



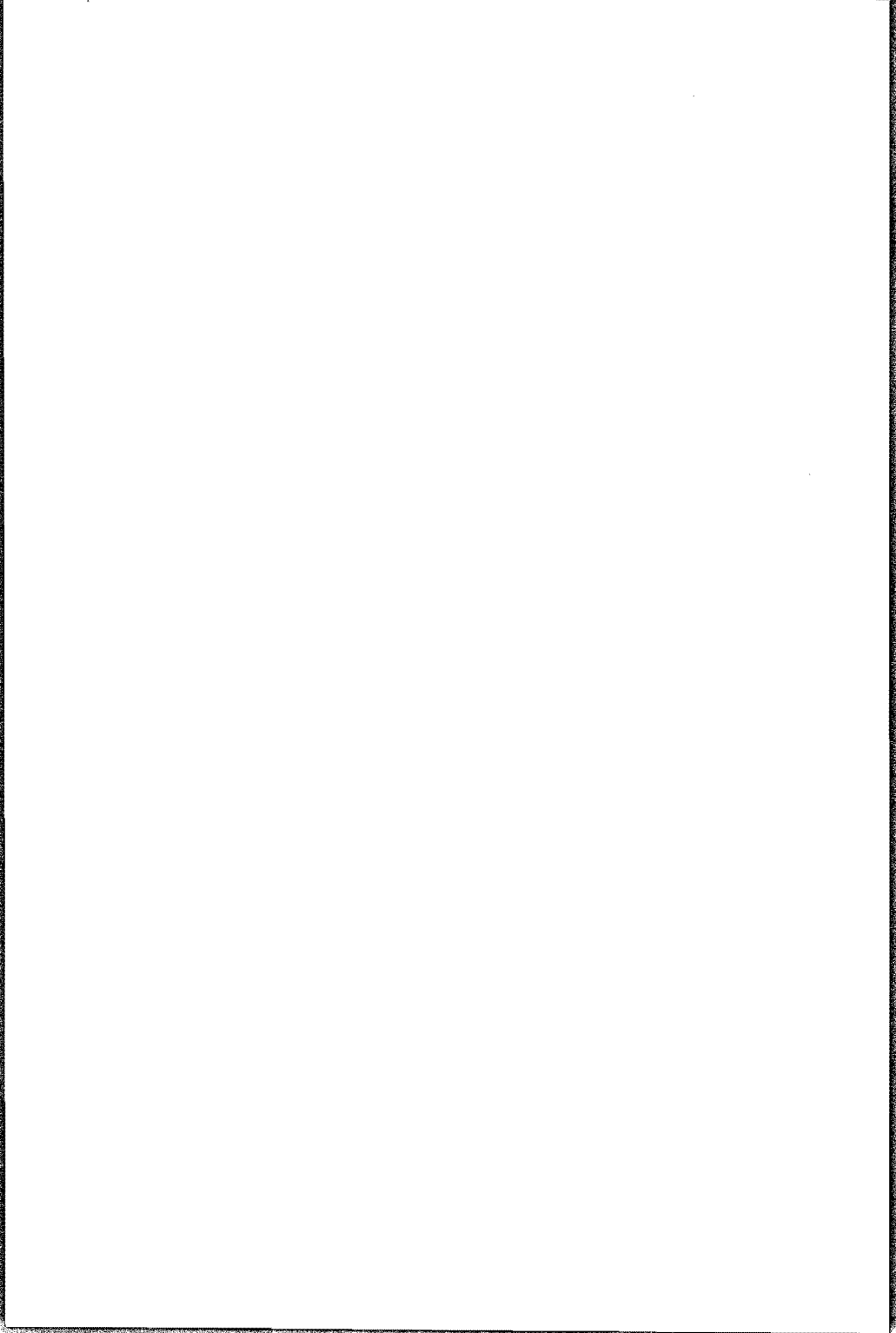
## *THE CLC CHARISM*



### **Guidelines For CLC Formation**

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# THE CLC CHARISM



## Guidelines For CLC Formation



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### PART I

#### *Criteria for CLC Formation*

### PART II

#### *The CLC Process of Growth*

## ***The Grace of Hong Kong 1994***

**During this Assembly we have experienced  
GOD's call to a deep ongoing conversion  
with regard to our MISSION.**

**As a World Community we have  
to integrate social realities,  
with all their problems and challenges,  
more and more into our life and action.  
Our conversion finds its source  
in the poor and humble Christ  
whom we want to follow and serve.**

**It is in the poor and oppressed of our time  
that Christ reveals his face.**

**The grace that we receive here and  
now is the awareness of being a community  
called to be with Christ and sent by HIM  
into a divided and suffering world.**

**HIS SPIRIT, who governs history,  
moves us to read the signs of the times and  
to put into practice our spiritual experience  
as a service for building justice and peace.**

**We have to live this not only in words  
but in deeds and in truth.**

**That is what Saint Ignatius teaches us  
in his Spiritual Exercises,  
source and instrument for our apostolic spirituality,  
the greatest grace of our lives.**



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## INTRODUCTION

1 The Christian Life Community is an international association of men and women, young and adult, from all types of background, who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him in the building of the Kingdom. Members make up small groups which form part of larger communities organised on regional and national bases, all forming **ONE World Community**. The CLC is present in all five continents, in almost sixty countries.

2 The CLC has much to offer the Church and the society in which we live. The rôle played by the MARIAN CONGREGATIONS in the formation of the laity for the service of the Kingdom during more than 400 years of history is a precious heritage for CLC. Christian Life Community, however, is not just a new name which was given to the Marian Congregations in 1967. In the words of Father Paulussen himself, CLC represents the **rebirth of the movement, almost a new beginning**.

3 The new identity of CLC was expressed in the General Principles, approved in 1971 and revised in 1990. But from the very beginning it was felt necessary to complement this fundamental text with other documents which were more explicit on the processes of formation proper to CLC.

4 In 1982 the World Community presented the SURVEY as a key paper for giving direction to CLC formation. Today, this SURVEY, duly adapted, remains the current paper for any analysis and description of the growth of a CLC, of the methods used and of the contribution of different roles at each stage.

5 Nevertheless, there is a need for a clearer presentation of the vocation of the laity in CLC, and of the process of growth of its members in ways which can enrich formation plans of National Communities and strengthen a greater unity in the World Community. This is something that has been confirmed, notably at the 1994 World Assembly in Hong Kong, which recommended the implementation of levels of formation (initial and continuing) according to specific, selected criteria.

6

The first step was the drawing up of a brief paper *Criteria for CLC Formation* by an international working party. The first draft was re-worked in the light of the international meetings for *Jesuits and CLC* which have taken place in Europe, Africa, and Latin America during the past two years.<sup>1</sup> At the request of the Executive Council, a small, expert group has worked on the document, giving it unified style and definitive form. It is published as a *Progressio* supplement so that national communities can put it to the test and use it as a working document in their preparation for the next World Assembly in Brazil. The final document will be approved during this Assembly.

7

As with the SURVEY, these directions have been written for guides, assistants and those with responsibility within CLC. There are two parts to this paper:

**Criteria for CLC Formation, and Process of Growth in CLC.**

For a better understanding and use of the document we propose the following keys to interpretation:

● **The personal dimension of Ignatian pedagogy**

8

St Ignatius firmly believed that each creature is an original work of the Creator. Each person, created in the image and likeness of God, is free to respond to His love. The **Criteria for Formation** help us to ascertain, among those who have chosen CLC as their way of life, what stage they have already reached and how they should be formed. Until now, the CLC emphasis has always been on *community*: now, without losing anything of that characteristic, it is a matter of looking at the individual, the person with potential for entering the school of the Spiritual Exercises and of living the CLC

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In English: Rome, August 1995.  
 In Spanish: Buenos Aires, October 1995;  
 Lima, January 1996;  
 Madrid, April and November 1996;  
 Mexico, October 1996;  
 In French: Zaire, July 1995;  
 Cairo, January 1996;  
 Cameroon, August 1996;  
 Ivory Coast, August 1996.



way of life. The Ignatian pedagogy is addressed to everyone and helps that person to put everything that they are and have at the service of the Kingdom of God. To be faithful to that pedagogy, CLC wants to form men and women who offer themselves freely to the Lord and the Church and to serve wherever they are sent. The **Criteria** form a reference for this process of formation.

- **The breath of the Spirit throughout CLC history**

CLC formation, under the guidance of the Lord and of His Spirit, has been gradually codified in various papers: those of the World Assemblies, the SURVEY, the revised General Principles and in numerous formation programmes. The **Criteria** form another page of this history of the presence and action of the Lord. Thus, they should not be seen as a supplementary document, but as a humble attempt to sum up the most recent graces which have marked the path and taken us a step further towards living the CLC charism in its fulness.

- **Participation in a common heritage**

CLC history is inseparable from the history of its apostolic association with the Society of Jesus and those other religious groups inspired by St Ignatius, for the greater service and greater glory of God. This collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus has been built with the passage of time, but after the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, and the publication of the document *Cooperation with the laity in mission*, collaboration intensified towards the setting up of an *Ignatian apostolic network* in order to increase the human and institutional resources in the service of Christ's mission. The **Criteria** should be read and put into practice in the light of this cooperation. They will be sent to those many Jesuits who, like their forebears, have been consecrated to the mission of the formation of their lay companions, sharing with them what they are and what they have, the common heritage of the Spiritual Exercises, the riches of long tradition, and the structures which serve a common mission. In this way, CLC will have more chance of becoming an important node in this Ignatian apostolic network which has so much to offer society and the Church.

## PART I

### CRITERIA FOR CLC FORMATION

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- 11            This paper sets out to describe the charism specific to CLC. It is presented as a particular vocation within the Church to which its members respond with a life commitment. Such an approach expresses both the simplicity and the richness of the charism, drawing attention to its historical roots and taking stock of later enrichments. This is not an exhaustive account of the subject, nor is it examined in all its aspects.
- 12            The presentation is based on the experiences of the National Communities, but our approach goes well beyond that which is actually seen in this or that Community. The CLC vocation and the CLC charism present an ideal and a challenge for all of us. Contributions from the most experienced CLC members are certainly necessary so that the proposals can be put into effect in each National Community, but we must also, all of us together, continue to work without stint on the task of renewing both our personal and our community life according to our charism.

## ● What sort of person should we expect a CLC member to be

13 We hope that all CLC members will participate in the mission of Christ according to their own vocation in the Church.

14 *Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, young and old, of all social conditions, who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and to work with Him for the building of the Kingdom, and who have recognised the Christian Life Community as their special vocation within the Church. (GP 4)*

15 The foundation of CLC formation and renewal is **the individual value of each person** and the conviction that each person has a **divine vocation** which touches on every part of that person's existence. Everyone is called by God to fulfil a **mission** in life. It is God, therefore, who takes the initiative, but He respects our personal freedom. Each individual discovers this call, listens to it, and tries to understand what God wants. Vocation is the call of God which manifests itself in our deepest desires and our highest aspirations. Our free response to God's call is what gives meaning and dignity to our existence.

16 To understand our life as a response to the call of the Lord means that we are liberated from a resigned fatalism in any situation in which we find ourselves. Equally, it allows us to react against conformity, which dictates how we should live.

17 Each person finds in his or her own personal vocation the way in which to live the **universal vocation** of the human family, which is called to communion with the Father through the mediation of the Son in the Spirit of love. In fulfilling one's own mission as a loving response to the call of the Lord, the individual fulfils his or her destiny of developing a personal relationship with God and with the human family.

18 CLC as presented here is a particular vocation within the Church, certainly, but this vocation can only be understood in the light of the universal vocation to which all Christians are called.

## ● The Christian Vocation

19 Christian life is **the answer to the call of Jesus to follow Him and to be transformed by His Spirit**. This is the design of the Father who has predestined us in Christ: *Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to . . . live through love in his presence, ... [to] become his adopted children through Jesus Christ* ... (Ephesians 1, 4-5). Christ invites us to follow Him, by adopting with the grace of the Spirit, those same feelings and attitudes which were His during His life and at the time of His death, and which are set out in the Beatitudes (Mt 5, 3-12), so that we might pass ourselves from death to true life: *All I want to know is Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead.* (Phil. 3,10-11)

20 The Lord invites us **to share in His friendship**. *I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; ...* (John 15, 15-16). He also invites us **to work with Him in His mission**: *As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.* (Jn 20,21) The Christian vocation is a call to follow Christ in the service of others.

21 One responds to this call of the Lord in faith by welcoming His word and the gift of His Spirit, by which the Father consecrates us to the mission of Christ, priest, prophet and king. Baptism is the sacramental sign of incorporation within the body of Christ, the Church, the community of his followers.

22 The call of God to an individual is a part of the nature of the person and of the circumstances of individual history. Each person has his or her own mission to fulfil, both within individual family and professional life, and within the larger contexts of the Church and society. Sometimes mission is simple and unassuming, at other times, more dazzling; but the value to the person does not depend on the importance of the mission; it depends on the faith and love with which the individual responds.

23 Both vocation and mission have their origins in God's design and become clear in the light of His calling. Vocation, however, has reference to the direction which we give to our life and to the style in

which we live it (being with Jesus), whilst mission relates to our leading our life according to God's designs (announcing the Good News) *and He appointed twelve ... to be His companions and to go out and preach.* (Mk 3, 14)

24 In the search to discover individual vocation, Christians find before them the usual **life choices**: marriage or the single life, priesthood or laity, choice of profession, duties and responsibilities, the accumulation of wealth and possessions, material well-being, friends, interests, projects, etc. These choices, if they are made freely and consciously in order to best follow Christ, constitute the response of the Christian to God's call, and, little by little, they transform the universal vocation into a personal vocation.

