



PROGRESSIO

Father Louis Paulussen s.j.

FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GRACE

Josée Gsell

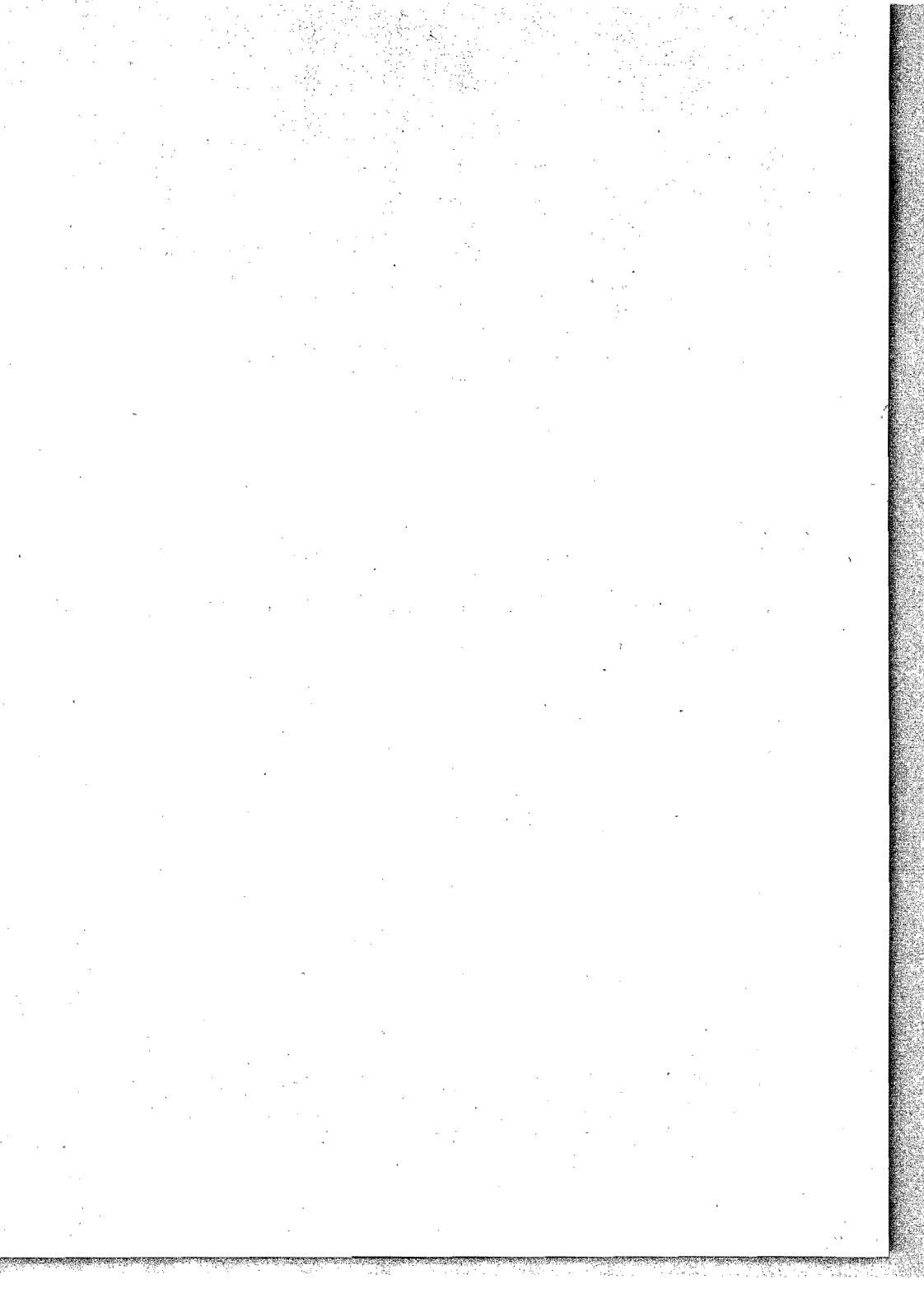
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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION	5
I. THE MAN	6
Blessed are the poor	6
Looking to the future with an open mind	12
II. HIS WORK	15
Building unity	16
Inspiring and motivating renewal	20
The companion	27

PREFACE

The present supplement to PROGRESSIO has a multiple purpose:

- It is a well deserved tribute to a great man, an outstanding priest, a friend and a companion, "the faithful servant of grace": Rev. Louis Paulussen, s.j.
- It is a compendium of Ignatian Spirituality and a deepening of our CLC identity, written in the context of the witness of somebody's life at the service of a dream.
- It is a grateful review of our communitarian history as we have grown in Christ.
- It is like a "handbook" for Ecclesiastical Assistants and priests who often wonder what we expect from them. We suggest it as one of their basic readings.
- It is a simple and clear answer to many questions we have on mutual collaboration between lay people and Jesuits.

Furthermore, it has been written with insight and love by somebody who has served on the same mission: Ms Josée Gsell, who for 15 years was the World Executive Secretary for CLC and Editor of PROGRESSIO.

I am happy that this particular issue will be the last supplement edited under my supervision. It makes me feel like one brief page in a great book we all are writing day by day under God's guidance. Both Fr. Paulussen and Josée are important pages, not because of personal ambition, but because they were faithful to God who wanted to work through them. Those of us who have arrived later, find in these pages a deeper meaning to our service. We are working on a project that we do not own because it started centuries ago as a grace from God's heart.

Father Paulussen: we love you. Please help us, from that special place you enjoy very close to God, so that we may have many "faithful servants of grace".

José Reyes

INTRODUCTION

Getting to know Father Paulussen was a slow process. He was not one of those men who reveal themselves in words or in glamorous actions. His manner was too discreet, too inward for that. Meeting him for the first time, all were struck by his personal qualities: the warmth of his welcome, his simplicity, and the way he had of bringing out God's presence in every subject of conversation. However, they were not always aware of the extraordinary task he had undertaken and which he carried out for nearly thirty years, faithfully following his deep intuition, step by step.

