



PROGRESSIO

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

Approved by the General Assembly on September 7th, 1990
Confirmed by the Holy See on December 3rd, 1990

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FOREWORD

With joy we publish the text of the General Principles of the Christian Life Community.

This text replaces the former one of 1971. It preserves the best of our tradition and incorporates the main developments since 1971 up to now. The approval of these General Principles at the General Assembly by a large consensus indicates that God is addressing us through them. In fact, the General Principles express the way in which we want to respond to Christ's call. They are our covenant with God, with the Church and with all people.

With this conviction, we have come to the Apostolic See with humility and a spirit of faith to be confirmed in our vocation and sent out to live it among the People of God. In receiving its confirmation and canonical approval, we have experienced once again the life of the Church expressing itself through a very old rite in the history of the pilgrim People of God: the solemn confirmation of a covenant.

May this double approval help us to grow in our sense of communion with the whole Church in its efforts to extend the Gospel in a lasting and profound way in the great variety of places, persons and situations. May we also grow in our love for the Pope and the Apostolic See, visible expression of the mystery of the Church.

These General Principles will help us to fulfill our deepest desires of service. Let us pray on them, individually and in community. Let us use them as an inspiration and a point of reference when we review our lives and program our activities.

Encouraged by the example of Francis Xavier, on whose Feast we received our canonical approval from the Holy See, let us offer to the Church our life as an apostolic Ignatian community.

**PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
PRO LAICIS**

1620/90/AIC-50

DECREE

Having considered and carefully studied the text of the "General Principles of the Christian Life Community", approved by the World Assembly of that association of faithful in Guadalajara (Mexico) on 7th September 1990, and subsequently submitted to the Pontifical Council for the Laity for canonical approval,

Also bearing in mind the "General Norms of the Christian Life Community", approved in the same Assembly,

Recognizing in the Christian Life Community the joint continuation of the Marian Congregations initiated by Jean Leunis, s.j. which still trace their origins to "those groups of lay people that developed after 1540 in different parts of the world through the initiative of Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions" (General Principles, preamble 3),

In appreciation of a venerable association erected by the Bull Omnipotentis Dei of His Holiness Gregory XIII (5 December 1584), sustained and encouraged subsequently by numerous pontifical documents, particularly by the Apostolic Constitution Bis Saeculari of His Holiness Pius XII (27 November 1948) enriched by examples of holiness and apostolic fruits,

Taking into account the actual commitment of "men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized

Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church" in accordance with their own charism and spirituality (cfr General Principles, part 1),

Recalling that the former World Federation of Christian Life Communities was recognized as an International Catholic Organization and that its Statutes were approved by the Holy See on 31 May 1971 after a period of three years ad experimentum,

Also considering the actual norm of the Code of Canon Law relative to Associations of the faithful within the Church,

THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY

CONFIRMS the Christian Life Community as a public international Association of faithful, of pontifical right, in accordance with canons 312 and following, of the present Code of Canon Law,

AND APPROVES its "General Principles" presented in their original form and deposited in the Archives of this Dicastery.

It is highly significant that this pontifical approval of the "General Principles of the Christian Life Community" occurs precisely in the Jubilee year which celebrates the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Ignatius Loyola and the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Jesus. Therefore all the members of the Christian Life Community should take to heart what has been written in the letter of Rev. Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach when he points out that "the Ignatian year has no other purpose than the renovation, in the Spirit, of the apostolic life, both personal and at community level", associating with this celebration in a special way "all

those men and women who collaborate most intimately with the Society or who take their inspiration from Ignatian spirituality" while embracing "the Spiritual Exercises in all their rigour and authenticity". This we ask of the Lord through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, to whom the Christian Life community regards itself as profoundly and traditionally united from its very beginnings and in whom it has always wished to inspire its fidelity to the Lord and its apostolic and missionary zeal "for the greater glory of God".

Given at the Vatican, on 3 December 1990,
the feast of St. Francis Xavier.

+ Paul J. Cordes

Paul J. Cordes
Vice-President

E. Card. Pironio

Eduardo F. Card. Pironio
President

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY**

Approved by the General Assembly on September 7th, 1990
Confirmed by the Holy See on December 3rd, 1990

PREAMBLE

1. The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains. Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor Virgin of Nazareth. Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family. This gift of God to us and our response continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances. Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the options of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever.

2. Because our Community is a way of Christian life, these principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text but rather by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love. This law, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life. It respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God. It challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people.

3. The Christian Life Community is a public world association whose executive centre is presently in Rome. It is the continuation of the Marian Congregations, started by Jean Leunis s.j. and first officially approved by Pope Gregory XIII's bull, Omnipotentis Dei, of December 5, 1584. Going back beyond the Marian Congregations we see our origin in those groups of lay people that developed after 1540 in different parts of the world through the initiative of Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions. We live this way of christian life in joyful communion with all those who have preceded us, grateful for their efforts and apostolic accomplishments. In love and prayer we relate to those many men and women of our spiritual tradition who have been proposed to us by the Church as friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfill our mission.

PART ONE: OUR CHARISM

4. Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church. We aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation. We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them. To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith according to our charism. We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live.

