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WORLD CLC FEDERATION ACQUIRES CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH UNITED NATIONS

Approval : On April 28, 1975, following an application made almost a year before, Roland Calcat, President of the World Federation of Christian Life Communities, received notice that the World Federation had been approved for consultative status as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with the Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) of the United Nations.

Meaning : Such consultative status includes the right :

- 1) To have someone represent WFCLC at the UN whenever so desired.
- 2) To receive the extensive documentation of the Economic and Social Council.
- 3) To be represented at gatherings of the Non-Governmental Organizations.

Follow-up: The Executive Council of WFCLC will discuss soon the follow-up to points (1) and (2): how and by whom it should be represented, and which documentation to receive and in what language (s).

An immediate result of WFCLC's approval as an NGO was an invitation to be represented at the Tribune (Forum) of Non-Governmental Organizations linked with the United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico City June 19-July 2 of this year. This Conference is the high point of the 1975 International Woman's Year, so designated by the United Nations. At the World CLC Federation's request, the Mexican Federation agreed to represent CLC at the Forum, and two of its leaders, Miss Magdalena Palencia and Miss Isabel Salas (some readers will remember both of them from our Augsburg '73 World CLC Assembly) are taking part in the UN Forum in that capacity.

Relevance: The Christian Life Communities believe that their presence in UNESCO and its activity is a perfect expression of the CLC spirit, whose General Principles give as our aim to "work in a spirit of service to establish justice and peace among all men"(7), and whose World Federation Statutes (6) include as a means "assuring the presence of representatives in programs of international cooperation wherever it may be opportune".

THRUST OF THE INTEGRATION EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST WEEK

by Gilles CUSSON s.j.

Once a solid "foundation" has been laid for the experience of spiritual deepening that the Ignatian Exercises aim at, the entry of the retreatant into the exercises as such corresponds to a specific movement: "Our one desire and choice should be what is more conductive to the end for which we are created" (conclusion of the text on the Principle and Foundation, n° 23). The steps involved in this desire to choose and order things rightly is precisely what the First Week of the Exercises will describe. It seems to us that the intuition of Ignatius here is the following: first, to have the retreatant pass through a "global" stage, which will allow the global vision of faith (that of the Foundation) to produce its first fruit: liberation in hope and in saving love. Then the retreatant will be ready to offer himself for the more radical step of gospel commitment which the Kingdom and the Second Week will present to him.

One can ask why Ignatius keeps the retreatant in this stage of "globality" in the First Week (he even judged that a good number of persons could not go beyond this stage!), when the desire that is characteristic of the end of the Foundation experience already looks to an ordering of things and an election (at least, of a choice of means). Why this sort of prolonging of the preamble to an experience which, normally, is already envisioned as total? What faith requirement inspires Ignatius, and what wisdom prods him to keep the retreatant in the First Week without regard to time and for as long as will be necessary (see the autograph Directories)?

To reply to these questions, many reasons can be given, which, in complementing each other, mark out better what Ignatius has in view, above all in the "full Exercises", in which the gospel quality of the experience, if it is to achieve its full significance in the Second Week, presupposes this phase of really effective integration set forth in the First Week. Among these reasons, let us

note first the simple fact that, theologically, salvation begins with deliverance from evil; that reconciliation at the deepest level of our being precedes entry into union, in the salvation plan of God as set forth in all of revelation; and that entire and radical commitment (in the sense of the "more") to the following of Christ for the building of the Kingdom, demands a freedom which is a profound liberation in faith. There you see the elements which help us to determine the objective of the First Week. But in the end it is the very truth of our faith, that is, of the dynamic of a faith really situated in existence (role of the Foundation) which places the retreatant face to face with the living reality of Evil, as it surrounds us and lives within us.

And through these insistent challenges that Evil addresses to his faith and hope, the retreatant will undertake an effective effort at integration. It is a matter of his arriving, with the grace of God, at this liberation brought him by the history of salvation experienced in the concrete life of the person. Only then, in the freedom of "the sons of God", will a new and radical experience of configuration to Christ in the Second Week, in the light of the Word and under the influence of the Spirit, be made truly possible ... In other words, one does not have a choice about being in the First or in the Second Week of the Exercises. It is a matter of the deepening and effectiveness of the life of faith, which remains the object of further apprenticeship, formation and practical exercises, effective through the grace of God.

