



*CLC and the Centrality of
Mission*

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INTRODUCTION

This issue of PROGRESSIO which we have the joy of offering the World Community is the outcome of two years' work by the International Reflection Team which was invited to develop the following theme by ExCo;

To study and reflect on the centrality of the mission in our Ignatian CLC spirituality, taking account of previous experiences and reflections, and suggesting to ExCo avenues and means whereby the results of this study can be communicated to our members at all levels.

At long last, after two years and on the eve of Hong Kong '94, we are now in a position to offer the fruits of our labors. Perhaps they will not be perfect, but there is no doubt that they are the best that we have been able to achieve, given our limitations.

We decided to base our work on real-life experience. The first chapter therefore provides the reader with four mission experiences - both personal and communitary - and the process which led to them and carried them forward.

We then attempt to re-read these experiences in the light of what has happened in the CLC throughout its history: its ancient history with the Marian Congregations, its modern history since 1967 and the *General Principles*. Our history helps us to reflect today on our missionary commitment.

However, it would not be possible to reflect seriously on the centrality of the mission in the CLC without reaching out openly and generously to the Mystery which is its source and the reason of its very existence. This is done in the third chapter, which provides a theological reflection on the Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesiological sources of our CLC mission, striving to dialogue at all times with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, as the source and instrument of our missionary spirituality.

Lastly, the fourth chapter brings us back to the reality of our world and the challenges which lead us to experience the centrality of the mission. We trust that the questions that emerge from this concluding chapter will be the seeds which will grow in the soil of the World Community, bearing much fruit and bringing it increasingly into line with the Will of God and the inspiration of St. Ignatius. May we be able to continue serving the World Community in the search for the centrality of its mission.

Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer
(CLC-Brazil)

I. FOUR MISSION EXPERIENCES

An experience of CLC life and service

(the Gonzaga Community - CLC-Ecuador)

When, 15 years ago, we began to familiarize ourselves with the Centro Universitario none of us realized that we were setting out on an experience that would last our whole lives.

We were mostly medical students, and by mutual invitation we were anxious to revive the "Círculo Médico" that provided study and training facilities for future doctors. It was here that there first emerged a desire to support the "servicio médico popular" - providing medical care to the working and peasant classes.

We spent the first little while getting to know one another, to get the feeling of being part of a group,

increasing in mutual trust and beginning the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*, while gradually working out what we expected to achieve through our service, as a group of physicians, after graduation.

It was in mid-1982 that the CLC was officially re-established in Ecuador, and our group started out as a pre-community, taking the name of Gonzaga. We continued in our search for group growth and for greater familiarity with the CLC path. We saw the *Spiritual Exercises* as a very special opportunity for seeking the Will of God for each and every one of us.

Subsequently we held a CLC course, and later still we took our

TEMPORAL COMMITMENT.

But it was after we graduated that the zero hour of our community adventure struck. As we spent a year working at the RURAL MEDICINE SERVICE, using the Exercises as our basis, we asked ourselves individually and as a group this fundamental question:

How does Our Lord wish us to devote ourselves to the most needy through the common service of our profession?

Despite the fact that we were novices in the discernment methodology, we placed our trust in our resolute readiness, simplicity and freedom. And this enabled us to think and feel deeply, without any setbacks.

We spent a great deal of time preparing our discernment. Our rural service gave us the chance to spend Holy Week in retreat at the Casa de San Agustín, near Quito. The first thing we did was to deeply confirm our CLC vocation. It was so deeply rooted that it affected both ourselves and the health care authorities. Our second proposal was to provide a common professional service. The response was affirmative. It was a logical consequence of the idea we had been nurturing since our undergraduate days.

The fundamental issue was to decide where to settle down. We analyzed all the implications of this question, and after examining the consequences of the decision, the solidity of the group, our self-giving, our capacity for self-sacrifice, we defined the main features of what the community would have to be: the resolute acceptance to work where the need was greatest. We then set about establishing the basic approach which the Center would take: high professional standards, and service to the community. We accepted the proposal to set up a medical center.

In our sharing after the retreat, each one spoke of the choice they had made, and we reached the conclusion that we felt gathered, called, and sent as a community by Our Lord on a mission to serve the poor sections of the population, or preferably the rural population, by pursuing the CLC path.

In October 1984 six of us began practicing as doctors, providing a service at Santo Domingo de los Colorados and la Independencia, 130 and 180 km to the west of Quito. As our operational instrument we set up the "Asociación Médica Ecuatoriana de Compromiso Cristiano ASME CX."

While providing our rural medicine service, we met a priest who joined us in order to animate our spiritual growth and at the same time forge direct contact between us and the local Curia. However, his eagerness to run things and take all the decisions created serious tension, and we were obliged to ask him to leave the group. As a result of this, the Curia unfortunately lost its confidence in us. Nevertheless our motivation enabled us to press on with our work. In the first few years we held our weekly community meetings in Quito, accompanied by the National Assistant. We continued using the Exercises as our principal source of impetus for our work, seeking greater integration in our personal and community life.

Five years ago, five of us took the permanent commitment to living the CLC lifestyle just as several new companions were joining in our work. Today there are fifteen members or would-be members of the Community.

One of the great changes that has had a major impact on us over this period was the membership of married couples. It has given us a new slant on our commitment, but at the same time it has given rise to new difficulties. Before this new

situation could be fully taken on board, everyone had to agree to it, and three of our founding companions left the group as a result.

One of the most far-reaching decisions we took was to live in greater poverty. We wanted to follow the example of the early Christian communities, and we managed to achieve real sharing. In practical terms we organized ourselves with a common fund for both the married and the unmarried members. Each person was given what they required without any distinction in terms of profession or functions. This was also an experience which enabled us to work better with, and from the viewpoint of, the poor, for their liberation through our health care and community commitment.

The service and its priorities have varied across the years. Initially we only provided medical care, but three years ago we began to place greater importance on educational work, and supporting the organization of the poor people as a means of achieving our objectives. Even though the scope of our service has broadened, we have also seen that our CLC life has been neglected to a certain extent, and this has caused a number of

contradictions and tensions to emerge. We can therefore say that we are now passing through that phase of our path in which interpersonal tensions, as well as an awareness of our limitations, are emerging. Stormy weather has followed in the wake of the calm we experienced in the early stages. And once again we have to ask ourselves whether we are really doing what Our Lord wants of us, or whether we are simply striving to achieve our own personal aspirations.

We trust in Our Lord, and we therefore believe that we shall overcome, aware as we are that following Him is not a matter of our own merits but a gift which is given to us freely. We are committed to devoting greater effort to the means of our spirituality, especially discernment and community prayer. This will enable us to go forward with a clearer vision in our search for the treasure of the Kingdom.

As far as our future is concerned, as a Medical Association we are obliged to run our service according to the socio-political circumstances. Our aim is not only to provide medical treatment but also to carry out educational work which will strengthen the organization and solidarity of the working classes, in order to create conditions that will make it possible to raise the living standards of the people whom we serve. Our commitment in this direction flies in the face of the wave of conservatism which gives priority to the private sphere and the individual rather than solidarity, which is the attitude that should move the world.

As a CLC Community we are in a situation which leads us to seek our personal and community redemption, to enable us to improve the quality of our CLC life, aware as we are that everything that we receive will always be a gift of God.

A lawyer at the service of rural communities

(Pat McIntyre - CLC-Australia)

The setting

The southern part of Australia is a huge arid region. Two-thirds of the three million population live in the capital, Adelaide. Less than one-third live in the countryside, which is mostly the semi-arid agricultural belt forming a productive coastal fringe.

The region's economy is based upon the automobile industry, agriculture and mining. Agriculture is practiced by people living in small towns that serve the local farming regions where the land is mostly worked by the families who own the land. Most of the rural communities have their own schools and hospitals and other community facilities that have been set up by the people themselves over generations. Most of these towns

depend entirely on farming, and their services are geared to agriculture.

During the 80's South Australia suffered its worst drought in a hundred years. The first occurred in 1982-83, followed by the second in 1989. During the same decade the national financial market was deregulated, the Australian dollar fluctuated, foreign banks entered the market, the market control cooperatives and committees were abolished, agricultural imports were deregulated, the agricultural, industrial and service sector machinery industry was centralized/monopolized, international prices collapsed and a market war broke out, centering around the European market stabilization pattern; structural community services such

as health care and education became centralized monopolies, and substantial cuts were made to welfare programs and services, with massive retrenchments and redundancies and a substantial increase in rural/urban migration.

Towards the end of 1990, the rural region of South Australia was in the throes of major social, political and economic turmoil.

Pat McIntyre's experience

Pat began practicing as a lawyer in a small rural community in March 1981. In 1983 the rural region of South Australia was devastated by huge bush-fires (sparked off to serve some governmental interests) which caused many deaths, and losses put at four hundred million dollars. Pat acted for the victims in a trial which went in their favor, even though compensation was not paid to the victims for at least five years.

As a result of this and other leadership work, he began to become known as a man and as a lawyer who understood and was ready to help the rural people and communities. These people also saw that his way of dealing with them and his way of working helped

them to rediscover the meaning of life and the power of acting again, and so they went back to seek him out.

Between 1983 and 1993 many farming families were forced by financial pressure and the impact of government policies to quit agriculture. In the Eyre Peninsula (approximately one-third of the semi-arid towns, where cereals are grown and sheep farming is practiced) there had been 2,600 farmers in 1986. By 1991 there were only 1,800. Four hundred of these were now faced with being declared redundant by industry and six hundred more were in severe financial straits.

Many rural towns saw their community infrastructure becoming bankrupt, including local shops, service industries, local governments, with administrative offices, with the closure or reduction in size of schools and hospitals.

With so many families being forced to seek alternative employment, the population declined, causing a multiplier effect. The distress and uncertainty among all these people led to a sharp increase in separations and divorces, disease, stress, suicide and in the demand for social services. The whole social fabric of

the rural communities was threatened, and still is to this day.

In 1987 Pat was working with three rural communities whose hospitals, founded by the government, were threatened with closure. The "Country Hospitals Action Group" was made up by ordinary people from the communities, and began a massive political/legal campaign which, in January 1989, led to a negotiated settlement under which the future of these hospitals was assured.

At the beginning of 1989 some of the people involved in the hospitals campaign joined forces with others to combat the planned government cutbacks in funding for rural education. They were successful, and the campaign turned into an even larger political movement, forming core leadership groups in different parts of South Australia, which founded the

Community Action for Rural Education (C.A.R.E.). After a march on parliament in November 1989, and on the eve of the elections, the government withdrew its proposal to introduce cuts for rural education, and announced the temporary suspension of its decision for twelve months.

