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THIS ISSUE,

faithful to the direction we set for ourselves at the Augsburg Assembly, invites us :

- * to understand better the authentic vocation of CLC, through rereading what Father Arrupe said about it
- * to start from events, in this case the event of the 25th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, so as to grasp its importance in the slow advance of humanity
- * after rereading the concrete experience of a CLC in the service of liberation that appeared in the January issue, to help ourselves mutually to arrive in brotherly fashion at a better discernment
- * to come to a true understanding and deepening of ecumenism, so that we may be become capable of uniting our efforts with those of the whole Church
- * To prepare for the Feast of the Annunciation, which is in a special way that of the Christian Life Communities, for they recognize in Mary the model of compliance with God's design and the guardian of their own fidelity. By studying the place of this contemplation in the Exercises. Some, still not very familiar with the Exercises, may find it difficult. But it should introduce all of us to a deeper understanding of it, and prepare us for the meditation we can then make, using the suggestions given in the Exercises (nos. 101 - 109)
- * to grasp better the importance in our lives of the daily evaluation, as we read the witness of a CLC member in this regard.
- * as we read the "echos of CLC", to rejoice and be grateful for this gift we share.

FATHER ARRUPPE SPEAKS TO GIC LEADERS (1)

We are always speaking today of the signs of the times. What does that mean? It means the revelation of God through Christians, through situations, through social movements, through the new advancements and progress of civilization. We have to see God in all things, but with the spirit of St. Ignatius, that is, with discernment. Not everything is the Word of God. There are different spirits, and the Exercises give you the sharp eye to discover where Christ is, where Christ is at work.

With discernment I am sure you will find God in every thing, and you will be a tremendous, explosive bomb. We speak so much today about bombs--atom bombs, h-bombs--so much about revolution. You should be the real revolutionaries today in the world. The foundation of this revolution is the explosive love for Christ and for his work.

You should go out from this Course and from Augsburg being men and women for others. We have to form ourselves, surely, but we are not egocentric. We like to develop our personality, we like to develop all our powers. For what? For others. To serve others. That is for us a program of life. We follow Christ, THE MAN FOR OTHERS.

We must never say "enough", but rather "more, more, more". Personal love for Jesus Christ, in faith, up to the cross, is the answer to egoism. Grow in the service of others, so that Christ, who offers Himself on the Cross for others, will offer Himself once more through you. Do the minimum of the General Principles, which is, after all, the maximum of the Spirit.

Question : "How do you see the work of the Christian Life Communities in the ensemble of the works of the Society of Jesus?"

Answer : The Christian Life groups are inspired by the Exercises, which are also at the origin of the Society of Jesus. Therefore we consider this movement of lay people--and I underline, lay people--the real expression of the charism of St. Ignatius for the laity. I hardly know a deeper movement for lay people. The place of this movement in the works of the Society is very high and the Society has it much at heart. I consider the Christian Life Communities unique, inspired by the Exercises. I am convinced they are doing very important work.

Question : "What is the relation between the Spiritual Exercises and liberation?"

Answer : I am glad to answer this. The Exercises give us the real internal liberation, the liberation of Christ, liberation from all attachments so that we can be completely indifferent and free to follow the will of God and the way of the Holy Spirit and to work for others. Then we can work in other areas of liberation--for justice, against oppression, and so forth. Liberation is a very important question and we have to study it in all its depth, especially the theology and psychology of it, and its human aspects. But we should avoid being superficial with slogans that don't mean much and can distort the meaning of things. I am sure that your study of this at Augsburg will give you clear directions so that you can pursue this important problem in the right way.

Question : "How much can Christian Life Communities be adapted to different situations and still remain CLC?"

Answer : Difficulties in this come from misunderstanding by people of what the Christian Life Communities really are. We should adapt groups to different conditions, but every group should be established within the framework of the General Principles. Today these General Principles are so flexible that one can make one's own application of them. But you cannot touch the essentials. You cannot have a group but say, "We do not care for the Exercises". That

is a contradiction. You will have a group of people who are doing wonderful work but not a Christian Life Community. Therefore we have to distinguish between the essentials and the accidentals. The essentials are in the General Principles. Then these can be applied in different ways in different countries. That is the wonderful elasticity of the charism of St. Ignatius.

Question : "If there is such a close connection of CLC with the Spiritual Exercises, which mean very much to Jesuits, how do you explain the fact that some Jesuits are not much interested in CLCs or Sodalities"?

Answer : Why don't some Jesuits appreciate the Christian Life Communities? I would say it is mostly a case of ignorance. They don't really know them. Or their knowledge is of Sodalities of the old style, and they do not care for them. And that would be right, because we recognize that the old type of Sodality has no meaning today. We must respect the past but we must adapt it to today. I think if the Christian Life Communities as contained in the General Principles are presented to Jesuits, they will recognize the value of this apostolate.

- (1) (Excerpts from the address of Fr. Arrupe, General of the Society of Jesus, and from his replies to questions addressed to him by the participants in the International CLC Formation Course at Rome, July 26th, 1973).

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN

by François RUSSO, s.j.

