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Many readers write us to say how glad they are to receive PROGRESSIO. They tell us they like its content, and find in it reflections and accounts of experiences that touch closely on the personal option they have once made in recognition of and response to a call.

Many say to us too that our review constitutes for them the only means of being informed about and linked with CLC around the world, and that in and through this quite modest instrument, they find a perspective of the Church.

These reactions lead us to make a suggestion to our subscribers:

Could EACH OF US take the responsibility (at the next meeting of his group, for example) of presenting PROGRESSIO to the members of his CLC? To mention and discuss with them this or that article which touches more closely on their concerns? And so to interest other members in enjoying with us the issues during 1975.

If each of our readers were to interest himself in finding at the start of this year

1 NEW SUBSCRIBER

and so translate into action his appreciation of PROGRESSIO, he would be taking responsibility for a part of its future. Isn't this something each one of us could do? Surely it is. And a way too of effective support and sharing among the readers of the 79 countries that receive PROGRESSIO.

FOREWORD

The season of Christmas and the New Year is still near. It is a time that quite naturally stirs us to wish our friends the best of everything. And yet, how can we do so without running the risk of being superficial or irresponsible, if we pass over in silence the anguish that grips us before the accumulation of facts and of the news that keeps repeating to us the same thing: millions of men are in danger of starvation.

So we would like simply to say to all our readers that, with them, we seek to find the means - beyond mere words - of wishing and extending to our hard-pressed brothers what they have been waiting for so long.: JUSTICE. And the absence of love, finds for us its expression in the orientations we decided upon together during our last General Assembly, in 1973. We recall here the first point: "to become involved concretely and immediately; to situate one self so as to transform political, economic, social, cultural and religious structures, or simply to improve them within the framework suggested by the talk of Father de la Costa [Supplement to Progressio n° 2, November 1973] and in the spirit of the Magnificat."

Whatever form our participation takes and however modest it be, are we quite sure that our efforts, our work, the different responsibilities that we assume, are inscribed within this world perspective of solidarity and of sharing? Or is there reason to adjust our sights, by changes or by decisions that break with what we are doing? And then, how can we fail to be challenged with regard to our consumer habits, simplicity in our living, and the concrete sharing with others that these ought to permit? These practical queries can help us to be alert and to reveal to us the quality of our service in the concrete, the extent of our gift of self and the truth of our adhesion to the WAY of Christ poor and humiliated.

It is along this path that PROGRESSIO would like to advance with its readers all during 1975. It is in this perspective that the review will direct its various series of articles this year:

"Following Christ" - In the spirit of Number 4 of the General Principles, we will explore further the central and decisive role of the Spiritual Exercises in the formation of members of the Christian Life Communities.

"Ignatian Helps to Pray Better" - Some commentaries on the "Additions" in the text of the Exercises will help us to prepare and begin our meditation in favorable conditions.

"Socio-Economic Situations Around the World" - Several analyses of situations to stimulate us to become capable of assembling and gathering information, reflecting upon it and evaluating it, so as to pass from the apparent results to the causes, often hidden. This step, as one sees, is preliminary to, and prepares the material necessary for, discernment.

"CLC Means of Formation" - In this series, after situating the goal to be pursued in CLC formation, we will present the principal means of formation used by national federations, bringing out what factors seemed to be responsible for success or failure.

"Events" - We have received several letters about this series begun last year, all of them favorable. They ask that these articles presenting in an objective way important events in the world by a person of competence, be continued.

And as in the past, there will be news about our members here and there, as well as other articles judged useful. But ABOVE ALL there will continue, with the wide backing of Youth-CLCs shown throughout the year, YOUTH-PROGRESSIO, for which Peggie Telscher will this year be responsible.

These then are the themes that the Executive Council proposes for the year 1975. To sum them up, we could say these different series of articles, far from being parallel tracks, are very closely linked with each other. They show the unity of a life of faith lived out in concrete situations. They aim at binding us ever closer to Jesus Christ, in order to share in the plan of His Father and to serve Him today in all men.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND CLC

Justo G. TARRIO s.j.

For those who follow PROGRESSIO and its contents closely, it may be somewhat surprising that once more - and we plan to continue this series throughout the year 1975 - we take up again in key articles the theme of the Spiritual Exercises.

It might seem that we have already written enough on the Exercises, and that the PROGRESSIO Supplement (April, 1974), "Freedom for Service: How to Use the Individually-guided Spiritual Exercises", by Fr. Alex Lefrank, will more than suffice, and that we could leave it at that.

Nonetheless, when the new Permanent Committee on the Dynamics of the Exercises (newly created by the Executive Council of the World Federation) held its first meeting in Rome in November, 1974, we realized that there was still a long road ahead to travel. In reality, while we have published various articles on this topic, so closely linked with the spirituality and mission of CLC, it must be recognized that the practice of the Exercises, for a variety of reasons, is not yet as extensive or as solid in our movement as a whole as would be desirable.

So one of the key decisions taken by the Permanent Committee was to present, throughout the year 1975, a series of articles relating to the content of the Ignatian Exercises and the effective way of making and giving them. The aim in this is that this experience that many of us have made, and which for all members of CLC should be basic, may become ever more widely used and firmly rooted.

At bottom, we are deeply convinced that no really committed action under the impulse of the Spirit - and only such action is really liberating - can take root and be effective without the interior force of the Lord who converts us, calls us and sends us on mission. And it is this conviction that has led us to insist, on the world level, on the reflection needed about this specific source and characteristic instrument, as the General Principles point out in Number 4.

