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Juan Ochagavía S. J.

THE CLC WORLD COMMUNITY

Origin and Meaning of Providence '82

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JUAN OCHAGAVIA S.J.

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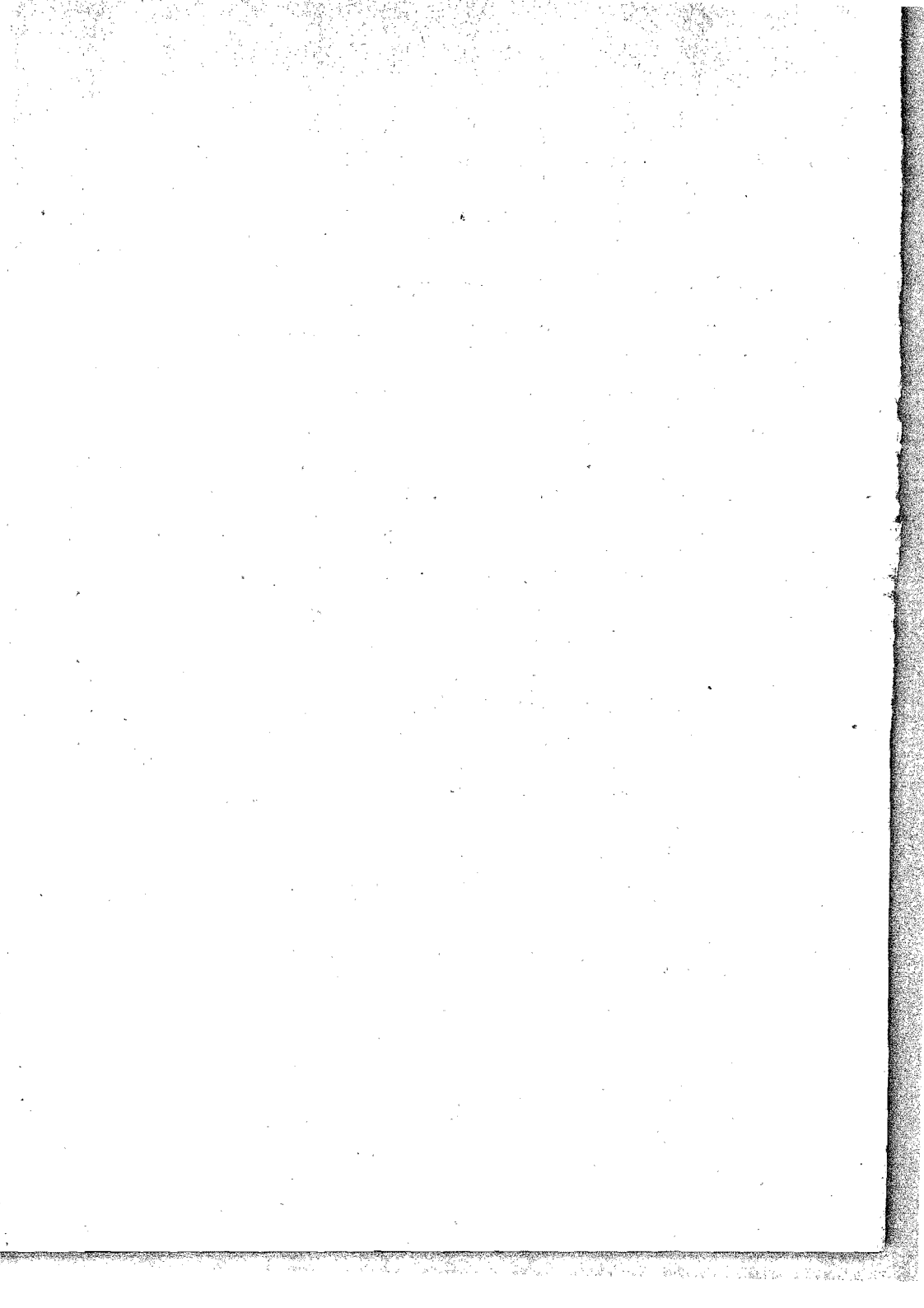
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PREFACE

With the publication of this booklet, the collection of Progressio Supplements is enhanced with a page of recent history, which must bring a sense of fulfilment to those who have followed the evolution of the Christian Life Communities. The text describes with a penetrating clarity the slow coming to fruition of a call. It highlights the last stage of a Community's journey - a journey marked by inevitable fumbblings and difficulties, but always inspired by a secret and powerful hope until the time when all shadow of doubt was removed and its members recognised themselves "*in communion*" and felt themselves called to express this in a way that truly grasped the reality they all experienced. Before the work of the Spirit, who clears a way for Himself and draws to Himself with bonds that go far beyond our frail hopes, we stand in wonder at the fidelity of God to the work He undertakes.

This development had been prepared for a long time, often without our realising it - how true it is that frequently the profound meaning of some initiative escapes us. The deepest reality is the history of the divine action. In the light of Providence '82, the renewal of the CLC's was highlighted like the dawn of a new day.

The reasons which, 30 years ago, led to the formation of a world federation already reflected this concern of union for mission: in a world growing smaller and smaller, the international responsibility of lay people, the urgency of participating in the mission of the Church on the world level and of co-operating with other organisations in the service of people, seemed all the more imperative (cf. Louis Paulussen S.J., God Works Like That, Progressio Supplement n. 14).

Those promoting the World Federation sought to coordinate the existing realities: groups and national federations scattered throughout the world which, not being represented at an international level, remained without a voice and any great likelihood of being able to do anything. "The World Federation has not been created artificially; it has been born naturally, normally. It should be an organism rather than an organisation. The Federation should achieve its goal with a minimum of structures and a maximum

of spirit". ("Nature and task of the World Federation"; allocation to the first General Assembly at the Gregorian University, Sept. 9, 1954). This was a first step which, taking account of a profound aspiration, would permit further developments.

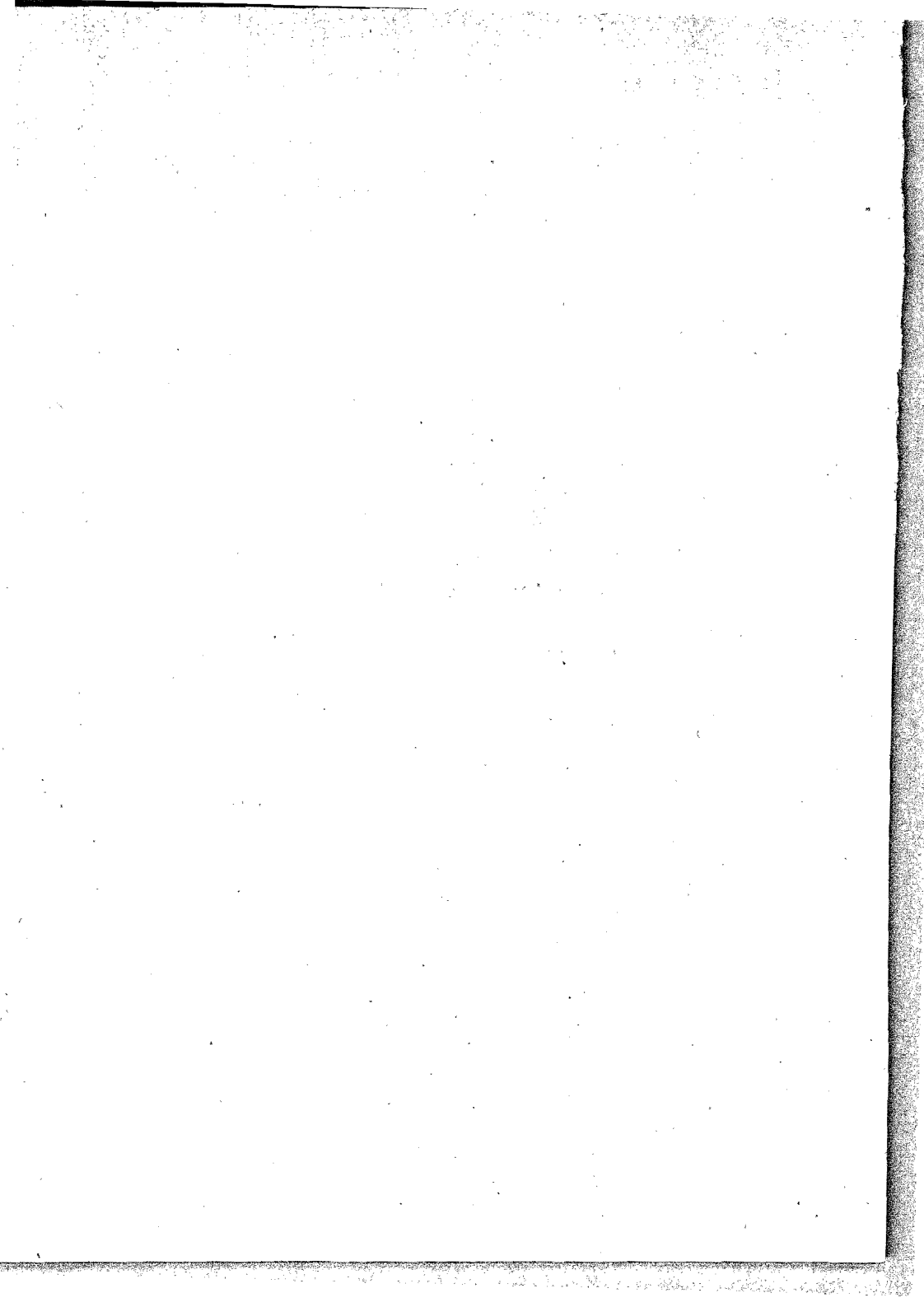
1967 appeared as a new decisive step. For the first time in our history, we formulate our own document and renew the movement in its entirety : new General Principles, new statutes, a new name "Christian Life Communities", new juridical structures and a new mission - the struggle for justice. The successive General Assemblies mark a progressive and regular movement towards the World Community and enter into a current which keeps on growing. Providence '82 is the culminating point.

The result of a normal and healthy growth, one might say. Yes, but even more "the mystery of the Spirit who makes use of human instruments to achieve His ends..." The author of these pages, in the excellent description of this development, shows the truth of this statement in a very penetrating way. Fr. Juan Ochagavía knows the CLC's well, since he has been an assistant for CLC groups for a number of years; he is also a doctor of theology. He participated in the Second Vatican Council as a theologian for the Bishops of Chile. In addition, for a number of years now he has been director of the uncompromising Chilean review MENSAJE - which carries the sub-title "Christian message for the world of today". In this capacity, he is very well informed about vital problems both in Chile and in the rest of the world today. Finally, the knowledge that he has acquired of the Society of Jesus and its government is well attested by the fact that, after being Rector of the Jesuit scholasticate at Santiago, then Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Chile (from 1972-1978), he is master of novices in his province. The Christian Life Communities are indebted to Father Ochagavía for an exceptional contribution.

PROGRESSIO

"As a consequence of the progress of institutions and the rapid evolution of modern society, the universal nature of the Church's mission requires that the apostolic initiations of Catholics should more and more perfect the various types of inter national organizations".

(Second Vatican Council,
Decree on the Apostolate
of Lay People, n. 19).



INTRODUCTION

I have been asked as a theologian to give my reflections on the 9th General Assembly of the CLC's, held at Providence in 1982.

But how to approach such a rich and many-faceted event? The theologian must find, in each situation, the method which is best adapted to the theme of his reflection. There is not just the one method in theology, even though some people associate theology with airy speculations, couched in an esoteric language.

Today we have learnt to appreciate both the narrative theology of the evangelists Mark and Luke and the speculative Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas; both spiritual theology, which discovers signs of the Spirit in an historical process, and positive theology, which carefully analyses the different kinds of Church documents, to draw from them orientations for christian faith and practice.

I think that this reflection, to be faithful to its object, should use a very broad approach, capable of taking in the different aspects of the world reality of the CLC's and the unique experience of Providence. It is only in this way that we will gradually come to pick out the main factors which animate this living community of groups and persons, without getting too caught up in a systematic approach that glosses over concrete details which well could be the seed of further promising developments.

This requires that we should be attentive to the signs of the presence of the Spirit of Christ in personal and community happenings, in the times of light and confusion, of discouragement and joy. Sometimes it will be appropriate to call on the testimony of some particular person, and mention him or her by name; this happens in every family! At other times, a prayer, a song or a Eucharistic celebration can be the vehicles for, or the expression of the Spirit.

It is obvious that, in such a work as this, it is

necessary to present and to examine certain texts and documents. I am thinking especially of the Second Vatican Council and other documents of the Magisterium. Special attention is also to be paid to the sources of Ignatian spirituality and to the history of the CLC's.

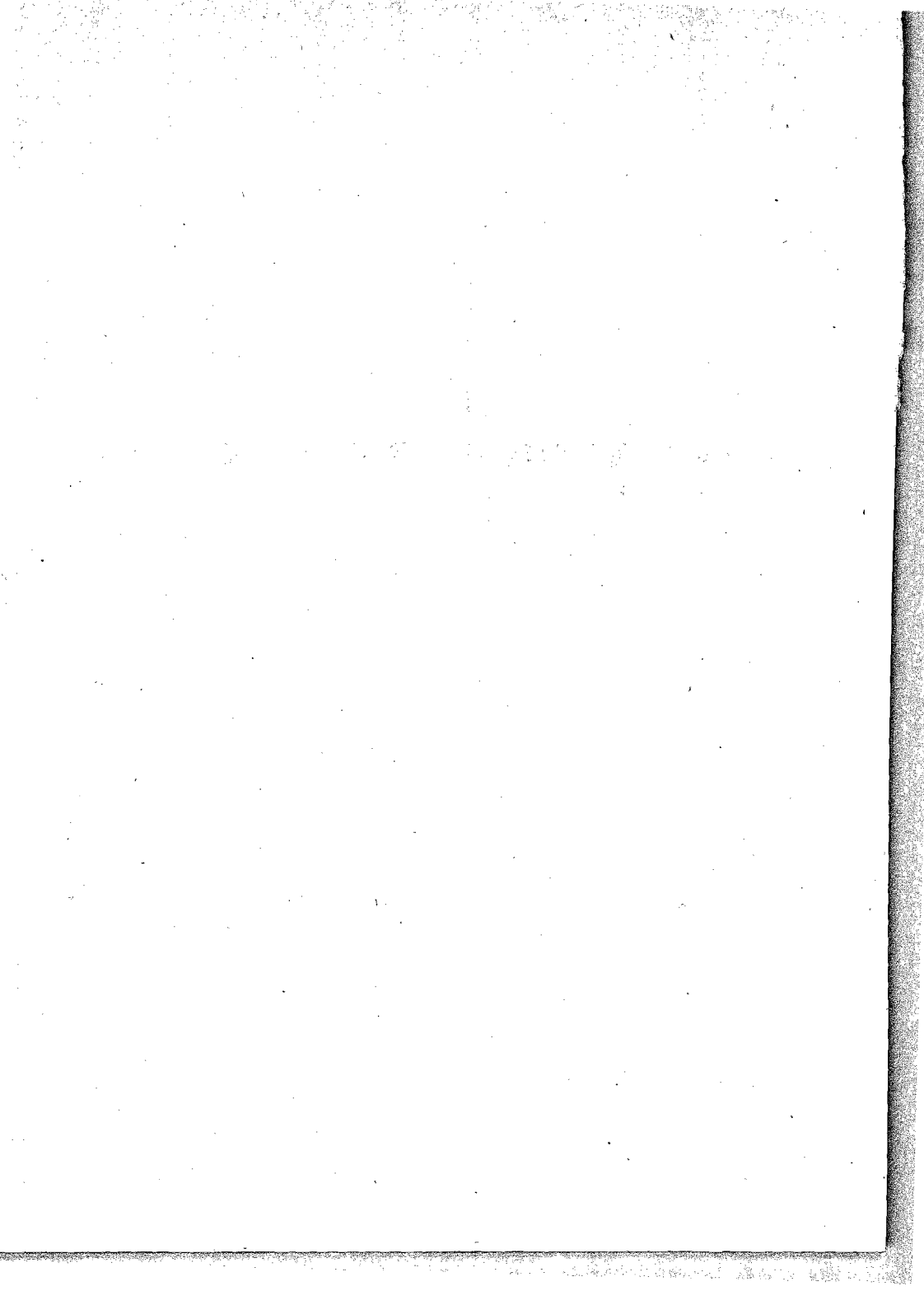
Since I have been the assistant for CLC groups for a number of years, and since I have participated in Providence, this reflection cannot claim to be, as it were, objective and neutral. Such an attitude, instead of helping to understand the facts, would only lead to a distorted way of seeing them. So what I am presenting is rather the meditation of someone who has witnessed what went on through being at the heart of it and following it from the inside.

The CLC's are, above all, a community of persons united with one another by the call of the Lord to dedicate themselves as lay people to the work of the Kingdom. This creates close and intimate bonds of friendship and service. May these pages pass on something of this life which is so characteristic of CLC groups, and which was so clearly and vigorously in evidence at Providence.

* * *

I

ORIGINS OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY



I

ROME'79

On the 8th of September, 1979, the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady and the 25th anniversary of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities, Hildegard Ehardt, Vice-President of the CLC's, officially opened the VIIIth General Assembly of this Federation. The meeting took place at Villa Cavalletti, in the hills just outside Rome, and so has become known as "Rome'79".

The theme of the meeting comprised basically three points:

1) Close attention to and a deeper understanding of the charism and special mission of the CLC's; 2) an analysis of the CLC reality today; 3) a deliberation on the question - "Should we now actively strive to become a World Community?"

On September 9th, the delegates of the Assembly were received by the Holy Father at Castelgandolfo. Reading from a prepared text, the Pope showed his interest in the theme - "A World Community at the service of one world." And he added - "We must break out of the narrow limits of self-centredness, questioning our lifestyle in order to see in what way it fails to respond to God's call to live as the one human family of which we are all members, and trying to discern the spiritual and material needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world that require our assistance".

The first two days were given to the study of the first point of the theme, helped by a conference from John Reilly S.J. From the afternoon of the 12th to the 15th, the Assembly studied the second point of the theme - the present state of the CLC's throughout the world and the calls and the needs of the world today. The conference of Father Arrupe on the 13th was very enlightening. It was centred on service - more precisely, on a "better service" - as expressed by the mind of Ignatius, drawing from that what should be the service of the CLC's in the world :

"This, then, is your service to the world - a thorough, intelligent, unremitting lay apostolate, which most surely presupposes an interior life no less intense, intelligent and constant". A new service, truly lay, which draws its inspiration from the orientations proposed by Vatican II and deepens them. A service which gives special attention to the four fundamental areas of life - family, professional, socio-civic and political, the Church.

To shed light on the grave problems of our world today was the theme of a conference presented by Michael Campbell-Johnston S.J. First of all he gave facts, then he analysed the meaning of them and finally he suggested some possible courses of action in the light of such an analysis, while drawing some conclusions.

The third point of the Assembly's theme, the call to form a World Community, took up the last three days. It was examined in a spirit of and according to a method of authentic discernment.

