

progressio

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S U M M A R Y

- Editorial, by Roland Calcat	2
- Synod '71	4
- Let Us Pray, by Nicholas Rieman	7
- Solidarity : Well-Informed, Active, by a Group of Young People	11
- The CLCs in the Spain of Today	14
- Echos of the Month	17

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EDITORIAL

Here we are at the half-way mark between the Congress of Santo Domingo of 1970 and the one which will take place from August 4-10, 1973, at Leitershofen, near Augsburg (Germany).

At this time of the year the Church, by her liturgy, reminds us that a "Liberator" has been born to us. He comes like the Spirit, without making any more noise than a drop of water penetrating a sponge, a little like the suffering of the Pakistanis.

Certainly, his kingdom is not of this world. It is good to recall this, for the word "liberation" today hides many confusions. At this very instant--not tomorrow--every intention, every action, every operation to "liberate" our brother can place us within the design of God and reconcile us in Jesus Christ.

Do we want it?

Every being on the way to christification is waiting to see in us Jesus Christ, humble, poor and crucified.

Are we?

What a conversion that requires of us...!

And still, if we are able to recognize ourselves as sinners, and believe that we are effectively saved, that we are nothing and He is Everything, our hope is not empty. Everything becomes possible, so immense is the mercy of Jesus Christ, so well expressed in his words to the good thief.

Let us then give thanks like the leper who was cured, for compared to the situation as it appeared at Santo Domingo, we have truly been overwhelmed with grace.

From then on, spontaneously, Father Paulussen was ready to prolong his priceless help.

Bishop Audet has told us recently that he counted on being able to devote more time to our movement.

Father Nicholas Rieman, who has inspired the work of the Exercises at Cleveland, has accepted the post, left vacant, of vice-ecclesiastical assistant.

Jose Gsell, after 10 years of unwearied dedication to the Christian Life groups of France, has taken in hand the Central Secretariat and given it appropriate form and development.

"Progressio", in spite of the limitations of its format, is becoming little by little--even though there is still much progress to be made--the tool that the people at the Santo Domingo Assembly desired.

In Latin America, thanks to the trip undertaken with Father Paulussen, confusion and fears have given way to clarity and hope.

Southern Africa is responding from various parts and I understand that, there even more than elsewhere, the subscription campaign to "Progressio" is in full swing.

The trip planned to all the countries of southeast Asia is getting organized by Fred Leone, Jose Gsell and Nicholas Rie-man.

Old Europe is coordinating its efforts, facing its problems together and searching for solutions.

Thanks to the efforts of the Center for Ignatian Spirituality of the Jesuits at Rome, and more especially to Fathers Giuliani and Gonzalez, with the backing of Father General Arrupe, the Exercises, considered a short time ago as out-of-date, are being seen now as fully modern. The guidelines governing communal deliberation are being worked out and published, with Fathers Futrell and Gonzalez-Tarrio among others giving themselves generously to this work.

From the Philippines, with Father Sim, the revolution which liberates, the true revolution, is making its echos heard.

Good news keeps coming from all parts of the world.

At the same time, and without darkening the picture, for one who knows how to view things clearly, these graces constitute but the necessary preconditions to go forward effectively under the inspiration and the guidance of the Lord.

The Executive Council, which meets at Rome this January will have, among other tasks, that of preparing for the Congress of 1973, and certainly marks a turning point in this sense. Furthermore, the new team chosen at Santo Domingo is now running smoothly and ready to act more effectively in order to be of better service, in conformity with the wishes and desires expressed by the countries present at the Council assembly of Santo Domingo.

May this year be the year of Hope for all. May our hearts exult in the Lord. May the lowly be lifted up and become greater, may the powerful and the oppressors be put down from their thrones. May the starving Pakistanis--and many others--have a little more of the good things. We pray to the Lord.

Roland CALCAT

SYNOD--'71

We are the Church, we Christians, and so of course the Third World Synod of Bishops, held September 30-November 6 at Rome, was our synod, and we were deeply interested in it. Quite specially is this true of our Communities, whose aim and whose honor it is to "serve Christ in his Church". So a few reflections about it seem fitting.