I had the privilege of working with him for fifteen years and the good fortune of meeting and talking with him daily. I have been profoundly influenced by the witness of his life and by what he taught us as members of Christian Life Community. I hesitate, as I set out humbly to sketch the figure of Father Paulussen: will the memories of qualities, events, trials, bring out the "fulness of life" of an existence such as his, indissolubly apostolic and religious? Will these pages contribute to a rediscovery of his message in the development of Christian Life Community as we know it today? Be this as it may, these pages provide the opportunity to remember and to give thanks to the Lord for the man he chose and to whom he gave the task of guiding the Christian Life Community (CLC) along the path of renewal. In thinking about this man and his work, we may be able to grasp more fully the essential aspects of the CLC, for it is true that its concrete realization is only manifested in the witness.

I. THE MAN

Father Paulussen was sent to Rome in 1951 to take charge of the central secretariat of the Marian Congregations (MCs). He came well prepared. As a high-school student he was a member of a Marian Congregation and saw early and increasingly the need for renewal. In the course of a retreat, he had a decisive experience which led him to join the Society of Jesus. Later, as a young Jesuit, he was in charge of organizing the Marian Congregations in the Netherlands. In this capacity, he came to Rome in 1950, to take part in an international meeting of Jesuits gathered to reflect on the need for renewal within the Congregations, many of which had been led by historical events to deviate from their original spirit.

One year later he arrived in Rome, to inspire and coordinate a long and patient "return to the sources" which gradually drew to itself many of the older Marian Congregations as well as new groups in countries throughout the world. In several countries, work had already begun in an effort to recover the true identity and the authentic spirit of the early Congregations. These beginnings gained momentum. The early work acquired new clarity and depth thanks to the quality of communication that Father Paulussen instituted with entities existing within each country. Very simply, by being who he was, he led others to recognize the hidden treasure, the joy of discovering it and the need for detachment in order to have access to it. In effect, Father Paulussen illustrated and radiated that which he was meant to promote.

"Blessed are the poor..."

Father Paulussen's religious and spiritual nature was fully expressed in this poverty and joy: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3). The beatitude that he incarnated was a gift from God, the particular seal that marked him as an authentic

follower of Christ. His response was to live it out fully, following in Christ's footsteps, "meek and humble in heart" in all circumstances of life. He often said to us: "God is all", and wanted us to understand that with God we have all, and that our response must be one of boundless trust and total abandonment. What was announced in the beatitudes acquired its full meaning in Jesus, whose faithful companion he wanted to be. All his life, he remained faithful to this path of "poverty of spirit", of total availability, of confidence in the future, of a faith that never calculates. He knew that all is gift, and that by faithfulness to grace is the Kingdom built, and not by self-reliance.

The spirit of the beatitudes shaped his behavior and his activities. He was spared neither hardships nor suffering during a life entirely devoted to the mission that was entrusted to him. Yet he accepted everything - happiness, afflictions, pain - in humility, in abandonment to God.

He was gifted with great tact and sensitivity, and treated every person he met with kindness and respect. The members of the secretariat received constant tokens of his friendship and consideration. Every morning he would bring the mail and go from office to office, exchanging a few words with each one of us, as interested in the details of our lives as in the major events. Every visit from him involved a brief chat. Finally, he would go back to his room, which since his arrival in Rome had also become his office. At noon, we would meet with him again in the chapel to celebrate the Eucharist; he had chosen this hour because it was also convenient for people coming in from outside. Late in the afternoon, he would be back, bringing newspapers and magazines. By then, he would have read them all, and would be eager to point out some article of particular interest, some important item of news.

Many visitors came to the secretariat on their way through Rome, alone or in groups, giving us the opportunity to establish new contacts and initiate fruitful exchanges. It was Father Paulussen's idea to have one of

the rooms decorated with three large panels which provided a vivid explanation of what CLC was all about. He had designed them personally, with the help of a photographer friend, intending them to be a starting point for dialogue. A few photographs illustrate a concise and clear commentary, setting forth spirituality, community and mission. He always returned to these, anxious to stress these essential points. All that he said flowed naturally from there. Each word carried the weight of experience. A few simple sentences were enough to trace the outlines of this way of life; here, often in silence, each was able to situate his own experience within the wider horizon of the Church's vocation, which had just acquired new meaning for him. To the very end of his life, Father Paulussen continued to receive many letters. This correspondence was often sparked by a meeting, sometimes a very brief one, which had awakened in others the desire to know him better, because so much good had come from meeting him. He spoke with authority, interested above all in serving Christ and his fellow-men and women.

His personality was best revealed at meetings. Whether at staff meetings of the secretariat, or preparatory meetings for a particular activity, at annual meetings of the Executive Council or World Assemblies, the quality of his presence was instrumental in restoring to the function of spiritual assistant a dimension that had all too often been lost. Long before we were able to discover, through the process of renewal, the wide range of possibilities that were available to us, we began to see in the way he acted and in his manner of proceeding the figure of the spiritual guide.

As a follower of Ignatius, he was called naturally by his spiritual experience to transmit the fire that burned within him, in a spirit of utmost respect for others. In this he was very much "a servant" to others. Attentive, totally present, often silent, always prayerful. His words spoke of a constant quest for the will of God, which seemed to spring from inner prayer and illuminate his actions and movements. He was able to place whatever problems we discussed in their proper perspective,

never forgetting the material and concrete issues involved, but never allowing us to become trapped in them. He was very effective in the way he helped us search for a just solution to practical problems, and shared in whatever menial jobs were involved.

He understood his mission to be the formation of lay people in the school of the Spiritual Exercises to serve the Church throughout the world. More than a formator, however, he was really an inspirer. He had studied and reflected upon the history of the origins of the 16th century lay congregations. He knew how deeply they had been aware of their personal vocation within the Church of the time, how fully involved they had been in the wide field of the Church's apostolate. Jean Leunis had clearly defined their goal, he had encouraged responsibility and promoted community life. This same spirit guided Fr. Paulussen's relationships with us, and gave them their special intensity. There was complete trust between him and the lay people involved in the renewal. A profound friendship was growing. Some of the members who served on the various executive councils or in national federations experienced great hardships and trials. Fr Paulussen's friendship and support never wavered, and his faithfulness was unshaken. This remained true to the end. In sharing and in prayer, through letters and generous deeds, he expressed the unfailing bond he maintained with those whom the Lord had placed on his path.

