many paths intersect at Broadway and Madison, the home of Seattle University. It is a crossroads for the Catholic Faith, Jesuit tradition, modern learning, and the evolution of Seattle and the entire Pacific Northwest. As these strands have come together, there have been collisions and snarls, but more importantly, a greater merging and synthesis.

The purpose of this book is to retrace the routes that led to Seattle University in its centennial year, but one cannot understand how the university came to the place it occupies today without following the strands of Catholic and Jesuit tradition that define its mission and philosophy.

As a Catholic university, Seattle University is part of a spiritual, intellectual and institutional continuum stretching back two millennia. It embodies and expresses a shared faith, philosophy, history and community. Seattle University is not limited to Catholics — indeed, only half of its enrollment belongs to the Church — but it has a point of view, a purpose and a style which are shaped by its Catholic heritage.

Paramount among these is a special idea of the intellect as a doorway to God. In the Catholic way of knowledge, an understanding of the world is not merely found, it is revealed through a providence which not only gives men and women the ability to think but which acts positively to reward enquiry with comprehension and spiritual discovery.

In this Catholic tradition, investigation and instruction are vital forms of reverence premised on a faith that every individual can find, by the grace of God, his or her own truth. Thus, Seattle University is faithful to its Catholic roots without operating exclusively or even chiefly for Catholics. It is not a religious school offering only catechism or theology. On the contrary, Seattle University is a leading institution in such traditionally secular fields as computer science, psychology, engineering, education, nursing, and business, and it attracts faculty, staff and students representing every religious persuasion.

Within the broad Catholic intellectual tradition, Seattle University follows a special vector founded and extended by the Society of Jesus, an order of Catholic priests established more than 450 years ago by Ignatius of Loyola, a Basque nobleman now revered as a Saint. It is difficult to imagine a less likely candidate for launching one of history's greatest continuing experiments in applied intellect.

Don Inigo Lopez de Loyola y Onaz was born in his family's ancestral Pyrenees castle in 1491 as Muslims and Christians struggled for control of Spain. Ignatius (as he later became known) displayed no early religious enthusiasm and led a fairly typical life as a young courtier and soldier until, at the age of 30, he received a severe leg wound in a battle with the French.

Ignatius retired to Loyola for a long convalescence. He read to pass the time and soon exhausted the supply of novels in the family library. Out of boredom Ignatius turned to religious texts to fill the hours, but recreation became revelation. After reading about the lives of Christ and the Saints, Ignatius resolved to emulate them by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land upon his recovery.

His first stop was Montserrat, a monastery outside of Barcelona. While meditating in the nearby cave at Manresa, he began formulating his Spiritual Exercises for clarifying and strengthening both the soul and the mind. Thus fortified, he crossed Europe and arrived in Jerusalem, but the turmoil there led Church officials to advise him to depart soon after.

Back in Europe, Ignatius encountered and narrowly escaped the Inquisition, whose agents distrusted all religious novelty. He ultimately arrived at the University of Paris where his ideas served as a magnet for a small but ardent band of followers, including some of the finest minds of the period. In 1537, Ignatius and his compan-
ions decided to travel to Rome and put themselves at the service of the Church.

This was at the height of the Reformation. Martin Luther was still alive and challenging Catholic dogma and practice, and Europe was alternately scourged by plague, rebellion, and ambitious princes. Amid this chaos, Ignatius and his companions entered Rome and offered themselves to Pope Paul III as intellectual “soldiers of God.” Impressed by their knowledge and zeal, the Pope commissioned the Society of Jesus on September 27, 1540.

The Pope granted the Society an unprecedented degree of autonomy, which Ignatius implemented through a series of constitutions organizing the Society along hierarchical lines. The highest official of the Society is the Superior General based in Rome, sometimes called the “Black Pope,” who commands the superiors of lower echelons: provinces, missions, colleges and individual Jesuit “communities.”

The structure is more democratic than it sounds; the Superior General is himself elected for life by a special congregation of Jesuits, and extensive consultation and individual discernment are encouraged in making and carrying out key decisions. Because members routinely rotate through assignments and positions of authority, today’s leader can be tomorrow’s follower and vice versa.

While other religious orders put a premium on obedience, what makes the Society of Jesus unique is its emphasis on members’ intellectual preparation. Ignatius insisted that students be fully grounded in the humanities before undertaking a vocation as a Jesuit. This process of study, teaching and service typically took 16 years in Ignatius’ time. It was guided by the precepts of Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastic philosophers of the late Middle Ages who preserved Aristotle, Plato and other classical thinkers against the chaos of Europe and revived and refined their analytical insights and techniques. The essential insights of Scholastic philosophy continue to provide a foundation — not a ceiling — for both Jesuit education and action.

Such philosophical preparation is essential for missionaries destined to work in the real world far from the security of monasteries, often in distant lands and alien cultures. Each member of the Society must carry the tradition of the order within himself and be able to perceive the transcendent human and spiritual dimensions of whatever and whomever he encounters. For all of the elaborate procedures Ignatius crafted in his constitutions, he ultimately entrusted each Jesuit with the responsibility to discern how best to work ad majorem Dei gloriam — for the greater glory of God.