We just celebrated, last December 10, the 25th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. It offers a fitting occasion to inform ourselves and to reflect on this Declaration and on the pacts and conventions that since then have made it more specific and detailed, and have tried to assure its being put into practice.

This Declaration of the United Nations, made in 1948, is along the lines of the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, but is the expression of a more mature and more precise awareness of the rights of the human person. Its aim at first was to be a solemn condemnation of the crimes of Nazism. But soon it was to orient itself in a more positive sense: the affirmation of the dignity of man. This short document consists of a preamble whose thought is very exalted, and then of thirty articles in which are listed, in clear, sober and arresting language, the fundamental requirements of the human person. Have we read it? Have we weighed its thrust, its richness, its permanent up-to-date-ness? Here already are questions that this anniversary leads us to pose.

Of the many conventions that set themselves within the framework of the Declaration of 1948, the most important are two pacts which were voted by the Assembly of the United Nations in 1966. One of these is about economic, social and cultural rights, the other about civil and political rights. Although, because of its very nature, the Declaration has no juridical value in the strict sense, the pacts, as also all the other conventions, are texts of a juridical character. But, although they were approved

by vote, these texts do not enter into effect until ratified by a sufficient number of countries. For the pacts, 35 ratifications are needed. And as of November 15, 1973, only 23 states had ratified them. Among the countries that have still failed to ratify them can be noted France, Great Britain, Italy, and West Germany; among those who have ratified, the Soviet Union. This makes one reflect on two things. On the one hand, as to the worth of such commitments on the part of "certain" countries. On the other hand, as to the difficulties that countries--which are nevertheless concerned about respecting the rights of the human person--can have about fulfilling the obligations imposed by the pacts. For it must be recognized that these agreements can sometimes pose delicate problems, especially for countries which have only recently acquired independence, which cannot in honesty be dodged.

To measure well what effectiveness these pacts have, it must be noted that they have not come into being through procedures which assure a recourse to courts and to sanctions in the cases where they are found to be violated. The sole recourse consists in complaints that may be made to the United Nations, which can demand explanations from the countries involved, and make observations to them. However, as experience shows, these interventions generally have no effect. Such a judicial recourse is found in the European Convention on the Rights of Man of 1950, which convention is already in effect; and the recourse is open not only to governments but also to individuals (unfortunately France, which has finally ratified it, in doing so set a condition which excludes recourse by individuals).

The Declaration, and the pacts through which it has been implemented in a very concrete way, take account with great clarity and precision of the variety of situations in which respect for the rights of man may be in danger. They have to do mainly with these rights: the right to a life that is free and worthy of the vocation of man (condemnation of slavery, respect for human life, respect for privacy, defense of the family, protection of infants and of the aged); public freedoms (freedom of opinion, participation in political life, the right of assembly and of association); economic and social rights (the right to

work, the right to a sufficient salary, the right to form trade or other unions, the right to property, etc.); cultural rights (the right to education, the right to participate in cultural life, etc.). Let us single out, besides, particular conventions having to do with the right of peoples to self-determination, racial or religious discrimination, war crimes and genocide, the political rights of women, refugees and stateless persons.

Here then is a description of the way it is agreed things ought to be. Here is that to which nations in great number have committed themselves. But how far have these noble and just obligations been put into application?

Are we not tempted to scepticism and even to discouragement when today in so many countries we see these principles and these commitments ignored or scoffed at? One thinks of arbitrary detention, systematic practice of torture, growing infringement of the intimacy of private life by the use of "diabolical" electronics, maintenance of woman in a condition of inferiority, persistence of slavery in certain countries...

Whatever be the cruel reality of this state of things, we can and should nevertheless be alert to, and recognize, two positive aspects of the present situation as far as the rights of man are concerned:

- As Pope Paul VI stated in his message to the United Nations on the occasion of this anniversary, "Men of our time show themselves sensitive to the values contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The fact that denunciations and demands are multiplying, is this not a sign of this growing sensitivity?". And in this sensitizing, the Declaration of 1948 seems to have played an important role.

- Even when they have not received the number of ratifications which would make them binding, these pacts and conventions have often led states to modify their attitude with regard to respect for the rights of man. Besides, several of these conventions have been very concretely put in to practice by a great number of states. This is true with regard to the treatment of refugees, the free movement of

persons, freedom of information, racial discrimination, religious liberty.

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The attitude of the Church as regards respect for the rights of man has unhappily not always been what it should. We should have the honesty to recognize that in the past, notably, freedom of belief has often been impeded, and wars have been accepted which in multiple ways have done violence to the dignity of the human person and to his most sacred rights. Let us think of some aspects of the conquest of the New World, and of those so numerous wars in which, for the glory of a very Christian prince, so many men lost their lives or their freedom. These failings must not however, make us fail to recognize all that the Church has done in the course of centuries for the uplifting of man, for his protection against injustice, exploitation and domination of every sort.