The vote on this central orientation for the future took place on the morning of the 17th. Hildegard opened the proceedings with the song, "*Nous chanterons pour toi, Seigneur.*" After some doubts had been clarified, the 35 officially affiliated Federations and the members of the Executive Council gave their vote in writing. These were gathered up and counted. The result was:

YES : 23

NO : 7

ABSTENTIONS : 6

Joel Tabora S.J., faithful chronicler of Rome '79, described the atmosphere at that moment in the following words:

"There was something of a stunned silence after the voting. The General Assembly was saying yes. It was a clear yes, but it was a humble yes, uttered not without reservation and fear. The momentary silence acknowledged that. Then came the applause. Then came the song. It was the moment of World Community. A moment of joy. And reflection.

After a break, the small groups met for the last time

in this General Assembly. Their task was to brainstorm for means as to how the yes of the body could be best carried out. Their suggestions were to be submitted in writing to the Executive Council, and shared verbally with the Assembly at the plenary session at 11.45 that morning."

(Progressio September-November, 1979 p. 73).

These little groups produced 40 pages of reflections on the consequences of, their contributions to and the expectations of being a World Community. We will come back to this later on in the work.

PROVIDENCE '82

The 9th General Assembly of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities took place from August 26 to September 6 on the magnificent property of the diocesan seminary of Our Lady of Providence.

On this occasion, it was the name of the place - not, as at Rome, the date of opening - which marked the presence of Mary in the unfolding and the discerning of the signs of the Spirit throughout the Assembly.

Providence followed a process of discernment in three stages, similar to what had been followed at Rome in 1979. The central theme was also the same. The formula approved at Rome - *"Should we now actively strive to become a World Community?"* - was briefly rephrased to make clear that it was very much a question of an invitation from the Lord. The wording ran - *"Do we feel called, now, to become a world Community?"*

On September 1st, when the process-guide, Eddie Mercieca S.J., put the question to the Assembly so that each delegation, through a secret vote, could express how it felt, the response was:

YES : 37

NO : 0

ABSTENTIONS: 2

The result was practically total unanimity; the two abstentions were due to reasons and circumstances readily understandable.

As at Rome, the vote was followed by a markedly joyful applause: 37 delegations, in a process of listening to the Lord, declared that they felt called today to become a World Community. After a time of joyful sharing, we all went to celebrate the Eucharist. The celebration was presided over by Patrick O'Sullivan S.J., vice-ecclesiastical world assistant, known to the participants under the simple name of Pat. On the altar was a little statue of Our Lady of the Apparition, from Brasil.

The participants felt united by a deep feeling of communion, peace and joy : communion with God the Father, with Christ, in Love; communion among all those present; communion with CLC members throughout the whole world; communion with the Pope and the Universal Church.

Once again, these feelings expressed themselves in a song to the Mother of us all:

*"Though some say nothing can be changed,
fight for a new world, fight for the truth."*

This communion in love and joy also took the form of being sent, of a mission, to form a CLC World Community through working for a new world, united with so many others, in a generous response to Christ calling us to build the Kingdom.

The following day was a break day - more than welcome. Apart from the time devoted to the elections of new members of the Executive Council, the following days were given to exchanging ideas on the implementation of the decision taken. The way of approaching this and the propositions put forward did not differ very much from what took place at Rome '79.

WHY PROVIDENCE?

What has been said so far shows that Providence, except for the result of the vote which expressed what the delegates were feeling, was, as it were, a repetition of the Assembly at Rome.

Feeling this beforehand, some already wondered about returning to the theme of World Community. Would not this be a waste of time and energy, returning to a point already approved, for all practical purposes? Would it not be better for the 9th Assembly to take up a more concrete theme and to see how to realise, de facto, the World Community?

This leads us to reflect more carefully on the reason for Providence. But to do this, we must return, at greater depth, to the theme of World Community, as from Rome'79.

THE FRUIT OF ROME'79: THE WORLD COMMUNITY

Rome'79 took a decisive step in deepening the CLC charism in regard to its mission and service. The decision to strive actively henceforth to become a World Community is the consequence of this step.

The process of the development of the CLC's up to the point of being a World Community is a gift of the Spirit. His power, which ever renews, works towards unity. It is this impulse of the Spirit which, in the last analysis, animates the building of the World Community.

On the other hand, the Spirit of Christ acts in our human reality and is marked by historical, concrete conditions that can become motives and reasons for what we do.

While respecting the mysterious gratuity of the Spirit in the development of the CLC's, we can investigate to-

day the factors which most influenced the Assembly of Rome '79 in wanting to advance in the direction of a World Community. To this end, we will draw on the White Book, Rome '79, which contains the Acts of everything that took place.

In 20 pages, we are presented with 183 "*reasons for*", among which, obviously, there are a number of repetitions. It is instructive to compare them with the "*reasons against*" (16 pages of 180 reasons some of which also repeat themselves).

The long list of "*reasons against*" - which Pat O'Sullivan S.J. compared to a reading from the Book of Lamentations - reflects and especially shows the fears and the risks which flow from the weaknesses in the present reality of the CLC's.

The "*reasons for*", on the contrary, are characterised by the desire to promote a World Community inspired by revelation, the Ignatian charism and the needs of the Church and the modern world. Of the 183 "*reasons for*", only 21 are inspired by considerations arising out of the de facto situation of the CLC's.

In the light of the rules for discernment in the Exercises, it clearly appears that the "*reasons against*" are more influenced by a state of desolation (Sp. Ex. 317) - "... darkness of soul ... leading to want of faith and hope...", for "(the) characteristic of the evil Spirit (is) ... to afflict with sadness and to raise obstacles..." (Sp. Ex. 315). Although looking for "*reasons against*" is an important step in the process, this only partially explains the extent and the depth of the fears expressed. It is true that there are "*reasons against*" which express real and important problems. But the overall picture painted is excessively black and does not reflect what is characteristic of the Spirit of the Lord, which is "... to give courage and strength... inspirations and peace... by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good." (Sp. Ex. 315).

THE SIMPLE FACTS...

The "reasons for", which are inspired by a consideration of the de facto situation, have considerable value to the extent that they indicate what - as a simple matter of fact - the Spirit is achieving in the CLC's. St. Ignatius often used to say that we experience God in the present, whereas the devil tempts us with what might happen to us in the future. He learnt this himself through personal experience when, at the beginning of his life as a penitent at Manresa the thought came to him - "And how will you be able to live this sort of life for the next seventy years?" (Autobiography, no.20).

The reasons based on already existing facts highlight the following points:

- "We felt that there was a deep desire for a World Community". (E 4/3)*. "If the question arises now, that is because there is a felt need". (F 2/5).

- "We are on the way to become a world community already and so we should further this." (E 2/21, 22, 24; E 4/3,5; F 1/10,13; F 3/17). "The seeds are already growing." (F 1/11).

- "We should continue on the way we have already begun towards a World Community" (E 2/21, 24; F 1/10,13; F 3/17).

- "For 25 years we have been trying to become a union of hearts and minds." (E 3/1); "Yes, because the ground we have covered has no meaning unless it leads to this step." (F 1/13).

- "We felt that a World Community would be simply surrendering to what the Lord is already doing in the World Federation." (E 4/5).

* The Assembly worked in small language groups-English (E); French (F) and Spanish (S). The first numeral gives the number of the language group, and the second numeral gives the number of the reason as these are listed in the White Book, Rome '79. We follow here the English edition which does not always follow the literal wording of the original (F or S), but nevertheless is faithful to its spirit.

- "The whole CLC enterprise leads to community for better service". (F 1/1).

- "Young people have great expectations for it." (F 2/17).

- "The present moment seems to be a favourable one for us". (F 3/6).

- "We are already a community of persons. We must name the community we have". (F 1/7; E 2/21, 22, 24; E 6/10).

In conclusion, one group notes that the evolution towards a World Community is already manifest and that we should accept it, not with resignation but positively and with joy (F 3/17). Another Spanish group - with a realism worthy of Sancho Panza - notes that, "Most of the problems concerning a World Community seem to be already present in the federation. So the change towards a World Community could only be advantageous". (S 1/18).

FROM THE SOURCES OF OUR FAITH

The "reasons for" a World Community frequently make an appeal to the fundamental realities of our faith and of our Christian experience: a Triune God, Jesus Christ and His desires, the Church.

"The community reflects the family of God better; God is community" (F 1/6). "Communion is the sign of the presence of God... The more we are in communion, the nearer we will be to God". (F 2/15). "...a community is more the image of the Trinity". (F 3/25). Also, "World Community is a challenge... it is like a call from God" (E 6/1); "It is a sign of hope" (S 1/19) which impels us to seek "...greater unity, interchange, intercommunication - which is the real meaning of community". (S 3/10).

This call from God to form a World Community responds to the deepest desires of Christ that we may be one, as He and the Father are one (E 5/4; S 3/5; F 3/3). The World Community "would stress a common humanity in Christ" (E 1/1);

it marks our real unity in Him (E 2/20). It is the best way to respond to the constant appeal of Christ in the Gospel—an appeal for union among brothers and sisters (E 4/1; E 3/5; S 2/13).

The union to which the World Community aspires will strengthen our service (E 3/3,4), will help to break down the barriers of separation (S 1/5: allusion to Eph. 2/14), and will mean coming closer to the union St. Paul characterises by the image of the Body of Christ (E 5/11). In this way the World Community "will be a better instrument in the hands of our one Lord..." (F 3/15) and "...the CLC would go deeper into Christ's mission". (S 1/5).

All this is in the direction given by John Paul II in his encyclical Redemptor Hominis (E 3/9). To realise this task we should count on "the gift of the Holy Spirit (which) is given to us abundantly and without measure. A World Community... would be a more perfect testimony of what the gift of the Spirit is". (S 1/9).

The desires of the Church follow those of Christ. Being more centred on Christ, a World Community "...would express better the Church's universality". (F 2/10). The Church, in fact, "...has constantly called us to global responsibility." (E 5/16).

At the heart of a necessary tension which exists in the Church between centralisation on the one hand and decentralisation and pluralism on the other hand, the World Community would be a force to strengthen unity (E 7/9). Moreover, just as in the universal Church there are worldwide orders and congregations, why could not a movement of lay people also be universal? (E 1/2). It would be of great significance in a world and Church that suffer from divisions (E 5/5).

For the CLC's this "...would mean a growth in faith to see ourselves and to feel ourselves truly members of a single people, the People of God, and not just members of a country or region". (F 2/3). In this way we would be encouraged "...to serve the Church and people even in small proportions." (E 3/3).

"...the world today...needs the witness of a community of love that transcends all barriers." The World Community could render this service to the world. (E 4/4).

Finally, the role of the Roman Pontiff to be the rock of the one Church (F 3/11) and the principle of its unity, impels us towards a World Community (F 2/16). To be added to this is the concrete fact that John Paul II "on the first day of this Assembly... encouraged this line of search." (F 3/18).

IN A WORLD OF GROWING UNITY

The awareness that the world aspires to and is moving towards a greater unity had considerable influence on the decision at Rome to go towards a World Community.

"The world is moving closer together; could it be our mission to show the way? To foresee and face problems?" (E 5/3). Similar ideas appeared in other groups: "...in the secular world, more and more sharing, more and more they get together." (E 1/4; E 6/3; S 3/1; F 1/5; F 2/2; F 3/12).

On the other hand, it is quite evident that in its quest for a greater unity, the secular world comes up against obstacles and encounters constant contradictions and delays: "the world is divided and it hurts..." (E 6/3); "...forces of dispersion and division are at work in it.." (F 3/16); "countries communicate with one another to give mutual aid, but rarely for purely selfless reasons. Almost always there are underlying political interests." (F 2/2).

The World Community of the CLC's "...could help contribute genuine love to such exchanges. That would give an example to the secular world." (F 2/2). To the spirit of Babel we must oppose the Spirit of Pentecost (F 3/16). "The world has need of models - realistic models. If we wish to set up a World Community, the particular form it takes must clearly embody the sharing of goods. That is a sign to which the world of today is very sensitive." (F 3/5).

FOR A BETTER SERVICE

The desire to form a World Community is born of the desire to be more deeply involved in the mission of Christ (S 1/5), to serve better (E 3/3,4).

This idea of a better service is present in and inspires all the reasons for a World Community. This is repeated in a number of different terms from different points of view and in all sorts of different ways.

It is very difficult to classify all these fully and clearly. Quite definitively, service - or rather, "*a better service*" - is the driving force behind the move to a World Community.

Let us be content in this paragraph to underline some of the richest and most varied aspects of service that the CLC's wish to render through setting themselves up as a World Community.

Some consider that the CLC's have not insisted enough on mission and service (E 2/17), through living a spirituality that is too closed or too individualistic (E 2/18). A World Community would help overcome this.

One of the first benefits would be to give a more universal vision (E 1/5), creating the possibility of seeing local problems from a universal perspective (S 3/4). This would open us to the needs and to the calls of the whole world and every country (F 2/9, 10; E 2/11).

Behind this preoccupation for a greater universality, we find the Ignatian principle: "*the more universal is the more divine*". (S 1/4; cf. Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, 622).

From this movement, this impulse, towards the more universal there is an expectation of greater vigour in serving better "*the Church and the people even in small pro*

portions" (E 3/3), on account of a greater apostolic effectiveness. (F 3/1). The World Community will be more effective in making people see needs more clearly and how to meet them (F 1/2), and will help those belonging to the CLC resolve their problems as they carry out their mission (S 1/14).

In this world, in its search for unity, the World Community-*"through creating better relations and integration on the international level"* (S 2/1) - could make a positive contribution through developing a sense of responsibility with regard to international questions (E 6/8; E 7/4), and through seeking to better understand *"all categories of life and all different cultures"* (E 3/7). Before a divided world, the World Community would be *"a more effective witness of love and unity"*. (E 7/5).

The movement towards a greater universality could make a special contribution in the fields of ecumenism (F 3/2), evangelisation, help for Second World countries (F 2/9) and, even more especially, in the efforts being made to promote the full liberation of man, a greater justice and equity, and a *"better service to the poor, with Christ poor."* (S 1/7; 2/3; F 2/10; 3/5, 7, 8, 10).

THE JOY OF SHARING TOGETHER, IN A FAMILY

From the World Community one would expect *"a closer sense of brotherhood"* (E 2/2), *"a stronger bond of community"* (E 5/6) and *"solidarity"* (E 2/4). *"God desires a world of equality, like a family, where all live as brothers and sisters."* (S 1/16).

A World Community would oblige people to delve more deeply into the meaning of what it is to be a community (E 2/9), would sharpen *"our sensitivity to each other's needs"* (E 2/5), and *"would help us discover better the richness that is often hidden in each one of us."* (E 2/7).

The road leading to this goal is not easy because, even at the level of National Federations, this community spirit is still lacking (E 2/16) and people have their prejudices (E 2/6), and unnecessary conflicts (E 5/15).

The World Community is a real challenge to National Federations to create solid bonds of community (E 5/7; 6/2; 7/2); "for some, it might be the spur to form real, living communities in their own countries." (E 3/6).

What would we like to share together at the heart of this family of the World Community?

In the first place, the joy of brotherhood and equality that God gives us in Christ (S 1/16). To use the vocabulary of the first christian communities, we want to live *koinonia* (fellowship), with all the richness and pluralism that term evokes (F 3/14). A federation is more concerned with structures (F 3/14, 24), organisation (S 1/12), while "... a community is more concerned with persons " (F 3/24). "... sharing, *koinonia*, is a constitutive part of community, whereas in our Federation it is something purely optional" (F 3/14). In addition, a community would require greater openness (S 1/12).

As has already been said, a community does not live for itself but for a better service, responding to the call of the Kingdom. This service requires that we discern the voices of the people, urgent needs and possibilities. A more open discernment, thanks to an exposure to the manifold aspects of reality, is a second element, of prime importance, that the choice made at Rome in 1979 can bring to the CLC's.

The World Community would make for a better realisation of this discernment, for several reasons. First of all, "it would bring together more the integrating factors of our communities, since all could have a common experience" (S 2/5), and help towards a common vision (E 6/4). In the second place, it would foster an active indifference - always necessary for a good discernment - through interesting CLC members in realities beyond their frontiers (S 2/6). Thirdly, it would create an attitude of generosity in the faith, opposed to all egoism (F 2/11). In the fourth place, "feeling and being a world community helps us to see the true proportions of our national problems" (E 3/2). Fifthly, "all movements need a challenge and an ideal" (E 5/1) to go out of themselves and to be free to serve. This "ideal is like a star in the sky; we cannot catch it, but it can lead us forward" (E 5/13), which constitutes a vital support for discernment itself.

For achieving a deeper sensitivity to the needs of others (E 2/5), the World Community would provide a greater mutual support (E 2/4). This support and this reciprocal union increase our strength (S 3/2) and are especially necessary in the struggle for a more just world (S 3/12). "There would be greater union in the face of common problems and enemies" (S 2/7).

Among the different ways of sharing together - apart from those already noted - mention was made of exchanging personnel, formation programs and of financial help (E 2/3, 12). With regard to this last point, it was pointed out "the world's inequalities also manifest themselves within the World Federation. So let us begin by ensuring the most effective sharing among ourselves. Then we shall be able to speak to the world of what our life is - a living witness" (F 3/14). This calls for a commitment from each person (E 6/5).

To move towards becoming a World Community would have two further consequences - the fruit of a greater and more universal sense of community, for a better service. On one side, "... when elections occur, the more competent would be chosen; there would be less concern to choose people by region" (F 2/4). From the point of view of government, the World Community would give the Executive Council the possibility of acting with more effectiveness in the countries which have more need of help (F 2/14: we are following here the spirit rather than the letter of what was said).

Finally, a World Community would make it much easier to incorporate on a world level those who cannot federate (F 2/13).

FAITHFUL TO THE CALL OF CHRIST WITHIN THE CLC CHARISM

This way of life, which seeks a better service, by lay people, of the Church and the world, demands of the members of the CLC that they give themselves generously to Christ and that they prepare themselves seriously, in accordance with their charism which is inspired by the Spiritual Exercises (E 1/5; 4/2; F 3/4).

The World Community would not lessen but rather enhance this: "quality and quantity of membership would be emphasised" (E 5/8); "it would foster a strong degree of commitment among all" (E 5/9); "... it would be a more perfect testimony of what the gift of the Spirit is" (S 1/9); "... it might help the individual members in that universal vision. The members will be enriched, will be helped to be more out-going, more ready to take up mission and service in this World Community" (E 1/5); "... it can bring out the best in people" (E 6/4); it would foster "a common experience" (S 2/5).

To move towards World Community is an act of faith (F 2/11), a response to the call of the Lord. In the last analysis, it is aiming at a goal which "... might be an encouragement to stimulate our communities to be more perfect in their loving" (S 3/11). It is a change of structure which "concerns the spiritual life" (F 1/3). The spiritual life of the members of a CLC World Community would be enriched, one would hope, "through sharing in the spiritualities of the various continents" (S 2/8).

To live in community and in World Community "... commits us to a life in common and a vocation which penetrates the depth of our being, all our life" (S 1/10). As well as being a help, a World Community would also be a challenge for some of us (F 1/8), which would oblige us to overcome our egoism (F 2/11; 3/13); our hesitations and our fears with regard to commitment (F 2/12). "In a community we no longer seek our personal advantage but God's will" (F 3/9).

