

He brought clarity, unity and spiritual depth.

Working with Father Nicolás during his time in Rome was a fantastic privilege for which I continue to give thanks. Among many other gifts, I particularly value his humility, gentle humor, and extraordinary capacity to summarize discussions.

Father Nicolás wanted us to think of him as a fellow member of the Curia community rather than the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He never insisted on having his own way, especially in unimportant matters, although he took seriously his responsibility as the ultimate authority in the Society and although he had no difficulty making difficult decisions. For example, early in his days as General he wanted to take a turn serving at table during our midday meal in order to underline his solidarity with our fraternal service of one another. However, he quickly and sensitively realized that this simple gesture was too threatening for those of us who preferred a more traditional and hierarchical approach.

He always greeted guests who arrived at the Curia as friends he had not yet had the opportunity to meet. In fact, he made everyone feel welcome with a smile and playful joke that brushed aside any awkwardness one might have felt in the storied presence of the Superior General of all the Jesuits. His tender teasing was a delight, not only to those who watched a colleague blush at the accuracy of the General's joshing. I was not the only subject of his attention who felt respected, appreciated, and even honored in those amusing moments.

At the end of one of the first meetings of the General Counsellors after Father Nicolás's election, he demonstrated his dazzling capacity for synthesis. Using a few elegant and intuitive sentences, he summarized what each of us had intended to say, even if we could not articulate it. He brought clarity, unity, and spiritual depth to disparate thoughts by stating the more profound truth upon which they depended and rested. Moments like that were always awesome, for they provided a glimpse of his connection with the One who is Truth.

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