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Wild air, world-mothering air,
Nestling me everywhere,
My more than meat and drink,
My meal at every wink;
This air, which, by life's law
My lung must draw and draw.

Now but to breathe its praise,
Minds me in many ways
Of her who not only
Gave God's infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast,
Birth, milk, and all the rest
But mothers each new grace
That does now reach our race.

Mary Immaculate,
Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess's
Was deemed, dreamed; who
This one work has to do-
Let all God's glory through
God's glory which would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.
And men are meant to share
Her life as life does air.

Be thou then, O thou dear
Mother, my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O live air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee isled,
Fold home, fast fold they child.

"The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe",
(excerpts) - Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

IGNATIAN DYNAMIC OF THE MEDITATION ON THE FOUNDATION

Gilles CUSSON s.j.

In practice, we know, St. Ignatius used to begin the Spiritual Exercises with the First Week, that is, with the first exercise, that on the three sins (n° 45). It was at Paris that he introduced the present text of the Principle and Foundation (n° 23). The autograph Directories are informative on this subject: the text of the Foundation was to establish a bridge between the preparation made beforehand and one's entry into the Exercises. At that time Ignatius asked only that the text in question be stated ("de clarar" in the Spanish) as a basic principle that he considered to be already accepted, so as then to pass at once to the first exercise. Later, because of the increased number of persons wanting to make the Exercises - persons, no doubt, whose preparation for the experience was less certain - Ignatius accepted the suggestion of his companions: that of having the person "meditate" the Foundation. As a result this involved proposing it in the form of "points" (see the Directory of Polanco), at the beginning of, and within, the Exercises retreat itself.

This short account of a long process of development allows us to single out better the dynamic of the meditation on the Foundation in the Exercises experience as it is made today. It is obvious that this "meditation" is presented as a foundation that must be assured in order to have a solid basis for the spiritual journey of integration and of assimilation of the gospel that the Exercises pedagogy sets before us.

Drawing, then, as much as possible on the intuition of Ignatius and the evolution briefly noted above that it went through, we can determine the goal of this meditation and the way to present it today by reference to the experience to follow, which will basically depend on it. The logical and dynamic relationship to establish between this necessary base and the intelligent pursuit of a particular spiritual experience ought to be clear in our minds if we hope to respect its function and to obtain the results in-

tended.

The meditation on the Foundation involves, in essence, recreating the CONTEXT OF FAITH (the objective content of the experience) in which we must concretely SITUATE OURSELVES (the subjective experience) in order to unleash the experience of DEEPENING A LIFE OF FAITH BASED ON THE GOSPELS that the Exercises stimulate and guide (the objective and subjective poles of the experience). If the meditation on the Foundation is understood in this way, the experience that follows will then of necessity make explicit the hope and love in the concrete life of the person (1st Week), fitting him(or her) for a radical gospel commitment in his personal life today (2nd Week), and for an effective and continuing sharing in the paschal mystery (3rd and 4th Weeks). Keeping in mind the long journey to be traveled to arrive at this effective sharing - which is what the ordinary Christian life is all about - one can with better insight lay this faith-foundation which the meditation on the Principle and Foundation aims to assure.

How then should one present this meditation on the Foundation? How should one go about it, in view of the experience to follow that, with the grace of God, it is to stimulate? I would distinguish here between the content of the exercise and the way to go about it.

I usually sum up the content of the exercise in this expression, which conveys only a hint of the inexhaustible riches of it: "the basic or global vision of the Christian faith". What the exercitant should even now be able to open himself to is the ensemble of the mystery of revelation, so as to willingly accept it and situate himself within that optic, which is the truth. Perhaps one will object that is the goal of the entire Spiritual Exercises. No; it is only the necessary foundation for them; the Exercises will make this more explicit in an unforeseen way. The aim then in the Foundation is to become aware of the vastness and richness of the "yes" of faith (Revelation) with regard to the whole of created existence, to acquire a global grasp of this, to be able to refer to it spontaneously, to situate one's true personality (historical, psychological, social and spiritual) with in that perspective, progressively to live it. Then, on this global foundation that one has acquired - and not just at the level of understanding and of comprehension

but at that of concrete living - one will be able, in faith and hope, to launch into the no-less-effective experience of integrating the sector of evil - that of the universe, of our world, of society and of one's own life.

Where draw the matter and content for this basic experience of the Christian faith-vision? In biblical terms, evidently in the whole of Revelation, which runs from Genesis to the Apocalypse and which, by evoking the experience of "our ancestors in the faith" (the experience of the Living God among the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Wise Men and that of the Living Christ among the Apostles), opens to us step by step its inexhaustible treasure. In the direct words of Ignatius, we have only the very first lines of the text on the Principle and Foundation: God, man, and all the things on the face of the earth... Indirectly, we have at our disposition the broad vision of faith that came to Ignatius from the meditations at Loyola and the graces of Manresa; and it is above all the illumination he received at Cardoner which constitutes the backdrop for this fundamental Ignatian meditation.