This call to a World Community expresses more authentically the CLC charism (E 7/1) which, inspired by the Exercises (the meditation on the Kingdom), carries "... a very clear aspect of universality" (E 1/5).

The World Community, with all that it implies, is seen both as "... the natural outcome of the experience of the Spiritual Exercises" (E 4/2) and as "... a new path towards finding the specific character of the Ignatian charism lived by laity" (S 2/2). It would be "an expression of the Ignatian 'magis' in our commitment to others" (S 2/11). According to another formula "... our Ignatian spirituality leads us to mission and to a universal mission, excluding no one, which therefore orients us towards a World Com-

munity" (F 2/7). Another group sees a World Community as a way that is more adapted to thinking with the Church (S 3/9).

The strongly eucharistic character of Ignatian spirituality (F 3/22), just like the importance Ignatius gives to unity as a sign of the work of God (F 3/12), both point in the direction of a World Community.

EVALUATION OF ROME'79

The exposition we have just given helps us grasp the considerable importance of Rome'79 in the movement towards a World Community. The balance-sheet is extremely positive, although we have not spoken of other factors from this Assembly which complement what has been said. I am thinking especially of the "*reasons against*" - which I have already alluded to - some of which should be borne in mind to prevent a future World Community from floundering. The "*consequences*" and "*expectations*" are also equally valuable in filling out the profile of what a World Community might look like. Together with the reports gathered at Providence, these contributions from Rome will serve as a basis for our fourth chapter which, drawing on them, will try in this way to determine the approximate features of a World Community.

Rome achieved something quite important with regard to discernment. The services of an excellent guide, Dominic Maruca S.J., were available for such a process, and also what helped very much was the remarkable explanation of Hildegard Ehardt in which she outlined the six steps an Assembly should follow for a true discernment (cf. Rome '79, English edition, pp. 194-200). To have gathered all this material together in the White Book was an excellent idea.

Rome opened for the CLC's a road towards World Community, to serve better a world which, doubtless without knowing it, finds only in Christ its true goal and unity. This move was born of the action of the Spirit of the Lord, made manifest in concrete signs. It drew its inspiration from the sources of our faith and the Ignatian charism, and it united more closely all the members of the CLC's in the same fa

mily spirit and in the joy of sharing together at different levels of intimacy.

Rome said YES to the World Community but the result was not sufficiently unanimous; it failed by one vote to attain a two-thirds majority. This outcome was judged insufficient to be regarded as approval for such a fundamental orientation.

Moreover, as has already been said, the YES at Rome was not free from reservations and fears; reasons for this were not lacking.

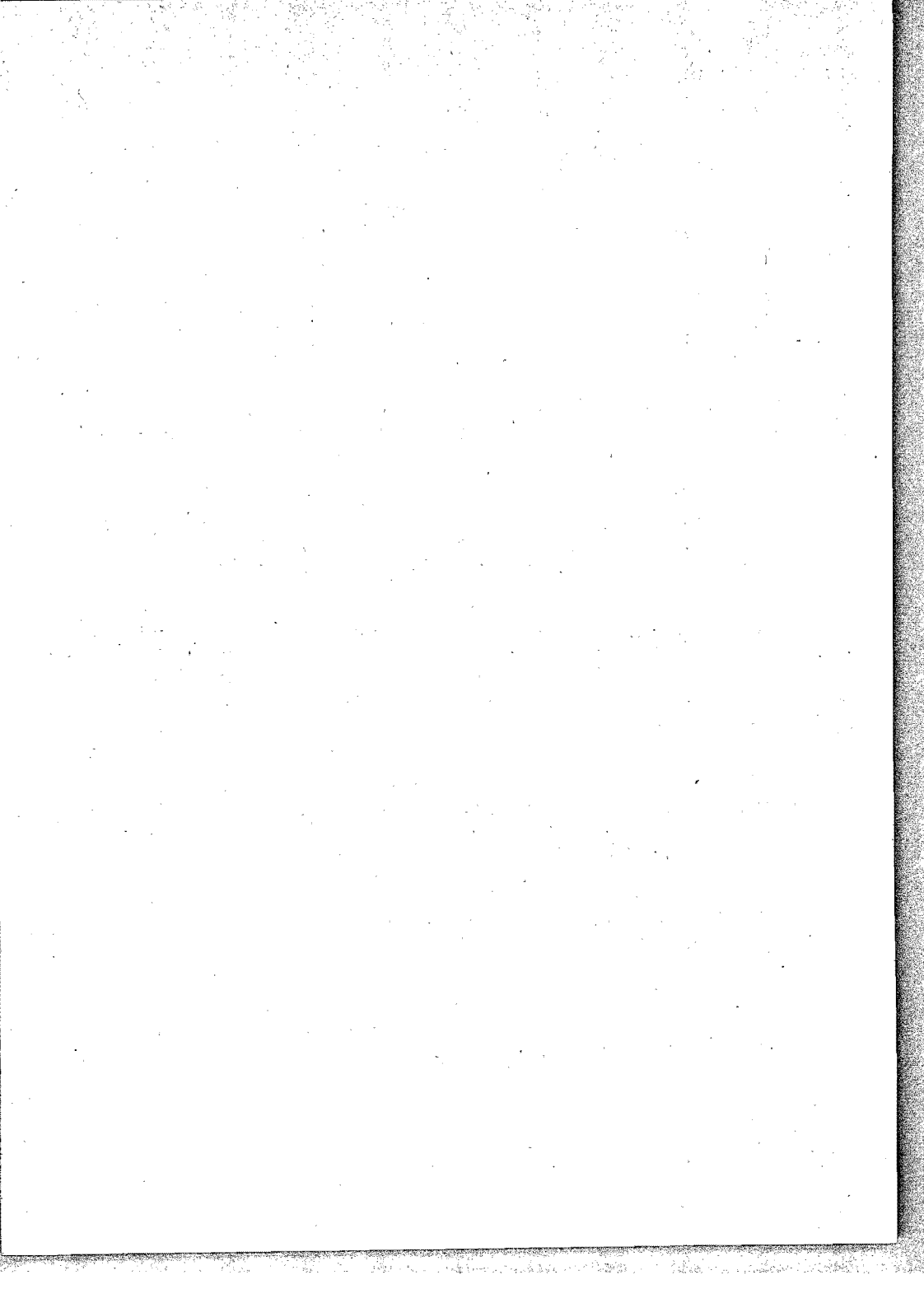
In the first place, a good number of those present had just taken their first steps and were very young in their CLC experience.

Delegates from certain countries felt that many communities lacked an awareness of their National Federation. How could they venture, then, towards a World Community?

Some delegates had a similar feeling with regard to the sense of mission and service in certain communities. This moved them to fear a decision implying an attitude towards mission and real service which went beyond the purely personal.

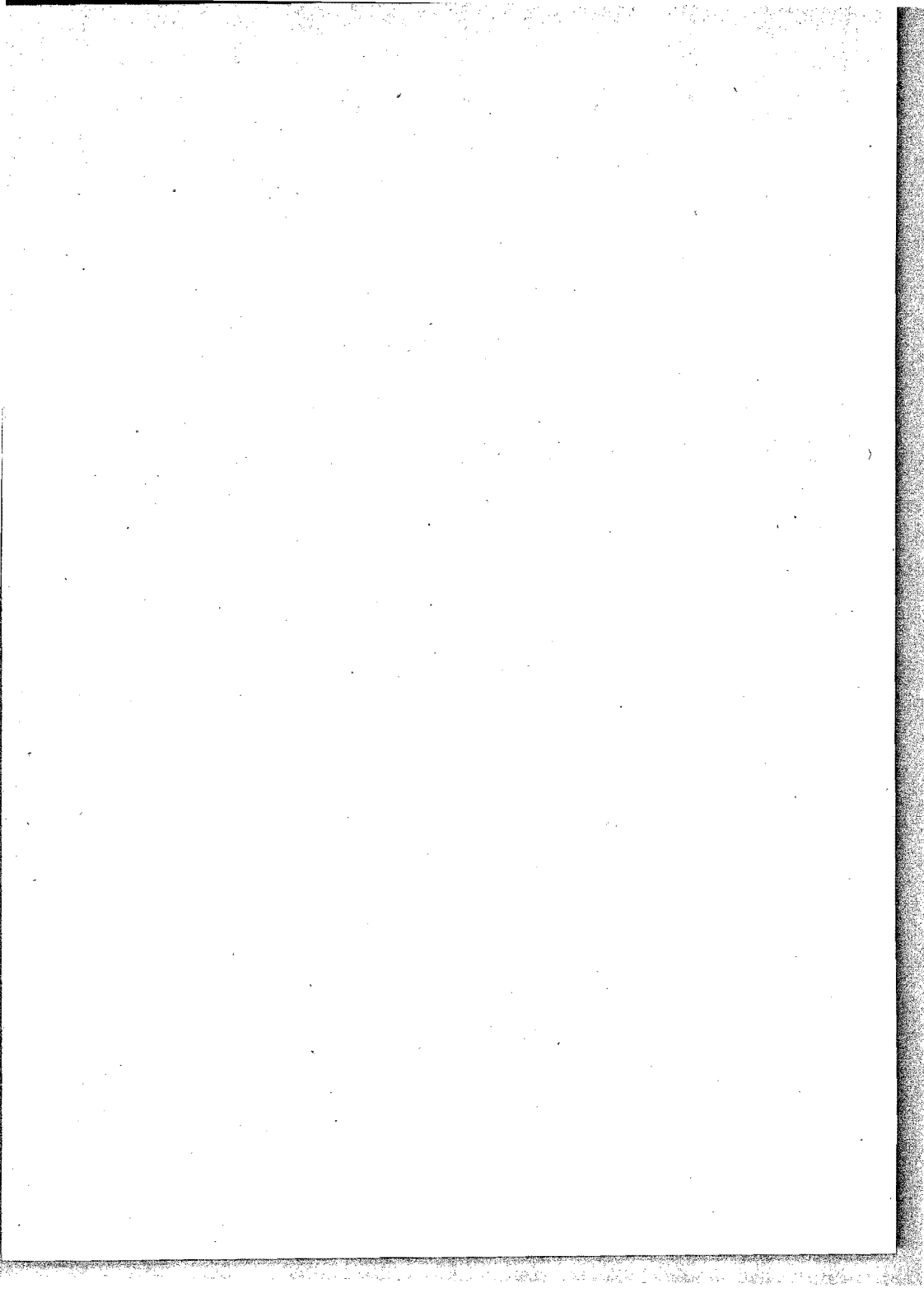
In addition to all that there was a lack of mature reflection with regard to certain basic concepts tied up in the choice for a World Community - for example, the concept of koinonia with its different levels, the concept of solidarity, of mission, of lay life-style and spirituality (as opposed to the spirituality of a secular institute), of the authority of the Executive Council over the local, national and regional CLC's.

Although at Rome the breath of the Spirit was felt gently moving towards a World Community, its hour had not yet come, it was not the kairos. That would be at Providence.



II

BIRTH OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY



II

After having studied the contribution of Rome '79 - as well as its limitations - to the beginnings of the World Community, let us now turn to Providence '82 to grasp its particular grace which brought about the birth there of the CLC World Community. But to understand this, we cannot pass over in silence the three years between the two General Assemblies.

FROM 1979 - 1982

The delegates for Providence received preparatory information in abundance. Among the documents received, special mention should be made of the "Activity Report, 1979-1982" of José Gsell, Executive Secretary, which was completed by the reports from the 5 Commissions: Formation, Mission and Service, Youth, Finance and the Ad Hoc Commission.

There is no need to repeat what is found there but rather to take up certain lines of thought and recall one or two significant facts, to better understand what living itself contributed to the decision at Providence.

The preceding chapter has shown us that the option for a World Community is a spiritual option, inspired by a faith which welcomes the call of God and by the desire for the magis: a better service in the mission of Christ, in the Church, for one world.

This presupposes a commitment of the CLC's and of each one of its members to respond in a more vital and generous way to the call of Christ, the call to know Him intimately so as to love Him more and follow Him (Sp.Ex. 104). In other words, to know, to love and to follow more closely the whole Christ, Head and members, the Christ of Palestine crucified and risen who today is born and dies, suffers and triumphs in the whole Church and in each one of its members.

cises. The reports given at Providence all agree on this point.

The Exercises - often made according to the 19th annotation retreat - have been a source of personal sanctification and apostolic vitality for individuals and CLC communities. And people have discovered there a pedagogy that can be applied for different purposes:

- the life of community prayer.
- discernment as a permanent attitude to open ourselves to the call of God in all our choices about ourselves, our families and our apostolate.
- interpreting in the Spirit events in the world (cultural, political, economic, social and so on), which is a variation on discernment vis-a-vis present events.
- the pattern in the Survey on Formation (June 1981), which covers the different stages of the process of development in the CLC's.
- the methodology that is used in holding local meetings, national meetings and even General Assemblies of the CLC's.
- a growing sense of thinking with the Church, the pilgrim Church.

In all these areas people in different situations, in different countries have had very valuable experiences in the course of these last three years. Perhaps it is not yet the right time for them to be the object of a systematic reflection. In any case, this pedagogy founded on the Exercises seems full of promise and rich in its fruits.

To the progress already mentioned should be added a marked increase, in the course of these three years, in the volume of communications and reports throughout the World Federation. Regional meetings have especially contributed in this area - Asia, August '81; Latin America, January '82; Africa, May '79 and December '81; annual meetings in Europe. These meetings have united the federations in administration, friendship and in an exchange of material and persons experienced in the work of formation.

The review Progressio and the numbers of Projects, of a more informative nature, and the exchange of CLC reviews between countries have strengthened these ties.

Though all this is true, the problem remains, however, that in many cases this rich network of communication is limited to the offices of the National Secretariates and is not known to the members of CLC groups. This is a matter that deserves serious consideration.

The orientations of Augsburg '73 and Manila '76 on liberation and life-style have been expressed through diverse initiatives. The theme of Manila - "*Poor with Christ poor for a better service*" - has been implemented in almost all the Federations through initiatives of evangelisation and work on behalf of the most needy. One example: the CLC's in Egypt send a certain number of their members to have an experience over several months of helping and serving the Church of Sudan. Two have remained several years and others are getting ready to go there.

The effort to create an awareness of the necessity for disarmament and international peace has been especially emphasised by the Federations of the United States, Germany and Japan.

Thomas I. Monahan is the CLC delegate at the United Nations. He is a tireless worker and at this world level where government policy is affected, he is involved in such problem areas as disarmament, development, the North-South dialogue, the creation of a new international economic order, changing the mentality of developing countries, etc.; and there are many like him in the United States and other countries. This greater awareness of things to be done on the international level should also be seen as progress in the CLC's.

The overall impression of the years 1979-1982 is that of a time of deepening, reciprocal communication and of expansion. The proper identity of the CLC's is well enough established; there are good orientations in formation inspired by the Spiritual Exercises; groups meet with seriousness and a great sense of the Church; the numerous presence of young people gives promise of a generation of well formed adults in the years to come; the bonds between

Federations have grown closer; there is a concrete service among the most poor in a spirit of identifying with Christ poor; and at different levels, efforts are made to promote justice and the good news that makes people free.

These three years have been fruitful; we can see the signs of the help the Lord has given. However, that does not mean that all is perfect and that there is not still a lot to be done. From now on, what needs to be done is to consolidate what has been achieved and to open the CLC's more to mission. But more of that later on. What has been said should suffice for recognising the help given by the Spirit of Life in the animation of the CLC's, and the impact of all that on the decision taken at Providence '82 on the question of a World Community.

THE IGNATIAN REPETITION

The 113 delegates from 44 countries gathered at Providence were invited - as we have already seen - to review the decision taken at Rome. This reviewing corresponds to the practice of the Ignatian repetition during the process of discernment.

We already know the reasons why Rome was not able to arrive at a definitive decision concerning the World Community. There was no question of beginning all over again, as though no account was to be taken of what happened at Rome. Although a good number of the delegates at Providence had not shared in the spiritual experience of Rome, the two Assemblies maintained a definite continuity, both because of the presence of quite a number of the same delegates, and because of the information shared during the past three years and especially through sharing in a common spirit.

This explains why Providence did not consider it necessary to have a complete new process of discernment, spending time on interior movements and "reasons for" and "against" as had been done at Rome.

But what does an Ignatian repetition consist in? Be-

fore explaining that, it is essential to see clearly the place of the 'confirmation' in the process of discernment, because the repetition is in function of the confirmation.

We see clearly in Ignatius' own experience as he was convalescing at Loyola that the last point in the process of discernment is not the moment when the person experiences interior movements (first step, Autobiography, nn.6-7), nor the moment when the person interprets where they come from (second step, which is often wrongly called discernment; Ibidem, n.9), but the moment of decision and its confirmation by God (third step; Ibidem, nn.9-10). In the conversion of Inigo, it is almost impossible to pin-point the moment of his decision. This was a gradual process: "...he began to think...in what situation he would do penance"; "...then he considered within himself the desire to imitate the saints..." (Ibidem, n.9); "... and already his past imaginings were fading away, and giving place to the holy desires he presently had" (Ibidem, n. 9). Inigo arrived at his decision without almost realising it.

But the confirmation of the decision - linked to a vision of Our Lady - was clear and definitive. Through this vision his holy desires "were confirmed for him; ...during one notable moment he received great consolation and he was left with disgust at his past life..." (Ibidem, n.10).

It is interesting to note that Inigo does not attribute the confirmation to the vision of Our Lady ("... although he did not dare affirm it..." Ibidem, n. 10), but to its effects in changing his life: "... through this effect one could judge that the vision had been something from God." (Ibidem, n. 10).

The confirmation, then, is the divine guarantee which seals a human decision with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Its signs are peace, clarity, joy, an increase of faith, gratitude, surrender, a greater desire to serve.

When, in a community discernment, we look for the confirmation of a decision, as at Providence, it is important to note that - in a way similar to the role played by the vision of Our Lady in the confirmation of the holy desires of Inigo - the confirmation does not necessarily depend on the reasons by which one has arrived at a particular decision.

Once we have seen the determining place of confirmation in the process of discernment, let us now look at the repetition and its function in the process. Ignatius explains it to us in the book of the Exercises, during the First Week (62 and 64) and in the contemplation which the retreatant makes in the Second Week (118, 119, 120).

After the retreatant has meditated, during the first and second exercise of the day, on the theme of sin, Ignatius invites him to repeat these two meditations: "... we should pay attention to and dwell upon those points in which we have experienced greater consolation or greater desolation or greater spiritual appreciation." (62).

During the fourth exercise, the retreatant is to take up what has been repeated in the third exercise - "...the intellect, without any digression, diligently thinks over and recalls the matter contemplated in the previous exercises. The same three colloquies should be used at the close." (64). In the same way, Ignatius requires that we make repetitions of the contemplations on the mysteries of the life of Christ (118-120).

The point of the repetitions -- and the summary (64) -- is for the retreatant, with much prayer, to let himself become more deeply penetrated by the persons or the things meditated or contemplated, so that they become part of the retreatant and the stage is reached where the person can take things in intuitively, in a way that is completely in harmony with his or her emotions and feelings. The repetition envisages a growing process of interiorisation and familiarity with Jesus Christ and with the designs of God. It is by no means necessary to "discourse" with many ideas. The point, rather, is to arrive at the stage of being able to become 'centred' on the theme, with spiritual relish.