Both campaigns became symbols

and channels for the protest movement, because of the falling living standards in the rural areas of South Australia. Organized help was given by many towns, and for the first time the dislocated rural communities began to act as an identifiable community within the State as a whole.

In 1987-1989 Pat worked with leaders and organized committees, and in 1989-90 he also began to visit and work with the grassroots.

At the beginning of 1991 he became involved in a project designed to promote solidarity, a common vision and joint collective action on the part of several rural communities. The "South Australian Rural Action" (S.A.R.A.) was the result of a merger between various rural and community action interest groups. The history of S.A.R.A. over the next 18 months until it virtually disappeared in mid-1992 was too long and complex to summarize here. But essentially, what many intended it to become - namely a channel for community self-help and cultural development at the local level - was infiltrated and manipulated by right-wing extremists, promoting a neo-fascist agenda. They were well organized, well-funded and active in many parts of Australia. The time and the

social conditions are helping to foster these interests in our culture which can promote "certainties" and whose methods are the very opposite to community participation in cultural decision-making.

Pat reflects on his experience

When I had to tackle these obstacles in 1991 and 1992, my understanding of the critical contribution that the CLC/Ignatian community discernment process could offer our culture became more acute.

For ten years, from 1983, I had been more or less constantly involved in community action groups of one kind or another. On many important occasions the use of some aspects of our CLC process proved critically fruitful and was noted. It is not so easy to spell out exactly how things happened. It was significant that the people involved recognized that something was happening, and I was constantly being questioned by them, and urged to explain things. More importantly, I was asked to assist and help other groups in their decision-making process. What is it all about? I have no doubt that it works best in those groups:¹

- that were pre-disposed to accept - at least to some extent - that a process of decision-making could be as important as the decisions reached by the particular group;
- that have the openness to learn by doing;
- where the group facilitator is familiar with the process and is accepted by the group as such.

I am of the opinion that our CLC process of discernment could be an invaluable tool for cultural transformation. CLCers and others experienced with this way of decision-making are able to assist other groups and decision-making bodies to be attuned to the collective reality, and therefore to better discern the magis (more) in their decisions.

Comments on the experience

Pat worked virtually alone. At the CLC community level he was given some support by individual members and by the National ExCo. Because of his isolation in South Australia, and the novelty of what he was doing, few people understood his way of applying the

¹ Supplement no. 40: Finding God's will in community (Requirements for the communal discernment process etc...)

process. Pat and Mary Nolan (who had also applied the process in a similar way) walked closely with him in seeking God's will, calling each other to ongoing personal conversion, seeking to create a climate of spiritual freedom for ongoing discernment. All of this was done by phone and fax, because they lived eight hours from each other by car. A few other CLC members in Australia also understand or are using this way in their secular work (some are doing something similar in the parishes).

It seems that the Spirit is drawing people who had never heard of Ignatian spirituality or CLC before, but this "drawing" might remain latent.

Where a group of people are open, an experienced CLC/Ignatian facilitator (who has lived and experienced the communal process of the *Spiritual Exercises* at deep levels) can bring to life an awakening to their collective Truth in response to an event or situation. Such a group then experiences as a body (and as individuals) the movement of spirits.

It is questionable whether the small CLC group can support the

missionary service as it is. A modern form of the apostolic sections of the Marian Congregations could be the networks which bring together these people with shared interests, and their need to support the mission. They will not replace the small group, but they will expand the possibilities for missionary responses. This missionary commitment must be supported, evaluated and confirmed at the national level of CLC, which will give it a community identity.

In the course of the years Pat suffered from a great deal of personal and financial stress. For example, his telephone was tapped, and because many of the people he looked after could not afford to pay him, his business has been severely affected. He was also praised and honored by many groups, most recently with a nomination from the state to a national office.

All of this shows us the need to look more closely and to analyze the forces - ideologies, right-wing groups and influences within the groups as well as the movements in our own hearts - that are working against this way of empowering people.

A couple in the family, professional life and mission

(Françoise and Jean Claude Sailly - CLC-France)

We are both 53 years old and we have four children and have been members of a CLC since 1969. Françoise is a nurse, and has worked for seven years in a hospital. Jean Claude is an economist, and manages an economics research center.

It is very difficult to trace the steps which eventually led us to take on our present missions. Our mission seems to us to be the result of a whole life, of a whole history, woven year after year, made up of fruitful events. With regard to the way in which we perceive our mission and in accordance with the way we try to live it, it is also the result of the whole of our relationship with God, day by day, retreat by retreat (we have tried to go on retreat every year for the past 30 years).

However, one can perceive a number of features in the discovery of the mission that we are trying to perform. Features that are never

acquired once and for all, but which are internalized a little more each time through the revelations which mark out our lives (and particularly during the annual retreats). One point we would like to emphasize here is the discovery that we have been sent, and that Jesus associates us to His mission. It is a slow discovery which presupposes a whole revelation in the Ignatian language of the Principle and the Foundation, of our sin, of pardon and forgiveness, and of the personal call of Jesus. This discovery took a long time in our case. After the dazzling experience of conversion (when we were 23-24 years old) our past education led us to believe that it was necessary for us to behave properly and to do good deeds: but we did not yet feel the need to perform the mission in the Gospel sense of the term.

It was perhaps only ten years ago that we fully realized what the word *mission* means. We saw more clearly what is wrong with our

world: death, anguish, loneliness, lying, the difficulty of loving, selfish inward-lookingness. We understood more clearly that Christ comes to free us from all these evils, and that He really does save us. We sensed His call to take part in building up the Kingdom: in other words, concretely building up a community of sharing, love and communion. While we failed to gain a deeper understanding of this economy of salvation, the mission remained alien to us. But now, being able to see more clearly the evils from which our world is suffering (through our experience as parents, and as professionals, but above all through our spiritual experience now that we are better acquainted with the unbelievable love of Our Lord for this world, His power of liberation and salvation, sensing that we are called to respond to His love by building up His Kingdom) we feel that we are truly sent on a mission. This discovery is essential to the mission. It is its source, its basis and its inspiration.

What are our missions and how are we trying to live them?

Françoise works in four areas of the vineyard:

Firstly, work in the home. This was the object of the discernment when her maternity leave to look after our fourth child came to an end. We

then felt that because of Jean Claude's demanding professional commitments, it was desirable to have someone in the house all the time. Self-effacing, discreet, repetitive and sometimes not very gratifying work, but nevertheless work which bears great fruit: the personal growth of each member of the family and the communion of the family owes a great deal to this. We also think that in a society in which women's professional work is highly developed, and where housewives are not highly thought of, it is important to bear witness to the importance of this role.

A number of parish services: after Catechesis, Françoise spends several hours in the parish house, helping to clean the church and working as a member of the pastoral animation team. A mixture of humble, but very necessary duties, and participation in animation.

An important area of the mission is visiting the sick. This activity falls in with her professional work (as a nurse) and requires some of her professional qualities (listening, gentleness and kindness, compassion). This is carried out as part of the SEM (Gospel Service to the Sick), and the chaplaincy of a local hospital. Two types of activities are performed there: firstly regular visits after the friendship visit, including spiritual accompaniment;

and secondly meetings for discussion, formation and prayer which are planned by SEM.

Lastly, taking part in a "clothing service," helping the very poor to acquire cheap clothing, as a result of Françoise's interest in keeping in contact with the poorest people in our sector.

For Jean Claude four other pieces of the vineyard have been proposed:

A mission in the professional field, both as an economist and more specifically a health care economist. He views this mission of understanding social phenomena to be important in the contemporary world. How can decisions on unemployment or the organization of social protection be given the right orientation, unless one understands the underlying socio-economic mechanisms? These analyses lead us towards discovering: the need to invent a new form of growth, which is less fascinated by automation at whatever price, directed firstly towards the provision of services particularly to combat marginalization, loneliness, and the deterioration of the environment. All these necessary developments require inventiveness (participating in creation), questioning (linked to sin!), hope and dynamism (salvation

increases our strength tenfold), growing in solidarity and sharing (the Kingdom to be built up). These analyses and hopes are, for the Christian, strangely related to the Good News...

A mission of responsibility, as a health care economist. Jean Claude is a member of the "Haut Comité" (High-level Committee) for public health, and a number of other national bodies which bring weight to bear on decisions taken by the government in the field of health care: the fact that he belongs to a Catholic university makes it easier for him to speak out as a Christian.

A mission as a person responsible for a research establishment. He sees his essential mission in his work as serving. Never to use authority except for the benefit of the service he provides: but that is so hard! It means persuading all his colleagues to see their work as a service (continuing conversion through work), organizing the center in such a way that it helps each individual to develop, fostering the autonomy and shared responsibilities of each member, heightening group solidarity, simplicity and truth in their relationships, caring for the poorest, and those with the lowest educational levels. In order to do all of this it is necessary to constantly invent, to continually question and challenge, and to perceive one's sin. It is not easy to make a firm or a

company a small part of the Kingdom in which personalization and communion are lived out.

A mission to be a spiritual guide.

After many calls, Jean Claude finally became a guide: a guide of individuals or of couples in difficulty, a guide for CLC groups, an individual spiritual guide. This is an essential task which demands ready acceptance of the Spirit, and which enables one to see the power and the wonders of the action of Our Lord. It is also an activity which places you in contact with the tragic aspect of certain lives, with spiritual combat, in terrible confrontation between the sources of evil (which are powerful, and sometimes even victorious) and God. Jean Claude finds it difficult to remain always on the ready: it is difficult when preparing to spend a relaxing evening, after a long day's work, to have to listen to someone who knocks at the front door. Sometimes it is very difficult to have to bear the worries, the secrets, the weaknesses and the dramas of other people: humbly sharing the burden borne by Christ!

Françoise and Jean Claude ended by saying:

We have very few activities in common, outside the family and the

CLC group to which we belong. As far as our children are concerned we place great stress on listening, dialogue and an atmosphere of freedom. After adolescence (in the case of three of our children) we have been encouraging them to experience the encounter with Our Lord in all the Ignatian retreats. This has proven very decisive to their Christian life. They have been key moments for them, which have structured their future.

CLC has been for us a wonderful melting-pot thanks to which we have received one grace after another, including our involvement in the activities of the National Council (seven years in the case of Jean Claude) or the World Assembly in Providence '82, where we had the privilege of taking part in the discernment in the transition from the CLC to the World Community.