25 Each one of us must prepare him or herself, seeking, asking for, and welcoming with recognition the gifts of the Lord which guide our steps along the path of life towards the deepest communion with Him and with our brothers and sisters in love and service. At the same time, the Lord is always inviting us to detach ourselves from all these gifts in order for us to learn to love them, not for themselves, but for the Creator and Lord who gives them to us. *So, in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions* (Luke 14, 33). Our calling is thus an invitation to **reorganise** our life around Jesus, who must become the centre.

26 CLC members recognise their personal vocation in this particular way of Christian life, within the Church. This personal vocation is closely tied to discernment of their apostolic mission, that is, the way in which they are being called to serve the Church in the evangelisation of the world:

- **Features specific to the CLC Vocation**

27 The CLC vocation, within the universal Christian vocation, has three principal tenets. It is:

### **An Ignatian Vocation**

28 The charism and spirituality of CLC are Ignatian. Thus, the **Spiritual Exercises** of St Ignatius are both the specific source of this

charism and the characteristic instrument of CLC spirituality. *Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens us and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life* (GP 5).

29 The General Principles emphasise the Ignatian character of CLC by using phrases throughout the text which refer to experience of the Exercises or to Ignatian charism. They emphasise the central rôle of Jesus Christ. They offer explicit references to the Ignatian origins of the CLC way of proceeding. They underline the importance of **apostolic discernment** in opening oneself to the most urgent and universal calls of the Lord, discernment which, following the Ignatian way, becomes the normal way of taking decisions.

30 The CLC way of life is shaped by the features of *Ignatian Christology*: - Jesus Christ is sent by the Father to redeem the world and calls personally to everyone who considers himself weak and a sinner to work closely with Him; contemplation of the Incarnation (mission); to follow the Eternal King in His life of humility and poverty (kenosis); union with Him in His passion and resurrection (strength of the Spirit) - fashioned in the way of the CLC: austere and simple, in solidarity with the poorest and the marginalised, combining contemplation with action, in a spirit of love and service in all things, with discernment.

31 Ignatian spirituality is equally explicit in the Marian character of the CLC charism. The rôle of Mary in the Community is in effect the same as that she has in the Exercises and in the spiritual experience of Ignatius. The mother of Jesus is constantly present at the side of her Son, a mediator as well as an inspiration and model of response to His call and to working with Him in His mission.

32 In the light of the formative experience of the Exercises, the CLC has as its vision the integration of faith and life in all dimensions: personal, social, professional, political and ecclesiastical.

The spirituality of the Exercises strengthens the distinctive character of this Christian vocation.

33 ▶ The Ignatian *magis* sets the style of the response to the universal call to holiness as a seeking for the 'greater glory of God', by following Jesus Christ more closely [GP 4] and by

'offerings of greater worth and moment' [SE 97].

34 ▶ Christ, moreover, reveals Himself in Ignatian spirituality as 'a man for others', who invites us to follow Him and to put ourselves at the service of our brothers and sisters, a distinctively **apostolic** approach to the Kingdom of God. CLC members are Christians who *want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom.* [GP 4]

35 ▶ Finally, the Exercises, and hence Ignatian spirituality, underline the **ecclesiastical character** of apostolic service. The mission received from Christ is mediated through the Church. *Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ, here and now continues his mission of salvation.* [GP 6]

36 The Ignatian character of CLC finds expression in the regular practice of the Ignatian way of prayer, 'examen', evaluation and apostolic discernment, at a personal as well as at the community level, and by frequent participation in the sacraments.

37 The Ignatian heritage can be likened to a great tree planted in the garden of the Church. The principal branch of the tree is undoubtedly the Society of Jesus, but **Ignatian** is not a synonym for **Jesuit**. The spirituality of the Exercises nourishes other religious groups and lay groups just as well, each of whom expresses in its own way this or that character of the Ignatian charism. It is among these groups that a special place has to be given to the Marian Congregations, the predecessors of the Christian Life Community.

### **A Community Vocation<sup>2</sup>**

38 CLC members live Ignatian spirituality in community. The help of brothers and sisters sharing the same call is an essential factor which allows each individual to continue always more faithful to his or her vocation and mission. In addition, community itself is a constituent element of the apostolic witness of CLC:

39 *To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic*

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<sup>2</sup> This dimension of the vocation of CLC is described in detail in a special section (p. 42)

witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with according to our charism. [GP 4]

### A Lay Vocation

40 CLC is defined in the General Principles as an association, not of laity, but of the faithful: *Our community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions* [GP 4].

41 With maturity, however, at the stage of Permanent Commitment, the CLC vocation becomes specifically lay in its objectives and its characteristics: *We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live.* [GP 4].

42 In 1946, Pope Pius XII said *The faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church* [Discourse to New Cardinals, 20 February 1946, Acta Apostolica Sedis XXXIII, p.149].

43 The Second Vatican Council treated the same subject as follows: *Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity. . . . But by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will* [Lumen Gentium, cl. 31]. And Pope John Paul II has written, *The 'world' thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined to glorify God the Father in Christ. The Council is able then to indicate the proper and special sense of the divine vocation which is directed to the lay faithful. They are not called to abandon the position they have in the world. ( . . . ), on the contrary, [baptism] entrusts a vocation to them that properly concerns their situation in the world ( . . . ). Thus for the lay faithful, to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but, in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well.* [Cristifideles Laici, cl. 15]





## CLC PEDAGOGY:

### *how to find and follow one's individual vocation*

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- 44 *The fundamental objective of formation of the lay faithful is an ever clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil one's mission. [CL 58]*
- 45 In the process of discovering whether an individual has a CLC vocation, several things must be considered. First, whether the individual hoping to live such a vocation has a suitable disposition and, second, if they do, how this character can be strengthened and the person helped to recognise that God is calling them to embrace the CLC way of life. These elements of CLC pedagogy in relation to vocation are based in particular on the **Spiritual Exercises**.
- 46 In making the **Spiritual Exercises** one seeks to forget one's own plans and to look at one's life [SE 21]. One asks the Lord how He wishes us to serve him? [SE 135]. The Exercises are a remarkable school for making us listen to the call of God. They help us to respond and make us ever more ready to be always listening for His divine voice. They help us to transform our entire life in a generous response to the Lord who calls us and who sends us. The Exercises prepare us for a life of call-response, of listening for the call and answering it.
- 47 Doing the Exercises does not constitute a once-and-for-all experience, by which one 'achieves' an apostolic life, but, rather, marks a decisive initial experience in the choice of a personal option for Christ which will form the basis of the way life will be lived thereafter.
- 48 The way proposed in the Exercises as the way to find and live one's vocation with an ever-increasing faith is through **discernment**.

Discernment is a requirement of love which pushes us at each moment to do the will of God whom we love, and to please Him in everything. Discernment makes real the gift of those who responsibly and freely put themselves entirely at the service of the Lord and of their fellow men and women; it allows us to seek God in everything and at all times, to learn to listen for His voice in the voices of our sisters and brothers, and to discover his will in difficulty as well as success, even in situations which seem hopeless. Thanks to this permanent attitude of discernment, we move progressively towards communion with God in every aspect and at every moment of our life.



### Aptitude for CLC

49           The CLC vocation presupposes certain characteristics, essentially the same as those required to do the Spiritual Exercises. Aptitude is determined by taking account of those characteristics which allow the individual to encounter God. It is not so much a question of something already acquired (even if unquestionably motivated by love) as promise of potential. To indicate such an aptitude, St Ignatius uses the expression 'tener subiecto' (literally, 'to have subject' which means to have a strong sense of self, i.e. to have aptitude). *Tener subiecto* has a dynamic sense: one who makes the Exercises either becomes progressively 'subiecto' (disposed) or, conversely, indisposed; one moves forward or backwards, but one is never static.

50           The Annotations (SE 1-20) offer us a picture of the adult exercitant, a picture which is at the same time a point of departure and a point of arrival. They are the minimal conditions, laid down by Ignatius, for undertaking the adventure and they are also the result of the undertaking. In other words, the characteristic traits which define a suitable individual must, in some manner, be present in the beginning. Ignatius adapted the Exercises to each individual, but at the same time he recommended that the question of an election should not be put to everyone indiscriminately. Moreover, in describing both the exercitant and the conditions required for the undertaking of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius presupposes that whoever wishes to have this experience wants above all *to love and serve his Divine Majesty*

(SE 230). These are also the distinctive characteristics of the individual best fitted to become a CLC member.

51 These personal characteristics, which must in some way be present at the beginning of the Ignatian experience, can be put into two categories:

▲ **from the human point of view:**

- ▶ **capable of accepting reality**, sensitive to the social and political world in which he or she lives, able to communicate and render service to others in a significant way;
- ▶ **greatly desiring** to lead a full and dynamic life, even if for the time being this desire could be tainted by personal ambition;
- ▶ **longing** for a better world and eager for their own 'improvement'.

▲ **in relation to God:**

- 52
- ▶ **attracted by Jesus and His mission**, yearning for a deeper personal relationship with Him, prepared to let Him change needs and aspirations, deficiencies and weaknesses;
  - ▶ **someone with a real sense of his or her own sinfulness**, but knowing they are loved, redeemed and chosen by Christ;
  - ▶ **someone open to the needs of others**, ready to serve them and to work together for a world both more human and more divine;
  - ▶ **someone who feels that being a member of the Church involves responsibility**, and who is ready to commit him or herself to the Church's mission.

◆ **The vital role of the Spiritual Exercises in the discernment of vocation**

- 53 The discernment of a particular vocation to the CLC is made above all through the Spiritual Exercises: here we find the instruments for an election and the stages of vocational discernment.

▲ ***Levels of God's call***

- 54 **The Father's call to life - the splendour of being human:** to be a man or a woman means to be called to fulfil a task, that of living in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1, 26-30), to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and conquer it, to recognise the fundamental good in all things. The New Testament reveals all the splendour of the human being who, created in Christ, is called to divine life in communion with the Father, through the mediation of the Son, in the Spirit of love.

- 55 The **Principle and Foundation** instils in us how we are beings 'oriented to the Other', called to recognise in everything - whether health or sickness, good fortune or adversity - the gifts and the presence of God, and to respond, like Jesus, with praise, reverence and service. [SE 23]

- 56 Each day we continue this dialogue with the **examination of conscience**, in which we acknowledge the benefits received in things, people and events. [SE 43] This is a way of living day after day the Contemplation to Attain Love, *which urges us to ask for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received, in order that . . . I may become able to love and serve his Divine Majesty in all things.* [SE 233-234]

- 57 CLC members must avoid 'spiritual consumerism', in which spirituality is simply a product by which one seeks to satisfy one's subjective desires in the experience of God, a sort of aesthetic pleasure in the silence of contemplation or security beyond the worries and commitments of real life.

58 The depth of our experience of the **First Week** leads to an understanding of God's design for us and the reality of sin and death. In the Dialogue on Mercy, we recognise ourselves as sinners full of confidence and gratitude for the forgiveness of God, who saves us through Jesus Christ. The experience of the love of Christ who died on the cross to give us a new life in his Spirit, invites the exercitant to ask himself, *'What can I do for Christ?'*, before continuing into the Second Week.

▲ **JESUS CHRIST:**  
**the great option of the Exercises and of the CLC**

59 The experience of being saved by Christ and freed from the slavery of sin [SE 53] - what Christ has done for me - awakens in us the desire to put ourselves entirely at His service and to listen to His call to work with Him in building the Kingdom [SE 95]. In fact, the eternal King calls us *to stay and work with him, to follow Him in His suffering and in His glory. To stay with Jesus and to follow Him in His work to establish the Kingdom*, this is the one and indivisible choice. To follow the Lord means wanting to know Him better, to love Him more intensely and to follow Him more closely in His mission. [SE 104] This is the objective of all the Contemplations in the Spiritual Exercises.

60 In Ignatian spirituality this **option for Christ** and this work for building the Kingdom means to know, to love and to serve His brothers and sisters. In this way we love more intensely and follow more closely the Christ who is 'the genuine life' [SE 139]. It is also to exalt him and to contribute to the reconciliation of everything to Him and in Him, so that the Father may be all in all. [1 Cor 15,28]

61 CLC is wholly imbued with this Great Option. *Our community is made up of Christians . . . who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom.* [GP 4]

### ▲ *Movements of the Spirit*

62 Ignatius is a teacher who learnt from experience. His spirituality is not based on abstract principles of perfection, but on actual events, on being touched by God. Those making the Exercises must prepare themselves to take the most important decision - *that of finding that state or life which God our Lord proposes for us* [SE 135] by a specific methodology: the contemplation of Christ's life being attentive and alert to our own feelings and interior movements through which the Holy Spirit speaks.

63 The experience of consolation and desolation and of various spirits [SE 176] also plays a fundamental rôle in Ignatian choices. The Meditations and the Rules for making an election [SE 135-168; 169-189] are aimed at clarifying these experiences for better discernment. Far from being based on his own will-power, Ignatius is always concerned with actual experiences. He is satisfied only if *the Creator deals without intermediary with his creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.* [SE 15]

### ▲ *Stages of Christian Discernment of Vocation*

64 Ignatius speaks of making 'a sound and good **election for one's life and state**'. As far as we are concerned, this election should be our free and generous response or answer to a call from God. Ignatius shows us the way in which we should prepare ourselves interiorly to listen to the call of the Lord and how to behave in a manner in which God can make himself heard.