At meetings, he helped us to see what was essential, and forced us to separate out vital things from less important and trivial ones. His message was very clear: none of our initiatives, activities and commitments would ever be truly radical unless they were the fruit of a serious conversion within ourselves. In this spirit, he helped us live through hardships, problems and pain. In his footsteps and under his guidance, we were learning that we must be completely committed to the work entrusted to us, and completely detached from ourselves. Had he not requested, way back in 1970, to be relieved of his responsibility as vice-president of the World Association,

because he believed that the time had come for him to be replaced, for the good of CLC? The prevailing tone was one of joy, and this was the word that sprang so frequently to his lips. The joy of being called, the joy of being able to love, the joy of being able to serve, the joy of suffering without losing inner peace. For him, suffering was the essential criterion of confirmation. But more on that later.

He listened carefully and attentively to our discussions, always encouraging us to go on. We were all comfortable, because we felt recognized and appreciated. At times, he would point to some particular spiritual attitude that we were called upon to live out more fully. He feared hasty decisions and warned us often against them: where did they come from, he would ask, and where were they leading us? Thus he awakened within us a spiritual sensitivity eager to receive rather than to grasp. As we watched him live, we understood that discernment is continuous: every situation, every event and decision, every problem must be dealt with in a spirit of evangelism. Where was Christ's spirit active? Where, by contrast, were manifested the movements of confusion, bitterness, pretense, lies... those unmistakable signs and fruits of the Evil Spirit? As to appearances, he would observe them with utmost caution watching until their true nature was revealed! On days when there were meetings, he would celebrate the Eucharist at the end of the day. In a brief homily, he would then shed light on our work through the Word of God. Those were special moments for us, and we looked forward to them.

His way of being and of working - which he never imposed - promoted unity. He always stressed the marvelous diversity that was so apparent at our international meetings, and the unity that comes about among those who believe in Christ and love him. Unity was one of the goals to be promoted. He could visualize it at every level: the inner unity of man, wounded and broken by sin, opening up to a love that saves; the unity of the members of

Christian Life Community in a Church Community serving one world; the unity of all Christians, the unity of all mankind in one fraternal world, which we must all strive for. The vision of unity haunted him and it was the last thing we talked about during our final visit five months before his death.

Filled with charity, he was open to all, and in particular to those who were most in need of it. His natural inclination was toward understanding and forgiveness and he was compassionate in all circumstances. His heart, so easily moved to compassion, made him feel close to the beggar he met in the street, and sad for the person who had hurt him or disappointed him. I have never once heard Fr. Paulussen be judgmental or critical; I have seen him sometimes be silent in the presence of behavior or attitudes that he could not share. He had made St Paul's words his own:

"If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interest first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus: His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God." (Letter to the Ph. 2:1-6).

What was given to us to grasp was only the outer dimension of an inner life deeply rooted in the life of Christ, humble and poor. This explained his joy; it was not the fruit of an inborn optimism or a passing enthusiasm that would disappear in the face of hardship. True disciple, he held that the supreme joy was to be tested, as his Master had been before him.

Looking to the future with an open mind

Profoundly interested in the world around him, Fr. Paulussen followed closely all the signs of change in the world and of new beginnings in the Church. The newspapers and magazines he read every day gave him a solide basis of information. He read them faithfully, never filing away any of the papers or newsletters we received without reading them first. He only gave this up the last years of his life, because his eyesight was failing, and then he listened to the radio instead.

Between 1951 and 1970 he travelled widely, establishing personal contacts with various Marian Congregations. He was familiar with many different countries, and his thoughts were spontaneously geared to the "world" level. The Son of God had come to save the world, and that is where he went to look for his standards. He kept in touch with many people who lived and worked all over the world. They were an endless source of news, facts, signs, trends providing clues to ongoing developments. Intent on keeping abreast of events, he missed few meetings or lectures that could bring light to contemporary reality. This was not mere curiosity on his part; rather, his purpose was to retain sensitivity, awareness and responsibility. The intricate transformations occurring in society demanded vigilance, greater attention to "the signs of the times". All of these items of information were not merely food for his own personal reflections; he carried them in him, "pondering them in his heart". Strong in his faith, he never drew back, was never paralyzed by fear, and was always able to face up to his times. In his discussions and conversation with young and old, priests, lay people and religious, he continuously revealed his capacity for dialogue and his wide understanding of human life. He walked "with" each one, not "alongside", always seeking to help others recognize Christ present and involved in every life story, and to help them decipher their personal situation, in the light of love.

His desire was to serve Christ, in every person and in every event, and this service of Christ was made possible, for him, through a special relationship to the Church. Wishing to understand precisely the thinking of the Church and the teachings of the Magisterium, he gave much of his time to a careful reading of the texts and documents issued by the Church. The Magisterium had often called for a deep and concrete commitment; for Fr. Paulussen, this call found a field of practical application in the renewal of the Marian Congregations and beyond that in their mission. When the 3rd World Assembly, meeting in Bombay in 1964, decided to delay the adoption of the General Principles to a later assembly, because the Vatican Council had just begun, many saw in this decision Fr. Paulussen's influence. If the new Principles were to reflect the Council's teachings, their adoption would have to be delayed till the work of the Council was complete.

Frequently, in his special intentions at Mass, in our conversations and in our office meetings, his words would echo the statements and concerns of the Church. His words about them, his prayers for them and the strength that they acquired in him punctuated our own work and our reflections. He made them ours, and awakened more strongly in us an awareness "of the situations in which the Church finds itself today" (GP 6). He used this as a tool to develop our sense of Church, and it was very effective: a living reminder to help us "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" (GP 2). These were no longer mere items of information that Fr. Paulussen shared with us in his statements: they had been interiorised and matured in prayer. He was teaching us to love, to serve, to work and to suffer with and for the Church.

He applied this same open-mindedness to his research on the Spiritual Exercises, the inspiration and the experience that Ignatius had condensed into them, the

historical events that were the result of the Exercises themselves. Some contributions were particularly important. As early as 1950-51. Fr. Joseph Stierli s.j. published some of his articles on the Marian Congregations, their methods and their devotion to Mary. The year 1953 saw the publication of a book by Fr. Hugo Rahner s.j. titled "Ignatius von Loyola und das geschichtliche Werden seiner Frömmigkeit". In September 1963, a European Conference was held in Rome to commemorate the 4th centenary of the foundation of the Marian Congregations. On this occasion, Fr. Paulussen invited Fr. Maurice Giuliani s.j. to speak on the spiritual foundation of the Marian Congregations and the Exercises of St Ignatius, the basis of their spirituality. These are only a few samples of the wide input we had. The renewal of the Congregations was greatly enriched by the reflections of contemporary experts, thanks to the open-mindedness and the intelligence of Fr. Paulussen.

