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The SUPPLEMENTS to PROGRESSIO pursue the same goal as the review PROGRESSIO. They are official publications of the World Federation of Christian Life Communities. As such, they reflect the research and inspiration that the thrust of CLC apostolic service finds in the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

They aim to be of help to those who wish to be witnesses of God's love in the world, who search for authentic contact with the Word of God in all things, who desire to live more fully conformed to Christ in their action, in a profound and enlightened attachment to the Church.

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EDITORIAL

1973 will remain for the Christian Life Communities a striking event. The Course of Rome and the General Council of Augsburg were places where something happened. Something that challenges us personally. Something that makes us experience in an existential way the world community. Something that makes us recognize together our common goal and our path to it.

As we turn the last page of the year's calendar, it will not be without value to recall for ourselves and to fix in our minds the challenge that is presented by these days, with which we must from now on confront our lives and those of our communities, if we do not wish the seed that has been sown to die through contact with our resistances or to be smothered by our fears and our incumbrances.

For it is indeed question of a real challenge--now, several weeks after, we can see it even more clearly--which lays hold of us in all the dimensions of our being. There, doubtless, is the first interrogation with which we ought in the future to begin our periodic evaluations: to what degree do our faith and our personal love of Christ enlighten and give direction to our entire life? To tend toward identification with Christ--and to help each other along the path that progressively leads us there--that is indeed the basic thrust underlying all the concrete decisions adopted together.

This concern for fidelity to the Love of God incarnate in the world led us to recognize the priority goals before which each one of us and our communities question themselves: in our local context, what is the specific and concrete contribution of my community, of each of its members, to the liberation of all men? Our discernment, we said, must lead to action, it must make of each of us an agent of change in the area of his activities, it must envisage the presence of the Church in the necessary transformations of structures. This same sense of the Church has called our attention too to the importance of our participating in ecumenical efforts.

The reason for our existence as Christian Life Communities, we recognized, is to serve, while drawing our basic orientation from the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises and finding the support and stimulus for a discerned and unified apostolic life in our union at the heart of our communities.

On the eve of 1974, it is fitting that we affirm our desire to move ahead on this clearly perceived path. With no other desire than that of working for the birth of a more brotherly world. With no other inspiration than the dynamism of our faith and our hope. With no other secret than that of love.

* * *

It is along this path that PROGRESSIO will try to accompany us throughout the new year, drawing on our concrete decisions to orient its themes. So we will generally find in it an introduction to the meditated Word of God; an article on some event (Holy Year, 25th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Universal Rights of Man, Population Year and other important events); a series on "Liberation" in which we will publish accounts of experiences from different continents--which experiences will be followed by an analysis of the methodology used so as to help us in our discernment; a series of articles on ecumenism; others on the essential elements of formation in CLC; finally an exploration in depth of a specific means, that of evaluation (or examen), both personal and communitarian. In addition, of course, news about each other, and any other article or account or presentation that might be suggested by events. These various projects, as one sees, justify increasing the size of the review, which today becomes 28 pages.

* * *

May we, during the year now beginning, walk together with the entire People of God, stir hope in all who suffer and work to bring men together, knowing that the road leading there goes by way of the sharing of our riches, the struggle against oppression and the solidarity written and lived at the heart of our lives.

José GSELL

CALL TO RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL

by Nicholas RIEMAN sj

All times are times of grace, for God is active in all things and all events. But existence takes place in time. And so God's call to us is clearer and more pressing at certain times.

For the ancient Hebrews, such a time was the year of jubilee: "You will declare the fiftieth year sacred and proclaim the liberation of all the inhabitants of the land. This is to be for you a jubilee year" (Leviticus 25: 10). An important feature of the year was that everyone recovered an ancestral property he may have had to sell, and that slaves were set free. The Jerusalem Bible adds in a footnote: "The Church has taken the custom over and given it spiritual significance in the periodical Holy Year." It was in 1300 that Pope Boniface VIII designated the first Holy Year, a practice since then often repeated, usually at twenty-five year intervals.

Such a time of grace for us is the coming year, designated by Paul VI as a "Year of Reconciliation and Renewal", a "Holy Year". In the Pope's own words, "this year we must renew ourselves, refashion ourselves, reunite ourselves, blending our psychology and our education and our hearts in order to say, each one of us, to ourselves, 'Yes, I want to be what the Gospel calls me to be, a new man', and socially to seek to see in those around me only brothers and friends."

For the worldwide Church, the Holy Year will be that of 1975, which marks another quarter-century from the date (by popular reckoning) of the coming of salvation to our world in

the person of Jesus Christ. Wisely Pope Paul has decided that the year should begin in the local ecclesial communities already in 1974, so that reconciliation and renewal will really be a grass-roots process, building gradually towards a universal expression of it.