65 Discernment of vocation is a process, with stages which it is essential to follow and understand. These stages are not linear, but there is a dynamic owing to an interaction of grace and freedom.

66 First, one must have a proper **disposition**, by adopting particular spiritual attitudes which are the prerequisites of a good election:

- ▶ assimilation of Christ's criteria (Two Standards, SE 136-148);
- ▶ a mature decision to follow the will of God (the Three Classes

of Persons, SE 149-157);

- ▶ allowing the affections to be centred on God, by loving Jesus with a free and fervent heart:

67 • in the 'first degree of humility' to make a **fundamental choice**: *...that in all things I may be obedient to the law of God our Lord. Consequently, even though ... to save my temporal life, I would not enter into deliberation about violating a commandment ...which binds me under mortal sin.*[SE 165]

68 • in the 'second degree of humility', to feel **detached and free** with regard to all created things, to the point of not being able to envisage under any circumstance a venial sin, i.e. to knowingly resist God's call in a small thing; [SE 166]

69 • in the 'third degree of humility', [SE 167] to seek the *magis* with an growing identification with the Spirit of the poor and humble Christ.

70 Next, one must **search carefully for manifestations of the Lord's will,**

- ▶ by reflecting before Him on the objective of the election and on the advantages and disadvantages of each choice in the light of faith;
- ▶ by remaining attentive to the movements of spirits and their effects (consolation or desolation) for discerning which way one is being nudged by the Lord;
- ▶ by praying to the Lord with fervour to make his will known.

Finally, we can distinguish between **two objectives**:

- 71 ▶ To discern *states of life*: a lay life in CLC or another spiritual path, the priesthood or religious life.
- 72 ▶ to discern *styles of life* [SE 189]: in the context of one's life (family, friends, community, study, work, etc.) not everything favours a process of growth towards the freedom necessary to discern 'state of life'. It is necessary to adopt a style of life that favours this growth. Often, development comes to a standstill because of a lack of care in the first stages.

### ◆ **Preparation and confirmation of the election in the Spiritual Exercises**

- 73 According to Ignatian tradition, the Spiritual Exercises are a privileged time for discerning vocation. However, as Ignatius knew well, we cannot make the Exercises relating to choosing one's state of life without good preparation, which can last for several years. After the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, we also need time for confirmation and clarification of God's call, taking into account things which happen around us and within ourselves. In this preparation and this confirmation, Ignatius invites us to experience different situations, which he calls experiences or tests, and to have the advice of someone who can help us to discern the call of the Lord.

### ▲ *Learning through experience*

- 74 These experiences are not only real 'ministries', but also tests of progress made, and points of departure for new calls from the Lord. Ignatian pedagogy does not form anyone by hothouse methods, but, on the contrary, by exposure to the elements, where one is forced to brave the storms. It is a question of being tested in the heart of the community and of letting oneself be tested there by experiences capable of touching one, 'understanding ... profoundly and savouring interiorly'. For example:
- ▶ undertaking **studies or formation programmes** with a clearly apostolic purpose, that is to say for *helping souls*;
  - ▶ undertaking the **Exercises** in daily life (19th Annotation) or



whilst making a retreat of 3, 5 or 8 days;

- ▶ rediscovering **daily life as a vocation** (work, family and social responsibilities, sickness, unavoidable events, etc.);
- ▶ assuming responsibilities as a coordinator in the community or undertaking **apostolic commitments**;
- ▶ taking part in apostolic activities or service where one is obliged **expose oneself to different situations** and one's personal strengths and weaknesses are put to the test;
- ▶ building up a **Community for mission** which is not simply a group of friends, but a 'community of friends in the Lord for mission.'

These experiences should be offered gradually, depending on the stage of growth.

- During the **first years of a community** the experiences offered are common to other young people and to other associations: prison and hospital visiting; catechism groups; participation in formation programmes; days of recollection and periods of retreat; having spiritual guidance.
- For those who **hear the call of the Lord** with greater clarity, group meetings can be organised with CLC or other religious associations and communities.
- For those who are **discerning vocation**, some countries organise summer camps specifically directed towards choosing a style of life. They generally last about a fortnight and offer an intensive programme of communal life, work, reflection, discussions and personally-guided Spiritual Exercises.

▲ *Individual spiritual guidance*

75

Spiritual guidance is not seeking advice, and even less to ask what we should do. It is a matter of sharing our experiences with someone in order to understand more clearly what God is saying to us and what He wants of us. It is an indispensable part of discernment. It presupposes above everything a mutual trust, which manifests itself in an openness of heart in listening attentively. It requires absolute discretion. On occasions the guide can provide clarification or offer advice, but these instances should be the exception rather than the rule.

In the course of such guidance, particular care should be given to the stages of preparation for the Exercises for an election, and the time for confirmation which follows.

It is important that the guide should have assimilated thoroughly the Annotations [SE 1-20] and incorporated the progress of spiritual growth with an understanding of social and cultural requirements for an apostolic vocation. The guide should be involved in the promotion of justice, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue should be thoroughly integrated in his or her own life as an essential dimension of evangelisation.



## CLC PEDAGOGY of Apostolic Mission

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### Apostolic Mission

*'To be on mission' - a fundamental characteristic of CLC*

76 Mission is a state more than an activity. To be Christian means to be sent. The Ignatian charism is essentially apostolic.

Ignatius believed in Jesus Christ and perceived him as the Son sent by the Father to free humankind, who gathered around himself apostles and disciples to be sent on the same mission. In his turn, Ignatius saw himself as called and sent by Jesus Christ to a life similar to that of the apostles, in the service of the Kingdom. Moreover, he experienced being placed under *the banner of the cross*, standing with Jesus, in the service of the Lord and of the Kingdom.

77 That is why, for a CLC member, to approach and give deep consideration to the theme of mission comes back to a sounding of his or her individual identity as a Christian and of the rôle he or she is called to play in the Church. The CLC vocation implies being on mission, that is, choosing to be - in all that he or she is, in all his or her life and actions - an individual sent by God into the world, working from the Church, to serve with Jesus, this Jesus who carries the cross, the symbol of God's love for us.

78 Mission lives inwardly upon the following questions: *What has Christ done for me? What am I going to do for Christ?*

Knowing themselves to be loved unconditionally by God in Christ Jesus, CLC members must become themselves intermediaries of this love for others.

Thus mission becomes a **way of life**: being an instrument of the love of God and of God's kingdom in all dimensions of human life.

79 Mission is the **first priority** for CLC. It is impossible to have formation separated from mission and community, or community separated from mission and formation. Formation and community are 'for mission'. It is not a question of having first, formation, following which we busy ourselves with mission, nor of living as a group in such a way that this becomes an end in itself. Members in CLC groups must be ready to move into another group for the sake of formation or mission.

#### ▲ The CLC mission field

80 The CLC mission is a response to the needs of the world and of humankind; this response is taken from the Gospel of Jesus. Mission expresses itself in choices, projects and activities, which should correspond to genuine needs of the world and of humankind, in the light of the Gospel.

81 The CLC mission has a truly **lay character**. In the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* we read the following declaration:

*... by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live and work in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the world, and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within, like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. [LG 31] Therefore, even when*

*occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can and must, do valuable work for the evangelisation of the world. But if . . . many of them expend all their energies in apostolic work, nevertheless the whole laity must cooperate in spreading and in building up the kingdom of Christ. [LG 35]*

82 Conforming to the direction given by Vatican II, the mission of the laity within CLC is not to be understood in a restrictive sense. The CLC field of mission is **unlimited**. It extends to the Church and to the world, in the service of individuals and of society, in an effort to reach the heart of each individual and to change oppressive structures by bringing the Gospel to everyone and every situation and circumstance.

83 Given the lay character, however, of the CLC vocation and given today's world situation, marked by serious injustice and by the marginalisation of a large part of the human family which lives in poverty and misery, the service to which CLC is called to give **priority**, in the light of its preferential option for the poor [GP 4, 8], must be the **promotion of justice**. This is because we love God who wants us to transform the world, so that all God's children can live with dignity. We should try to see Jesus in every man and woman, because Jesus identified Himself with them, especially the most deprived [cf. Mt 15, 31-46]. Commitment to the cause of justice and freedom makes sense for us only so long as it is motivated by the Spirit of Christ, as an expression of faith and love.

84 The promotion of justice must also be **integrated** into the larger context of **evangelisation**, the proclaiming of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. That is why our desire to help others in the Spirit of Christ is, by definition, directed to the fulfilment of our eternal destiny, even though it may express itself at first in simple actions in favour of justice and peace, freedom, human rights, the well-being of the human family and the wholeness of creation.

85 Work for justice takes different forms according to regional and cultural circumstances, and different socio-political situations. But giving this priority must show itself in our **style and standard of living**. In the Spiritual Exercises we ask for the grace to follow Christ, poor and humble, and our hope is to obtain this grace from the

Lord. To believe in Jesus Christ, therefore, means to follow Jesus Christ more closely, and to share His poverty means to live a life of faith which gives rise to justice and takes the part of the poor. A simple life-style safeguards our apostolic freedom, expresses our solidarity with the poor and makes our faith credible.

86

### **Mary is also a model for Mission.**

*She is the model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's cooperation with God begins with her 'yes' in the mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation. Her effective service, as shown in her visit to Elizabeth, and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her an inspiration for our action for justice in the world today. Mary's cooperation in her Son's mission, continued all through her life, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary.... Thus we confirm our own mission of service to the world received in baptism and confirmation. [GP 9].*

### **▲ Ways to live out mission**

87

The CLC experience, clarified in the Spiritual Exercises, invites each one of us to live his or her apostolic mission in three basic ways:

#### **● Personal mission**

88

**Personal mission** is the witness of each member to their faith, in the family and in the workplace, in attitudes, words and actions. *Each one of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations. [GP8(a)]*

Personal mission can also be to answer a particular call from the Lord, the rest of the group not being able to respond (e.g. service to an ethnic group whose language and culture are not known to everyone), or which concern only one member of the group (e.g. looking after an elderly parent in need of help).

## ● **Group mission**

**Group mission** finds its expression in service or apostolic activities undertaken by most of the members of the group and for which the group takes responsibility, e.g. catechesis, a university parish, shelter for the homeless, a spirituality centre, a dispensary, etc. These services can be occasional, with short-term preparation, implementation and evaluation, or they can be on a regular basis, with long-term planning. At times, the task itself is the only reason for the existence of the group.

The **local community** (CLC group) can undertake an apostolic task, either on its own (even without the participation of all its members), **in collaboration** with other CLC communities, or with other church or lay institutions, *through the involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts* [GP 8(b)]. In every instance, CLC brings its charism of apostolic discernment.

For greatest efficiency, apostolic action must be *initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures* [GP 8(b)]. The setting up of groups or apostolic networks in specific fields or common apostolic aims, at the regional or national level, meets the need for sustaining structures.

## ● **Common mission**

**Common mission** is the true aim, the basic direction for all service rendered by the community. Although the CLC field of mission is unlimited, the community agrees on a community mission when its members discover the needs and aspirations of those whom they serve. The needs of our neighbour which touch our hearts are the cries for help and petitions addressed to us from those in situations of poverty, distress or abandonment. But, subsequently, one must go further than first impressions and explicit requests to reach, in the light of reflection and love enlightened by faith, the real roots of these problems. We wish to bring increasingly appropriate, radical and global solutions to the problems of our world. Community mission is the way in which the CLC tries to proclaim the Good News that God loves us and take up the mission of Christ and the Church at this point of history.

91 It does not mean that all CLC members must do the same thing. It is mission that is common: the tasks are different. This is not only because of the origin of mission, but also because of its **direction**. All of us, each in his own way, stand for the same values, follow the same aims and have the same priorities.

92 Bold ideas, if they are to endure and be realised in the modern world, require mediation through an institution, whether structural or organisational. Thus CLC needs adequate systems of support for its mission. It is important to recognise that a small group does not always have the ability or the means to sustain certain apostolic initiatives. (cf p.45, *Mission always communitarian*)

### ◆ Apostolic discernment

93 Apostolic discernment is intelligent and contemplative attention given to the Spirit by mature Christians in their family, work, social life, and Church commitments. The purpose is to seek and to find God's will for our mission: *What does God want of me, now, in this situation?* In order to seek the divine will, one's heart must burn with the same fire as burns within the Heart of Christ. One must also be familiar with the different ways in which God can make His will manifest. One must, in short, have what is necessary to allow one to opt for the greater glory of God and for the universal good.

94 The official CLC documents underline the **need for apostolic discernment**: *The community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the Review of Life and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.* [GP 8(c)] *Since the Christian Life Community aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God's reign, all individual members are called to an active participation in the vast field of apostolic service. Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ's presence ... into our world.* [GP 12(b)] These documents also propose a number of **criteria for choosing ministries and specific missions**, and in these echoes the criteria drawn up by St Ignatius. One reads, for



example, that CLC members should be open to *what is more urgent and more universal* [GP 8(c)].