Fr. Paulussen's openness grew out of a threefold concern for faithfulness: 1) faithfulness to the message of Christ in the historical framework of a changing world; 2) faithfulness to the Church and to her teachings; 3) faithfulness to the centuries-old tradition of the Marian Congregations. An article he wrote for the July/September 1982 issue of *Progressio* and titled "Faithful to our sources" is a good illustration of this. This spirit and this quality of presence, together with his rich natural intuition, allowed him to recognize in the ferment of renewal those tendencies that belonged indeed to the authentic tradition, and to support with great lucidity those innovations that stemmed from the tradition by way of an authentic and natural evolution.

It should be apparent by now that Fr. Paulussen was not a man who pulled people or things to himself. Rather, he was the sign of the call he transmitted, which is why, long after he had effectively relinquished all responsibility, many of us still went to him for advice. He walked with all those whom the Lord had placed on his

path, and along the way, we received so very much from him. His knowledge has enlightened us; his way of feeling and understanding situations has taught us vigilance; our own discernment has been awakened by his. In all circumstances, his behavior was a lesson to us, for it always pointed to freedom and we all know well that his tenderness was strength. This was the servant that God had chosen to be a pioneer and a pathfinder in the renewal of the Marian Congregations.

II - HIS WORK

In 1979, Progressio published a special issue (Supplement n.14 - June 1979). It was titled "God works like that" and was written by Fr. Paulussen in response to our request for a history of the Marian Congregations. The CLC identity had been strengthened and unified on the international level by two World Assemblies, Augsburg-1973 and Manila-1976, and by the formation sessions that were held in association with these Assemblies. Already the experience of renewal was strong enough to awaken a certain curiosity about the origins and the development of the movement we had inherited, and to evoke in us a desire to live out our commitment in faithfulness to the original sources. We had spontaneously turned to Father Paulussen for answers to our questions. In response, he wrote the now familiar story, bringing to life the exhilarating moments as well as the darker pages of the history of the movement. The author places facts and events in their objective framework, yet the tale is livened by his own memories of the critical time of renewal in this century. In a few pages, he invites us to see that the world, its history, our community, the happy events in our lives, our sorrows and our difficulties are all the work of God. God draws us to himself, and by our participation in the cross brings us together and unites his children to himself, "powerfully, with total respect for our freedom, and in accordance with the great law that life must pass through death". His words become witness, inspired by that faith which was his implicit signature.

In the following pages, I shall attempt to outline some of the highlights and turning points of the renewal of the Marian Congregations, as a renewal inspired and initiated primarily by Fr. Paulussen. Rather than follow the chronological order of events, I shall look at the profound influence of Fr. Paulussen's input on the process of renewal. Many others participated. Yet, his role and his presence, both apostolic and spiritual, were such that his contribution became the keystone of renewal.

Building unity

His first priority, when we arrived in Rome, was to get to know the existing Marian Congregations in various parts of the world. He travelled a great deal throughout his term of office. His lengthy journeys allowed him gradually to gain a clear vision of the situation as it was then, as well as a precise understanding of the needs of existing groups, both visible and hidden. In his introduction to Emile Villaret's "Brief History", he summarized his findings:

"Not so long ago, I passed through a magnificent medieval town in one of the older parts of Europe. Over the centuries, this town has suffered greatly. The horrible scars of the recent war were still everywhere to be seen. Yet, the atmosphere was not one of discouragement, and I could see on every side that the work of reconstruction was underway. Besides, the churches, the houses and most noteworthy buildings were still standing. The town was damaged, but not destroyed. All the special features it had acquired over the centuries had remained intact. This town is an exact image of the present situation of the Marian Congregations throughout the world".

A little further, he clarifies his thought:

"It is true that if we look at the movement of the Congregations throughout the world, we do see a few ruins, here and there. But we can also discover and

admire in them a deep inner life, a fervent Marian devotion, a spirit of conquest and apostolate in every field and in every form, inspired by a great love for the Church and guided by the solid rules of 'Sentire cum Ecclesia'. The most encouraging fact is that in following faithfully the rules of 'Bis Saeculari' (1), we return seriously to the only source of all effective and powerful renewal, to the authentic inspiration of the Congregations: the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius".

His many travels had other results, in addition to the deep understanding they gave him of the reality of the Marian Congregations of that period. This soon became apparent, as a communications network began to take shape between the national associations and the central secretariat. Contacts between countries were further strengthened as a result of the general assemblies of the World Federation, created in 1953 on the initiative of Fr. Paulussen. Years later, these would form the backbone of the worldwide community experience of CLC. Commenting on the General Principles (1967 edition), Fr. Paulussen wrote:

"The striking thing, when one reads the General Principles, is the enormous emphasis placed on communal life. It is an innovation that was insisted upon by all those involved in the drafting of the text. Community spirit is expressed first of all in the literary genre of the document: after four centuries we have returned to a communal mode of expression ("we", "our", "us"), one that existed in the oldest version of the rule drafted by the very first group in Rome in 1574".

(1) Apostolic Constitution issued by Pius XII in 1948

Worldwide, the situation of the CC.MM. in the 50's and 60's was one of great diversity. Among those Congregations that had survived two centuries of "a decline of the authentic spirit" (see "God works like that", p.23), the more vigorous were undertaking aggrionamento, while others had settled into their status quo. In a few countries, where the CC.MM. seemed on the verge of collapse, new groups were appearing, attempting to give life to the creative initiative from which they had sprung. The global situation, in itself quite intricate, was further complicated by the disparity in experiences and situations. Most people would probably have despaired of ever bringing together what seemed to have exploded in many different directions. But Fr. Paulussen did not. As a man of faith, he accepted the situation as it was, and began work, sparing no effort and expecting all from God. His attitude was a practical expression of the spirituality that guided him, beautifully summarized in the prayer we all know so well:

Trust in God,
as if success depended entirely on you
and not at all on God;
yet, at the same time,
apply your soul fully to your task
knowing you are helpless in yourself
and all in God's hands.