This is now the third such synod since Vatican Council II, with 2-year intervals between each. The regular calling of such synods, composed overwhelmingly of bishops elected by their peers, shows that Pope Paul VI takes seriously collegiality and is trying to implement it. It is the first time in the history of the Church that the union between pope and bishops has been translated into a permanent and specific form. In this last synod, the average age of the delegates taking part was lower than in the ones before, and for the first time the Third World was strongly and adequately represented. The two subjects taken up, the priesthood and justice, were certainly ones that needed attention. How successful was the Synod in advancing the kingdom of God? That is not easy to say, but let us try.

On the negative side, there was much dissatisfaction among many bishops with some of the procedures. Speeches were very repetitious, they said, and so not enough time was left for the important exchanges in small groups. Some felt that too many procedural questions were decided by appointees, not by the Synod itself. In particular, not all were happy that the phrasing of the amendments ("modi") to be inserted in the proposals revoted was left too much to a small committee; though admittedly lack of time was a chief reason for this. In the part of the Synod on the priesthood, some would have liked to look first at the practical problems and needs of the priests before discussing the doctrinal side.

Widely regarded as illogical and unusual was the decision that, even though all the discussions of the Synod on the priesthood and justice were publicly and quite fully reported, its conclusions on these topics were not made public by the Synod, but

were remanded privately to the pope. While lack of time and lack of satisfaction with some of the conclusions reached seemed to be the main reasons for this, it was still much commented on.

The pope himself in his closing Synod address mentioned that he would take steps to assure that for future synods the procedures be more expeditious, and invited the bishops to communicate to him any suggestions they had along this line.

Perhaps the most frequent observation made was not concerning the Synod itself, but about its preparation—that most of the national or regional bishops' conferences had not really involved their people or their priests very much in the preliminary discussions on the topics, and therefore their delegates were not well-equipped to make statements or decisions that their people and especially their priests would understand. Possibly this was most felt regarding the discussions on the priesthood. Apart from ten superiors-general, there were only some twenty-odd priests who took part in the Synod, active indeed in the small work groups, but in the category only of observers at the general sessions. One priest in attendance said that at times during the discussions on the priesthood he had the feeling of being a small boy in a family of grownups, all of whom are talking in his presence about what he ought to be and to do, but no one ever asks him what he thinks about it.

So, like all things human, the Synod was not perfect, and can be improved. But this should not blind us to its many achievements, very real and very important.

Regarding the priesthood, it seems clear that both the delegates and many Catholics generally acquired a clearer grasp of the great value of the charism of celibacy, when freely embraced and combined with an entirely evangelical life. Emerging from the discussions too was a deeper realization that, whether or not one speaks of married priests or priests engaged part-time in secular activity, the priesthood is not merely functional, but a consecration and an orientation of one's whole life and being. Quite possibly one of the most important benefits of the Synod for the priesthood will be a much closer and more brotherly and collaborative relationship between bishops and priests in those dioceses where this has been somewhat lacking; the need for such a relationship was stressed by many speakers.

The explosive issue of celibacy and its link with the Latin priesthood was much discussed, and it seems good that a subject so much spoken of in many parts of the Church was aired at the highest level. As to the precise question of admitting married men to the priesthood, there remained at the end of the Synod a deep division among the bishops as to whether such a practice should be, for practical purposes, excluded completely, or on the

other hand whether there should be somewhat more readiness to admit in special situations, with a slightly higher number favoring the former solution. A synod is advisory, not legislative, but it did offer the pope a clearer image of the different situations and opinions.

Regarding justice and peace, many of the participating bishops felt that much was achieved. Beyond any doubt, a great sensitizing of the delegates from the more affluent nations to Third World problems and outlook took place. In particular there was much emphasis on the world nature of the problem of poverty, and that it is much affected by national policies, especially in the area of trade. The growing feeling in developing countries that their need is not so much for development as for liberation from the economic and cultural domination of the richer nations was clearly reflected at the Synod. And the truth that within the very structures and practices of the Church there is still considerable that does not reflect justice was often spoken of. As the Synod wore on, the rights of women, both in civil society and in the Church, received increasing attention, aided perhaps by the presence of several women either as observers or special speakers. There were frequent calls for a special commission to explore this whole area of women's rights, and there seems little doubt that in this field the Synod took a small but quite important step.

One question raised a number of times both by bishops and by attentive observers was whether, in the realm of practical matters and discipline (not in that of doctrine and broad policy) it is really feasible today to arrive at decisions that will apply well to a worldwide Church, or whether increasingly such matters should be left to national or regional bodies. It is a thoughtful question, one that deserves reflection.