For some of our members these articles we are now beginning will furnish motivation for them to enter fully into this spiritual experience. For others, already accustomed to this internal process of the Exercises, it will offer an opportunity to deepen and clarify to some extent what they have experienced. For them too it will confirm that the dynamic of the Exercises can and should inspire our entire life, both personal and communitarian, as well as the discernment that we make use of in order to serve men better in the common effort of liberation.

The Exercises,
Instrument for
Today

Fr. Maurizio Costa, in an article published in CRISTIANI NEL MONDO (December 1971), asked himself whether the Ignatian Exercises continued to be effective in the pastoral field and in the spiritual life of the postconciliar Church. His reflections on this theme showed very clearly that the answer was "yes". For example, it is interesting how the author highlights the profound interaction between the Exercises and the sense of a community seeking always its greater service. Now, three years later, there is not the slightest doubt that the affirmative answer of Father Costa has been proven by experience. For the communities that have come to perceive the spiritual-apostolic dynamism of the Exercises have not only managed to achieve a cohesion among their members by these roots in a common experience; more than that, the Spirit of the Lord has been leading these same communities along the difficult and risky road of seeking and finding the will of the Lord both as regards the persons who are members of the community, and as regards the community as such.

Not only are the Exercises shown to be timely by this evidence of the cohesion they effect between persons and communities. They are as effective as ever, we tend to think, because they lead man to meet God, a God-ever-greater who reveals himself to us in silence and in prayer. And he does this in order to seduce us, to convert us, to integrate us, to draw us and to call us, there precisely where man yearns with all his powers to serve the Lord in freedom and to succeed in doing this always more and better, in total adherence to the saving plans of God. And at bottom this was the intuition of Ignatius through his own ex-

perience of the Exercises - that man felt within him a compelling necessity to be subject to truth by means of grace. How many men and women dream of ridding themselves of their foolish baubles, in order to encounter themselves as they are, neither more nor less, before the Lord and before men!

It is precisely in starting from this "subjection to the truth" that man can open himself to the action of God's grace in his heart, and to the action of men in and through the events that form the visible web of the "invisible" Word of the Lord.

For us, members of CLC, this is something we cannot forget. And perhaps, beginning with this reflection, we can come to understand why we need to live continually this style of life, which is that of a man who needs to arrive at this truth through the total confrontation of his life before God and before men.

It must be stressed too, on the other hand, that, as members of CLC, we are trying to live seriously our commitment in favor of the liberation of the whole man and of all men. Do we need here too to take account of the Ignatian Exercises? I think that everyone who took part in the International Course of Rome and the Congress of Augsburg of 1973 will agree that the answer is yes. Why?

As I see it, for two basic reasons:

The first, because in this liberation process, we ourselves have to take into account that we too are oppressed and strongly influenced (whether we know it or not) by so many sinful situations and structures, personal and collective. It is not easy to feel ourselves free with the freedom of the sons of God so that we can loose ourselves from so many bonds that keep us from leading an evangelical life, and therefore, keep us from being free, bold, serene and effective. And through the Exercises and following their internal process, we will find means that the grace of the Lord wants and can make use of, to help us walk the road toward such a commitment, which demands an extraordinary freedom.

The second reason, because it is precisely here, in

this field of liberation, that the spirit of evil blinds us at every instant - and how often he does so under the appearance of good! - so as to keep us from following the way of the Lord. God is calling us insistently - even shouting to us - to undertake this struggle for liberation, a TOTAL liberation, complete for all men and complete for each one of us. And our hearts need to be wide awake to avoid deviations and illusions. For it will take all our energies to come to understand that liberation is not situated only in the domain of the spirit, nor only in the social, political and economic order. Yes, it is true: only a deep experience of prayer and discernment (key elements of the dynamism of the Exercises) will bring us to grasp and to embrace the vast extent, the transcendence, that is meant by the word and the saving act of liberation.

Preparation for the Exercises

When Ignatius Loyola began to give the Exercises to his companions - and let us remember that he was not yet a priest, he was a layman - he grasped, with that fine blend of psychology and spirituality granted him by the Lord, that this spiritual adventure is not one for all, nor to be undertaken at no matter what time. More than that, in some of the Directories of the Exercises (which offer suggestions and practical comments for each of the weeks or stages of the Exercises) attention is called to the need for this selection and preparation, in order that the one who is going to make the Exercises will really profit from them and not rather suffer harm. Not everyone has the capacity to make them, and not all times are equally suitable.

Personally I am inclined to think that there are two means particularly which can further this preparation : introduction to prayer (even though it is very certain that the Exercises are a school of prayer!), and spiritual guidance.

Experience shows that a person who begins the Exercises without any experience of prayer converts them into a course on prayer (even though it is very certain they are a school of prayer!), and that, then, he needs to return to the Ignatian Exercises to be able to grasp and assimilate all their internal dynamism, which leads to an election or decision that ought to be highly significant in the life

of each exercitant. This previous initiation into prayer needs above all to be done when it is question of the individually-guided Exercises, since the activity in them falls much more directly on the retreatant.

I think we all have at hand enough practical means to further better preparation by a well-arranged initiation into prayer.

The second means is spiritual guidance. With the aid of a good guide we can become aware of shackles that bind us and the ways we are psychologically conditioned. It is very helpful to have detected these and overcome them, to the degree possible, before entering into the demanding experience of the Exercises. I do not mean to say that a dichotomy exists between psychology and the spiritual life. But I do affirm that, in not a few cases, this spiritual direction can help to discover if there exists a "foundation for building", that is, if there is sufficient psychic and physical force and enough clarity and understanding to enter with ease into Exercises that demand the whole person.

These two means - initiation into prayer and spiritual guidance - will also be a step forward for the entire work of spiritual discernment, supposed throughout the Exercises.