Fr. Paulussen was convinced that his task was to heed back to the original spirit; confirmed in this, he worked at it with commitment. Yet, he remained close to those who were far removed from this goal, to those who had neither wanted nor understood his path. This was an important aspect of his personality, one that remained true till the very end of his life. Many times we saw in him expressions of this attitude of constant fidelity to the authenticity of a life of grace, and of the state of reconciliation in which he lived constantly. A reconciliation that came from his will to love.

His manner expressed his deep caring and profound respect for people: there were no tricks, no pressure, no constraint; simply options to which one could freely react. Consensus gradually replaced choices imposed from above. This was merely a first step and a first lesson in the kind of respect for others that was to become a hallmark of all our meetings and assemblies. Step by step, as individuals and groups entered into the proposed way, we were to learn to listen to each other, recognizing bits of truth in words spoken by others. Fr. Paulussen had cleared the way and prepared a path for a Christian community to make decisions with discernment rather than through a power struggle. To be sure, his efforts were not always understood. For some, he was going too fast; for others, too slowly. Yet he remained unshakeable in his two-fold fidelity to grace and to people.

Indeed, it is thanks to this fidelity that the renewal of the MCs took place in its own time, with the participation of a large proportion of members and countries, and in a climate of patience. Fr. Paulussen had brought together what had been broken. He had brought about the necessary conditions for renewal: creating bonds, awakening a common desire, unifying expectations, awakening faithfulness to a Church-directed path.

Once these conditions were set up, the task of renewal had a foundation on which it could grow. Rather than reflecting one particular experience, broadened and transmitted to a variety of countries, renewal would involve contributions from all, from every culture, through a frequent sharing of experiences. The role of general assemblies, in this respect, has been crucial. In such a context, the true CLC identify would gradually emerge, pruned of its burden of useless developments, accepted and absorbed by every one together. The joint realization of this task was an illustration of one of Fr. Paulussen's beliefs, as he expressed it in "Fundamental themes" (p.14):

"Whoever is united with Christ enters into the divine community of trinitarian life and at the same time

into the universal community of human life. the more Christian we are, the more human we become. The more Christian we are, the more "social" we become. That is why the Church is essentially community and not a collection of individuals. That is why church groups are above all communities that naturally and spontaneously function together. This is all very clear. It is the reality of our catholic faith".

The few lines quoted above are illustrative of Fr. Paulussen's life of faith. He does not allow us to reduce unity to the result of our joint efforts. He does not authorize us to stop there as though it were an achievement accomplished by our own means. He brings us back to the source, to God's gift. Genuine unity, he teaches us, is not that which is born of agreement, of good will, of dialogue, of sharing, no matter how important and essential these may be. Unity, he tells us, is born of trinitarian love uniting in Jesus all those who welcome Him. Unity in Christ thus means to follow him, to live as he did, letting the Holy Spirit build this unity within us. Finally, we are reminded that the unity to which CLC prepares us must lead all members to be its servants, striving towards it within the context of their own particular circumstances, human, social, economic and political. Surely, this was the hope voiced in the theme of Rome'79, "One World Community of Christian Life at the service of one world", a hope that acquired concrete expression three years later, on the occasion of Providence'82. The seed had sprouted.

Inspiring and motivating renewal

On 27 September 1948, Pius XII issued the Apostolic Constitution Bis Saeculari, which marked the beginning of the period of renewal. As Fr. Paulussen stated on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its publication (see Progressio, January 1974, p.18), this was "a call to renewal":

"The most interesting thing which the Constitution achieved was to face the Church of 1948 with a surprising new picture of a disdained, misunderstood and abused association. For many members it was a tremendous challenge for fidelity to an old ideal, a pressing call for reform, for unconditional service. Something like of the call of the Eternal King in the Exercises. What impressed most was not so much the long list of statements, but rather the moving, inviting tone of the Constitution as such, the impact of the whole. Such documents can be read in many ways. Knowing the background, the context, and especially the person who wrote it, you find a burning spark, the seed of new life, hidden under the curial style and the juridical terms. The Pope praises all that could be praised, you feel his confidence, his affection, his love. It makes one restless and it pushed irresistibly to the great question of the Exercises: and now, what does God want us to do?"

The Constitution was well received on the whole, but responses were a little slow getting underway. Fr. Paulussen noted (see id. p.19):

"A first answer came from an international Jesuit meeting (Rome, 1950). A respectful answer. Too quiet. not enough new thinking. No revolution after the explosion. Strangely enough, Bis Saeculari, certainly meant as a stimulus to new development, was at times uses as an argument blocking further growth. ("The Constitution says that nothing may be change!"). We badly needed more effective structures, permanent communication with the base, cooperation with responsible people on the national level, better rules. Pius XII saw it. He, the man who insisted continually on the urgency of activity on the international level, he the Pope of the World Congresses for the Laity, who told us that on this ever smaller earth a new international community was in formation".

Bis Saeculari was the Pope's send-off to the Marian Congregations, and Fr. Paulussen always thought of Pius XII as "the greatest promoter of our movement at a time of opposition, decline and deviations".

Arriving in Rome in 1951, soon after the proclamation of this Constitution, Fr. Paulussen found that in practical terms, the situation was intricate and confused. Bis Saeculari provided him with a light to shine on his path. Commenting on this, he wrote the following (see idem p.19):

"After the publication of Bis Saeculari all those endless discussions on our identity became silent. The new image of the CM was clear, much clearer than in any other document of the past. As in the Exercises the whole spirituality is centered on Christ. As in the Rules of the first group in 1574, the aim is the Christian Life in its fulness and in all its dimensions. (...) There is another reason to be grateful: the absolute priority given to the Exercises of Ignatius. They are listed number one in the enumeration of the means of CLC in Bis Saeculari. All those interested understood what it meant: if we want to live what we are, we have to go to the source and drink".

The imagery was clear and although it put an end to all discussion concerning our identity, this identity still had to be implemented within a reality that was very diverse. He began his work in close cooperation with all within the Marian Congregations, those who were burning with the desire for renewal and those who were tranquilly settled in their ways. A chance for renewal would be offered to all. Many took it, others stayed on the fringes, but maintained regular and fraternal contact with the secretariat; a few broke away completely. The clear definition of our identity, as it gradually emerged through concrete implementation, allowed each to find a place and to respond in conscience by following their own particular path.