If we look honestly at the Synod, there is no question that certain criticisms are valid, perhaps especially in the areas of procedure and of preparation. But it is also clear that the Synod achieved much both for the priesthood and for justice. And one might well reflect on the comment of a certain journalist, who summed up his view of the Synod by saying, "What other world institution has its very top leaders take five full weeks out of their busy schedules to do nothing but reflect and ponder and search as to how it can better promote holiness and justice and peace?"

So let us thank God for the achievements of our recent Synod, which are many and real, both for the Church and for the world. And as it is our vocation to answer the needs of the world by serving Christ in his Church, let us work and pray--both--that the next synod will be even more effective, more evangelical, more the extension of Christ in this world.

BUT ARE WE PRAYING ?

It is time we talked about prayer. Not about the value of prayer nor methods of prayer nor topics of prayer, but about whether we are actually praying, we members of the Christian Life Communities.

Of course we all pray a little, with a word here or a couple of minutes there, by fits and starts, with an occasional shared prayer and once in a while an hour of recollection. But are we praying with the kind of prayer--habitual, profound, prolonged--that is needed to change our personal lives and to make our Communities flourish?

To probe this question, let us first look for a moment at the life of Christ and the role of prayer in his life. Jesus prayed just after he was baptized. He was in the hills praying about four o'clock in the morning when the storm at sea was threatening the apostles. He prayed all night before he chose his twelve apostles. He prayed for two to three hours in Gethsemane just before his passion began. St. Luke gives us a glimpse of the prayer-life of Christ when he writes, "His reputation continued to grow, and large crowds would gather to hear him and to have their sickness cured, but he would always go off to some place where he could be alone to pray." And the prayer of Jesus was deep, all-absorbing, so that his apostles did not feel free to interrupt it easily: "Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'" The role he attached to prayer is shown too by comments on it: to name a few, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, that of the importunate widow, his comments on praying in secret, his comparing our prayer to God to the requests of children to their parents.

If Jesus needed to pray, so do we--far more. There can be much flexibility about such matters as when we pray, where we pray, how we pray or how much we pray, but not about whether we pray. For any Christian, prayer is a necessity. For those committed to

the fullest possible living of the Christian life, -- and that is what CLC is all about -- nothing short of regular, intimate and reasonably prolonged prayer will do. The GENERAL PRINCIPLES of our movement say this: "We recognize especially the necessity of personal prayer and spiritual direction as indispensable for seeking and finding God in all things". And again, "This way of life commits the candidate, with the help of the group, to strive for a continual development which is spiritual, apostolic and human. In practice this involves...daily practice of personal prayer, especially that based on Sacred Scripture..." (underlining added in both excerpts). Personal prayer is, then, especially necessary; and what is meant is prayer every day.

How much daily prayer is necessary? How much time ought one to set aside for it? Here it helps to go back to the SODALITY COMMON RULES, the guidelines for our movement before the General Principles took their place in 1967. In doing so, it should be stressed that the Principles were not intended in any way to weak en the Common Rules, but to give them more flexibility in line with the directives and spirit of Vatican Council II. Sodality Common Rule 34 read in part as follows: "Sodalists shall be very diligent in performing those religious exercises which are particularly necessary for a fervent life... They shall set aside and spend at least a quarter of an hour in mental prayer" (underlining added). (Other prayers too are specified--morning prayers, Mass, rosary, examination of conscience at night.) It remains true then that, generally speaking, we CLC members need to give a minimum of about fifteen minutes each day to prayer, and that without this, we will usually fail to achieve the kind of intimate contact with God in prayer that will deeply mark and influence our lives. Some Community members find from experience that they need more --even half an hour. These things are very personal, and one person may need twenty minutes of prayer, another twenty-five, a third fifteen, a fourth, long habituated to prayer and so able to find God quickly, a few minutes less. That is just why our present Principles are now less specific on the point. But to imagine that our Communities can be vital and deeply Christian with but a couple of minutes of sporadic prayer here and there is an illusion. Only adequate time set aside for prayer (15 minutes? 20 minutes?) and on a habitual basis (for practical purposes, every day) will help us and our Communities truly to grow in Christ.