Ignatius also proposes this practice of the repetition in the different ways of making an election. During the third time for making a good and sound election, the fourth and fifth points in numbers 181-182, and the four rules mentioned in numbers 184-187 are repetition exercises.

The two ways of making a choice during the third time

(for making a good and sound choice) lead the retreatant to present his election to the Lord : "After such a choice or decision; the one who has made it must turn with great diligence to prayer in the presence of God our Lord, and offer Him his choice that the Divine Majesty may deign to accept and confirm it if it is for His greater service and praise." (183).

The words "with great diligence" suggest that this prayer should be repeated several times. What is at stake is that, through prayer, the Lord receives and confirms the election. The divine confirmation normally makes itself felt through the signs of the Spirit already described: peace, interior clarity, joy, surrender, and so on.

In line with the pedagogy of the Exercises, which we have recalled, Providence adopted the method of the Ignatian repetition as the most apt means for achieving 5 objectives:

1. That Providence operate in continuity with the spiritual grace and the contribution of Rome '79 to the World Community.

2. That full account be taken of the Lord speaking through the experiences, the successes and the failures of the CLC's over the previous 3 years.

3. That, rather than enumerate and weigh the "reasons for" and the "reasons against" - which was sufficiently done at Rome - an atmosphere be created in the Assembly which would make it easier to hear, through a perception both sensitive and wise, the call of the Lord with regard to the decision to be made.

4. That the Assembly maintain full liberty - indifference - to accept, reject or modify what had been done in Rome, if the Lord clearly showed it.

5. That people should pray with great diligence, and over and over again so that once a decision be reached, the Lord confirm this decision that He had placed in the hearts of the delegates.

...AND ITS APPLICATION TO PROVIDENCE

The process foreseen at Providence for this Ignatian repetition succeeded in combining an atmosphere of much prayer and much work.

The Eucharist, each time in a different language and with appropriate songs and arrangements, was the centre from which went out and to which converged all the efforts. As the "*sacrament of unity*" it was vital in strengthening the bonds of personal love in Christ and His mission, which alone, ultimately, can explain the desire to form a World Community.

What also helped in creating the climate of prayer were the observations and comments of the process guide. On the very day the Assembly opened, Eddie insisted on the necessity of transforming ourselves into "*a discerning community*", which depended mainly on our interior dispositions, on this "*magnanimity and generosity*" (Sp. Ex. 5) that Ignatius expects of the retreatant who wants to make progress.

The daily time-table foresaw special times for personal prayer - a key factor in maintaining this spirit.

Other initiatives, like the morning prayer that Oriol Pujol took charge of, and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament chapel, reinforced this atmosphere of prayer. The peace and serenity of the countryside also played their part.

The repetition as it was undertaken followed the following steps:

1. INFORMATION ON THE WORLD REALITY OF CLC TODAY

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This began with the "*Activity Report, 1979-1982*", presented by José Gsell, the Executive Secretary, and the presentation of the reports from the different Commissions in the opening session.

Then, during the next two days, there was an exchange of information and sharing with regard to the CLC situation in each country; this was done on the world, the regional and the national level. Thanks to an ingenious process, practically all the delegates were able to know and say something about the more salient points of what was happening in the CLC's today.

But it was not only a question of listening to information; in a true atmosphere of discernment, a spirit of listening was being fostered and also admiration before other people's reality; people dropped their barriers, let themselves be questioned, each one in his or her own domain, thanks to the presence of and contributions from others.

The meeting of August 28th with a rather large group of CLC'ers from the United States, Canada and Mexico, together with the paper of Sister Janet Richardson (delegate to the United Nations) and its specific orientation, provided more information and also an opportunity for people to widen their horizons.

It is worth remarking in passing that, during this phase given to gathering information, several delegates - and maybe quite a few groups from the same region - showed little interest in a World Community or even opposition to it.

2. RETREAT DAY ON "THE KINGDOM"

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The goal of this day was to prepare people's spirits to enter into the theme of the repetition, the call to World Community, with a more vital contact with the Lord, with greater interior liberty, a disponibility and a sincere desire to seek, to find and to follow through. The silence fostered a deeper communication with the Lord and among those present. Eddie invited us to pray "for others, for other countries, for ourselves as CLC members and for the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ".

Providence '82 took as its own the words of Micah, 6/8: "To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God". These words, Eddie added, invite us "to a

greater desire to save man, to illumine the world with Christ, to collaborate from now on in establishing the Kingdom. God is full of surprises; he is unpredictable. Let us not plan His action. He does not allow us to imprison ourselves in our own limitations where we sometimes want to remain. Let us search for His will with docility and act according to it".

In the points for the day of retreat on the Kingdom, Eddie explained: "To be a christian implies a moment of conversion when we accept the love and the pardon of God expressed in the words and life of Christ. But that also implies an attitude of service, to follow Jesus Christ in His mission received from the Father, imitating His style of life and adopting His basic choices".

Then came briefly 6 characteristic points of how Jesus lived for the Kingdom:

- Jesus lived for the mission received from His Father and carried it out in a filial spirit. His attitude is totally opposed to a self-imposed mission. "We are destined to be sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, receiving our vocation to follow Him. From this flows prayer, which opens us to the Father, and an attitude of discernment and disponibility".

- Jesus announces the Kingdom of the Father as a gift, as an initiative of God and not as the mere work of man.

- To realise His mission, Jesus becomes incarnate in a concrete situation and accepts the limitations that implies. To be called by the Lord means for us to be men of our time, concerned to know the reality and to accept the limitations and tensions of our world.

- Jesus lives and announces the Father's preference for the poor, for those on the margin of society. To put ourselves at the service of the mission of Christ implies for us a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised of our time.

- Because of His fidelity to the mission received from the Father, Jesus must confront conflicts which lead Him to the Cross. "Our following of Christ also involves suffering, conflicts, dying, the cross. We are called to a profound freedom, rejecting both fears and living out a false pacifism".

- Jesus does not impose his option for the Kingdom of God; He invites, He puts Himself at the service of others. We are called not to manipulate others but to serve them.

God alone knows how each person received the graces offered during this day of retreat. In any case, the Word of God - more concretely, these points summarised here as faithfully as possible - were certainly a grace, which is why it seemed necessary to include them in this account.

Collectively there was undoubtedly an atmosphere of deep disponibility which culminated in a penitential liturgy, followed by the Eucharist. There was a feeling of peace all around which showed on people's faces and a real community joy.

3. EXCHANGES ON THE CALL TO A WORLD COMMUNITY

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As from Monday, August 30th, there began a serious process of listening to one another as the delegates met in groups on the world and regional level and by delegation. The focus for the listening was the central question for discernment - "Do we feel called, now, to become a World Community?"

Once more it was a question of letting oneself be challenged by the voice of the Lord coming through others, so as not to close oneself up in one's own little castle. In this way one would be in a better position to seek and find the divine will. As the process advanced - it lasted until September 1st - there developed a common language and a common sentiment. Thus the grace of Rome '79 was relived by the Assembly at Providence, enhanced by the gains, the advances, the hopes and the insights of the last three years, together with the difficulties, the fears and the failures, real or supposed. This accumulated experience purified and enriched the grace of Rome and also gave a gentle push forward.

For the process of listening to be more realistic and concrete, an important factor was introduced, namely the workshops. The basic idea of these workshops was to exchange experiences and to work out courses of action in 5 important areas of CLC spirituality and mission, always

asking the question of how these fitted in with a World Community or how they could be helped by it.

The 5 workshops were : Mission and Service, Thinking with the Church, Youth, Married Couples, the Spiritual Exercises in daily life. Each one could go to whatever workshop he or she desired but it was recommended that members of the same delegation choose different workshops.

Later on we will be presenting the results of the work done in the workshops, especially those points that more directly concern the profile and the future moves of the World Community.

4. EXPLANATIONS IN PLENARY SESSION

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On August 31st, the day before the vote, José Gsell, at the request of the Assembly, presented an orderly and complete synthesis of the "reasons for" and "against" a World Community given at Rome, and recorded in the "White Book". This was an important phase in the process of discernment as it provided an opportunity for reliving and so maintaining continuity with the experience of Villa Cavalletti, both on the level of fears and pit-falls to be avoided and on the level of challenges and hopes. We already know about this, at least as far as the "reasons for" are concerned.

Patrick (vice-world-assistant for the CLC's) was then asked to respond in the Assembly to various anxieties expressed by some of the delegates.

The questions asked concerned the difference between "Federation" and "Community", the importance of structures, the reason for a change of name when it was not at all clear that passing to a World Community implied, by that very fact, a change in the reality that people were presently living.

The replies were known to all as they had already been circulated on a stencilled sheet.

- "Federation" emphasises a structure; "Community" emphasises an attitude of unity and solidarity springing from a common source (The Spiritual Exercises).

- The word "Community" seems to express more aptly the CLC world reality - a growing attitude of unity and solidarity between Federations, as witnessed in mutual help, common courses, personal contacts.

- To the third question - why change the name if a change in the reality was not immediately foreseen - Pat replied that names were important: what we call ourselves and what others call us influence our way of being and our way of acting because they express how we see ourselves and how others see us. The name is a vital reality; to change it not only reflects but brings about a change of attitude. He illustrated this explanation with a personal anecdote that brought home the point.

Towards the end of the sixties, when there were all sorts of changes going on in community life, he was Rector of Jesuit scholastics studying at the University, and they used to call him "Father Rector". Then one day one of the scholastics simply called him "Pat". "When that happened", he recounted, "I realised that this simple change of a word indicated that an old style had been replaced by a new style, and that to use 'Pat' would create new structures in community living and in the relationship with authority. And that's what happened".

This example provoked much laughter and clarified for everyone the meaning of the change proposed in the CLC's.

These clarifications were followed by various other interventions; many were in favour of the change of name, while others expressed reserve and raised obscure points and difficulties.

It appeared more clearly each time that what was at issue was a decision of the spiritual order, a call from the Spirit to a greater surrender which, without forcing anything, would open doors and facilitate change. In the light of the experience of the last three years, it appeared that this step would strengthen communication at different levels of CLC life and action. It appeared equally clearly that any change to come in the structures would

depend on mission. This, in the last analysis, is the reason for being CLC. In addition, in conformity with the "*tantum quantum*" and the "*magis*" of the Principle and Foundation, we should be open as a World Community to taking up the structures which best serve mission.

The explanations were always followed by a time for prayer and reflection, and sharing on the levels of regions and delegations.

Before going into Plenary Session to express their deeply thought-over response, each national delegation met to elaborate what was to be said.

The last step was to listen to the replies read by each delegation in the Plenary Session. It was a surprising succession of responses. We give here briefly the principal reasons mentioned. Naturally, there are repetitions.

- Yes, because that responds better to the call of Christ
- Yes, because it expresses better the experience and vision of the CLC's
- Yes, because it is the image and the best witness of the mission that unites us
- Yes, because it means openness
- Yes, because we are the Church and the Church is community
- Yes, because we believe that represents an important contribution that Ignatian spirituality can make to the Church today
- Yes, because it is the best way of realising mission and service on the regional level
- We do not see clearly yet
- Yes, but let us always see very clearly what that implies
- Yes, but let us know how we are going to do it

- Yes, because we belong to a group which lives a spirituality which seeks the more universal good
- Yes, because this is a challenge to be brothers, like the call of Jesus in the Exercises.

We were confronted with a startling display of what God can do. Different delegations, who were thinking of voting NO at the beginning of the Assembly, changed their mind in the course of the process. Those who considered, during the first days, that the question of the World Community was too complicated, or just a question of words, or something that did not really matter, shared in the exhilaration that everyone felt after this succession of responses so carefully thought through.

5. THE VOTE AND SIGNS OF THE SPIRIT

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It only remained now to vote. The Assembly was consulted if this vote should be public or secret; one delegation asked for a secret vote, and so it was.

Before the voting, Eddie explained what exactly the vote meant. The vote is the external expression of an interior call of grace. There is no question of a majority wishing to impose itself on a minority. We are not in a parliamentary system where there are pressure groups, representatives who must vote according to the mind of those who have elected them, majorities imposing themselves on minorities. "What we are looking for is not for a majority to decide for us. We are looking for a consensus; which means to say that all will make their own the final decision".

These words express a deep sense of faith and a great capacity for self-denial : we should be persuaded that God speaks through the voice of the majority and be so detached from our own judgment that, in the case of a contrary result, we would adhere with all our heart to the decision of the majority and make it our own.

The vote took place after a long interval following the reading of the responses which we have already mentioned. This again gave the opportunity for prayer.

When the delegates came together in Plenary Session, the vote itself took very little time. We already know the result. To the question - "Do we feel called, now, to become a World Community" of the 39 Federations (with the right to vote (44 were present in the Assembly), 37 said "YES... we feel called", no one said "NO", and 2 abstained for reasons quite extrinsic to the question.

Already in the course of the previous days, one could sense, with a strong and growing unanimity, the signs of the presence of the "good spirit". That showed itself in a growing joy and light-heartedness, in a spirit of cooperation and serious work, in the desire to serve others, in the peace that reigned although there were reasons for tension, as for example, the vote which rejected a temporary change in the statutes to admit one or two young members to the Executive Council.

This feeling of peace, of joy, of union, together with the desire to show gratitude and to serve reached its peak after the final vote and in the course of the Eucharist which followed.

These were the signs of the divine confirmation of the process of discernment prolonged over more than 4 years. So this was the last of the 5 stages in the Ignatian repetition that Providence had adopted as a method of spiritual discernment to shed light on the call to form a World Community.

AFTER THE VOTE: CONCRETE STEPS

After the decision to change to a World Community, the next move was to find appropriate means to implement this fundamental decision and other matters associated with it. The process guide introduced this part, which complemented the decision taken, with the following reflection that is inspired by a work of Father Fernando Montes S.J. in Qua- dernos de Espiritualidad Ignaciana, n.12 (1981, Santiago, pp. 20-31)

"We must take concrete steps. This helps us accept our own limitations, and turn them towards service as much as possible. Salvation must work itself out in history in the midst of human difficulties. Our discernment, our feeling called to a World Community is not going to be realised in ideal conditions, but rather in a complex world, with people and in very concrete situations. To bring together the great and the little is of the divine, and to keep the dream and the ideal in spite of failures supposes a considerable spiritual maturity. The spiritual process of St. Ignatius unites what is great and what is possible in a permanent tension filled with desires; in a permanent discernment of life. That is the grace I invite you to pray for today and in the days to come.

The big task of these days is to combine our desire to serve, a universal vision of things, with human instruments and a sense of what is possible and down to earth.

Like Ignatius we have to ask for the grace of uniting dreams and reality, great ideals with our ordinary everyday living. Someone has said that Ignatius was able to unite Don Quixote and Sancho Panza - two extremes that would be most difficult to bring together. St. Ignatius, a man of dreams, was to discover step by step in his life that we can only serve God in the concrete, in the ordinary details of life and through thoroughly immersing ourselves in it.

It is a question of uniting our capacity to search, to dream, to have an ideal with the necessity of seeking concrete means and living our life fully within the framework of space and time.

Our temptation at this moment is to be content with a little and not to search for concrete, possible means".

After these words, the delegates came together by region to exchange their ideas on how to implement the decision taken. The areas of formation, structures, mission and service were analysed from a world point of view. Subsequently, these ideas were presented as propositions to the Assembly and the other delegates had the opportunity to make their comments.

This rich material - more than 11 pages - will be drawn

on when we deal with outlining the possible profile of a World Community.

On account of the wish to be really down to earth, the regional groups met one last time to recapitulate, to evaluate and to make practical resolutions for the region.

These concrete resolutions were likewise submitted to the General Assembly. Most of them dealt with local questions. However, they were all part of a greater universality that we have to bear in mind in the work that follows.

ROME'79 AND PROVIDENCE'82: A SINGLE PROCESS

It seems to me that one very clear conclusion is to be drawn from this chapter: Rome'79, the three years that followed and Providence'82 formed a single process which culminated in the World Community of the CLC's.

The call to World Community - like all the things of God - has been a singular and constant voice: it begins before Rome as the works of Fr. Paulussen show (God works like that, Progressio Supplement n.14, June 1979; "Faithful to our origins", Progressio July/Sept., 1982); Rome discerns it through a very long and serious process of listening; all this matures in ordinary everyday living during the years 1979-1982; the time of preparation is over and the reality comes to light at Providence.

A single process from Rome to Providence. This gives us a key for interpreting things which will be very useful in the task ahead - namely, to clarify the meaning of the step that we have made from a World Federation to a World Community (chapter III), and to bring out the desires and the moving forces underlying this initiative, so as to trace a profile or an image of the CLC World Community (chapter IV).

This profile is offered to us by the CLC way of life as it has been expressed and deepened in a single process

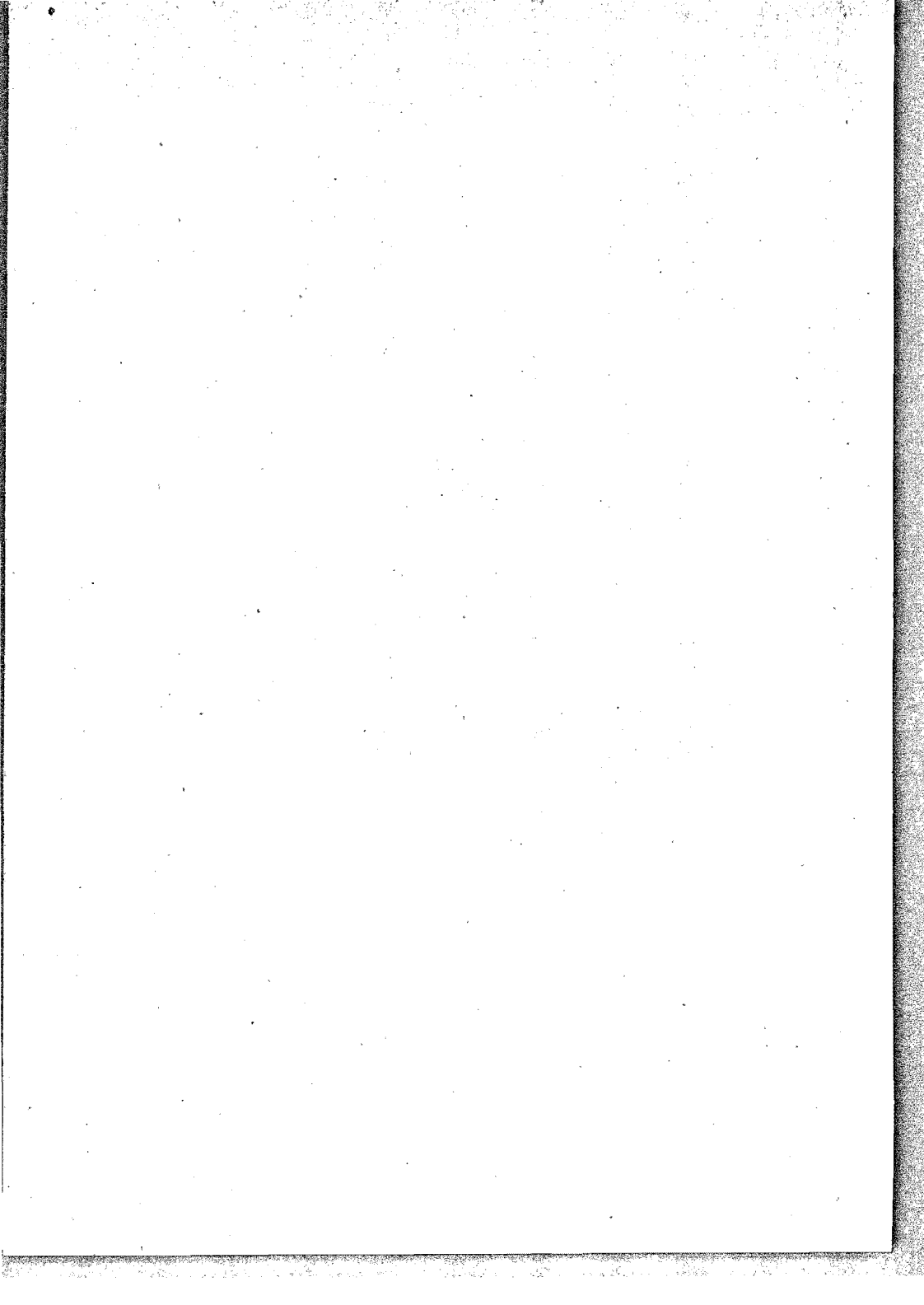
stretching out in time from Rome to Providence. The Ignatian repetition should not be separated from the meditations and contemplations that preceded it.