With all our weaknesses, we feel called to share the honor of helping Our Lord build up the Kingdom - not as servants, but as Friends. Despite our frailty, we have an important role to play. Our Lord needs us, even though it is His power which is doing the work.

Reaching out to the poor

(The San Marcellino Association - CLC-Italy)

The San Marcellino Association was established in 1988 by two priests and a group of volunteers (including the CLC of Genoa) who had been helping the Jesuits in their service over several years. The Association is an extension of the inspiration underpinning the activity begun in 1944 called the "Mass of the Poor," to help the homeless and immigrants. San Marcellino's work is concentrated in the historic center of Genoa, where one finds all the most serious problems of poverty in every shape and form: material poverty, and the less obvious forms that are the results of the breakdown of society and moral standards (drugs, prostitution, alcoholism and violence). San Marcellino works in this environment out of its desire to offer a word of hope to the hopeless, and those who have no one to speak for them, those who live on the sidelines of society.

In recent years we have been meeting people that we find it difficult to relate closely to, because they feel hurt and unloved. It was

this that led us to decide to reach out to them, to meet, understand and work with them. We begin by attending to their immediate needs (a bed, food, clothing), trying to get them to express their deepest needs, which they rarely mention. Our aim is therefore to let ourselves be touched by these people, and by reflecting on our experiences we are led to the conclusion that their real needs are not being met simply by finding an appropriate response to their pain, but first and foremost by letting ourselves be transformed by this encounter with them, so that we can view ourselves and others in a more humane, compassionate manner, and more genuinely.

We know that when any of these persons allow themselves to be "seduced" (in other words, when a solid relationship is established) this experience leads to the development of a deep desire for change. And the desire is born in us to contemplate the beauty that exists in each human person. This requires us to wish to understand the other, a desire which stems from love. But we must also allow oursel-

ves to be loved. This is a task that takes time, patience and mutual trust.

The traditional work of San Marcellino has always been classified as charitable work, because it attempts to reach out to attend to the most urgent needs of the people involved. But in recent years we have begun to ask ourselves whether it is possible to help others reintegrate into society. Beginning with this open question, and continuing to expand our available facilities, drawing on the experience that we have built up over such a long period of working with the needy, we have managed to gain insights into a rehabilitation project that today runs parallel with, and is underpinned by, our charitable work. We are therefore now in a position to offer a fairly clear definition of our aims: *Charity and Rehabilitation*.

Charity

When reaching out to people giving them emergency aid, we meet them at the throes of their crisis, and attempt to help solve their problem by giving them wholesome food, a bed for the night, some clothing, money and resources.

At San Marcellino the traditional moment for meeting people is at the Sunday Mass at the Church of San Marcellino. This Mass is attended by many of the people who come to the Center, workers and volunteers

alike, and it encourages people to participate closely, providing an opportunity to make people feel welcome and equal, sharing breakfast after the liturgy and celebrating birthdays together.

In the building near the church there is a clinic, where a number of volunteer doctors take turns to provide services: a dispensary run by volunteers, including a number of pharmacists; a wardrobe room, where the needy can be provided with clothes supplied by the Listening Center and the Community Help Center.

The Listening Center is the key to all our activities. A number of volunteers work at the reception desk and in the secretariat. There are seven consultants on call at all times to interview people. A file is kept on each client, containing the most important information gathered during the interview, and this is updated after each successive interview.

When the Listening Center feels that the time is right, it offers the client a monthly meeting and some financial support or food. This is usually for old people, without an income of their own, or those living on a very low income, or for people who cannot find any other way of re-acquiring their independence.

Each week there is a meeting for the staff of the Community Help Center on how to proceed and cooperate together, and to deal with

the problems linked to the cases under discussion.

The path to rehabilitation

The Listening Center is also a benchmark for the stages in the treatment process, because it is the place where the personal meetings take place. In order to solve accommodation problems, we have a number of facilities at our disposal:

The Corner - a night shelter. It can accommodate eighteen people and two volunteers, and it is open from 7:30 pm to 7:15 am. Services are provided by about eighty volunteers, working in four groups, taking turns to cover one week each. In order to be accepted, three minimum rules must be observed (punctuality, sobriety and personal hygiene), and these are checked when the pass is renewed giving access to the dormitory for one week. There is one important step in which, in response to some urgent need, we begin to become acquainted with the people and to enable them to become acquainted with us, in order to evaluate the possibility of beginning a treatment process. Last year we realized that we needed more places in the dormitory. We thought that it was important to be able to offer people shelter for longer periods and, at the same time, have premises available for anyone seeking hospitality.

The Step - this facility will be opened this year, to accommodate

the people we already know, for whom a longer period of residence is envisaged.

The Grove - this is a semi-residential facility, to accommodate fifteen people and two volunteers. Only people who have been entrusted with a project are invited to The Grove. They pay a small contribution and share the running of the house, looking after the cleaning, covering the expenses and preparing dinner.

Subsidized shelters - vary in terms of their organization and composition, depending on the programs that are planned for each one. According to their financial possibilities, the guests contribute towards the rent and the running expenses, and have to pay their full board expenses. All these guests attend the monthly meeting with the directors in order to discuss problems connected with the management and the progress of their lives.

Work is a fundamental and necessary element in the path to rehabilitation, and also for the individuals' own personal independence. The cleaning shop and laundry constitute the most important part of the Association, and is called *Let's roll up our sleeves*. Its main social aim is to create opportunities for occupational therapy. For the hours spent working in the shops, the Listening Center provides a proportional subsidy.

The Cleaning Shop - is responsible

for keeping the emergency dormitory clean, and for cleaning the Church of San Marcellino and the La Svolta meeting room. Work is carried out between 8:00 am and 10:30 am, three or four times a week, by six or seven people sent by the Listening Center.

The Meals Service - was opened in March this year. Five people provide midday meals there from Monday to Saturday, coordinated by a cook, with two people on duty three hours a day.

The Laundry - is open every day, from Monday to Friday, from 3:00pm to 6:00 pm, and is run by 6 to 7 people under a duty allocation manager.

In addition to encouraging people to look for independent work, we also have the Regional Federation for Solidarity and Work which plans to create job opportunities for our people.

In the field of socialization, we are completely dependent upon voluntary service. For this purpose we hold a meeting in the La Svolta hall at La Rollière (a house in the mountains) and we run a series of events in order to recover the capacity to live together, to show solidarity with one another, to learn to trust others and enjoy each others company.

La Svolta (turning-point) - is a circle which is only open to people

approved by the Listening Center, where people can meet, play, read, discuss or watch television. The volunteers are particularly concerned to create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, involving the guests in certain aspects of the management of the circle.

The house at La Rollière - has been used for many years for holidays in the mountains in July and August. The intention is to create an atmosphere of understanding, friendship and trust amongst those present, but also to offer a break to those who have no other chance of taking a holiday in a pleasant resort.

In order to provide some time for interaction and entertainment, the team organizes celebrations, meals, excursions and film showings.

Many of those who attend the Listening Center are alcoholics, and in order to facilitate their progress to recovery, they are invited to attend the Alcoholics Anonymous Club where they endeavor to develop self-awareness and mutual solidarity, and are helped to change the way they think and live their lives. To complement the therapy, the alcoholics undergoing treatment are invited to take a daily dose of Antabuse, a useful product to strengthen their resolve to give up drinking. The alcoholics must be accompanied to the meeting by a member of their family, but many of them have broken all ties with families, and have no contact with

their homes. They must therefore be accompanied by a volunteer. In some cases their companion is another patient who has made more progress in the recuperation program.

When patients leave AA, other alcoholics or workers go out to see how they are doing. It is an important experience for them to see people going out to look for them, when no-one had ever looked for them in the past. Throughout these years we have learned not to pass judgment, and always to ask ourselves why and how certain types of behavior occur, particularly those which we consider to be disasters from the beginning. And we have learned that some people who are aggressive and backslide are those who lack self-confidence, who are afraid to be loved, just as we are afraid to face difficulties.

San Marcellino was legally recognized as an Association from the very beginning. The Association has many volunteers working with it, including three Jesuits, over twenty-five CLCers, and associates who provide voluntary services. These volunteers come from various social and occupational backgrounds. Some are doctors, psychologists, pharmacists, cooks, etc. But their common bond is the strong desire to give, to make people happy and to be useful. They try to closely integrate a thorough training with sound

motivation, to relate well to people, and to cultivate friendships with their neighbors. Many of them have been affected by their experience and have changed the way they live their lives. But we realize that we can never have enough volunteers, particularly women, who would be useful and effective as hosts. It would be a great blessing for the group if it could grow to such an extent that it could continue this service and improve it, and be useful for the needy and for society.

CLC is also part of the Association even though it is rarely identified. The reason for this is that when the purpose is the mission to be performed it is not necessary to talk a great deal about CLC, even though it is in the hearts of the team members working in the Association, playing an important role in the implementation of the program. For two weeks every month the CLC team serves in both the dormitories, helping the volunteers and workers at the Center. At the San Marcellino Association, three CLCers performed their civilian service, instead of military service, and others are working there as individual volunteers.

Our Lord is revealing, little by little, the path of our missions. How much progress we have made over thirty years! It has been both a tortuous, and a consistent path, at the same time.



Altarpiece from the 14th century, artist anonymous: *The Sending of the Spirit*.
Archives of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

When Faith Draws Circles

The Round Table - Both an Old and New Model of the Church -

We meet a group of believers. Twelve men and a woman are seated on a round bench. In the middle is a "round table," "around" which they are gathered. The round table was a basic idea in Germany when steps towards unification were being sought. All groups in society which were touched by the issue had been invited to take a seat at the round table.

As early as 1370/80 a round table was a model of the Church in an altar-piece in Osnabrück. All have their place in this community, young and old, men and women, different names and faces, individual life stories and histories of faith. Even Matthias, who was listed as one of the twelve in the place of Judas (cf. Acts 1:26) is among them in the upper room, where they are staying.

They were ...Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with...Mary the mother of Jesus...(Acts 1:13).

They are equals side-by-side. All can see each other, look at each other's faces and talk to each other. A genuine sharing group in a young community-Church. They are of one mind but not without individuality. This "round-matter" is God's work. His inspiration is indicated by the haloes, again a circular shape. A Church of "concentric circles" is indicated.