To these two suggestions for preparation for the Exercises, I would add the recommendation to read some simple book about the Exercises, and, in general, something on Ignatian spirituality. Many in this preparatory stage have been helped by reading and assimilating the Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola.

These brief notes with which we are opening this series of articles on the Exercises aim at nothing more than to situate them within the general framework of our worldwide CIC movement, and to underline how relevant and how crucial it is to grasp more and more clearly that our activity needs always to be inspired by the charism that we have accepted as our means to live the Gospel.

TWINNING - AN EXPRESSION OF COMMUNITY

Nicholas RIEMAN s.j.

"Twinning" - a kind of partnership between two national CLC federations in which they share with each other in a special way - is an idea that surfaced at the last General Assembly. But the idea was not new. There had already been encouraging expressions of such mutual aid through direct contacts between certain countries for some years. But since Augsburg, the idea has really taken root. Twice in the last year the World Federation's Executive Council has communicated with national federations on the subject, And just recently, it established a Committee on Twinning to stimulate and coordinate efforts in this field. This article will furnish some background on the topic, while the two short contributions that follow give the experience of two federations that have made use of twinning.

The "why" of twinning is simple. All of us have become ever more aware that the World CLC Federation is in fact an international community - a community of those groups and members everywhere who are trying to live out Ignatian spirituality as lay people in the world. Twinning is simply one expression of that community. Or, to borrow a phrase from Vatican Council II, it is a "sign and cause" of that community: a sign of the fact that it already exists, a means to help it grow.

But if twinning is to be effective, there are certain conditions needed, as experience has shown. To begin with, it must be, not paternalistic, but an exchange between equal partners. Each of our federations needs the help of others, each has something to share with others. It is the spirit of the contemplation for love in the Spiritual Exercises where, when two people love each other, each is ready to share with the other whatever he has. There are, of course, good reasons why twinning is especially suitable between First World and Third World countries, since a sharing of material resources forms part of it. But the other riches of each country need to be shared too. CLC in one country may possess a well-developed community life, another federation may be outstanding for its balanced and integrated formation, a third may reflect strong commit

ment in the social and political sector. And almost inevitably, twinning will heighten awareness of the economic inequalities between countries, and the challenge to international justice that this poses. So twinning looks to a sharing of many things, perhaps first of all of experiences.

This means too that communication - such things as exchange of CLC publications, of personal correspondence, even of photographs - plays an important part in twinning. And if the opportunity of a visit or a longer stay by a member of one country in the other occurs, this is precious.

If a national federation (or a local CLC) wishes to twin, the next question is, "With which country?". It may be that Federation A already has close contacts with Federation B, and wishes to develop these further. Between some First and Third World countries there may be natural affinities, for any number of reasons. Language needs to be considered too, for at least some leaders in each country need to be able to communicate in some common language.

An important condition is that, to bear its full fruit, twinning should be as widely spread as possible. Ideally, every country would be twinned with at least one other. Another is that any projects involving financial sharing be carefully selected in terms of priorities. To help assure these goals, as well as to sensitize national federations to the values involved, a Committee on Twinning, made up of 4 CLC members from 3 continents, has been set up and will soon be communicating with the national federations in more detail.

One last point. For all the reasons given above, a twinning relationship between national federations can be of real value. At the same time, we should recognize that even more important for building community in CLC are international gatherings where all countries exchange and share (such as the Augsburg Assembly and the Rome '73 Formation Course), the Solidarity Fund, continental or other trips of Executive Council members or other leaders, exchanges between our various international commissions, etc. Sharing and communication of all kinds at all levels is essential if our World Federation is to become ever more truly a world Christian Life Community. Twinning is one im

portant way of furthering this.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL FEDERATIONS

When the Sri Lanka delegates took part in the General Council of Augsburg 1973, we had informal discussions with the Canadian members. Their readiness to understand the problems of Sri Lanka in furthering CLC development brought to our minds the idea of building a partnership in service for the future of our two countries. We were encouraged in our thinking when the World Federation Secretariat issued an information bulletin (PROJECTS n° 10) on "Twinning", and we promptly wrote to the Canadian CLC Federation of our desire to combine our efforts for a more permanent and lasting attachment, particularly because we had by that time received substantial assistance from Canada in the completion of our National Carpentry Training Project building, and towards the National Service Centre plans for the local development of CLC. But "twinning" to us means more than financial assistance. It calls for a fundamental attitude and spirit of partnership, leading to a broad and effective exchange of experiences and a sharing of cultural, spiritual and material resources, as outlined in the Projects article.

We are aware that more than half of what is produced in the world is consumed by only 12% of the world's population, living in the affluent countries. The hardships and disabilities caused to the people in the developing countries by this unequal consumption pattern is something we in Sri Lanka can bring to the conscious understanding of our Canadian brothers and sisters through the CLC. Today the world spends nearly 225 billion dollars on armaments, very largely by the developed countries. If this crazy build-up of weapons of destruction can be arrested and the tremendous energies, capacity and money used for such purposes can be turned over to supply the daily needs of the people in want, then the stern and hard faces of worry and hate will become smiling faces of joy and gladness.

We in Sri Lanka have over the centuries built up oriental traditions based on Hindu, Buddhist and Christian cultures. These enrichments we wish to share with our Canadian brothers and sisters. Our little island is historically

well known for its beauty, as "the pearl of the Indian Ocean." We invite them to come into our midst, live with us, experience our life situations, get to know our strengths and weaknesses and help to kindle the love and joy that living in community with Christ can bring to all people.