How go about this meditation? By CONTEMPLATING it. For Ignatius, it is not a question here of first presenting a conference, but rather offering a subject for contemplation ... and for a practical exercise. One doesn't learn only by reflecting. But, starting from an intellectual grasp of the interpretation of created existence, understood in the light of faith, one "learns" to situate oneself, to live in this world of light, of relationships, of life, of covenant that is revealed by the faith.

I ask of the exercitant, in carrying out this meditation, three things: 1°-to nourish his vision of faith (i. e., to explore this revelation of a world of vital relationships, both universal and personal, all basically oriented towards Life); 2°- within this framework of interpretation, to pray very much; 3°- to live by situating himself continually as much as possible in concrete life, within this network of relationships, within this "light of life".

It is after he has sufficiently exercised himself in this foundation that the person will find himself ready to enter into "exercises of integration", that is, to confront himself with the universal and personal force of Evil, this unavoidable problem that underlies all existence

in search of salvation. This will be the very summit of this faith-vision, accepted in its totality, which can then effectively accomplish its work in the First Week: to know the saving love of God, revealed in Christ come to save us from evil:

... how, though he is the Creator, He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life to death here in time.
(Exercises n° 53)

In closing, let us go back to the text itself of the Foundation (n°23). If we restore to it its first function in the mind of Ignatius (i.e., to be proposed as the conclusion of a long stage of preparation "in the faith"), we see it fulfill its role in making explicit the simple necessity posed by our grasp of our situation in the faith: that of rightly ordering ourselves in consequence of this. Then the Exercises can begin with this specific outlook: first to order ourselves in the face of evil (1st Week), so as to be able afterwards, in freedom, to order ourselves more radically in love and according to the Spirit of love (2nd Week).

If we take the text as its function was later seen, let us be alert to the snare presented by the "letter" of the text. Its first declarations, in the mind of Ignatius, are a subject for contemplation (for exercises to be performed) and not for a conference (philosophical, theological or other). As we saw, it is on this subject matter of contemplation that the exercise focuses. As to the rest of the text (in so far as, indifference, etc.), it is not properly speaking the object of an exercise. Rather it specifies the proper fruit (what I desire) of this initial and basic contemplation (what follows from this long "preparation in the faith"). It is not, indeed, by talking about indifference that one becomes indifferent. Rather, the more one contemplates in faith the vast, dynamic plan of God for the created universe and for the vocation of man, the more will grow this "disponibility" or openness which is the unconditional desire to order one's life according to the ways of God (a definition, in other terms, of Ignatian indifference). And that will be the fruit of the contemplation on the Foundation.

* * * *

Note: We call the attention of our readers to two books by the same author on the subject of the Exercises in which the theme of this article is much more fully developed.

- Pédagogie de l'expérience spirituelle personnelle (DDB et Bellarmin, 1968, Montréal, 427 pages). On the Bible and the Exercises. The book also exists in Spanish under the title Experiencia personal del misterio de salvación (1973). It is now being translated into English in Canada.
- Conduis-moi sur le chemin d'éternité (Bellarmin, Montréal and Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1973, 220 pages). On the Exercises made while continuing daily life. Translated into Portuguese, in Brazil. In process of translation into Spanish and English. Official handler in Europe: Libreria, Università Gregoriana, Roma.

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"LORD, SIGHT THAT I MAY FREE"

by Raynah STANLEY
Sidney d'SOUZA s.j.

The work here described is but a small part of the vast activity in various fields of Seva Niketan, 6-story social action centre in Bombay, which also houses the National CLC Secretariat.

Originally known as Sodality House, the centre continues even now to involve the dedicated efforts of a number of CLC leaders and members, in addition to that of many other persons of varying religious beliefs. (Editors' Note)

"We are proud to state that over the past 20 years, India's overall food production has increased by 100%. Indeed, a green revolution has filled our storehouses....." so says the politician. The common man, he laughs. One can detect a note of despair in that laughter. "Has it ever filled our stomachs?" he asks. Over 400 of India's 560 million inhabitants could voice that question for themselves and the 13 million babies that are added to the population every year.

Three fourths of India's population live below the poverty line! Eighty percent of our people are farmers, and seventy percent of these live in abject poverty, even by admittedly low Indian standards, with a per capita, per day consumer expenditure of only about 74 paise. (equivalent to about 10 cents). Over-dependence on the monsoon months, fragmentation of land holdings, primitive methods of cultivation and countless hazards from pests, floods etc., make their plight a sad one indeed. Farming in India is still a gamble with regard to the rains. When the farmer loses in this gamble time and time again, he and his landless workers turn their steps towards the big city, literally pushed there by the poverty and hunger that threaten to devour their weakened and frustrated selves. Perhaps he comes with hope in his heart to live afresh. But the struggle for survival is even greater for the poor man in

the city than in the village.

Yet the exodus to the cities continues, 1000 to 1500 per day into Greater Bombay, bringing serious problems in its wake. Housing is one of them. These people are forced to eke out a miserable existence huddled together in little hovels with no sanitation, no fresh air, no light and some times even, no water supply. There are about 400 such slums in the city of Bombay alone, housing about a million people. Added to these are the over 90,000 pavement-dwellers who are even worse off. Accommodation is a problem and yet, the fight for survival makes the need for accommodation so secondary!