5. The spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ and on participation in the Paschal Mystery. It draws from the Sacred Scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, and the revelation of God's will through the events of our times. Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life. We recognize particularly the necessity of prayer and discernment, personal and communal, of the daily examination of consciousness and of spiritual guidance as important means for seeking and finding God in all things.

Sources

6. Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation. By making ourselves sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit, we will be better able to encounter Christ in all persons and in all situations. Sharing the riches of membership of the Church, we participate in the liturgy, meditate upon the Scriptures, and learn, teach and promote Christian doctrine. We work together with the hierarchy and other ecclesial leaders, motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people and open to the situations in which the Church finds itself today. This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand.

Sense of the Church

7. Our gift of self finds its expression in a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community. Such a local community, centered in the Eucharist, is a concrete experience of unity in love and action. In fact each of our communities is a gathering of

Community bonds

people in Christ, a cell of his mystical Body. We are bound together by our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary as our mother. Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the National and World Christian Life Community, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all people of good will.

8. As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour. Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

a) Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations.

b) At the same time, we exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures, or through involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts.

c) The Community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be

always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.

- d) The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sort of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelization of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians. Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ.

9. Since the spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ: she is the model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's cooperation with God begins with her "yes" in the mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation. Her effective service as shown in her visit to Elizabeth and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her an inspiration for our action for justice in the world today. Mary's cooperation in her Son's mission, continued all through her life, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary, who by accepting the designs of God became our mother and the mother of all. Thus we confirm our own mission of service to the world received in baptism and confirmation. We honor Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way, and we rely on her intercession in fulfilling our vocation.

PART TWO
LIFE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

10. Members

Becoming a member of Christian Life Community presupposes a personal vocation. During a period of time determined in the General Norms, the candidate is introduced into the way of life proper to CLC. This time is allotted for the candidate and the wider Community to discern the candidate's vocation. Once the decision has been taken, and approved by the wider Community, the member assumes a temporary commitment and, with the help of the Community, tests his/ her aptitude for living according to the end and spirit of CLC. After a suitable period of time, determined by the General Norms, permanent commitment follows.

11. Community Bonding

As a primary means of formation and continuing growth, members come together on a regular basis in a stable local community, to assure a deep sharing by members of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere and a strong commitment to mission and service.

12. Way of Life

- a) The way of life of Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for a continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. In practice this involves participation in the Eucharist whenever possible; an active sacramental life; daily practice of personal prayer, especially that based on Sacred Scripture; discernment by means of a daily review of one's life and, if possible, regular spiritual direction; an annual interior renewal in accordance with the sources of our spirituality; and a love for the Mother of God.

- b) Since the Christian Life Community aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God's reign, all individual members are called to an active participation in the vast field of apostolic service. Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ's presence, concretely, to our world. Our broad and demanding mission requires of each member a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses. Furthermore, it demands also simplicity in all aspects of life, in order to follow more closely Christ in His poverty and to preserve inner apostolic freedom.
- c) Finally, each one assumes responsibility for participating in the meetings and other activities of the Community, and to help and encourage other members to pursue their personal vocation, always ready to give and to receive advice and aid as friends in the Lord.

13. Government

- a) The World Christian Life Community is governed by the General Assembly, which determines norms and policies, and by the Executive Council which is responsible for their ordinary implementation. The composition and functions of these bodies are specified in the General Norms.
- b) The National Community, constituted according to the General Norms, comprises all those members who are striving to live out the CLC way of life and mission within a given country. The National Community is governed by a National Assembly and an Executive Council. Their aims are to ensure the structures and formation programs necessary for responding effectively to what is needed for the harmonious development of the whole Community, and for an effective participation of Christian Life Community in the mission of the Church.

- c) National Communities may, if they find it helpful, establish or approve regional or diocesan communities or centers, comprising the local communities of a given region, diocese, city or institution. They are constituted according to the General Norms and the National Statutes.

14. Ecclesiastical Assistant

Christian Life Community on each level has an ecclesiastical assistant, designated in accordance with Church law and the General Norms. The assistant takes part in the life of the community in its various levels according to the General norms. Working in collaboration with other leaders of the community, he is principally responsible for the christian development of the whole community, and helps its members grow in the ways of God, especially through the Spiritual Exercises. In virtue of the mission given him by the hierarchy, whose authority he represents, he also has special responsibility for doctrinal and pastoral concerns and for the harmony proper to a Christian community.

15. Property

Christian Life Community on each level can, if it is useful, own and administer property as a public ecclesial person, in accordance with Church law and the civil laws of the country in question. Ownership and administration of such property belongs to the specific community.

PART III: ACCEPTANCE OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

16. Modification of the G.P.

The General Principles, which express the fundamental identity and charism of the Christian Life Community and therefore its covenant with the Church, have been approved by the General Assembly and confirmed by the

Holy See as the fundamental Statutes of this World Community. Amendments to these General Principles require a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly and confirmation by the Holy See.

17. Suspension and exclusion

Acceptance of the General Principles of the Christian Life Community is a prerequisite for membership in CLC on any level. Significant failure of a member or a local community to observe them is cause for suspension and eventual exclusion by the National Community. Significant failure of a National Community to act when one of its local communities is not observing them is cause for its suspension and eventual exclusion from the World Community. There always remain a right of appeal from a local or regional decision to the national community, from a national decision to the World Community.

