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N E W S

Appointment of a new Ecclesiastical
Vice-Assistant

We are glad to welcome the official nomination of Fr. Nicholas RIEMAN sj as Ecclesiastical Vice-Assistant of the World Federation of Christian Life Communities.

The members of the Executive Council were unanimous that Fr. Rieman was the right choice. So the President of the Council asked Fr. ARRUPE Jesuit General, to consider him as a candidate. Fr. General was pleased to do this, and, on May 31, 1971, nominated him as president of the Central Jesuit Secretariate. According to the Statutes of the World Federation, this means he also becomes Ecclesiastical Vice-Assistant of the World Federation.

Fr. Rieman is detained in USA on various prior engagements and will be with us in Rome by September. As promotor of the CLC in the province of Detroit, he is known for his solid experience of the Christian Life Communities and his deep understanding of the Spiritual Exercises.

TO OUR READERS

This page, dear friends, is intended for each of you personally. We hope to draw us all closer together by sharing with you our thoughts about our projects and our concerns - and above all, by asking you for your opinions.

PROGRESSIO goes to sixty-six countries in five continents. Most who read it seem to be in national or local positions of responsibility in CLC, priests and laity. It also attains a number of "sympathising readers". Members of groups do not seem to know it so well, although, in the last two months (April and May) we have had 267 new subscriptions. This is encouraging and seems to indicate our readership is opening out.

"I find in it plenty of material and inspiration to stimulate our groups" writes an ecclesiastical assistant from the Far East in a letter received this morning, renewing his airmail subscription. Documentation, inspiration, stimulation... these certainly seem the services anyone should be able to expect from PROGRESSIO and we feel they sum up our main aim.

Documentation means giving news, information about the life of our groups, their progress, their research, their activity. It also implies reflecting in our choice of subjects and information the actual situation in which our members are living. Inspiration means providing points for reflection, to remind us of the uniqueness and special nature of our vocation in the Christian Life Communities. And all this adds up to stimulation, through our readership in sixty-six countries, of the desire to live in union with Christ according to the vocation of service to which he has called us.

In view of this, we might spend a few moments defining our goal. It has been developing progressively - the working out of the General Principles and the various resolutions of General Councils mark stages in this development of an experience, and in recognising on what it is founded: -the formation of the whole man in the school of the Spiritual Exercises; -the experience of com

munity life which stimulates us to be faithful to Christ and exercise our sense of discernment so we can serve better; -an apostolic life based on being aware of the most pressing needs - summed up since our 1967 Congress as "the development of the whole man and of all men". This is the way our Communities are following, and PROGRESSIO wants to accompany them on it, serving as a forum for the initiatives taken in the different countries and continents, respecting the evolution and the originality of the experiences.

It is there that your suggestions would help us. Would you send your answers to the following questions ?

- * Which CIC topics best suit your needs ?
(formation of members, life of the group, outward-lookingness and service, retreats, ... etc.)
- * What experience of your country (local or national) would interest all our readers ?
- * On which current question should PROGRESSIO provide points for reflection in the coming months ?

The Executive Council are anxious to make PROGRESSIO a reflection of our whole movement and an instrument of service to it. They will be very grateful for the time you devote to answering these questions, and hope you will send them in quickly. They are confident all our members realise the bond that unites them and the work that must be done, and they hope for a deluge of letters. Each will be a gesture of concrete cooperation which will benefit all our members.

PROGRESSIO

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY and the MOVEMENT TOWARDS COMMUNITY

by José Luis VELASCO

THE CONCRETE MISSION of CLC in this MOVEMENT TOWARDS COMMUNITY

Finally, we must not forget that, having experienced the influence of community life in CLC, our movement has special characteristics which differentiate it from "typical basic communities". If these differences impede our renewal they are merely negative; but they can be positive if they mean avoiding certain dangers and becoming a means of dialogue between basic communities and the hierarchical Church.