The World Community of Providence '82 is the end point of a process which was directed over quite a few years by the Spirit of Christ acting in the Church. The end point. But not only that! It is also a point of departure, because a good number of the "reasons for" are on the level of aspirations and desires which must be planted in reality. A point of departure, too, because it is not nor should it be an end in itself, but rather a humble and little instrument in the hands of the Church to continue - united with Christ - the work for establishing the Kingdom.

Providence '82 has been a moment of grace; is it not a tremendous social grace to accept to follow the call to a World Community without stopping to calculate the sacrifices that the Lord will ask of us?

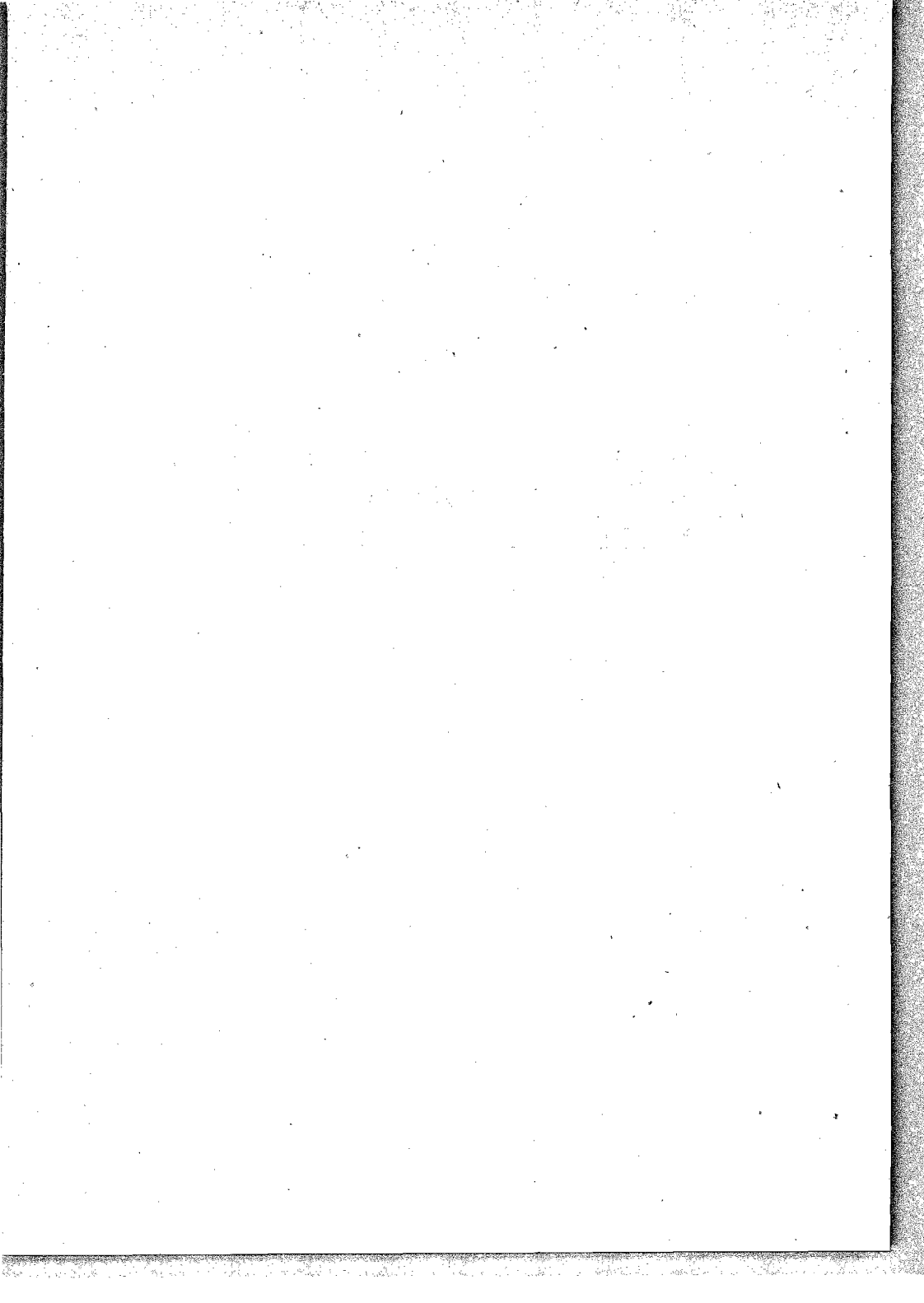
This social grace is called to confront the test of life. Only life and the years to come will enable us to evaluate if the results actually approximate to the aspirations and the good desires.

Before the stature and the grandeur of this call, we can only turn with a humble confidence to the Lord so that He may show His power in our weakness.



III

MEANING OF THE TRANSITION FROM FEDERATION TO WORLD CLC COMMUNITY



III

«ENLIGHTENED IGNORANCE»

After the vote of approval of Rome '79, the delegates asked on a number of occasions that the implication of the transition from Federation to World Community be studied and clarified.

The delegates wanted to know what new spiritual attitudes this step presupposed in their members; what were its consequences for mission and service; what possible changes of structure were implied on the juridical, administrative and financial level; how to form leaders in the light of this new perspective; how to keep a balance between the local and the world level, while taking into account the necessity of inculturation and a healthy pluralism; what would be the pedagogy to promote the movement to this World Community, and other questions of this kind.

All these desires, formulated in different ways, appear in the "White Book", when one treats of "principal means", "consequences" and also "expectations" with regard to the call to World Community. A number of these desires and clarifications - as we have seen - appear somewhat disguised under the form of "reasons for".

This shows that Rome, in spite of a request for clarification (Hong Kong: "Clarify the meaning of World Community"; Luxembourg: "Discern the mystery of the World Community") on what was understood by the transition to World Community - and it was a question of very substantial points - already had an intuition, at least in some way, of the consequences implied in the transition.

Something very similar happened at Providence '82. Being asked to explain the changes in structure that would be involved in the transition to a World Community, the members of the Executive Council kept their replies on the level of "the future will tell". Setsuko Nagashima compared this step to the moment of getting married - a commitment always to live together whatever the future might bring, to

accept it with zest, even the most unforeseen - like herself being at the Assembly in Providence and her husband being in Tokyo, looking after the children and doing the washing-up...

Like Rome, Providence also approved of a World Community in a state of "*enlightened ignorance*" without understanding, in an act of courageous and confident surrender to the call of the Lord, but at the same time, seeing the direction and some of the main implications of this decision.

This clearly appears on re-reading the well-considered replies, the expositions already mentioned and the propositions and resolutions aimed at putting the decision into practice.

On the basis of this "*enlightened ignorance*" we will try in this chapter to clarify, in a general way, the meaning of the transition from World Federation to World Community. From this we will draw a conclusion and make a tentative proposal which will serve for the next chapter, which will be more concrete.

It is not easy to be able to clarify in a precise way the concepts of "*Federation*" and "*Community*" and their mutual interdependence. It is still more difficult to take up the request of clarifying the transition from World Federation to World Community. As Pat and other members of the Executive Council have said, only the future can show with any certitude what the World Community will be.

On the other hand, the future, to a certain extent, is contained in the desires and expectations of the present and in the means one will choose to realise them. The future does not bring anything new which, in one way or another, has not been anticipated - foreshadowed (like a '*preparatio evangelica*')-in the present. For this reason, we think that the question we are dealing with is not only a possible question but actually quite a valid one.

Although the fairly strictly methodological character of the reflection of this chapter can seem to some people to be leading us away from the theme of the World Communi-

ty, we think that this way of proceeding is unavoidable and that it will help us to be more critically concrete in what comes after.

WORLD FEDERATION AND WORLD COMMUNITY: THE CONCEPTS ANALYSED

Rome and Providence frequently asked - about 30 times at Rome - for a clarification of the meaning of the transition from World Federation to World Community of the CLC's.

Let us be precise about the content of this request; that will help us move on with regard to the theme of this chapter.

One way of clearing the ground is to say what is not being asked to be clarified in this area:

- In the first place, it is not a question of explaining what is meant by *"a community of persons"*.
- Neither is anyone asking - *"What is a Christian Life Community?"*
- Nor (as a third remark) is a question being asked about the all-embracing adjective *"world"*.

I underline that these three points are not the question being asked because, quite frequently, the reasons given in favour of the World Community refer to them, invoking arguments that *"prove too much"*, as though only the transition from World Federation to World Community made possible - equality (E 6/5), living as brothers and sisters (S 1/16), maintaining a stronger community bond (E 5/6), being reflections of God Who is community (S 1/19), living real unity in Christ (E 2/20), a response to the prayer (E 5/4) and the call of the Lord (E 4/1).

Reasons of this nature - and other similar ones that we have summarised in the chapter on Rome '79 - share in

the weakness of arguments which "prove too much": they prove too little and sometimes nothing. And the reasons for this is that they are considerations of such a general nature that no concrete conclusion can be drawn from them, namely why a group of lay people living out Ignatian spirituality decide to pass from a World Federation to a World Community. If the arguments above were valid we would come to the absurd conclusion that everyone should belong to the World Community of the CLC's.

Moreover, these reasons forget that in the new General Principles (1967), the community aspect is very much emphasised. Certainly, from their first rule of 1574, the Marian Congregations encourage and foster mutual union and service; but the quite large group of people who collaborated in drawing up the General Principles of 1967 had this community spirit so much before them that they decided to change the name of "Congregation" into that of "Community". The fact that it was not only a question of a change of name is proved by the demands made by the new General Principles (GP).

The community is a group into which a person enters because of "a personal vocation" and "upon approval by the group". (GP 9). The groups "are for those who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith" (GP 3). There is a commitment to a particular, freely chosen community (GP 6). The person commits him or herself "... with the help of the group, to strive for a continual development which is spiritual, apostolic and human" (GP 11). Each one accepts "... the responsibility for participating in the meetings and activities of the group, and each helps and encourages the other to pursue his personal vocation, always ready to give and receive fraternal advice and aid" (GP 11).

This community spirit commits the members to works and very concrete apostolic services. But neither this spirit nor its concrete expression in particular actions are limited only to the members' community, without any concern for other CLC's, Church communities, the Church and the whole world.

A universal dimension runs through all the General Principles - "... to give ourselves always more generously

to God in loving and serving all mankind in the world today" (GP 1); "...to work together with the whole People of God for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all men" (GP 2; cf. also 5 and 7).

Lest there be any doubt, it is expressly stated - "Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our own group, but extends to all the federative movement, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all men of good will" (GP 6; the underlining is ours. In this line, cf. L. Paulussen S.J., Fundamental Themes of the General Principles - a booklet containing 7 articles from Progressio 1968-1970).

In making the demand that community bonds are to be developed, not only within one's local group, but to be extended to "the whole federative movement", an active spirit ("our responsibility...") of World Community (GP 6) is being fostered at the heart of the World Federation.

As we can see from this analysis, the notion of Community is not absent from the World Federation. If we wanted to, we could also show the contrary - that in a community at the world level, there are bound to exist quite a number of traits that belong to a Federation. A true World Community cannot claim a uniformity which would destroy the richness and the variety of the initiatives of regional and local groups. This wish is clearly shown in numerous "reasons for" and also in the consequences, propositions and expectations of Rome '79 and Providence '82.

The word "Federation" comes from the Latin foedus, "alliance". It is a system of social organisation which underlines the autonomy of local and regional groups, which reserve for themselves decisions of importance - not just trivial matters - in the attainment of their goals. But this autonomy is partial because each local or regional group, in order to achieve a goal it cannot reach by itself, makes an alliance (foedus = to enter into federation) with other groups who seek a similar goal. This association, founded on a pact (alliance) implies on the part of the groups that they pass on to the central organisation certain powers of decision-making which are necessary so that all together may achieve the ends which they hope to realise through federating. This transmission or

distribution of power between the groups and the central organisation can take various forms and combinations. There are no two systems of federal organisation which manage in exactly the same way this necessary tension between the focus of unity and the centres of plurality (cf. W. Anderson, "Federalism", A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, ed. J. Gould and W.L. Kolb, New York, 1964, p. 264).

The word "community" has a meaning no less elusive and difficult to pin down. G. Shoberg, by referring to a collectivity of persons who live in a limited territorial area, notes that the main characteristic of a community is "to share as much as possible the same daily activities" (Ibidem, "Community", p. 114). It is worth noting, though only in passing, that the biblical word koinonia literally means "sharing" and that it can be translated by "communion". It is this, then, which characterises "community". (Cf. W.G.H. Lampe, "Communion", The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, New York, 1962).

A CONCLUSION AND A TENTATIVE PROPOSAL (HYPOTHESIS)

Where does this analysis of the words "federation" and "community" lead us? Basically to two things - to note a conclusion and to suggest an hypothesis.

The conclusion is that the line between World Federation and World Community - if we follow our analysis of the concepts and the text of the General Principles - is very subtle and difficult to pin down. Strictly speaking, they are not terms which are mutually opposed; it can happen, in fact it is desirable, that Federations be strongly communitarian whether on the local, regional, or world level.

In political science, what is opposed to a federative regime is a unitary system, i.e., a single, uniform system. The difference between the two is one of emphasis and admits an almost infinite scale of variations, ranging from extreme differences to a point of nearly coinciding. But even though one, like the other, can be political communities that are very united and bound to one another, in

their quest for what constitutes the common good of a nation, nevertheless each one maintains different structures.

We conclude from this that the transition from a World Federation to a World Community is not so much the transition from one organisational and social structure to another structure, but rather to a new spirit - a spirit of koinonia, of mutual sharing in the perspective of the good of the whole.

This spirit of koinonia will always tend - like every spirit - to embody itself in structures which both express and foster it. Such is the challenge and the responsibility involved in the option at Providence for the World Community.

The hypothesis, closely bound up with what has been said, is that the most valuable aspect of the YES at Providence is to be sought in the word "community", as an expression of the creative (and therefore transforming) impulses, and profound aspirations that through the Lord's grace, were already at the heart of these impulses for quite some time. Moreover, this new terminology perhaps may be seen as directing this vitality and these desires, for a more effective realisation of mission. To return to a compelling example, this corresponds to the transition from "Father Rector" to "Pat".

In this perspective, the reasons for the World Community that we have criticised above as "wanting to prove too much", now recover their value. What they prove lies not so much in what they say as in what they bring to light. What they say is too general and sins against the principle of logic: argumentum nimis probans, nihil probat ("an argument which proves too much really proves nothing"). But they bring to light something very valuable - the presence in the CLC's of "a desire" (E 4/3), "a felt need" (F 2/5), "surrendering to what the Lord is already doing" (E 4/5), "great expectations" (F 2/17). All these expressions are drawn from the "reasons for", of Rome '79.

We know the great importance that St. Ignatius attached to good and holy desires; it is through them we help our neighbour (Constitutions of the Society Jesus, 638); we should make every effort "to have great plans and great de

sires to be true and faithful servants of God" (letter to Fr. John Pelletier, Rome, June 13th, 1551); "we should enkindle in our soul lively desires for the salvation of our neighbour" (letter to the Jesuits at Coimbra, Rome, May 7th, 1547)**; "the desires to serve Christ Our Lord do not come from us, but we are given them by the Lord" (letter to Teresa Rejadell, Venice, June 18th, 1536)***.*

Rome'79 and Providence'82 are full of this desire to serve God and one's neighbour. The transition to a World Community denotes an attitude of complete disponibility - like the Virgin Mary - to be formed into a more fitting instrument in the hands of the Lord so that He can use it for the service of the Kingdom.

The achievements of the years 1979 - 1982 prove that these desires are not mere velleities and phantasies of the imagination. This hypothesis gives us a line to work on in the next chapter with regard to the principal features of the World Community. We have to concentrate not so much on possible structures as on the aspirations and profound impulses which inspire them. Doubtless some ideas will come out of this which will be embodied in structures, in some way different from those of the World Federation, so that the World Community may be a more fitting channel to pass on the abundant life of the Spirit.