Our liberational efforts at Seva Niketan are directed towards such families through our Community Organisation Programmes. "Darga Gulli" in Bombay, is one such slum area singled out for our attention. It is a predominantly Muslim area, congested, with 1800 families living well below the poverty line. Most adults try to work as daily labourers or are self-employed as hawkers, vendors, coolies, scrap pickers etc., earning a monthly income of about Rs. 100 - and even less.

Here, in November 1974, we conducted a Community Health Survey of 300 families living within a radius of about 100 meters. Our findings revealed the following: There are 930 adults, 490 children between the ages of six and fourteen, 325 toddlers and 70 infants below the age of one year. About 30 mothers were expecting a child. Tuberculosis was detected in 40 of these families. A thorough examination of the children below five years revealed that 90% of them suffer from worm infection, 80% have anemia, some of these being severe cases, with blood tests showing results as low as 4.2 grams which should normally be about 12 to 13 grams; 40% have rickets and 40% to 50% are acutely undernourished.

Our survey was by no means exhaustive. But our findings so far clearly showed a very pressing need to educate the people, show them local resources and give them guidance in how to take account of nutritional values in their

purchasing, for more healthy living. Ignorance, lack of cleanliness, unbalanced diet, faulty feeding habits and carelessness are some of the causes of their ill-health, not to mention the widespread shortage and price rise of food. Enough rice and wheat is the diet of the rich; while meat, milk, sugar are found on the tables of kings, to the limit of their aspirations. Is it any wonder then, that India has been called "a miracle of survival"? According to World Health Organisation figures, 52% to 55% of our people suffer from severe malnutrition. The average Indian consumes about 1750 calories and even less, while the average human requirement is about 2400 to 2800 calories. If there is no strength to live, can we talk about a will to work? to do social action? stir up a revolution? When a slum leader, head of his family of 6 was asked: "What future do your children have?" he replied: "Oh, well... hungry dogs learn how to search from lane to lane."

Ill-health and malnutrition in early years is a serious handicap, almost irreparable for later development and for creation of a will to live and work. Consequently, our findings also urged us to launch out on a Community Health Education Project, putting all we have and can get into a scheme consisting of an ante-natal clinic, an under five-years clinic, and one for those with tuberculosis.

Most of the children born in the slums are weak and unhealthy right from birth. The expectant mother, under-nourished herself, and probably weighed down by the problems of the family, struggling to make ends meet, gives little thought to her health and that of the child in her womb. Child-bearing for the average mother in the slum is not only painful, but it also endangers her life. Lack of care during pregnancy, ill-health, unhygienic and unskilled methods of the midwife who is generally one of the slum-dwellers, are responsible for this. Maternity deaths are very common. In Maharashtra State alone, on an average, about 3400 such deaths take place every year. Through our ante-natal clinic we aim at helping the mother and child so that the foundation can be laid for the growth and healthy living of a new generation - a generation that can

look forward to a more purposeful existence than their parents could ever hope for. Expectant mothers are given a check-up every week and are provided with the necessary medicines and food supplements they may require. Sessions on topics such as health, hygiene and child-care are also given to them through talks and audio-visual aids.

The Under-Five Clinic is also well under way. All efforts at the moment are concentrated on treating the children for intestinal parasites and building up hemoglobin through a vitamin and protein supplement. Towards the end of the first day of thorough check-ups, the tired doctor ordered. "Put all these children on an intensive and massive A and D program and spare no one your worm medicine," then reflectingly added, "God help you produce the quantities required!"

We have had to rely entirely on the generosity of others for our Project to materialize. The Catholic Relief Services provided us with oil and bulgur, C.A.S.A. with milk-powder. Thanks to this we are able to provide the children with the nourishment they are so much in need of. One of the big hospitals in Bombay, the Nair Hospital, has provided us with a generous supply of Polio and Triple Antigen Vaccines, as the majority of the children have still to be immunised. This means a big step forward in the prevention of Polio, Tetanus, Whooping Cough and Diphtheria among this vulnerable group.

The tuberculosis Clinic has not yet started. But we have been "promised" the voluntary services of a doctor and free medicines. In the meanwhile, the 8% to 10% of our weakened slum-dwellers apply themselves less and less to work, earn less ... eat less ... but spread the disease more.

This then, is one of our projects, a drop in the ocean perhaps, when we consider the colossal task of up-

lifting the oppressed in India. We can only hope to lend "a helping hand". That is what our centre aims at: to do what we can, in the best way we can; to sensitize the people who care and make them aware of the appalling conditions under which the majority of our neighbours live. If all could only live simply, so that others may simply live! If there were many many more to lend a helping hand, then perhaps, we would see the realization of that dream for which the great Indian poet Tagore prayed: "Into that haven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."

* * * *

Note of World Federation Secretariat

We received this week the following letter from a CLC family :

"I am sending you a check for \$50, and I would like this money to be used in one of the countries suffering from hunger. This money was saved up by our family by having a weekly "hunger meal". I wonder if you could have this money sent to a CLC which would use it in their struggle against the hunger the poor suffer from! As we will be meeting the person in charge of the action program described above some time during the summer, we will surely be glad to give him this sum and any others already received or which might be received for this purpose.