The chief dangers to avoid are: becoming a set of illuminist ghettos; becoming so radical politically that the life of faith and prayer is abandoned; constantly challenging the hierarchy. As a concrete example of guide-lines for living a community life in CLC, I am going to quote what was said at the last national meeting of my federation, -C.E.M.I. of Spain. The quotation deals with a particular problem with special peculiarities - particularly national trends and the fact that most of the members are of bourgeois origin. Nor is the thought fully developed. But I hope that, based on actual experience as it is, it may be useful.

The community we describe can be called a Group of Christian Reference. It is a reference group in the sense that, while it may offer a few general hints, it deals with a particular aspect of life. Nor is it a natural group or a complete group. It does not include (or pretend to include) all the life-plans of the individual. It only modifies, orientates, animates his action and provides constant opportunities for self-examination before God, a continual reference point for renewing and promoting Christian action. The reference group is one to which we are led by action in the world, and which one leaves to return to work in the World. It is a group which makes total demands on its members because of this Christian reference point. As a Christian group, it is distinguished by a strong sense of what is finally aimed at: the worship of God, the witness and proclamation of the Word, sharing in the building up of the Kingdom (1).

* This is a continuation of an article which appeared in "Progressio", May 1971, n°3, Christian Life Community and the movement towards community.

(1) In other words, to share fully in the priestly, prophetic and royal functions of Christ, according to the ideas of Lumen Gentium.

Each community should be at the same time a community of Christian reference and (where there is group action) a community of Christian action. It should not, however, seek for actions in order to unite the community; common action will only arise when it is really of service to men.

CHARACTERISTICS of this COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIAN REFERENCE

It is :

1) POOR

This is urgent, and necessary in faithfulness to the gospel and the witness of the Church, especially where the Church is still linked to the rich and powerful. How can we, as individuals or a group, in our own situation, become poor? (We have to distinguish here between community poverty and a community of poor individuals).

The community of Christian reference to which we speak, if it is to be a poor community, will lead each of its members to austerity and the stripping away of superfluities. The poor community will be a community of people who aim to be available and generous; it will be an austere community, asking the normal Christian means of austerity. It will be a community of support for all - in hospitality, in helping its own members in need. It will be a community of welcome - and a community that makes demands on its members.

The community will lead its members to lead a poor life, and so will become a community of poor individuals. It is not a question of consecrating part of one's life to poverty, or a part of one's money or one's work - but of putting one's whole life at the service of others.

Some are already established in a situation of being engaged in a job within an unjust system. The idea of "coming out of one's class" is one not to be taken lightly: it cannot be done in a day: it is a difficult, painful, long process. One must start by having an uneasy conscience about one's milieu, as a practical way in the short term, of challenging it by one's witness. Going out of one's class is risky, too - it involves one's wife and children, there are family ties of all sorts. Not all, anyway, find themselves confronted with this choice.

We find the key in living according to the gospel. "Coming out of one's class" should not be a laborious, artificial affair. If we live our Christianity, the ruling class will soon force us out of it. Nor is it necessarily a question of leaving one's job (although some situations might demand this). It is rather a matter of putting one's job and one's whole life at the service of others. This is poverty as a means of bringing about a more just society, and making one's whole life revolve round this.

Service, poverty, involvement should go together. We are not talking of being poor in the sense of having nothing, but of a whole life of service. If we commit our lives to bringing about a better human society, this will force us to be poor.

Obviously, anyone taking this path of poverty - involvement - for a long period will need a good deal of support from the whole community.

2) INVOLVED

A community of the involved. Involvement is the preliminary to poverty and, in a way, it leads to it. Putting one's whole life at risk to obtain a better society, putting all one's life as the service of men - this will make one poor-in time, in money... For us, it follows from the gospel, but we must realise we cannot do it all by ourselves: we need the help of God. Real evangelical poverty, means putting the whole of one's life, always, at the service of others.

One important aspect of involvement is to take our own jobs seriously. One's work is a very fundamental thing, but the kind of work may change. One has constantly to be asking oneself: who is benefiting from my work - this or that kind of person? a dominant class? In most cases, we shall probably find our work is socially productive, but the first step is to be aware of the need to ask the question, and to see how important it is.

Trying to link one's job to a changing society, seeking out new relationships in one's work. This attitude (which implies involvement) is always necessary.