The object of the First Week can then be more clearly defined thus: in the light of the faith that we have fostered during the "meditation on the Foundation" and in the course of which we have learned better to situate ourselves, to face directly the very concrete question of Evil, of the evil that runs through the entire history of the world past and present and through our own life. And we do this in order to enter with greater effectiveness into the very real victory of the Risen One. Our faith, in fact, needs this confrontation in order to be authentic. That is why it takes up, in the First Week, the challenge

presented to the hope it is building within us, and involves us in this experience that I call the "experience of integration."

Let us now specify of what sort of integration there is question. Here it is important to distinguish between the different forms that evil takes in the world: those that stem in part from human freedom (such as sin), and those that are linked with our created and limited nature (suffering and death). We know that salvation history has not come to eliminate by magic these different forms of evil. Human liberty can, through an increase of justice and love, acquire the capacity to combat moral evil and its consequences of every sort. As for physical or natural evil, it is to a victory that is unexpected, gratuitous, and assured in the person of Christ that creation in its forward march, fundamentally oriented towards Life, leads us.

Finally, it is in taking up again the inner thread of the Foundation meditation, which is an experience of God Alive and of Christ the Life, that the retreatant can focus on the reality of evil past and present in order to learn how to live effectively, in spite of evil and through evil, in the hope revealed to him by the indestructible love of God as shown in Christ the Saviour. Basing himself on this indestructible love, aware too at the same time of his own radical poverty, he will hand himself over unconditionally to the action of God as it is experienced in the history of sinful humanity and in his own limited life. Two Scripture texts describe well the goal of this effort of integration, which is to be liberated for a total commitment made in love:

Love will come to its perfection
in us
when we can face the day of Judgement
without fear
because even in this world
we have become as he is.
In love there can be no fear,
but fear is driven out
by perfect love,

because to fear
is to expect punishment,
and anyone who is afraid
is still imperfect in love.
We are to love, then,
because he loved us first.

(1 John 4:17-19)

For the love of Christ drives us on ...

(2 Cor. 5:14)

At the close of this short expose, it would remain to show how the pedagogy of the exercises proposed by St. Ignatius in the First Week is effectively directed to this fruit of liberation in saving love. Thus it means, while respecting the rhythm of each one and exercising oneself according as the Spirit leads, to advance toward this goal of commitment to which the experience of the "complete Exercises" as St. Ignatius conceived them invites us.

"GOD IS THERE, HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT IT"

Paul ROGER-DALBERT s.j.

Many readers of PROGRESSIO will remember Father Roger-Dalbert. He was, during fifteen years, national CIC ecclesiastical assistant in France and the person mainly responsible for shaping their foundation and growth in that country. The pages that follow are not an "article", but lengthy excerpts of a recent letter that he addressed to his friends.

For us, members of CIC, who seek to live out in our lives a preference for the very poor and "to give witness by a poor and simple life, as an expression of our prophetic stance and of our charism", this witness of one of our assistants rings true and challenges us. We are happy to offer it for us all to reflect on. (Editor's Note)

"I still am part of the small team of Jesuits lodged in La Busserine (the name of the low-cost housing sector here on the outskirts of Marseilles). The team underwent a change last September: Two, who had come ten years ago or so when the buildings and the concrete stories were going up (goodbye to the pines!), left for other tasks. Two others just arrived and now we are four again, living in two different housing projects. There is Andre, an electrician; another Andre (whom we call Andries, to keep them separate), who is a lathe operator by trade; Georges, who is a manager in a food store, and who will be ordained a priest in June; and me, as before an infirmarian at the same clinic. A fifth, Roland, forms part of our community; he is an electrician on a freighter, which right now is plying between Marseilles and Abidjan in Ivory Coast, with bananas in cold storage.

It is a young team: I'm the oldest of the group; among my four companions, the oldest is thirty-three. Have no fears, our boat "La Bousserine" has no hankering to stay anchored in the Old Port...