Two other things about our daily prayer, both of them stated in our Principles. Scripture should be its chief source, and above all the life of Jesus; for if we are to live the life of Christ we must know him through and through, everything about him, about his ways of thinking and acting, his values, his way of life. And it should generally be personal, not simply group prayer nor recited vocal prayer, but the intimate dealing of the individual person with God.

A very practical question arises: how can ordinary lay people find the time to give even a quarter of an hour to personal mental prayer each day? The difficulty is very real, but one should not exaggerate it. It is above all a question of what priorities we set in our lives. The things we really judge are important we do find time for. Some priests and religious are every bit as busy as any lay person, and face the same temptation to conclude that they have no time for daily prayer; and, let us be honest, some of them yield to the temptation. For a married person, certainly, there is always need to work out the time problem with one's partner, but if one assigns it high enough priority this can probably be achieved. This shows too why it is so desirable that not just one spouse but both be members of a Community. Admittedly, the problem is more acute where there are young children in the home. But even here, deciding mutually on priorities is half the battle: plenty of young married men, if their work requires it, spend at home far more than fifteen minutes closeted with business papers or reports that they must peruse or prepare.

Because there are always a hundred other things to do, and because most of us do not find prayer easy or pleasurable, we look for rationalizations. The most frequent one heard is, "my work is my prayer"---and so, of course, there is no need for me to devote any specific time to prayer. It can be true that "laborare est orare" (to work is to pray), but only if the motivation behind the work is 100% perfect, if the activity is totally selfless, entirely God- and other-directed. Since that is rarely true, all of us need at times to return to our Source, to immerse ourselves in God, the only perfect milieu. More than that, if we honestly love God, we will want sometimes to be alone with Him. Just as, the wife who complains that her husband is always at work at the office and never home is never really satisfied with his reply that, after all, he's doing it all for her; her intuition tells her that if you really love someone, you find ways to be with that person.

Let me make very clear that I do not write from an ivory tower. I have all the same problems in prayer that others do. I too do not find it easy, though I do find that, over the years, it has brought me much light and strength and peace. I too am not quite as regular in my prayer as I should be, nor do I pray quite as much as I ought. But I know too---I have learned from experience---that I simply have to pray, and pray daily, and keep trying to pray well, or else I find that I do not think and choose and live as a Christian should. And I do keep trying always to pray better.

This article is directed to all Community members. But one

obvious conclusion from it is that, if prayer is really that important, then initiation into prayer should be a key part of any Community's candidate program. You note I use the word, "initiation." Reading about prayer, reading the General Principles concerning prayer, discussing prayer--all this is good. But above all the need is for actually initiating candidates into the practice of daily mental prayer of at least a quarter of an hour. Once the practice has been begun, a full week's experience of the Spiritual Exercises is the best way to build the practice into solid habit. The Exercises are often called a "school of prayer", and there is no question that an annual replunging for a full week in to an Exercises retreat deepens our commitment (and so, that of our Communities) in many ways, but quite strikingly in its renewal of our prayer life.

This article was written, by the way, at the prodding of the lay editor of PROGRESSIO, who five or six times remarked, "We have to have a series of articles on prayer, approaching it from different points of view". So this article is a first, and we hope there will be others, by different people. Perhaps on our attitudes in prayer, or on how to get at the heart of the gospel message, or on the liaison between prayer and our work-a-day life, or examples of actual mental prayers. We invite your comments on this article, and your suggestions and contributions for future articles.

By Nicholas Rieman, S.J.

PROGRESSIO

wishes for all its readers that
the BIRTH OF THE LORD will bring
them enduring Joy and Peace

SOLIDARITY : WELL-INFORMED, ACTIVE

Last September we published excerpts of letters from India about the situation of the Bengali refugees. The article below, written by a group of high school students, tells simply of the actions and reflections suggested to them by this situation. This witness has a double value: that of raising questions for us, that of opening the columns of Progressio to the initiatives and the aspirations of the young.

- (Editor's Note)

At Amiens a group made up of students and of several teachers got together at the end of the year to inform themselves on the different problems which the world poses for a student of the Premiere or of Terminal (1) and above all that of the imbalance between poor countries and rich countries.

Following this get-together, a group of the youth decided to turn its effort toward Pakistan. The group, composed of about fifteen boys, reflected for a week, then decided on the motives and the direction of its action. The group wanted this action to take two main forms: first, as effective help as possible, given the means at their disposal; second--and this to take place after the first action--acquainting the school, the other schools of the city and, with the help of the Third World Committee, even the town itself with the problem.

So meetings began to be held according to the need and the possibilities. First there was the organizing of the rice-bowl project at the school cafeteria. (2) This involved contacting all the classes--teachers and class officers--and reached about 500 persons. The organization of the bowl-of-rice project first of all helped us become aware of the problems involved in administering a school (this might seem secondary, but it showed our desire to understand and to avoid ready-made solutions). It also

- (1) Last classes of secondary school before entering university.
- (2) In place of the usual lunch, the cafeteria management made available an alternate lunch consisting of simply a bowl of rice, usual meal of refugees and many others; students were encouraged to choose the bowl of rice, and to donate the money thus saved.

made the majority of the students aware of the refugee problem. Finally, and this is not negligible, it allowed us to collect the sum of 1500 Francs (3), which was sent to Pakistan through Se-cours Catholique. This first action stimulated small groups of boys in several classes to organize in turn other activities for the benefit of the refugees such as car-washing, window-washing, hair-cutting....

Then a letter was drawn up and sent to Malraux in which the group assured Mr. Malraux of their accord and in the measure possible of their support.

After this a flier was prepared and 250 copies run off and put in the different schools of the city with the idea of stimulating similar actions in these institutions.

Meanwhile, the group made efforts to inform as to the problem their milieu--in the school and in the city--and did this in two ways which to the group seemed essential. The first way was by acting as leaders in meetings which were studying the problem simultaneously from different aspects--social, historical, political, geographic--so as to have a somewhat clearer view of the problem. The second way was to organize one or several talks by persons returning from Pakistan, so as to have direct testimony about what is happening there.

It became clear to us rather quickly that what seemed to be no great problem in the meeting became more complicated when it came to implementing it. This slowed things down a bit and for a moment gave the impression that the activity had stalled. For to prepare the meetings supposed some research into what documents were trustworthy and a study of such documents--all this without neglecting our scholastic work. So we began this study of sources first of all in the daily newspapers. Unfortunately, while these articles were useful for elementary information, they quickly showed themselves to be very incomplete for an effort just a little deeper. As for articles in depth in the specialized periodicals, we had to compare these and to study them, drawing on our very elementary and sometimes non-existent knowledge of the history and geography involved.

Some might be surprised at the place given by the group to becoming informed itself. As for us, we think we gave this the place that it normally ought to occupy in any serious activity. In fact, it became evident to us that if saving men needed urgently to be done, the manner of saving them needed by all means to be rethought. At the time of the genocide that took place in Biafra, we all know the method by which public opinion was gradually sensitized to the problem, a method which proved quite effective for a massive and rapid help in money and supplies, but

(3) About \$274.00.

which, separated from all political and social action, was only a flash in the pan. Who still thinks of now and gives active help to those infants saved from death and supported for a moment thanks to the milk of Europe, and who, the moment of crisis having passed, find themselves again in the misery of the developing countries? Public opinion, shocked for an instant by the terrifying pictures transmitted by television, has closed its eyes and its heart with a sigh of relief.

We are uneasy too with the methods stemming from colonization and which seem to us out of date. They consist in sending to the developing countries the surpluses of the rich countries without promoting to the fullest possible degree the awakening of these countries to their own responsibilities and riches so that they may no longer need our aid.

On this subject, Margarita Moyano demanded of us: "Are you ready? Are you ready to give up the privileges of rich peoples? Are you ready from the economic point of view, for example, to pay taxes, to pay more in order to allow greater international justice? That calls for a very great effort at awareness. Are you ready to accept that there is more than one development--the European variety, which must at all costs be imposed or exported elsewhere? Are you convinced that each people must find its own original path to freedom? Are you ready to become poor? Poor in the sense of someone who has need of another, who knows that he must receive something from another, who feels defenceless? Are you ready to make your conversion, to effect that revolution of your mentality which will allow us to make our revolutions at home? Otherwise, international solidarity is just philanthropy."

There in a few words is where our group now finds itself--with these demands--this hope, this folly too.

If some of the groups which have this same uneasiness would like to make contact with us, they are welcome to write to us. We have no label. We are not at all interested in starting a new movement. We only want to share on as deep a level as possible with other young people who believe that there is still something to be done if justice and brotherhood are to advance.

-- A Group of Young People
Collège La Providence
80 Amiens, (France)

We share the grief and the hope of the National Federation of Italy, tried by the death of Marco Di Liberto, its president. We assure them of our prayers and our fraternal sympathy.

Let's get acquainted...

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES IN THE SPAIN OF TODAY

The Christian Life Communities in the Spain of today have tried to adapt themselves completely to the renewal initiated first of all by "Bis Saeculari" and later by the dynamism of the Council, so well expressed in the General Principles that we now have.

This task of renovation has not been easy in a country as traditional as ours, where necessarily and even with the best of will, resistance and apprehension could not be lacking. Little by little the natural tensions of the whole process of renewal have largely passed, and we can now say that serenity is beginning to be felt, in the measure that the vitality of the World Federation and its wise action in all fields is beginning to be experienced. Toward this end the review "Progressio" is accomplishing enormous good.

Our old Marian Congregations are being transformed from huge organizations into small communities, much more dynamic and inserted into the social reality in which they must be incarnated. Their number has decreased in a spectacular way, just as has happened to the entire organized apostolate and especially to Catholic Action, above all since its famous crisis--still not resolved--which has had such an influence on our movement.

The Communities of today are groups, but quite small, and grouped together organizationally in a much more specialized way (university students, workingmen, clerks, young people, couples), although heterogeneous Communities are beginning to appear. All of them have been grouped together in the national federation, the official organism of the Spanish Church. It groups together and coordinates the different federations, which are the following: Federation of Married Couples (FECMA); Federation of University Students (FECUM); Federation of Workingmen (Vanguardias Obreras); Marianist Federation (CEMI); Federation of Intermediate Independents (CIX); Federation of Youth; and Federation of Adult Women. In all seven federations are integrated into the Confederation, at the side of which functions, as a service organ, the National Secretariat.

Each federation has its own governing structure--represented on the National Team, which is the coordinating body,--its own plan of formation, national assembly and news bulletin.

The ordinary meetings of the groups usually consist of study and formation, always ending in a community Eucharist. The several groups which form a Community normally meet monthly, and there is much insistence on theological formation and also on the experience of an authentic "community of faith". The principal apostolate is the apostolate to one's own environment and the infusion with the gospel spirit of structures at every level. This does not mean to say that there do not exist apostolic works of importance led by our Communities. Some of these are, for example, institutes for theological formation (mainly for university students), promotion of social works (centers of instruction for middle-level and professional people), construction of housing for the ordinary people, and collaboration with "Caritas Nacional" in the relief work of the Spanish Church. But apostolic priority is given to the transformation of structures, attempting to make them more just, more human and above all more Christian, more in conformity with the teaching of the Gospel.

As one kind of federation we can present that of the "Vanguardias Obreras", which groups together the Communities established especially for workers, as its name indicates. Its centers are scattered over practically the whole geography of the country, and one of the big problems that it has at present--just as does the movement of university students--is the lack of assistants who give themselves exclusively to this work. The Federation of the Vanguardia is at present busying itself in a special way with the solid formation in the faith of its militants, and for this purpose the National Team is now traveling throughout almost the whole peninsula arranging cursillos of theological formation, well-planned and whose results are most encouraging. The Vanguardias have concerned themselves not only with maintaining centers in Spain itself, but have also established groups among the Spanish emigrant workers in France, Belgium and England.

The university movement (FECUM) follows the direction traced by the workers' movement and also stresses the theological and religious formation in depth of its members. Just now it is preparing for its next national assembly, which is to take place in Granada, on a theme as suggestive and profound as "An Analysis of the Christian Message Regarding Poverty".

Another kind of federation is that of the married couples, formed of Communities of married people, as its name states. Practically all the former adult Communities have little by little been changed into mixed groups of men and women. They meet in small groups and the themes for formation and study are supplied by a bulletin (FECMA) which offers plenty of material both for suggested reading and for action. These Communities prepare formation courses for marriage and some of them carry out a wonderful effort of assistance at all levels. Very closely united

with them is an extremely active secretariat for widows, which carries on a most interesting apostolic effort in liaison with similar other organizations at the world level.

The other federations follow a similar line. That of the Marianists (CEMI), -- formed chiefly of the alumni of their schools, -- just finished its national convention, at the same time as the independents(CIX). The CEMI has an amazing Governing Body of the Apostolate, charged with guiding all the apostolic work of the federation.

The Federation of Youth is in a period of restructuring. It has contact with many groups from high schools and similar institutions and tries strongly to form youths in such a way that a little later on they can form part of our Communities, and give themselves to the Communities with a real Christian commitment. We consider the work of formation among these young people very important, since from them must come our future corps of members.

It is difficult in times like these to give a more complete picture. In moments of crisis such as the present one, the task of our Communities is difficult. Because of that we consider it very important that the Assistants be well-formed and understand our spirit. In this regard a short course of formation for Assistants was held which was very interesting and which we hope to repeat in the future. The National Assistant, Father Mielgo, is assisted by a team of seven assistants who meet periodically to study on the national plane their priestly and apostolic work and who throughout this entire year are reflecting from a priestly standpoint on the theme, "Christian Faith and Commitment in Our Communities".

Certainly the change from our former Congregations has been profound, while keeping as a base the General Principles. There remains still much to be done, but we have faith. We believe that, in spite of the difficulties of our time, the Christian Life Communities, if they live the General Principles, can be a factor, valid in the highest degree, for the evangelization of the world of today.

Madrid, December, 1971

ARGENTINA : Sureness of Direction

The Argentina Confederation met September 5, 1971, and after a stimulating talk by the national assistant, broke up into five groups of eight persons each, which "worked all morning in intense work and lively discussion" hammering out their answers to 14 very searching questions about their relation as CLC members to God, to the world, to men. Some of their conclusions as to what CLC means for them:

- I d e n t i t y .** - "Our CLC movement is a community of faith, hope and love, inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and inserted into the world at the service of man, with Christ, and in the Church."
- D e v e l o p m e n t .** - "As a community of men in the world it must be 'a fundamental force for human promotion and development'. The presence of the community in the world must help give it a direction that will allow all their full development and the enjoyment of liberty."
- L i b e r a t i o n .** - "The members of the community must come to develop themselves as human persons. They must pass from 'conditions less human to conditions more human', liberating themselves from all that oppresses and enslaves, whether this be lack of material things, oppressive structures, or the mutilations of egoism."
- E u c h a r i s t .** - "Without the Eucharist the community will never fully crystallize."
- U n i v e r s a l .** - "By its link with the bishops and by its insertion into the joint pastoral effort which ought to be the work of the whole community, it breaks out of its isolation and opens itself up to a particular Church, and, by means of this, to the Church Universal."
- M a r y .** - "We regard as necessary a personal and mature love of Mary,...the universal model by the way in which she accepted God's plan over her, received Christ and radiated Christ with her faith."
- F o r m a t i o n .** - "We believe that for our integral growth the formation of the members of our community is indispensable."
- D i s c e r n m e n t .** - "It is not desirable that the action of the community be of only one kind, but rather multiple, in conformity with the charisms of each one, but always in a

climate of solidarity and in accord with the 'signs of the times'. The means to achieve this is individual and community discernment."

N u m b e r s . - "A smaller number of members is a condition for the rise of an authentic community, but in no way a determining cause."

C o m m i t m e n t . - "It is necessary that our communities be made up of Christians who are deeply and totally committed to the gospel way of living, who take seriously the General Principles and the style of life that they demand: 'Love one another as I have loved you.'"

President Jose Testa and Vice-president Aurora Varela of the Argentina Confederation sent us the account of their meeting, from which we have excerpted the conclusions above. We think it says a great deal about what CLC really means.

CEYLON : Shared Responsibility

A few items from the annual report and the bulletins of the National CLC Federation of Ceylon. Truly a team approach:

Aug. 25-29, 1971: The first Leadership Camp organized by the national federation was held at Mutwal, conducted in the Sinhalese language, and drew 27 members from 13 CLC units. Speakers included 3 laymen, 1 laywoman, a priest and a brother. With that kind of teamwork by the leaders, it is hardly surprising that the strong community spirit struck the participants most. As one said, "Everyone participated like a group of united brothers and sisters in one family."

Aug. 28, 1971: CLC members from different groups cleared the ground for CARPRO, a Carpentry Center begun in commemoration of the Pope's visit to Sri Lanka. The Regina Mundi CLC is to build it, with collaboration of the entire national federation. As soon as the first part of the building is finished, it should be ready to train 20 young men at a time.

Oct. 29, 1971: Discussions were held with a member of the Archbishop's staff by Fr. Patrick Perera, Miss Donita Syesinghe and Joe Ranasinghe regarding work among the fishermen.

Nov. 7, 1971: Day of recollection was held at Negombo, given jointly by Fr. Patrick and Joe Ranasinghe.

EUROPE : A Team Effort

The European CLC Team (Equipe) has been at work for two years. Its efforts were launched by the deliberation of Chantilly, which gave it its broad guidelines, and confirmed by the meeting of Mahresa, which specified the apostolic direction of the CLCs. In its recent October meeting, it was able to establish three task forces, charged with bringing their contribution to the general objectives, which are those of aiding as many persons as possible to live a more apostolic life in the spirit of the Exercises". Three work groups (each consisting of

about 6 persons from different countries) have already begun work:

- a Mixed Commission (lay people and priests), a research group taking its point of departure from the needs of man today in his quest for God, and seeking to find means capable of satisfying those needs.
- An Exercises Group which, starting from the experience of CLCs, is studying the best means to further, at the European level, the spread of the true Spiritual Exercises. This proposal of effective means will be submitted to the deliberation of the national leaders of the different CLC federations in August, 1972.
- a Development Commission whose task is to promote the implementation of the results of Manresa, which envisioned a real simplicity in the style of life of each person and of each Community, pointed towards a solidarity--actually lived out--with the less fortunate, as well as a search for what the specific contribution of the CLCs should be in the field of development.

The convergence and coordination of these efforts should assure our Communities a profound inspiration, issuing, by the means of a communal discernment, in effective service.

INDIA : News of a Regional Federation

Kerala : The promoters from eight dioceses in the southwest of India decided to establish a regional center to assure the communication and coordination between the eight diocesan federations. This center, situated next to the editorial offices of the review "Maryvijayam" (monthly of the diocesan federations of Kerala), seems to correspond, in a feasible and effective way, to the needs of the region. In their meeting, the promoters underlined the two fundamental bases of the movement: a life of intense prayer, and an apostolic life geared to the challenges of our times and to local needs.

BELGIUM(Flemish) : Pointed Effort Towards Use of the Exercises

All Saints, '71 : Retreat given by Father Penning de Vries to 43 adults. A retreat of 5 days and one of 8 days are planned for 1972.

Christmas, '71 : Two retreats for university students:

--at Orval for 23 persons

--at Westmalle for 10.

Mardi Gras, '72 : A retreat at Loppem for 30 people.

The annual weekend for youth which will take place January 29-30, 1972, is being actively prepared. About 300 young people are expected. Theme of the days : "To Live Christ".

JAPAN : Expansion and Deepening

Annual Convention. - "We had our annual meeting

here: for 3 full days, 98 people from all over Japan. The theme was: 'To live! with God and with men'. It was subdivided into seven subthemes, according to the timetable. The meeting had many extremely good points. One was that the first day was not too successful, so we felt that something had to be done; we decided to pray for its spiritual success...so we did. And we were so happy to see that the good Lord heard our prayers much more than we expected. For many people it was a great grace; and the last Mass had people singing of joy, crying, etc...."

C o m i n g A c t i v i t y . - "Now we are readjusting our groups and our National Council. We have our schedule now: two days of retreat for young couples, from which we expect to have the foundations of our married CLC.

On November 23-24 we have a Seminar for Priests and Religious, for those actually directing or really interested in having CLC groups. And then on December 11-12 the semi-annual meeting for leaders of groups. Again for Immaculate Conception Day we intend to have as usual the meeting for the groups of Tokyo, where those who are to make the consecration do so, and all the others renew it at a Mass, followed by a gathering...."

A t t h e S e r v i c e o f t h e N a t i o n a l F e d e r a t i o n . - "Part of our activity is devoted to giving the 'Lay Apostolate Seminars' which have become the best known outside activity of our Federation here. The same method should work with non-Christians as well. We started doing it. Then we wrote the pamphlet 'New Approach to Apostolate' and we started giving such seminars, training sisters and other Catholics for such an approach. Now we have given such seminars in the four main islands of Japan."

P r e s e n t C o n c e r n s . - "Now we feel that after one year of expansion, we should aim again at depth in our movement and insist on the essentials. This is why we are now preparing the meetings with the assistants, leaders, etc..."