True Significance of the Year

It must frankly be admitted that the image that comes to mind for many when hearing the term "Holy Year" is hardly reassuring: commercial promotion of tourism in connection with pilgrimages, an emphasis on indulgences that seems to appeal to self-interest, at best a stress on vocal prayer and individualistic piety that seems to have little relevance to the great problems afflicting mankind today. True, such an image fails to reflect the many positive aspects of bygone jubilee years. Yet it is an image that may linger.

It is clear as day that what Paul VI has in mind for the coming Holy Year is something quite different, something much deeper. Over and over again, practically every time that he speaks, he keeps repeating that the aim of the Year of Reconciliation and Renewal is exactly what those words imply: a fundamental change of heart, one that will touch every corner of our lives. Words such as "conversion", "a new heart", "renewal of conscience", "reconciliation with all" keep recurring in his comments. As he said when in November he opened the Year for the diocese of Rome, "We need to enter in depth into our conscience, to have the sense of our selves. . . . We need to be convinced that we can and we should dialogue with everyone. . . . We must regenerate our way of thinking and living in the world in which we live. We must reconstruct a true Christian conscience."

True enough, we are invited in this first phase of the Holy Year to visit in pilgrimage the cathedral of our local church, but it is a "community celebration" that is there asked for, one that reflects the unity of Christians among themselves and with their bishop, and that "represents the concluding moment of an entire process of spiritual renewal". True enough, a plenary indulgence for such a visit is offered, but there is insistence that this be viewed as an expression of that "mysterious solidarity linking one with

the other members,... a life-giving participation in the grace and so the merits of Christ". And the Central Committee for the Holy Year, appointed by Paul VI to prepare it, could hardly be clearer when it goes on to say, "Understood then is a specific commitment to an itinerary of effective personal and community conversion, characterized by love and by reconciliation with God and with one's brothers."

Principal Objectives

The principal aims of the Year, in the words of the Central Committee, include:

- 1) "Continual recourse to Christ as the only Saviour, from Whom comes every grace, including that of conversion and of good actions. Strengthening of our communion in Christ at the level of personal consciousness.
- 2) Emphasis on reconciliation with God and at the same time with one's brothers, with the Christian community and with all of humanity. Stress on the need to repair the ruptures that exist in this communion because of personal or social faults.
- 3) Sensitizing of ourselves to the problem of sin and conversion, presented in language suited to the modern mentality and taking account where needed of the psychological and sociological aspects of the problem. Stress on the rôle of penance, whether as a Sacrament or a practice, in this process, and so of its effectiveness for unity and for peace.
- 4) Recalling of our mission and of the duty of Christians to be present in the world in every field of activity--family, professional, social, political, cultural, etc.--as builders of unity and of peace, following the gospel way of brotherhood and of pardon, and translating into actions, into accepted values and into institutions the Christian spirit of love."

A Call To Integrated Living

Surely these goals of the Holy Year as set forth by the Holy Father--and as they have been or will be elaborated by the different national or regional conferences of bishops--should stir in the hearts of Christian Life Community members a special resonance. First of course because it is part of our CLC vocation to throb and feel with the Church and with what she has at heart. But more than that, because the theme of reconciliation and renewal as presented by the Church in the Holy Year so perfectly states the call of our CLC vocation.

Enough has been said of the thrust of the Holy Year to make clear that it is not a call simply to reconciliation with God or simply to reconciliation with our fellowmen, but to both. Not a call only to love God with all our hearts, or a call only to love our neighbor as ourselves (in fact, either one by itself is impossible), but to do both. A call to an integrated conversion, both personal and social. Is not this exactly what our General Principles ask of us, what the Spiritual Exercises invite us to, what our recent General Assembly developed as its theme--that through personal and community conversion we should become a community at the service of the liberation of all men?

It is a call to integrated living. It is striking how often the two words "personal" and "social" keep recurring in the official documents on the Holy Year. For our life is one life, and all of it must be touched and transformed by the leaven of Christ, whether it be our individual practice of prayer and penance, our family relationships, our political options. And our response to the call of conversion, we are told, should be integrated in yet another way, reflecting both the genuine tradition of the Church and the psychological and sociological situation of modern man.

The Holy Year is, then, a time of grace, a period when we are called more insistently to reconciliation with both God and our brothers, to renewal both personally and socially. Or, as Paul VI said in opening the Year for the diocese of Rome, "It is a question of finding a style of living.... We must truly be reborn in our hearts."