The most urgent particular aspects of this involvement are the political arena, the area of study, the need to cultivate a professional conscience. In all these, we have to work with a strong sense of the injustice of the social structures, and it is important to know the techniques, the "rules of the game" - otherwise one may work with great goodwill but one will be beating the air, like a fish out of water...

Collaboration in our unjust society... how far should one accept responsibility for the injustice? One must distinguish between accepting it in political matters (where one is more compromised with the system) and in technical matters (where the collaboration is not so great). To break with the system. If this is not possible, at least to be conscious of one's collaboration with it.

How can one combine living inside the system in one's job, and living outside it in other aspects of life? The community's role is very important in working this out.

Possible ways of action and life outside the system :

- The community needs this, and seeks it out, as a community;
- Seeking new relationships within one's job, more in accordance with a just society, with a view to paving the way for a new society;

- Realising the means that can influence people: publications, films, conferences, discussion groups;
- In CLC, forming and preparing people for the idea of a real solidarity as the chief driving force of society.

These are only a few possible ways. Each individual must see what best suits him in this situation, spurred on by his sense of urgency.

3) IN THE WORD OF GOD AND THE EUCHARIST

Creating a system which makes it easier to bring about a community based on the Word of God, and finding the right means to build such a system.

A community of faith in the Word of God. Communal discovery and common sharing of the fruits of the Word. A spirit of faith as a basic element in our spirituality. Fraternal correction in the scriptural context.

Community in the breaking of bread and communal celebration of the Eucharist. Exchanging the sign of peace with one's brethren. Realising our real role.

In doing all this we exercise our priestly functions as individuals and as a community.

These principles should lead us to :

- a) an intensification of common prayer;
- b) an intensification of private prayer - the prayer of members of a community even when they are dispersed, and who will be able to enrich their community prayer when they come together again;
- c) A re-thinking of the Eucharist in all its different aspects, which themselves make up a summary of the Christian life : communion, sacrifice, offering, word, prayer, forgiveness.

The importance of a liturgical formation which fits in to the life of the Church and, in consequence, to the life of our own community. The importance, also, of biblical formation. These two kinds of formation could be undertaken together but, however one does it, it is not so easy.

The careful preparation of retreats, other spiritual exercises and other liturgical and religious actions.

4) OPEN

Never a closed community. Every community, as a sign of unity and love, is a sign of progress - although it can cease to be this if it does not base its openness on love. We should not set up an "elite". Anyone should be able to come to us and be at home in our community.

5) PLURALIST

Different trends of thought can co-exist in the same group. Relationships and exchanges of view should exist inside and outside CLC (with workers, professionals, university people) and inside and outside the Church (interested groups of all other types).

Freedom of development of each group or community, with its own characteristics which can enrich the whole. Rejection of any "ideological monopoly"; the need for different tendencies, arising from different ideologies and backgrounds (geographical, social) etc.

6) FORMED

Serious study of the background is necessary in the liturgy, bible, theology. Formation is necessary, too, in professional competence, and in the appreciation of the need for community. Within CLC, meetings might be held for members of a particular profession, to examine its human aspects, the renewal of society, the building of a new world, the Christian sense existing in the profession, its efficacy, the importance the profession has in regard to the needs of the country.

7) OPENNESS TO NEW NEEDS

An attentive eye to new needs. The supremacy of life and the new problems which are arising, as compared to the institution and the juridical order.

8) DEMANDING

The same demands for all members.

9) INSTITUTIONALISED

A real understanding of this; assessing the importance of the institution and the organisation. Re-appraisal of means, steps, use of authority.

10) EFFECTIVE AND VISIBLE

A witness to love and sign of salvation. If we take a stand, we should be seen to be doing so.

Final confirmation of the General Principles and Statutes of the World Federation.