Our CLC groups have involved themselves in the social needs of our country - educational training, food production, health, poor relief, destitution in the slums and estate areas, unemployment, community building, etc. Service in these areas calls for updating our action programmes and we look forward to twinning as a means of getting to know the techniques and advancements of the West in meeting these challenging situations more rapidly. On the other hand the West too can learn much from the deep spirituality of the East.

Thus we feel certain that in developing our understanding jointly with Canada in areas of human interest, we shall grow in faith, love, sharing and mutual help, removing injustices wherever they exist, as members of one family working towards the development of a world community through Christ.

- John FERNANDOPULLE
President, Sri Lanka CLC Federation

NEW TWINS !

Ever since Fr. Patrick Perera's visit to Montreal, in 1968, Centre Leunis has kept a special link with CLCs of Sri Lanka. For a few years, especially through our "Comité de développement", we were able to follow the progress of CLCs in that country, and their practical commitment in social needs of their milieu. Our Regina Mundi CLC in Montreal was interested in helping achieve specific projects like the building of a Carpentry Centre for the poor of the slums in Colombo. Moreover, at the international meetings in Rome and Augsburg in 1973, our delegates were able to meet those of Sri Lanka, and they highly appreciated the genuine efforts of the Sri Lanka Federation to live the General Principles and to carry out the teachings of the Holy Father, namely in positive social commitment. When the Sri Lanka Federation asked for a twinning between

our two federations, we felt as if we had already been twins for a while. Our National Executive nevertheless envisaged the pros and cons before making an official decision.

The first difficulty we saw lay in the financial help we had been sending to Sri Lanka. We definitely wanted a twinning, by no means a "sponsoring" of Sri Lanka by a richer country. But we thought that this danger could be avoided on account of the vitality of Sri Lanka CLCs whose experience and commitment could bring such a wealth of inspiration to our own groups. We also thought a special link between our CLCs and a specific country of Asia would help our groups become more vitally aware of the situation in the Third World. There was also the language problem, since our members were French-speaking. But we finally decided the twinning would be only fair, since the contacts would be carried on in English, which is not the mother-tongue of Sri Lanka CLCers either.

The General Assembly of our National Federation confirmed on October 12 the decision of the Executive to accept this "twinning". We are therefore just starting to extend to our groups their kinship with Sri Lanka, but we trust it will be a most valuable experience in the sharing of what we are and what we have.

- Monique BRUNEL

for National Federation of CLCs of Canada

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

DECEMBER 25

REVISITED

Lord, it's a few days after Christmas, and I'm afraid that many of us have already put You away with the rest of our Christmas decorations. Why do we do this to You? Why can't we see that You are a person, alive in us, and not merely a part of the Christmas formalities and trimmings?

We start at the manger each year, Lord, but it seems that too often we stop there. Help us to keep You in mind throughout the year. We really don't want to throw You out with the tree and the tinsel.

Too often my Christmas joy freezes into apathy after I have read the Christmas cards I received. (Help me to at least think about and pray for some of the people I get my cards from!) Too often our holiday plans get in the way of You, and I get wrapped in the trappings and trapped in the wrappings.

Untangle me, Lord. Help get the tinsel out of my hair. Refresh me with the gift of new birth in my life from You each day of the year.

From Pray, Praise and Hooray

Richard Bimler

MISERLOU COMMITS ITSELF

(continued from November issue)

To say that our little community is alive does not mean just that each member prays and seeks the Lord at her own pace, but that all become involved in the different sectors of their life: family, school, parish, community, etc. They all realize that commitment is an answer to a call from God.

Pauline shares with us her reflections:

"For me, commitment means a decision, a choice... Commitment for a believer does not really exist until the day he is ready to hear this call of God in his life,

and to create freely his own answer."

The three team leaders look on their responsibility within the community as a commitment. Here is what Louise thinks:

"My experience as a team leader comes from a commitment I undertook after taking a fuller part in things... This gradually greater involvement led me to take more personal initiative in order to build jointly with others in a constructive way."

With Monique and Joanne, Denise visits regularly the bed-ridden in a hospital. All three thought up the project of lightening the boredom of these lonely patients during the summer vacation, and this effort was approved and in part funded by the government within the framework of the Youth Perspectives Program. Their work consisted in organizing sessions of ceramics, plastic arts, educational games and recreational evenings.

"This summer I want to arrange my work and my leisure on the basis of my love for the Lord... We are five, of whom three belong to Miserlou. Our role is to make the summer season more pleasant for those who live there at the hospital, to give them a summer that they'll never forget because we will be there, bringing happiness." (Denise)

During the year, Anne-Marie and Francine discovered that "commitment means choosing between taking it easy and serving others." Here is why they volunteered to go and work this summer in Haiti:

"Rather than a tourist trip, it's an experience of mutual help, of working together in a team, that I want to live... Still, I must honestly admit that, ten months ago, that is, before I joined Miserlou, I never would have thought of going there..." (Anne-Marie)

And Francine wrote her plans:

"Down there, I will try to share with my Haitian brothers the things I know, my free time, my music. I would like to give them a part of myself... I feel in me a desire for brotherhood and commitment towards the people of this country."

At Christmastime, Madeleine and Dominique took part in a parish activity and "tried to bring joy, friendship and happiness into the homes of elderly persons."

"These friendly people, somewhat forgotten, would no doubt have 'celebrated' Christmas alone. They welcomed us with open arms, as if we were their children. A few simple presents had been prepared as an expression of our friendship: a bottle of cider, some "goodies, a basket of fruit. They listened to our music and our presentations, and chatted gaily and excitedly as they enjoyed the hours we passed in their company."