It was not always an easy path to follow, and there were many difficulties to confront. At the time of a particularly painful separation, during the Assembly of Santo Domingo in 1970, Fr. Paulussen wrote an editorial (Progressio 4/1970) expressing his hope that this separation "carried within itself the promise of a greater union". One reader reacted negatively to this way of viewing things. Fr. Paulussen's answer to him is worth looking at again, for it contains much food for thought. Here are a few excerpts from it:

"I am surprised that such a man, involved on a daily basis in the practical work of our movement, should be opposed to a simple application that attempts to integrate the events of daily life into the reality of redemption.

We are in the Easter season. In his letter, our friend stated that he loves the General Principles. Surely he must agree that our spirituality "is centered on Christ and on participation in the Paschal Mystery" (GP5). However, this is not merely a beautiful theory or a set of abstract concepts. We are invited to live this mystery "continuously", to "seek constantly" to know what God is asking of us "in each concrete situation of our daily life". This existential meaning, this attention to concrete reality, here and now, is typical of the General Principles.

In the editorial, all I did was confess my faith in the Paschal Mystery. Not in some abstract way, but in a concrete and practical way. It is easy for us to believe that Jesus "saved the world". But what does this mean, if I do not believe very concretely that he has saved every situation, every ordinary event in our daily life? And I repeat: 'Jesus has done everything. On his side, there is nothing to add. But on our side, everything still needs to be done'. It is up to us to continue redemption. Here and now it all depends on us. It depends on our responsibility, on our availability, on our creativity, on our openness, on our willingness to listen, on our sensitivity to the movements of the Spirit". (Progressio, May 1971).

"Every break needs mending". He did not hesitate to undertake an intercontinental trip to sort out the difficulties and strengthen cohesion.

I chose this example, among many others, to illustrate some aspects of Fr. Paulussen's personality; his total presence to the moment, no matter what the circumstances; his evaluation of any situation in the light of faith; a total commitment to the search for a just solution. He never stopped at the immediate interpretation of events; through faith he could see more deeply into their significance, and this led to adhesion to the Father's will. Many times the path we had to follow proved to be a harsh one, littered with obstacles, difficulties, sorrow. We were dealing with the reality of a world-wide situation, with all its complexities, its values, but also its shadowy areas, opening up a whole new dimension to the spiritual effort of renewal of which spiritual struggle is a constant element.

Under his impetus, the project of a World Federation was taking shape concretely. The project had not initially met with general agreement. Many recognized the need for cooperation at the international level, but did not feel comfortable with the idea of a definite structure to express it. Nevertheless, in 1952, the secretariat in Rome was invited to draft statutes and submit them to the national MCs and then to the pope. Attitudes had evolved, and the draft was adopted. On 2 July 1953, Pius XII approved it by a letter in which, once again, he expressed his interest in the MCs:

"All who are familiar with our thinking concerning the modern apostolate, know how dear to us are the MC and how deeply we are interested in their continued spiritual progress".

The instrument now existed, and Fr. Paulussen presented it in these terms:

"It is true that Bis Saeculari did not foresee such a Federation. But it is a natural consequence. The question, 'what does God want us to do?' does not make sense unless we are able to do something. This implies that we are united - and not only spiritually - in a permanent way. This means World Federation: a concrete possibility for deliberation and action on the world level" (Progressio, Jan. 1974).

"A minimum of structures inspired by a maximum of catholic spirit", as he often said, to enable discussion and action on a world level. What we needed was an instrument that could prepare members, and would itself be prepared, to respond to the call of the risen Lord: "Go! I am sending you out to the nations far away" (Acts 22:21). The Gospel must be announced in every language, rooted in all the different ways of feeling, expressing oneself and living. The World Federation would be a crossroads of cultures and an education for all of us.

Once the instrument of communication was set in motion, a more decisive phase of the work of renewal could begin. Bis Saeculari had invited the Marian Congregations in various countries to enter into the path of aggiornamento.

"All of (these groups) followed the orientation of Pius XII and so there began within the MC movement a complete revival of the Exercises, the original source of the authentic MCs" (See God works like that, p. 42).

As early as 1951, and despite serious opposition, students in Cleveland decided on an eight day silent retreat. In 1959, the adult group suggested for the first time a 30 day retreat. Other countries in the various continents undertook new initiatives. Fr. Paulussen continued to stimulate, support, encourage, inform, publish experiences. Gradually a common outline began to emerge. The

time had come to start thinking of drafting the General Principles that would replace the old rules, made obsolete by changes in human society. The Newark Assembly in 1959 invited the central secretariat to begin preparing a text. The process took eight years, punctuated by consultations with national federations. To some, this might seem rather long. But for someone like Fr. Paulusse, imbued as he was with the mystery of the Incarnation which had become his favorite meditation, this was a time of waiting, a time of non-productivity, a time of inner growth in preparation for an opening up to grace. When the General Principles were adopted in 1967 by the Assembly in Rome, few could have guessed that they would be the source of a formidable new wave that would surge powerfully through time. It was the grace of a "new beginning", of a re-birth.

Introducing the central themes of the General Principles Fr. Paulussen wrote:

"There is a common thread that runs through the various aspects and bind them together: the universal catholic spirit, independent of form, structure or institution, giving priority to no single devotion or apostolate and remaining open to all that Christ's Church has to offer. (From this standpoint the new name - Christian Life - is particularly significant). The central idea thus stresses the only thing that is necessary - *unum necessarium* -: our response to God's call. All else is relative; if the means do not favour the end, they have no meaning. However, such a universal spirit presupposes a choice, or better, constant choices. What means should we chose? The answer is, discernment. Our spirituality is different from others precisely in the accent it places not on poverty, or liturgy, or action, or Marian devotion, or contemplation, or culture, but rather on discernment, in other words on the ability to recognize 'whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life' (GP 5)" (see Fundamental Themes, p.3).

The companion

As early as 1950, after the Jesuit meeting that followed the publication of Bis Saeculari, Fr. Paulussen was asking several important questions:

"Can only Jesuits represent a lay association? Where are the lay representatives themselves? Where does the responsibility of the lay people on world level come in? What is the opinion of the laity on Bis Saeculari, on renewal, on new rules, new structures?" (...) The secretariat is not enough. It can never act as representative for the MCs on world level. We need a representative body of qualified lay people together with priests. The laity should take responsibility into their own hands" (quoted from "God works like that", pp. 34-35).