So we all have a profession or trade. It seemed to us crucial that those who live here, all of the working class, see in the priests that we are people who are in solidarity with them, living on their salaries alone. The life of a wage-earner - I have experienced this now for two-and-a-half years - creates a common life style and draws people together in a strange way. It means too that one sees things, people, political life and the economic crisis with the eyes of those who are at the bottom of the salary scale, which is not such a bad idea when one has to announce the Gospel.

So it is at night after work, or on weekends, that we meet the people of the neighborhood: helping the mothers who act as catechists, preparing with parents the baptism of their offspring, receiving engaged couples who are planning marriage, bringing the young people together, visiting families, etc. That makes for rather full days, but that's what we want, thinking that a new kind of priestly presence must be sought, one that fits in better with the life of people today. And on Sunday night we close our doors in order to reflect, evaluate, and pray together.

Also, our contacts with people go beyond religious life as such (catechetics, sacraments, Eucharistic assemblies). They are the things that neighbors do, rendering small services, conversations as we go for bread and wine (commenting meanwhile on the endives or the artichokes whose price goes up all the time...). With certain ones we are already friends. I find that the contacts come above all from the living conditions we are subject to here. And since these are lamentable, it often starts with complaints against ... if one only knew exactly who. Anyway, it is the basis for initial contacts.

So, for example, I belong to, since two months ago, the Association of Renters of the housing project where I live, or, more exactly, of the Association board. The elevators, you see, don't work well. They are out of order for days on end - which is not very convenient when you live on the 8th or the 15th floor. They no longer conform to safety regulations, as our association alerted the

owners last July. And now, ten days ago, an elevator cage plunged down about five feet. A pregnant woman with her two little children was inside, and there were some bruises and a case of nerves. So the Association of renters decided to sue the company that owns the building. Every night some of us from the board stop by each of the 250 renters to ask their signature and 10 francs to secure justice. We explain, we listen to their expressions of regret, while eating their cookies. Sometimes it goes farther than regrets and cookies... Over and above this specific action of self-defense we aim at creating a solidarity between all people who live in this area where, one must say it plainly, living is difficult.

Living is difficult. Even, one can say, it is impossible to live, even to the minimum degree, a balanced human life. That is the predominant impression I retain from the two years I have now lived in La Busserine.

Too many people in too few square meters. Too many different people (from all the Mediterranean countries, from the African coast, the West Indies ...), not prepared to live together. And from this comes a mutual mistrust, easily degenerating into racist reactions. Too many parents who no longer know how to handle their children who, very soon, for lack of playing space and something intelligent to do, escape from their control, and turn to thievery and looting. Too many poor, utterly polarized by simply the demands of material existence, weary of it all, for whom the end of the month comes like a nightmare... And so, nervous depressions, violent reactions against neighbors who make noise, etc...

In a word, the norms of an elementary social life are lacking. The Provence countryside is only two steps away.. But here it is an ant-heap, where the ants have but one soul, a soul searching for happiness.

In the face of that, the housing project proprietors just let things run down... They keep nothing up, they don't make repairs (they don't forget, though, to raise their charges, including the rent and that for the elevator). What to do? It's made of asphalt... The urban planners and the promoters have simply, either by lack of re-

flection or greed for profit, made a mistake. But this is such a big one...

Besides, in the judgement of experts, this life in the housing projects is bound to be more or less a short-term thing. Dangerous phenomena are developing here, which are getting out of control, such as the number of youths who simply loaf, violence (unemployment is high among the young people of 16-20 years of age, and that accelerates the process). One day it will crack wide open - that is the impression one has. The people will be "fed up" with things, they will just leave (even now they leave just as soon as they can), or they will revolt.

As you see, the picture is quite somber... But even when one has been here a long time, the feeling of desperation remains. One doesn't get accustomed to the ant-heap.

And yet, it is in this soil that the good seed takes root. And why not? These men and women, these youngsters, subject to inhuman conditions, are they not creatures of the Good God? I tell myself that often. And the human substratum here is oddly powerful. In spite of all, the good soil of men pushes up and breaks through the asphalt... How many kind reactions among the people, what a joy of living among the children!