◆ **Ignatian criteria for apostolic discernment**

95 Everything which comes to us from Ignatius - in this case apostolic discernment - is marked by the *magis*. His zeal for the greater glory of God enabled him, in effect, to seek the most efficient means of helping others. This privileged discernment is made in the Spirit of Christ, through the contemplation of the life of the Saviour and according to the rules for discovering the interior movements arising from the same Spirit. These rules have already been mentioned in the paragraph dedicated to the choice of personal vocation. There it is a process which involves the heart as well as the head. Ignatius proposes, however, certain rational criteria [cf. *Three times suitable for making an election* SE 175] with a view to discovering the greatest service that can be rendered to those nearest one in particular circumstances.

96 The Ignatian criteria for apostolic discernment are found not only in the Spiritual Exercises, but above all in the *Autobiography*, in so far as progress and personal processes are concerned, and in the *Letters*, where Ignatius suggests strategies for definitive objectives and proposes means for attaining them. But it is in the *Constitutions of the Society* that Ignatius makes a systematic presentation of the **criteria for the choosing of ministries**. These criteria can help us to define our own apostolic mission.

97 First, Ignatius talks of the missions of the Sovereign Pontiff (Const. VII, cll. 609-617), who, as pastor of all, is able to determine better than anyone else, the best service that can be rendered for the people of God. For us members of CLC, it means to take into account, before everything else, the **priorities of the universal Church**, and equally, that of the local Church, in the light of the CLC charism.

98 Gradually, as the object of the mission becomes more precise, Ignatius suggests various considerations for discerning the signs of the times, in which place one should work, which sort of service one should take on, for how long, and in what way, etc. (Ibid., 618-632).

These criteria can be summed up as follows:

- 99 ▶ **the universal and most enduring good**
- 'to think globally and act locally';
  - to set up structures rather than one-off events;
  - to develop activities and services which can be continued independently by those whom they serve.
- 100 ▶ **the greatest need and urgency**
- to go where there is no-one else;
  - to go where those who should be there, care little or nothing about their obligations;
  - to be prepared to take the unknown road, whatever the danger.
- 101 ▶ **the greatest good**
- the formation of 'multipliers';
  - the creation of networks to encourage the development of one global family.

◆ **Apostolic discernment as a permanent attitude:  
the pedagogy of the examen**

102 The Ignatian prayers of examen are perhaps the most important activities which make apostolic discernment a habit which accompanies all our other activities. There are a number of different examens proposed in the *Spiritual Exercises*:

103 ▶ **'The Examen of Prayer'** *After finishing the exercise ... I will examine how well I did in the contemplation or meditation.* [SE 77; see also SE 90, 160, and 207]

104 ▶ **The First Method of Praying** can be considered like the 'prayer-examen' for the purpose of reviewing how the

retreatant observes the commandments, and their attitude towards capital sins and the virtues which oppose them. [SE 241]

05 ▶ **The Particular Examen:** this has as its objective the day-to-day correction of disorderly tendencies and attachments [SE 24-31].

06 ▶ **The General Examen (the daily review)** is directed towards the *Contemplation to attain love*, and *to love and to serve* in all and to put into action what one has learned from the Spiritual Exercises on the subject of prayer and discernment [SE 32-43]

For Ignatius, the **daily review** is truly a colloquy overflowing with humble recognition and filled with faith, trust and love.

07 One who practices this particular spiritual exercise is an apostle who has been working with the Lord all day long, inspired by the Meditation on the Kingdom - *whoever wishes to come with me ...* [SE 93] - who here, at the close of the day, in the way *one friend speaks to another* [SE 54], evaluates and comments on the events of the day together with the Lord: twenty-four hours in the history of salvation. For the day which is about to begin, one asks for the grace of God, so that one is able to live each new moment as the friend and partner of Jesus, someone intimately involved in His mission.

08 Thus, for one on the path of the apostles, seeking to continue his or her way alongside the Lord, the examen is an absolutely indispensable pause which permits one to see that way in perspective and to gather one's strength to tackle the next stage with renewed elan and greater clarity of understanding. Above all, the faithful practice of performing the examen is an essential factor in becoming the contemplative in action, seeking and finding God in everything.



## COMMITMENT TO CLC

### *In the light of the General Norms and the General Principles*

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109 *Becoming a member of the Christian Life Community presupposes a personal vocation. During a period of time determined in the General Norms, the candidate is introduced into the way of life proper to CLC. This time is allotted for the candidate and the wider community to discern the candidate's vocation. Once the decision has been taken, and approved by the wider community, the member assumes a Temporary Commitment and, with the help of the community, tests his or her aptitude for living according to the end and spirit of CLC. After a suitable period of time, determined by the General Norms, Permanent Commitment follows. [GP 10]*

110 *As a primary means of formation and continuing growth members come together on a regular basis in a stable, local community, to assure a deep sharing by members of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere and a strong commitment to mission and service. [GP 11]*

111 *In whichever way admission takes place, the new member must be helped by the Community to decide whether a call, an ability, and a willingness to live it are present, and to become identified with the wider Christian Life Community. After a period of time normally no longer than four years and no less than one, they assume a Temporary Commitment to this way of life. An experience of the Spiritual Exercises is strongly recommended as a means of arriving at this personal decision. [GN 2]*

112 *The temporary engagement continues as such until, after a process of discernment, the member expresses his or her Permanent*

*Commitment to CLC, unless he or she freely withdraws from the community or is excluded by it. The length of time between temporary and Permanent Commitment should be ordinarily no more than eight years and no less than two. [GN 3]*

113 *An experience of the complete Spiritual Exercises, in one of its several forms (in daily life, a closed month, retreats over several years), precedes Permanent Commitment to the community. [GN 4]*

### **Why commitment?**

114 When we ask ourselves what made us commit ourselves to the CLC, we discover many reasons for commitment, the most important being:

115 ▶ **theological - the Trinity:** the roots of commitment in CLC are not found within ourselves, but with God. The Principle and Foundation of our commitment is that God establishes an unbreakable covenant with His people. The Lord is the first to commit Himself in a permanent and visible way. God has been faithful to this covenant again and again throughout history as witnessed by His liberating deeds. But it is in the Incarnation that He gives us the greatest and irrevocable sign of this covenant.

116 ▶ **anthropological:** we are not pure spirits, but human beings who need to express the deepest experiences through the senses. Our relationship with the mystery of God is best expressed in visible, sacramental signs. We are equally part of the times in which we live. Thus, Temporary or Permanent Commitment with the CLC is perceived through the senses. Permanent Commitment signifies that, within time, we pattern our response according to the faithful love of God and the fullness of the mystery of Christ who brings all things to Himself (see Luke 9,62; Rom. 12,11).

117 ▶ **the Church community:** we do not live our vocation and mission as isolated individuals. We live them in community and we proclaim before that community of friends and companions in the Lord that we are **in** and **with** the Church.

The community has the right to see, to hear, to feel and to appreciate our commitment. This helps us to live coherently the way of life to which we have committed ourselves. (cf. Mt 6,14; 1 Thess 1,6-10; Heb 10,23-25)

118 Our commitment is thus to freely present ourselves before the Lord and His people, and to give a visible sign of that which we have lived and discerned with our heart. It is a gesture similar to an engagement to marry. In proclaiming before God and our companions that we have committed ourselves to a spirituality, a way of life and a mission, we are confirming before them a discernment and the gift of ourselves and we proclaim that the Christian Life Community is the body within which we live the charism that the Spirit of the Lord has given to us.

### ◆ Temporary Commitment

#### The process leading to Temporary Commitment

119 A reading of the General Norms and General Principles shows that the CLC life originates in a call from the Lord to each individual member, and that such a vocation is apostolic and universal, lived in the Church and within a local community.

120 This **key to vocation** makes explicit, better than anything else, the initial steps by which we reach commitment in CLC. From the beginning, those who feel attracted by CLC must be helped by the Community to assume a CLC way of life. [GN 2]

121 Vocation - or calling - is perceived in the beginning as a vague longing strong enough to encourage the making of contact with CLC. When candidates first become members of a community, they begin to become familiar with the CLC's way of life and growth [cf. GP 12]. These ways are introduced gradually, as part of a pedagogic process during which spiritual guidance plays an important role.

122 During this growth stage, the candidate has to make certain decisions: attend days of recollection, take part in group activities

meet with a spiritual guide, undertake some pastoral activity, undertake the Spiritual Exercises or a short retreat, etc. In making these decisions, candidates commit themselves progressively to the CLC way of life. On their journey they will experience different emotions, and these will help them to realize whether or not this is the way for them to become closer to God. The community, for its part, sustains the candidate with an attitude of discernment, and encourages them to take further steps towards growth and commitment.

123 At length the moment arrives when candidates must ask themselves whether they truly perceive the path along which they have been taught and guided for some time (1-4 years according to GN 2), to be a call and a grace from God. This moment of discernment can arise spontaneously along the path, or it can be deliberately made to be part of the pedagogical process.

### **The purpose and meaning of Temporary Commitment**

124 Temporary Commitment is the expression of the desire to live according to the CLC way of life, whilst looking forward to a final decision. Commitment at this stage implies a quest for the vocation to which the Lord is calling the individual, and the discernment of this vocation.

125 In those individuals who already have the necessary disposition, this vocational discernment takes place on two levels:

- ▶ discerning a permanent option for CLC, having considered other alternatives in the Church;
- ▶ *the choice of a state of life* by those who have not yet done so (religious life, of course excludes a Permanent Commitment to CLC);  
*amendment and reformation of life-style*, for those who have already decided upon their state of life. [SE 189]

126 This discernment of vocation does not take for granted a definitive CLC vocation, but means to remain open to the will of God

for whatever state of life we are being called. The process, lived in the CLC way, implies that the candidates already belong to a community, even if the individual vocation has not yet been clearly defined.

127 An important aspect of such discernment is the question 'do I want and desire to deepen my experience of God fostered by the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius and lived in community, for greater service. Individuals who make a discernment asks themselves whether or not they see in CLC the path which God wants them to follow, and whether or not they feel free to accept this relationship, and make a commitment [SE 98] to an apostolic way of life.

128 This vocational stage is open to different options. Thus, within CLC, some young people discover the call to religious life or to another type of life pertaining to the Church, and leave the Community. Others find that their motivation for joining was rather social or affective, and acknowledge that they have no desire to continue further. Others, however, come to the conclusion that the community answers their aspirations, and commit themselves to the CLC way with renewed strength.

129 Thus, Temporary Commitment, made within the community and accepted by it, expresses the individual's determination to seek God's will by employing Ignatian methods. The community which welcomes the new member offers CLC's own Ignatian pedagogy.

Temporary Commitment should not be reduced to a set of obligations, but should be our loving answer to God who loved us first (GP 1) and *in the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love.* (GP 2)

### **Ways of approaching Temporary Commitment**

130 Whilst commitment is indeed a personal act, it has a deep significance for both the community and the Church. It is linked explicitly to the World Christian Life Community, for *In love and prayer we relate to those many men and women of our spiritual*



tradition who have been proposed to us by the Church as friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfil our mission (GP 3), but it is best if such commitment is made during a liturgical ceremony such as the Eucharist.

131 Temporary Commitment can be approached in different ways. There could be a bulletin or publication indicating different possibilities. There could be a meeting for those who have been participating in CLC for a few years and they could be invited to think about the significance of Temporary Commitment; discernment is thus introduced, and those who wish to make their Temporary Commitment will agree on the best way to express it. Another way might be to have each year, as a National or Regional tradition, a procedure, a formula and a fixed date (e.g. World CLC Day, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pentecost), on which day those who wish express their Temporary Commitment.

132 Good CLC procedure requires time for this vocational discernment and explicit Temporary Commitments are inevitable. If this is not the case, it could be for one of the following three reasons:

- the process stops at some stage and becomes repetitive;
- commitment is not properly understood, has the wrong meaning or connotation;
- difficulties arise from the way in which it is expressed and celebrated.

133 Our challenge today is to show what it is we are trying to live and do interiorly, to transform it into a visible and ecclesiastical sign, to give it appealing spiritual meanings from a theological and pedagogical (educational) point of view.



### **Permanent Commitment**

134 In the CLC vocation, *Permanent Commitment* corresponds to the mature stage of apostolic life when personal vocation is lived as

an apostolic mission. Vocation is fully developed and expresses itself in mission. Permanent Commitment occurs when members have finished the process of discerning their vocation and have chosen their state of life. This stage is necessarily linked to *apostolic discernment*, as an essential element to develop mission.

135

Whilst *Temporary Commitment* in CLC is linked to the formation process, particularly to the call of the *Eternal King* and to an "election", *Permanent Commitment* is linked to the CLC way of life, and is in harmony with the trustful surrender of the *Contemplation to attain love*. Our commitment is an expression of the *Take, Lord and receive...* as a response of commitment to God who 1) *has given me so much ...*, 2) *... dwells in me, giving me existencè, life, ...* 3) *... labours and works for me ...*, and 4) *... seeing how all good things and gifts descend from above, how limited my power is compared to the Supreme and Infinite power above, and so of justice, goodness, piety, mercy, etc. just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source, etc.* [SE 234-237]

136

*Permanent Commitment* is the culmination of vocational discernment, in which we express our desire to discover God's will and fulfil it in our apostolic life, to answer our specific call and our readiness to be sent on mission [GP 8(c)].

### **Why permanent, when we are only human?**

137

Rather than seeing Permanent Commitment as a risky decision which compromises our future freedom, we should attempt to understand that it is inner freedom which is both the true basis of this decision and one of its fruits. Real freedom (worthy of the name) exists to the extent to which we are able to direct our lives according to our deepest desires. Thus, we are free inasmuch as we are able to live in response to the deep desires the Spirit of the Lord has awakened in our hearts. We are really free when our decisions are made not just by the will, but are acts of faith and hope. The radical quality of our commitment is not so much based on our capabilities, but on what Scripture states: *Christ has set us free* [Gal 5, 1].