One regrets too that the leaders of the Church rejected as a whole the declaration of 1789, not knowing how to distinguish between erroneous views and views directly flowing from the spirit of the Gospel. But with Leo XIII, who knew how to recognize the legitimate rights, till then seriously disregarded, of workmen, and, much more, with the Encyclical "Peace on Earth" of John XXIII, Vatican Council II, the Encyclical "The Development of Peoples" and a number of other declarations and directives of Paul VI, the Church has very explicitly and very positively given its backing to the promotion of the rights of man, linking this closely with the promotion of peace, since both the one and the other constitute, inseparably, the fundamental condition of the true progress of peoples.

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With the hindsight of a quarter of a century, we can today better gauge the human bearing of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1948, and our Christian faith gives to this its full meaning.

As Rene Cassin, by whom the Declaration was principally inspired, said recently, "for the first time in the history of humanity, all the nations of the world, whether they were Marxist, Christian, or of other religious or political tendencies, managed to agree on a certain number of principles". Certainly, they did so by giving to these principles different bases. One can moreover ask one self as regards the adhesion of some, notably of the Marxists, whether their ideology is in accordance with these principles. In any case, the fact is there: the rights of man, the fundamental norms of conduct with regard to man, the relations of men between themselves, were recognized as having force for the whole of humanity. To this universalism, our faith gives a profound basis. As Paul VI declared in his message, already cited, to the United Nations, "The Church can never fail to be interested in the rights of man, who has been created in the image of God, to the likeness of his Creator. She feels herself wounded when the rights of man, whatever these be and wherever it be, are ignored or violated. The rights of man are founded on the recognition of the dignity, the equality and the brotherhood of all human beings."

Clearly aware of and penetrated with these views, how could we be insensitive to this anniversary? How could we fail to accept the invitation found there to cooperate in every possible way in the defense and furthering of the rights of man, rights that are formulated with such clarity, detail and precision in the texts of the United Nations? How could we fail to contribute to the work of sensitizing and of formation that is there called for, as we are invited to do by the joint appeal of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Holy See and the World Council of Churches on the occasion of this anniversary? Especially by making known the Declaration and its conventions, by bringing pressure to bear on governments which have not yet ratified them, by denouncing violations of them, by taking the lead in efforts to assure that they will be recognized and respected.

Here, then, are the concrete tasks by which our Christian ideals will express themselves in the most authentic and effective fashion.

Father Francois RUSSO is the ecclesiastical adviser of the Catholic Center at UNESCO.

LET'S HELP EACH OTHER THROUGH A FRATERNAL EXCHANGE

As we stated earlier, the series on "Liberation" will be presented this year in alternating fashion, with each experiential account followed by a critical analysis of it, the aim being to help ourselves to grow mutually in discernment. The experience is given by the CLC which has lived it. The critical analysis is made by a team of CLC members connected with the periodical. It must be noted that, since it is not possible for the authors of the accounts to meet the team that singles out their strong and weak points, some remarks or criticisms may rest simply on an inadequate description of things. No matter! It is question above all of helping each other recognize the essential steps that mark our path--or the obstacles along the way--so as to achieve more and more the integration of our faith with our entire life.

Today we make reference to the article that appeared in the January issue entitled, "A Concrete Experience of a Community at the Service of Liberation". It would be good to begin by rereading it. For very understandable reasons, which the authors point out at the start of the article, their witness remains purposely general. So we will focus on its main lines, which still give us a quite penetrating view of the direction the efforts of this community are taking. Several points struck us.

First of all, the very clear option made in favor of the very poor, the oppressed, by this community. It is a matter of a solidarity that is lived, which dictates the choice of the service to render and the actions to undertake. As we expressed it together during our recent General Assembly, it involves being at the service of "those who are "directly affected".

We notice too a profound concern--sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit--to live in communion with the Church. The Church's documents serve as a reference to orient the action. There is insistence on the authenticity that must clothe our witness if it is to have credibility and to present the true image of the servant Church. "The mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of man even in his present existence in this world." This dictate, formulated by the Synod of Bishops, is aimed at. This concern to

think with the Church stands out in all the paragraphs, and we would be tempted, for our part, to see in it the thread running through all the action undertaken. Admittedly this fidelity to the guidance of the Church may have been found difficult in specific cases. But one cannot but congratulate and encourage this community if in fact it has always managed to carry out its activity with a care to be in communion with the Church. In the types of action mentioned—personal witness to justice, denunciations of injustice, action in favor of liberation—one recognizes too the orientations so often reemphasized by the Church.

We would have liked the article to describe in more detail the process of discernment used by the community in making its choices. What were the possibilities for action? Were there other options than those taken? How did the group arrive concretely at the choice decided upon? What were the reasons for? What were the reasons against? How were the specific decisions made? Are they subject to periodic evaluation?...

Other questions which might present themselves as subjects for discernment: Is the general situation such that committed Christians can now move from the simple denunciation of injustice to the taking of some initial steps toward reforming the structures of injustice? Or is this impossible at the present time? If committed Christians are not vigilant, and seize the opportune moment to reform the structures according to Gospel principles of social action, situations of injustice such as that described tend to move inevitably toward the "revolutionary situation", when the only option that presents itself to people is bloody revolution or civil war. To the extent possible, this should be avoided. Among the policy makers of the society, are there any in whom the Christian conscience with regard to justice is not completely dead? If so, is it possible to take steps to awaken their consciences?