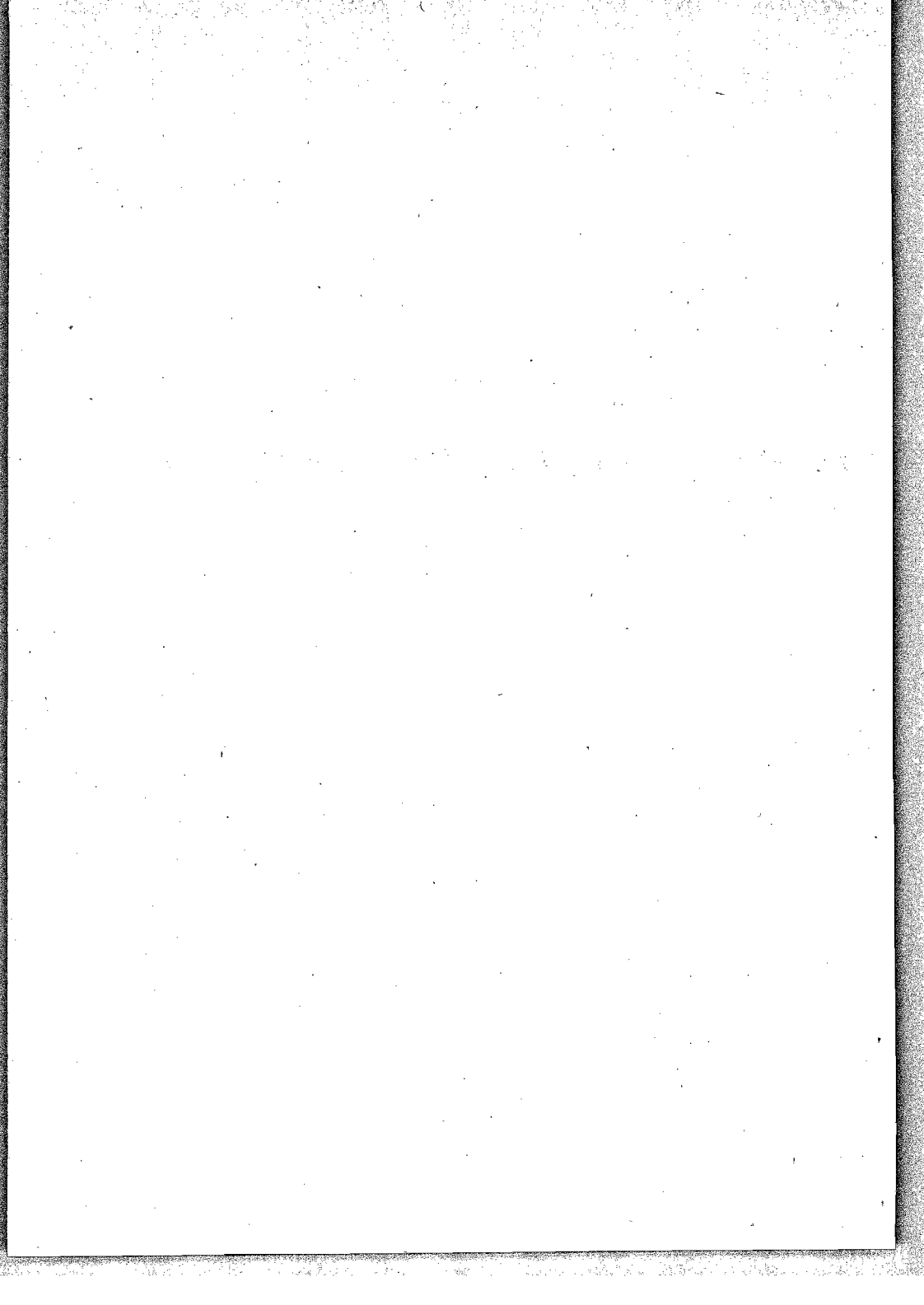
* Obras Completas de S. Ignacio, BAC 86-2, p. 772..

** Ibidem, p. 687

***Ibidem, p. 625

IV

PROFILE OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY



IV

Our task now is to bring together the fundamental points of Rome and Providence on the basis of the desires, the recommendations, the contributions and the expectations which were expressed there.

The CLC's have a history of more than 400 years and belong to the Church of today whose fundamental task - according to the directives of the Holy Father and the Bishops - is to further and to deepen the implementation of Vatican II.

For this reason we must look closely at the road leading to the World Community of the CLC's and the charism that inspires them as it has been lived out down through the centuries - bearing in mind too, the orientations of the Council.

In line with the ground covered in the preceding chapter, the most characteristic and the richest aspect of the World Community is to be found in the creative aspirations which inspired this step. There is where we find the special grace of the Rome-Providence movement. In highlighting these main factors which were at work, we will be able to trace an approximate profile of the World Community.

A GREATER SENSE OF MISSION

The fundamental impulse which moves the CLC's towards the World Community is the desire to respond with greater generosity and unconditionally to the call of Christ to participate in the mission He receives from the Father.

The Council emphasises the universal and truly catholic nature of this call: "All men are called to belong to the new People of God" (L.G. 13). The whole Church furthers the mission of the Son, sent by the Father (L.G. 3). The apostolate of the laity is "a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord Himself."

Moreover, by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist, that love of God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished" (L.G. 33).

This teaching on the call to the apostolate - in other words, for lay people from within the mission of the Church to unite themselves with the mission of Christ or His being sent, since "apostolate" means the same as "mission" or "being sent" - is summed up in the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People in a concise and telling sentence: "... the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well" (A.A. 2). A little further on, on the subject of the duty and rights of the laity with regard to the apostolate, the same Decree says - "... it is by the Lord Himself that they are assigned to the apostolate" (A.A. 3).

The mission of the Church is one: "In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but unity of mission" (A.A.2). "Ministry" is a term we can translate by "service". There are different kinds of services: the service of the members of the hierarchy is one kind and the service of the laity is another. The service of the hierarchy is directed to helping the People of God. The service of lay people - through participating in the priestly, prophetic and royal ministry of Christ - embraces the field of evangelising and sanctifying peoples (A.A. 5,6), the Christian renewal of the temporal order (A.A. 5,7), and numberless initiatives of compassionate love on behalf of the poorest, the sick and those in need (A.A.8). The fields in which the laity can exercise their service in mission (= their apostolate) are both in the Church and in the world; and in either case, very different perspectives open up: "Church communities, the family, the young, the social environment, national and international spheres" (A.A. 9).

A member of the CLC's, on hearing these words of the Council, feels that they evoke other words, equally pressing: "... Christ Our Lord, the Eternal King, before whom is assembled the whole world. To all His summons goes forth, and to each one in particular He addresses the words - 'It is my will to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus enter into the glory of my Father'. (Sp. Ex. 95).

In having the experience of the Exercises, such a

person has heard this universal call and committed himself or herself to follow Christ, their Lord, through sharing with Him in the mission He has received from the Father ("... *join me* ..."*labour with me*"...).

This spiritual experience, intensely lived in the course of these last years by members of the CLC's, thanks to the renewal of the Exercises, is the ultimate reason for the deepened sense of mission and the greater disponibility to assume more universal and more urgent services.

In what follows, let us examine different aspects of this deeper awareness of the sense of mission. Some points, inevitably, will be repeating what has already been said, or will appear again in the course of this work.

A WORLD VISION

In the contemplation on the Incarnation, the Three Divine Persons "...*look down upon the whole surface of the earth...*" (Sp. Ex. 106).

The transition to a World Community corresponds to this way in which God sees the world. So what is at stake is to acquire and to develop more and more a mentality that is open to all peoples, open to the world. In this way, local or national situations and problems may well be seen in the light of events and needs which concern the whole world. And, inversely, the world vision may well not lose sight of but become vitally interested in concrete situations, which is where we live our daily lives and which is where empty and grandiose dreams are soon deflated.

Under various forms, Rome '79 expressed the hope of seeing this universal vision grow (Expectations : Philip-pines, 4 etc.) and suggested a number of ways for developing this - the Spiritual Exercises, with an emphasis on this aspect (Means: E 4/2); avoiding becoming too introspective and self-centred in the concern to build one world (Means : E 5/5); "*sensitize our members.... to an*

awareness of the interdependence among countries" (Means : F 2/2); "more meetings on the world level..." (Means: E 3/5) and more information (Means: E 3/12).

Providence worked along the same lines. The conference of Sister Janet Richardson, from the perspective of the United Nations, helped bring alive this spirit of a world vision and highlighted some particularly critical areas.

Among the Recommendations coming from the different regions, there is an insistence, with regard to this world vision, on the necessity of being "... 'contemplatives in action' ... in community... for service" (Recommendations: Asia and Oceania; Progressio, January-March 1983, p. 68). The group of the delegates from Europe states "the awareness of the call to the mission for one world should become the inspiring force for all concrete services" (Ibidem, p. 71). Japan asks for a realistic approach through insisting that the World Community "...not only work for a world vision of our mission... but offer us concrete means for changing social structures at the world level... like the abolition of nuclear arms..." (Ibidem, p. 72-73).

In the last Plenary Session of the General Assembly, when the delegates came down to concrete resolutions, the representatives of each region gave prime importance, as far as mission was concerned, to developing this spirit of universality which Ignatius attributes to the Trinity as "They look down on the whole face of the earth".

THE MORE UNIVERSAL GOOD: A GLANCE AT HISTORY

We have already referred to the profoundly Ignatian principle - "the more universal is the more divine". This is one of the criteria which help us discern what service to render within the Church, in the face of the many options which present themselves.

Following in the footsteps of the Marian Congregations, the CLC's have no specific field of work. Their

task is absolutely universal and open to the whole world, without any limitations, as they aim "...to form men and women, adults and youth, for service to the Church and world in every area of life" (G.P. 3; the underlining is ours). As it is a movement of lay people, we note the words "... we must consecrate ourselves first of all to the renewal and sanctification of the temporal order" (G.P. 7). Nevertheless, this preference can in no way take away from the golden rule - "Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily living" (G.P.4).

There is an obvious parallel with the conciliar decree which opens up to the laity every field of the apostolate. When the Council refers to the organised apostolate, distinguishing it from the individual apostolate, which should never be abandoned and which is irreplaceable (A.A. 16,17) - it states the great variety of forms this can take, according to the particular end in view:

"Some look to the general apostolic end of the Church; others aim specifically at evangelisation and sanctification; others work for the permeation of the temporal order by the Christian spirit; and others engage in works of mercy and of charity as their special way of bearing witness to Christ" (A.A.19).

The CLC's belong to the first group and look to the general apostolic end of the Church through fostering and developing "... a more intimate unity between the faith of the members and their everyday life" (A.A.19; cf. G.P. 3).

A quick look at the history of the Marian Congregations and at the services which the CLC's render and desire to render illustrate for us this concerted desire to undertake service directed to the more universal good.

In the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, the members of the Congregations worked vigorously for the propagation of the faith in the pagan regions recently discovered. So we find them in Mexico (1574), in Constantinople (1609), in Lima (1571), in Quebec (1657), at Goa and in other parts of India as well as in the empire of China, where they were introduced by Mateo Ricci, who belonged to a Marian Congregation before entering the Society of Jesus. We also find

the Congregations in the Congo and in other places of Africa. Congregations which were made up of local peoples were a great help in spreading the faith and they facilitated and multiplied the work of the missionaries.

In the Catholic countries, the Congregations looked to a more universal good in forming leaders, as well in the Church as in civil society. A great number of priestly vocations came from them, and these priests helped very much in raising the cultural and spiritual level of the people around them. The congregations also had lay members coming from the most diverse social classes and milieux: nobility, magistrates, soldiers, merchants, craftsmen, servants, beggars, lepers, people in jail and slaves. Each Congregation, to the extent of its possibilities, exercised an extensive and profound influence in the works of the apostolate of evangelisation, of mercy and of transforming the social scene.

All this was supported by an excellent formation through means of the Spiritual Exercises, Academies of different kinds and religious publications. This formation heavily emphasised the importance of a professional conscience-called "*the duty of one's state in life*" - which corresponds to what the Council designates as the "*Temporal Order*": the family, culture, economic interests, the arts, professions, politics, international relations (A.A. 7).

The works of mercy were also a special field for the Marian Congregations. Among their works in this area should be mentioned the creation of centres of teaching, the reconciliation of enemies, visits to prisons, help to the poor, caring for the sick and plague-ridden, which on more than one occasion cost them their lives (at Lyons and Avignon in 1577).

The Congregations took an active part in the defense of the faith against the stance of the Reformers. They made a considerable contribution in apologetics by means of pamphlets, debates and conversions. In this way they succeeded in keeping numerous hesitant Catholics within the fold and helped others return who had wandered away. Given the style of religious struggles of those times, which was hardly ecumenical, many members of the Congregations, like St. John Ogilvie S.J., sealed their faith with martyrdom.

Finally, though this may shock our present-day mentality, the Congregations played a very important role in the defense of Christianity against the Turkish invasions. Sobieski and other famous generals, like the majority of the soldiers who repulsed the Turks from the walls of Vienna on September 12th, 1683, were members of the Marian Congregations.

In other words, the Marian Congregations played a very important role in the implementation of the Council of Trent. Without them, the Society of Jesus would not have been able to accomplish what it did in the evangelisation of pagan lands, in the renewal of Christian life in Catholic countries and in the defense of the faith against the ideas of the Reformers. (All these historical facts are taken from Emile Villaret S.J. "Congrégations de la Sainte Vierge", in Dictionnaire de Spiritualité II, columns 1479 - 1491 and in E. Jombart "Mariales" (Congrégations) in Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique, (1954, columns 803 - 811).

AN ALL EMBRACING OPTION: VATICAN COUNCIL II

History teaches us to read, understand and correct the present and the future. Faithful to the golden rule which is to live in a constant attitude of prayer and discernment, to be open, "...to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily existence" (G.P.4), the decision of Providence shows a profound desire to seek the more universal good. The numerous desires formulated there are all contained in one aspiration - to live Vatican Council II, as the Marian Congregations in former times directed all their efforts towards implementing the Council of Trent. Times have changed and, in the same fidelity to the Gospel, the spirit of the two Councils is very different. This is how the Church thinks, and likewise the World Community of the CLC's which wants to assimilate this new spirit and infuse it into its mission of today and tomorrow.

In the perspective of the more universal good, what are the apostolic choices the World Community feels it should take up, to be fully alive and to help the Church in the pursuit of the implementation of the Council?

It is not easy to reply to this question. But it is possible, through availing oneself of the contributions from Rome and Providence, to propose some ideas indicating certain lines which seem to be fundamental ones.

CONSEQUENCES OF AUGSBURG'73 AND MANILA'76

Rome and Providence insisted on a number of occasions on the need to maintain the fundamental options of Augsburg and Manila. In other words, "*The Liberation of the whole Man and of all Men*" (Augsburg) and "*Poor with Christ for a Better Service : The Vocation of the CLC in the Mission of the Church*" (Manila), are objectives which remain.

That will surprise no one who keeps their eyes open to the reality of man today who stands so much in need of the liberty and the poverty which are 'the livery of Christ' (Lk 4/18-19). So it is a question of following the orientations of Vatican II, not only in Gaudium et Spes, but of the whole Council.

From different angles, the Council encourages the struggle against all kinds of slavery through liberating people, and the work against growing injustices of different sorts which subject people to misery and do not respect human dignity and fundamental human rights. Equally it calls us to combat totalitarian oppression and the lack of regard for religious freedom. The Council denounces the slavery of consumerism in the developed countries and the oppression of others this leads to.

The orientations given by John Paul II confirm this option. It should be sufficient to mention his main encyclicals - "*Redemptor Hominis*", "*Dives in Misericordia*" and "*Laborem Exercens*".

A series of recommendations along these lines was proposed in the Assemblies of Rome and Providence:

- Cooperation with the International Bodies of the Church (for example, the "*Justice and Peace Commission*").

- Participation in the meetings of Catholic Organisations at the world level
- Study of the documents of the Church concerning structural and social changes, together with social analysis and the evaluation of different ideologies
- Collaboration with other Organisations, such as the United Nations, the North-South dialogue, Amnesty International, Movements for Disarmament and Peace
- Insertion in marginalised areas, to learn, to give witness and to offer there a better service
- Theological and ethical reflection on the problems of oppression in all its forms, and of injustice : the work for justice - which is the fruit of an authentic conversion - should frequently be the object of reflection and questioning in the light of faith
- Awaken among lay people the sense of collaboration within the Church in the works of evangelisation and promotion of justice
- A very solid formation of youth for the apostolate: community life, the Scriptures, Eucharist, discernment with a view to mission, a missionary spirit, community experience of service, conviction that *"the CLC vocation carries with it, implicitly, the demand of serving the poorest"*.

These orientations, and many, many others which we cannot detail here, reveal the strong impulse which animate the CLC's to work - as Christ announced in His carefully chosen words in the synagogue at Nazareth - to bring the Good News to the poor and freedom to prisoners (Lk 4/18-19).

«CHOSEN TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD» (ROMS. 1/1)

In carefully comparing Rome '79 and Providence '82, one gets the distinct impression that, in three years, the aspirations, which so often are expressed in concrete actions, for a more open and courageous participation in the work of evangelisation have come to fruition.

This tendency appears in the information given by the delegates on their activities over the previous three years, in the work done in the groups, and especially in the work-shop on Mission and Service. Unfortunately, the report that the delegates received on this work-shop did not bring out this point sufficiently. But this is present, and very much present, in the written papers - which I actually have on my desk - in which the thirty or more members of this work-shop expressed their preoccupation with regard to the apostolic mission of the World Community.

There is no question of minimising the work for justice, for the poor and for freedom in all its fullness. Quite the contrary - and this is clear in the papers I have just mentioned - it is a question of intensifying this work.

Enormous efforts, in the course of the last two decades, for the more effective promotion of justice and liberation have not borne fruit; sometimes they have degenerated into very narrow ideologies because they were not properly rooted in the Gospel. This has been of no service at all to the poor, neither in changing oppressive structures, nor to the Gospel.

One Federation from a rich country declares that its members interpret the CLC mission as a work for justice and that each local community commits itself to dedicate itself, as a community, to some kind of work for social change.

I cite this case because it expresses well the problem. The insistence on justice and dedicating oneself to some kind of social work are wonderful and necessary enterprises. When this is done out of love and in union with Christ, the enterprise acquires a transcendent value and furnishes a witness that has the power to evangelise.

But that is not enough. In this particular country - and in the vast majority of the western countries - many Catholics have given up the practice of their faith or have simply lost the faith. Many others are indifferent. An explicit work of evangelisation is required.

But it is a curious thing: in the traditionally "mission" countries, the CLC's do not have this problem of a

lack of explicit evangelisation. Very simply, they do this, they live it and they practise it. This problem is typical of the countries more affected by secularism and unbelief.

Here we give some of the propositions made at Providence.

- "Study the Bible. Make it known. Live it. Prayer integrated with life.... It is important for us to be involved with faith and conviction, in activities that combat injustice" (Malta).
- "We should form lay people who feel called to give spiritual direction and perform other ministries which are not directly linked with the sacrament of orders" (Japan).
- "Form members in a greater awareness of the need to develop the faith and the promotion of justice" (Austria).
- "It is necessary to awaken lay people to the role they should play in the Church; they have to participate with priests in evangelisation and the promotion of justice. The integration of these two dimensions commences in Christian countries by means of a solid instruction of children in the Christian faith..." (French-speaking group).
- "We must be conscious of our own lack of justice before God and others, to be able to fight against injustice, without becoming proud, judgmental and resentful; rather, we should combat injustice with the power of the Good News" (Chile).
- "What is called for is an evangelisation which expresses itself in love and in the assistance offered to the sick and to prisoners - which also expresses itself in the handing-on of the faith to the people we work with" (Indonesia).
- "All the groups are concerned to make a contribution in some line of the apostolate... : catechesis, Scripture circles, unions, politics, delinquents, family movements, barrios, social services" (Brasil).
- "We should work with people and not for people" (Austria).
- For an effective evangelisation, the lay people should be present in the different milieux where life goes on.
- "A direct evangelisation is important".

These texts, which express both realisation and aspiration, show us how the CLC's are now concerned to be caught up in a more vital and more comprehensive work of evangelisation. In recognising the fundamental importance of a living witness, they discover the necessity, born of love, of bringing to others an explicit proclamation of the Lord Jesus. We can see that this is the path which leads to a life-giving commitment, shared in community, and which inspires those who have known the Lord to be converted into messengers of the Good News that has transformed their lives. This seems to be the point of the proposition, "To work with people and not for people".

Moreover, this conversion corresponds to the orientations for lay people given by the Council : "*...the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate...*" (A.A. 2). It also corresponds to the message of Evangelii Nuntiandi (Paul VI), to the directives of the Latin American Bishops at Puebla and to numerous discourses of John Paul II.

