NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

April 22, Mary, Mother of the Society of Jesus

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Apr. 22, 2010 NCR Today

"Dear Fathers and Brothers of the Society, today you look with special devotion at the Blessed Virgin Mary, remembering that on 22 April 1541, St Ignatius and his first companions made their solemn vows before the image of Mary in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls."

--from an address [1] delivered by Pope Benedict XVI to the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus on April 22, 2006, following a Mass celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica by Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

"St Ignatius?s heritage sparked his devotion to Our Lady, which intensified during his period of convalescence following the injury he received during the battle at Pamplona. Major events in his life occurred on feasts or at sites honouring the Virgin: his vigil before the Black Madonna of Montserrat on the eve of the Annunciation, 1522; his first vows at Montmartre, Paris, on the feast of the Assumption, 1534; his first Mass in St. Mary Major in Rome on Christmas, 1538. On Friday of Easter week, April 22, 1541, seven months after papal approval of the Society of Jesus and two weeks after Ignatius was elected its first general, he celebrated Mass with the first companions at Our Lady?s altar in the basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome, during which all pronounced their vows."

--from Sacred Space, [2] the prayer site run by the Irish Jesuits.

To see the icon before which St. Ignatius and five of his companions took their vows on April 22, 1541, click here [3] and then click on the fourth image at the left.

A very happy feast day to all Jesuits, to their students, alumni and alumnae, Associates, Volunteers, Companions, and friends!

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[1] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060422_gesuiti_en.html
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