We appreciated much the way in which the role of the community was presented. "The place where faith in Christ and in his presence is expressed and lived", and where one finds "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". One could say that the Community, centered on the Eucharist, plays a double role. It is on the one hand for each of its members the means to a greater personal fidelity in one's attachment to Christ, to be implemented in one's entire life.

On the other hand, it is the place for discerning together what service is to be rendered and then carried forward together, the place where each member, thanks to the sharing and the mutual help, will find "the strength and the help" to go forward again on the road and to continue in spite of difficulties.

The authors insist on the necessity of a solid formation of the members. Here we touch the essential point on which depends in large measure the quality of an action and the rightness of its orientation. The pedagogy of the faith as described in the article rests 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." We recognize there, indeed, the essential elements that point toward and are an integral part of the way of life of CIC. Still, we think we see something lacking when we do not find the Exercises listed among the means of formation. Without doubt the approach used is inspired by initial forms of the Exercises, but we think that before long the need will be felt for an authentic experience of the Exercises in the form of a retreat and also through the use of the Exercises pedagogy in the group meetings and in daily living, and that this will give members the solid formation that the leaders are looking for. This would help the members--while being careful to use as a point of departure their own real needs--to attach themselves better to the Person of Christ, to arrive at a greater interior freedom which will condition and facilitate their commitment to serve liberation, to acquire that so necessary sense of discernment, to find in the process of the Exercises a dynamic that as experience shows can direct and support the joint action taken.

May we be allowed, in closing, to thank this community for having shared with us that which constitutes its way of life. Its witness is a challenge to each of us and to each of our communities. A challenge to greater unselfishness in the gift of ourselves for the liberation of all men. A challenge to greater unity so that, sustained by mutual help, prayer and brotherly exchanges, both we and they may follow the path where Christ awaits us.

THE "WHY" OF ECUMENISM :
Its Theological Basis

by Walter M. ABBOTT, s.j.

It is the clear teaching of the Scriptures that God the Father sent his only begotten Son into the world so that, being made man, he might give new life and unity to the entire human race by his redeeming of it. He commanded his apostles to preach the Gospel message everywhere so that the human race might become the family of God, in which the fulness of the Law would be love.

All who accept the Scriptures are agreed on these points. They might have their differences when they get down to the details of what they mean by the redemptive act, and who precisely succeeded the apostles, and what exactly is contained in the Law, but they all hold these points in common. As a result there is today a strong tendency among ecumenists in favor of a common Christian witness which can be united to that of many other religious people, especially Jews and Moslems. This, in fact, was one of the conclusions of the meeting of Ecumenical Commission representatives held by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome, November 15-22, 1972. To explain their conclusion they started from the doctrine of creation, which reminds us that we depend utterly on God, who called the world and mankind into existence by freely sharing with them his own being. This self-giving of God, whereby the whole cosmos exists, they added, reaches its absolute summit in Christ, the God-Man, the perfect and gratuitous communication to the world of God's being, who in his own life recognized the absolute dependence on God which this implies. This is why his Gospel is the message of the Reign of God. In the Paschal Mystery we see that Christ is the fulfilment for each human person, mankind as a whole, and the entire created universe. He is the New Man and the Head of the New Creation. He, the Word made flesh, God present in person among men, expresses in an absolute way man's de

pendence on God, love of the neighbor, and the new life which is the object of Christian hope. (SPCU Information Service, N^o.20, April, 1973).

With such a vision and inspiration it is understandable that many ecumenists today are more and more drawn to the study of the unity of mankind and the contribution that Christian witness can make to it. God's will for that unity is the basic font of their activity. They trust that modern man will come to see that nothing is more relevant or important for him, and will therefore accept the new Christ-centered life offered to him.

Most ecumenists, however, are still working with the more restricted definition of ecumenism, the one given, for example, in the opening words of the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, where the Council Fathers declared that "promoting the restoration of unity among all Christians" was one of the chief concerns of the Council. If one asks the "why" of that goal, object, end, one gets first the simple, basic answer: because Jesus Christ desires it. Thus, in the Decree on Ecumenism one reads: "Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, multiple efforts are being expended through prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires" (N^o. 4). The best expression of Christ's desire is given, all agree, in his prayer "for those who believe in me" found in the Gospel of John (17:21): "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (RSV, 1973). The desire of Christ is such a big piece of the "why" of ecumenism that the Council Fathers can immediately add a sweeping conclusion: "This sacred Synod, therefore, exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to participate skillfully in the work of ecumenism" (N^o.4).

That the Council Fathers meant "all" quite literally is made quite explicit: "Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies" (N^o.5). Why? Not only because Christ desires it but also because he made us his

brothers, even members of himself. Through baptism we become adopted sons of God and brothers of Christ, to whom we are organically united. Thus every one of us shares in his priestly, prophetic and royal responsibilities. Young people too, even children? Yes. But aren't there many older people who fail to understand how they can have any role in all this? Yes, nevertheless we must insist that everybody--man, woman, child--has some role in the fulfilling of Christ's desires. It follows from everything the Scriptures tell us about baptism and about the risen Christ's gift of the Spirit to those who have believed and have been baptized.