A CONCRETE EXPERIENCE OF A COMMUNITY AT THE SERVICE OF
LIBERATION

In the course of this year we will publish several experiences of activity in favor of liberation. These experiences we have drawn from different continents and diverse situations. Each time, in a first article we will relate the experience, as a Christian Life Community presents it to us. In a second article appearing in the issue following, we will analyze the methodology involved, trying to pinpoint the process followed and the positive and negative points to be found in it. This is done so as to help each other in our discernment, and to continually recall for us the aims of our action and the source on which it must draw. Otherwise there might be danger of disfiguring the evangelical witness and the vocation of CLC.

The experience we publish today is taken from a country with a dictatorial regime. Work in favor of the oppressed is difficult there. These special difficulties and an analysis of the situation have led this community to take action in the form it describes. Other communities, in other situations, will tend toward other discernments. What is important is that our faith in God and in man insert itself into concrete reality, following in the path of Christ as members of the Church. (Editor's note)

We have been asked to relate some of the experiences of our Christian Life Community and its work in favor of liberation. It would be very easy to present one or more

concrete examples of our activity. It would also be, we think, a way to communicate to you our way of life in our situation, to walk the road together and to enrich each other within this movement of the Church, the CLCs, which represent for us a real force of the Spirit.

But, alas, we cannot speak to you in too precise a way: we live in a situation of total repression, of complete lack of freedom. To tell you what each community does could be very risky. This is why too we cannot sign this article with the name of the Community which composed it. Taking account of this remark, you will, we believe, understand our situation. The first Christians sometimes presented themselves before tribunals to proclaim their faith in Christ and to oppose the pagan laws. At other times they hid themselves so as to be able to witness and communicate to others this same faith. At present, we prefer to remain hidden so as to proclaim our faith in the daily struggle against oppression.

The CLCs and discernment

"It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church" (Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, 4).

The supreme norm of discernment is "the interior law of love which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts" (General Principles 2). This it is which allows us to discern what in our society oppresses man. This was very difficult for us, since our present society and government are clothed with exterior religious forms and have presented themselves for years as the quasi-ideal expression of Christianity.

The effort at discernment in our communities crystallized in a liberating judgment: our society is dominated by the interests of a small number, and this domination is maintained by a continual repression of any who try to express themselves, to meet or to freely associate for the obtaining of any demand, however just it be.

Our assessment now, after a laborious discernment,

made in the light of the Gospel and the doctrine of the Church, regarding the rights of the person, is clear: we live in a social and political situation in which the most elementary human rights are continually violated; it is so evident that many term it fascist. Those who have lived through similar situations in the past will understand what that means. With the added aggravation that the present regime calls itself Catholic and claims, in the midst of its repressive laws, "to inspire itself with the teaching of the Catholic Church".

Prophetic denunciation

For us, "to work together with the whole People of God for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all men" is our "response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live" (PG 2 and 3).

The minimum that one can do is to denounce any concrete injustice. The preaching of the gospel message involves, as the Synod of Bishops affirms, to "proclaim justice... and to denounce the situations of injustice when the fundamental rights of man and even his salvation demand it".

This aspect of the evangelical mission is very urgent in our country, where the legislation considers as a "crime" the exercise of the most basic human rights, punishing it with years in prison. One must remember that in our country, anyone at all can be arrested at any place and any time, and kept in custody in the jails of the government police for up to 3 days without the intervention of any lawyer or judge; that anyone can be fined by the governmental authorities even without proof or sentence and that not to pay the fine means some months in prison (there are few days when at least a hundred persons are not arrested and heavily fined, besides being faced with a charge of meeting illegally); that numerous persons are condemned to months, years, even many years in jail for so-called "crimes" of meeting, association, propaganda, strike,...

This is why we regard it as an unavoidable consequence of our commitment of faith to make concrete judg

ments about the situation and to denounce the acts that appear to us as clearly unjust.

Thus, for example, we have recently denounced the trial of 14 workers accused of associating in workers' commissions, and who were threatened with sentences of many years in prison. We have protested too the dismissal of a group of workers (arbitrary dismissal is legal in our country) for having participated in a strike to secure their demands; several of them were held in custody and two had a heavy fine imposed on them. We have denounced the situation of some thousands of workers in a particular sector, whose most elementary rights as workers were not recognized; several groups among them shut themselves up in churches to be able to demand their rights; it was forbidden them to discuss their problems together and the police put obstacles in the way of their consulting a lawyer. We have protested the situation of priests confined in prison and the inhuman conditions to which political prisoners are subject to in several prisons, generally far from their homes.

Many other Christian groups have also taken part in this gospel task of denunciation. To protest against the situation of the priest prisoners, different groups have locked themselves in churches and other places dependent on the Church and have drawn up statements.

Precisely in order that the witness of the Church be more striking and more effective, we work at coordinating the action of different Christian groups, parish communities, etc. Thus the protest against a recent trial was the result of common action. We believe that this is a task proper to our commitment to the Church. And it was for us a novel Christian gesture to see Christian communities of other countries join us.

