**St. Joseph Pignatelli, SJ (1737–1811)**

St. Joseph Pignatelli, SJ, helped restore the Society of Jesus after its suppression (1773-1814).

For multiple political reasons, European monarchs pressured the pope into suppressing the Jesuits in the late 18th century. The Jesuit suppression affected Portugal, France, the Two Sicilies, Parma, and the Spanish Empire by 1767. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV dissolved the Order entirely. Prussia and Russia refused to carry out the papal decree. Because of this, the Society of Jesus survived in Russia throughout the suppression.

When the Jesuits were suppressed in Spain, Pignatelli could have remained in his country, because he was a member of the Spanish nobility. Instead Pignatelli chose exile with his Jesuit brothers and became Superior for 600 remaining Jesuits. These Jesuits were refused entry into Italy and settled on the southern tip of Corsica, only to be exiled once again when France acquired Corsica in 1768. The community finally made it to Ferrara in Northern Italy, where they lived a fragile existence until the final suppression in 1773.

Now forbidden to practice his ministry as a priest, Pignatelli moved to Bologna and for the next 24 years kept in contact with his dispersed brethren. Pignatelli attempted to become a member of the Jesuit community in Russia. Unable to go to Russia, Pignatelli accepted an invitation from Ferdinand, Duke of Parma, to reestablish the Society in his territory. With several Jesuits from Russia, the Jesuit community was reestablished in 1797. Pignatelli renewed his vows and was appointed Novice Master. Later he was appointed Provincial in Italy.

In the midst of the Napoleonic wars, with shifting political pressures among the small states in Italy, Pignatelli shepherded the re-founded Jesuit communities. Joseph Pignatelli hoped to live to see the full restoration of the Society of Jesus but, worn out by his labors, died in 1811—three years before Pope Pius VII universally restored the Society. Due to his efforts to keep the Jesuit ideals and community alive, St. Joseph Pignatelli is considered the restorer of the Society of Jesus.