* * *

GENERAL NORMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

Approved by the General Assembly on September 7th, 1990

I. Membership

1. A person can become a member of the World Christian Life Community in one of the following ways:
 - a. By initiating along with others a local pre-CLC community, which is accepted by a regional or national community. The accepting community must provide the formation resources for the development of this new community.
 - b. By being a member of an existing group of Christians which has chosen the CLC way of life. This group accordingly has been received as a local community by the regional or national community, which is its accepting community.
 - c. By joining an existing local community which is the accepting community, and which provides the means of formation.
2. In whichever way admission takes place, the new members must be helped by the Community to assimilate the CLC way of life, and to decide whether a call, an ability and a willingness to live it are present, and to become identified with the wider Christian Life Community. After a period of time ordinarily no longer than four years and no less than one, they assume a temporary commitment to this way of life. An experience of the Sp. Ex. is strongly recommended as a means of arriving at this personal decision.
3. The temporary commitment continues as such until, after a process of discernment, the member expresses

his or her permanent commitment to CLC, unless he or she freely withdraws from the Community or is excluded by it. The length of time between temporary and permanent commitment should be ordinarily no more than eight years and no less than two.

4. An experience of the complete Spiritual Exercises in one of their several forms (in daily life, a closed month, retreats over several years), precedes permanent commitment to Christian Life Community.
5. The forms of these personal commitments are left to the National Communities. It is suggested that a printed model of these personal commitments be drawn up by each national community and that they include an explicit reference to the acceptance of the General Principles of CLC.
6. All that is said above must be understood and practiced according to age, culture and other specific characteristics. For this purpose the National Communities must develop formation programmes, diversified if necessary for various groupings of members and the various exceptional circumstances which may arise for individual members.
7. The Christian Life Community is a particular way of following Jesus Christ and working with Him to bring about the reign of God. It allows for many different individual responses and does not value one more than another. Within the richness of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church and as a result of their growing in Christ, some CLC members may desire to emphasize one or more of the many evangelical counsels by taking private vows. Likewise, persons or groups of persons who have taken such vows outside CLC can be accepted into the community on the same basis as all the others.

II. Way of life

8. National and regional communities must find ways for making accessible to all members the actual experience of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, of spiritual guidance, and of other means of growth in the Spirit.
9. As a primary means to continue our growth as persons and as Christian Life Community, our ordinary way of decision-making at all levels is a discerning approach, and even a formal community discernment for the more important shared decisions.
10. In the spirit of its best tradition, and for the sake of greater apostolic efficacy, the Christian Life Community at all levels promotes the participation of its members in joint projects to respond to various and changing needs. National or international networks, specialized apostolic teams or other such initiatives may be set up by the Community where appropriate.
11. Likewise, in the same tradition and in view of the formation of its members and of other people, the Christian Life Community at all levels promotes workshops, seminars, courses, publications and other such initiatives.
12. For the sake of mutual help and apostolic collaboration, the Christian Life Community at any appropriate level can affiliate other associations of people who wish to share in our way of life but not to become full members. Similarly, the Christian Life Community at any appropriate level can find ways of expressing meaningful links with persons or institutions who are somehow related to the same tradition.

13. Special attention must be given at the world and national levels to ensure that all local communities be helped to live a genuine CLC process with a well-formed guide and an efficient coordinator.
14. All that is said above, both with regard to apostolic and formative challenges, supposes a good collaboration with the Society of Jesus and with other persons, communities and institutions that share in the ignatian tradition.

III. Life and Government of the Community

A. General Assembly

15. The General Assembly is the supreme governing body of CLC. It is made up of the Executive Council and the delegation of each National Community. Each delegation will consist normally of three delegates, one of whom should be the Ecclesiastical Assistant or his representative. Difficulties which may arise in making up the delegations are to be settled by the Executive Council.
16. The General Assembly:
 - a) Approves the activity reports and accounts of the period since the previous assembly.
 - b) Sets the policies and orientations for the period up to the next General Assembly.
 - c) Decides the financial policies to be followed.
 - d) Decides on proposed amendments to the General Principles and General Norms.
 - e) Confirms the establishment of new national communities.
 - f) Elects the Executive Council for the period until the next Assembly.
17. The General Assembly meets normally every 4 years and is convened by the ExCo at least 12 months in advance.

18. The President is empowered to convene the General Assembly at other times following consultation with the national communities and the written agreement of one third of them.
19. In the General Assembly each National Community has one vote and decisions are taken in a spirit of discernment by a majority vote providing a quorum is present. A quorum consists of 50% of the national communities. In the Assembly, the Executive Council has one vote in the person of the President.

B. Executive Council

20. The Executive Council is responsible for the ordinary government of the Community. It is made up of 7 elected members and 3 appointed members and a maximum of two coopted members.
- 21a) The elected members of the Executive Council are: the president, the vice-president, the secretary, the treasurer, and three consultants, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of four years. They may be re-elected only once to the same office.
- b) The appointed members of the Executive Council are the ecclesiastical assistant; the vice-ecclesiastical assistant, who is the head of the Jesuit Central Secretariat for CLC in Rome; and the executive secretary.
- c) The World Executive Council may, if it wishes, coopt one or two additional consultants.
22. The Executive Council is responsible for:
 - a) Promoting the implementation of the General Principles and General Norms.
 - b) The implementation of the policies and decisions taken at the General Assemblies.