138

So, when we reach the conclusion that proclaiming Christ and

his Good News amid human reality is what *I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision* [ES 98], this means that the Lord has guided our steps through a long journey. Freedom to commit ourselves does not just mean being ready to choose. It really means giving oneself, surrendering to God, and trusting Him totally. It is in this spirit that St Ignatius prays: *Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will - all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given it all to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for that is enough for me* [SE 234]. Our freedom comes from God's love, and is offered to Him. God loved us first, God committed Himself to us first.

### **Why public?**

139 By bearing witness before the CLC community, I ask the Lord for the grace that I may give this generous response to his fidelity. By doing so in front of the whole community, who is my witness, I am asking for their help and ask them to accompany me on my journey. The outward expression of this inner gift of faith somehow gives it a sacramental character.

140 This is the time to confirm one's Election, to ensure *a strong commitment to mission and service* [GP 11]. The Spiritual Exercises should play a key role in our life becoming mission, helping us to follow better the poor and humble Christ [GP 8(d)].

141 At this stage, formation should be considered as continuing formation so that we are always "in good apostolic shape", and thus able to give at any time the most adequate answer to the question: *What shall I do for Christ?*

## ● What kind of a Community do we expect CLC to be?

142 CLC is called to be, first and foremost, a Christian community, but with a certain number of features and characteristics of its own. In order to help to understand better the distinctive features of CLC as a community, we should first examine, very briefly, its specific process of growth and maturation and then, in more detail, the role it plays in the growth and maturation of its members.

### ● How CLC develops as a community

143 In the context of biblical faith, God calls not only individuals, but also communities. God can initiate religious communities or a lay community, such as CLC.

144 It means that these communities have, as a body, a graced history similar to that of a personal journey - living through periods of promise, call, setting out in trust and hope, through times of crisis and turning away from God, only to return to Him, and be welcomed again, experiencing moments of God's saving love in reconciliation and acceptance, through periods of discerning God's call to the community and living out the response in different circumstances and despite the cost.

145 The Spiritual Exercises are CLC's *specific source*, and the community proceeds in a similar way to an individual.

146 After an initial stage when the community is full of hope, there may be moments of crises and tension, even of collective sin. At such times a CLC group can disintegrate if someone does not help the community to live through these moments, and to consider them as times of growth, of purification and of reconciliation in and with Christ.

147 Through such experience, a community can find in itself a new desire to be by the side of Christ on mission throughout the

world, and to directing its own life to this end.

In this way, the community becomes more open to continuing apostolic discernment, deciding to live according to Christ's mission.

- **Characteristics of the CLC as community**

- **A 'lived' community**

*To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith according to our charism [GP 4].*

148 **Vocation in CLC is a vocation to a community:** its fulfilment is in community. The individual commitment to the World Community is expressed through a **particular community**, freely chosen [GP 7], made up of a maximum of twelve people, generally of similar background [GN 39(b)]. This community of friends in the Lord is called to guide its members when discerning their personal vocations and their lives as contributors to the mission of Christ [GP 12(c)]. It can be said that community is one of the main ways in which the CLC implements Ignatian spirituality in its members' lives and apostolic service [GP 11].

149 The CLC community is a *gathering of people in Christ, a cell of his mystical Body [GP 7]. It is therefore based on faith and a common vocation*, rather than on natural affinities: *we are bound together by our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary as our mother [GP 7].*

Through their relationship of love within their community and to others, they give witness of the Good News to the world.

150 CLC is not a community where members normally 'live under the same roof' and share all material goods in common. Nevertheless, CLC is a **'lived' community** and as such is *a concrete experience of unity in love and action [GP 7]*, because its members are engaged in:

- ▶ following the same particular vocation in the Church [GP 4] and adopting the way of life consequent with that [GP 7];
- ▶ sharing their problems, their aspirations, their plans and various aspects of different parts of their lives, and helping each other in this way to live fully their Christian faith [GP 12(c)];
- ▶ helping each other in spiritual and material matters;
- ▶ undertaking a common mission, despite different social backgrounds, age, character, position, tasks, etc. [GP 8].

151

The CLC pedagogy entails mutual assistance of its members for apostolic and spiritual growth, so that, by means of the integration of faith and life, the community is able to continue *the dynamics of life generated by the Spiritual Exercises* [GN 39(a)] and members are better prepared *for apostolic witness and service* [GP 4]. The CLC community supports the human, spiritual and apostolic development of each of its members, especially by:

- ▶ the witness of the life of each member, particularly adult members;
- ▶ formation activities such as shared prayer, the Review of Life in community, community discernment and study groups;
- ▶ community apostolic activity and the commitment of members in a common mission;
- ▶ group life and teamwork help to sustain attitudes of interior freedom and openness to others with the capacity to understand and to forgive, the ability to adjust one's own desires, sensitivity to the needs of others and a ready response.

152

The most important part of this community life is the **meeting** which should be held each week or every fortnight, such regularity being necessary for real growth in the group [GN 39(b)]. At these meetings important parts of CLC formation take place, group bonds

are reinforced by better knowledge of each other and by mutual gestures of love and service, and community activity is planned and evaluated.

153 The life of the CLC is centred on the **Eucharist**. The group will, therefore, celebrate the Eucharist together as a group from time to time [GN 40], expressing sacramentally that fraternal communion which is based on Christ and on the Church.

• **A community on mission**

154 'To be on mission' is the essence of the CLC, indeed of the Church herself. And since the CLC exists for mission, it is mission which gives the community its meaning [GP 4 and 8]. Formation of members and fraternal communion between them are not, therefore, ends in themselves, but are directed to mission. The aim is not solely to form Christians for apostolic service, nor simply to support them in their apostolate, for the **apostolic service is itself specific to the CLC as such**. One of the characteristic features of the CLC is to undertake apostolic action as a community. The CLC is thus a **community on mission**, or an **apostolic community**; it is apostolic as a community.

*Mission always communitarian*

155 Even when apostolic service is offered on an individual basis, CLC mission is always communitarian. (cf. p. 28: *Ways to live out mission*)

The fact that **CLC members are sent by the Church** transforms their apostolic tasks and their humanitarian service in mission. The world community, thus integrated in the life and the mission of the Church, is the essential mediator of our mission. This mediation is made real for us in local and national communities. Whatever CLCers' mission may be, they receive it through and in CLC; therefore, this mission is always community mission.

156 Moreover, mission is community mission because it is the **fruit of community discernment** at the local, national or world level.

It is thanks to a spirit of faith, and a humble openness before the community, that one becomes available to be sent on mission, and that the humanitarian or apostolic service of the member, or of the group itself, becomes mission.

The small local community is indispensable to the discernment of mission, but this group is not the place where all initiatives are taken, and it does not necessarily have the means to sustain some apostolic activities. More important structures, such as the General Assembly and the Executive Councils, are needed at the World or National community levels for when more universal apostolic priorities or plans, either specific to CLC or in collaboration with other groups, are undertaken.

### *Apostolic community discernment*

157 Is a way of implementing what Vatican II called *discerning the signs of the times*, and involves the following stages:

- ▶ **the community listens** to the deepest needs of our fellow men and women in order to discover the most urgent and universal tasks to be assumed, and to offer more efficient, radical and global solutions to the world's problems.
- ▶ **the community prays:** prayer allows the community to develop its efforts of listening and analysis. At such times we listen for the voice of the Spirit which calls us to serve and sends us on mission. Our personal prayer becomes prayer shared by the group.
- ▶ **the community deliberates and decides:** after sharing enlightenment by the Spirit, the community is able to take decisions unanimously or almost unanimously, to make choices and assume apostolic tasks where other group members might be involved.



• **A world community**

**The universality of CLC**

158 The community nature of CLC reflects the tension that is to be found between what is individual and what is universal, between the local community and the world community. The CLC is basically a sharing of life at the local level, but it also has a universal dimension.

159 Following a discernment which began at the Rome '79 Assembly and ended at that of Providence '82, the World Federation decided to become **one single world community**, governed by a General Assembly, whose meetings are privileged moments where the community discerns the CLC mission.

160 CLC, like the Church, is more a community of people who feel spiritually bound by their vocation and shared commitment, rather than an institution (defined by the General Principles). But they are no longer independent local communities, like the old Marian Congregations, which were independent groups formally attached to a primary community (the Prima Primaria) and sharing the same rules and the same spiritual tradition. Neither is it a question of a World Federation of communities, the structure adopted by the Marian Congregations before their transformation into the CLC. In accordance with the decision taken at the 'Providence '82' Assembly, the CLC is a single world community, realised in local communities. Each member of the CLC belongs first to the world community, even though this naturally has to be by means of membership of a particular group. *Our gift of self finds its expression in a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community.*  
[GP 7]

161 The **universality** of the CLC is thus visible in the **one** world community. This universal dimension should be present in the **outlook of all members and every local community**, because it is rooted in our theology and is an essential element of our Ignatian vocation.

***The theological roots of the universality of the CLC:  
the Trinity, Jesus and the world***

162

In General Principles 1 and 4 we read that the Three Persons of the Trinity, having contemplated sinful humanity and given themselves totally to all men and women, now support the desire present in each CLC member to take part in the Mission of Christ and to live as brothers and sisters, children of God. We must live deeply our faith in Christ, burn with desire for closer communion with all men and women, not keeping just to our local group, but going out to meet *all people of good will* [GP 7] as the Trinity did through Christ. At the World Assembly in Rome 1979, it was said:

- ▶ *We must give the deepest meaning to community. Our community should reflect God's family. God is community.*
- ▶ *CLC members should contemplate on the world, into which they are sent, in the manner of the Trinity, and accomplish in their lives the task which the Eternal King wishes them to do [cf GP 4].*

***A community in the service of the world***

163

This is a consequence of the universality of CLC. *Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the national and World CLC, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all people of good will* [GP 7]. During the World Assembly in Rome 1979 a community discernment was made, which led to the decision to transform the World Federation into a World Community: the CLC. The main reasons which led the delegates to make this choice (which remain valid today) were as follows:

164

- sensitivity and fraternal commitment to the needs and problems of humanity
  - ▶ *we must have great sensitivity to the needs of others. The universality of CLC is a challenge and an ideal*

*which invites us to commit ourselves yet more in everything, since we are all equally precious in the sight of God. One member of CLC and one small group, if they have this universal vision, open themselves to Christ's mission which extends to all [Rome 1979].*

• being open to people from other countries and other cultures.

▶ *as members of a World Community we are called to establish close bonds with those from other cultures, overcoming all prejudice, and opening our eyes to the points of view of those from other countries and taking an interest in those who live beyond our own frontiers in order to discover the richness of life each has. [ibid.]*

▶ *the world has need of the witness of a community founded on a love which surpasses national frontiers. [ibid.]*

165 • the need for unity of vision and action in the face of the world's problems:

▶ *as part of the Church, CLC is called to assume a global responsibility in following the same objectives and having the same world vision, despite differences. [ibid.]*

▶ *as a world community, united in front of common problems, we are able to provide a more adequate response. [ibid.]*

166 • being available for what is most urgent and most universal. As members of the CLC we are **predestined for nothing, but available for everything.** While other associations within the Church undertake specific apostolic tasks, CLC remains open to serve all the needs of the Church and the world, whatever they are.

- ▶ *the field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends to both the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people [GP 8].*

167 • the mutual enrichment of communities.

- ▶ *this universality invites us to enrich each other by a deep sharing of our spirituality, our formation programmes, spiritual perception and resources. It is in the level to which each member and each community lives in this universal dimension that we can see national problems objectively, and open ourselves yet further to the needs of all the association [Rome, '79].*

● **A community within the Church**

*The foundation of the CLC's ecclesiastical character*

168 The CLC, was born and is growing within the Church, and draws from the Church its identity and its universality. This vital relationship with the Church is founded on union with Christ Himself. *Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ here and now continues His mission of salvation. [GP 6]*

169 The CLC community is, at every level, at the service of the people of God. By its very existence within the Church the CLC contributes to the promotion of:

- a Church where one finds communion within a diversity of charism and ministries, and shared responsibility for the accomplishing of Christ's mission;
- a Church which is not an end in itself, but which has *received the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and which is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that kingdom. [Lumen Gentium 5]*

## *The relationship between the CLC and the Church*

- **Fidelity to the message of Christ**

170 The CLC seeks to deepen its understanding of the Gospel, by living the faith that has been passed on to us by the Apostles, preserved by the Church and safeguarded by her magisterium.

- **Participation in the life of the Church**

171 The CLC does not exist in isolation from the rest of the Christian community (parish, diocese, national and universal Church). It is, on the contrary, an integral part of this community, and this finds its expression:

- ▶ in liturgical and sacramental life, which, *centred on the Eucharist, is a concrete experience of unity in love and action.* [GP 7]
- ▶ in the ordinary life of the Church, by participating in Church activities and identifying, effectively and lovingly, with her needs and problems, and supporting her progress.

- **Collaboration in the mission of the Church**

172 Having received its mission within the Church and from the Church, the CLC, in accordance with its directives and its pastoral priorities, carries to the people of God and their pastors, the gift of its apostolic service and its rich and original charism, in a spirit of discernment and shared responsibility.