Something else follows from those very same things the Scriptures tell us, namely that all who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in real communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect; they are members of Christ's body and have a right to be recognized as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church; we can acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is at work among them and uses their churches as means of salvation. All this is the explicit teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Decree on Ecumenism, N°.3). It explains why the Council Fathers decreed that we should make every effort to eliminate words, judgments and actions which do not respond to the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness, why we should engage in dialogue with them, why we should cooperate with them in whatever projects a Christian conscience demands for the common good, why we should come together for common prayer, why we should undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform. When all do what they should do about all these things, the Council Fathers declared, "the result will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into that unity of the one and only Church which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning" (N°.4).

It can be said that in the Decree on Ecumenism the Council Fathers were intent on making the most favorable possible analysis of the separated brethren, and that Church authority has continued this approach in the Ecumenical Directory and other documents of implementation following

Vatican II. Thus, among other things, as a result, the non-Catholic partner in a mixed marriage no longer is asked to sign or even to make any promises about the bringing up of the children, and the Catholic partner is required to promise only that he "will do everything possible" to see that the children are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church (Motu Proprio, Matrimonia mixta, March 31, 1970).

The Decree on Ecumenism stated that "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement" (N^o.8), that all Christians should unite in professing "their faith in God, one and three, in the incarnate Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord . . . and with mutual respect let them bear witness to our common hope, which does not play us false" (N^o.12). In subsequent reflections and suggestions on the subject of ecumenical dialogue the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity explained that through dialogue Christians must learn to give common witness to the mission which Jesus Christ confided to his Church, and "since the world poses the same question to all the Churches and ecclesial Communities, the latter, listening to the questions together and understanding them through dialogue, and being attentive to the Holy Spirit, will seek together the response that the Lord expects of them in order to serve the world, especially in those places where the Gospel has not been preached" (SPCU Information Service, N^o.12, Dec., 1970, page 6). The Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, at about the same time, recommended to its parent bodies a study document entitled "Common Witness and Proselytism" which not only clarified those two terms but also proposed a number of practical conclusions, including this one: "Missionary action should be carried out in an ecumenical spirit which takes into consideration the priority of the announcement of the Gospel to non-Christians. The missionary effort of one Church in an area or milieu where another Church is already at work depends on an honest answer to the question: what is the quality of the Christian message proclaimed by the Church already at work, and in what spirit is it being proclaimed and lived? Here frank discussion between the Churches concerned would be highly desirable, in order to have a clear understanding of each other's missionary and ecumenical

convictions, and with the hope that it would help to determine the possibilities of cooperation, of common witness, of fraternal assistance, or of complete withdrawal" (SPCU Information Service, N°. 14, April, 1971, page 22). The meeting of Ecumenical Commission representatives already mentioned reached this conclusion: "Perhaps also it might be possible to have a common catechesis in this field, though it would be necessary to proceed very carefully in such a project" (SPCU Information Service, N°. 20, April, 1973, page 19).

Yes, even to those lengths, conceivably, ecumenism can go on the theological premises now endorsed by the Second Vatican Council. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity is at work studying the proposals and intends to produce something helpful as soon as possible. Whatever it decides, however far it goes in the directions recommended, we will not go back to the one-sided stress on the Roman Catholic Church as a perfect society which prevailed for so long, with the implication that outside of it there was only "non-Church." We will keep the focus on the one holy God whom we worship and from whom we have received all that we have, on Christ's prayer that the world may believe that the Father sent him, on the Spirit's activity everywhere showing there is indeed a God who loves the world and wills to share his life of holiness with it. As the restoration of unity among Christians proceeds, as it surely will, perhaps more of us will be able to embrace the broader concept of ecumenism that is in the making, the one looking to the unity of mankind in Christ.

Next issue :

The "How" of Ecumenism

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THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE INCARNATION IN THE EXERCISES

by D. MOLLAT, s.j.

The contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation holds in the Exercises a place of the first rank. The retreatant has just heard the call of the Kingdom. Driven by the desire to prove his "greater love" and to "distinguish himself in every service", he offers himself to the "Eternal Lord of all things". He commits himself to "imitate" Him up to total poverty, both in desire and in fact, if such is His most holy will. The contemplation of the Incarnation opens the series of "mysteries" which are going to show him concretely on what path he has entered. He has decided to place his footprints in the footprints of his Lord. Now he must get to know the route by which his Lord has passed. The Incarnation is the first step of the itinerary. In a sense, it contains already the whole journey.