Some members of Miserlou offered me their help in organizing a second weekend of formation for six new students interested in living in this way. This second weekend gave other young people the chance to discover Jesus in prayer and in a team experience. Afterwards, they became further involved in the student milieu, especially in organizing a big catechetical exposition, a project in which I invited the 200 students I teach to express the values they believed in. Forty booths and stalls on joy, respect for life, solitude, loyalty, etc.! The members of Miserlou really gave witness to their faith by building or helping build stalls about God, hope, silence. This last-mentioned one won first prize; it was the result of their own deep searchings, their own lived experience.

I have to pass over in silence other interesting commitments of theirs with the poor, in their families, in the student milieu. Some of them invited boys to take part in our community life. Jean-Pierre, a friend of Francine, came to see me, took part in a Eucharistic celebration with us and wants to prepare for a mini-experience of silence and retreat. We would like to invite others to share our life and our activities.

"Miserlou has lived some intense experiences in our gatherings and activities and they have left their mark on our faith... That faith, our group wants to translate into commitment, the service of others... Often it is in and through everyday life that solid commitment takes root..." (Anne-Marie)

So now for a year already these students have been making

their path together. They have been a stimulus to each other to progress in the faith by the daily practice of personal prayer, in spiritual discernment by a daily review of their life, in openness to God by their apostolic commitment, growing too in the sense of the Church and sense of community. Anyone acquainted with Ignatian spirituality and with the pedagogy of CLC will easily recognize the basic elements.

To be a member of CLC constitutes a vocation, a call from God. The Spirit will perhaps put into the hearts of some of these young people the desire to take up our way of living. I respect the action of the Lord, for He is the great Pedagogue, and I will try to be attentive to the Spirit when He suggests to me this personal contact, or that topic for a meeting, or that other new activity. That is my method: listening to the Spirit and being alert to his inspirations, being available and at the service of youth so that they can find in me sometimes a teacher, sometimes a friend, but always someone who has met Jesus and who wants to share with others his joy and his love.

- Helene CAMPEAU

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MALTA

YOUTH

A CLC group of 17 schoolgirls (begun last year by Lina Camilleri) met for a weekend renewal. Agnes Bartolo, who helped them plan the retreat, tells us that some very creative presentations were made. One was a dramatization of the Prodigal Son parable by some of the girls.

The members said the presence of Christ was felt intensely during the weekend, in and through certain crisis situations that arose. The session did two things: it strengthened their own youth CLC, and it is having an effect on others in the school through them. Good to hear!

Ignatian Helps To Pray Better

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

by

Louis PAULUSSEN s.j.

"In your prayers do not multiply your words....for your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him"(Mt. 6: 7-8).

Among the directives in the book of the Spiritual Exercises--annotations, additions, notes--there are some that have to do with prayer. About these PROGRESSIO intends to speak, in a series of articles.

These counsels that the Exercises give are intended, first of all, for the time of retreat, but that does not mean they have no value outside these special days. Quite the contrary. The experience of four centuries witnesses to the profound wisdom of these suggestions, applicable - though obviously in a very different way - to the various stages of spiritual evolution.

Besides, a true retreat is, by its very nature, a preparation for ordinary life. This is true above all for CIC members, who mean to live the Exercises in daily life.

Dynamics

To begin, here are some considerations about preparing for prayer. They must be viewed within the context of the dynamic of the Exercises and above all within the framework of the total Christian life, for apart from this the Exercises make no sense. What inspires the Exercises is not an idea, nor a philosophy, nor even a theology, but the person of Jesus, accepted and lived without reserve. He who really lives by Him and in Him, shares his infinite desires. He becomes a fire. In the measure that his fidelity grows, he will share too in the experience of God. Of this God who is always greater than the human heart (see 1 John 3:20). He desires always more. He prepares himself. He prays.

Whoever has come to know somewhat that great Christian who is called Ignatius of Loyola knows that for him, preparation, especially for the Eucharist and for prayer, is of capital importance. He seems forever to be

preparing himself and to be evaluating himself. He is always ardent, but never agitated. When he is at peace, he is never satisfied, never "arrived". His burning thirst: to come ever closer to the mystery of God who communicates himself in all things. He never feels he is sufficiently prepared, sufficiently purified, sufficiently united to his Creator and Lord.

This man of great desires, of aspirations always more universal, it is he who has written the Exercises. It is impossible to understand them without knowing their author. He has lived very deeply the truth that everything on earth is provisional, preparatory, a continual growth in purification-union toward the perfect and eternal union.

It is he who calls prayer: "every way of preparing and disposing" for this purification, for this union. The additions on preparation for prayer that follow are written "to pray better and to find better what one desires" (see Spiritual Exercises 73).

Tranquillity

"After retiring, just before going to sleep, for the space of a Hail Mary, I will think of the hour when I am to rise, and for what; and briefly sum up the exercise I am to go through" (SE 73).

"When I wake up, I will not allow my thoughts to roam at random, but will turn my mind at once to the subject I am about to contemplate..."

"As I dress, I will think over these thoughts or others in keeping with the subject matter" (SE 74).

"Before entering into prayer, I will recollect myself for a while" (SE 239).

An essential element of the Exercises, and of life according to the Exercises, is discernment. I must continually discern the movements taking place within me in order to know, very concretely, God's will for me here and now. On reading these additions, one asks: is all that meant for me too?