- **Solidarity**

173 The CLC community seeks especially to be open, within the framework of a fraternal community, to the poor, the marginalised, the excluded, in short, to all those who, in the Church and in the world, have the greatest need of help and sustenance; CLC is ready to share what it has with them and to integrate this attitude into its way of life.

## PART II

### The CLC Process of Growth

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#### INTRODUCTION

174 Today, as in the time of Jesus, an apostle is not born as such, but is formed gradually. Each apostle experiences a personal love story, conversion, and encounters Christ, whom he or she wants to follow. The words of St Paul: *It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives within me* (Gal. 2,20) take on an ever greater reality. Many aspects of this journey are common to all Christians; others, however, are more specific to those who share the CLC vocation.

175 The following pages, which incorporate many elements of the SURVEY, should be interpreted in the light of the previous pages, the **Criteria for CLC formation**. Their purpose is the better integration of individual and community growth. We should bear in mind that in the previous pages the emphasis was on the development of the individual, and when we are dealing with the development of the community we should not forget that this is always dependent upon the development of each individual member. What follows, therefore, must be read in the light of the previous pages.

As a World Community we have to take into account the social and cultural differences of each national community. These guidelines, therefore, should be considered as a framework, which can be adapted by each national community.



## DIMENSIONS OF CLC FORMATION

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176 From the point of view of individual growth and the way in which the individual progressively answers his or her vocation, the CLC life has three inseparable and mutually supportive dimensions:

### **Spiritual ↔ Communitarian ↔ Apostolic**

177 Development in these three dimensions depends upon two basic personal life capacities and dynamism which form the natural substrate for life in the Spirit, and its communitarian and apostolic expression:

the intellectual dynamism  
the affective dynamism



### **The Spiritual Dimension**

178 Includes all aspects of our working together with the grace of God to accomplish His plan of salvation for ourselves and, through us, the others.



*Growth in the Spirit of Christ* shows itself in certain spiritual attitudes, probably best expressed by the word 'empathy', in the Ignatian sense of 'sharing the feelings' of someone:

- ▶ **empathy with Christ**, having an interior knowledge of Jesus, and following Him in love and service;

- ▶ **empathy with Mary**, the model of discipleship who filled with the Holy Spirit, contemplates the saving action of God in daily life and intercedes for us desiring to place us with her Son;
- ▶ **empathy with the Church** as the Bride of Christ and our Mother, as members of the community of the disciples of Jesus, who became incarnate within human history;
- ▶ **empathy with the world**, recognising the richness of creation and of the progress of humankind, of compassion for its needs and miseries, and of commitment to its complete liberation.

▲ ***Life in the Spirit of Christ*** has two aspects:

179 ▶ **ascetic:** which does not mean the repression of our natural instincts, but the sincere effort to place our whole being - body, soul and mind - under the influence of the Spirit of Christ and *to order one's life without reaching a decision through some disordered affection* (SE 21).

180 ▶ **mystic:** in the widest sense of the word, is a distinctive characteristic of a life of faith. It is a matter of the experience of God, welcomed as a gift which awakens in us a spontaneous desire for a greater communion in love, pushing us to abandon ourselves to the Spirit of the Lord who, little by little, transforms our relationship with God, with our fellow men and women, with nature and with ourselves.

181 ▲ ***Working together with this grace*** is expressed above all in the consistency with which we show the following:

- ▶ perseverance in **prayer**, for a deeper knowledge and greater love of the Lord (meditation, contemplation)



and a full integration of life and faith (examen);

- ▶ living with the **sacraments** - baptism, marriage, reconciliation, and above all, the Eucharist;
- ▶ familiarity with the **Scriptures**, the living word of God addressed to men and women today;
- ▶ practice in **purifying the heart**, smothering all egoistical tendencies and adopting, as far as possible, the attitudes of Christ.

82 A real effort to be ascetic (expressed by giving service, generous self-denial, and spiritual exercises) make a person more open to the action of the Spirit (mystic). The further we progress in the spiritual life, the more we will be moved by the Lord, making His will ours. Let it be to me according to your word! But, just as experience of God should be, from the beginning, the driving force behind a spiritual search, so asceticism continues to be necessary, to a differing degree, all life long.



### **The Communitarian Dimension**

83 The communitarian dimension of formation springs from the true nature of CLC, which, as its name indicates, is a vocation lived in community, a *community on mission*. It is therefore very important that each element in the formation programme is integrated with the community (formation by the community) and reinforced by the *bonds of community* described in the General Principles (GP 7) (formation for the community). [For ways used by the CLC in community formation and community life, see Criteria, p. 42]



### **The Apostolic Dimension**

84 ▲ **Specific apostolic experiences** - planned, implemented and evaluated by the community - which help to discover and develop:

- ▶ *spiritual attitudes characteristic of an apostle* : humility, gratitude, unity with God, right intentions etc.;
- ▶ *capabilities and charism* for apostolic service: e.g. aptitudes for counselling, discernment, comforting, teaching, helping others with their material needs, organisation, etc.

There are two main categories of apostolic experience:

- ▶ **ordinary**, in accordance with the apostolic service undertaken by one's own community; and
- ▶ **extraordinary**, as an insertion experience among the poor and the marginalised.

185 ▲ **Formation for spiritual guidance**, for groups and individuals. This is a precious apostolic service, for which, to some extent, all CLC members should be prepared.

186 ▲ **Discernment** in the different fields of apostolic service, and acquisition of the required knowledge, skills and experience.

◆ **Basic dynamics of personality**

187 ▲ **Intellectual dynamism**

Personal assimilation of the CLC way of life in its three dimensions is impossible without a clear understanding of the process which determines it and the principles which inspire one to it, or without reflecting on these experiences.

The CLC formation process necessarily includes an intellectual aspect, which is indispensable to a better understanding of life and faith in our own social and ecclesiastical surroundings.

88

This intellectual reflection is not merely 'academic', but takes place in the cultural context of which each CLC member or group is a part, and has two specific goals:

- ▶ the development, through the practice of discernment and of social analysis, of an aptitude for **seizing reality** in all its complexity and reflecting upon it in a way which is both critical and productive. We desire to evaluate ideas and situations, judging them according to Christian criteria and, basing ourselves firmly in reality, not letting ourselves be swayed by more fashionable opinion.

On the other hand, the methods for planning help to find adequate solutions for the problems we meet in our apostolic service.

89

- ▶ **a study of those subjects** closely bound up with the three dimensions of CLC life. One cannot, of course, make this an exhaustive study, but an essential element in the formation of a CLC member is missing if any of these subjects is completely ignored. We mention here four which should be reflected upon:

90

#### **the Christian message.**

This must be deepened by theological study of its sources, especially the Scriptures, and the teachings of the Church, Christology, ecclesiology and ethics (social, professional and sexual).

91

#### **the Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian spirituality**

The Spiritual Exercises, *the characteristic source and instrument of CLC spirituality*, form the basis of the CLC formation process. Thanks to reflection on method and the spiritual dynamism of the Exercises, we come to a better understanding of our own experience and we will be enabled to accompany others.

192

**the CLC charism: way of life and mission.**

This charism originates in Ignatian spirituality and the world-wide experience of the CLC and is clearly set out in the General Norms and General Principles;

193

**the reality of individual and social life**

in all its aspects - psychological, political, economic, socio-cultural and religious.

194



**Affective dynamism**

The 'affects', or affectivity, are echoes awakened within us as soon as we establish an existential relationship between ourselves and our environment. They take different forms - tendencies, desires, emotions, sentiments, passions, etc. They are, so to speak, spontaneous reactions and therefore independent of our will, though it is always possible not to express them, or provoke them, and to try and control and overcome them.

195

Affective life is at the root of human behaviour, i.e. of our relationships with God, our neighbour, nature and ourselves, and it is the basis of spiritual, community and apostolic life. This is a fact of nature which must be transformed by grace. The inadequacies of affective life have in themselves no moral or spiritual connotation; they can be accepted in faith and borne with patience. Nevertheless, affective maturity contributes in a decisive way to the development of spiritual life, to the establishment of a positive rapport with others and a fruitful apostolic life.

196

The quality of our relationships with others indicates the quality of our relationship with God. We only have one heart with which to love both God and our neighbour. If I mistrust my neighbour, I also mistrust God. If I have no friends, I cannot be God's friend. It is not about what we wish we were, in our dreams, but what we really are that find its expression in our emotional behaviour. In order to know the nature of our relationship with God, we should, first of all, observe our human relationships.

97 Our relationship with nature also reveals the quality of our relationship with God. Being able to enjoy and admire nature, to take delight in the contemplation of a flower or appreciate the purity of the air we breathe, to accept bad weather and one's own bodily frailty, are aspects of the way in which we communicate with God.

98 Hence the importance that must be given to this in the CLC formation process. The following steps are suggested for reaching affective maturity:

99 • ***paying attention to the affective dimension of our personality*** - sentiments, desires, impulses, etc. - that we feel inside us and to the motivation which determines our behaviour: what do I feel at some point in time or other? why? It is not mere introspection, but a starting point for our dialogue with God, in the light of faith, hope and love.

100 • ***accepting spontaneous manifestations of our affective life with serenity***, as well as the deficiencies and the limits of our nature and personal history. Accepting does not mean indulging in things contrary to moral constraints, but considering them impartially, without shock or shame, without being discouraged or feeling guilty. The way in which we accept ourselves should reflect the way in which God accepts us. Trust in God's unconditional love for us and faith in His wisdom and in His providence, constantly renews our relations to others and to ourselves, as well as our hope for today and the future.

201 • ***integration of the different affective levels*** is achieved in two ways: on the one hand, by trying to have the basic needs of life (food, sexual desire, security, recognition, etc.) under conscious control through adequate discipline, and, on the other, by encouraging higher affective tendencies (love for goodness and truth, altruistic ideals, social concern, etc.). A passion for justice and honesty, as well as an interest in scientific research or for a humanitarian cause, contribute to the leading of a disciplined life.

202

There is no need to suppress one's basic needs, but to order them, submitting ourselves to a discipline which implies a certain amount of self-denial; in this way we strive to answer these needs according to God's will (in married life, working life, etc.) and to take pleasure in so doing.

203

To reach a stage of affective maturity does not mean that all tensions disappear, but that one can gradually let them go without too much effort, integrating within oneself both moral and spiritual life. The main signs of affective maturity are:

- being able to accomplish one's duties;
- having good relationships with other people (even if they are not perfect);
- being able to make decisions without too much hesitation and at peace.



## THE PHASES OF CLC FORMATION

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204 CLC formation is a way to *follow Christ more closely*, in each newly arising situation, activating certain hidden aspects of our personality and operating at ever-deeper levels. At each phase of formation the CLC member tries to assimilate certain values and to develop certain attitudes relevant to the Spirit of the Lord. These values are bound up with the way in which one lives and acts, and with new ways of loving God and one's neighbour. The assimilation of these values in order to better follow Christ, involves the person in a cycle of four phases which is repeated at every stage: viz. **motivation, search, discovery, confirmation.**



### The Phase of Motivation

205 The CLC process of human and spiritual growth begins with *desire*. The interest with which we pursue an ideal and the transforming influence this ideal has on our lives depends upon how much we desire it. Without the motivation of a strong and well-defined desire, neither formation nor further growth is possible. Experience teaches us, however, that when these desires first appear they are often vague and uncertain.

206 One of the tasks of the person in charge of formation is, in short, to help the individual to discover and articulate the deep desires inspired by God. Much creativity and skill is required to awaken these desires. It is important that the spark is triggered by moments of grace, by which we are deeply moved and led to profound spiritual experience, and in which the service of others becomes overwhelmingly appealing. This phase should always be

accompanied by individual spiritual guidance.

### ◆ The Search phase

207 The search begins when the individual, moved by desire, decides to act, even if the desires are still vague and undefined. Desires lead to searching only if adequate means have been used to reach the desired goal. Without a decision to do this, desires remain wishful thinking and it is easy to deceive ourselves into believing that the desires themselves are sufficient answer to the needs and aspirations of ourselves and others. Ever the wise teacher, St Ignatius himself instructs us to be certain of the authenticity, sincerity and coherence of our desires. The criterion here is rightly the *making of a firm decision to find the best way to achieve one's pursued objective* (SE 149-157).

208 If in each stage of spiritual growth the search proceeds in an orderly way, the discoveries made contribute to the integration of the person, avoiding activism, diversion and discouragement.

### ◆ The Discovery phase

209 Discovery represents a full or partial answer to desire and search. It is an insight, a new way of seizing something and making it part of our lives. It brings about changes in individual attitudes and behaviour. It makes it easier to overcome misunderstandings and prejudice, enriches our knowledge and our service, opens up new avenues for action and awakens fresh desires.

210 There are discoveries specific to each stage of the formation process. The discoveries which affect us the most are those which follow from experience, for, as St Ignatius says, *what fills and satisfies the soul consists not in knowing much, but in understanding things profoundly and savouring them interiorly* (SE 2).

211 In the first phases of formation we discover sin, our weaknesses and our need of redemption. It also means the



rediscovery of Christ as Saviour. After this experience of the unconditional love of God, in Christ, our decisions take on a new dimension because they are responses to that love. They also express our love for Christ, and our desire to follow Him more closely.



### **The phase of Confirmation**

212

Confirmation is the sign by which God lets us know that we are acting in accordance with His wishes. It is the proof that our discoveries were genuine. Only after the first steps have been taken, and the positive outcome of the Lord's doing is experienced as a great inner peace and harmony within the individual and the community, can we know that we are really following the path the Lord has prepared for us.

