "living stones" of the land where Jesus walked.

### Film Screening and Conversation with Dan Corrou, S.J.

Sunday, April 26th  
1 PM to 3 PM  
Wallace Hall

Fr. Dan Corrou, S.J., Regional Director for JRS Middle East & North Africa, will show a film and moderate a conversation on the work of Jesuit Refugee Services in the Middle East. He will also offer a personal reflection on refugee accompaniment in Jordan and Lebanon.

*Sponsored by Ignatian Social Justice and  
Ignatian Young Adults Ministries*

### IGNITE Tech Support for Seniors Program

Sunday, April 19th, from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM  
Parish House

This program brings high school students together with senior parishioners for one-on-one technology support. Seniors are invited to bring phones, tablets, or laptops for help with everyday tech questions.

# CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

980 Park Avenue at 84th Street • New York, New York 10028

(212) 288-3588 • Fax: (212) 734-3671 • ignatius.nyc

## PARISH STAFF

### Pastor

Rev. Dennis J. Yesalonia, S.J.

### Associate Pastors

Rev. Mark C. Hallinan, S.J.

Rev. Michael P. Hilbert, S.J.

### Assisting Priest

Rev. James Martin, S.J.

### Pastoral Year Priest

Rev. Jonathan P. Pennacchia, S.J.

### In Residence

Rev. James A. Casciotti, S.J.

### Pastoral Associates

Roxanne De La Torre

Kate Noonan

Brian Pinter

Jean Santopatre

### Pastoral Assistant

Maureen Haley

### Music Ministries

Jen Arvay Kefalas

Robert Reuter

Daniel Beckwith

Michael Sheetz

Christina Kay

Elizabeth Van Os

Douglas Purcell

Scott Warren, *Director*

### Assistant to the Pastor

Rebecca Brucas

### Director of Communications

Elizabeth O'Sullivan

### Director of Facilities

Robert Cisternino

### Facilities Coordinator

Pattie Hughes

### Parish Administrative Assistant

Caitlin Caruso

### Treasurer

Fernando Castro

### Weekday Masses (Monday – Friday)

8:30 AM, 12:10 PM, and 5:30 PM

**Saturday:** 8:30 AM

### Masses for Next Weekend

Saturday Vigil 5:30 PM Fr. Pennacchia

Sunday: 8:00 AM Fr. Hilbert

9:30 AM Fr. Pennacchia

Wallace Hall Mass 11:00 AM Fr. Yesalonia

Solemn Mass 11:00 AM Fr. Hallinan

7:30 PM Fr. Hallinan

## Religious Education for Children

Ms. Kate Noonan, Director

(212) 288-3588 x609

noonank@nycignatius.org

## Saint Ignatius Loyola School

### Upper Campus

(First Grade through Eighth Grade)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

M.S. Ed. (Admin.), M.S. Ed. (Literacy)

48 East 84th Street

(212) 861-3820 | Fax: (212) 879-8248

### Lower Campus

(PreK-3 through Kindergarten)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

240 East 84th Street

(212) 734-6427 | Fax: (212) 734-6972

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

Sundays at the 9:30 AM Mass.

## Confessions

4:30 PM Saturday, 6:30 PM Sunday,  
or by appointment.

## Baptisms

Please contact Maureen Haley at  
baptisms@nycignatius.org  
to arrange for a Baptism and  
the preparation given prior to Baptism.

## Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

Contact Maureen Fullam, M.A.,  
Director, at the Parish House.

## Marriages

The Bride or Groom should contact  
Maureen Haley at  
weddings@nycignatius.org  
to begin preparation for Marriage,  
normally one year in advance.

## Visits to the Sick

Please contact the Parish House  
between the hours of  
9:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

## Ignatian Young Adults (IYA)

For more information about our IYA  
ministry, email Jean Santopatre at  
santopatrej@nycignatius.org.

## Announced Masses and Readings for the Week

### Monday, April 13th

(Second Monday of Easter)

Acts 4:23–31 Psalm 2 John 3:1–8

**8:30 MEM** Joyce Flammer

**12:10 MEM** Ricky Johnson

**5:30 MEM** Betty Gast

### Tuesday, April 14th

(Second Tuesday of Easter)

Acts 4:32–37 Psalm 93

John 3:7b–15

**8:30 MEM** Antonio Regodon  
Cercas

**12:10 MEM** Emalie Feerick

**5:30 MEM** Carol Selland

### Wednesday, April 15th

(Second Wednesday of Easter)

Acts 5:17–26 Psalm 34

John 3:16–21

**8:30 MEM** Joey John Villarroel

**12:10 MEM** John O'Gorman

**5:30 LVG** Patricia Peck

### Thursday, April 16th

(Second Thursday of Easter)

Acts 5:27–33 Psalm 34

John 3:31–36

**8:30 MEM** Edward Sullivan

**12:10 MEM** Philomena Quinn

**5:30 ANN** Living & Deceased  
Members of the Wallace Family

### Friday, April 17th

(Second Friday of Easter)

Acts 5:34–42 Psalm 27 John 6:1–15

**8:30 ANN** Gordon D. Vaughan

**12:10 LVG** Millie Provenzano

**5:30 MEM** Pierce O'Malley

### Saturday, April 18th

(Second Saturday of Easter)

Acts 6:1–7 Psalm 33 John 6:16–21

**8:30 MEM** Francis Zelesky

### Sunday, April 19th

(Third Sunday of Easter)

Acts 2:1, 22–32 1 Peter 1:17–21

Psalm 16 Luke 24:13–35