We have only mentioned some recent examples. In reality, prophetic denunciation is for us something continual because the repression is continual. Our preaching and our deeper understanding of the gospel message grows with the concrete situations of injustice under which we suffer.

Our responsibility is all the greater since Christian associations enjoy in our country a certain privileged po-

sition. That does not keep us, however, from being subjected to a strict police surveillance...

Liberating action

"It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustices and utter prophetic denunciations; these words will lack real weight unless they are accompanied for each individual by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility and by effective action" (Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, 48).

This active involvement in the struggle for justice is also demanded by our faith in Christ: "to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination", "in a spirit of service to establish justice and peace among all men" (GP 7).

This evangelical demand requires a further time of discernment in order to find the ways to act effectively, the means to participate in efforts to liberate the most oppressed, the method of solidifying and strengthening our faith so that it can face up to the risks.

As to the risks, we hardly need to discern, except, of course, to "be wise as serpents". During these last months, several members of our communities have been arrested, certain ones have been dismissed from their jobs, others have been given heavy fines... for having defended the most elementary rights of themselves and their companions, for having held meetings looked on as illegal...

The paths to effective action are very clear: associating and organizing all those who are working for liberation, for experience shows that no association of an official or governmental type can lead to liberation. The option is then clear even though it demands an effort of discernment because of the difficulties which it brings with it.

This is the reason why we continually attempt to discern, personally and in community, adequate means for a solid formation, along with a pedagogy of the faith adapted to different states and situations, and a pedagogy of ac

tive commitment. Our aim is that each person be able to assume the defense of the fundamental rights of man and to collaborate actively so that all will be able to exercise those rights and will in fact exercise them.

This pedagogy of the faith is developed within the specific framework of CLC, with particular insistence on a community spirit in living, the imitation of Christ, reflection on and deepening of his message of salvation, and an apostolic and missionary spirit, with a sense of the Church as the Body of Christ, in order to contribute to its building up and its extension. The community is not only the place where faith in Christ and in his presence is expressed and lived, but the strength and the mutual help to advance in the service of one's brothers through a progressive liberation, achieved through difficulties and with risks, and with the community centered in the Eucharist as the sharing of all of life.

The pedagogy of commitment is developed by the shaping of a community conscience, having the goal of penetrating ourselves with the gospel values that we want to live and with which we want to inform all the social structures. This is done through knowledge and analysis of reality, through knowledge and discernment of various human efforts.

In practice this formation is achieved through courses, intensive or at intervals, involving both theological formation and human and social formation. Those are our objectives. The reality falls somewhat short of this because of our limits and our mistakes.

The Problem of the Church

The Church suffers everywhere today from an internal convulsion. We all are questioning ourselves as to the true demands of the Gospel, as to how to live our faith today. From all sides come different and sometimes contradictory answers and modes of Christian activity. In our country this contradiction is very acute: from a Church subject to the governing power which supported it, it is changing slowly into a Church giving witness to the radicality of the gospel message.

Today this Church, resolutely free, takes position

each day more clearly in this direction. The bishops themselves take this approach. Recently a member of the hierarchy gave a very courageous homily, defending the right of meeting and of association and denouncing the latest arrests as lamentable. Other bishops have expressed their solidarity with prisoners, and certain ones have publicly denounced the use of torture...

But a great part of the Church in our country does not take the risk of speaking or acting, or follows blindly. As Father de la Costa says: "of all the wounds inflicted by injustice the most grievous is surely this: injustice, if sufficiently prolonged, makes men forget what it is to be free; deprives them not only of the ability to strike off their chains, but even of the desire to do so." (Supplement N^o. 2 of Progressio, page 20).

We think that the Church of Christ should be a liberating force in the world and that it can be so only through our effective action. We remain in her, we love her, we want her face to appear more and more as a reflection of the Saviour. That is what we desire for the Church and that is what we seek to live in our communities. In spite of our cowardice and our limitations, we affirm in the name of our companions even more persecuted, that we seek to follow Christ seriously, that, even if our way of living our faith in Him has many faults, we hope to overcome them in the present concrete and effective struggle against inhuman oppression.

Brothers in the faith: when you strive to implement the demands of social or political commitment, remember that if for you it is a matter of efforts made at the cost of individual comfort, for us it is a matter of a grave risk. We say this to you not as your superiors nor as your inferiors but as members of the same Church. We wish to share with you our risk and we ask you to share with us what you can, that you help us in all the ways that the Spirit will inspire.

Let us live in Christ the struggle for liberation.

From underground, we greet you with joy, for we believe in the Resurrection.

APROPOS OF AN ANNIVERSARY,
A BIT OF HISTORY...

Twenty-five years ago
appeared
the Apostolic Constitution
BIS SAECULARI

by Louis PAULUSSEN, s. j.