- c) Fostering national communities, stimulating their mutual assistance and collaboration, and promoting their active participation in the world mission of CLC.
 - d) Assuring CLC representation in programs of international cooperation wherever it may be opportune, for example in collaboration with the Conference of International Catholic Organizations.
 - e) Promoting the implementation of the teachings of the Church, especially that of Vatican Council II and its further developments.
 - f) Encouraging the fuller sharing, by national and other communities, between each other and with the World Community, of their documentation, experiences, personnel and material resources.
 - g) Promoting and encouraging specific projects particularly in accordance with norms 10 and 11.
 - h) Encouraging and creating initiatives necessary to fulfill all these tasks.
23. The Executive Council meets at least once a year. It informs all national communities of its activities.
24. In the Executive Council, decisions are taken in a spirit of discernment by a majority vote providing a quorum is present. A quorum consists of 5 members.
25. The Executive Council maintains a Secretariat for carrying out its policies and decisions.
26. The Executive Secretary is appointed by the Executive Council, which determines the rights and responsibilities of the office.
27. For all official communications the address of the World Secretariat is to be considered as the address of the Executive Council.
28. Nominations for all elected officers are to be proposed to the World Executive Council in writing at least four months before the meeting of the General

Assembly at which elections are to take place. Nominations are submitted by each national community through its executive council.

29. A list of candidates for the presidency of the Christian Life Community is to be presented to the Holy See at least three months prior to the election.

C. Establishing New Communities

30. Though the Christian Life Community is one, it may nevertheless comprise groupings of National Communities according to common specifics or relating to territory.
31. The World Community officially establishes a single national community in a given country. When circumstances make formation of a single national community impossible, the World Community may establish more than one community in a country or one community to include more than one country. Establishment of a new national community is first approved by the World Executive Council. Such approval makes the newly established community eligible henceforth for all the rights and obligations of membership. However, the decision is to be confirmed by the General Assembly.
32. The Church authority which grants official approval to a national, regional or local community is the World Christian Life Community, canonically approved by the Holy See, with the consent of the bishop or bishops concerned; for communities established in places belonging to the Society of Jesus or in those whose charge has been confided to it, the consent required is, according to the pontifical documents, that of the General or Vicar General of the Society of Jesus, who may delegate this authority to the provincial or to the ecclesiastical assistant.

33. Every established national community must accept:

- a) The General Principles and General Norms.
- b) The resolutions approved by the General Assembly.
- c) The financial contribution fixed by the Executive Council.

34. The Executive Council of the World Community, respecting the legitimate rights and obligations of the National Communities will take action regarding a national community only in the event of non-compliance with General Norm 33. The General Assembly reserves to itself the right of expulsion.

D. National Communities

35. Each national community as a branch of the World Community establishes its own statutes in conformity with the General Principles and General Norms and the stage of development of the national community. Such statutes would ordinarily deal with:

- a) Membership in and admission to the national community.
- b) Goals and means of the national community.
- c) Relationship with the hierarchy
- d) Structures for choosing leaders and for making decisions.
- e) Procedure for selecting delegates to the World General Assembly.
- f) Any other matters essential to ordering the life, unity, growth and mission of the national community.

The statutes of national communities are to be confirmed by the Executive Council of the World Community.

36. Each National Community may establish regional, diocesan, parochial or other suitable units as may facilitate its development.

37. Secretariats may be established by national communities which desire them for the purposes of coordination, counsel and promotion.
38. National Communities are free to enter into relationship with each other for apostolic projects or any other just concerns. Any new structure resulting from such initiatives, if it intends to act in the name of those national communities, must have a clear and specific mandate approved by the Executive Council.

E. Local Communities

- 39a) Members participate in the life of the community at several concentric levels. The local community level (also called "small CLC community" or simply "group") is the most appropriate for a communal continuation of the dynamics of life generated by the Spiritual Exercises. These small communities practice the type of prayer and relationships which foster a process of integration of faith and life by offering to all members a permanent communal verification of their spiritual and apostolic growth.
 - b) Experience shows that for this end it is of great help that these communities be composed of no more than twelve members of like qualities, such as age, occupation, or state of life, and that they meet weekly or every fifteen days so that the process carries over from one meeting to the next.
40. Each local community, within the framework of a wider community (a center or church, a diocesan or national community, or whichever unit is appropriate to the different realities) adopts its process for accepting new members, its own programs, service, and the content and format of its meetings. All members participate periodically in celebrating the Eucharist

and share responsibility for the life of their local community and of the wider community in which this is inserted. Thus, the entire community decides all its affairs except those it delegates to its leaders.

- 41a) The principal responsibility for coordination in each local community is vested by the members in its elected coordinator, who works in close collaboration with the guide and possesses such other powers as are delegated by the community.
- b) The guide, well formed in the ignatian process of growth, helps the community to discern the movements at work in the individuals and the community, and helps them to maintain a clear idea of the CLC goal and process. The guide assists the community and its coordinator to find and to use the means needed for the community's formation and its mission. The guide's participation in the life of the community is conditioned by the objectivity needed to carry out effectively the role of guide. The guide is chosen by the community, with the approval of the national or regional community.