So in this way, at its very birth, the World Community of the CLC's shows itself truly within the glorious evangelising tradition of the Marian Congregations in all the continents.

But in all this there is something even more profound. Only an evangelisation that is explicit, courageous, and extensive is capable of effecting more liberty and justice in the world. A struggle for justice and human rights is doomed to failure unless there is an explicit call to conversion; unless people stop relying on themselves and their own resources; unless people turn to Christ, to follow Him and to welcome the message of the Kingdom.

Man without grace can do nothing. In the present divine plan of salvation, grace is bound up with witness and the preaching of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Within a social structure like the Church, all of us owe to one another this proclamation of the Lord. Once, through welcoming the Word, the Lord has entered into our lives, we cannot but pass on this gift through catechesis, the sacraments, and through our community life in the Church.

Man is not placed in a world, like in a scenario that

carries on regardless of him. The human person forms a continuous whole with his or her world. Moreover, the conversion of man leads to the 'cleansing' and rectifying of oppressive and unjust structures.

Vatican II insists repeatedly on the very close connection between man and social order and temporal structures. It is crucial to set in order according to the Gospel of Christ whatever dehumanises and is deformed and corrupt (Gaudium et Spes 29, 30, 37, 42, 43; A.A. 7 etc.).

John Paul II, in the encyclical Laborem Exercens, goes one step further. He affirms not only the necessity of proclaiming "the Gospel of work" (L.E., 25, 26), but also the absolute necessity of developing a spirituality of work. And this is necessary, not just so that people may understand the problem of progress and development, but rather that they may come to grips with such a spirituality and put it into practice (L.E. 26).

The way for the CLC's to grow in the characteristic identity of their charism is to be a World Community with a decided orientation to evangelisation. In this way, too, they will be responding to the greatest need of our time - energetically to proclaim Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the sole force which can knock down the wall of indifference which imprisons the secular minds of our time; in their egoism, these bring about so much injustice and servitude.

The members of the CLC's are called today to cultivate with special care the virtue of parresia - a Pauline virtue which means "to speak freely and courageously" (Col. 4/3; Eph. 6/19); in other words, to proclaim with joy the Gospel of Jesus in the midst of difficulties, even before the world and important people who reject it (Acts 9/27-29).

The primacy of evangelisation brings us back to the apostolic dynamism of the Marian Congregations in their early days, and to the wisdom of St. Ignatius. Those just entering the novitiate were asked to spend some time in proclaiming Christ and His message. And priests taking

their final vows had to take a special vow to teach Christian doctrine to children and to those who do not know it. Behind these rules lies partly hidden the impassioned love of Ignatius that Christ may be better known, loved and served (Sp. Ex. 104). But there is also the underlying suggestion that the person who benefits most from evangelising is the person who does it.

The General Principles declare that we must be "... witnesses to Christ before men (by our words and actions)" and that "... We must consecrate ourselves first of all to the renewal and sanctification of the temporal order" (G.P. 7). The Spirit of Christ seems to demand of us today that we emphasise the explicit proclamation of the Gospel with the parresia of St. Paul. In this way we will contribute more effectively, without oversimplifying and without any ambiguity, to human liberation and development, which according to the teaching of Paul VI, makes Christians true "liberators" and genuinely committed people (Eváng. Nunt. 30, 31, 32, 38).

We will also be responding to the call of our General Principles "...to work for the reform of the structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination, and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor..." (G.P. 7).

The Exercises have taught us to contemplate the constancy and the power with which Jesus taught in every circumstance, even the most adverse, the Good News of the Kingdom. That brought Him incomprehension, persecution and the Cross.

If we do not claim to be above our Master, the same thing will happen to us: criticism, ridicule, persecution. In these we should glory (1 Cor. 1/31). Is this to deform the lay vocation of a member of the CLC's? We do not think so. No Christian is less a lay person because he or she speaks enthusiastically of Jesus.

It could happen that certain individuals experience 'this way of proceeding' as a call from God to give themselves more exclusively to the service of the Kingdom and from this is born a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life. If that happens - as has happened and hap-

pens down through the centuries - the CLC's have one more reason for rejoicing and thanking the Lord. Perhaps these people will be their future assistants one day!

STRENGTHENING THE BOND OF COMMUNION

1. FRIENDSHIP - COMMUNION - SHARING

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The words "community", "communion" correspond, in New Testament Greek, to the word koinonia. The Greek word is used commonly enough in the language of CLC spirituality so it would seem to us useful to stop a moment to examine its meaning more closely.

Koinonia is a word that is rich in nuances. The fundamental meaning is the close bond, the interior relationship between persons. It is the union of lives that come together for a common end. It implies fraternity, community, friendship.

This bond of friendship carries with it a sharing, a pooling of people's lives, gifts and goods. The sharing is the sign and the manifestation of a fraternal way of living, of generosity and self-forgetfulness. It is just the opposite of egoism.

This sharing can take the form of different or many people collaborating in a common enterprise. St. Paul, for example, gives thanks to God and prays with joy for the Christians of Philippi because of their collaboration (koinonia) with the Gospel (Phil. 1/5). (Cf. W. Bauer, Worterbuch zum N.T.; Berlin 1963, col. 867-869).

To take a decision in favour of a World Community is to opt for a closer and more intimate community bond; for greater union, fraternity and love between the members; for communication. It means a concern for a greater solidarity; a concern that each member, each group, each National Community share with and communicate to others what each one is and possesses. It is communicating in greater

joy and generosity. It is a concern for a closer collaboration in the mission of Christ to serve the Gospel. All that is koinonia.

As we have seen, these aspirations for a more united, closely-linked and fraternal community manifested themselves at Rome '79. And it is clear what people desire to share: the family spirit, the joy of brotherhood in Christ, the hidden riches of others, the needs of others, discernment - enriched by contributions from everyone - to live our mission more effectively; and also an exchange of personnel, formation programs and financial assistance. (Cf. above pp. 24-26).

To these points, Providence added some others which it is good to remember. For one English-speaking group from Africa, the essence of World Community was, is and will be friendship. Chicco Botta S.J. considers that the World Community means that, in practice, we have a family wherever we may go. He said he would be personally delighted to receive at the CLC centre in Rome all the members who might be passing through there, "but not the friends of a friend of a friend of a CLC member....!"

2. EXCHANGING INFORMATION

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Union and friendship demand contact and mutual knowledge and develop by means of these. An impressive number of expectations and proposals underline the necessity of increasing the channels of communication within the World Community.

One proposal suggested a wider distribution of Progressio and that National Communities send to one another their publications. The desire was strongly expressed for a wider diffusion of the experiences of groups and their apostolic works by means of short articles, written in a simple and yet engaging style. People should remember to send to the Executive Council information each year on the life and activities of each country. The national CLC News letter might include reports from other places. The suggestion was made of setting-up a "flying team" to move through different countries, giving information about what was going on in the World Community. It was considered that these

and other personal contacts - especially with members of the Executive Council - are irreplaceable and foster apostolic koinonia. Some showed a certain disquiet that some themes were not treated with due openness and freedom; it was their desire that, as among brothers and sisters, we should enjoy the freedom of saying things just as they are, bearing in mind the Presupposition of the Exercises (Sp. Ex. 22).

Finally, some delegates, being very practical, remarked how helpful it would be if posters and cassettes with texts and other audio-visual aids were available, which would give the opportunity for everyone to get to know themselves as CLC, and enrich their CLC meetings.

3. EXCHANGING RESOURCES

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Providence revealed a number of impressive achievements in the line of sharing. The CLC members of Zaire live an experience of sharing resources in common which recalls the early Christian communities (Acts, 2/44; 4/32). Something similar happens in Sri Lanka. The very fact that delegates from so many countries could come together at Providence was due to the spirit of solidarity which helped finance the expenses of travel and board and lodging of those who were not able to afford these.

As far as exchanging personnel is concerned, quite a lot has gone on with regard to formation people, directors of the Exercises and basic CLC resource people. Their participation in formation sessions, in meetings and simply living with CLC members of other countries has helped the cohesion and the renewal of the movement. And though this is only in passing, we must mention one of the delegates, John Sullivan who, with his wife Cris, has been working for several years in Zambia at the service of the Church and the CLC's. There are other cases like this.

4. THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

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The bond of community is nourished by a common source: living in Christ and the desire to respond to His commandment of unity in love, as He and the Father are one (Jn. 17/21). Communion transforms itself into mission and service of the world: "...so that the world may believe" (Jn.

17/23). This communion grows through an "intimate understanding and relish" (Sp. Ex. 2) of the word that Christ gives us: "I gave them your message" (Jn. 17/14); it also grows through all members, spread throughout the world, participating in the same Eucharist.

The Spiritual Exercises, whether as a retreat experience or as a spiritual pedagogy, are a special way of always living more intensely this communion in Christ. In this regard, it was recommended with some insistence - "We must still promote the Spiritual Exercises" (Rome '79, Means, E 5/ 7), and that persons be formed - CLC lay people, priests, religious - who are properly qualified (Providence: Recommendations from English and French-speaking Africa, China, Australia etc.). On this point there is a total consensus in all the countries.

The Exercises have found again the place they enjoyed in the former Marian Congregations of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries. It would be a very interesting work to give the historical basis for this statement, but that goes beyond the scope of these pages. Hence I am content to quote the judgment of the foremost specialist in the history of the Exercises, Father Ignatius Iparraguirre: "In this city (Cologne), as in many other places, the Congregations helped with the Exercises and the Exercises contributed to the success of the Congregations" (Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio, Rome 1955, vol. II, p. 180, n. 99).

At Providence, some delegates presented propositions somewhat strict and rigid concerning the duration, the frequency and the content of retreats for CLC members. This could end up being harmful. To counteract this tendency to be too legalistic, it would be a very good idea to read these two volumes of Fr. Iparraguirre, or at least the pages under the heading in the index - "Adaptation".

5. SERIOUS FORMATION

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The World Community constitutes an appeal and a challenge to give special attention to the formation of its members. The Exercises inspire "the magis (more)", a "better service". The World Community has understood this better service as a more intense dimension of evangelisation in line with Vatican II. It sees as its special mission announcing the faith to the indifferent, bringing back to the Church those who are separated or resentful, the strug

gle for justice, changing the mentality and structures of the consumer society, ecumenism, inculturation, striving to create better conditions for a society founded on religious and civil liberty, on justice, mercy and love.

All this, as is evident, requires a serious formation, both on the theoretical and practical level. It is not as though all the members of the World Community possess the talents required for these tasks: however, it is necessary that the World Community count on many of its members who are well formed - each one according to his or her talents - who can collaborate in this vast apostolic work.

This does not presuppose a western-style academic formation. We know, from the experience of Providence, how extremely capable and effective in passing on the truth is the 'unclouded' language, simple and direct, of people from other cultures - like Africa, for example.

Rome and Providence recall the necessity for a formation that is demanding, integrated and integrating. The Council states with regard to the apostolate of the laity - *"A training, at once many-sided and complete, is indispensable if the apostolate is to attain full efficacy"* (A.A. 28). This formation must be *"lay"*, that is to say, firmly rooted both in faith in Christ and in the world; both fully human and fully Christian. It is expected of the lay person that he or she be well acquainted with the world and its problems and *"...a member well integrated into his own society and its culture"* (A.A. 29). According to particular conditions and talents, the Council calls for a solid spiritual formation, which is fundamental, together with a doctrinal, theological, moral and philosophical preparation. It recalls the necessity for a permanent formation - *"Inasmuch as the human person is continually developing and new problems are forever arising"* (A.A. 29). It further demands that the formation be not only academic, but be accompanied by experience and action, which themselves can be evaluated and reflected on, with other persons (A.A. 29).

The World Community of the CLC's recognises itself in these orientations of the Council - there it sees itself identified, challenged and filled with hope. It recognises itself, inasmuch as these orientations reflect the historical practice of the former Marian Congregations and the ideals

of formation which have inspired and continue to inspire it. (G.P.3,4,5,7,11). It is challenged, inasmuch as it recognises that the majority of its members, though having grown considerably in the area of spiritual formation according to the Exercises, are still far from having that practical and doctrinal formation necessary to confront the challenges of our time. These orientations inspire hope because of the different initiatives successfully accomplished in a number of countries - for example, the common experience in Lebanon of courses in Sacred Scripture and Social Doctrine. To this must be added the fact that a large majority of CLC groups are young and enthusiastic.

6. YOUTH

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One of the five work-shops at Providence was given to Youth. We have already mentioned that these are a majority in a number of countries. In other countries it is not so, and there have been some conflicts in the integration between youth and older people.

Given the importance of youth in society, and the number of young people, the youth groups play a central role in the future of the World Community. Young people carry the seed for the future shape of the CLC's.

Two facts at Providence contributed considerably in clarifying how the youth belong to the CLC's and are integrated into them. One was the way the Assembly handled the decision of the Executive Council, in April 1981, to terminate the "Youth Commission", set up at Augsburg, in 1973. The other was the manner in which the Assembly, and the young people present, accepted the vote rejecting the statutory presence - by way of experiment - of two young members on the Executive Council.

These two problems were treated with depth and maturity. They served to show clearly that youth and adults are part of one and the same movement. The spirituality which unites them is a unifying factor; and as it grows deeper, it becomes a "way of life", and apostolic koinonia.

Youth is not a stage in the course of which young people feel without any ties or completely neutral as far as

communion with adults is concerned. The young share their ideals and, through formation, prepare themselves to work side by side with them in the missions the Lord proposes. On the other side, adults do not look on young people as members not properly integrated into the CLC movement.

Providence, happily, has got rid of any idea of two movements following one another, or side by side - one for adults and one for youth. The World Community is like a family where adults and youth live and work together.

In this option there is a desire to strengthen the spiritual and apostolic unity of the movement. But there is also a note of wise, common sense. The stage of youth (18 to 25 years) is an extremely short one and is mainly taken up with an insistence on formation. On the other hand, youth is also the time when numerous movements and grand ideas for the future are nurtured. Young people are usually more audacious and generous in their ideals. These two facts - which are facts of life - must be integrated, not opposed. And Providence succeeded in doing that. There was a deep desire to increase the contribution and the presence of youth - especially in countries where youth are a minority - and, at the same time, to preserve the unity of the movement, through avoiding setting up two movements, one following the other or parallel with it. The proof of all this was the incorporation of two young people into the Executive Council.

7. A CREATIVE TENSION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL (WORLD) AND LOCAL

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One of the strongest reasons advanced against the World Community at Rome '79 was the threat that this constituted for the National Federations. From the first page of the "reasons against" in the White Book, we read: "A World Community could decrease the importance of National Federations or national communities" (E 1/5). Some felt a danger that the World Community may undermine the riches and the characteristics proper to each national or regional community through doing away with them, whereas "diversity is beautiful" (E 2/1). Others saw a danger of domination in the World Community (E 2/12); others again feared that plurality could be reduced to unity (S 3/10). The fear was expressed that the World Community might be a ponderous and im-

personal structure which could accentuate the risk of seeing the CLC's as a Third Order (F 3/4).

These reasons, and other similar ones, appear often at Rome. They reappear at Providence on a number of occasions, but far less often and, especially, in quite a different spirit.

Rather than thinking of the risks and dangers, Providence concentrated on ways of overcoming them and on making recommendations so that the step from Federation to World Community should take place gradually, according to a 'way of proceeding' that would ensure that nothing positive in the areas of diversity and pluralism be lost.

This is the reason why Providence, in promoting the World Community - an apparent paradox - encouraged the National and Regional Communities. This had already been suggested at Rome '79 when delegates proposed "*Means*" (E 2/7, 8; 3/2; F 1/4; 2/1,6); but at Providence these suggestions became resolutions accepted by the Assembly. What three years before were considered by many as an obstacle were taken up by Providence and endorsed as something positive.

The riches that make up the pluralism of races, of languages and of cultures will be a wonderful contribution to the World Community. On the other hand, with the aid of a good pedagogy, there is no need to suppress differences.

Hence the problem centred on how to effect the transition from the federated CLC's to a World Community without this meaning either a lessening or a suppression of the healthy tension between the local and the world reality.

It was asked that priority be given to changing attitudes, fruit of the experience of the Exercises, rather than to changing existing structures.

The process should take place slowly and patiently, in no way abruptly. The point of departure should be the local, national and regional Communities, although this does not mean that the Executive Council should not actively cooperate in helping the process along. There should be a great respect for people and their sensitivities.

This tension between the local and the universal(world) will furnish different cultural expressions for the Ignatian charism of the CLC's, which can only mean a greater richness.

The developed countries hope that the Third World will contribute their human and spiritual riches. As Alex Lefrank S.J. put it - *"I want to say that many of us in Europe wish to have relationships with people from other worlds, so that we may be more human"*. Isidoro Ribas, S.J., from Japan, referring to the countries of Asia, said - *"The World Community of the CLC's has much to learn from the countries of the Third World which, from the point of view of the spirit, are more ancient than the countries of Europe"*.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLC'S AND THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Both at Rome and at Providence, numerous delegations expressed the desire of enjoying a closer and more extensive assistance from members of the Society of Jesus. One delegation expressed its regret that the Society gave no effective help to the CLC's in its country.

At Rome - perhaps somewhat artificially, due to circumstances that it is not the place to go into now - some delegations manifested their concern at the excessive dependence on Jesuits, and at the lack of autonomy of the movement, with its insufficient regard for the lay character. To my knowledge, no one made this complaint at Providence. These positions provide the occasion for reflecting on the relationship between the Society and the CLC's.

I begin with a truth from Perogrullo: The Society and the CLC's are two distinct associations. There is not institutional dependence on either side. The CLC's are groups of lay people; the Society is a priestly, religious order. The CLC's are not a Third Order of the Jesuits.

Once these differences are clearly stated, let us now inquire into the bonds which exist. To do this, we must go back to the origins of the CLC's.

Everyone knows that the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities is the result of a transformation, after the Council and according to its spirit, of the former Marian Congregations, whose foundation goes back to Father Leunis, at the Roman College, in 1563. Shortly after his death, on November 19th, 1584, Pope Gregory XIII established canonically the Congregation of the Roman College and declared it "*the Mother and Head*" of all similar groups deriving from it, and he recognised the right of affiliating other groups of the same nature.

But what many do not know is that Father Leunis was not the originator of the Marian Congregations. Their origin is to be found in the groups of lay people formed by St. Ignatius himself and his first companions in different parts of Europe. Father Leunis was inspired by these groups to create the Congregation of the Roman College.

This historical fact, known for a long time by the experts, has been the object of research by Father Villaret S.J., in his study - "*Les premières origines des Congrégations Mariales dans la Compagnie de Jésus*", Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu (Rome, 1937, pp. 25 - 57). Three doctoral theses have recently been written on this subject, but we do not have access to them. That is why we rely here on the work of Father Villaret.

The question is not only one of erudition but has a direct bearing on our present concern: the relation between the Society and the CLC's. In effect, if the Society had adopted and extended a work created by one of its members, Fr. Leunis, the Congregations would have no guarantee that they were expressing the authentic way Ignatius and his first companions passed on their spirituality and apostolic zeal to lay people. But if Fr. Leunis was authentically inspired by the groups formed by the first generation of Jesuits, the Marian Congregations will be the faithful expression of the Ignatian spirituality and "*way of proceeding*" adapted to lay people.