Many of you will remember that, after the 1967 Congress, the Holy See confirmed the new General Principles and Statutes ad experimentum for a period of three years. That period now being ended, the Secretariat of State, on 31 May 1971, gave us confirmation of these texts with the following amendments agreed at the Congress of Santo Domingo :

Text of N° 14 (para 2) as voted :

"The assistant of the group ordinarily takes part in the life of the group; he is principally responsible for the Christian development of the group and helps the members to discover the ways of God. In virtue of the mission given him by the hierarchy, whose authority he represents, he also has special responsibilities for doctrinal and pastoral concerns and for the harmony proper to a Christian community."

Text of N° 21, as voted

"The assistant of a group is a priest; in special cases the competent authority may assign this function of assistant to any other qualified person. The group may propose one or more persons, but approval is reserved to the competent authority."

Amendments to Arts. 9 and 12 of the Statutes :

to change from five to three years the time for the meeting of the General Council and the term of office of the members of the Executive Council.

THE IGNATIAN PERSPECTIVE *

by J.C. FUTRELL

A MODEL FOR TODAY

Using the Ignatian perspective on community as a model, it is possible to shed some light on the problem: "être ensemble, malgré tout" today. The readers are invited to reflect, upon their own situations according to this model. Employing a contemporary, phenomenological vocabulary, I shall apply the Ignatian perspective here only to the situation of a religious community.

Ignatius points out that the communion to be embodied in the community of the Company of Jesus is grounded in the personal love of God of each individual member. This means that the persons forming a religious community are brought together because each one discovers his own life-response to God, his "personal identity" in Christ in the same community vocation. Any person who discovers his personal identity does so through discerning within the experiences of his life, which make up his total self-awareness, an emerging pattern, an underlying thread of continuity, which enables him to see that he will bring integration to his personality and meaning and value to his being in the world through the commitment of his whole life to realising this meaning and this value. The discovery of personal identity is commitment to creating this identity through creative fidelity.

A Christian discovers his personal identity in Christ, through discerning within his own faith-experience of Jesus Christ a certain call, a specific "charism", to which he responds by committing his entire life to the embodiment of this charism in space and time. To be a Christian at all, is to respond to a personal experience in faith of the person of Jesus Christ. It is the shared experience of the one spirit of the Risen Jesus which is the communion of the People of God, embodied in space and time in the human community which is the Church.

But within the Church there are a variety of charisms for the service of the whole People of God. Each individual Christian

* Third part and end of the article which appeared in Christus 18 (1971) n.69, cf. Progressio, March and May 1971, The Ignatian Perspective.

has his own, unique faith-experience of God in Jesus Christ, because each individual is a unique person with his own irreplaceable selfhood, his own totally personal self-awareness. Although persons are joined together in communion through a shared, common experience, this very experience in its personal complexity is unique in each individual's own self-awareness.

Thus, if a given person sharing with all Christians the faith-experience of the Spirit of the Risen Jesus is aware of certain elements within his own awareness of this experience of Jesus, he feels simply impelled to give his entire life to the praise of God and to prayer for the People of God. He is aware of being called to the contemplative life. If, in another person, his faith-experience gives him awareness of other elements within this experience, he feels simply impelled to give his whole life and all his time and energy to trying to share the experience of Jesus with other men through proclaiming the Good News. He is aware of a call to the apostolic life.

A person aware of such a call must then seek to embody his response in space and time. Discovery of a vocation to a particular religious community is an experience of RECOGNITION that one's own individual response in love to God embodied in the response of this entire community: "For the union of the members with one another and with their head, the principal bond is the love of God our Lord." For "all of us share one and the same spirit in our Lord". The communion which must be embodied in a religious community, then, is a particular way of responding to the Spirit, of the personal growth in the life of Jesus of each individual member of the community, which depends, in turn, upon the depth and reality of the faith-experience of Jesus of each individual through prayer.

In order to "être ensemble, malgré tout" today, then, it is necessary that the members of a community find ways to become aware of a shared experience of their profound communion in the Spirit, which underlies all their varieties of language and of expression that make communication so difficult. Shared, spontaneous prayer is one effective way to accomplish this shared experience of communion. Perhaps the "charity and in general all goodness" that Ignatius saw as the means to help union today would be manifested chiefly in truly listening to others who have radically different forms of expression than my own and striving to discover whether there is a communion of lived, shared experience beneath them.