When Roland Calcat comes to Rome, we always go to the tomb of Pius XII in St. Peters. Not without reason. This pope has been--in a period of opposition, decline and deviations--the greatest promoter of our movement. On September 27, 1948 he gave us Bis Saeculari that marked the beginning of a new period of our CIC history. A period of renovation.

Fr. Emile Villaret, S.J. divides our history into three periods: 1540-1773, from the foundation of the Society of Jesus till her suppression; 1773-1948, from the suppression till the Constitution Bis Saeculari; after 1948, the third period.

First Period: 1540-1773

From their very origins the Jesuits started small groups of adult men, who helped them in their pastoral work. Evidently they were formed in the spirit of Ignatius. These groups had different names, but all of them are rightly considered as the early predecessors of our CIC. In 1563 Fr. Leunis founded the first group for young people, students of the Jesuit College in Rome, a European formation center. In the first Rules (1574), the Preamble says that these norms are the result of common deliberation and that the aim is "unity of life", integrating all dimensions of human-Christian growth. They called themselves "Congregatio Mariana" (CM): "since it is the custom to recommend such groups to a heavenly patron, whose name is also taken, we choose Our Lady of the Annunciation, whom we particularly venerate". The reason for this special

affection is mentioned in the same Preamble: it was the title of the college church.

Within twenty years the movement had spread all over the world, in the wake of the Jesuits. The total number in this period: 2500 groups, almost exclusively male, since only after 1751 were women's groups allowed. All these were affiliated to the first group of Rome ("Prima Primaria"). Only Jesuits could be the groups' spiritual leader (called "the Father"). The spirit, nourished by the Exercises, was dynamic, the sense of community very strong, the activity enormous.

On July 21, 1773, Clement XIV suppressed the Jesuit order. But the CM had to go on without them! From now on all priests could be what was later to be called "director".

Second Period: 1773-1948

It would have been a miracle if many groups had not lost their identity. The change of spiritual guides was too drastic, too sudden. No wonder that this period is in many ways the opposite of the first one. This was especially true in the late 19th and the 20th century. In these years many bishops wanted the CM as their parish association, too often only to foster a rather individualistic piety. Still more unfortunate was the fact that numerous youth associations "organized" CM or even imposed it from above, frequently having as their principal aim protecting their members from evil. The fast growth of these years was unnatural, and a deadly danger for the authentic spirit. More than 80,000 groups were affiliated in these years, very often without reference to Ignatian spirituality. After the restoration of the Society, the Jesuits were again charged with CM, but the true spirit did not always return with them. No need to say it, here and there excellent groups did wonderful work. And also the many groups existing almost everywhere did some good. But as a whole the movement had lost the original spirit.

The Society of Jesus, aware of her responsibility, convened a meeting of Jesuit experts in Rome (1922) to study the sad situation. A "Central Secretariate" was founded. Its task was extremely difficult, not to say impossible. How to reform a world movement without authority (only 5% of the groups were Jesuit), without effective

means, without the cooperation of qualified lay people, without permanent contact with the base, without knowledge of the national conditions? Nevertheless, it started and "National Secretariates" of the same type followed. All these offices worked very hard and not without concrete results. Books, pamphlets, magazines, meetings and other means were adopted. An international review (Acties Ordinata, predecessor of Progressio) was begun, some national federations were formed. Yet we needed more. Above all, a brand new challenge, a spark of inspiration. A radical re-birth of authenticity.

Third Period

Pius XII, knowing from experience Ignatian spirituality and the original force of the CM, followed with interest all these efforts and did his utmost to support them with all kinds of allocutions, letters and other proofs of his predilection for this form of Christian living. Finally he decided to do something extraordinary: to proclaim a new statute for the whole Church. Bis Saeculari was the synthesis of all his teachings. It came as a real explosion. The main reason of this shock-effect was the solemn affirmation that the CM was an "outstanding and particular form of Catholic Action", thus pulling down a solid system of uniformistic thinking on the lay apostolate. In doing this he opened the way for a new and pluralistic evolution.

But all this is now past and less interesting. Much more important are other aspects of the document, important also today. We mention only three: the challenging call for renovation and reform, the clarification of the aim, the priority given to the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius.

Call for Renewal

The most interesting thing which the Constitution achieved was to face the Church of 1948 with a surprising new picture of a disdained, misunderstood and abused association. For many members it was a tremendous challenge for fidelity to an old ideal, a pressing call for reform, for unconditional service. Something of the call of the Eternal King in the Exercises. What impressed most was not so much the long list of statements, but rather the moving, inviting tone of the Constitution as such, the impact of

the whole. Such documents can be read in many ways. Knowing the background, the context, and especially the person who wrote it, you find a burning spark, the seed of new life, hidden under the curial style and the juridical terms. The Pope praises all that could be praised, you feel his confidence, his affection, his love. It makes one restless and it pushed irresistibly to the great question of the Exercises: and now, what does God want us to do ?