One word indicates the goal and the spirit of the contemplation, as St. Ignatius conceived it. I am to seek in it "the intimate knowledge of Our Lord, who has become man for me". In its sober way, this "for me" orients and qualifies the whole reflection. It is charged with love and thanksgiving. One finds this again in the contemplation on the Nativity. The retreatant there considers "the extreme poverty" of the birth of the Saviour and, beyond that, thinking of all the sufferings which he will endure in order finally "to die on the cross", he says to himself: "And all that for me!" In the third week, contemplating the Passion of Christ, he will say the same: "It is for my sins that He suffers all this!" The life of Christ has been but one single gesture of love. A gesture of love that concerns me; that looks to me; that challenges me personally. And that, from the first instant: "The Lord became man for me!" He loves me. He loves all men. It is to the discovery of this love that, following Saint Paul and Saint John (Gal 2:20; Jn 13:1), Saint Ignatius brings the retreatant in the contemplation of the Incarnation.

This is not just any event in the course of human history. It is an "unsearchable mystery" (Rom 11:33; 16:25-27), which is only known to us by the revelation of it God has made to us, and cannot be recognized except in faith. This is why Saint Ignatius asks the retreatant to

begin by prayer: he needs to ask for the grace of light and spiritual understanding. And since the event is a gesture of love, which as such cannot really be known except from the inside, what I ask is "the intimate knowledge of the Lord" Himself. I seek to know Him, starting from the unheard-of step His love has taken. "Thus", writes Saint Paul, "you will, with all the saints, have the strength to grasp the Breadth and the Length, the Height and the Depth, to know the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God". (Eph 3:18-19).

The love of the Lord shows in the Incarnation its absolute gratuity. The Ignatian contemplation stresses this forcefully. The retreatant is invited to reflect on the state of the humanity in which the Lord is going to incarnate Himself, on what men are, what they say, what they do: "how they strike, how they kill, how they go down to hell". A world of violence and of covetousness, closed and hard, without unity because without love; a lost race, doomed to death. The picture may seem oversimplified. Still it agrees with what Saint Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans: "Christ died for the wicked... The proof that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners" (5:6-8). This does not mean to say that there is nothing good or lovable in the heart of men. But precisely that in them which is good and lovable, that is what the love of God has put there. Without this love, which is at work secretly, humanity, delivered over to its demons, is a hell. But, this humanity, God has loved; without any other reason than His love itself. And He decided to save it. Saint Ignatius would like the retreatant to hear resound in his heart the words that, in the ineffable mystery of their unity these three Divine Persons pronounce from all eternity: "Let us save the human race!"

Love shows itself again in the means chosen by God to bring about salvation: the Incarnation. God will not save men from outside. He will put Himself on their level. He will become one of them. He "will dwell among us" (Jnl:14). By the Incarnation, the Word who created all things, the Son of God, makes his own the condition of men, with its weakness and its destiny of death. He takes on Himself everything except sin. He commits Himself to the history that is unfolding. "Christ," writes Hans Urs von Balthasar, is "the commitment of God" to humanity. Total commitment,

without trickery, without reserve and without return; for "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8).

Still more. In becoming incarnate, God takes the path of service. He comes "to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He does not force Himself. He wishes to be welcomed, believed, loved, freely. He will only save a humanity that consents and cooperates. Without this adhesion, it would not really be saved. And this is why silence surrounds the entry of God into humanity. This silence expresses the respect the Lord has for His creature and the delicacy of His love. A resounding stroke would have made us bend our knees before Him. The humility of this approach purifies our idea of God and opens to Him our hearts.

Now, it is in Mary that is found and is concentrated all the perfection of this consent of humanity. She says yes to the divine step, to the divine offer. She welcomes for us the Saviour. The Council commented on the scene of the Incarnation in this way: "The Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined mother should precede the Incarnation, so that, just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life..." The Council specifies what the "yes" of the Virgin really meant: "By thus consenting to the divine utterance, Mary, a daughter of Adam, became the mother of Jesus. Embracing God's saving will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son. In subordination to Him and along with Him, by the grace of almighty God she served the mystery of redemption" (1). It has been remarked, with reason, that according to the text of the Council, the consent of Mary "does not envisage only the fact of the divine maternity, but expresses a total and active adhesion of the servant of the Lord to the whole mystery of salvation, to the whole work of her Son... She accepts her own mission in the establishment of this kingdom, the new humanity, the new Israel; that the descendant of David is to bring into being..." (2).

In the course of the Exercises, the attitude of Mary should then, in the scene of the Annunciation, hold the attention of the retreatant at great length. Mary shows him, in reality, as has been said, "what the offering in the

Kingdom means in its most utter and most perfect form" (3). Mary, at first cautious and reflective, but then enlightened by the angel as to the plan of God, commits in faith her whole being and her whole future. She places them into the hands of her "Lord". Without making a special point of it. As of an offering that goes without saying. Like the ending of a dialogue in which she has always said, "yes". The angel had greeted her as "filled with grace" (Luke 1: 28). She only sees herself as "the handmaid" at the disposal of her "lord" (Luke 1:38).

It is always a very serious and very solemn moment when a human being recognizes and accepts his vocation. Going out of himself in some way, and yielding to the voice that urges him pressingly in his most secret conscience, he says yes and gives himself over to God, casts himself on Him. This "yes" never has to do just with him. Others and their destiny are always linked to his acceptance. In the case of Mary it is the salvation of the entire human family that is involved. The coming of the Kingdom of God to this earth is found linked to what she will say.