F. Ecclesiastical Assistant

42. The World ecclesiastical Assistant to the Christian Life Community is appointed by the Holy See after receiving a list of names from the World Executive Council.
43. The World Christian Life Community accepts as its Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant the jesuit who, after consultation with the World Executive Council, is appointed by Father General of the Society of Jesus as head of the Jesuit Secretariat for CLC in Rome.
44. National, regional, diocesan or other ecclesiastical assistants are proposed by the CLC executive councils at the equivalent level, but their appointment is

reserved to the competent authority. Generally at the national, regional and diocesan levels, the ecclesiastical assistant is a priest; in special cases the competent authority may assign the function to any other qualified person, always taking account of the role that the CLC expects from its assistants (GP14). Procedures and formalities for these appointments must be clearly expressed in the National Statutes.

45. At the level of the local community the link with the ecclesiastical assistant will normally be maintained through the local community guide.
46. The term of office for a national, regional or diocesan ecclesiastical assistant is four years. This may be renewed.

G. Modification of the General Principles and General Norms

47. Changes in the General Principles and General Norms are to be proposed in writing by national communities to the World Executive Council at least six months prior to a meeting of the General Assembly. Copies of formal amendments will be circulated to the national communities at least three months prior to the meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly is required for approval of such amendments.
48. The World Community of itself can both establish and amend the General Norms by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly, with the exception of norms 21b, 29, 42 and 48 which touch on our relations with the Holy See.
49. A national community may reword the General Principles and General norms, if need be, for better comprehension, as long as the substance is retained, subject to approval by the World Executive Council.

HELP FOR READING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The text of the General Principles which we are now publishing, valid since December 3rd, 1990, is the fruit of a long process of revision of the previous text, which had been approved in 1971.

Before voting on a new text, national leaders and delegates to Guadalajara'90 had devoted a great deal of time to the study of the 1971 text and the changes that were being proposed to it. They acquired in that way a greater familiarity with the main themes of the General Principles, which remain the same as those in the 1971 text. In fact, the changes that have been introduced are matters of style, emphasis, nuance and explicitation of contents. This does not mean that they have little importance.

In our desire to help people to understand the changes approved by the General Assembly of GUADALAJARA '90, and hence to deepen the main lines of the General Principles, we have organized the main sources that have inspired the changes into six chapters .

The six chapters or "sources" of the changes are:

- I. Organization of the material.
- II. Use of language.
- III. Our Ignatian character
- IV. Stress on the apostolic thrust of CLC.
- V. Keeping in step with the Code of Canon Law.
- VI. Change from Federation to Community.

There is another source of change which is present in all six; so we do not treat it separately. It is the Mandate given by the Executive Council to the Ad-Hoc Commission which was established to propose eventual amendments. The mandate was a broad one, and included the need to reflect over the life of the Church, the development of theology and the experience of our Christian Life Community.

I. Organization of the material

The text is divided into two large sections, viz the General Principles (GPs) and the General Norms (GNs).

The GPs define our charism and our covenant with the Church. They fulfill as well what the Code of Canon Law establishes for lay associations such as ours (cf. CIC 304). Changes in them require approval from the Holy See (GP 16).

The GNs. are more practical orientations for the development and life of the Community in line with the General Principles, and therefore can be modified by the World Community itself (GN 48, cf. also CIC 309).

Some sub-titles have been introduced within each of these two big sections. The resulting internal structure of the text is as follows:

I. General Principles (1 to 17):

- n. 1 to n. 3: Preamble
- n. 4 to n. 9: PART I: Our Charism
- n.10 to n.15: PART II: Life and organization of the Community
- n.16 to n.17: PART III: Acceptance of the General Principles

II. General Norms (1 to 49):

- I. n. 1 to n. 7: Membership
- II. n. 8 to n.14: Way of Life
- III.n.15 to n.49: Life and Government of the Community:
 - n.15 to n.19: A. General Assembly
 - n.20 to n.29: B. Executive Council
 - n.30 to n.34: C. Establishing new communities
 - n.35 to n.38: D. National Communities
 - n.39 to n.41: E. Local Communities
 - n.42 to n.46: F. Ecclesiastical Assistant
 - n.47 to n.49: G. Modification of the GPs. and GNs.

The main advantage of this distinction between GPs and GNs is that while the GPs express our fundamental identity and charism, the G.Ns. incorporate the lived experience of CLC without conferring on it the character of "Principle", thus leaving it open to be enriched by permanent evaluation and reflection. However, as the norms are related to and inspired by the Principles, they are stable and solid enough to have the status of "norms" approved by the General Assembly; they are not just vague "orientations".

The lived experience which is being reflected in the General Norms is not the experience of a particular country or region, but rather the fruit of reflection on many current and past experiences. The GPs and GNs are not meant to confirm one particular experience or vision, but to challenge and orient every single experience and to allow for creativity within the diversity of realities.

II. Use of language

The original language of the 1971 text was French. During the revision of that text, most of the work was done in English, although the contributions came in many languages. The present text adopted English as the original language. As language is not merely a collection of codes and grammatical structures, the change in the original language explains many of the changes of style and nuance. No doubt, changing the original language affected the text in other languages, as all translations are from the original English.