* * * *

CHRISTIAN LIFE YOUTH GROUPS
IN SOUTH AFRICA

The membership of our Christian Life Groups in South Africa includes a cross-section of the youth of the country. We have groups or members from the various races: African, Chinese, Coloured, European and Indian. Some are school and some are parish groups, according to need. Some groups consist of Catholics only, others include some members from the Methodist, Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian and other Churches. In our youth groups, which we view as a kind of training-ground for eventual involvement in adult Christian Life Communities as such, these fellow-Christians are free to come into the movement as much or as little as they like. This situation arose originally from the fact that many children who are not Catholics nevertheless attend Catholic schools and have felt drawn toward the CLG way of life. The happy result is that there has come about in an unforced way a sharing of much that all Christians have in common, but at the same time differences are respected, not watered down: a tremendous contribution to ecumenism. The school groups are based mainly in Convent or Brothers' schools, but there are also some in Government schools. Both the privileged and the underprivileged have the opportunity to form groups. Moving on from school age, there are College, University or Armed Forces' groups, Nurses' groups, and Parish Young Adult groups, made up as above of a cross-section of our society.

The Christian Life Groups in South Africa in their present form began about five years ago. This was done mainly by developing school groups with the help of Sisters and Brothers teaching in the schools. By 1971 it had become possible to start an annual four-month training course for religious, priests or lay-people, and these trained workers have, since then, been able to give full- or part-time service in establishing new groups, helping those already established, and giving training and formation courses to both members of groups and their Assistants.

Formation takes place all the time, of course, in the meetings of the groups, usually once a week, and in their various activities. To assist this on-going formation we produced an "Aid Book" for leaders and Assistants of groups in 1973. This book contains the fruit of the annual train-

ing courses and of the experience of many groups; it also includes introductory material on C.L.G. and on forming groups. We hope to issue supplements to this book as more material on the practical running of groups becomes available. Clearly, however, this covers only a relatively superficial area, and the formation of more deeply committed groups is advanced by means of Leadership Courses (of which more will be said at the end of this article) and, most important of all, by "koinonumens".

A koinonumen can be defined as a group-centred retreat of a particular kind. The word "koinonumen" itself, made from the Greek root meaning 'share', and with connotations of the New Testament 'koinonia' - the Christian fellowship - stands for fourteen English words: 'we make and are made one in unity with each other and with Christ'. By using the one word 'koinonumen', the meaning and purpose of the retreat can be briefly summed up.

The principal method used in a koinonumen is a sharing, not of intellectual ideas, but of persons. There is no discussion, no debate, no talks from the one leading the koinonumen, no inter-action. Sharing takes place in several ways and on different levels:

- 1) By sharing reactions to simple but basic and reality-orientated questions on a theme suited to the group and based directly or indirectly on Scripture. These reactions are shared by speaking (the 'making'), and by listening (the 'being made'). Anyone who feels unable to share on a particular questions, and who simply and honestly says so, is considered in fact to be sharing by that very simplicity and honesty. (In spoken sharing, 'I', and not 'you', 'we', or 'one' is used, in order to avoid non-personal reactions of the 'preaching' or evasion kind.) Usually the theme is chosen and very carefully worked out beforehand, but it may, and often must, be adjusted to the needs of the group. Only a very experienced person could take this a step further and develop the whole theme by discovering the needs of the group in the actual course of the koinonumen. This would make a close analogy to the individually-guided retreat, but in terms of a group. (It may be mentioned here that koinonumens are led only by those who have first had the practical experience of the four-month training course.)

- 2) By sharing in the non-verbal communication of a living silence of awareness outside the spoken sharings.

The degree of communication in 1) and 2) is established by a group consensus at the start of the koinonumen. 'Minimal' communication means that attendance at the group sharings would be optional, and that outside the sharings, conversations with anyone on any topic could take place. 'Partial' communication means that everyone would attend the group sharings, but that outside these, conversations on the theme might take place with one or a few of the group. 'Total' communication means that all attend the group sharings, and that otherwise there is no spoken conversation, only non-verbal communication. Normally a group chooses 'total' communication either at the first consensus or later during the koinonumen. Sometimes this means great generosity on the part either of a few or of a majority of the group. This generosity, too, forms part of the sharing. There is never a majority decision. It must always be a group consensus on this or any other point of decision during the koinonumen.

3) By sharing prayer, and by sharing the fruit of times of personal prayer which have taken place outside the group sharings. In this as in all the other spoken sharings, it must always be appropriate. To put it in another way, each participant must rely on the Holy Spirit to judge what and how far he should share.

4) By sharing in the Eucharist, which is usually celebrated in a somewhat informal way, if this seems to increase its meaningfulness for the group.

5) By sharing the ordinary activities of the day, for example, meals, washing up, laying tables, and this without any set rota, but with everyone helping.