The establishment of the World Federation was an answer to these questions. Lay members of the MCs were now involved in the renewal. A lay executive council was elected at each assembly to implement guidelines as they emerged. In most countries and at the world level, renewal was beginning to take roots, thanks to the involvement of all and in a spirit of perfect collaboration between laity and spiritual assistants. The example had come from above.

In 1970, Fr. Paulussen asked to be relieved of his responsibilities as world vice-assistant. CLC officials requested that he remain in Rome, and this was granted. He was there, present whenever we called on him, and as always anxious to remain in the background. Above all, he wanted to avoid disturbing the work of his successors. I have never seen him at a meeting of the secretariat, of a commission or of the executive council, that we had not expressly asked him to come to. All of us - spiritual assistants and lay members - were very much aware of what his presence contributed. Not only was he the living reminder of our history, but he followed its

course with the serene assurance of one who recognized God's ways. He remained the servant of grace, the grace that was given to us, and even in his reserve he communicated to us his fervent desire to serve it.

The General Principles provided us with a written description of the CLC way of life. But how were we to encourage the progress of groups toward real community? There were no easy answers to any of these questions. We felt - and events confirmed this - that not every kind of initiation of formation would lead to an experience of the CLC way of life. In order to implement concretely the renewal we were involved in, we would have to undertake a renewal of the very concept of formation and of the methods of formation. Unless the initial effort was followed up by this further demanding effort of clarification, it could well burn itself out leaving no lasting effects.

The real turning point was 1973, when the first international session on formation was held in Villa Cavalletti, outside Rome, and followed by the Augsburg Assembly. The executive council had decided that the session would take place if there were at least 20 participants. Much to our surprise, 105 members of Christian Life Community, coming from 39 countries, registered for the 15 day session! Clearly, the proposed session was meeting a real need. For the first eight days, all took part in individually guided spiritual Exercises; during the remaining week, they defined and deepened their understanding of the essential aspects of the CLC way of life. Practical teaching, perfectly integrated with the dynamics of the Exercises, would have a lasting effect on the process of growth, a process that must be encouraged within the framework of a serious commitment to CLC. The Augsburg Assembly, in turn, made further progress in the search for common guidelines and in its ability to overcome differences through the "respectful challenge of love".

There are good reasons for reviewing these events: they provide an example of the unfailing support Fr. Paulussen gave to natural and authentic developments that allowed us to deepen our baptismal vocation in the wake of Vatican II. We insisted that he should take part in the preparatory work for the formation session, and provide a daily input during the session itself; every evening, he presented the theme and the methodology for the following day. It took several hard days work to prepare the session. As we defined key aspects, set forth a methodology that was expressive of the CLC way of life, fundamental questions were raised. The session was to be an opportunity for participants to understand their commitment to a specific vocation. Membership in CLC requires more than superficial involvement; it call for in depth sharing and total commitment. This could only be fully understood through some form of experimentation that would take into account the life and background of each one, giving to all the opportunity to judge for themselves how well they fit in by matching themselves against the CLC way of life. It would not be enough to provide "a few elements" of spirituality; rather, it was important to give access to it in full, and to make clear the demands of the spiritual experience proposed by Ignatius in his Exercises. The purpose was clear: to form free men and women who would be ready to serve others and to promote the concept of "every person, and the whole person".

Within the preparatory team, discussion brought out two major challenges. The first: to provide the participants with a true experience of the CLC way of life, and beyond that, with an understanding of the process of growth involved and of its main pedagogical turning points. Defining and sharing a common orientation with respect to the process of formation to CLC was a deeply felt need. The point was not to establish a formation "program", but rather to fully absorb the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises. This would allow each person to develop the most appropriate methods for initiation and further formation, best suited to his or her own culture and group. A common orientation with

respect to the process had to be clearly defined; its implementation required, and will always require, formed lay people. We were going beyond the fumbling initiatives in the area of formation that were unrelated to the experience proposed, or those that became an end in themselves. The second challenge grew out of the first and concerned the rediscovery of "means", methods that educate and develop basic attitudes such as attention, sharing, prayer, vigilance, etc. It also involved learning to seek unity while respecting differences, and using discernment to make decisions. To make all of this possible, it was necessary to work in small groups.

Fr. Paulussen was right there, as always following all that was said, never missing a word. He listened for a long time. We could all feel how attentive he was. Then the time came to summarize our discussions and draw out practical proposals for the organization of the session. We were all talking about "successive stages" and "daily teachings"; and then, he spoke up. He spoke of the link between the spirit that had presided over the renewal, and the concrete events that were taking shape in the preparatory work for the session. He could see how this formation process, modeled along the lines of the Exercises, would give thousands of lay people the opportunity to live out fully their baptismal vocation and mission. His joy was obvious. He encouraged us to continue and to persevere.

Three years later, we were preparing for the 1976 Assembly in Manila. The theme for this assembly had been chosen, as usual, in consultation with national communities: "Poor with Christ for a better service". Fr. Paulussen was particularly happy about this, and he wrote an open letter to the communities (see *Progressio*, Jan. 1976). Once again, in this letter, we see him sharing trustingly with us all the things that seemed important to him, and giving us support by pointing to the lighted beacons along the chosen path:

"Dear Friends. I am writing this letter to congratulate you. The reason for my congratulations? Your having chosen as theme for Manila '76: Poor with Christ for a Better Service. (...) Why has this theme so touched me? There are many reasons. I will limit myself to three of them.

1. "Poor with Christ for a better service" is a very concrete follow-up to Augsburg '73: "CLC, a community at the service of the liberation of all men". Augsburg was an important event, a decisive step forward, the lived experience of a new integration: Exercises - World Community - liberation. I rejoice that this experience is being continued through specifying it further and deepening it anew.
2. This is the first time that the theme of an Assembly of our World Federation is centered on Christ. In our age of secularization that so often reveals immaturity, this is a real blessing.
3. Manila invites us to contemplate in Jesus the attitude that, I would dare to say, is most specifically Ignatian, his poverty".