Teaching was and remains the foremost Jesuit mission. Even before giving the Society its charter, Pope Paul III had asked two of Ignatius’ followers to help resuscitate the moribund University of Rome, and thereby inaugurated the Society’s long career in education. When Ignatius died in 1556, some 40 Jesuit colleges were conducting classes for both clergy and laymen across Europe and in India, Africa and the New World. By 1700, the Jesuit educational enterprise numbered almost 900 colleges, schools and seminaries around the globe. In each and every one of these, instruction was guided by the Ratio Studiorum, a rigorous but psychologically astute methodology and curriculum first codified in 1599, which emphasized the education of the whole person in the classical languages, literature, philosophy (including the natural laws of science) and theology.

In keeping with Ignatius’ fondness for military imagery, he and his followers called themselves the Company of Jesus, but others soon dubbed them Jesuits, a derisive term for people who carried their piety to excess. So the Society’s members confounded their mockers by adopting the name for themselves. During the 16th century, Jesuits spread quickly across Europe and to the far corners of the planet, changing history,
adding to knowledge, and serving both humanity and their Church.

Peter Canisius became the first Jesuit to direct a university and led the victorious Counter-Reformation in Southern Germany by force of argument, not arms. At the same time, Edmund Campion debated English Protestants and won the esteem of no less than Queen Elizabeth by his eloquence and literary skill before he was falsely accused of treason and executed.

The great Jesuit thinkers Robert Bellarmine and Christopher Clavius risked censure to defend Galileo and his ideas of the solar system. Before 1700, Francesco Lana Terzi theorized lighter-than-air flight more than a century before the first successful balloon ascent, but he feared, prophetically, that aircraft would become tools of war. Maximilian Hell became the first astronomer to observe the transit of Venus across the solar disc while Rudjer Boscovich studied eclipses and offered a dynamic cosmology that anticipated modern atomic theory by almost 200 years.

These and later members of the Society would even leave their mark on the Moon, whose craters bear the names of 35 Jesuit scientists and mathematicians. This great intellectual tradition continues to the modern day, perhaps best exemplified by the paleontologist and humanist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who, before his death in 1955, strove to unite natural, social and psychological evolution in a transcendent spiritual synthesis.

But Ignatius commanded Jesuits to live in the world of men as well as ideas, and his followers soon radiated outward to reach every land and culture on the planet. Francis Xavier established the first Christian communities in the East Indies and Japan. Matteo Ricci penetrated China to Peking where he won converts by both his faith and science, and Ferdinand Verbiest later trained the young Emperor K’ang Hsi in mathematics.

On the opposite side of the globe, Jose de Acosta documented the cultures of the West Indies, the history of the Aztecs, and even the physiological effects of high altitudes while researching the Inca postal system in the Andes. Peter Claver cared for the African slaves shipped to Colombia and campaigned against this commerce in misery. To the north, Jacques Marquette charted the Mississippi River and opened the West to exploration and European settlement while Jesuit missionaries withstood torture and privation to minister to the native tribes of French and English America.

Perhaps the most renowned Jesuit missions in the New World were the Paraguay Reductions which established a degree of communal democracy unprecedented in Europe or Pre-Columbian America. These settlements thrived for a century and a half before they were crushed in 1767 in the imperial rivalry between Spain and Portugal. Soon after, the Society faced the same fate.

By the beginning of its third century, the Society had earned a reputation for dividing the house. Depending on the critic’s point of view, Jesuits were too liberal or too conservative, too rigid or too flexible, too loyal or too independent. These were not idle judgments; many Jesuits paid with their lives for their advocacy of unpopular ideas. (They still do, as witnessed by the 1989 murders of six Jesuit educators and two lay assistants in El Salvador.)

In particular, the Society’s extraordinary successes as missionaries in Europe’s new dominions and their advocacy of the original inhabitants’ interests inspired the enmity of kings and emperors, who banished Jesuits variously from Spain, Germany and Portugal and their colonies. Europe’s rulers finally convinced Pope Clement XIV to suppress the order altogether in 1773.

Although their Society was officially defunct and exiled from most of Europe (a few nations such as Czarist Russia offered sanctuary), former Jesuit priests remained active, if discreetly, with such projects as founding Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in 1789. Slowly, the Jesuits regained the Vatican’s confidence, which decided it needed the Society’s services again in the turbulence created by democratic revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

After Pope Pius VII fully reinstated the Society in 1814, Jesuit missionaries and teachers were soon working their way west across the North American continent, carrying the seed of Jesuit education toward the vast, largely unexplored Pacific Northwest. The idea that those pioneers would ultimately plant and nurture in the form of Seattle University can be summed up in the preface to the Ratio Studiorum written almost 400 years ago. Although the Ratio has since been retired, the injunction still holds true that Jesuits run schools based on the humanities—

Because they supply man with many advantages for practical living; secondly, because they contribute to the right government of public affairs and to the proper making of laws; third, because they give ornament, splendor and perfection to the rational nature of man; and fourth, and what is most important, because they are the bulwark of religion and guide man most surely and easily to the achievement of his last end.

This is the mission of Seattle University.