As we have already said, we know that this is what happened. The historical data is striking. From 1540, the year in which the Society was founded, Blessed Peter Faber had formed a group of lay people, thanks to the Spiritual Exercises, which was called "*Society of the Holy Name of Jesus*" (Villaret, op.cit. p. 42). Others followed Blessed

Peter: Fr. Lainez founded at least two groups (op.cit. pp. 39-40); Fr. Nadal organised several in the south of Italy (op.cit. pp.39-40); Fr. Gaspar Barzée, disciple of St.Fran^cis Xavier, set up a Congregation in India, at Goa (op.cit. p.35). In 1547, St.Ignatius himself created a Congregation of men, under the title of "*The Twelve Apostles*" (cf.Tacchi Venturi, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia*, Rome, 1951, vol. II/2, pp.201 - 203), apart from the other different works he confided jointly to clerics and lay people (cf.Tacchi Venturi, Ibidem, pp. 147 - 209).

This is how the Ignatian seed spread everywhere. These groups had different names though they shared common characteristics: a solid spiritual formation; they made the Exercises and lived according to this spirituality; daily prayer and examination of conscience; frequent confession and communion; meetings once a week or once a fortnight; a very lively devotion to Our Lady. Their apostolic activity was quite extensive. First attention was given to works that opened up the way to conversion, were associated with teaching Christian doctrine and spread the practice of frequent confession and communion.

The works of mercy that were practised were of all kinds: helping the poor, visiting the prisons and hospitals and reconciling enemies.

But there was a special concern to fulfil family, professional and social tasks and responsibilities. In different ways, efforts were made to change the laws in favour of the most needy. It was said of the group in the city of Siena that "*they are leading the whole city to Christ*" (*Totam civitatem et Christum traducunt*), a formula which, with appropriate changes, reflects something of the spirit of Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes*. It was said of the groups of Naples that "*their houses were like those of the early Church*".

A characteristic of these groups is that often they met according to some common bond: similar age, profession, social condition. Thus there were Congregations or groups of craftsmen, notaries, magistrates, nobles, priests etc. (Cf. Villaret, op.cit. pp. 44 - 49).

Without being a Third order or anything like that, these groups worked in close association with the Society:

they collaborated, undertook works together, helped one another, supported one another, replaced one another. They were inspired by the same spirit of St. Ignatius and his companions. One Jesuit wrote in a letter he sent to Rome - *"Whoever sees them cannot but recognise that they are marked by something of our Order"* (Villaret, op.cit. pp. 50-51).

This brief historical resumé explains better than any theoretical argument the relationship between the CLC's and the Society.

The work with well formed lay people, marked by the spirituality of the Exercises, is something which belongs to the Jesuit identity. We find proof of this not only in the Constitutions of the Society when they treat of the criteria for missions (622-623), and in the Thirty-First (1965-66) and Thirty-Second (1974-75) Congregations, but above all in the basic practice of Ignatius and his companions. The CLC's are the present day expression of this work.

It should be normal for Jesuits to accompany groups of lay people in their growth in Christ and in their apostolic influence. This is highly beneficial for the Society since it obliges us to give the best we have received in terms of our spiritual, theological and human formation. Always, he who receives most is he who gives.

As we see in the pages of history, the Society has something in common with the CLC's, not only from the Exercises, but also from its Constitutions and its *"way of proceeding"*. I am not referring to any of those points that make the Society a Religious Order, but to certain general criteria, like: seeking the more universal good, preferential attention to the most needy, primacy - all things being equal - for the more direct and explicit presentation of Christ, strict selection of members, a broad and solid formation, openness to any kind of mission, fidelity to and a strong love for the hierarchical Church. The list could go on with certain nuances. My only point, and one I wish to insist on, is that there are very many things in common between the Jesuits and the CLC's which foster a mutual understanding and an effective apostolate.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AT PROVIDENCE

We said at the beginning that the presence of Our Lady was felt quite forcibly in the Assembly. And this happened not only through exterior signs: the songs, the CLC badges with the monograms of Jesus and Mary, the statue of Our Lady on the altar...

The delegates themselves experienced a very deep devotion to Mary.

At the end of the Assembly, different propositions were put forward to deepen and to spread more widely love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, along the lines of the Exercises and the Vatican Council.

There is always a place for the emphases and personal touches and the characteristics which mark devotion to Mary in different cultures.

Nevertheless, we dare to suggest that, in the spirituality of the CLC's, devotion to Our Lady will always be marked by the characteristics we associate with her - total disponibility to the call of God and to fulfil with Christ, in the Church of today, the mission to which He sends us.

"A deeper living in union with Our Lady will actuate a better service in our mission to build the Kingdom with Christ. In Mary, poor and docile to the Spirit, are incarnated harmoniously and efficiently the values we want to announce to the world: fidelity to the Father, dedication to Christ and His cause, family life, the dignity of work, quietness and simplicity of life style, love and dedication to the Church.

This will enable the CLC's to be spread in poorer sectors in many regions; we affirm this specially for Latin America.

At the same time, this will help some Communities, especially those coming from Marian Congregations, to feel themselves more identified with the World Community, increasing our unity and apostolic strength".

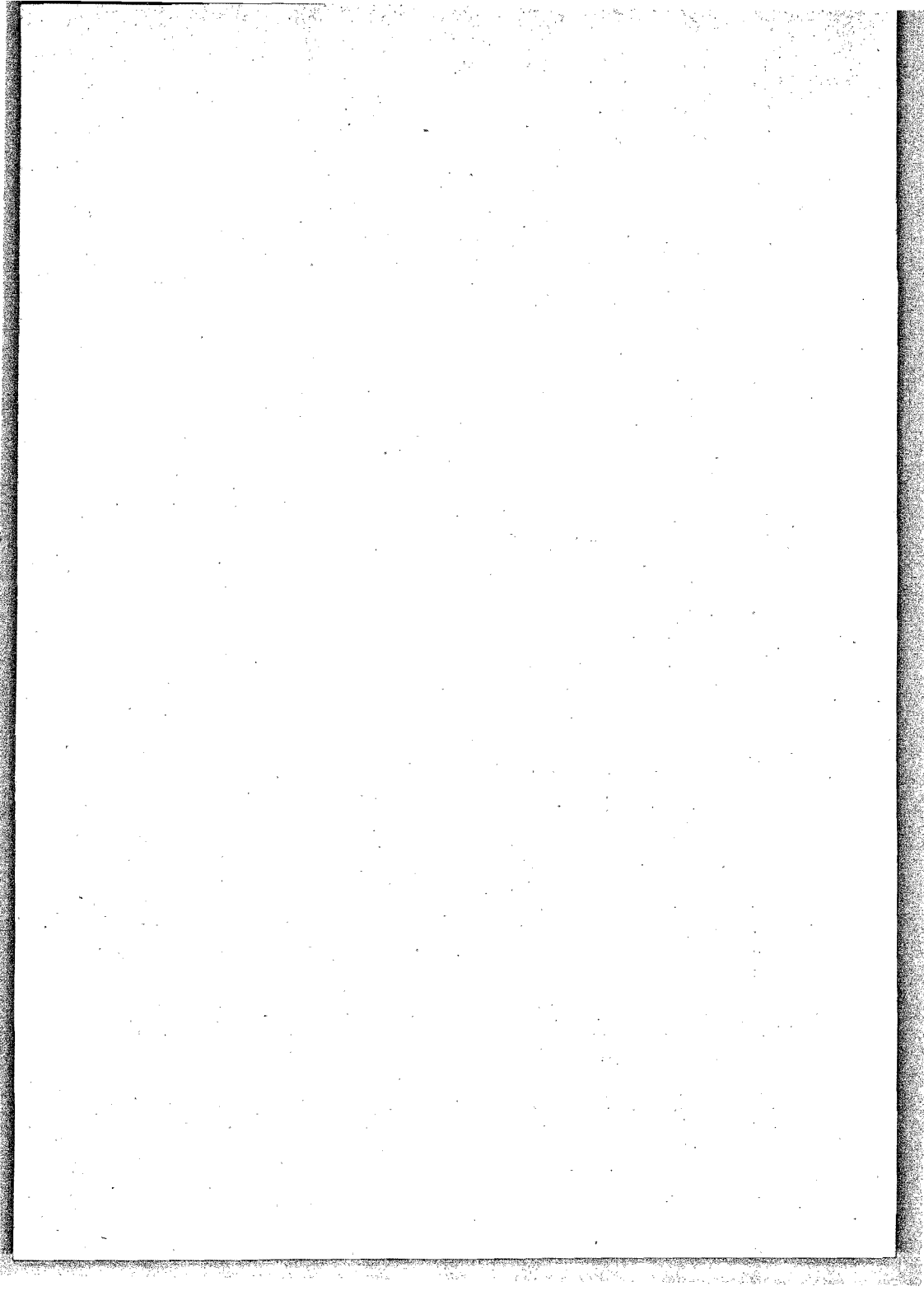
We believe that this text, part of a presentation made by the Latin American region, reflects very well the feeling of the majority of the Assembly. For the reasons given here, the CLC's want to deepen and to make more alive and explicit the role of Mary. People are aware that there is still distance to cover, but they are moving in the right direction.

Perhaps a symbol expresses better than words what goes on. On the day of departure from Providence, many delegations gave one another a souvenir. The most common one given was a picture or a medal of Our Lady. The CLC's do not have a common image of Mary. Each group gave its own symbol of Mary : Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Apparition, Madonna della Strada, Maria Pötsch of Vienna. This shows something very typical of the CLC spirituality and is a most promising sign for the future development of the World Community : the capacity to bring out the essential which is common to all, together with the manifold expressions which flow from its inculturation among the different peoples of the world.

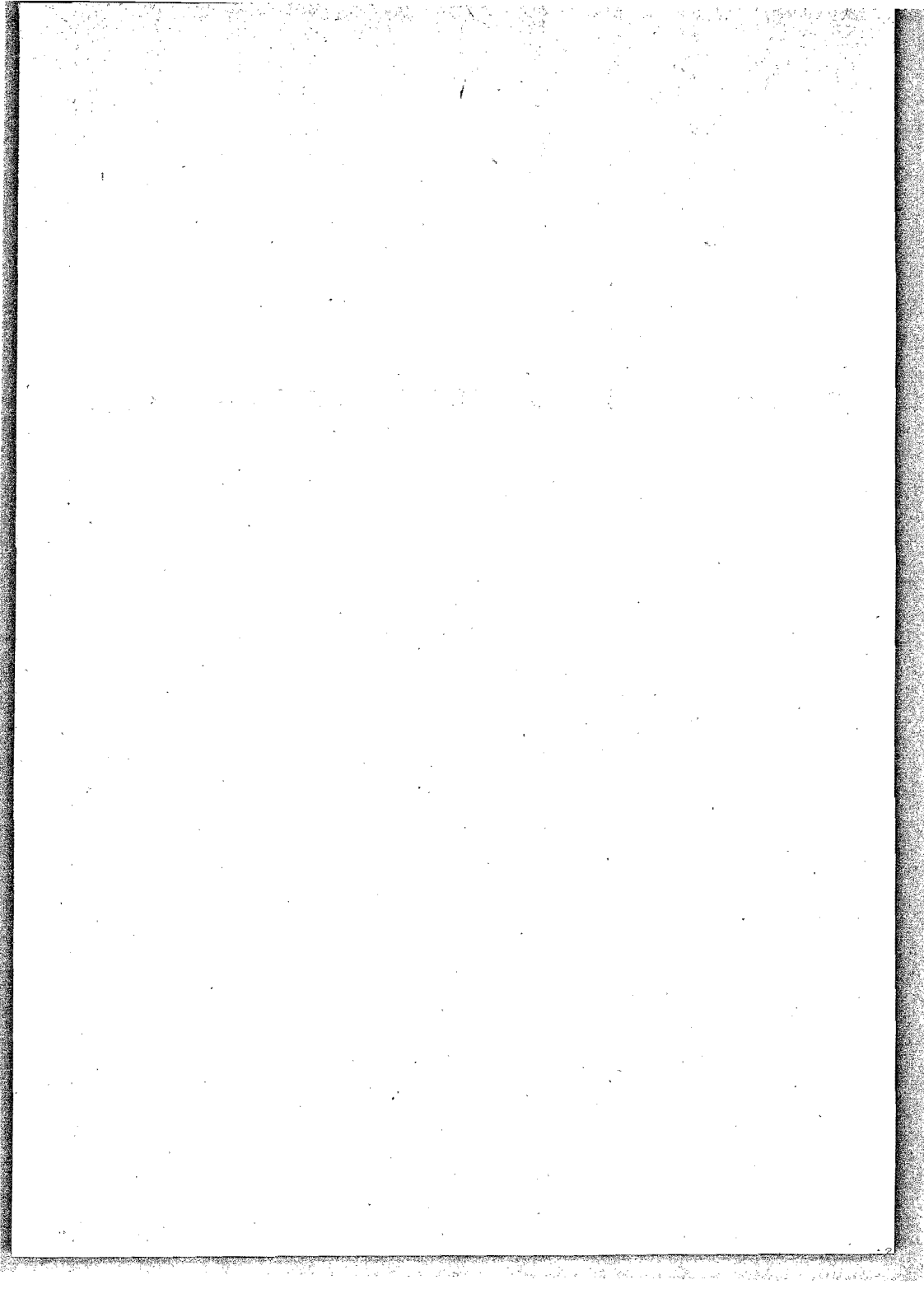
CONCLUSION

I do not want to go on and on; I would only like to underline some points:

- 1) The profile of the World Community that we have endeavored to draw, traces out the fundamental features of a spirituality and style of life which the Lord, who inspires us with good desires and brings them to their completion, wants to be lived out with an ever growing fullness.
- 2) It is probable that the World Community, through its greater concern for an apostolic koinonia, may call for a greater unity to assume the missions that God, through the Church, seek to confide to it.
- 3) While respecting regional and local endowments, this will demand of all a greater disponibility - within the context of a lay vocation and its primary responsibilities - to accept invitations to different missions in the service of the Church. I think, for example, of the immense potential in the World Community of the CLC's that could be tapped through taking up as a special mission to collaborate, in union with the Bishops and other groups in the Church, in the implementation of the Papal encyclical Laborem Exercens.
- 4) This would require a more directive role on the part of the Executive Council, always in dialogue, of course, not only in regard to formation and the internal life of the World Community, but especially with regard to missions: to point out areas, arouse interest, set up contacts and coordinate the resources of the CLC's in different countries with other apostolic lay movements. This uniting of apostolic lay groups could become an extremely effective instrument for action through putting into practice so many things which run the risk of remaining simply on paper.
- 5) I think that the insistence on mission will act as a catalyst to strengthen the spirit of the CLC's and to attract new members.
- 6) In all this the CLC's go hand in hand with Christ and with Mary in the Church - *"Behold, I am with you always"* (Mt. 28/20).



DOCUMENTATION FROM THE HOLY SEE



Vatican, 19 August 1982

Mr. President,

I have the pleasure to address myself to you and to all those participating in the work of the General Assembly of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities - gathered at Warwick, Rhode Island (USA) from August 25 to September 7 - to wish you a fruitful meeting of reflection and prayer from which may flow initiatives directed to an always coherent and renewed participation of your association in the life and mission of the Church. I express the hope that "Providence '82" will be a firm and solid stage in the long tradition of the Federation.

I have no doubt that all your Communities, represented in the General Assembly, feel themselves a part of this rich tradition, which has contributed so much to the Catholic Church thanks to the fruitfulness of an apostolic life in common, to the promotion of a laity aware of its own vocation and responsibility as Christians, to the spiritual formation marked by a warm devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and by Ignatian discernment. It would take too long here to refer to the many documents and declarations with which - since the time of its foundation - successive Pontiffs of modern times have blessed and encouraged the development of the former "Marian Congregations".

This tradition demands, however, a fruitfulness that may be proportionate to the Church's present knowledge of her own reality and her own mission in the contemporary world. Its renewal, then, should be in line with the primary objective of the Church in our time: the implementation of the Vatican Council II. The "full and integral realisation"

of the Council is the fundamental orientation indicated by His Holiness John Paul II already in the first great allocation of his pontificate. Twenty years after the inauguration of Vatican II, your General Assembly seems a rare occasion for bringing together all the potential riches of the constitution Lumen Gentium - in conjunction with Gaudium et Spes, with the decrees Apostolicam Actuositatem and Ad Gentes... as interpreted by the Synods - with which to vitalise your association. This seems the indispensable frame of reference for renewing the "sense of the Church", the power to evangelise found in community, spiritual formation, the commitment of service to man of the Federation and of all the Communities which compose it.

Nourished by its tradition, but, at the same time, creatively renewed to respond to the challenges posed by the life and the mission of the Church as the second millennium draws to a close, the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities will be able, in this way, to affirm and develop its own identity, the communion which animates its Communities, the apostolic service it feels called to offer.

These demands also require of all who participate in the life of the association, an effort of assimilation, of deepening, constant and faithful implementation of these "General Principles" and of the statutory norms, which were approved by the General Assembly of the Federation and subsequently confirmed by the Holy See, as a modern and up-to-date application and expression of the former rules of the Marian Congregations.

The continuity of the tradition of your movement, its renovation in the light of the Vatican Council II, the assimilation of its own communitarian originality, the affirmation of its own specific identity in its life and mission will imply, therefore, witness of unity and communion, nourished by the Eucharist, by the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. In this way, the spiritual and missionary resources will be multiplied with regard to realising the task involved in the very theme of the General Assembly - "To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6/8).

With these words, addressed to those present and to

all the members of the Christian Life Communities, the Holy See desires to encourage you in your work; to strengthen you in your apostolic enthusiasm; to call you to a spiritual discernment which is always in deep communion with the Church and docile to the gifts of the Lord; to accompany you in praying to God, trusting in the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin, our common Mother.

Opilio Card. Rossi
Presidente

Peter J. Coughlan
Under-Secretary

Egregio Signor Tobie ZAKIA
Presidente della Federazione Mondiale
delle Comunità di Vita Cristiana
Borgo S. Spirito, 8
00193 ROMA

October 8th, 1982

His Eminence Opilio Cardinal Rossi
Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis
Piazza S. Calisto
ROMA

Your Eminence,

On behalf of the Executive Council for the Christian Life Communities, I would like to thank you for your letter (1948/82/AIC-50) in connection with our recent World Assembly.

We were especially interested in your remarks about the Second Vatican Council. As a matter of fact, we invited Father Juan Ochagavía S.J. (former Provincial of Chile, and presently Master of Novices) to attend the Assembly, with a view to writing an account of our proceedings, in the light of our Ignatian charism and the Vatican Council, which he attended as a peritus. We hope this will be published by the end of the year, and we will send you a copy.

I am enclosing a first report of the Assembly, which, as you can see, went extremely well. We will send you a more detailed account as it is published.

Thank you, your Eminence, for your interest and support.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Patrick O'Sullivan S.J.

Patrick O'Sullivan S.J.
Vice-assistant WFCLC
C.P. 6139
00195 ROMA