213

Now our desires begin to be realised. We feel confirmed in what we are doing because we see the proof that God is supporting it. Real confirmation opens the way to new desires and new searching, thus initiating a new cycle of growth and grace.



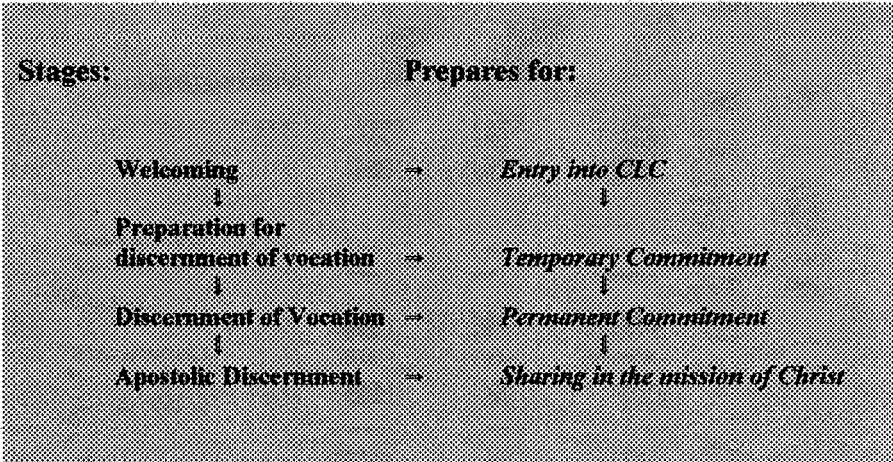
## FUNDAMENTAL STAGES OF CLC GROWTH

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- 214 .        The Spiritual Exercises are without doubt the basis of CLC formation, through which its members grow to fulness in their vocation and mission. For this reason the growth process in CLC follows the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises themselves. Although from the beginning members are invited to undertake the complete Spiritual Exercises, they will not be able to assimilate straightaway all the graces of the four weeks, but will pass by successive stages on the Ignatian journey.
- 215        The basis of the CLC vocation is a personal experience of the love of God who created us and has saved us through Jesus Christ, as set out in the Principle and Foundation and in the First Week. The CLC member, deeply grateful to Jesus, ask him- or herself: **What should I do for Christ?**, a question which leads them to search for His will concerning their way of life.
- 216        The end of this second stage, which corresponds to the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises, has the closer following of Jesus as its main objective, and thanks to the assimilation of His Spirit and the process of true discernment, culminates in the choice of a personal vocation within CLC.
- 217        Having identified deeply with Christ and made a serious commitment to follow Him, the CLC member is ready to really participate in the mystery of the Passion and the Resurrection, sharing Christ's mission in service each day, throughout one's life. This helps seeking and finding God in all things, letting oneself be guided by the Spirit, *to love and to serve in everything.*

Following the framework of the **Criteria for CLC Formation**, we now consider CLC in relation to mission, mission itself being the ultimate objective of CLC. We divide this into four stages:

- ◆ *A period of Welcoming to CLC*
- ◆ *Preparation for discernment of vocation*
- ◆ *Discernment of Vocation*
- ◆ *Apostolic Discernment*





## First Contact and Introduction to CLC

### *Lord, where do you live*

- 219 This introductory period, which can last for several months, is meant to help the candidate to get to know CLC. We recommend this time of reflection not only to those who wish to join a CLC group, but also to groups already having some experience of community apostolate who might be interested in following the CLC path.
- 220 Usually we are dealing with those who are more or less consciously searching for something deeper in their lives: CLC could be the place where this searching finds its fulfilment.
- 221 During this period, we want the candidates to become aware of the deep desires within them which God has inspired, whilst at the same time they experience something of what CLC means, and receive a basic knowledge of its structure and its spirituality. This will enable them to see whether or not the CLC is the way to which God is calling them.



### Personal characteristics

**The CLC vocation presumes certain characteristics in each of its future members:**

- 222
- *from the human point of view*, each member must be:
    - ▶ sensitive to their socio-political surroundings;
    - ▶ wanting to lead a meaningful and dynamic life with a vision for the future, even if one does not yet know how to define this future and make it a reality;
    - ▶ not self-satisfied, and seeking to change their way of life, wanting to be more useful in society and within

their own family, seeking something more.

223

• *From the Christian point of view, each member must:*

- ▶ have a certain spiritual restlessness that impels us to draw nearer to God and be increasingly strengthened by the Spirit;
- ▶ desire to learn to pray and to deepen knowledge of the Scriptures, especially the Gospels;
- ▶ desire to work together with those who strive to make the world both more human and more divine;
- ▶ open themselves to the needs of their fellow men and women and of the Church of which they are a member.

224

From the very beginning, a person who wants to join a community is encouraged to get to know him- or herself better, so that they can share their experiences with confidence. Little by little, bonds of friendship are established, and develop until they become truly brothers and sisters in the Lord.

#### **Candidates are characterised by:**

225

• **Their diversity** - they come from different backgrounds, each with their own personal history, level of human and professional formation, experiences of life and faith, needs, hopes, interior wounds, etc.;

226

• **Their instability** - some candidates will leave the group, not having found what they were looking for, some will rejoin, at least to try.

227

**Objectives to be attained** (some of which will appear again in future stages, but at this stage we are concerned with initiation into the CLC charism), are as follows:

- to feel welcomed and accepted, as they will be expected to do for others;
- to grow in intimacy with Christ;
- to take a positive view of the world in its human, social, cultural, and Christian dimensions, and to want to improve things;
- to begin Ignatian prayer;
- to understand the CLC and see its way as a possible answer to individual desires and aspirations;
- right from the beginning, to assume certain responsibilities;
- to learn to share experiences and feelings;
- to discover the importance of the *Review of Life* (General Examen);
- to begin working with spiritual guidance;
- to have some experience of retreats inspired by the Spiritual Exercises.

The basic means used during this phase are:

## 228 **Meetings**

Meetings are essential because they provide the place where community events happen: formation, catechism, general examen, evaluation, etc. Meetings should be held on a regular basis at least once a fortnight, and they should reflect the CLC way, thus:

- 229 • **prayer**, not only at the beginning and end of every session, but filling the atmosphere and spirit of the whole meeting with faith, hope and love, the characteristic virtues of all

Christian life;

230 • **the *Review of Life*** gives a special orientation to CLC meetings, aiming, as it does, to integrate life and faith; in the strictest sense, the Review of Life is a sincere exchange of the experiences of each member so that person can discover, with the help of the group, what the Lord is trying to say, and how this can be put into practice;

231 By and large, the Review of Life seeks always to relate the themes of the meetings with the experiences of the participants: the following questions favour this sort of development:

- ▶ what is our own experience of the theme?
- ▶ what is God saying to us by means of this experience?
- ▶ what reply of ours is He waiting for ?

232 • **evaluation**, which should be short, never more than a quarter of an hour. After a few minutes of silence, each member should state briefly:

- ▶ what has helped, or touched them most, during the meeting;
- ▶ anything that has upset them, or that has been difficult to understand;
- ▶ any improvements they can suggest for future meetings.

Evaluation is not just a part of the *Review of Life*: it helps us to discover what God is saying to us, and makes possible obstacles vanish.

During this period of welcome, the main themes for meetings are as follows:

- ▶ what seem to be the challenges offered to me in the world in which I live?
- ▶ is Christ truly asking me to share in His mission for the world?
- ▶ what is my personal faith history?
- ▶ how does one make the *Review of Life*?
- ▶ how does Ignatius of Loyola teach us to pray in everyday life?
- ▶ what are the history and basic features of the CLC?

233 It is very important that each theme is introduced slowly and gradually, taking into account the different experiences of the participants and endeavouring to bring them to realise how God is trying to communicate with them. This takes time and repetition. and different ways of approach are needed so that everyone is able to assimilate these themes.

234 Well-run meetings will help the participants to go forward together, desiring more intimate union with Christ, and becoming more reconciled with the world in which they live (this is the result of the Ignatian *Principle and Foundation*).

#### **Guide and Coordinator:**

- 235
- ▶ At the beginning, it is best if the guide and the coordinator prepare each meeting together, so as to be able to apprehend the position of the group with the greatest objectivity.
  - ▶ All forms of imposition of will should be avoided: the guide and the coordinator should always listen to each participant and to the group as a whole.



## Signs which indicate the end of this stage

- 236
- Members of the group feel a responsibility towards the world in which they live. They take pleasure in assuming responsibility for the preparation of meetings and in the planning and organisation of activities.
  - The participants are able to formulate some common ideas.
  - After several weeks or months following the same path, some of the participants know what they want to do next, having reached the conclusion that *this is what they were looking for*. They are now ready to pass to the next stage. Others, however, reach the decision that *this does not meet their needs*, and leave the group. Here, we recognise again that CLC is only **one** association **among many** others within the Church, which can help us to live the Christian life more fully.
- 237
- Those who wish and are ready to follow the CLC path, now enter the CLC Community

## ◆ Stage of Preparation for Discernment of Vocation

### 'Come and see'

238 A new stage begins for those who, after the introductory period, feel that CLC is what they have been looking for, and decide to become a member of a community. It is the first stage of their CLC path.

239 This stage is inspired by **the call to conversion to God incarnate in Jesus Christ**, as set out in the *First Week* of the Spiritual Exercises, and in *the Principle and Foundation*. God calls us to give up our old ways of thinking and acting, so that we can live *in His image and likeness* (Gen 1,26). It is a question of recognising this as the *principle and foundation* of our own existence and of responding to these gifts of His goodness with praise, reverence and service.

240 The fundamental experience of this stage is that of being loved unconditionally by God, our Creator and Saviour, and that in His love and service we are destined to become more fully ourselves. Thus we return to the personal knowledge of a vocation to the Christian life.

241 This is the stage of **getting to know one another better**: getting to know the other members of the group and being known by them; getting to know Jesus Christ personally, and being known by Him; acquiring a critical appreciation of our surroundings; and understanding whether or not the CLC way corresponds to a personal vocation.

### The dimensions of this process are:

#### ▲ Knowing God as revealed in and by Jesus Christ

242 • **The experience sought:**

- ▶ purifying our image of God, by moving from the God

of institutionalised religion to God the Father of Jesus Christ;

- ▶ acquiring a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and finding in Him the merciful love of God who saves us and who calls us, giving a new sense to our lives;
- ▶ beginning to move from a rather formal faith to a personal faith.

243

• **Assistance offered by CLC:**

- ▶ introduction to the Spiritual Exercises with the Principle and Foundation and the First Week;
- ▶ introduction to reading the Bible;
- ▶ introduction to prayer, especially the different ways of praying (SE 238-260), together with the *Additional Directives* (SE 73-90);
- ▶ introduction to the sacraments of initiation - baptism and confirmation.



**Knowing and loving ourselves as God knows and loves us**

244

• **The experience sought:**

- ▶ a deeper understanding of being a creature loved by God and chosen for a high purpose;
- ▶ a deepening Christian understanding of sin and offence, with personal experience of forgiveness, knowing that God loves us, not because we are good, but because His love renders us capable of loving and of living according to that love;

- ▶ a beginning to the process of purification from an inclination to find fault in everything and everyone, and of wanting always to be in control, and liberation from selfish attachments and attitudes which impede the development of a mature relationship with God and with others.

245

• **Assistance offered by CLC:**

- ▶ introduction to Christian anthropology - what is humankind in the light of revelation (Genesis etc.)?
- ▶ fundamentals of psychology - character, strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, defence mechanisms, adaption mechanisms, complexes, the conditions essential for mental health, etc.
- ▶ study and practice of the *Rules for the Discernment of spirits (First Week, SE 313-327)* and of the *general examen* and the *daily examen* (SE 24-43);
- ▶ emphasis on the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist (SE 44) and a deepening sense of the ecclesiastical communion (the Church as a community for the reconciliation of men and women with God and between themselves, in the Spirit of Christ).

▲ **Knowing and loving others as God knows and loves them**

246

• **The experience sought:**

- ▶ learning to see the world around us as God sees it, being positive and hopeful about all its facets (human, social, cultural, ecclesiastical), and wanting to help others as God helps them;
- ▶ knowing others and being personally known by others, knowing what it is to be welcomed and

accepted by others, and being the same for them;

- ▶ getting in touch with the poor, not isolating ourselves in a world measured by our own aspirations, not falling into the trap of simply providing assistance or paternalistic aid.

247 • **Assistance offered by CLC:**

- ▶ a Christian vision of the world and of society (*Gaudium et spes*);
- ▶ introduction to critical analysis of social reality (by the method 'perception-enrichment-planning', or its equivalent 'experience - social analysis - theological reflection - action');
- ▶ various experiences of service in company with other members of the community, which should be planned, organised and evaluated in group meetings;
- ▶ finding role-models in CLC to inspire us.

▲ **Knowledge of the CLC vocation and way of life**

248 • **The experience sought:**

- ▶ a clear understanding of the CLC path and whether or not it answers to one's own deepest desires (identity, way of life, spirituality, mission, organisation, and formation programmes);
- ▶ taking an active part in community life, undertaking responsibilities, sharing financial responsibility for CLC, etc.;
- ▶ learning to share ones personal experiences and feelings, aiming at doing the Review of Life in the community.

249

• **Assistance offered by CLC:**

- ▶ offering occasions and means for deepening understanding of the General Principles and the **Criteria for Formation**;
- ▶ the possibility of fulfilling different roles within the local and regional community (formation for action);
- ▶ an invitation to an active and responsible participation in the life of the group and the way of CLC. It is advisable to propose to everyone from the very beginning a more or less formal commitment, in successive stages, according to the directives of the national community.