This community is not dissipated, it concentrates on its center. In spite of the distractions of its time it gathers around the one who is their center, their life: Jesus Christ. In the center of the table, in the midst of the faithful, there is a bright circular host, a piece of the Bread of Life. The Eucharist unites this community and brings it together again and again.

The spiritual community which we are rediscovering in our days is indicated here: a community of sharing life, of communicating life, of sharing faith, hope and love with each other, of bearing burdens and worries with each other.

A new kind of togetherness can grow.

God's Spirit takes possession -

Oriented towards the center - concentrated - that is how the young Church community presents itself. But it also directs our vision upward. Where constriction and fear had prevailed, God's Spirit has taken possession. God enters by the sign of love, the dove bringing the host into the community.

It is not the sweeping power of the tongues of fire that bring Pentecost to life - neither in the 14th century picture nor today. Here the unknown artist communicates to us a model of the Church. The rays are like the spokes of a wheel that bind together the people around it. "Lord, you are the center, the closer we come to you, the closer we are to ourselves and the more we are friends" are the words of a new spiritual song.

The rays lead to where people can communicate with each other: to the face for seeing and perceiving, to the mouth for speaking and answering, to the hands for receiving, giving and holding fast. In the Eucharistic Prayers we pray for such strength: "May all of us...be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit," "Grant that we...may be filled with the Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ."

God's truth binds together, rouses the Word, liberates for a clear vision of the truth in one's own life and in the world. And God goes on healing that which has been wounded - even in the Church.

From collectedness to mission -

This community cannot remain in the circle forever. The circle must open up. Those who had been focussed on the inside will orient themselves outwards. At first the view towards the "outside" is hesitant. But "this bread is my body for the life of the world." The Eucharistic circle draws yet more circles to where people ask and seek, to where others are apathetic and lacking relationship. Whether welcome to the world or not: God's Spirit urges this community to leave its circle and go out.

Witnesses are sought for God's acting in the world, a world which increasingly loses touch with its center and already feels the loss of its divine center. We need witnesses who draw their strength from within the death and resurrection of Jesus, so becoming even more a living body of Christ in this world. The longer that I meditate on the picture in this spirit the more I discover the movement: these people are at the verge of setting out.

Perhaps the Apostles and Mary are only beginning to sense the fire of which Jesus so deeply yearns for: that it were blazing already (cf. Lk 12:49).

One thing that they had to do at their epoch was to welcome the gifts of God's Spirit and to continuously allow Him to take possession of them so that their faith could draw circles. That is our task for today.

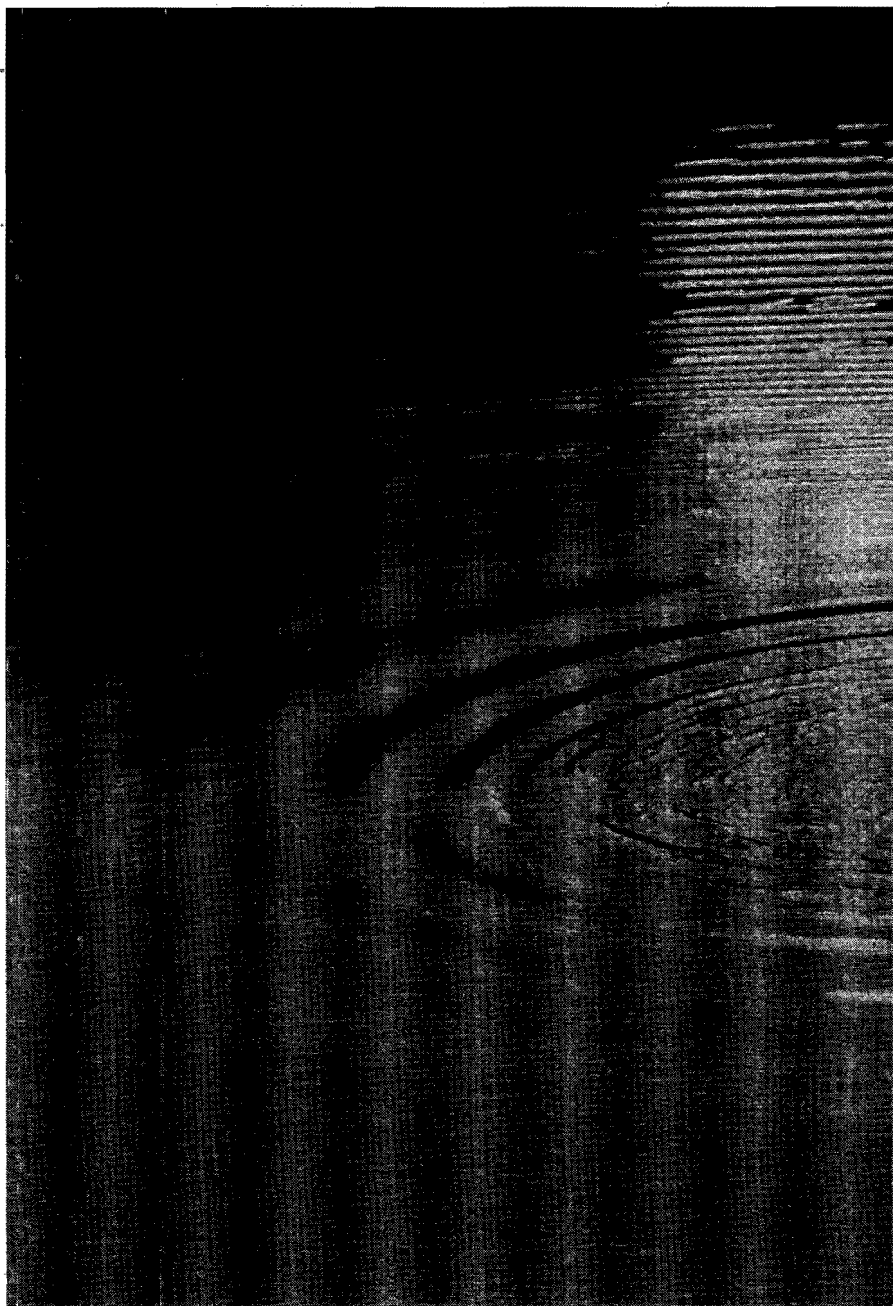
*We beg you: bring us to life
as in the beginning
you blessed us with the breath of life,
as you raised Jesus our brother
from the dead.
Shape now the mortal body of our Church
lively and zealous;
remind us of everything
that he lived out.
Let us be the fire of your mouth,
light of your light,
as the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, is in you -
the light of eternal light.*

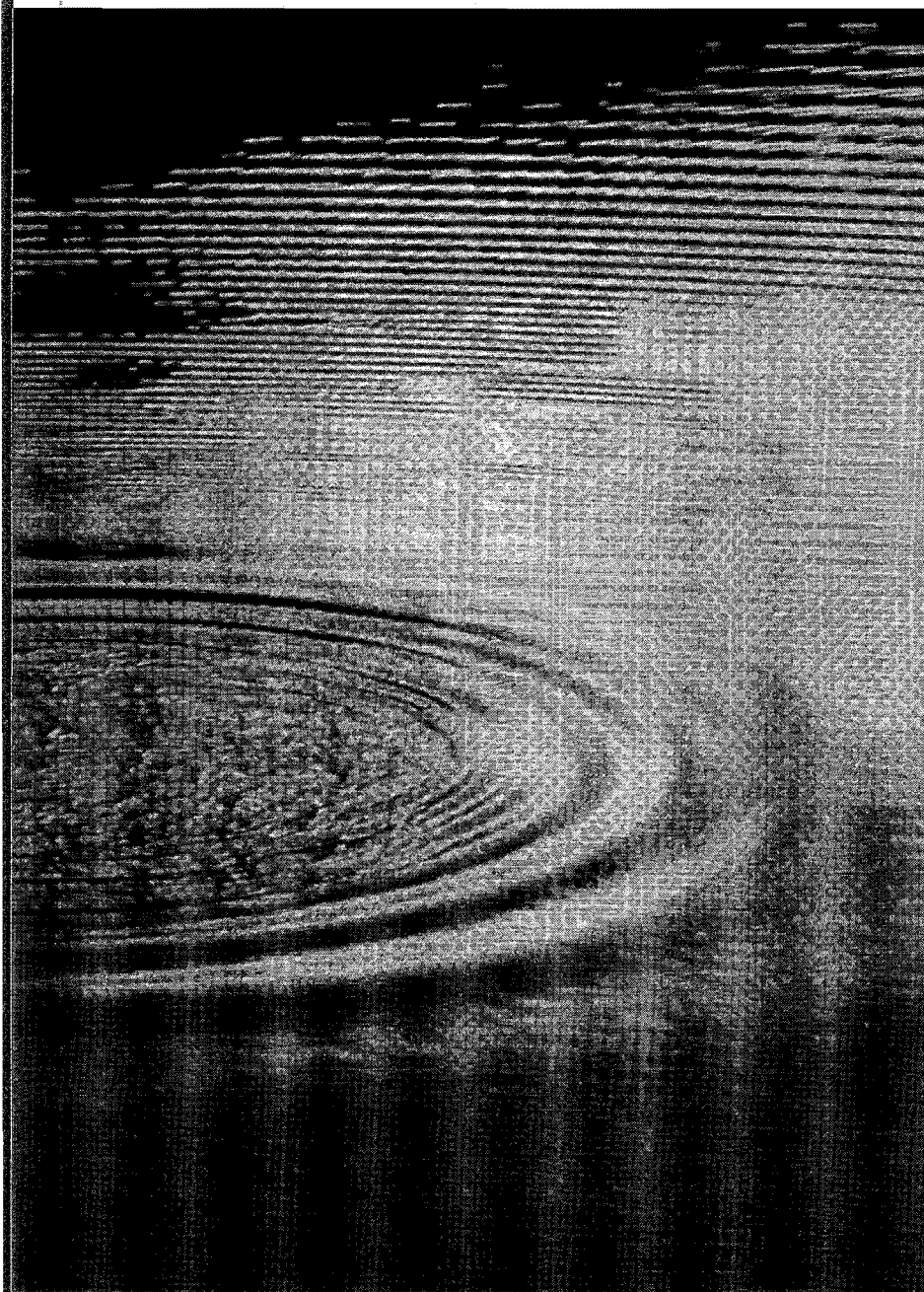
Huub Oosterhuis

Questions for reflection -

- What Church model do I have, what Church models do the members of my group have?
- Have they changed recently?
- How does the model of the Church in 1370 - the picture that we just contemplated - compare with these models?
- In what degree is the Eucharist the center of my own life and the life of my group?
- In what ways is my life and the life of my group allowing the Spirit to lead me/us?
- Where do I/we see the connection between the Eucharist and our mission?