The most clear example of this influence of language is the use of gender inclusive language. In many English-speaking countries, generalizations that use masculine gender (for example: "all men", "mankind", the use of "his" after nouns which may admit also "her", and other more complex situations) are seen as a real and actual way of excluding women from social and ecclesial life. In English there are several modern technics of using

language without incurring this problem. Many of these technics have been used in the original text and have affected the Spanish and French translations. Translators into these two languages have adopted some of the changes in this line, where they deemed it possible and aesthetic.

Though the original language is English, the sources that were taken into account during the revision (for example, the submissions by one or other country) were in several languages. Moreover, not all those who worked in writing the text were native English-speaking. In addition, English is spoken and written with different nuances in various countries. Therefore, the final version reflects these problems. For sure a perfectionist in the use of English will find some less than perfect constructions. The same will happen to those who will look critically at the translations. These problems are normal in an international community. Moreover, they are desirable. However, both the original text and the translations use a direct language which flows easily.

General Norm 49 has been included as a way of overcoming the problems proper to the use of language in an international community. Together with the above explanations, it should help us to avoid useless distractions about alternative words or idioms.

III. Our Ignatian character

The text recently approved keeps the richness that the previous text already had in this area. It includes, however, some further Ignatian elements. Some of them are typical expressions, explanations or references to our Ignatian roots and recommendations.

1. Expressions and common phrases

GP1 "The three Divine Persons..." in line with the contemplation of the Annunciation-Incarnation

GP4 "...to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom...", as a way of

saying that the mature CLC vocation draws from the meditation of the Kingdom.

GP6 "...a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand.", completes the Ignatian sense of the Church.

GP12c "...as friends in the Lord."

2. A helpful references to our Ignatian roots:

GP3 "started by Jean Leunis s.j....", "those groups of lay people that developed... through the initiative of St Ignatius Loyola and his companions."

3. The Spiritual Exercises in our process of growth

GP5 "Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius as the specific source...": The use of the article the has been widely supported in the World Community.

GN2 "An experience of the Sp.Ex."

GN4 "An experience of the complete Sp.Ex. in one of their several forms (in daily life, a closed month, retreats over several years)...": Norms 2 and 4 try to give a sense of process and to include several forms of doing the Sp.Ex.

GN8 indicates the necessity of making the actual experience accessible to all members.

4. Apostolic discernment

GP8c The Community helps us... to be always open to what is more urgent and universal... through personal and communal discernment."

GP12b "Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way..."

GN9 "...ordinary way of decision-making... is a discerning approach, and even a formal community discernment..."

5. Recommendations:

- GN8 "...find ways for making accessible to all members..."
- GN13 "...a well-formed guide..."
- GN14 "...a good collaboration with the Society of Jesus and with other persons, communities and institutions that share in the ignatian tradition."

6. The dynamics of the Exercises applied to our CLC process

- GP11 "... a stable local community, to assure a deep sharing by members of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere and a strong commitment to mission and service..."
- GN39a "... a communal continuation of the dynamics of life generated by the Spiritual Exercises. These small communities practice the type of prayer and relationships which foster a process of integration of faith and life by offering to all members..."
- GN39b "... for this end it is of great help that these communities be composed of no more than twelve members of like qualities ... and that they meet weekly or every fifteen days so that the process carries over from one meeting to the next."
- GN41b "The guide, well formed in the Ignatian process of growth, helps the community to discern the movements at work in the individuals and the community, and helps them to maintain a clear idea of the CLC goal and process..."

IV. Stress on the apostolic thrust of CLC

1. The primacy of mission: In defining the aim of the Community, GP n.4 says that the main purpose is "to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom". While giving this primacy to mission, the importance of formation is kept. Other statements in this line are:

GP8 "Our life is essentially apostolic".

GP12b "Since this way of life aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God's Reign"

GN7 To give a framework for a good comprehension of the evangelical counsels and of eventual private vows, this norm repeats once again: "The Christian Life Community is a particular way of following Jesus Christ and working with Him to bring about the Reign of God".

2. Integration of formation and community for mission:

This integration is succinctly expressed in GP11 and carried through into GP12. The point which is being made is that formation can't be separated from community and mission. Together they make up a way of life which is essentially apostolic. Other sentences in this line are:

GN14 "All that is said above, both with regard to apostolic and formative challenges..."

GN19 "...The guide assists the community and its coordinator to find and to use the means needed for the community's formation and its mission..."

3. The field of CLC mission: The central statements regarding the field of our mission are:

GP8 "The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society..."

GP2 "...to be open and free, always at the disposal of God... to see our serious responsibilities... to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times... and to work together with the whole People of God..."

These statements overcome a tendency to identify the apostolate of lay people in a restrictive way, either by diminishing the importance of their contribution in the work of evangelization or by establishing dichotomies which don't help the mission of the Church. "Evangelization", "the reign of God" and other such expressions, are

choices made in the text to broaden the field of our apostolate.

The "secular character" which distinguishes the lay identity follows the above fundamental statements:

GP8a "... to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings... among the great diversity of persons, places and situations".

PG4 "We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live."

While the passages from GP2 and 8 (quoted above) set the tone for the understanding of mission in the GPs, some other sentences are introduced in other places to specify or to stress some particular concerns. Of course, not all the emphases and specifications are equally important. An abridged text could exclude many specifications. A new revision of the text could add new specifications... or drop them all and leave only open statements. Let us see some of these more specific sentences in the text:

GP2 "...progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people."