▲ **CLC contribution during this period of preparation for discernment of vocation**

250

• **Group meetings**, in which attention should be paid to:

- ▶ welcoming, getting to know people and personal communication;
- ▶ sharing, both in prayer and in the Review of Life (for which practical as well as theoretical material is proposed).

251

Given the multiple objectives of this period, meetings should **take place every week, or, at least once a fortnight**.

Meetings should conform with the **CLC model and methods** (see p. 68) and attention should be paid to the time devoted to prayer and final evaluation.

Meetings with a **theme** should be inspired by the objectives of that stage.

252

• The *Review of Life* must put the emphasis on the positive

aspects. It is on account of these last that one can risk exchange of feelings at this personal level.

- 253
- **Personal spiritual guidance** - which is not to be replaced by the group - should help:
    - ▶ self-knowledge and the better acceptance of ourselves and others;
    - ▶ a personal relationship with Christ, who gives meaning to our life;
    - ▶ the finding, as Christians, of our own place within the society in which we live.
  - **The CLC national and local secretariats** should organise, or provide information about how to find:

- 254
- ▶ workshops or introductory sessions on
    - Ignatian prayer;
    - social and cultural analysis;
    - understanding the CLC (General Principles and Criteria);
    - preparation for confirmation (if this has not yet been received), introduction to reading the Bible, to Christology, etc.

- 255
- ▶ practical experience of the Spiritual Exercises, group and inter-group encounters, celebration of the *CLC World Day*, special liturgies, work camps, etc.

▲ **Signs which mark the end of this stage**

- 256
- Members have had deep experience of God, both personally and within the community. This experience leads them to deeper and greater commitment, both personally and as a community.

- Each member of the group has had some experience of the Spiritual Exercises and each has a regular prayer life and appreciates and frequents the Sacraments.
- The members have a positive view of what has been accomplished in these introductory years and value community life. In one way or another, they feel responsible for each other and they trust, respect and accept each other.
- They have developed a deeper sensitivity to the problems of injustice and social marginalisation, and are more open to involvement in political and socio-cultural life.
- They are aware of the necessity of contributing fully to the functioning of the National and World Community, and the need to find ways and means to achieve this.
- They feel the desire to commit themselves more fully to the CLC way of life and to strengthen their links with their national community and with the World CLC. One way they can achieve this is by making a *Temporary Commitment*.

257

This first stage normally lasts from one to four years (GN 2). During it, members will begin to reflect upon their personal vocation. Those who wish to start *vocational discernment* enter the next stage. This will not happen to all the members of the group at the same time. The transition to this next stage is marked by the celebration of *Temporary Commitment*.



## ◆ Stage of Discernment of Vocation

### *What should I do for Christ?*

258 As we said in the Criteria (p. 36), *Temporary Commitment*, made publicly and accepted by the community, is the way in which the individual gives expression to his or her decision to seek God's will for their life, and to use Ignatian means to do this; for the community that welcomes them, it should mean making available the Ignatian pedagogy specific to CLC.

259 At this point it is important to avoid two possible misconceptions, which are, first, that in the Church, the lay vocation is simply that which remains when no other option is taken up, and, second, that we remain with CLC because we do not know of any other Christian group.

260 What exactly does discernment of vocation mean, for both young and adult? For some, especially the young, it is a question of considering *states of life* - lay? priest? religious? For others, especially the older and those already married, it is a question of *way of life* - what does God want from me in relation to my personal life, my family, my professional life, my social and political involvement, my use of money, etc? What decisions must I make in order to live according to God's call to 'a greater service'? Will CLC help me to respond more fully to this call?

#### **This stage can be seen as a two-fold discernment:**

- 261
- discernment and choice of *state of life*: marriage, single life, lay state, priesthood or religious life.
  - discernment and choice of *way of life*, whereby we respond to the Lord's call to live the life to which we are already bound with greater fidelity to Christian values.

## Phases in the Discernment of Vocation

262 Discernment of vocation is usually made in two phases, characterised by the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises:

the **first phase** corresponds to the **development of the right disposition** for making a good 'election'. It is a question, specifically, of interior freedom (Ignatian 'indifference') and of increasing identity with the poor and humble Christ, totally committed to the service of His brothers and sisters according to the will of God;

263 the **second phase** is the **moment of the real 'election'** as to the way in which we are called to follow Christ. It is a question of wanting and choosing what God wants for us.

**There are two steps to this discernment:**

### ▲ **Listening to the call to follow Christ in his mission**

#### • **The experience sought:**

- 264
- ▶ the assimilation of the Christian faith as a vocation *for mission*;
  - ▶ a personal love for Christ and the desire to follow Him more closely by contemplating the mysteries of His life;
  - ▶ commitment to Christ's plan for salvation, and to His identifying with the sufferings and needs of His people;
  - ▶ an increasing awareness of social disorders, and of prevailing values and trends;
  - ▶ an understanding of what is necessary in order to follow Christ in fruitful service, ready to renounce everything, including oneself (inner freedom, indifference, Ignatian *magis*) for love of the Lord and the Gospels.

• **Assistance offered by CLC:**

265

- ▶ introduction to **personal prayer** as part of life, and an attitude of discernment in everyday life;
- ▶ experience of the full Spiritual Exercises, either in daily life or on retreats in several stages;
- ▶ deepening knowledge of Christ by reading and attending theology courses designed for the laity, etc;
- ▶ taking responsibility in one's own group and in CLC at large, for CLC itself or for the local Church;
- ▶ committing oneself to some powerful experience of humble service to the poorest and most marginalised.

▲ **Finding our personal vocation in the Church**

266

• **The experience sought:**

- ▶ for those who are free to choose, consideration of the *state of life* to which one has been called;
- ▶ for those who have already made a life-commitment (e.g. marriage), a period of self-renewal;
- ▶ an intensification of one's love of the Church and one's commitment to its mission of building the Kingdom of God ;
- ▶ a feeling of identity with CLC and its mission.

### Assistance offered by CLC:

- ▶ opportunities for learning to discern interior feelings and movements and becoming familiar with the Ignatian way of making decisions;
- ▶ an understanding of the different vocations within the Church: priesthood, marriage, religious life, the single life, lay ministries, apostolic service, secular institutes, etc;
- ▶ opportunities to learn about different vocations within the Church through personal testimony and example;
- ▶ familiarity with the image of the Church brought out by Vatican II in the documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, and the development of a clear sense of responsibility within the Church;
- ▶ fostering collaboration with other associations within the Church.

### ▲ CLC contribution to this stage of discernment of vocation

- In **group meetings** special emphasis is laid on the sharing of personal experiences arising from prayer or daily life and, with the help of a spiritual guide, attempts are made to discern these;
- **spiritual guidance;**
- **national and local secretariats** should organise, wherever possible:

- ▶ workshops or introductory sessions on:

**Biblical vocations** - Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Mary, the apostles, etc;

the dynamics and structure of the **Spiritual**

**Exercises** - this could be done in two phases, the first before the Exercises, as preparation, and the second afterwards, for reflection and enrichment of the experience;

**Ignatian discernment of spirits and the Autobiography;**

**the social teaching of the Church or socio-political formation.**

269

► ways and means for deepening knowledge of Christ, of the Church, of the sacraments of Ordination and Marriage, of the lay vocation, etc., for example by:

preparing reading-lists on these topics;

making these topics the subject of community meetings;

theology seminars;

meetings for those similarly going through discernment of vocation;

providing opportunities for participation in theology courses for lay people run by academic institutions.

▲ **Signs which mark the end of this stage**

270 This stage is completed when:

- a choice of life (an election) or of a reform of life (or both) has been made;
- the individual is ready to make a Permanent Commitment to CLC.

**The new way of life is reflected in new attitudes, namely :**

- in personal and community discernment, there is a clear perception of the way in which God wishes one to live one's life and one's way of life (work, profession, affections, domestic life, studies, etc);
- in making a decision as to the life to which one is being called, especially for young unmarried adults, all the vocational alternatives have been given serious consideration;
- the individual has reached relative emotional, spiritual and professional stability, integrating the different aspects of life within his or her own mission;
- the individual is sure that the Lord is calling them to a CLC vocation;
- at the personal and community level there is a serious seeking for what the Lord wants from us, both individually and as a group;
- as a result of spiritual growth in the majority of its members, the group has acquired a sense of cohesion and identity. The group is the privileged place where community discernment is experienced;
- members of the group are more committed to responsibility and service, even though these can be very demanding in terms of time, money and effort.



## Stage of Apostolic Discernment

### *Great service because of pure love*

272

At the stage of Permanent Commitment, it is not simply a question of apostolic activity: something deeper and more lasting is looked for. It is a matter of discovering that, like Jesus, we are not only sent for different missions, but we are people who are **sent**. This is why we try to give an apostolic meaning to the whole of our lives - family, work, social life, Church, leisure, illness, and even death (our own and that of others). Recognising that these are all gifts of God, we live out our commitment by which we work with Christ for the Kingdom of the Father.

273

Our being sent takes many different forms. In each sacrament we receive a specific mission. In baptism and confirmation, for example, we are really made apostles, sent to continue Christ's mission and to bring everything under His rule. In approving the apostolic way of life of CLC, the Church accepts and makes her own the endeavours specific to CLC. Furthermore, the hierarchy may give a specific mission to CLC, either at the request of the Church, or on the initiative of CLC.

274.

CLC is characterised by *apostolic discernment* because CLC members are encouraged to cultivate a spirit of listening, creativity and initiative in which they become sensitive to God's voice calling them through the needs of other people and through the appeals of those who have a leading role in CLC. [GP 6, 8, 13(b), 14]

275

CLC is marked by contemplation of the call of Christ which leads to a profound relationship and a new attitude towards Christ, communion with Him as the missionary, believing in His love and saving power, being open to the Holy Spirit, interest in the problems of others, apostolic charity, understanding, tenderness, compassion, fortitude in adversity, and a readiness to overcome all barriers of class and ideology.

276

The CLC mission field is not limited to particular people or activities, but extends to all sectors in which God has called us to

work: the Church and the world, people of our acquaintance and strangers, the family, the workplace, cultural, social and productive associations, politics, culture, and so on.

277 In trying to establish priorities, CLC shows a clear preference for the most urgent and universal calls, such as the need to end discrimination between rich and poor, to bring about the evangelisation of cultures and Christian unity. [GP 8(d)]

278 For those who feel called to be agents of social and cultural change in order to build the Kingdom of God in this world, it becomes second nature to be alert to the maintenance of a tension between human and Christian life and between personal and group projects. For this we need discernment, availability and balance.

### ▲ Characteristics of the stage of Apostolic Discernment

#### • The experience sought:

279 making Christ and His saving power really present in our lives; the personal apostolate (among family, friends, parish, work and leisure pursuits) is not only indispensable and irreplaceable, but for many it becomes the deepest and most lasting form of apostolate in their lives;

- ▶ developing an attitude of *the contemplative in action*, seeking to strengthen relationships with God and with others through thanksgiving, prayer, and the giving of self in love and service;
- ▶ regular practice of personal and community discernment, for taking all personal and apostolic decisions;
- ▶ a deeper integration of faith and life, and faith and justice;
- ▶ the development of a deeper sense of universality, ecumenism, and sensitivity to the greatest needs and



the greatest service, and the capacity to respond to them;

- ▶ assimilation of a good methodology for planning, implementing and evaluating apostolic and social projects.

#### • **Assistance offered by CLC**

- ▶ the community supports personal encounter with Jesus in prayer, in the sacraments and in daily life;
- ▶ the practice of a specific apostolic prayer life which enables us to encounter God and unites us with Him in apostolic activity;
- ▶ providing sessions for discernment on vital decisions of our lives: marriage, work-profession, participation in social and political life, etc.
- ▶ making adequate arrangements for the organisation of apostolic service (e.g. professional networks).

#### **CLC contribution to this stage**

- In group meetings, daily life, personal plans and apostolic projects become vital issues. These are the subjects for the group to share, to listen to, and discern. The meeting helps both personal and community discernment and also helps in coping with pain and death encountered in the course of mission;
- the extent of the range of apostolate in CLC makes apostolic discernment absolutely essential at both personal and community levels. It is used at all levels of action, beginning with each member reviewing the events of the day in the Daily Examen, and evaluating the calls of the Lord to serve others. [GP 12(a)]

- the *Review of Life* can take here the form of community apostolic discernment;
- there should be frequent **personal spiritual guidance** and the guide's role is one of witness and helping discernment. Occasionally, a married couple can share spiritual guidance as a couple;
- the **Spiritual Exercises** in the form of a five or eight day retreat, are an Ignatian repetition of the full experience of the Spiritual Exercises;
- there should be some kind of **common purse** or solidarity fund;

**Local and national communities should offer means for on-going formation**

- 282
- among the most important for adult CLC members should be courses on: **family ethics, professional and social ethics, deepening knowledge of Holy Scripture, Mary in the mystery of the Church, etc;**
  - other courses will have different relevance in different countries: **inter-religious dialogue, inter-cultural dialogue,** etc. These subjects can be dealt with in group meetings, according to bibliographies drawn up by national CLCs.
- 283 We end this paper with Saint Ignatius' words from the last Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises:

❖  
*It is granted that we should  
 value above everything else  
 the great service  
 which is given to God  
 because of pure love*  
 ❖