6) By each member of the group sharing with Christ in an individual koinonumen, restoring lost unity with Christ and with oneself by means of Confession (informal when this is found helpful, as it very often is) and counsel. A very important point is that this 'sacred area' is never shared with the group.

A koinonumen usually lasts about 36 hours, from 6 PM the first evening till after lunch on the third day. Informality and a relaxed atmosphere are emphasised. The self-denial, which can be very demanding, is in the different forms of sharing rather than in the more customary ways of fasting, less sleep, and so on.

(Continued next issue)

EUROPEAN CLC YOUTH LAYING
PLANS FOR COURSE

Angela Clarke (Great Britain)
and Helen Muller (Germany), Eur
ope's 2 Youth Commission repre

sentatives, on March 25 sent a letter to "all National Fed
erations of Europe and those responsible for Youth CLCs on
the national level", which said, in part :

- "During our evaluation of the questionnaires you sent
us last year we found that all countries wish to have a
Youth Formation Course on the European level. There is
not much time, but we decided to hold such a course this
summer. We are now looking for people who are able and rea
dy to guide such a course and for a place where it can be
held. As you wish it will be on the lines of the course in
Rome '73 and the courses last year at Brixen, Teignmouth
and Saint-Flour, but specially oriented to the needs and
wishes of young people."

- "The course should have two main parts:

1) A preform of the Spiritual Exercises (5 days)

- A break (about 1 day) to relax, make excursions,

2) A Formation Course in which the way of life can be
experienced

- A day for evaluation and planning how to continue
with Youth CLCs in Europe."

- "As you see, these will be very intensive days. It
seems to us it would be best if from each country at
least two and up to five young people in the age bracket
between 17-25 could participate, especially those who have
some CLC responsibility."

- "At the moment we plan to hold it in Quétigny, near Di
jon, France, where we had the International CLC Youth meet
ing 1973 after the Augsburg Assembly. We feel the house is
suitable... There is no comfort in it, but this simple sty
le of life can certainly help us reflect on what is really
necessary in living."

STEP FORWARD IN
URUGUAY

In a letter signed by all 5 newly-elec
ted national leaders, they say: "Thanks
to the coming of Father Justo Gonzalez-
Tarrio we have just had a fruitful formation course
Through these days which everybody liked and was enthusias
tic about, we have begun a new stage ... Some communities
have reorganized and are working with real eagerness and
faith to do what CLC asks of us... We send you our strong
solidarity with the whole movement."

* * *

THE GOAL OF OUR FORMATION

by Hildegard EHRTMANN

What attracts people to CIC? What happens in them before that day when they become aware: that is what I want, that is how I could live and would like to live? A chance conversation, contact with a written text, a convinced person, a community that seems authentic - external factors such as these, and an honest search, have perhaps played a part. A true awakening, mobilizing all the energies of a man (or woman), does not occur unless he has glimpsed at least once the vision of the goal, and recognized in it himself and the meaning of his life. Already at that first moment when inner desire and a vision of the goal converge, something decisive takes place. In spite of our healthy scepticism as regards grand phrases and statements about ideals, it makes good sense to take a look for once at what the goal of the long CIC formation process is. In so doing, some of us will recall how one day they set out on that journey and sold much - or everything - that they owned, to obtain "the pearl of great price". For others, it can be an encouragement to persevere with tenacity in the obscure steps of the personal process that leads to "the liberation of all men", to hold fast in the crises of community life or in lack of success in their commitment. For those, finally, who ask us what there is special about the goal of CIC - since all spiritualities aim at a life lived according to the Gospel - it is not without meaning to try to trace the profile of this way, as one has oneself perceived it. For this, each one will make use of the tints and shades of his own life history. But if it is true that our way of living has certain universal characteristics, then each of us will recognize himself in the basic colors that are sketched.

The First Contact : Utopia? Freedom?

For me, there was need to encounter not just the written text, but to meet flesh-and-blood men and women marked with the dynamic of the Exercises, who would correspond exactly to what, in my experience, adult lay persons in the world ought to be. Did such persons exist?

From my first contact with the community - it had been in existence already six years - I had been struck by the calm of these very busy young adults, by their readiness to spend time in conversation at odd moments with their friends and families, and at the same time by their amazing capacity for apostolic commitment. It seemed that they were just as earnest in the pursuit of professional competence as in their efforts at a commitment to social justice that was precise and strategic. At the same time it was evident that they gave primacy to a simple and profound love for the person of Jesus. This expressed itself not only in the specially intensive moments of their personal daily prayer, Eucharistic celebrations and continuing evaluation and questioning of the harmony of their own life with that of Jesus, but still more in what seemed to be the favorite theme of their meetings: "to what extent all aspects of our life are lived in reference to Him":

I was struck too by a curious tension between their careful use of their time and energies and those of others - although this was expressed in what seemed to me too - complicated planning and an endless decision process - and, on the other hand, their often quick and almost childlike readiness to carry out what they had recognized as being right, almost as if it were play. They seemed to me to live as if there existed only today in which to win the whole world, and at the same time as if it were question only of the earnest play of children, who, at bottom, know that nothing depends on them.