Franz-Reinhard Daffner





II. RE-READING AND REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCES

Recalling our past missionary graces

Looking at these different "life stories" let us praise Our Lord because they enable us to see the action of God's Spirit, the same Spirit who moved Jesus to His mission, the same Spirit who moved Ignatius and his first companions, and who moves our CLC members and communities today, working in the contemporary world.

But we would be betraying the truth if we were to present these reflections as if these missionary promptings of the Spirit were only happening today. If we look back over the history of our communities, we can glean extremely valuable testimonies and apostolic commitments which we feel important to re-examine as we prepare to evaluate our missionary commitment and reflect on the centrality of the mission in our CLC spirituality.

The truth is that CLC has always offered a missionary vocation from the very beginning.

The truth is that CLC has always offered a missionary vocation from the very beginning. The first CLC was the first Ignatian community before the foundation of the Society of Jesus in 1539. GP 3 helps us to see and recognize our Ignatian origins and appreciate the gifts received across the past five centuries.

After the first companions had crossed Italy performing different missions, they gathered together groups of lay people to help one another to follow Jesus and to pray and practice missionary attitudes emerging from that spiritual experience.

The Belgian priest Jean Leunis SJ, who is considered to be the

founder of the Marian Congregations (MCs), also formed part of that tradition. Those groups were marked by an intimate bond between faith and life, and their emphasis on the community and apostolic dimension.²

The MCs grew and spread throughout the whole world. There were MCs made up not just of students but also of different professional and social groups. There were also meetings known as Sections, depending on the training and the occupation of the people involved, designed to achieve a deeper spiritual life and better respond to the missionary call.

The 1968 renewal was not intended to make a break with our tradition, but rather, with the approval of the *General Principles*, to offer a new framework within which the MCs throughout the world had to move and act. But the core of the grace of our foundation remained there: CLCs, called to be apostolic communities, communities called to follow Jesus Christ as communities of apostolic discernment.

More recently, in the past 15 years our World CLC has made giant strides forward, growing in its awareness of its apostolic and missionary vocation.³ At Rome '79 and Providence '82 we received the grace of being a World Community for Service. At Loyola '86 we discovered through the *Spiritual Exercises* the source of our specific Christian identity, that we also have

a community mission. At Guadalajara '90 we heightened our awareness that, as a World Community, we were an organized body of lay persons at the service of the mission of the Church.

When preparing for the last World Assembly at Guadalajara, an International Reflection Team sought to define the concept and awareness of mission in the CLC on the basis of experiences throughout the world. Let us refresh our memories about the main points that were suggested there. We will certainly be able to identify each of the elements that emerged from the four missionary "life stories" which we have just read in Chapter I.

Mission is something which springs from the heart: in other words, the mission comes about in a personal experience of the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ. It is not a question of law, but of desire: an increasing desire to be an instrument of God's love in the building up of the Kingdom.

Mission is a way of life: it does not refer to any one particular sector or area of life, but has to do with the fact of being a tool in God's hands, in all things, however humble or important.

² For this development in the history of the first CLCs, see PROGRESSIO supplement Nos. 38-39, Sept. 1992, the chapter on: A grace in history.

³ The reflections are dealt with in greater depth in the supplement to PROGRESSIO No. 34, January 1990.

Mission is an orientation for the election: the word mission can also be used to describe basic orientations or priorities, ideal values and energies focusing on the concrete needs of the human family in accordance with the Gospel.

Mission means the election and concrete tasks: this refers to specific projects or actions which are performed with a Gospel motivation, directed to satisfying real needs.

Another International Reflection Team dealt with "CLC mission and social reality,"⁴ in preparation for Guadalajara '90, and pointed out at the end of the report a number of "open conclusions" which it is worthwhile recalling here: "...it is important, for better service, to maintain permanent emphases on both personal and community growth. Underlining this fact that being a Christian orients us towards service, as Jesus came to serve us, is a key orientation for CLCs. Members and CLC communities, at local, national and world levels, exist for service. This is their *raison d'être*: CLCs at the service of the Kingdom."

And naming the "many means at our disposal in our spirituality" in order to attain this objective, the team gave top priority to the Spiritual Exercises: *The experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is the specific source of*

missionary growth of CLC members, both personally and as a community.

Reflecting on our missionary commitment

Looking back in this way over our history we can see that a fundamental spiritual step forward is taken whenever Our Lord enables us to understand that the mission given to us is our world as it is, the everyday world. We are frequently tempted to believe that the mission is somewhere else, in some future world (rather than today's), in a different world - one which is more susceptible to conversion, and better suited to what we believe we know how to do...

But in order to realize that this world is our workshop we must love it, because this is the Kingdom in which Our Lord has placed us, this is the task which Christ is giving us, and this is a world which He loves passionately! How can we feel sent, missioned, if we do not love the mission land which is given to us, and if we do not recognize it as such?

We have to stave off the lies of the Evil one whose main purpose is to make us believe that we do not have a mission. It is through conversion and by placing our lives at the service of Our Lord that we can overcome this deception. The Evil one will immediately try to divert us away from the mission in which we are now committed, trying to make

⁴ See PROGRESSIO supplement No. 35, July 1990.

us believe that our mission lies elsewhere, somewhere in the future. The unity of life between the life of faith and daily life is created as a result of this grace of discovery, which we must unceasingly re-experience, namely, the discovery that the mission is HERE and NOW. The bond between prayer and our daily activities can therefore be truly established: I am challenged in my daily life by everything which stems from my prayer, and in return my daily work, enlightened by a missionary awareness, nourishes my prayer life. By contemplating Jesus on the Cross we see the infinite love of the Father for all men and women, and we see Jesus calling us to share His compassion for humankind. We are called to live in the world, but to live a life which is different from the world's, a life which is modelled on Jesus' life through the Holy Spirit. Watchful prayer (the evening examination) is also important from this point of view: it helps us to survey this mission land on which we have been working during the day. We can therefore rediscover it as it is, if we happen to have forgotten it. But it also projects us in the direction of tomorrow's mission, making us perceive what lies ahead of us already.

We emphasize the difficulty of viewing the world in spiritual terms, namely by taking an approach that perceives:

- *the beauty of creation* and recognizing God the Creator, even

through human intelligence; the complexity of our societies, inventiveness, cultural differences... This can be done very concretely in our lives by being permanently ready to *wonder* and to be *thankful*. The beauty of creation is not only read in terms of mountain landscapes, but also through the laws of economics, a recipe, the progress of information technology, laser surgery...;

- *the signs of our finiteness*. We are certainly magnificent creatures, but we are still creatures, with all our limitations;

- *the marks of original and collective sin*. With age and experience we become increasingly aware of the perversion and distortions caused by sin in beings, structures, and the mechanisms set up to foster solidarity;

- *the marks of re-creation, and salvation*. It is not necessary to learn to read the marks of what has already passed and the shortcomings of what is "not yet" to acquire a view of the world *from the viewpoint of the faith*. What is sin has already been saved in hope; my shortcomings, my littleness, my incapacity to deal with the mission, are all made up for by the One for whom nothing is impossible. And this is another important aspect of the unity of the life of faith and daily life: *viewing our mission with eyes enlightened by the history of salvation*.

And we have seen already several

examples in the life stories that we read at the beginning of our reflection. Each individual or each group, with their own particularities, discerning what is grace and what is sin, distinguishing between God the Creator, the creature, sin, re-creation, and preserving hope: doing what we have to do, and knowing well that it is only a small step, only a tiny drop of water mixed with the wine of sacrifice, and hence of the Resurrection.

This call to complete the construction of the Kingdom imposes three important tasks on us:

- *ensuring that each one of us achieves self-fulfillment* (hence the great deal of space devoted to listening)
- *fostering communion* (hence the importance of every thing that leads to concord and to unity)
- *showing concern for the poorest.*

A missionary life therefore springs from our encounter with Christ in our own lives and the liberating experience of His saving love. Christ saves us and calls us to work with Him. Following in His footsteps - personally and as a community - is expressed in a new lifestyle. This is the primary testimony that we have to give. The CLC group must fully play its part as a stimulus to remaining faithful to our way of life. And so we are called daily to convert the way we view our

mission, and our attitudes to it: it is not only a matter of seeing it in terms of our daily lives, but also of loving it; we have to see it through the eyes of Our Lord, the Creator and re-creator. This is one aspect of the process of radical conversion to which we are led by growing in the following of Christ. Conversion releases energies within us which will then be at our disposal to be used for the mission.

However, it is also appropriate at this point to emphasize those experiences that have not always succeeded, but which are nevertheless indispensable to help the CLC group to discern and to feel called to participate in the mission of the Church. This is where it shows its ability to believe in the truth about itself, overcoming the inevitable difficulties, tensions and limitations in an open and respectful exchange, in order to establish sufficiently solid unity. We have to recognize that some people fear these moments and tend to withdraw from the real world, and engage in "safer" interchanges, but ones which do not commit a group in the life of an apostolic community.

Learning discernment and a way to proceed inspired by discernment and habitually resorting to it when making decisions is one of the most characteristic features of the CLC group. In this connection let us note that one of the first obstacles to discernment lies in the fact that it is

sometimes difficult to imagine that a particular decision has anything to do with discernment: for example, buying something, responding to a request for a service... Here again, the Evil one tends to make us believe that we have to keep this method of making decisions reserved for dealing with exceptional matters.

Secondly, even though the word *discernment* should be kept for the spiritual exercise that goes under that name, it is important to understand that in the many decisions that have to be taken in the course of a day, it is essential to develop the habit of implicitly seeing a reference in it to Our Lord^o of discerning in an attitude of freedom - if we want faith and life to be one.

In the testimonies that we have just read, we have seen the importance of ensuring that when taking purely professional or technical decisions, we should learn to look away from ourselves, to examine other points of view, and to listen to others, knowing that there is no such thing as a perfect technical solution. Placing ourselves before the eyes of Our Lord, in the certainty that He controls the whole matter, that He is capable of purifying us of our sin, and that He is totally selfless and totally receptive to us, gives us extraordinary hope and peace of mind when making decisions.

Discernment stems from simultaneously considering the Call, the

personal equation of each one (history, talents, environment), and the object of the decision: which service to provide, for example, read in terms of a number of election criteria.