It is the grandeur and the power of the Ignatian Exercises that they situate man at this level of responsibility. The retreatant is searching in them for his divine vocation. This is presented to him as the unique and irreplaceable role that the Lord calls upon him to play in the work of the salvation of humanity. Purified of his sins by the exercises of the first week, fully open and at God's disposal, he has given himself by the offering of the Kingdom. The contemplation of the Incarnation points out to him what it is to which he has committed himself: he must follow his Lord in His strange adventure of love. He should not only accept it, but enter completely into the game, and merit, as Mary did, the beatitude of welcome and of collaboration without reserve in the work of God: "Happy is she who has believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled!" (Luke 1:45).

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- (1) Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), chapter 8, n° 56.
 - (2) "Mary and Scripture in Chapter VIII", in Bulletin of the French Society for Marian Studies, by R. Le Deaut, 1965, p.66.
 - (3) The Exercises with Mary the Mediatrix, by F. Charmot.

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EVALUATING MY DAY

Every day we ask of our Father to give us the bread of the Holy Spirit, and to deliver us from Evil. This evil, like an intruder, hinders us. The good Spirit, He, waits for us to invite Him. He respects too much our freedom to impose Himself, but comes promptly at the faintest call. Still it is foolish to imagine that He can enter if "the other" occupies the place with his usual hubbub. And the Evil One is the more pleased when...

- I do nothing to reduce useless fatigue that changes bit by bit my attention to others and my taste for the Lord. Sleep that is too short, food that is too heavy;
- I let my thoughts, on rising, ramble here and there and settle on "false reasons" that prevent me from going forward;
- I throw myself into all that which stirs up my emotions: hot political topics, too lengthy discussions in meetings, that eat up the time of prayer, of listening and of evaluation;
- I allow certain resentments to surface, without at once opposing to them the love of the Lord; or I do not avoid those who--like myself at certain times--are more filled with negative criticism than with positive suggestions ;
- I do not stick to the priorities of the day, but give way to my ease and convenience;
- I spend time on plans that are still in germ, determining by myself the path of the Holy Spirit.

I need not go on: these are for me the major obstacles to a spiritual life. The worst thing would be to accept them with the blase attitude of "one who has caught the sickness of the modern world", and to resign oneself to a rhythm so accelerated that one no longer has time to live nor to maintain relations with God.

The Evening Encounter

The Lord comes when, going over all of that seriously and simply in dialogue with a spiritual guide, I admit before God and my brothers that I am a sinner... The Lord remains if I stay alert, having found again the real causes of my troubles by going back over the whole chain of my thoughts, which involve detours that are ever changing. So, I look on it as indispensable, even if it is not always easy after a harassing day, to make a daily evaluation. Saint Ignatius used to say that if one could not make both meditation and an examination of conscience, he preferred the examen to the meditation. The Lord will remain then if, at the stroke of noon, my eye turns a bit toward this unique meeting with Him--who, very often, I have locked out as if He were a thief. The key thing for me is to have a taste for this night examen. That is what will, first of all, make sure it will take place. And that is what will, next, avoid my making it a psychological investigation, for what will then stir me to do it is the joy that comes from the desire for God and sadness at my own infidelities.

The time having arrived, I pass in review my day. Often it has been turned a little upside down by others and by myself. As I have a horror of monotony, it happens that I change an activity in order to do something else, something very important to be sure, but without relation to what the Lord wants that I do at that precise moment. I have become more aware that this is in fact shutting the door on the Holy Spirit, and that for me is grave disobedience to reality. The decisive remedy is to foresee the night before what will be occurring: to contemplate and sense in advance with the Lord each situation that is waiting for me, so as to find a taste in what I ought to do, thanks to the evaluation of my past experience.

* An example. I linger over this demonstration that I took part in today, and which provoked in me--a thing quite normal--many uncontrolled movements. I am glad I did not give way to the herd instinct that lurks in each of us. But I did not manage to dialogue with my neighbor: who was he? Communist, Socialist, labor union member, Brazilian, Chilean? What was he looking for? What did the Lord expect

from our being in contact with each other? I left without knowing. Scruples, you would say! God doesn't ask that much in such a situation! Still, we are continually involved in liberation movements, in collective actions for justice. How are we to be truly present there, able to discern what in these disturbances is from the Spirit, capable of helping others in these situations to see clearly, as free and responsible men? To turn these things over before God will help me to live better a similar event next time. At the next demonstration I will find myself a little less in the role of a spectator, a little more in an effective and affective spirit of solidarity.

Towards a New Day

There are also the small events that are significant --such as meeting an immigrant. I know the situation of these workers, of whom many sleep packed together like sardines. As I remember this man, my mind runs on to the bill at a business luncheon, the picture of an unused house, and again of property acquired by inheritance, accepted without much question. The word "sharing" appears to me in a new light. I lingered over this because it seemed to me that it was something serious. How did I stand in my sharing, especially the sharing of my power? Some of my responsibilities remain a private preserve. And as I could not respond alone without making a mistake, I began to think that this situation needed to be clarified without too much delay, together in community with my Christian friends, in the light of the guidelines of the universal Church. I do not see what the Lord thinks in this because with regard to this affair I do not have the viewpoint of the Lord. I have the feeling all of a sudden that the Lord is far off, that perhaps I am slipping into scruples, and I realize that my Eucharistic life has been less regular, less intense; it is not surprising that I am not more spontaneously moved by the Spirit.