The effort of religious orders today to "être ensemble, malgré tout", concretely is the effort to accomplish the renewal and adaptation demanded by the Church in Council. What we must do in our renewal, then, is to return to the Founder's original experience of the Holy Spirit beneath his historical expressions,

and to clarify this vision in the language of our own time. All the members of the community must gradually discover this communion in the spirit and must make the common commitment to seek together to discern how to embody this communion in space and time here and now, as Ignatius of Loyola and his first companions did in the "Deliberation" of 1539. Through communal discernment of the Spirit it will be possible to recognize the actual Word of God to the whole Community here and now and to respond "Yes" through the life and action of the whole unified community, even when the Word of God is unexpected and disconcerting, even when it is a call to new life through the Cross.

HAVE YOU READ...?

- the Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" (May 15, 1971)
- the Pastoral Instruction, "Communication and Progress", published by the Pontifical Commission for Mass Media (June 4, 1971)

Every CLC member should be familiar with the se. Group discussion will produce deeper reflection and understanding of them.

NEWS . . .

Naples, 30 April - 2 May 71

Third Congress of the Italian National Federation, on the theme: "Seeking for God again: our time, in the community perspective of the CLC".

Paris, 30 April - 1st May 71

Fifth Congress of the French Association of Christian Life. Question for consideration: "Christian life - objectives 1971 - 1974 ?"

Liege, 9 May 71

General meeting of FEBEC on the theme: "Prayer as it appears in the gospel".

Madrid, 21 - 22 May 71

National meeting of the Spanish Federation, for adults, on the question of secularisation.

Vienna, 19 - 20 June 71

Meeting of delegates of the Austrian National Federation: preparation of "Deliberation 1972" and working out the programme of work.

Walsingham, 31 July - 7 August 71

Annual Summer Course of the English CLM and others on the theme: "The Christian and the Common Market". Irish and Danish CLC members will be present

Philadelphia, 19 - 22 August 71

"Convention 71" of the US National Federation, on the theme: "Towards Life - challenge and action".

Philadelphia, 22 - 25 August 71

Meeting of the Executive Council of the World Federation, with a very tight agenda (as usual) ... Details will be given later.

FROM "SODALITY SEMINARS" TO "CLC SEMINARS"

Experience and Evolution of Training Sessions in Canada

by Monique BRUNEL

The method of seminars has been very precious to us in the last twelve years. Except for the Spiritual Exercises, it is the instrument that seems to have best contributed to the formation of our CLC leaders, and I would like to share our experience with the readers of *Progressio*.

During the 50's, we were brought into contact with many Priests, Religious and lay leaders in charge of Sodality groups, who were doing their work with undeniable good will, but with little practical and theoretical knowledge of Sodalities. Already overburdened with their ministry, their teaching or their studies, they could find no time to do reading or study about Sodalities. They needed some kind of an immersion into Sodality and we tried to answer this need.

Our first seminar, in June 1959, was for Sisters whom we led through an intensive program of conference and study. In spite of the density of the program, the Sisters were very happy with their experience and they asked us to organize similar sessions for other groups. Through the thirteen seminars we held that year, we were able to adjust our method little by little.

METHOD

Seminars usually took place on week-ends. The first evening, there was a presentation of the seminar and of the participants, as well as an opening talk. The following half-days were divided into a 45 minute talk, an hour of personal study and an hour of exchange. On the Saturday evening, there was either a friendly get-together, an informal discussion on questions brought up during the day, or a communication of experiences.

The seminar was based on the threefold method of conference - study-exchange. For the study, we drew from the text and commentary of "Bis saeculari", from the works of Father Villaret, and from the series "Les Congrégations mariales dans l'Eglise" with texts by Pius XII, Hugo Rahner, Joseph Stierli and others.

Very precise recommendations were made for the full success of the method: - Conditions for admission: a will to deepen the characteristics and methods of the Sodality and attendance at all sessions of the seminar. - Necessary disposition: an open mind, ready to discover anew or to deepen one's knowledge of Sodality. - Importance of being faithful to personal study where one can really assimilate the subject.

