

# Go forth and set the world on fire—but are you sure that’s a good idea?

I wouldn’t say the Feast of St. Ignatius is as big as Christmas at Loyola University Maryland, where I work, but three of the Jesuits said a special Mass followed by a low-key party.



Because today was a day with unexpected twists and turns, I ended up taking Leo with me to the Mass.

It was Leo’s first visit to Loyola’s chapel, so I reminded him to make his three wishes. They must have been food-related because at the party afterward, they were serving egg rolls and pepperoni and fruit kabobs—some of his favorite foods.

When one of my colleagues offered Leo a Fruit by the Foot, he practically jumped with joy. Then one of the Jesuit priests gave him a cross to wear around his neck. That’s when Leo realized this whole Feast of St. Ignatius might be a bit like Christmas.

Tonight as I was putting Daniel to bed, he noticed my necklace.



“Who dat man?” he asked.

“It’s St. Ignatius,” I told him.

“Did he get killed?”

“Well, no, but when he was an old man, he died and went to heaven.”

Daniel got upset. “Mama, I miss dat guy.”

“You do?” I said, a bit startled. “Why?”

“I like his beard.”

I assured him that St. Ignatius is in heaven and we can still talk to him. And I told him there are a lot of priests, and even Pope Francis, who are a little like St. Ignatius. I carefully didn’t mention how many of them have beards—a statistic I am not able to provide.

“And St. Ignatius told people, ‘Go forth and set the world on fire!’” I said.

“What?” Daniel said. “Why?”

I tried to explain that St. Ignatius didn’t mean that literally, but I could see the concern in Daniel’s eyes and the questions started flying. Setting anything on fire is

a no-no for a 3-year-old. Finally I just changed the subject.

Lesson learned. When introducing St. Ignatius to a 3-year-old, only include quotes such as “Laugh and grow strong.” Or stick to talking about the beard.

