

MORE—I WANT MORE!!!

There's a great series of commercials in which an adult sitting on a small chair asks groups of preschoolers questions whose answers will support the cell phone provider they're promoting. In one of my favorites, he asks, "Which is better: more or less?" A little girl quickly jumps in: "More—when we like something, we want more. Sometimes your parents won't give it to you, but if you like it you want more."

If we're honest, adults often give similar answers. Can there really be too much Putz's or Graeter's ice cream? Can we really have too much saved for retirement? Do we have enough life insurance so our loved ones won't be burdened once we die? Our new car surely needs the back-up camera for safety and at least 20 cup holders in case anyone wants to drink anything in the car. Our TVs need to be flat-screens and large; cable needs to offer us several hundred options; and our smart phones should be able to organize our life easily (if only we could figure out how to work them). We live in a "more" society—shoes to match every outfit, gadgets to serve every whim, and so many options in the grocery store that we'd never have to eat anything twice. We work hard for things and so we deserve more—at least that's what our society tells us.

Like the preschoolers many of us would agree that more is good. However, there's way of looking at "more" beyond material possessions: Jesuit spirituality talks about this in terms of "magis," a Latin word that means "the more." It is taken from *Ad Majorem Dei gloriam* a Latin phrase meaning "for the greater glory of God." Magis refers to the philosophy of doing more, for Christ and therefore for others. It is an expression of an aspiration and an inspiration. It relates to forming the ideal society centered around Jesus. The roots of the phrase are ascribed to St. Ignatius' exercise of doing more for God. He would encourage people around him during his time by asking: "What have I done for God? What am I doing for God? And What MORE can I do for Him?"



Quite a different slant on things, isn't it? For the scrupulous among us, it *does not* mean getting an "A" in piling up good deeds to win God's approval. Instead, it invites us to experience God's love and having been freely loved just for who we are, to let that love spill over in our interactions with others. It's about building the kingdom of God right where we are—in our homes, our work places, in our communities. It's about loving because" God first loved us."

And it doesn't mean putting on a gloomy face, steeling our resolve, and taking on unpleasant tasks just because they are difficult. If Jesus were like this, no one would have been attracted to him. Scripture tells us how he liked to be with people, enjoyed a good meal, even saved the best wine for last. And though I haven't found it anywhere in the Bible, I'm sure Jesus laughed—loud and long. He was fun to be around. What set him apart from the others was that he included everyone, even those society considered outcasts. And he realized and modeled how important it is to take care of oneself. When he felt overbooked he took time away to rest and be alone with his Father.

What could the "more" look like in your life? Maybe it could be getting up 10 minutes earlier each day to start the day with prayer or saying "No" to extra hours at work to spend time just hanging out with family. It could be including a lonely neighbor in family events or recording a favorite TV program to be a volunteer tutor. Perhaps it could mean not buying that extra pair of shoes and making a donation to a food pantry. Or it could be leaving five minutes earlier for Sunday Mass to pick up someone who doesn't have a ride to mention just a few.

None of these are very dramatic. But as Mother Teresa says, they are "small things done with great love." Who knows? Maybe this could become what you want more of.

—Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate