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S U M M A R Y

- WORDS OR ACTS ?
by Jacques SOMMET s.j. 3
- THE PRESENCES OF GOD
by José Ignacio LASAGA 6
- ROUND-TABLE WITH FATHER ARRÙPE .. 10
- WHEN I PRAY
by Gladys CASTELINO 11
- THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ASSOCIATION OF
FRANCE, by Claude BIJON 14
- OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY
by two young students from Padova
(Italy) 17

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T H I S I S S U E

inaugurates a series of articles on the theme of The Gospel and Development. Father Jacques SOMMET, S.J., Director of the Center for Philosophical Study and Research at Paris, will, in four successive articles, propose some reflections for us, in the light of the Gospel and in the framework of the Spiritual Exercises, about the fundamental attitudes which ought to inspire our action for the liberation and development of the whole man and of all men.

Are We Praying? was asked in January by Father Nicholas Rieman. Two lay people answer. Two experiences which reflect the diversity of forms and expressions in which our intimacy with the Lord is clothed. José Antonio LA SAGA, of Cuba, was the first president of the World Federation. Gladys Castelino, of India, is a member of the Diocesan CLC Committee of Calcutta.

As announced in our last issue, the Executive Council had the privilege of meeting Father General ARRUPE at the close of its January session. Starting with some notes taken at the time, we have reconstructed the main lines of the meeting with him. It remains one of the most memorable moments of those days so rich in grace.

Our usual series on "Let's Get Acquainted" takes us to different countries, and shows us the characteristic aspects of each national CLC experience. Today Claude BIJON, president of the Christian Life Association of France, traces the evolution of the French CLC.

The issue closes with a presentation about their Community by two young high school students of Padua (Italy). It is a message of hope and of the future, and reinforces so many other signs of renewal, reflecting the direction that the Christian Life Communities are taking.

WORDS OR ACTS ?

by Jacques SOMMET, s.j.

The Gospel and Development: I

The Gospel is our light. It must be received honestly in order to live Jesus Christ. Now, this Gospel is a life and a message, a "Word". The temptation of the Christian is to keep its words, to transmit these, but to forget its life and its actions.

This is a temptation in every age, and perhaps more than ever in our own. How much Christian talk--revolutionary or pacifist--but talk! And the actions? I do not say that no one does anything. But it seems that the Christian who understands the words of the Kingdom does not manage to find the actions, the collective actions, which would at last give reality to his faith in the midst of the world. And still, one must act in this world in development. For development means action.

Why too many words?

To understand the evil, some reflection on the situation today is necessary. The Gospel will help us see it clearly. But first an explanation: One can look for it in the situation of the Church in the world of today. In a former age "Christian talk", which we both use and abuse, was understood by much of the world, by most of the inhabitants of the "Christian" countries. Either because the men and women living understood it, or because the nations then existing recognized it at the level of political structures. So the Gospel word was from the outset received, understood by a great part of society. This does not mean that the society was really Christian, but that each one saw this as the ideal: and this made possible the impact, individual and collective, of the Faith.

But since then a great wind of "secularization" and of "laicization" has swept in. The most impartial observer today cannot help but realize that in the cultures most Christian by tradition, the social universe has changed in its relation to this faith. It is normal today to discuss with one's fellow townsmen, and still more with all the citizens of the world, the problems of this world without bringing up the gospel message. Now these problems deal with grave questions, and engage the whole man. And during this time, the Christians, among themselves, engage in Christian

talk. But does one not see the danger, or at least the difficulty? The words pour out, they pour out, but from where and to where? Do not they risk producing vague talk, with nothing guaranteeing its authenticity, its practical truth? Pious words, even gospel words, cease to have any cultural or ethical impact.

The Gospel and human action

One must go back then to action, to giving priority to this action for the abandoned or the de-Christianized. But how? First to the Gospel, and then to St. Ignatius, to help us see.

The Gospel. Let us go back to Chapter 10 of Saint Luke. We can read there, in verse 30 and the following, the well-known parable of the good Samaritan. Then to Chapter 10, verse 38, the episode of Martha and Mary. And then, follow all this with the light shed by the "Lord's Prayer": Our Father who art in heaven... At first sight, a trite approach. Who of us is not familiar with these simple and praiseworthy texts? But let us go beyond the separate reading of each of these three scenes. Let us read them "together", as one, asking ourselves what the Gospel is telling us here about words and actions.

"A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho...." We know the rest: the man wounded, stripped. The priest and the levite pass by, busy with their duty of delivering, further on, their pious words. The Samaritan, he, stops: not to talk, but to act. And with an action that "commits" him for the future; moreover he will be, in the future, faithful to his first actions. Here, action has a striking priority over words.

But let us pass further and we will be disturbed: Martha and Mary. Martha works, wears herself out, and for a very fine action: preparing a nice friendly meal with the Lord. The Lord who will, he too, be injured by our misdeeds; the Lord who had let himself be honored with perfume in the first hours of his apostolic journey. And still Jesus steps in, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious... Mary has chosen the better part". Now, Mary is not doing anything. Decidedly, after the defense and praise of the Samaritan, this is most disconcerting.

But let us go further, and the conditions of true apostolic activity will be unveiled for us. What is it that is praised in the Samaritan? His realistic concern for his neighbor, without anxiety, but effective, brotherly, paid by sacrifice. The Samaritan was not restless. A busy man of action, always agitated, would have passed him by too. So it is with Martha: her action is not action but rather anxiety about her little projects. Mary and the Samaritan, the one in silence, the other in a brotherly initiative,

received humbly, peacefully, in and through the reality of the situation, the reality of human encounters. - "Our Father, Your will be done... Forgive us as we forgive others...."

Here we are at the Center. No more giving priority to words, however pious. Rather first of all active attention to the human event taking place around us, giving help and pardon. Not a readiness to speak at once about God or to impose a formula for service: neither like the levite, nor like Martha. It is for each person and each group to live the gospel in such a way that the person or the group welcomes its task, its individual or collective human duties, as from God Himself. The Gospel is fruitful only at this price, at the price of prayerful action, action attuned to reality, alert to the situation of men least flooded with Christian light and yet for all that received by the heavenly Father.

Principle and Foundation, and Development

Who does not see how that gives new force to, at the same time that it modernizes, the applications of the "Foundation" of the Exercises of St. Ignatius? There you see well, stated with great vigor, the priority of action over words. This "indifference", this sovereign liberty, is there defined and called upon in terms of practical choices on the basis of the glory of God.

Still, we must recognize that something has changed, something which rather reinforces the meaning of the Foundation, but modifies and broadens its application. Since the time of Ignatius freedom has, through the choice of means, become realism. For each one, persons and things are the object of a rigorous discernment in the light of the solid point of departure: "tantum--quantum", "in so far as". Today we must find again this "operative" liberty in action and by means of action.

But the things, the persons, are no longer set there, fixed, all arranged statically as in a Flemish painting. The universe is in movement. "Development" gives a dynamism to everything. In such a way that action faithful to the Principle and Foundation consists from now on in keeping oneself open with regard to the projects of this development, judging the human priorities in the measure in which they can be perceived. Indifference, the supreme gate to realistic action is here, as in the Gospel, related to listening to the Father as He speaks through human events and situations.

Openness to Jesus Christ is transformed by its attentiveness into the action of men, the gesture that helps them, that journeys with them. Secularization? No, for it is a matter of listening to God and His demands in men before speaking. And so spiritual discernment rooted in the Foundation, and "development" rooted in the hopes of our age, both are found in an active respect for the same priority: the free service of men, all men, sons of God.

THE PRESENCES OF GOD

by José Ignacio Lasaga

Variations on an Augustinian Theme

Lord, I need You and I would like to meet You.

But, what am I saying? If I look around me, where can I turn my eyes without them being directed to You? If I explore my body and my soul, is there any place where You are not?

But if I ask myself how I can meet You, it is because I have not, always and everywhere, known how to hear the fatherly message of your words, how to perceive the vibrations of your creative impulse.

It is certainly not easy to notice your presence. Things some times present themselves to us as too opaque to let us glimpse through them your power and your love.

But to surmount this density of things created, You have given us the infra-red light of the faith. And in the life of a Christian there are brief hours when it is not difficult to experience You within us, or behind us, or in the midst of our brothers, or hidden in the deepest recesses of our being.

I have seen, Lord, the fringes of your mantle stirring in the many-colored dances of the northern lights, and I have heard the music of your voice as the wind caressed the leaves of the palm-trees of my Cuba.

You before me, Lord--playing with the atomic structure of the constellations, and with the microscopic solar systems of the atoms. You, the God distant and all-powerful, who were so close--so close to me that I found myself completely submerged in your being.

And I have felt the warmth of your breath and the palpitations of your father's heart in the loving and unfathomable riches of family life, in brotherly gatherings, in community prayer, in the liturgical mystery. "Wherever two or three will be gathered in my name, I will be there."

I have met You too in the sciences. When all through my life, I was opening my mind to know, in every physical law, in every biological rule, in every psychological certitude, I was discovering your secret designs, the marvelous plans that You were following, and that You continue to follow, in the building of the universe. For the progress of the sciences is nothing else but the marvelous process in which men--atheists or believers, whether they know it or not--go about reading your thought in the pages of the book of creation, charged with revelations.

In the solitude of your churches, the small infra-red light of faith has taught me to grasp your presence in the midst of the inevitable denseness of things and the necessary limitations of our senses. I do not know how, and I do not pretend to know--what theologian has explained the mystery?--but I am certain that You have pitched your tent among us within the four walls of the sanctuary, always ready to hear us, to bless us, to feed us.

But, Lord, there are times when even the small infra-red light of faith seems to tremble like a lighted candle before gusts of wind. When one has asked without receiving, when one knocks at the door and no one answers. Truly, that is how it is when we see things from this end of the telephone by which we communicate with You. Then we have the feeling that You have left us or that You are asleep on the cushion in the boat in the midst of the storm that assails us.

And still, Lord, that is perhaps, in a certain way, the moment when You are present with us the most. It is the hour of your absent presence. Because we, poor unlettered people, ignorant of your wise designs, we have not yet realized that your telephone is never disconnected and that your hands have never ceased to cover us with blessings. Because what we have interpreted as your silence is but an answer, full of meaning, which our weak instruments of reception have not known how to grasp. Perhaps because it was an answer given in a language which we do not yet understand and which we will not learn to decipher except in the life eternal.

Sometimes too, Lord, it is we who set about cutting communication with You, fleeing your presence, fleeing your sight. This

is the tragic hour of sin. We wish to separate ourselves from You in order to go to meet only ourselves, our miserable pleasures, our unadmitted egoisms. But even then, we must face up to the inevitable reality of your presence. For when we sin, You are in us, in our arms and our feet, in our eyes and our lips, in our mind and our heart. And You are in the objects of sin, in the persons and in the things that we have put at the service of our misdeeds and our caprice. In sinning, we have sinned, in a certain manner, with You. We have used your gifts to disobey You and your blessings to curse You. But You, Lord, You continue always to await us with open arms, and it is not difficult to meet You, on our return, at a turn in the road. "A father had two sons..." And I, Lord, who have been one of them, I have always found You scanning the horizon as You wait for the prodigal.

But they tell us, Lord, that we ought to recognize your face in all men, and that is really difficult. How find You, the Lord of truth, in the hypocrite? You, supreme love, in the person of the egoist? You, saviour of men, in the person of the persecutor and the exploiter of my brothers? Perhaps it is hard, Lord, because we stop at the shell of things, without searching for what is essential. Because in detesting their actions, which You too detest, we ought to love in them the man that You created and that You want to save. For how could we hate them in their humanity if You, You love them? To hate them would be in some way to hate your work, that is to hate You.

One is never more aware of your divine presence, Lord, than in the ecstasy of supreme joys or in the storm of great anguish. When the loved one that one had thought forever lost is found again after the illness, the separation or the prison. Or again, when, all human hope exhausted, one clings, in the midst of the fluctuations of agony, to the quieting anchor of prayer.

In these overpowering moments of life, when the mind seems paralysed and a wave of impressions good and bad sweeps over us, one discovers as at no other moment the amazing power of wordless prayer. Or perhaps the deep meaning of the repetition, which at other times seemed to us mechanical, of a schematic verbal formula. In the most unsettled hours of my life I have been able in this way to feel around me the warmth of your presence. Not in the peace of meditation, for my reason was too clouded to speak with You.

Not in the richness of the liturgy, because the churches were too far away. Not in the words of Scripture, because my eyes could not penetrate their texts. In those days I met You, Lord, through Mary, in the worn beads of a broken rosary.

"Lord, teach us to pray".

Lord, teach us to live in prayer.

Lord, teach us to live prayer.

To seek You and to meet You in all things and in men. To discover You in the mystery of mysteries of the universe, which is human suffering. To serve You and to revere You in the empty hands of the poor man, in the impassioned cry of men who demand justice, in the foul-smelling lips of a wound, in the nightmare that torments the poor head of an insane infant.

Grant, Lord, that we may learn, at all times and in all places, to be aware of You without seeing You, to hear You without understanding You, to embrace You without touching You.

And grant that one day, at the end of the road, I come at last to enjoy without shadows the brightness of Your infinite presence, in a small, hidden corner, beyond the narrow gate by which humble souls enter heaven.

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ROUND-TABLE WITH FATHER ARRUPE

At the close of its last meeting in Rome, the members of the Executive Council of the World Federation had a rare experience : for over an hour they exchanged ideas freely with Father Pedro ARRUPE, General of the Society of Jesus. His spiritual depth, openness, vivacity and creative imagination made it most enjoyable and worthwhile. The Executive Council had just had a special audience with the Holy Father. This led Father Arrupe to comment:

Pope Paul is often criticized. Journalists sometimes misinterpret his thought. I know how it is, for I have sometimes been the victim of their negative interpretations. I have had personal experience of the openness, charity and profound evangelical humility of Paul VI. We should learn to look at persons and things in a positive way. It is one of your tasks, you members of CLC, to emphasize the positive aspects of the Pope's thinking. And that takes courage.

Much of the conversation was on CLC-Jesuit collaboration, a natural topic, since both groups are inspired by Ignatian spirituality. Some of Father Arrupe's ideas on this:

The Spiritual Exercises are the great "motor" of your CLC activity. One of your first tasks is to enter ever more deeply into them. Not just into the Exercises - into all of Ignatian spirituality. That means getting to know the life of Ignatius and the Constitutions of the Jesuit order, which are a kind of crystallization of his spirit, even though geared to religious. The Society of Jesus does not have a third order, but it finds in your movement a lay corps, a body of laymen living the same spirituality that we Jesuits do. We need to collaborate more, just as you should collaborate with other religious and priests. Your goal is identical with that of the Society of Jesus: to work for your own sanctification and that of others. You must unite holiness and the apostolate. You need to be contemplatives in action. The practice of the Ignatian examen will help you seek and find God's will in each situation, just as the "contemplation to gain love" will lead you to find God in all things.

Father Arrupe spoke of ecumenism, and also of the need for adapting the truths of the Exercises to people of other cultures and even to people not Christian. He talked of the 1971 Synod Statement on Justice and showed how our work for development must always, in a true Ignatian spirit, be a search of the "more", the better; and that this means influencing structures. He underlines the community element as being something very important today. His concluding comment:

The secret of persevering and progressing in this life of contemplation and of service is to develop a truly deep and personal love of Christ.

WHEN I PRAY...

by Gladys CASTELINO

"When you pray, go into your room, and closing your door, pray to Your Father in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6: 6).

When I think of prayer, I think first of these words of Jesus. From what He said about prayer, and from his practice of it, I learn so much about what my own prayer should be. The first thing I learn is that I need to pray. How many of us nowadays think prayer a waste of time. But Jesus acted and taught quite differently. And my own experience too has taught me that I need to pray.

Why do I pray? Because God is my Lord, my Creator, and I know I depend on Him. But much more, because He is my Father, or rather, "our Father". Is it strange that children should want to talk to their father? And that is what prayer is--our way of talking to God, our way of expressing our thoughts to Him. I remember that Jesus promised us, "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, you will receive". If we not only ask in the name of Jesus, but pray in his own words--"Our Father...",--will not we receive, even more surely, what we ask?

I pray too because I am weak. I think of prayer as the great means God has given man in his weakness. I know I depend entirely on God's grace. And that I am prone to sin. I find all of these strong reasons why I must pray.

What do I pray for? What do I speak to God about? Like everyone else who prays, about all kinds of things. I pray for my own needs, of course. But I pray very much too for all my fellowmen, for I know that Jesus suffered and died and rose for all of us. My enemies get included in my prayer too, for I remember Jesus was quite clear that we must do this. One reason I like the Our Father is that when I say it I feel I am not praying alone, but that all of us are praying together. This invisible but real sharing between the members of his Mystical Body is beautiful and consoling. What I ask most of all is that God may be glorified and that we men may reach true and endless happiness, which is really the same thing.

Jesus stressed so much that our prayer must be sincere, that

prayer is only as good as the heart it comes from. I know this means I must love my neighbor. So I do keep aiming at this, though not always successfully. But I know I must keep striving for this if my prayer is to be genuine.

God deserves my full attention when I pray, that I know. So I do make an effort to bring my thoughts together and to avoid things that might distract. This is easier when I am keenly aware that it is God I am speaking to. But even when there are distractions, I know I am praying well if I am trying to pray.

I pray too because I am grateful. We never fail to say, "thank you" when we receive a gift from a friend. And every day there are many gifts from God. Some of them may be small, but I try never to forget to say "thank you, Lord" at the end of each day.

Faith teaches me something else. Prayer alone, even prayer that is the expression of true living, is not enough: I need also to live a sacramental life. We members of the Communities should go to meet Christ often in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. I know how much I am helped by daily participation in the liturgy. I think it important that if for some reason we cannot participate daily, we do so just as often as we can. For it is there we specially meet Jesus, and He is our Life.

Jesus said, "Ask and you shall receive". So I try always to pray with confidence. This doesn't seem to me to be hard to do, for God is our father, and surely He will refuse us. Remembering the Marriage Feast of Cana helps me especially to pray with confidence. Mary understood the embarrassment the bride and groom would have to face. All that she said to Jesus was, "The wine has run out". A few words, which could mean anything, but Our Lord understood, and although he replied, "My time has not yet come", even then He could not refuse his Mother.

A good part of the "Hail Mary" comes from Scripture, and I find it a beautiful prayer. Perhaps for that reason too I find the rosary helps me. I know everyone must find his own style and method of prayer and that few things are as personal as how one prays. What I can say is that for me the rosary is a prayer that works well, especially if I say one decade as the day starts, a second on my way to work, a third at lunchtime, a fourth on my way home, and the last one at bedtime. It helps to infuse my

whole day with the spirit of prayer, to make it lighter and brighter.

To me the most important thing about prayer is perseverance--never to stop. We need it too much ever to give it up. I know I do. And from experience I can say too that more than once friends who at one time smiled indulgently at me for praying, came later on to ask me to pray for them. We all need prayer--to ask God's help, to plead for his mercy, to thank Him but maybe most of all, because we need to talk to our Father.

"The Lord is near to all those who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him. He also hears their cry and saves them" (Psalm 145: 18-19).

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ASSOCIATION OF FRANCE

An Evolution Marked by a Search for
Identity and a Concern for Service

by Claude BLJON

It was in the sixties that the Christian Life groups were established in France. Actually they began outside the two or three Sodalities of Our Lady which still existed at that period. These new groups, each consisting of five to seven couples and often one or two single persons, began meeting with certain Jesuit priests. By 1966, about thirty such groups existed. A national liaison committee assured a certain coordination among them.

In 1966 the idea germinated of establishing "a corps of lay people for service in the Church". The idea was not new, but that was the period at which, after much debate, the coordinating committee decided to organize a deliberation based on the one held by the first Jesuit companions to decide what means they should take for their advancement. After a preparation of some months, forty persons met during five days in July, 1967, and searched out together to define their next steps. As a result of this deliberation, new statutes were proposed to the groups and approved at their Congress in January, 1968. From a federation of groups we became an association of persons. The Christian Life communities took then the form and structure of a single national Community, affiliated to the World Federation.

Among the means taken by the new association to develop the apostolic life of this body of laymen, the creation of a "commission on apostolic priorities" deserves emphasis. Its task is to be alert to what the world as well as the Church have to say to us about our apostolic choices. It is supposed to identify the various thrusts and to propose them to the lay people who are joined together in the Association with the aim of service. This was one of the decisive intuitions of this period. Doubtless because its scope is so vast, we have not yet grasped its full importance and there is still much to be done to find the methods best adapted to its work. At present the efforts of this commission are directed to assembling an analysis, to be made by the groups, of the current political and economic situation (paragraph 4 of the Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal Roy). It is along these lines that the Commission is preparing five days of study and deliberation for the month of August, 1972.

Another commission is charged with the formation of the members of the Christian Life Association. It organizes sessions and prepares proposals to aid the groups in their formation and is concerned with the reception of new members. It is active too in the promotion of the Spiritual Exercises.

This is the picture, sketched in a few strokes, of what was established by the Congress of 1968. Within this framework, what is the life of the Christian Life groups like? There are at present about sixty of them, comprising around 700 persons. Their meetings take place once a month, sometimes oftener. In contrast, before 1968, the groups were very autonomous in their organization and activity, and relations between them very loose, mainly by regional meetings once or twice a year.

Since two years ago one can notice a double evolution in the groups.

On the one hand, a certain number of persons, Association members over many years, are trying to form larger community groupings outside the Association. This activity arose quite spontaneously and one can see in it the mark of the Spirit. One notices in fact certain characteristics found in the different efforts of this sort. It is always several persons of the Association acting together in a milieu where they are deeply involved: neighborhood, parish, youth. They seek to form these community groupings that answer the needs of the sector, and are completely open to all possible forms of this: charitable efforts, study of the faith, dialogue between the generations, etc. These loose communities remain outside the Association and generally group people who want to continue what they are doing outside any organization.

But at the same time, our members who set up these larger communities still want to maintain a permanent relationship with the Christian Life Association. Their activities with the larger groups do not allow them time to participate in the old-style Association forms, and they are asking for new structures within the Association which will be compatible with their new involvements.

A second tendency is noticeable. It is the appearance within certain groups of what may be called "lack of faith". Some persons are troubled in their faith. In certain cases, a group may for a time not celebrate the Eucharist or may avoid shared prayer because of non-believers in the group.

These two tendencies which we notice cause us some apprehension. The more so, since a close observation allows one to say that both of these two trends are likely to intensify in the years ahead. Already two reactions have appeared, or, more precisely, one reaction in two stages.

The first reaction is to help each one find what he needs: to help the "weak-believer" to find a response, or at least a framework for his search; at the same time, to help the committed apostle find with other like-minded brothers the strength he needs to further his activity. This first reaction respects carefully the needs of each, and we must encourage it.

But it at once comes up against problems of structure and method. Who will concern himself with the weak believer and watch over his growth? And, on the other hand, where and in what community will the leaders of these larger, looser communities go to steep themselves again in reflexion and prayer, in a word, to sit down and think over the tower that they are building? Can one answer both these needs in the same group? etc. To worry about questions of responsibility and structure, does not this risk putting a bridle on the spontaneity of life? Or, to pay no attention to such questions, is this not in fact to leave the problem to the ecclesiastical assistants and to be satisfied to be just a consumer in the Church?

Some attempts are now being made to respond to this problem by establishing on the regional level a community joining together all those who, after some years with the Christian Life Association, have marked their adhesion to this corps of laymen by their "consecration", a term not entirely clear. This community of service includes persons living in the Christian Life groups as well as those who have left these groups to work at the formation of the looser communities of which we spoke earlier. It is in these regional communities, aided later doubtless by the commission on apostolic priorities, that the discerning of priority tasks and the assignment to missions would take place. At the same time it is these communities which help the Christian Life groups of their region, are leaders in the regional gatherings, and are at the service of all. One or two regions have begun this experiment, and seem to have found in it a new dynamism, a liberation from internal problems for the good of apostolic service. Is it perhaps too a sign of the Spirit?

Our Christian Life Community

by two young students
from Padova (Italy)

We are a very large group of young students between 16 and 19 years of age. Belonging to different schools and institutes, we are linked by the same sense of search as to how to form in Christ a Community. Too, we are trying to penetrate the social reality that surrounds us, so as to get ourselves ready for the plunge into it.

There are eighty-eight of us--slightly more boys than girls.

Our Community wants to be, and in fact pretty much is, open. Since we are many, we are organized in groups to make our activity more effective and productive of greater results. The groups are self-chosen, divided according to their interests. At the year's start we suggested some themes of a social and religious nature to study and explore, with each group being expected to give an account of its work to the whole Community. In this framework the groups meet once a week. Using as a base printed materials and their own personal experience, they seek to throw what light they can on the different problems.

To make direct contact with different aspects of our society, we have committed ourselves to some activities of a practical sort. These include work in a sector just on the edge of Padua, educational efforts with youth (catechesis, games, helping other associated groups, secretarial work), attempts at contact with groups from the city, some other activities here and there that we've been asked to handle.

In the Mortise area, which is in the process of rapid urbanization, we have tried to organize after-school sessions for every afternoon (two hours in length) for the children of the elementary school, a social group which with the help of boys from the area organizes cultural and social discussions, a film discussion forum for the area. Besides, we are active in assisting the sick and those families particularly needy. But sporadic and haphazard assistance is not enough. So our aim is also to contribute to the formation of a social conscience in the neighborhood and to coordinate efforts to assure certain elementary civic rights.

But actually, all this is quite difficult because we are still young and because we lack experience and preparation. We try to make up for this with study and with attempts at definitive solutions, attempts that even if modest in their beginnings we always try to continually advance and develop. There are about eighty of us (including some university students and other friends) working steadily at this effort in the area.

We began one activity due to a specific request, and are now carrying it on. We are organizing a collection of white linens and a workroom to make bandages from them for use by a leprosarium. In this work we have a double aim: to do at last something concrete and which makes a certain contact with one of the cruder realities of life, and, through our work together on it, to unite ourselves more closely and to come to appreciate each other. Here we are working on a project already established and approved. The decision was made by majority vote: three and a half days at the workroom in place of three and a half days of skiing during the vacation of February 11-12-13.

A Community of high school students must accept being forever in crisis, for we are all in evolution and two years of difference among us says a great deal. We experience great difficulty in respecting each other's ideas, in accepting the different levels of gradual development among us. But still, all in all (having overcome certain moments of rebellion) we are content with our choice.

We are seeking to maintain frank dialogue with our milieu and with the youth of Padua. With this in mind we thought of publishing our own paper, called "Beginnings". For the present it is completely unsupervised and furnished to each one free. In it any idea is welcome provided the ideas of others are respected, and any criticism or self-criticism is admitted provided the facts set forth are correct. In this desire for dialogue and for openness we have organized a lively propaganda for the project of the bandages mentioned earlier, inviting everyone to think about the problem of leprosy and then to act accordingly by lending a hand.

To give a fuller picture of what the Community thinks, discusses and does, we must speak of the attempt to share our goods that has been going on now for a year. It is not an easy effort. It costs much sacrifice, and perseverance in giving up certain whims which would make our brother feel his poverty is really hard. At any rate, the eleven youths who are making this experiment want to seek to be more poor because Christ was poor. They want in this way to prepare themselves by a spirit of poverty to make the right choices, those of every day now and the more important ones of the future.

In a word: we all feel the duty to prepare ourselves and to begin already to act with the responsibility of Christians. We feel exuberance and we feel conviction; of tenacity of purpose perhaps we have too little. We have tried then to give as objective an idea as we can of the Community--of the Community as it is, but above all of the Community as it definitely wants to be. In any case, to sum up, the hours that we give each week to our brothers are many.

As to religious formation strictly so called: thirty-five of us have made this year the Spiritual Exercises, discovering the value of silence as a fine instrument for spiritual work. All, the boys and the girls in separate groups, have taken part in a course of seven lectures on "the problem of God in the face of contemporary atheism", as the yearly religion course of the Community.

We try to find our point of deepest oneness in the Sunday Mass. To prepare it, thirty of us form a choir in three voices to lead the group and have a weekly practice. Seven or eight others study the biblical texts for the day and in this way try to provide a more correct and effective reading for the liturgical assembly.

Sandra OMETTO and Jack ZANIN
4th Year Scientific

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GLI ESERCIZI SPIRITUALI OGGI, edited by Vincenzo Insolera, SJ, Stella Matutina Press, Rome, 1972, 113 pages.

This book lives up to its title: THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES TO-DAY. It gives some profound insights into the Exercises, and, since they are "the characteristic instrument" of CLC spirituality, into the spirit of our Communities. In particular it aims to relate the Exercises to current trends in the world and the Church.

The book, whose format and presentation are outstanding, is a symposium by ten Jesuits, all well qualified in the topic, and two of whom have been closely involved in CLC. Among the authors one finds Carlo Martini, Rector of the Biblical Institute in Rome; Maurizio Costa, a real authority on community discernment; Paul Roger-Dalbert, long active in the French CLC movement; and Ignacio Iparraguirre, a leading historian of the Exercises.

Some of the chapter headings--"The Word of God and the Exercises"; "Manipulation of Liberty, or Pedagogy?"; "The Community Element in the Exercises"--reveal well the general thrust of the book.

Father Insolera, Italian CLC national assistant, has done a real service in publishing this valuable and inexpensive book. At present it is available only in Italian. One hopes it will be translated into other languages soon.

Let the entire body of the faithful pour forth persevering prayer to the Mother of God and Mother of men. Let them implore that she who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers may now, exalted as she is in heaven above all the saints and angels, intercede with her Son in the fellowship of all the saints. May she do so until all the peoples of the human family, whether they are honored with the name of Christian or whether they still do not know their Savior, are happily gathered together in peace and harmony into the one People of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Vatican II Decree On The Church, N°. 69.