Well, it is with them that we work - and with enthusiasm, I think. A few other Christians are at work too, and some of them really active in the neighborhood. A small group, quite modest, quite surrounded by the others, which must become the core of a Christian life community.

In the face of all that weighs these people down, one must recognize that the hope for a better life is being carried at present by a handful of persons: a few Communists, a few Christians, a few good souls, who get together often enough to forge a greater solidarity among themselves, to defend the interests of everyone, to wake up the people to a certain collective awareness. God is there, have no doubt about it.

So there you have our life at La Bussierine, or rath-

er a part of it. For the other part of my days is spent helping out in the bone surgery department of a big clinic, not far from here. My courses in medical technology that I followed for a year at the anti-cancer center finished a month ago. So I now work 42 hours a week in the clinic where I took my first plunge a year and a half ago.

I feel at home in my sector of work. One strikes roots there. Friendship with the personnel has grown (they all know I am a priest). As for the sick, of whom many come from our neighborhood (the clinic is linked up with the Social Security system), when they are hospitalized for some little period of time, links with them are forged too.

Will I stay here? Or again, will I orient myself toward the departmental hospital for the aged, where so many end their days in lamentable conditions (difficult even to imagine in France of 1975). Hundreds of honest workers, whom our capitalist society has simply tossed aside after having made use of them. Profits are somewhere else... Perhaps the Gospel witness for us should be there? In any case, it is a question that I pose for myself, to be discussed with my companions as we look to the future.

This life is quite a change from that which I led at Paris or on the streets of Toulouse, Lille, Nantes... But I find it marvelous. Less of a "chief of staff", certainly. More "down to earth". Not always easy, but furnishing so many fine surprises. What fine specimens of humanity there are among simple people, even when one encloses them in walls of asphalt! In all truth, the light of the Word made flesh enlightens every human being.

How did I arrive at the life I am leading now? By a journey in which the Christian Life Communities played a decisive part.

As a young priest, I wanted to become a priest-worker. This was impossible when I was 30 years of age. Circumstances led me then to share, during 15 years, the growth of CLC. It was in living with these lay friends and these Communities that my conviction was strengthened:

that to give oneself to the Lord for the work of the Gospel, and to enter into solidarity with the very poor and with their struggle for liberation, were intimately linked with each other. And it was with these same friends that I learned to "discern together" the paths to follow in order to be faithful, with the same love, to the call of God and the calls of men.

So when at a certain point in my life the question came up: where now? it was at one and the same time thanks to the Spiritual Exercises and thanks to my friends in the Christian Life Communities, that I decided to ask my superiors to send me to the apostolate that I am carrying out today. Without the Exercises, without the "inspiration" of CLC, without my companions, I do not think I would have been capable of taking this step.

CHRISTIAN LIFE YOUTH GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA (*)

The theme of the first koinonumen made by a group is that of the Paschal Mystery, as being central to all Christian life. This includes sharings on the Agony, and the Passion and Death, moving into a shared experience of Resurrection joy in the group. All sharings, to be meaningful, must link the Mystery with the actual lives of the group members, and, as mentioned earlier, the experience of Confession and counsel is profoundly important. As the group moves into joy, a "Mary sharing" marks for many people the high point of the koinonumen. Each day the Eucharist is celebrated at a particular moment in the development of the koinonumen. On the first evening, it introduces the theme, on the second evening it is a pledge of Resurrection joy, with the renewal of Baptismal vows as at Easter, and on the last day at twelve noon it is an affirmation of out-going strength in the power of the Holy Spirit.

By the end of a koinonumen, a deep bond of unity in Christ has been forged by the different kinds of sharing, a bond which makes action possible. After the koinonumen proper, a training session takes place during which the group considers meeting-patterns, projects and planning, as the practical outcome of the "bond of community" established in Christ. At the end of each of the hundreds of koinonumens run so far, each participant has written a testimony to his experience of it, and these testimonies make an impressive witness to the value of this means of creating community in Christ.