Perhaps it was that which so fascinated me about them. When one was with them in community, one felt the harmony between their readiness, recognizing their human possibilities and limitations, to use these and let others make use of them freely, and the joy found in human relations and relaxing and bodily expression. And always, a

surprising liberty as regards all these things: when the priorities of service seemed to require it, all that became secondary. This facility in taking action, even when this involved self-renunciation and sometimes painful personal loss, and in spite of negative criticism that might come from outside, this could only have as its foundation the fact that everything had been gathered together under one "heading". Perhaps they would have put it like this: it is a matter of seeing, recognizing and then doing what God wants. In doing this, they seemed all to be very free as regards laws, norms, principles of action... Was it their love for men, their love for the Church which was suffering and which they wanted to renew? That did not explain all of it. At any rate, it could not be the assembling of people with the same outlook and with harmonious temperaments. The weaknesses, the deficiencies, the painful process to go through, the problems of each one - these were not disguised. They often suffered, within themselves and between themselves, from confrontation and from natural limitations and difficulties. They certainly did not experience the community as a cozy and warm nest.

The Common Denominator

Behind all that one saw and remarked in them, there was as a common denominator an experience, linked with all that the process of the Exercises represented:

- the real experience of what it means to be loved personally by God in all the steps of one's personal history of salvation.
- the deep, interior awareness of my own guilt, my inability to save myself, and that for sinners, of whom I am one, Jesus Christ lives as Saviour.
- the experience - it can hardly be expressed in words - of being "called by one's name" by this same Jesus and invited to take part in the law of living that is his and is his work of salvation.
- the longing to become more tranquil and peaceful in life, the way that Jesus was; that is, a clear preference for living his salvation-path, which passes through humility, being looked down upon, and the cross, so that the Father may be known, loved and praised in his Church and in the world today.

- the simple certitude that this gift of life - after the example of, and in union with, Mary - is being lived out in community with those who have made the same experience and who are working together for the liberation of the whole man and of all men.

Since that time, the lived experience of all our international gatherings has confirmed that this common experience, in spite of all the varied cultural contexts, remains the same to an amazing degree, and allows those who share the same vocation to recognize each other. And perhaps we share too the painful inability to demonstrate or describe to others how much it has been worth all it cost to take the plunge.

The Expression of a Lived Experience

Important questions and the existence of views that are clearly contrary necessitate some words of justification and explanation. Perhaps it is to these differences within our movement that we owe the circumstance that we can now discover, in our common experiences, a broadly valid growth process that involves phases and steps as clear as those within the Exercises. One prefers of course to live and not to explain. But it has become necessary to point out, and to help people to experience too, which elements of the way of life are essential and which others are superfluous. It is only when such a goal has been lived, and one has met such persons, that the General Principles can then try to express in words what at least some persons have experienced: the dynamic of the Exercises as a process of living. It was not from an elaborately formulated rule of life that CICs took their origin, but from persons who had been taken hold of by Jesus Christ. And who then desired progressively to be transformed and to make use of all the means - spiritual, human and apostolic - that could help them to become more alert and driven by a greater love, so as to hear and understand the call and the signs and to commit themselves to service with all their energies.

The man who, by the experience of the Exercises, aspires and wishes to live a growing identification with Jesus, will seek to integrate into this personal relationship

with Jesus all the details of his life process, all aspects of his physical and emotional needs, all the specifics of his daily life. "Unity between faith and life" will then be felt as something liberating because one will have learned from experience that a life of familiarity with Jesus dissolves fear, renders needless self-assurance and makes pointless one's concern about social standards and exigencies. When one has really experienced that the Person of Jesus wants to communicate himself individually and in the community, then one willingly lets go of those ideals, principles, standards and values that one professed and took for granted in the past in order to affirm only His word, only the Spirit of Jesus and, now at last awake, to let himself be led by that alone.

Is there a "Type" of Person Apt for CLC?

Perhaps one can, in this sense, speak of a "type" of person apt for CLC. Anxious to hear and understand always better what God wishes to communicate to him - both as regards his state of life and his own personal mission in conformity with it - he gradually develops into a "searcher", one ever alert and prompt to listen and to question, and ready to be called back and change if need be, for his eyes are fixed on the person of Jesus. He searches the signs so as to understand them, and directs himself exclusively with a view to the service that the spirit of Jesus wants. Each new possibility and situation is put to the test in order to judge if it is in accord with that interior resonance that comes from his praying relationship with Jesus. In this way his whole life can involve a very intense personal dialogue, and at the same time an amazing fruitfulness and social and apostolic liberty in the service of others.

When from the experience of familiarity with Jesus he has acquired a certitude as to his own mission and as to this way of life, he remains always a man of humble prayer, but also a man of witness and of sincere praise. He is very convinced that alone he can do nothing, that he needs the proximity of the Lord and of the community and all facets of its way of life in order to advance in this faith and this listening, and not to let himself unconsciously be swept back to his old standards and ideals, to become

complacent, or to develop a false independence.

If a person as described here is the goal of CLC formation, then that implies that a long journey is necessary to pass from the vision of this as an ideal to the full existential integration of it and to a life lived in this freedom.