An increasing number of our contemporaries wish to base society on something new, in order to better face up to the challenges of our time. What they are seeking are criteria for making a choice, criteria for the election. Should not the CLC seek election criteria for itself (and share them with others)? This question, which conditions some of our decisions, underlies the exchanges of a group regarding the services and missions provided by its members. Are there any criteria that should direct our judgement, and if so what are they, and what do they mean?

With regard to the attitudes to be taken in a discernment process, we will merely mention the following:

- the certainty (lived out in the faith) that a decision does exist, that Our Lord is passionately interested in the election or choice to be made, and desires our growth and the growth of the others involved, and that it is possible to know Our Lord's plan;
- the openness and the humility that are needed by the group and for each of its members. What prevents us from calling on the group is the fear of hearing someone speak the truth, when

what we are seeking above all is a word of comfort.

With regard to the role of the CLC group we would emphasize the following:

- the importance of ensuring that everything that is said, whether it is to help personal discernment or group discernment, should be the result of prayer and be expressed in an attitude of indifference. To achieve this the group must live in an attitude of spiritual freedom and mutual truth.

- We also note the importance of the person who provides spiritual guidance to the individual group member. It is sometimes possible to deceive our group for a time, but it is more difficult with our spiritual guide.

- If the group is to help each individual member to grow in their missionary lives, to become a place of discernment, and to challenge us to participate in the mission, it must meet a certain number of requirements:

- its formation must be adequate to enable it to perform its role,

- it must reach outward by being aware of the world's needs, and the thinking and priorities of the local church and the universal Church... in order to help its members to share frankly with one another;

- it must have a group guide, helping in discernment and decision-making. However, let us

remember that its role will be different in the groups undergoing formation, where the person accompanying it will be required to ensure that appropriate means are used for formation, in order to foster the member's integrated growth.

A missionary commitment

It follows from this that we believe that our missionary life extends to every sphere of our life (family, professional, social, religious) and cannot merely be reduced to providing services. To put this another way, we must ensure that everything we live and do is inspired by the Gospel. We also believe that the responses we make to calls that we receive should be expressed in the widest variety of different commitments. Any initiatives must meet real needs, and be capable of opening up to new needs, and be changed accordingly; a Gospel motivation must be followed, and the dignity of the human person borne constantly in mind. It may be necessary to ask ourselves whether in the CLC we take sufficient account of the problems facing contemporary man, and the new needs that are emerging. Do our responses bear witness to our love of people and their future?

If we re-read our history, which is the history of so many CLC members, we can see that the desire

to serve has been deepened and translated into a missionary commitment consisting of services, tasks and initiatives. What we consider to be most important is to feel that we have been sent to wherever we are, bearing in mind the sense of the more universal good. This more universal good is manifested in two ways:

- firstly, by the way we structure our actions within associations, movements, joint actions, increasing our relevance and enabling us to spread more widely. Are we sufficiently aware of this important aspect of our missionary commitment?
- secondly, by the attention we pay to the calls which are directed to us and which give rise to discernment.

If we ask ourselves what it is that changes a community of missionaries into a missionary community, we can see that sharing the same vocation unites us, and a common pedagogy underlies our missions. Would it not be desirable to be able to see in the diversity of our responses a certain degree of

cohesion in the way we read today's world, and the calls that these changing realities are making on us? Should we not spell out our criteria for the election and choice?

Whether our personal actions are performed in associations or movements, or whether the CLCers called to respond to one need or another, work in groups (on their own or with other groups), all forms part of the same concern: the concern to increase our apostolic effectiveness. What is essential is to ensure that in everything we do we remain free to love.

In order to enlighten this universality which is a highly Ignatian feature of our mission, we are helped by the Trinitarian configuration of our spirituality.

Let us therefore turn our eyes and hearts to the primary sources of our missionary spirituality. And this means looking to the Trinity, which *gazed on the whole surface or circuit of the world, full of people...* (Sp.Ex. 102).

The First Prelude is to survey the history of the matter I am to contemplate. Here it is how the Three Divine Persons gazed on the whole surface or circuit of the world, full of people, and how, seeing that they were all going down into hell, they decided in their eternity that the Second Person would become a human being, in order to save the human race. And thus, when the fullness of time had come, they sent the angel St. Gabriel to Our Lady (Sp.Ex. 102).



*We are called and sent
to build up the Kingdom of God
in the marketplace
of this world

of business and money,
of law and justice,
of economics and politics,

of science and achievements,
of space exploration and gene techniques,
of loneliness and human suffering

and all areas of human life.

We are called, and We are sent.*

III. THE SOURCES OF OUR MISSION

The Trinitarian community and the sending of the Son

Our spirituality as CLCers has its roots at the very heart of the mystery of the Christian faith: the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, which is a mystery of love, but also, and by this very token, a mystery of mission and sending: A mystery of God who comes to meet us at the most intimate level of the mystery of humanity, to take it upon God in God's own intimate life.

The Holy Trinity is a community of love which is constantly attentive to everything that is happening in the world. And St. Ignatius, in the very central contemplation of the *Spiritual Exercises*, namely the contemplation of the Incarnation (101-107), proposes as a starting point for human contemplation, together with the Three Divine Persons who lovingly *contemplate* the face of the earth (102), this world and, in it, the whole of humanity, which is so diverse and so

divided by so many problems, sins and conflicts (103). Emphasizing the contrasts which create the diversity that makes up the human race, Ignatius draws our attention to the proven universality of history and then immediately mentions its negative side, sin, which runs through it and splits it.

This negative universality of sin and the fall from grace which threatens ultimately to destroy the world is covered by the most positive gesture of love, namely the Incarnation of God. It was within this world, full of injustice and sin, that the Incarnation of the Son took place, forming a new hermeneutic key to the interpretation of the world and history, no longer as a place of condemnation, but of salvation. This "sending" and "coming" of Christ is the event which divides history and the criterion of judgement and discernment for all men and women



Reproduced above is the fresco of the Annunciation-Incarnation which was located above the main altar in the Chapel of the Annunciation at the Roman College. Here the Prima Primaria, the first Sodality, held many of its early meetings. When the chapel was torn down in 1626 to make room for the larger Church of St. Ignatius, the detail of Our Lady was conserved and placed in the new oratory of the Sodality; in the following centuries it became world famous as the Prima Primaria Madonna.

of whatever race and age. The world and the human race, in both their positive and negative dimensions, with all their ambiguities, are the place chosen for the Incarnation of the *Word of God*.

And only this Incarnation could be *kenotic*,⁵ self-emptying, because it involved taking on a wounded and sick condition, a mortal flesh, a path made up of poverty, difficulties and sufferings from birth to death (106). It therefore had to be taken on by total surrender, and by being sent from the glory of the divine community to enter into the human condition, accepting in advance all the consequences which this choice entailed.

The Three Divine Persons are therefore paramount to all, and lie at the very origin of history. They are the Principle and the Foundation of the history of the love of God for all men and women. This is the other face of reality. Not so much the other as the true and the first. Love and grace are not only stronger than sin and death, but they also precede them. Everything began, everything found its Principle and Foundation not in the sin of humankind but in the throne of the divine Majesty where the Three Divine Persons behold

the face of the earth, full of men and women. And everything began in the glory of God.

But, as a result of grace, everything also began in the poor and humble house of Our Lady. This is where the God of all grace realized and identified with this humanity in all things - except sin - through the body and the heart of Mary.

The mystery of the Trinity therefore presupposes a committed and compassionate God, involved in the life and drama of men and women. A God who permits Himself to be touched and affected by all the blindness of the world. The Divine Trinity who experiences love, and seeing their beloved creatures suffering, acts and works (102-106).

And God acted by speaking a word: "Let us work the redemption of the human race" (107), expressing a decision taken, an election made. This divine word pronounced over humanity and history is translated into a concrete praxis: the sending of the Son. It was from this decision, taken at the heart of the divine life, that the mystery of the mission of the Son in the Incarnation took flesh and became reality.

Mary is the model of this re-created history, the place where God and humanity meet.

⁵ *Kenosis* (a Greek word from which the adjective *kenotic* is derived) means emptying, despoiling, annihilating. The Incarnation of the Word, the Son of God, is *kenotic* because He emptied Himself of His divine condition in order to take on the human condition, service and obedience to the death of the cross (cf. Phil 2:5-11).

This decision and praxis which had its origin in God, occurred in the most concrete and divided reality of

human sin, where the glory of the Trinity agreed to enter into the narrowest confines of the flesh and the human condition, placing itself at the very heart of history. The small, particular and humble circumstances in which the divine gesture occurred were the point at which a new and re-created history began, a definitive covenant between history and the Spirit. Mary is the model of this re-created history, the place where God and humanity meet. And the Incarnate Christ is the possibility given for all time to all men and women to re-create history in a more human way (because it is the divine way).

The sending of the Son by the Father, in the humble human condition, experienced in poverty and struggling for life, lies at the source of our sending. The mission of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the model on the basis of which we can understand and live and perform our own mission, converting our whole life into obedience and service, like the life of Jesus.

Jesus Christ: the obedient servant

The Incarnate God, by living in this world which appears to be built up according to the rationale of sin and evil, appears as the "true life" (141, 142, 143) in the midst of death in the guise of wealth and pride. This is the reason why God could only reveal Himself *sub specie contraria*,

in a kenotic manner. The rationale of the Cross is the true rationale of the Christian mission, because it is the rationale of Jesus Christ Himself: contrasting poverty with wealth, humiliation with vanity, and humility with pride. And spreading it far and wide, by proposing the same path to others.

The true life for humanity is the life of Jesus Christ: a life of service in poverty, humiliation and humility - a missionary life. It is also the Ignatian *magis*⁶ - the concrete in the minus of a service which is increasingly poor and humble. And this is the movement of the Trinitarian life, from which the Son Incarnate came: never covering the maximum, always capable of entering and placing Himself in the minimum. The glory of God is the mission of the Son in kenosis and poverty.

And this is why St. Ignatius, in the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, recommends that as we contemplate the life of Jesus, we should begin to look at our own life and ask us ourselves in which life God wishes us to serve Him (135). The election will come from contemplating the mysteries of the life of Christ, so that they can be closely united to the life of Jesus and the life of the exercitant. The grace requested, the interior knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ and following Him for

⁶ Cf. Principle and Foundation (23): electing only what most leads to the end for which we were created....

greater love and service, will move the exercitant in the direction of an increasingly more radical commitment and practical service.