He goes on to explain his three reasons. And I quote again:

"Our commitment to liberation must become a better service by a deeper spiritual poverty on our part, thus aiming at eliminating the causes of oppression and injustice, and also by a real and actual poverty, witnessing in this way to our solidarity with the poor. It was especially with them that Jesus identified himself." "The theme of Manila is an invitation not only to study, but also to contemplation. Its inspiration is not a concept or an idea, but a Person. The Person of Jesus, one with the Father in the Spirit, one with all men and women, his brothers and sisters in the same Spirit. It is He who will be at the center of your deliberations - Jesus poor and humble, infinitely more than simply an historical Person. He will be present, living, active,

giving himself and manifesting himself, inviting all to be with Him. Risen and invisible, he is the Jesus of the Gospel, the incarnation of eternal Love, hidden in his creatures, humble, simple, powerless, silent. What an eloquent poverty! But also, if I discover Him, if I see Him, what freedom!"

"I am happy, dear friends, that you want to deepen your sense of evangelical poverty. You know that the Exercises are an inestimable help. The key meditations of the Second Week introduce us to it in a special way. Here I would like to mention at least the incomparable meditation on the Two Standards (Ex.136) (...)

"The Gospel is filled with marvelous examples of this liberty on the part of Jesus. Attached only to the will of the Father, he is immune to the least pressure, no matter where it comes from. Lord and Master of situations, he seeks neither esteem, nor success, nor security, nor certitude, nor understanding, nor support, nor satisfaction. True Man with a human heart, He is simple, independent and free as regards everyone. Not only as regards political and religious authorities, but also as regards the people and its desires. He disconcerts his friends and his disciples, he opposes himself to his fellow countrymen, his family, even to his mother".

Let us now turn to his conclusions and receive his message:

"To be poor with Christ means to be free with Him. But we are still on the way. We must - always with Him - cross the desert, go through the dark night, the dryness and emptiness, the desolation, the suffering, the annihilation. To be poor with Christ means to accept and to embrace with love daily life, including its insults, its hurts, its disillusionments and its humiliations. The Exercises speak, and with insistence, of the desire for humiliations and contempt... (Ex 98, 146, 167).

As for me, I see here the very heart of our spirituality: whoever wants to see and love God in all things must be purified and liberated in all things. That supposes depth, radicality, totality. It supposes above all that we live what we are: one with Jesus poor and humiliated. I am deeply convinced that this "highest spiritual poverty" and a more profound humility are essential for the renewal and the rejuvenation of the Church today. Those who are privileged to consider Ignatian spirituality as their characteristic way have here a very special vocation. To be even more specific: I believe that this poverty - a great gift of God - is available to all those who make the experience of the authentic Exercises. Without this poverty-purification, our "disponibility" and discernment, our prayer and our commitment, do not go very far...

Dear friends, you perhaps understand still better now why I congratulate you.

With you always, in Him. L. Paulussen s.j."

To the very last years of his life, he was present to us, in a very real way, holding in his prayers our response to active grace, and giving support to the efforts underway. When his health no longer allowed him to leave his room, we took turns going to see him, bringing him news of life in the CLC, of the "signs" that were appearing, the questions that were being raised, of activities and services that were starting up. He listened in silent attentiveness to these tales of teeming life, and when he spoke, all of these developments suddenly became part of a "flow" whose strength and vitality had renewed a movement centuries old. Fr Paulussen was the living memory of this flow, better yet, he had been the agent of its continuation.

In him we had found a companion for our journey who helped us nourish our Christian lives with the Ignatian charism. He led us to fully assume our responsibilities as lay people in fraternal collaboration with our spiritual assistants. He helped us to love the Society of

Jesus, and our relationship with it developed and grew spontaneously. What was at stake, at all times, was the best service we could give, that of cooperating in God's work within the men and women of today. Our mission is given to us within the Church, and we must assume it together, in perfect fidelity to the vocation we have received.

* * *

The presence of Fr Paulussen at the central secretariat in Rome coincided with the most decisive years of renewal of the Marian Congregations, and their transformation into the Christian Life Community. The crucial turning point was negotiated, step by step, during that time. In his balanced and discrete manner, he carried the heavy burden of this undertaking. He did his work humbly, with courage and lucidity in a spirit of full cooperation with all those who were involved in it. There is much to be done, and each has a part to play.

Chosen and called for this task, Fr Paulussen was at the very heart of the transformation that took place, with all the inevitable difficulties, the problems and the trials that such a venture cannot fail to create. The hardships were many and some proved to be permanent. We learned many an important lesson, as we watched him react to moments of difficulty and crisis. Far from being discouraged by trials, he seemed strengthened and revitalized: he was there, fully present. He would recognize the seriousness of a situation, never minimizing the repercussions it could have, but all of this only made him more dynamic, more intensely alive. The cross and suffering had been Christ's lot; they must be the lot of those who follow him. For Fr Paulussen, these were the signs confirming the fulfilment of the mission, signs of participation in the Pascal mystery.

Did he ever experience fear? It seems unlikely. What we know of him would lead us to believe that Jesus' words, "It is I, do not be afraid" had reassured him and

filled him with confidence. He accepted trials, conscious of his poverty and wishing to be even more open to the Gospels. He went on, motivated by a sense of inner comfort, open and willing to let the Holy Spirit be active within him despite everything. Hardship, like any other thing, was the occasion to give praise and thanks to the Lord.

At the end of an article titled "Why suffering?" (See Progressio, March 1984) he wrote:

"Suffering is a mystery of God, who is infinite Love. God wants neither death nor suffering for themselves. He only wants to communicate himself further and give life to people in abundance. Jesus never went in search of the cross. The cross went in search of Jesus, precisely because he was innocent. The powers of darkness never accept light.

If I try to grow in union with God, I attract evil and sufferings, but infinitely more do I attract the merciful love of God, who gives me peace of heart, interior freedom, the life of Jesus for the world.

In Jesus, God accepts death as testimony of his infinite love for people. The cross is the crowning of the greatest love between God and ourselves. In Jesus, God gives his life for us. In Jesus, men and women give their lives for God.

The famous "magis" of the Spiritual Exercises is not a technique invented by Saint Ignatius. This dynamic force is the natural law of love which always wants to give itself further".

Times of hardship and sorrow revealed more intensely the profound unity in which Fr Paulussen lived, bringing together the contemplation of divine mystery and the tenderness of the human condition. He accepted human trials and contradictions with a heart that had willingly burned in the fire of divine love. He integrated them, whatever the pain they brought with them, with no other concern than that of remaining the faithful servant of grace, whatever form it took.

Josée Gsell