The most recent findings of psychology describe the person who has attained affective maturity in the same way as does the dynamic of the Exercises. In this process of maturing, a person will need to have had the experience of personal love and of decision-making. He needs to let down his self-defenses through positive new experiences. Finally, he needs the openness to expose himself to the truth and to the community which offers it and which challenges him. Then he will seek to communicate life more widely and to attain an ever fuller capacity for encounter and for love so as in this way to arrive at true freedom in decision.

It is not a matter of deciding at the start upon a long formation process, as one would do in choosing one's studies. One need only believe that it is possible for a lay person in the world to opt for Jesus Christ and for his way, for the step which follows, and with the means that correspond to it.

Perhaps it is true that formation is never finished. But one can say too that the goal of formation is already being lived when "one stays on the road". Such a road, such a path, does exist. The journey can neither be accelerated nor shortened. It depends only on one's personal commitment to taking the next step in the footsteps of Jesus, with the help of a community that has within itself the same dynamic.

BODILY POSITIONS IN PRAYER

Werner BRUNNER s.j.

When we talk about "bodily positions", we tend to think just of our body. But we must not limit our considerations to the physical space filled by our bodies, since through these bodies we are linked with everything around us. To begin with, in reflecting on our bodily positions, we must at least touch on the question of the framework and the surroundings, both material and spiritual, within which we pray. In this regard the article by Father Paulussen s.j. (first of the series on "Ignatian Helps to Pray Better", Progressio, January 1975) has already shown how important it is to prepare for prayer. If I take up again one or other point there treated, it is only the better to situate it in relation to the position of the body in prayer.

Within the Spiritual Exercises Themselves

St. Ignatius attaches great importance to the arrangements or dispositions to be taken for entering into prayer:

Preparation more or less remote: separation from friends and from the places one usually frequents (Sp. Ex. 20); the setting and surroundings (79, 130, 229); one's conduct (guard over laughter during the 1st Week: 80); control of one's eyes (81); orienting along the lines of the prayer one's thoughts on going to bed (73), on rising (74, 130, 206, 229); penance (82-86 and above all 87).

Steps to take before beginning prayer: "I recollect myself for a while and, either seated or walking up and down, as may seem better, I will consider where I am going, and for what purpose" (239) "and in whose presence" (131). "I will stand for the space of an Our Father a step or two before the place where I am to meditate or contemplate". (75).

The prayer itself: When St. Ignatius speaks of this he does not enter into detail, but opens up various possibilities: "Begin the meditation, now kneeling, now prostrate on the ground, now lying face upwards, now seated, now

standing..." (76), but not to use some of these positions "in the church before others, but only in private, for example at home" (88). In arranging the setting for prayer, in choosing my reflections, in choosing among the possible positions for prayer, I aim always at "seeking what I desire... If I find what I desire while kneeling, I will not seek to change my position; if while prostrate, the same, etc. I will remain quietly meditating upon the point in which I have found what I desire, without any eagerness to go on till I have been satisfied" (76). Preparation and positions are at the service of that openness to grace that I ask for in the preparatory prayer of each meditation and contemplation: the "grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of his Divine Majesty" (46).

In All Prayer

If I am really at ease with my body, then the bodily positions taken are in direct relation with my inner attitudes. Then they can be an expression of what I am living in depth. To the extent that I am not yet living in accordance with God's call to me, they can be a help for me towards a life more fully at the service of God and men.

The guidelines of St. Ignatius given above have value also for our prayer apart from the special time of the Exercises. Often it is a good idea to have a "prayer corner" or a "prayer rug": such a setting will of itself help me to begin prayer, and the memory of the fact that I have prayed in this place before will help too (see Sp. Ex. 20: another house; and regarding the setting: 7=, 130, 229). Remembering that I will pray at such an hour can surely help me dispose myself (see 73, 74, 78). Sometimes we forget that ordinarily our arriving at an attitude of recollection and openness to God is a gradual thing. If "before entering into prayer I recollect myself for a while, either seated or walking up and down" (239), then I am expressing already in my bodily position a readiness for prayer. The few steps that we take at our own pace, or the moments of silence seated comfortably, can quiet our mind to consider "where I am going and for what purpose" (239) and "in whose presence" (131). Let us handle well the time of preparation. Maybe standing quietly "one or two steps from the place" (75) of prayer might express by our bodily

stance that we are there, ready. These moments of beginning the prayer are not time lost, even if they shorten the time of prayer as such. We will recognize that through them we have not impeded the prayer, but rather made ourselves more ready for what will be given to us.

