

## ONE LAST WORD

### Ignatian NGO's

Globalization has yielded a rich harvest of NGO's – great energetic zealous non-governmental volunteer organizations – to address wrongs that governments have not yet learned to address adequately.

Ignatian colleagues have invented NGO's such as the Jesuit Relief Service and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and joined NGO's such as the third-world debt relief movement and various peace movements. Viewed from this angle, programs of Exercises in Daily Life often look like NGO's. These are all truly good.

For many ignatian colleagues, some kinds of NGO's are immediately thought of in terms of the *magis*. NGO's do commonly tackle grave, urgent, consequential human needs, including religious and spiritual needs. Getting into such NGO's seems as a matter of course to be the *magis* of A.M.D.G.

That bears thinking about, because charging off after what looks like a *magis* can very easily lead down a blind alley. In some cases it seems to have done. Consider ignatian associations begun for their own sake. Consider colleagues in Exercises in Daily Life programs who give themselves harried, over committed lives.

To begin with, *magis* does not mean more to do. Or to do more. That's obvious. What seems less obvious is that *magis* does not require us to jump into whatever work is recognized by the world around us as the more grave, urgent, and consequential. When we get into a work, however holily, simply because it is currently the great issue, we are acting as though we could tell God what He is to think important.

The *magis* of A.M.D.G., faithfully followed, may well lead us to work that the world around considers trifling, boring, and inconsiderable. The *magis* of the three kinds of humility may – if God grants it – lead to an entire life that seems trifling, boring, and inconsiderable. Serving in a kitchen, for life. Cleaning up after AIDS sufferers. Teaching teenagers their religion.

Much else has to be said about pursuing the *magis* – help whoever lies wounded right now in whatever ditch – respond to crises that no one else is

responding to – look after those who are right now the poor and the outcast – and a lot more.

But it would be helpful at this juncture to keep something clear: Master Ignatius' *magis* means living more and more the way Jesus of Nazareth lived, to whom only one thing was important. To put it too simply, the *magis* is about loving more the way Jesus loved, and not about merely working more the way committed energetic zealous NGO volunteers work. Even when volunteering in an NGO.