

## *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* - St. Ignatius of Loyola

This past week, the Church celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, and it reminded me of tuning a piano. If you've ever watched someone tune a piano, you know that it's a process of trial and error. The person presses the key and listens for the sound. If the note is off, then the person tightens or loosens the piano string and strikes the key again. The person repeats this process until just the right note sounds. It's as if the person has a tuning fork in his or her mind which resonates just so when the right note is finally found.

This image comes to mind on the feast of St. Ignatius because, other than founding the Jesuits, one of the largest and most successful religious organizations in the world, he is perhaps best known for his writings on discernment, the practice of seeking and discovering God's will in our lives. For Ignatius, discerning God's will is very much like tuning a piano. It is a process of trial and error, spending time praying and reflecting about the different possibilities until one hits just the right note. We can recognize when this happens because that choice will resonate most closely with the tuning fork in our hearts, God's Spirit dwelling within us. It will feel right on a level much deeper than emotion. In fact, it might even contradict our emotions; we may want one thing, but discern in our bones that the right choice is something completely different. That is why discernment takes time, and lots of practice.

Ignatius expressed the inner guide we all have for discerning God's will with a saying that became the motto of his community: *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* - For the greater glory of God. Whatever gives God the greatest glory is the choice that is right in any situation. That is our inner guide. Listen to it, and follow wherever the beautiful music it produces leads.