CONTENTS

The following plans of seminars give some idea of the subjects treated:

Seminar for a synthesis of Sodality - 1961 : 1) History of Sodality. 2) Spirituality. 3) Apostolate. 4) Human formation. 5) Selectivity of members and formation. 6) Government. 7) Meetings. 8) At the service of the Church.

Seminar for Priest-Directors - 1962 : 1) Sodality for the formation of committed Christians. 2) Spiritual Exercises, source of spiritual and apostolic vitality. 3) Rule of life. prolongation of the Exercises. 4) Sacraments and spiritual life. 5) Spiritual direction. 6) Apostolate of Sodalities. 7) The sense of the Church. 8) Human formation. 9) Government. 10) Selectivity and formation.

Seminar for Priest-Directors - 1964 : 1) The Church in the world of tomorrow. 2) The Christians we need. 3) An answer, the Sodality. 4) Training of members by a community life. 5) The Director, an animator. 6) Spiritual Exercises, source of commitment. 7) The Spiritual Exercises in daily life. 8) Spiritual Exercises and Christian maturity. 9) The Director, a witness.

Seminars of 1965 : 1) Groups of a Living Church. 2) Apostolic commitment. 3) Apostolate and community life. 4) Spirituality rooted in human values. 5) Spiritual realism. 6) Spirituality and community life.

EVOLUTION

After a few years, most Sodality leaders had attended at least one seminar of synthesis. Many afterwards organized similar sessions for their own groups. Those who had gone through a first seminar asked for a follow-up and a further study of some aspects of their Sodality vocation. In this way we were led into holding seminars on specific subjects like the Spiritual Exercises, the Development of Peoples, etc.

Our seminars were undergoing quite an evolution already, but a more profound adaptation was becoming necessary, required by the deep religious and social changes in the world, by the Vatican Council in the Church, and by the General Principles in the CLCS.

From 1966 to 1970, we were especially busy looking for our own identity: study sessions on the projects of statutes submitted to us by Rome previous to the General Principles; foundation of the National Federation; preparation and follow-up of the World Congress in Santo Domingo. At the same time, the old bibliography on Sodality was in need of updating, so we wrote a series of "Fiches" (or study guides) for CLCs. These Fiches, together with the General Principles, the "Fundamental Themes" by Father Paulussen, and some publications by "Vie Chrétienne" in France, are already an interesting bibliography from which to start.

Last February, the National Federation organized a week-end meeting to initiate CLC leaders to the use of the Fiches. The week-end started with a presentation of the method (Fiches n°1, 2, 3) and of its orientation (Mouvement d'ensemble, Fiche n°4). Then some CLC groups, having already used the Fiches, reported on their experience. After this introductory part, the participants broke up into smaller groups for four long sessions. Each small group experienced one of three Fiches (n.11 on discernment, n. 16 on apostolic commitment, n.19 on the way of life), choose its own method of work adapted to the subject, and decided how to divide the time allotted into reflexion, prayer, study or exchange. In the closing plenary meeting, the groups shared the result of their work.

In May, the CLC groups in Quebec City, wishing to come to a better knowledge of the new visage of CLC, held a session in which they approached four main subjects with the conference-study-exchange method. They used the General Principles and the "Fundamental Themes" as bibliography on: 1) The Purpose and End of CLCs; 2) Their Essential Characteristics; 3) Their Way of Living; 4) The Spiritual Exercises. At the end of this meeting, an older member said how happy he was to have thus studied the General Principles: "We think we know all that and, through more study, we discover we still have much to learn and to live!"

At the beginning of the 70's, our membership being much less numerous, there is no question of organizing dozens of seminars every year. But we believe the method of intensive sessions for training CLC leaders is always up to date. We do intend to continue using it, adapting it to the real needs of CLCs of today.

Centre Leunis
4100, av. de Vendôme
Montréal 260, P.Q.

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"Today more than ever, the Word of God cannot be announced and understood if it is not accompanied by the testimonying force of the Holy Spirit, working in the action of christians who are serving their brethern there where their existence and their future are involved".

Apostolic Letter of Paul VI :
80th anniversary of Rerum Novarum