

## ONE LAST WORD

### Salt of the Earth

Against our vast diversities, earth's peoples have a few things in common. Salting our food is one of them. Never mind how simple or how complicated the cuisine; unless it is sherbet, we put salt in it. The chef who spends three hours combining ingredients and measuring temperatures and at the end forgets the salt has severely damaged her recipe.

Forgetting the salt brings up another of the few things we have in common. We take the simple fundamental things for granted and tend to forget about them. An example could be a simple and fundamental purpose of evangelical lives—to help others know Jesus Christ. Never mind how long and complicated the processes of in re-founding and creative fidelity, the end-point is bringing Christ to others. The community that forgets that has severely damaged the planning outcomes they hope to implement.

All of this is said in order to justify calling attention to something as simple as salt – the common way that we help other people know Jesus Christ. Master Ignatius made a straightforward statement of it in the Jesuit *Constitutions* in Part VII: “The first way is by giving the good example of a thoroughly upright life and of Christian virtue, striving to edify those with whom one deals no less, but rather even more, by good deeds than by words” [637].

All of the congregations have had to rediscover the good in their constitutions, and further than that, to catch fire from the inspired lives and the charism of founders. The Christian Life Communities have had to practically re-invent their ignatian way to God. And now, all of the ignatian communities find ourselves having to address the challenging processes of creative fidelity.

Going through all of this, we have made serious efforts to study and to reflect. We have persuaded ourselves to take the grand view of apostolic life in the world. All of us have opened ourselves to intellectual and spiritual conversions, especially through new ways to experience *Spiritual Exercises*. We have done individual discernment and we have tried hard to

do apostolic discernment in common. And all of this has left us with splendid documents, many experiences of work in groups, and a lot to still do.

Fine. The Holy Spirit has been leading us through all this. Just do not forget the salt. The salt is the good lives that we are leading, lives of dedication and service, of prayer and worship. These simply good lives are God's gift to each and all of us, and to our life world. They will help those around us, however, only if we are "giving good example." At the least, this means living transparently as men and women for others, who do good things expressly for love of Jesus Christ. This is what makes us the salt of the earth.