A good many annoyances are an occasion for me to place myself in the hands of God. When I remain there, I solve them with lightning speed and find peace again. When I instead I leave His hand, they become disturbances that grow to enormous proportions, until--awake now--I grin at last and recognize that "the other" has fooled me once more. I

recall then the three conditions without which I cannot live things and sense things with the Lord and His Church: an affective life whose equilibrium is equal to this "interior sense"; a vigilant attention so as to foresee, see, and afterwards see in retrospect God in each event, see too what is an obstacle to Him; and finally, a guard over my senses, a certain "abstinence", without which there is neither enlightened vigilance nor the possibility of tasting things interiorly.

Henry

MARCH 25 : FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
WORLD CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY DAY

Proposed theme, which can inspire our efforts throughout the year :

LIBERATION OF SELF AND OF OTHERS:
A STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION.

What does it mean then for CLCs, to live the Holy Year, keeping in mind the general orientations of Augsburg'73?

- Reconciliation with God
[How do the Exercises lead us toward this ?]
- Reconciliation in the Church
[How work at furthering reconciliation within the Church (in my parish, in the movement to which I belong, in my relations with Catholics, both priests and lay people... ?)
How situate our ecumenical efforts so as to promote the restoration of unity among all Christians ?]
- Reconciliation with all men
[How does this prepare us "to be at the service of the liberation of all men" ?]

National leaders will find in PROJECTS N° 9 (January 15, 1974) suggestions to help them carry out this day and to make its theme the focus of efforts by CLC.

CLC ECHOES from around the WORLD

AFRICA

South Africa: For its special CLC course for adults and priests, held January 14-17, the KOINONIA center used "with great effectiveness" 150 of the introductory folders to CLC available at the World Secretariat and entitled For the Life of the World The new assembly hall at the national center in Johannesburg, dedicated February 17, accommodates 400 people and will be a big help for the many formation programs staged there.

EUROPE

England: CONTACT '74, a deliberation on the question, "Should CLM work for liberation and development by sharing what it has with others in the Church?", was a resounding success. To quote one of the leaders who took part, Contact '74 resulted in

- a clearer idea of what the Church in England needs;
- a deeper understanding of what CLM has to share, and so resolutions to put more energy into CLM formation and promotion;
- a greater ability to communicate to others what CLM is and what it offers".

Holland: The weekend of introduction to CLC (see Progressio, Nov. 1973, p. 24) took place January 5-6 at Maarssen. Ten lay people and ten Jesuits took part. Father Paulussen gave an introduction on CLC and Father van Breemen on the Exercises, and then reflection, shared prayer, evaluation and Eucharistic celebrations paved the way for further development. The team of 20 will continue to coordinate and prepare meetings and Exercises.

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina: Starting in late September, and continuing Sunday afternoon till mid-December, national leaders have conducted a formation course based on the Rome one, but with some adaptations, in Buenos Aires. Sixteen CLC leaders, half of them university students and the rest adults, took part, working for the most part in two wellmixed groups. The reports adds: "During the summer we will have the Spiritual Exercises. In March we will repeat the course for new groups."

Mexico: A recent note, though short, makes clear that the federation is at work on a follow-up to Augsburg and Rome: "We are planning formation courses like that of Rome. For this we need material. We would appreciate your sending us what you have that you judge suitable. By airmail, if you can."

NORTH AMERICA

Canada: In the line of Augsburg '73, Leunis Center arranged an exchange between adults and youth on the topic, "Do you feel that your family life, whether as parents or children, is favorable to your personal liberation and that of your children (or parents)?"

United States: From a letter of Archbishop Helder Camara (Brazil) to Betty Leone, Member of the World Federation Commission on Liberation: "In a moment of great difficulty and seeing so much despair around me, it certainly was a sign of God, an encouragement, to read the message of the U.S. delegation to the World Assembly of Christian Life Communities meeting at Augsburg, as well as the news of the Seminar. It all shows that in truth we can hope against all hope." - Recife, January 22, 1974.

ASIA

India: A short live-in formation course for the entire National Executive Council plus some other leaders was held in connection with the January Executive meeting in Calcutta.... Two "group encounters" for young working people in Bombay in January, aimed especially at growth in self-awareness and in a community sense, attracted about 25 youth for each session. This goal was much furthered by the atmosphere of prayer, reflection and quiet, to which the Eucharist each day "came as a wonderful climax".

Indonesia: Since last summer, Indonesian delegates to Augsburg have been busy communicating to local groups what they received in Augsburg and Rome. They have contacted CLC units in Djakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Solo. A new group has begun at Kediri. A new CLC newsheet, INSPIRASI, keeps everyone informed and furnishes, as you guess from the title, inspiration.