Let us try to get at the essentials. Everyone can profit from them. The directives given above all aim at the same thing: to make my whole person tranquil and calm, to fix my attention so that my spirit will not be divided

by the multiplicity of things that endlessly assail me. Above all in today's world, it seems indispensable to surround the night with a minimum of concentration. In preparing oneself in this way for prayer, one yields oneself more easily and with confidence to sleep, image of death. During these hours of darkness, God continues to love us in his Son, as his sons. It is not then so much a matter of adhering to rules of external behaviour but rather of entering, without any pressure, into recollection; or better still, into interior silence and spiritual repose. Viewed in this way, these additions are extremely precious: one observes them without agitation, in liberty of spirit and with a great tranquillity and peace. And then my prayer will be quite and tranquil too. Am I ever sufficiently calm in prayer?

Respect

"A step or two before the place where I am to meditate or contemplate I will stand for the space of an Our Father, with my mind raised on high, and consider that God our Lord beholds me, etc. Then I will make an act of reverence or humility" (SE 75).

Any preparation introduces to, and in some way begins, that for which it prepares us. The Christian life prepares us for eternal life and this begins already here below. The additions on preparation show that to prepare oneself for prayer is already to pray.

These additions spontaneously make me think of that wonderful parable in which Jesus instructs us about our attitudes in prayer. Our external attitudes, but above all our interior ones. The account, invented by the heart of Jesus, is one of those gospel gems that one never stops admiring and contemplating:

"The publican stood some distance away, not even daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner'" (Luke 18:13).

There we see the grandeur of respect, of humility: to stay at a distance, head bowed, confessing himself a sinner. In prayer rarely am I calm enough. And it is also true that I am never humble enough. Humility is the truth

lived out. In my prayer, am I truthful enough?

Gift of Self

"It will be very profitable for the one who is to go through the Exercises to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity toward his Creator and Lord, and to offer Him his entire will and liberty, that his Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all that he possesses according to his most holy divine will"(SE 5).

One may be surprised. Even before beginning, the author of the Exercises demands already this total abandonment, this complete gift of self, expressed(as the fruit of the Exercises) in the final prayer "Take, Lord and receive"(SE 234). Still, there is nothing which should surprise us in this. It is the law of all of life: from the start, everything is there, as in a seed. Mysteriously hidden, but really there,all. And yet, all must still develop in and through a progressive experience.

Jesus too asks for everything from the beginning(see Luke 14:26). Ignatius proposes to candidates for the Society of Jesus the most radical self-renunciation. And our General Principles start by presenting the challenge of the complete gift of ourselves(GP 1, 2).

In truth, can one speak of an authentic Christian life if one does not desire to lose his life(see Luke 9 : 24)? And if I do not desire it, then - to use again the words of Ignatius to candidates - do I not at least desire to desire it? Is it possible to pray, to "prepare and dispose" myself for purification and union with Jesus, if at the same time I oppose myself to "his most holy will"? To pray is to dispose myself to say yes to the infinite desires of Jesus that live within me; it is to let myself be grasped by his thrust of love towards the Father and towards all men. Isn't it normal to prepare one self for this, one's heart opened wide and totally ready for the divine action?

To begin my prayer with "magnanimity and generosity" means not only openness to God, but also receptivity towards everyone. That means wanting to bring with me all my brothers and sisters, all men, and to be listening to

their needs, their aspirations. "for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all men" (GP 2).

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Is there anything more personal than prayer, above all "personal prayer"(GP 4)?

But in prayer, all are called to true tranquillity and calm, for prayer is like the seventh day of creation. I occupy myself with God.

All are called to respect and humility, for I am face to face with God.

All are called to grow continually in the gift of self, for God is Love, always greater than our hearts.

ECHOES

LIBERATION

Europe: A week-long Study Session on Liberation drew 37 participants from 10 countries, including 2 other continents. Lively exchanges pointed up the need for deeper integration of CLC spirituality and our commitment to liberation. The session urged the formation of national core groups on liberation, better sharing of tools and resources in the struggle for justice, implementation of means to achieve the integration mentioned. It took action too on a specific problem of justice in one of the countries.

Japan: The national Congress, preceded by 3 training courses, had as theme "What do you value?". Writes Kenichi Miyasaka: "We felt the starting point of liberation in Japan was not big political or social problems, but the problems around us - air pollution, water pollution... The focus of Japanese society is not on "mankind". So we must start the action from the problems of ourselves."

Zambia: The Workbook of the Christian Life Groups covers all facets of CLC living, including social consciousness and commitment. Here are some of the questions

that introduce concrete exercises: What has independence achieved? What remains to be done?.... How does illiteracy make it difficult to improve the living standards of our people? What can we do about it as a group? What will I do as an individual member?.... How does God reveal Himself in the needs of our times? What are some of the needs of our times - in Zambia?

World: The Liberation Commission of the World Federation sent to each national federation 9 copies of a questionnaire on attitudes to liberation, to be answered by persons of different age, sex, social class, and length of CLC membership. It is hoped thus to get a much more exact profile of understanding of and attitudes towards liberation and social justice among CLC members.

FORMATION Mexico: The Formation Course at Puente Grande, modelled on Rome '73, was a mile stone in Mexican CLC history. A hundred members took part in its second week, and two-thirds of these had made the Spiritual Exercises under 8 Jesuit guides the week preceding. Many young men and women took part.

Europe: Similar Formation Courses (that is, based on the Rome '73 Course, with certain adaptations) were held on a continental level in 3 locations and 3 languages (English, French, German), and drew 123 participants from 13 countries. All 3 courses were viewed as highly effective in deepening the members' grasp and living of the CLC way of life.

India: "Our CLC Moderators' Course, October 2-14, went deeply into the CLC themes of the Spiritual Exercises, gift of self, community, mission of liberation, commitment to CLC. We had to turn away 10 applicants, as 30 was all we could handle. And 4 came from Sri Lanka..."