A first answer came from an international Jesuit meeting (Rome, 1950). A respectful answer. Too quiet. Not enough new thinking. No revolution after the explosion. Strangely enough, Bis Saeculari, certainly meant as a stimulus to new development, was at times used as an argument blocking further growth. ("The Constitution says that nothing may be changed!"). We badly needed more effective structures, permanent communication with the base, cooperation with responsible people on the national level, better rules. Pius XII saw it. He, the man who insisted continually on the urgency of activity on the international level, he the Pope of the World Congresses for the Laity, who told us that on this ever smaller earth a new international community was in formation. When he received the project for a World Federation of CM, he was so enthusiastic that he promised spontaneously to write another document to approve the Federation. So he did; on July 2, 1953, the date of the foundation of our World Federation. It is true that Bis Saeculari did not foresee such a Federation. But it is a natural consequence. The question, "what does God want us to do ?" does not make sense unless we are able to do something. This implies that we are united--and not only spiritually--in a permanent way. This means World Federation: a concrete possibility for deliberation and action on the world level.

Christ in the Center

After the publication of Bis Saeculari all those endless discussions on our identity became silent. The new image of the CM was clear, much clearer than in any other document of the past. As in the Exercises the whole spirituality is centered on Christ. As in the Rules of the first group in 1574, the aim is the Christian life in its fulness and in all its dimensions. All are invited "to grow gently to a high level in the life of the Spirit,

even to sanctity...". All means are concentrated on the "perfect and wholehearted following of Christ".

Such language pushed the young World Federation to the next step: new common rules. During the mass Congress at Newark (1959), we had an informal meeting, in which all present agreed that we had to start immediately. A worldwide consultation with all national centers began. Obviously we had to wait until the end of the inspiring Ecumenical Council of Vatican II before we could propose a final version. New expressions had to be found for the sense of the Church, the love of Our Lady, as much as possible in harmony with the latest Church documents. In 1967 the new "General Principles" were approved, a new name--Christian Life Community--adopted. A world movement was reborn in a world community. This became evident especially in Augsburg 1973. Here too Bis Saeculari was not absent. The theme of the Assembly, "the liberation of all men", was in strict harmony with another of its directives: "Among the primary aims are to be reckoned any and all forms of apostolate, especially the social apostolate". The name for "social apostolate" in 1973 is: liberation.

Priority of the Spiritual Exercises

There is another reason to be grateful: the absolute priority given to the Exercises of Ignatius. They are listed number one in the enumeration of the means of CLO in Bis Saeculari. All those interested understood what it meant: if we want to live what we are, we have to go to the source and drink. Study too, but above all drinking, simply living the experience of the authentic Exercises. Looking at the progress of the last years, we know that it comes from the practice of the longer retreats. There we find enthusiasm for Christ and for his ideal, the liberation of all men. There we grow constantly in faith and love.

One of the most striking statements of the General Council which in 1967 formulated the General Principles is the one on the Exercises in N°. 4. It will be forever the guarantee for the further development of our Christian Life Communities. The final document of Augsburg 1973 confirmed it very strongly: "The Exercises are the priority of priorities". Again: Bis Saeculari was present.

PERSONAL EVALUATION THROUGH A DAILY REVIEW

by Vincenzo INSOLERA, s.j.

"This way of life commits the candidate to... discernment by means of a daily review of one's life..." (GP 11)

This "spiritual exercise" is not limited to Christianity but belongs to all religions. Typical of the religious man is introspection. And with introspection, remorse for faults committed, the will to begin again, attention to the different moments of one's life.

In the Old Testament evaluation has an important place. This appears from the anxiety of Adam after his fault, from the repentance of David under the lashing words of Nathan ("You are that man", 2 Kings 12:7) and from the tormented soliloquy of Job. In the New Testament John the Baptist proclaims the need to face up to one's own conscience (Lk 3:1-14) and Jesus, through the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount invites us to a profound review of life and conduct. Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, says clearly: "Let a man examine himself, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks condemnation upon himself" (11:28-29).

The evaluation is made before the Lord, before his cross ("the whole crowd gathered to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, went back home striking their breasts", Lk 23:48). St. Peter, at the end of his first discourse, made "in a loud voice", exhorts his hearers to a true examination of conscience (Acts 2: 22-23).

The examination of conscience is to be found then, in all Christian literature and asceticism up to the present. But it takes a definite turn in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, where it receives a new formulation, destined to assure a wide and permanent diffusion.