GP4 "...the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation".

GP6 "...learn, teach and promote Christian doctrine..."

GP6 "...the problems and progress of all people..."

GP8d "...efforts to liberate the victims from all sort of discrimination... to abolish differences between rich and poor..."

GP8d "...to contribute to the evangelization of cultures from within."

GP8d "...to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians."

GP12b "...to participate in social and political life..."

GN10: "...joint projects to respond to various and changing needs."

4. With Christ poor and humble: In the life of the Church as well as in the developments of theology, and in the experience of CLC and the various World Assemblies, it becomes ever clearer that a central issue of our faith is what we usually call the following of the poor and humble Christ. This key element of our vocation includes a call to live "a faith that does justice" and to stand at the side of the poor. These are some selected parts of the text in this line:

GP1 Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor Virgin of Nazareth. Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family.

GP4 "We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them".

GP8 "...struggling to change oppressive structures"

GP8d "...to work for the reform of structures of society..."

GP9: "Her effective service as shown in her visit to Elizabeth and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her an inspiration for our action for justice in the world today"

5. Readiness for mission: The paragraph related to our sense of the Church (GP6) includes a sentence which affirms our disponibility towards the needs of the Church:

GP6 "This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand."

In including this sentence, the General Principles recall the fact that participation in the "communion" of the Church implies participation in its

"mission". Quite clearly, our readiness is not the obedience of religious life. Rather it refers to a spirit of creativity and initiative which is ready to listen and be confirmed by the community of mission. It is the "listening heart" and the idea of being "sent" by the Lord and His Church, which so strongly came up at the Loyola assembly.

6. Structures for mission: the GP8 expresses clearly and in a unifying way, in step with Vatican II Council, the importance of a personal apostolic life and the necessity of organised apostolic service. The organised apostolic service can be developed "through group action initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures". While making this point in n.8, the text proposes later on (G.Ns.10,12,14,22c,22d,22g,35,38) some possible "suitable structures". Notice that "the Community" here is at every level (world, national, regional, diocesan, center, local), and that the verbs used are "to initiate" and "to sustain" group action. So, what the text is saying is that the local community (also called "small CLC group") is not always the more suitable structure for mission or the place from which every initiative should come. However, the local community is very important also in view of mission (see GP8c, GP11, GN9, GN13, GN39a, GN40). Finally, the organised apostolic service can also be developed through "involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts", a modality which open a number of possibilities.

V. Keeping in step with the Code of Canon Law

The Code of Canon Law in its Title V deals with lay associations. It was necessary to introduce in our General Principles some helpful references to our identity as an association of faithful, in such a way that everybody may know which norms of Canon Law regulate our life.

1. Our canonical identity: Three expressions are used in the text to speak of ourselves: Community, Way of Life, Association (notice that the word "movement" is not used). While the first two are perhaps more familiar to many of our members and more meaningful to express our charism, the third one is the correct canonical expression. GP3 (among other things) makes explicit our erection by the ecclesiastical authority (cf CIC 301, 3 & 312, 1, 1°), in such a way that we can open GP3 by saying that we are "a public world association". In declaring this, we are saying that all the norms of the Code of Canon Law, valid for such associations (cf CIC Title V, chapter II), are also valid for our community. In this way we have avoided great detail, since we don't have to repeat in our GPs what is already in the Code, or we can refer some particular problems to the Code (For example: GP14, GP15):

2. Some specific requirements: The Church Law and the current reflection on it, ask that the Statutes of every lay association fulfill certain conditions (cf CIC 304, 1). For example, the very inclusion of GP15 is in this line; as well as the wording of GP16. As the G.Ps. meet the requirements of the Code, all the rest is left in the G.Ns. Obviously, the G.Ns. make sense only if seen together with the G.Ps.

3. Establishment of Communities: General Norms 30 to 34 try to make clear the way in which new communities are established. According to G.Ns. 30, 31 and 32, there is an "approval" granted by the World Christian Life Community (which has been "erected" by the Holy See: Cf CIC 312, 1, 1°), and a "consent" given by the competent authority (one or several bishops, depending on the territory. Cf CIC 312, 2). GN 32 expresses the situation for those communities established in jesuit houses. The relationships between the internal authority of the Community, the authority of the local and universal Church and the jesuit major superiors, are well defined.

VI. Change from Federation to Community

The text tries to express in some way the deliberations and conclusions of Rome 79 and Providence 82. Some results of the revision of our GPs. in this perspective of World Community are:

1. Vocabulary: The word "federation" is not used in the text, nor is the word "group" used (except as a synonym for "local community"). The option was to use the word "community", or the total expression "the Christian Life Community", mainly in singular (except when referring to local or national groupings in a collective way: "national communities"). It is helpful to make a comparison with the Church, which is a universal community. We speak of the "universal Church", of "the Church in a given country", of the "diocesan Church", the "parochial Church" and even of the "domestic Church". It is always the Church, or expressions of her in different realities. Sometimes we reserve the capital "C" for the universal Church, while we accept the small "c" and even the use of the plural for speaking of the "local (or parochial, or national) churches". The same has been the option of the text of our General Principles with regard to the Christian Life Community. When the text speaks of "the Community" or of "the Christian Life Community", it is speaking of every expression of it, or better, of any suitable expression of it in the context in which the term is used. Other times the text introduces specifications, for example by saying "every local community", or "national, regional or diocesan communities".