COMMUNICATION Latin America: Since taking up his post as full-time CLC continental assistant, Father Gonzalez-Tarrio has already visited CLC lay leaders and assistants in Mexico, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. Earlier he had visited Brazil. Everywhere he finds interest and enthusiasm, and in several countries, considerable promise. His hope is, during the coming year, to spend a longer time in some of these coun-

tries, as well as make first contact with some others.

U.S.A.: This past summer, the US Federation sponsored a national tour by the "Followers of the Way", a group of 7 young CLC musicians from all over the country. From July 21-September 15 the troupe lived as a Christian Life Community, travelled some 6000 miles, visited 11 cities, and performed for 4000 people. Through their music, the "Followers" were able to share the message of Jesus Christ and the CLC way of life with others. Their witness made a significant impact on many, something surely due to the work of the Holy Spirit. Praise and thank the Lord!

Madagascar: FIRAISAN-KINA (LINK), the review of the Young Christians of Today (CLC youth groups), is serving its purpose well of linking the different groups together. Two recent contributions: "Prayer in our life as Christians - do we know how to include in it the problems of others? And how to speak to the Lord of others? Do we know how to take part in and how to further community prayer?" (Aimé Randria). And from the group of Antonibe: "Last year we organized a dramatic production: the receipts allowed us to install a pump for drinking water... We have helped the poor to build huts as well as pens for the animals, and helped too in the work of the rice paddies from February to May, and especially in the June harvest."

France: The National Congress of the French CLCs (the movement in France is a single national association rather than a federation), held every 3 years, took place at Versailles November 1-3. Well over 400 members (including about a hundred children, since many couples were in attendance) took part. The Congress reflected the maturity and lay responsibility of the Association. In setting its future orientations, stress was placed on Ignatian spirituality, mission of liberation, community, and youth.

Socio-economic Situations
Around the World

THE FAMINE IN THE

SAHEL REGION

By Aude Raiga

The special point of this article is to underline how important it is to assemble the most precise data possible regarding a problem and, by reflection and an evaluation of the different factors, to analyze a complex situation. This effort constitutes a necessary step in discerning apostolic priorities and the specific action to which they call us. (Editor's note)

The European CLC session held this past summer on the problems of liberation insisted on how urgent and imperative it is that each one be committed. But there is still the need to know where and how to carry on this unremitting struggle.

Everyone is aware, of course, of the great crimes against humanity that occur today, whatever the terms used to describe them. But there is more to it than that. These striking attacks on human dignity should not hide from our view the whole forest, thick and sometimes gloomy, of the collective sufferings of men in all our societies. Do we know how to open our eyes and our heart to all the aspirations that men have to greater dignity and freedom, even if these movements take forms that sometimes repel us: youth, women, ethnic minorities, etc.

But to see the problems of liberation that, far or near, challenge us, is not only to be informed about them but also to know how to analyze them in their true dimensions, with their causes and their origins, their links to other problems. Unless we do this, we reduce them to the level of unrelated events, or of blemishes in our social systems that call for public or private assistance.

During this year, we will try to show what that might

mean in certain concrete cases, purposely chosen from very different fields. The first, today, will be that of the famine existing in the Sahel region of Africa. It is a drama that would seem to be a "natural catastrophe" and so to have no relation to the struggle for liberation. But is not our first task to push back the frontiers of knowledge regarding this accident; since, for thousands of years, ignorance has shrouded in mystery many aspects of man's exploitation of man. Catastrophes of nature are rarely natural in all their aspects.

INFORMATION

Here, briefly summarized, are the main facts furnished by the world press:

- a famine has for two years been ravaging the six countries of the Sahel - the section of Africa on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, between the 13th and 14th degrees north latitude - as well as other regions further to the east: Ethiopia and northern Kenya, central Asia, certain sections of India.
- in the region of Africa the worst affected live six million persons directly menaced by starvation. The havoc wrought is already catastrophic. In Senegal, Niger and Mauritania, 90% of the cattle have died.
- taken together, the 6 countries are lacking more than a million tons of grain. The production of rice, which has not been irrigated because the rivers are dry, is very small. The harvest of millet and sorghum is being consumed by the peasants, including even that earmarked for seed. Even this is not enough for their needs, whereas usually some is sold on the market.
- the number of infants and of elderly people dying has risen astronomically. The most conservative estimates put the deaths in Ethiopia alone at several tens of thousands of persons.
- the famine is essentially the result of insufficient rainfall over several years. Since 1971, it has been only 1/4 or 1/5 of normal, a situation which has not existed since 1913.
- the international assistance appears massive (700,000 to

900,000 tons of grain promised), but it is insufficient and is often stacked up in the port cities because of lack of means of transportation.

Beyond the official information given out, which is often incomplete, we must search out what really is at stake in this drama:

- the human lives.
- the irreparable material losses: the grain for seed that has now been consumed, the cattle and livestock too small in number to reproduce the herds formerly existing, the terrain now definitely won over by the desert. In a word, often the total loss of means of production for entire regions.
- the irreparable havoc wrought too on civilizations and ways of living: the massive exodus of nomadic populations towards the south, who will never go back to their region and who are creating new slums near the cities; the separation of families, who will probably never again be united; the sale of land and of animals that survive to the rich, thus increasing the proletarianization of whole tribes, etc.
- the danger of genocide through the disappearance of certain nomads like the Touaregs, who seem to be getting very little help from some governments.

From all this we can see how technical and financial help, while urgent and needed, cannot be enough. It definitely needs to be accompanied by a long-term water conservation program (dams, wells, etc.) so that the people can little by little manage to control the water resources.

But can we stop there?