And this practical service should be similar to Jesus'. It will have to take the form needed to fit into a restricted concrete situation. It will be necessary to give preference to all those who are enslaved, poor, blind, deaf, sad, imprisoned, and limited in their life potential. It will be necessary to take on the role and the dynamic of prophecy, agreeing to be the mouthpiece of God in the world, but also taking on the destiny of the prophet: persecution, danger and death. It will be necessary to manage conflicts, without fleeing from them, as Jesus did when he decided to go up to Jerusalem and face the official representatives of the Jewish authorities, in obedience to the will of the Father.

In Ignatian spirituality, the face of Christ is essentially a missionary face.

In Ignatian spirituality, the face of Christ is essentially a missionary face. It is the Christ who acts, desires and calls to conquer the whole world, with power and glory, in the Contemplation of the Kingdom (91-98). But this glorious Christ reveals Himself during the final three weeks of the Exercises as the humble and suffering Servant of

God, whose only wealth and whose only power is to obey lovingly and fully what the Father wishes in order to bring about the redemption of humanity. This explains why we can find in the theology of the Exercises the sources of our mission in a mixture of glory and humility.

Our mission must be a mission in communion with Christ's. But this communion is the communion in the "works" and the sufferings required for the glory of the Father. A communion in service and in the Paschal sacrifice of the Son of God, the only path to communion with the Triune God. God, who first loved us (cf. 1 Jn 4:19) passed "first" through poverty and humiliation and today is pointing out the road to those who receive the grace to desire to follow Him in order to introduce them into the glory of the Father. The poverty and humiliations that are inherent in the mission therefore have the purpose of making us more capable of imitating Him (147).

The mission of service received during the Second Week of the Exercises and taken on with the election takes on a new sense and enlightenment, being definitively confirmed with the contemplation of the Paschal Mystery in the Third and Fourth Weeks. Through the service of Our Lord Jesus Christ who died on the Cross, the service of men and women is definitively shaped. By taking on the consequences of being sent on the mission by the Father to the end, the

crucified Jesus invites us to partake in His Passion, as an inevitable part of following Him and sharing in communion with His mission.

In the Third Week, then, we must learn the passive side of the mission to make us capable of facing up to those moments where it would not be possible to speak and to act, but only to suffer in silence, believing, in the darkness of faith, that the Father is always at work. Like the God of love who suffered to the end the consequences of His love for humanity, the exercitant is called upon to respond by sharing the Cross of Christ in the midst of conflicts and sufferings, even serving when nothing is clear and where everything appears to have become meaningless. Just as the life of Jesus Christ was a life "extra se" (outside of Himself), lived on behalf of others, our life must be fashioned around that life, as we accept each day to become more "lost" to ourselves, by finding the sense of our lives and mission only in Him and through Him.

Ignatius insists on this aspect of living for others, namely, this aspect of life as a service when he speaks of Jesus suffering and dying "for me," "for my sins" (193, 203). The definite seal of self-giving to love and commitment is set by death. Thus it was with Jesus. And thus it must be with us. In this dynamic of service to the end, men and women are called to enter into this experience in order to receive the

enlightenment that will make it possible for them to practice profound solidarity and radically serve those who are excluded, left on one side, the poor and all those whose life has been taken away, diminished and denied, and to do so in their real life situations. When that is done, these men and women will be able to see the glory of God which "shines" in the faces of those who are crucified in history and in the Church.

It is only after having passed through and experienced radical obedience and the service of Jesus on the Cross that we will be able to talk about joy and rejoicing, with the mystery of His Resurrection. The Risen Christ is the Crucified Christ, the very same and no other. This means that death does not have the last word and that the mission of Christ - and consequently the Christian mission - is definitively confirmed by the Word of the Father who supports us and ensures victory over the failure and murder of Jesus.

The sending of the Spirit the sending of witnesses

In the Fourth Week, St. Ignatius asks the exercitant to contemplate God who appears in the most holy effects of the Resurrection. The Resurrection which cannot be understood in itself, but only in its effects. And these effects are the sense and the fruits of the presence

of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son: joy, peace and above all the absolute need to obey the command of the Risen Lord to go out and tell all of what one has seen, heard and experienced - that He is alive.

The last contemplation in the Fourth Week, on the Ascension (226, 312) makes the Risen Christ disappear from the sight of the apostles who are committed to going to Jerusalem, where they are to wait for the Promised Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the definitive presence of the glory of God in history divided by sin. The process set in motion by evil against love and the Word of God has lost forever; thanks to the Paraclete of God and His Christ, given to humanity as a permanent Gift and Presence.

Christ disappears into the "cloud," but the Spirit remains by the side of humanity. Being the Comforter, the Spirit makes it possible to experience joy and peace. Above all He makes it possible to pass through the "holy places" that were the scenario of contemplation during the Exercises, for what is universal in the Church, where the mission has to be lived out and practiced. The acts of the apostles - those of yesterday and today - are the consequence of consolation moving in the direction of service. This is what necessarily makes each Christian an apostle, a messenger bearing the Good News.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...

The sending of the Spirit performs the miracle of transforming the fearful disciples into bold and charismatic witnesses - martyrs and confessors - in the first hour of the Church. The sending of the Spirit is translated into the sending in the Spirit, which at the end of the Gospel takes on universal dimensions: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...* (Mt 28, 18-20). There are no limits to the mission. The world is the limit for the disciples of Jesus Christ in order to announce His Incarnation, His life and His victory over death.

The fundamental experience of the Fourth Week is that the world, and men and women, are already living the new life inaugurated by the Risen Christ. History has truly entered its final phase; and the heart of this world, which seems to be despairing and fearful, is good, because Jesus Christ who stands at the heart of history, as the paradigm of humanity, took flesh, died and was glorified. Everything that happens in the world now bears the seal of the victory over evil and death.

Yet the Risen Christ is still crucified, and His glorification is still acquiring its fullness, even though it is already an undisputed fact. The Gospel and the concrete lives of men and women bear

witness to this eschatological tension, this conflict, which makes the mission not only necessary but the most central core of the Gospel and of Christian life.

Being a Christian means being a companion and a follower of Jesus. Sharing His service to failure and to death, but also sharing His triumph. Following Him in suffering and glory, suffering with His passion, and rejoicing with His Resurrection. This tension means that the Risen Christ plays the role of the comforter, as friends console one another (224). And this is the mission given by the Spirit of the Risen Lord to humanity. Those who experience intense joy and gratitude because of the glory of Our Lord must work in such a way that the world may see the saints and the true effects of His Resurrection. The Christian mission - paying humble and loving service to others, above all to those who are in greatest need - is to show the world that in Jesus Christ not only has death been vanquished, but that the love which is lived for Jesus Christ gives a meaning to life.

The Holy Spirit who creates an eternal bond between the Christian and Christ is the same Spirit who is present in the Church. The mission discerned in the Second Week, and tested and proven in the Third Week, has now been definitively confirmed. Just as the mission of the early Christians was not only dependent upon the historical

sending of Jesus of Nazareth, but mainly upon the manifestations of the Risen Lord, the true following of Christ is being sent to serve in this world in order to enable the comforting, consoling God to appear, experienced in the joy of the Resurrection, while still in the presence of the wounds of the Cross. He is fully the Lord of Glory, who lives in the life of the Trinity. But He continues to remain the Lord who was fashioned and marked by human history, by a specific place and time.

The Holy Spirit is the One who permits men and women to recognize the graces they have received and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth, recognizing and proclaiming Him to be the Son of God. He also permits them to perceive, within the Church which is so full of sin, the ever new novelty of Jesus Christ, and to have the courage and the desire to proclaim it to the whole world. This same Spirit, poured out over creation and over history, once again makes all things new. He is God in all things, and continues to perform His loving, creative, redeeming and sanctifying service for humankind. He makes it possible to encounter God in all things, and to place all things at the service of God and of others. It is He who makes men and women understand that the mission is the heart of their history, because it is the heart of the history of God, and of the life and being of God revealed to humanity.



The night on Hebron by Sieger Köder

While some people view

the world

as a religious desert,

Ignatius was convinced

that the world is filled

with the Spirit of God.

IV. THE REALITY OF THE WORLD

a spiritual challenge

The analysis of reality, our listening and response

The world in which we live is not very different from the one which the Son of God encountered when He took flesh, or the one in which St. Ignatius lived his spiritual experience, which he tried to translate into his *Spiritual Exercises*, above all in the Contemplation of the Incarnation (101-107).

If we think carefully about the news that we are given in the media everyday, we are surprised when we see a complete and objective panorama of what is happening in the modern world, with the interaction of all the various aspects and consequences. Day-by-day we find ourselves submerged by our fragmented experiences, and the information provided by the mass media is generally partial, superficial and not particularly objective.

This is why, when an Encyclical such as *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* presents us with a panorama of the modern world, we realize that it is based upon an analysis of values. An analysis of this kind can also be made at the continental, national, regional and municipal level. And the Church needs to work on the basis of such an analysis in order to project its Pastoral Ministry in a way that is appropriate to reality. This is the only way in which the Church can remain embodied in the world, and can be the sacrament of salvation, the leaven of the Kingdom of God. The greater or lesser degree of incorporation of the Church into the world is therefore an important aspect of the analysis of reality, because the effectiveness of the Church's mission depends on it.

Since the CLC is an ecclesial association we must also examine

the extent to which our Community is inserted into reality at the worldwide, continental, national, diocesan levels, depending upon the sphere in which the Community is expressed. When the *General Principles* invite us to follow the contemplation of the Three Divine Persons "of the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions" and in "chains" (GP 1), we must do so really. What are the "structures of sin" which divide our society? What are the forms of slavery and the "chains" that they produce? It is from this analysis, here and now, that our apostolic project must stem.

...our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese...) - GP 7.

But we cannot carry out this analysis if we are cut off from the rest of the Church because, as the *General Principles* state, "we work together with the hierarchy and other ecclesial leaders, motivated by a common concern" (GP 6) and "our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese...)" (GP 7).

It is therefore in communion with the hierarchy, united to the Society of Jesus (from which we receive "the milk" of formation) that we can "read" the problems afflicting our society.