During the prayer itself this or that position can be an expression of my relationship to God at that moment, or can be too an aid to invite a deeper relationship. Let us look at several body positions whose meaning will differ depending on the persons involved and the circumstances:

- standing: I am rooted in the earth and in search of that which is "on high", beyond the material and the practical;
- sitting (learn how to sit!): a certain repose, a waiting;
- kneeling: an admission of dependence, making easier my calling on Him who has done all for me;
- kneeling back on one's heels (or another possibility: the lotus position): accentuates one's being rooted in the earth; one's head and shoulders are like an arrow starting from the "earthly" and pointing toward the "spiritual";
- kneeling face to the ground: I efface myself before my Partner in joy and His grandeur and in the confidence that He can supply what I need;
- prostrate: complete effacement of myself and recognition that everything comes from the Other;
- walking: a movement, an advance, beginning from where I am now;

As regards the arms and the hands:

- hands opened: I reveal myself, I give myself; I am ready to welcome;
- arms and hands "in a circle": a sign that life can circulate in me (or it can symbolize the opposite: I am closed in);
- arms hanging loose: a certain non-activity: no need to act, all will be given me; I am confident (or it can also express an attitude of resignation).

There you have some possibilities. To the extent that I try, perhaps timidly at the outset, to consider my body too when I pray, I will be able to experience a kind of prayer that involves the whole of me. The reserve of St. Ignatius advising that not all these positions be taken in public suggests that - at least initially - I experiment with them in solitude, where no one will disturb me.

Today's Experience

After the overly sentimental prayer of the past, it has in some countries become now too "cerebral": it no longer involves the whole man. In reaction, today, the methods of prayer of certain movements (zen, yoga...) or Churches (Pentecostals) - because they take account of all dimensions of man - have attracted many Christians, even to the point of stimulating such movements as the charismatic renewal.

It is entirely in the Ignatian spirit to make use of in practice the various possibilities mentioned above as ways of "praising, reverencing and serving God our Lord" (23). Now, not all of them suit everybody. I must search out what helps me personally. And not everything helps me all the time. I must see what suits me and helps me to pray in my present situation.

There are two dangers to avoid:

- In making skilful use of bodily positions that are an expression of profound attitudes, I can run the risk of forgetting the goal of my prayer, namely, "the service and praise of his Divine Majesty" (46), and to limit myself to what would be simply "performances". Then it would be nothing more than I myself "making" prayer.

- The other danger: to let myself be led in group situations to bodily positions or expressions which, while socially acceptable in these groups, do not correspond to my own personal situation.

Conclusion

St. Ignatius invites us to make use of favorable positions and methods in prayer with a view always to "what I wish and desire" (48; see also 73, 76), that is, "to seek and find the will of God" (1) in my own personal situation (see 55, 65, 76, 91, 104, etc.).

"When the one who is giving the Exercises perceives that the exercitant is not affected by any spiritual experiences, such as consolations or desolations, and that he is not troubled by different spirits, he ought to ply him with questions about the exercises. He should ask him whether he makes them at the appointed times, and how he

makes them. He should question him about the additional directions (preparation before prayer...), whether he is diligent in the observance of them" (6). Do we put aside all that is a hindrance, so as to invite a relationship with God? Do we seek out all that helps to dispose us for prayer? All these questions are posed with the aim of helping us discern well in this matter, either by ourselves or with the help of a spiritual guide. And they are questions that always retain their point, for we will never have arrived at the perfect preparation and the perfect position, suitable for all times and all situations.

E C H O E S

INDONESIA : "CLC is progressing, even though none of us is full-time in the work. Last year two student groups were started in the university town of Yogyakarta. The unfailing presence of the CLC chaplain in the students' weekend meetings and courses has contributed much. The links among the groups in Yogya, Bandung and Jakarta are becoming stronger ... In May all the CLCs hope to meet in Yogyakarta to experience CLC atmosphere and living for three days."

MALTA CLCS REPORT

Numbers and Spirit At the present there are 50 Communities (male, female, and 1 mixed), located in 40 parishes and 2 schools. Many of these are very active in both meetings and apostolate. Perhaps one cannot yet say the numbers are increasing, but what can surely be said is that more of the Communities are living in the true spirit and are applying the new approach of the General Principles.

What's New The new methods suggested by the World Federation for meetings and for the spiritual and human formation of members are widely used. These became known through Progressio, the world C.L.C. review, and through the contacts made by the 9 Maltese members who took part in the 2-weeks' formation courses (which included the Spiritual Exercises) in Italy and England. From these sprang the closed September Seminar in which personal and community meditation and the liturgical life were fully discussed and experienced by working groups in which all present took an active part. This mode of meditation and exchanges as done in the seminar became familiar to the Communities. Those groups which have no spiritual guide are handling their meetings effectively themselves, and are organizing apostolic activities that are indeed of great benefit. Teaching conferences organized by the C.L.C. and discussions and plays for several categories of people who are not members of our groups, are held very often. The enthusiasm of many members to spread our review Regina et Mater has grown so much that the monthly publication now has a circulation of 8,100 copies.

Besides this, Bible groups and prayer or discussion groups were created by C.L.C. members in schools or parishes; the intention is that in the near future these groups will be affiliated with the National Federation as "larger groups" in the sense encouraged by N° 28 of the General Principles. Other activities among the students of secondary schools are being initiated by the teachers' C.L.C. This applies also to the young workers in the factories. It is hoped to expand this effort.

It is now just 3 years since our National Federation began. With our newly-elected Executive Council and their zeal and commitment, we hope to continue to move forward.