SEEKING THE CAUSES

We have just seen that these peoples do not need alms, but rather short-term and long-term assistance. But this problem of water, is it only a technical problem? Here we need to ask a number of questions:

- 1) The causes of this insufficiency of water, are they all "natural"? Geographical experts tell us that it has been

caused by disturbance in the circulation of the winds that bring the rain (monsoon and trade-winds), which recently have not gone beyond the tenth degree of latitude (in place of, which is usual, the twenty-fifth). Apparently, nothing but an occurrence of nature. And yet, some experts call attention to the role - difficult to measure with precision - both of air pollution which modifies the makeup of the higher atmosphere, (1) and of the thin film of oil covering part of the oceans and perhaps affecting the volume of evaporation and so of rain.

2) But why is the research into climatology and geology (better understanding of the water stretches underneath the Sahara) so feeble in comparison with research in other areas (military, technological, psychological effectiveness of advertising, etc.)? Why have the efforts at "cloud-seeding (to bring about rain) been so late in coming and so small here? The first serious attempt took place in 1973 with just one plane using...kitchen salt! Another attempt was made in 1974 with some iodide of silver.

3) Why is it so difficult to get the help that is given distributed? The former colonizers hardly paid attention to means of transportation to reach these distant areas, being interested instead in furnishing transportation above all for purposes that were military or commercial (to facilitate the withdrawal of raw materials, for example).

4) Why did the peasants have such small reserves in grain and other food products, when this was something arranged for in their older economic structure, better adapted to this more-or-less-regular return of drought?

5) Why are so many persons in these countries profiting from this drought: speculators who hoard and sell the grain given from abroad, property-owners now buying up more land and flocks, officials who take their "cut" for passing on what is given, etc.?

THE THREE BIG PROBLEMS

In analyzing, then, the situation a little more deeply, one perceives emerging three main problems regarding

(1) Stockholm Conference, 1973

which one must ferret out the facts:

- the expansion of the desert
- the change in agricultural structures
- the change in social and economic structures.

Expansion of the Desert

For dozens of years, the expansion of the desert area has been taking place according to a well-recognized process:

- tilling land from which the woods have been burned off
- which involves a massive deforestation
- and results in the production of a type of soil that is unproductive
- all this completed by over-pasturing, as a result of which the goats finish the destruction of the vegetation.

All this has been the traditional pattern. But the problem has been considerably magnified by the increase in the population and the desire to increase production: the deforested parcel is tilled until the soil is exhausted, the flocks of goats are increased beyond the amount of pasture available, etc. As in practically all the regions of the Third World, the techniques permitting the lowering of the human mortality rate have progressed much faster than the means for planning the spacing of births, and above all, more than the techniques allowing food production to be safely increased.

Agricultural Production

If these peoples have been so defenseless in the face of the drought, it is because many of them have given up the traditional tilling of the land to provide their own living in favor of tilling for export - peanuts, sugar, cotton, which apparently pay more - and the result has been:

- lack of enough food reserves
- dependence on purchase from abroad of rice or wheat
- a decrease in revenue when prices go down, as well as

being at the mercy of price changes.

A large part of the research, equipment, and training of the peasants has been given to this sector of exports rather than to tillage for a living. Because of this, the productivity in this latter sector has been quite poor and very liable to climatic hazards. While the overall production has increased by 2.5% to 2.8% per year, the production of cereals has increased only by 0.8% to 1.1% annually.

Social and Economic Structures

One sees then taking place in these regions the complete overturning of the traditional structures, a process that seems to introduce a system quite coherent within itself. For some dozens of years one has seen developing:

- tilling for export, which
 - brings big revenue to the oil companies, the commercial associations, the officials, etc., but very little to the peasants
 - opens the traditional sector to the "market economy" and to dependence on money for taxes, credit, and commercial penetration. The old abuses in trade have been restricted, but have not completely disappeared
- large modern plantations belonging either to the great proprietors or to companies, which accentuate this phenomenon by using as hired workers the peasants who have not been able to survive the monetary economy.

The recent famine is in danger of accelerating the process:

- The peasants or stock growers who have lost everything have no choice but to hire themselves out to the industrial and agricultural enterprises
- The proprietors and the companies are buying up the land and the livestock: one sees starting up modern "ranches" producing meat for export. The buying up of land by feudal Ethiopian landowners and by some businessmen of Upper Volta are equally indicative
- The nomads and the traditional peasants are in danger of disappearing.

Here is the conclusion of a journalist recently returned from the Sahel area, (2) one which agrees with many other recent economic analyses: "Thus will be created a class of agricultural wage-earners on the land conveniently emptied of its occupants, and there will develop by means of the famine a highly productive agriculture, subject, like cotton and peanut growing, to the requirements of the profit economy." The drama of Sahel cannot be isolated from the ensemble of economic structures created in the "traditional" sectors by the industrial economy before and since colonization.

CONCLUSION

It seems essential then not to isolate the cases of oppression that we suffer or about which we know, but to carry our analysis of them to the level of a global explanation of the economic and social system that creates them. It is the condition for being effective in the battle to end them. It is also the criterion for the reality of our commitment. Each one should be capable of questioning in part or as a whole the economic system within which he lives, and perhaps by which he lives.

More than that. It is a means by which each one can feel that he is not exterior to these dramas, even when he is not personally involved in them. The economic and social system, which plays an important part in most of the great disasters, is at work everywhere, whatever the country, social class, or the profession in question. Each man is only a cog in its machinery. It is up to each person to live this reality either in a complacent and uncomprehending fashion, or in a way that is active and effective in this struggle for its transformation, a struggle that is worldwide.

(2) Thierry Brun, Croissance des Jeunes Nations, May 1974