Some examples:

- GP1 "Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community..."
- GP2 "Because our Community is a way of Christian Life..."
- GP3 "The Christian Life Community is a public world association... it is the continuation..."
- GP5 "The spirituality of our Community

GP8b "Group action initiated or sustained by the Community ...": The Community here can be the World, national, regional, etc... according to the nature of the action which is to be sustained or initiated.

GP8c "The Community helps us ... particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment": The Community here is at every appropriate level. For example, the revision of life is normally practiced at the level of the "local community". Communal discernment can be at the level of the local, diocesan, regional, national and even world level. Individual members find a help for their personal discernment in their local community, but also in their wider community through the formulation of some priorities or through many other means.

GP8d "The Community urges us to announce the Word of God...": here the Community is clearly meant at every level.

GP9 "Since the spirituality of our Community...": Here the Community is the one World Community and all its expressions.

GP11 "...members come together on a regular basis in a stable local community...": This is a sample of those cases in which the text has chosen to introduce a specification. In this case, "a local community" is specified.

2. Membership and commitment: The logic of a federative model is that a person is member of a "group", which in turn decides to federate with other groups for the convenience of all. Members of a federation are therefore groups. In the present text of our GPs, persons are members of the World Community, and they live this membership through a concrete local community which provides an actual communal experience of faith sharing and apostolic commitment. The local community is therefore a "primary means of formation and continuing growth" (GP11), and not the primary reference for membership. This difference between the federative model and the community model is expressed succinctly in GP 10 & 11, but it is present all throughout the text. Some examples:

- GP4 "Our Community is made up of Christians" and not "our groups are Christian communities".
- GP5 "The spirituality of our Community..." and not "the spirituality of our groups..."
- GP7 Our gift of self finds its expression in a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community..."
- GP10 "Becoming a member of Christian Life Community..." and not "Entrance into a group..."
- GP12c "Finally, each one assumes responsibility for participating in the meetings and other activities of the Community..." The activities of the Community include, but are wider than, the activities of the "group" or "local community".
- GN1 "A person can become a member of the World Christian Life Community..."

However, the text acknowledges the pedagogical fact that members need time to discover this sense of World Community. This is one of the meanings of the temporary and the permanent commitment. See how GP10 speaks of a "wider community", and how GN2 says that "the Community" (in the sense just explained in 1 above) helps the new member "to become identified with the wider Christian Life Community". GN3 says that the permanent commitment is "to CLC", i.e., to the way of life of this World Community, and not to a particular group.

Finally, the text is clear in saying that a group cannot exist as a genuine expression of CLC without a reference to a "wider community" which has established or welcome it (GN1).

3. Life and Government: The reality of World Community does not affect only the language and the criteria for membership. It also touches the life and the organization of the Community. The third part of the General Norms, mainly from n.15 to 38, is concerned with these organizational aspects.

A. The General Assembly (15 to 19): It is the supreme governing body. The norms related to the General Assembly make explicit its composition, its functions and attributes, its style while in session and the frequency of its meetings. The General Assembly sets the policies and orientations for action through an experience of communal deliberation.

B. The Executive Council (ExCo) and the World Secretariat (20 to 29): The norms regarding this topic regulate the composition of the ExCo, the election of its members, its functions and capacities, the frequency of its meetings, the relationships between the ExCo and the World Secretariat. In a World Community dispersed throughout the world, the Executive Council is responsible for the ordinary government. It is also the visible core of the Community.

C. Establishing new communities (30 to 34): The Community is one, as clearly put by Providence 82 (GN30). This one Community "establishes" national communities according to GN31 and GN32, and based on GP 13,b and GN1. The established national communities can act then according to chapter D (below), as long as they continue to fulfill the conditions of GN33.

D. National Communities: The definition of a National Community is given in GP13,b, first sentence. Once established by the World Community, the National Communities may act as the "accepting community" of GN1 and grow accordingly. They can establish as many internal divisions as necessary, in accordance with GP13,c and GN36. Notice that GP13c says that they may "establish or approve regional or diocesan communities or centers..." While the "establishment" is in the line of GN1a, the "approval" is in the line of GN1b. Many other things are connected with the life of the National Communities: G.Ps. 13b, 13c, 15, 16; and G.Ns. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 44, 49. Particularly important is therefore the GN35 about the necessity of National Statutes.

E. Local Communities (39 to 41): The norms regarding local communities try to reflect the experiences of the last 20 years. They explain the nature of the christian experience that occurs in such communities (39a) and the conditions which have proved to be of help for this to happen (39b). The norms also explain the relationship between a local community and a wider community (40). Finally, the norms clarify the various roles within a local community, particularly the role of guide (41).

F. Ecclesiastical Assistant (42 To 46): These norms clarify the procedures for the appointment of ecclesiastical assistants on the various levels (42, 44). They describe the particular insertion of the World Vice-assistant as an organic link with the Society of Jesus (43). They also clarify the relationship between the role of guide and the role of assistant at the level of the local community (45) and establish a term of office for the assistants (46). It is clear that there is an assistant on each level (PG14), though this does not mean that he/she should be present at every meeting of every local community. Rather, it is the way in which the assistant participates in the life of all the local communities which is important in these general norms.

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