The "general examination of conscience"--along with the "daily particular examen" and the "general confession"--hold an important place in the text of the Exercises: it comes immediately after the consideration of the "Principle and Foundation" and before the "exercises" properly so called (32-44). In five points, St. Ignatius lets the soul expand through a thanksgiving, makes it conscious of its defects, lifts it up to a level of generosity, renews it through love.

Here are the steps suggested by Ignatius: 1) "give thanks to God our Lord for the favors received", that is, recognize the gifts given; 2) "ask for grace to know my sins and to rid myself of them", light therefore so as to rise above the world of lies and of contagion in which we live; 3) examine oneself by reviewing one's own activity "one hour after another, or by determined periods"--recalling therefore our secret thoughts and our actions in the sight of the Lord; 4) "ask pardon of God our Lord for my faults", placing ourselves in the truth at the root of our being, there where the Father judges in secret; 5) "resolve to amend with the grace of God", the will to begin anew. And finish with the Our Father.

A suitable method for anyone. A way to keep oneself "alert and watching", one's lamp always ready. St. Ignatius made frequent use of the examen of conscience and recommended it strongly. He is right: the evaluation is a form of prayer, the first and most elementary "method of prayer (Exercises, 238-248) and offers to the simplest persons the possibility of conversing with God.

The practice of the evaluation, as we said, is spread widely today under multiple forms, personal and communitarian (revision of life). It is best made at night. CLC has always looked on it, from the very beginning, as an element of the formation of its members. Here can be mentioned the Libellus Sodalitatis of Fr. Francis Coster (1570), the Manuale Sodalitatis B.V.M." of Fr. Francis Veron (Liege, 1599) and that of Fr. Pavone of Naples.

The Church has always urged it. John XXIII, in his "motu proprio" Rubricarum Instructio (July 25, 1960) recommended

"making a prolonged examen of conscience at a suitable time".

Of course, objections against this "spiritual exercise" have not been lacking. They come from those who do not agree with "methods" of prayer, looking on them as a rein on one's free advance toward God, a fractionizing of the unity of the spiritual life. Not to mention the mathematical aspect of the particular examen and the "excessive" attention placed on oneself to the detriment of abandonment in God. The Christian today finds special difficulty in the idea of the chart mentioned in the plan.

To these difficulties answers have not been lacking. The secret of the effectiveness of the examination of conscience lies, as with everything, in its wise use. It is a question of a path, an approach, a way to go to God. The observations we will make will perhaps provide the best response to these hesitations about the practice.

The evaluation is a way of assuming responsibility, of disposing oneself better for the Spirit's action, to progress in a true and gradual conversion and to organize one's own life prudently with a view to one's moral and spiritual growth.

"Every method of examining oneself" (Exercises 1) is the basic idea of St. Ignatius at the beginning of the Exercises for arriving at a life in full conformity with the action of God in us. It is a means to rid ourselves of the refuse of the heart, to purify ourselves. At bottom, it is an act alive in God, which commits us to the way of humility and introduces us to an authentic contemplation, for it makes one "seek God in all things".

Man needs to know himself, to blush at his own misery and to aspire to a strong Christian life. The entire spiritual life hinges on the graces we receive and our own conduct (Exercises 18). It is not a matter of turning in on ourselves, but of looking at ourselves in God. It is not a minute inquest ending in an unhappy realization of our guilt and arousing an energetic reaction of our will. Rather it is to see and to will in God, beyond the illusions and the feelings that hold sway in us. The evaluation is

needed not just for a deepened awareness of ourselves, but so that our senses and our spirit will rest purified in grace, so as to remove the intimate and root obstacle that is the cause of our misery--sin--and bring us to a sincere confession. Faith keeps us alert to this, makes us answer this call, prods us to conversion, removes our guilt and makes us adhere to Christ, entering into the mystery of his death and resurrection.

The evaluation teaches us to foresee, to make decisions with prudence, to will with patience and generosity. It is a help to pray, to remain faithful and to advance.

St. Ignatius proposes five points, but there can be three points or seven, that is not what counts. What matters is "the consciousness of oneself in God" (St. Teresa of Lisieux), what matters is to change "bitterness into sweetness" (St. Alphonse Rodriguez) and the conviction contained in the reply of Christ to Paul: "My grace is enough for you; my power develops through weakness" (2 Cor 12:7-9). The obstacles make the power of God in us shine out. The approach used should be not rigid and minute formulas, but simple and flexible ones, that allow God to work in us and us to act in God.

Evaluation is a path to discernment. St. Ignatius offers it to guard the experience made in the Exercises: a review in the sense of the election or reform of life, to give more of a handle to the Spirit after the inevitable daily deficiencies. The purification involved creates a new docility to grace and changes obstacles into a growth in love and in freedom.