Nevertheless, even though the interdependent nature of the modern world obliges us to maintain very broad horizons, if we really wish our action to be concrete, it is above all the local situation which challenges our charity, and it is through our incorporation into the local Church that we can respond to these challenges. Unless we are really and lovingly inserted into the local Church, our witness of communion and the scope of our mission will be very limited. It is above all based on the analysis which is carried out by the local Church (in which we must participate) that a spiritual challenge is thrown down to us:

Hearing the call of God coming from reality

In its injustices, reality contains a spiritual challenge to the human conscience, even when we are neither their direct cause nor their victims. It is therefore essential to analyze the injustices first. Through the solidarity which makes us "throb," it is God's voice crying out to our consciences.

Listening to the voice of God which is expressed through the reality of

the world is one of the sources of our CLC spirituality. God's will is revealed "through the events of our times" (GP 5). And "the interior law of love...which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts...challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times" (GP 2). These are the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit to which we must be attentive (GP 6).

This call which is inherent in reality comes from Our Lord, because it is from Him (and ourselves) that the salvation of humankind springs. This is why His Spirit is ready to lead us (our minds, our hearts and our steps) along paths that may be difficult, creative and concrete (cf. GP 6) in order to transform the "structures of sin" which have created, and which sustain, social injustice. He will also ensure that our action is united "to the whole Church and to all people of good will" (GP 7).

Analyzing reality therefore opens up the field to pastoral discernment: it enables us to discover the "signs of the times" and to identify priorities. "Apostolic discernment...is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ's presence, concretely, to our world" (GP 12b).

Our response to God's call

The spirituality of the CLC, through the pedagogy of the *Spiritual Exercises*, "opens and disposes us to

whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life" (GP 5), as a result of "the interior law of love" (GP 2) whether the call comes from our own daily reality, or the needs of our age, or the demands to expand the Kingdom of God throughout the earth (cf. GPs 2 and 6).

But willingness is not enough: it is necessary to discern the responses to which we must give priority in order to play our part in the transformation of the world, and in the advent of the "New Creation." St. Ignatius teaches us the criteria of "what is more urgent and universal" (GP 8c). In other words what is most necessary and the place in which one hopes to gather the greatest fruit for the glory of God.⁷

We belong to a Community precisely because it helps us "to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal" (GP 8c). In other words, because it helps us to commit ourselves more fruitfully to the service of the Kingdom.

In human affairs one always has to distinguish between theory and practice, if possible improving the former but above all the latter. The following considerations are designed to do both. They consider not so much what is being done, but what we should be doing, in order to improve our ability to respond.

⁷ Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, No. 622

How can the Community give us this help?

- Firstly by providing us with a "concrete experience of unity in love and action" through the "local community" (GP 7), or a "small CLC community" (GN 39a) which is "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" (GP 11).

- Providing systematic formation which contains the essential contents of the faith, incorporating them into life, from a closer following of Jesus (GP 4), to union with the Church which continues Jesus' mission in the world today (GP 6) and "creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth" (GP 6).

— Initiating us at the appropriate moment in the apostolic "Review of life" (GP 8c) which is our specific method of formation-on-the-mission, and the method which offers us the basis for the community discernment of God's Will in the service we undertake: how to improve it, how to find new resources, and how to overcome difficulties, when to change it and when to leave it, etc., encouraging us to pursue it perseveringly, even under difficulties.

- Creating (or intensifying) a broader level of communion with

appropriate participatory structures, among the "small CLC communities" which live within the same local Church (the diocese); from which a more effective level of mission will stem, using these pastoral structures at our disposal to plan the response which we are able to make to the needs of the local Church: in other words, our response to the call of God coming to us from the social reality in which we live (cf. GN 10).

- Creating liaison structures between the members carrying out the same type of service in the diocesan and national CLC Community.

- Where appropriate, in order to improve the implementation of the pastoral plan of the local Church, we should work with other ecclesial realities (GP 8b) but without concealing our own identity.

The reality of the contemporary world demands that this transition be effective and not just formal.

With regard to creating a broader level of communion and liaison structures, let us ask ourselves why CLC is expanding. While this facilitates interpersonal relationships, it does not provide adequate pastoral structures for the effective response that our age demands. We think that the CLC is still going

through a period of transition from being a Federation to becoming a Community. A Federation is content with minimal liaison structures. But a Community desires effective structures for communion for the mission. The reality of the contemporary world demands that this transition be effective and not just formal.

We need to structure ourselves today as a true Community, coming up from the grassroots to the top, but it must really be a Community at every level. For example, at the diocesan level (the local Church) we need to meet on a fairly regular basis with the officials of the "small communities" in the whole of the diocese, and in assemblies of our own members, and in areas of service. This does not require any physical structures (such as premises or centers) but pastoral structures (human structures).

Conclusions: applications and implications

The apostolic experiences gained by the local and national communities have proven extremely valuable. The examples we have presented help us to realize this, as do the reflections we have carried out. Since at Hong Kong '94 we wish to unite ourselves to a more generous and more effective commitment to the mission amongst ourselves, we have a great deal to reflect upon and much to learn from.

At the end of this examination of the centrality of the mission in the CLC, we would like to emphasize some of the goals to be attained:

- **To see the mission as the central point of the CLC**

In the cases we have examined one can see that the way we act and even the development of spirituality has a great vitality when the mission occupies a central position. It is a matter of placing the needs and aspirations of the world in which we live before our eyes, and asking ourselves: what does God want from us? With what acts of salvation can we bring the Good News to this world? We must strive to enhance our effectiveness, but we must also try to awaken and renew our living love for God, as revealed in our love for our neighbor.

- **Sharing at the continental level the mission experiences and the CLC life which our community commitment entails**

Many national communities are cut off from one another. Many of them share some things in common, but there are also many differences between them. Different paths exist along which new members reach the CLC: the *Spiritual Exercises*, former students of the Society, friends and acquaintances, a pilgrimage, a CLC magazine, an area of work, an apostolic activity...

The formation of group guides varies widely. As a result of this, the progress made by communities and their service dimension also differ. With a constant and far-reaching interchange, positive points will be communicated and the differences will gradually be smoothed away as the lifestyle is mutually complemented and brought closer together.

The international structures have not been adequate to facilitate this contact beyond neighboring CLCs. At the International Formation Encounters (IFE) an attempt is made to offer a possibility for regular meetings and an exchange of experiences, following a method which includes evaluation, with the possibility of issuing instructions, laying down urgent priorities for the mission and for formation. At the IFEs it is hoped that the coordinating team will become a fully-fledged service and animation team at the continental level for the communities in the continental region.

But this mutual enrichment can only be achieved if the national communities feel the need and the desire for exchange. The attitude of the national communities is decisive both when they choose the people to attend the IFEs and make preparations for it, and also the use they make of them after the Encounter. If the IFEs are viewed as a need to be shared, to enrich and unite the CLCs into a more

homogeneous world association, they will be attended by the most responsible officials and the National Community will be able to depend on them to inspire the activities, encounters and formation courses which are held nationally.

- **The preferential option for the poor and the promotion of justice**

In the light of the cases presented here and the reflections we have made, we can better understand what this preferential choice for the poor really means. The CLCs involved in these four cases respect those whom they are trying to help, discovering their values, anxious to foster their development, liberation and self-management capacity. In contact with the "poor" they allow themselves to be enriched. And the reflections also show us that this has always been one of Our Lord's calls to the CLC which has matured throughout the years to reach the point in which we now find ourselves. Indeed, it shows that this has always been God's call from ages past, when He expressed His love for the poor by taking their flesh and choosing to live the condition of the poor Himself.

For many of us this preferential attitude towards the poor comes neither naturally, nor easily. There is no doubt that each one of us shares the interests and points of view of the social class within which we live

and work. CLCers frequently live among people of a high educational level, and work with professionals. It is only the Spirit of Jesus which will enable us to go beyond and outside our socio-cultural environment and enter into frequent contact with the poor and the oppressed. A true conversion of the heart is necessary in order to be able to make friends with and to consciously and subconsciously foster the interests of the weak.

- **We need an experience of becoming incorporated into the working class environment**

The fact that we have developed in an educated class means that the CLC lifestyle is of a higher cultural level than that of the poor. What we need are CLC experiences in working class parishes and amongst the working classes themselves. In order to develop this dimension we must creatively try to adapt the language and pastoral plan and the structures of the CLC.

- **We need professional groups within CLC**

We have professional CLCers, but they form part of plural communities, whose common basis is not their profession and professional apostolic work, but an interest in spirituality, friendship and certain common experiences in the field of secondary or higher

education. In a number of countries groups of professionals with links to institutions based on the inspiration of St. Ignatius are interested in CLC: teachers in Church boarding schools, nurses and doctors in hospitals, social workers and religious performing their service in refugee camps. They ask the CLC to provide spiritual formation and support focusing on the professional experiences which unite their group. These CLCs should be given a clear apostolic character and a spirituality which is geared to the expectations and needs of those taking part.

These CLCs should be given a clear apostolic character and a spirituality which is geared to the expectations and needs of those taking part.

- **Greater interest must be shown in cooperating with individual Religious and/or Religious families with an Ignatian spirituality**

Particular attention, in this connection, should be paid to cooperation between the laity and the Jesuits. There is an increasing interest among lay people working with religious institutions for both men and women in acquiring a more thorough formation and collaborating on a more stable basis with their Institutes. The Society

has also been reflecting in recent years on the importance of deepening bonds and opening up avenues for genuine apostolic collaboration, nurtured by a spirituality of the same source. There are already some extremely interesting examples in the world which lead us to believe that the Jesuits and the laity have a very promising future ahead of them as companions undertaking common missions.

At this stage of our cooperation we can already glimpse two apostolic aspects which are worthy of further examination:

a) A stable structure for dialogue and collaboration between CLC and the Society and the Religious families inspired by Ignatian

spirituality. This collaboration structure should exist at both the national and world level as necessary.

b) In the cases proposed, CLCers are working for the poor in organized structures. But the CLC should not necessarily become responsible for these activities or lend its name to them, or be the proprietor of any facilities. The entities and facilities concerned should have a name of their own. The CLC can collaborate in founding them and running them.

Perhaps as we reach the end of this reflection we might wish to propose all these points in the form of guidelines for prayer and discernment for the communities as they prepare for Hong Kong '94.



Photo of the painting, *Jesus washes his disciples' feet* by Sieger Köder, taken from Die Bibel: 1993.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the Living God,
Comforter of widows,
Washer of feet,
show us how to care for each other.
Teach us to love as you did:
Unconditionally, unilaterally,
without fear or favour,
pride, or prejudice.
Give us open hearts
and wise minds
and hands that are worthy
to serve in you name.*

Sheila Cassidy

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