The evaluation is linked also to spiritual dialog with God and with one's brothers, for it is a solid means to advance in our spiritual disponibility (availability). It is not a dry analysis, but an opening to the touch of God, the power to discern better the action of grace and to correspond with it.

In closing, some suggestions to help make the evaluation effectively each day.

- Examine first of all one's problems concerning prayer: choice of time for it, fidelity to it, difficulties, fruit; what prayer works best for me, what form is for me more congenial, etc.

- Then evaluate what we can call the "climate of the day": nervous or restless or distracted; joy or peace of heart or a pleasant state of soul; level or "drift" of my habitual thoughts; the "curve" of the day's ups and downs, etc.

- Finally, evaluate the problems, the concerns, the commitments that absorbed me all day long, discern what priority they had; note things I failed to do and deficiencies in confronting troubles and problems, initiatives and "duties".

In this way, the evaluation can be a way of recognizing the gifts received, of comprehending better the truth about ourselves, or beginning again with renewed strength the journey toward God and one's brothers. Above all it is a way to speak to the Father "in secret" (Matt 6:6), to say to Him--as St. Augustine suggests--what I am: "Tell God what you are!".

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CONTINENTAL INITIATIVES

The meeting of the General Council of Augsburg gave rise to informal gatherings between delegates of the same continent. The spontaneity of these meetings reflected a widespread desire, that of intensifying communication and mutual help between countries linked geographically. Five months later, we see appearing the first signs of concerted continental efforts, or, for Europe, the continuation of a larger scale of joint action in effect since 1969.

In LATIN AMERICA

Replying to the desires expressed by Latin-American delegates, José Antonio Esquivel, charged by the Executive Council with furthering relations and information with Latin America, sent out a questionnaire to the national leaders of the continent. Its aim is to gather the ideas and preferences of all the countries on the subject of the organization of a continental formation session.

A series of questions will furnish material for conclusions as to the timeliness of this proposal, the choice of participants, the content and methods to be employed. In addition, they offer some suggestions of means that might strengthen communication between Latin-American CICs.

In ASIA

The meeting of Asian delegates at Augsburg ended with several practical conclusions designed to form the "ASIAN LINK". The first of these was the designation of a continental coordinator in the person of Joe Ranasinghe (Sri Lanka) and a coordinator for each country so as to assure the relationship between the work and activities of his country and the mutual aid foreseen at the continental level. The national coordinators are: for China-Taiwan, Isabella Ting; Hong Kong, Anthony Cheung; India, Anthony Martyris; Indonesia, Frans Bonang; Japan, Yorizumi Watana-

be; Lebanon, Fouad Sayah; Philippines, Marte Vinzons; Sri Lanka, Dominic Philips; Vietnam, Father Jacques Do-Minh-Ly.

We have just received the first letter addressed to the national coordinators, laying the groundwork for a periodic bulletin.

In EUROPE

3 Formation Courses as a Follow-up to that of Rome

The presidents and ecclesiastical assistants of the national federations of Europe decided, in their meeting in Madrid at Pentecost 1973, to organize formation sessions by linguistic regions, following and taking as their model the international session of Rome. Three preparatory teams have been set up for this, with a coordinating team to assure the unity of the three sessions and the adaptation needed, and to assist the preparatory teams. These courses will take place:

- in English language at Teignmouth (England), from July 25 to August 11,
- in German, at Bressanone (Italy), from August 1 to 18,
- in French, at Saint-Flour (France), from August 2-10, with different possibilities to make the Exercises beforehand.

Formation Session on Liberation

Open to members of national work groups on questions of liberation, this session will be held at Toulouse (France) from August 18-25, 1974.

Its goal is expressed in the following text, elaborated by the European CLC Work Group on "Liberation and Development":

"Starting from an exchange of concrete experiences at the service of the cause of liberation, we attempt to arrive at a common understanding of liberation.

We analyze critically the methods utilized in effecting this service.

We try to search out to what degree our methods and the service rendered have been channels of the love of

Christ for all men and how the dynamism of the CLC way of living has been expressed through them.

This research should show us the means by which the CLCs of Europe can best make use of their special characteristics to promote liberation."

For our friends of the continent of AFRICA and MADAGASCAR

HELPFUL INFORMATION:

We call attention to the organization of a BEGINNERS' COURSE in DEVELOPMENT, offering a GENERAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORMATION. This is a correspondence course, drawn up in Africa for African countries. It treats both of economic aspects and of the historical, sociological, political and cultural aspects of the development of Africa. It presents a view of the ensemble of development problems.

This course is spread over a 2-year period. The level of studies demanded is that of the completion of secondary school. However, candidates without the scholastic level required but who exercise professional responsibilities in the socio-economic field will be allowed to register, after examination of their candidacy.

For all information, address: INADES-FORMATION, B.P. 8008, ABIDJAN (Ivory Coast).