The leader of the koinonumen remains outside the group process in order to assist it better, being alert to both group and individual reactions and ready to respond to them by challenge or relaxation.

In running a koinonumen, different media can be used according to the needs and age of the group. Slides, tapes, films, tape-recordings, pictures, posters, readings from non-Scriptural sources, and music, including modern songs, are some of those used when appropriate.

Koinonumens have been given, with suitable adaptations, to groups ranging from about nine years old to well over

middle age. The composition of a group normally includes, of course, those of a similar age-group. The usual pattern is for a group to have a koinonumen once a year, and to supplement this with one or two brief "refreshers" or "mininumens", lasting one day in the course of the year.

At present the thrust of our activities in relation to the direction of CLC as a whole is mainly toward deepening the spiritual life of the individual members and of each group as a community. This does not mean, far from it, that we ignore the apostolic and human dimensions, but that our primary need seems to be to develop deeply committed individuals and to give a vital meaning to "the bond of community". Only then can we do effective apostolic or social work, and see human development in the proper perspective; only in this way can we develop the unity, wisdom and courage needed to reform "the structures of society".

In the last year or two, the country has been divided into regional areas for C.L.C., and this year Regional Leadership Conferences have been held for representatives from school groups, and Executive Councils elected for each of these three areas. The chief aim of these Councils of the members themselves is to establish co-ordination and communication among the groups of their area, so contributing to a strong National Federation in the future. At the National Centre in Johannesburg, plans are being made to establish, in the coming year, a much wider and deeper communication on the national level than has, up to now, been possible. At this National Centre, "koinonia", there are young people who devote themselves full or part-time to working for C.L.G., and there are other young people in various parts of the country who are showing great capacity and potential for leadership in C.L.G.... This kind of leadership is fundamentally Christ-centred, desiring to give and serve wholly, and learning to do so from the examples of Christ and Mary, examples of which they have a deep understanding and which they wholeheartedly desire to follow.

Greetings from the South African
C.L.G. Movement to Youth C.L.C.
throughout the world.

(*)-[Continued from last issue]

TAKE ME FOR NOW, LORD !

by Kevin MARSHALL

India's National CLC Youth Convention, held this year at Seva Niketan in Bombay, was a transforming experience for many. Organised by the Youth Commission, it was conducted by the CLC Secretariate. Gathered together for a common purpose and with a common goal, a group of 30 young people from 10 dioceses experienced God through self-discovery, encounter, reflection and prayer. We publish here excerpts of Kevin Marshall's account, written for India's CLC review, of how he met God at the Convention. (Editor's Note).

As I look back, I wonder if I've changed all that much. My motto hasn't undergone any radical change, as far as I can see. I have one borrowed from a friend: "Live fast, die young, and make a good-looking corpse". Well, I'm still living fast, I still want to make a good-looking corpse, but... I'm not so sure I want to die young. And besides, there's a tremendous desire to give of myself - to God and man.

The reason for the change is the CLC and its way of life. I didn't know what the Christian Life Community was about, till I went to CLC Youth Convention.

I went in at 7:30 p.m. Monday, and believe it or not, I walked out of Seva Niketan the next Sunday morning feeling

like I was stepping out of a dream. It was a challenge all right - a challenge to show people they did not need always to be job-conscious or ambitious, or money-seeking in order to be happy.

More than anything else, I experienced the joy of discovering myself - the real, true me, devoid of falsities, masks, dreams, - and seeing myself as I really was: someone loved by God, with a mission to fulfill during his life. The capacity too to feel for another person, to be aware of one's own feelings. The realisation that every single person is a unique and different individual and has worth, plenty of it.

Before this I had taken my Christian life as a matter of fact. The convention changed all that. Being Christian no longer meant just going to church every Sunday because somebody in Rome said you must. No, being a Christian meant living in freedom. The kind of freedom that could make you want to go up on a mountain and sing for all you're worth. Or on your knees to thank God for everything, from the smallest grain of food to his overflowing Love for man. I learnt to give of myself. I still haven't learnt to give freely and without reserve, but the joy is in going through the stages of trial and error. The challenge, of course, has only just been taken up

And above all, I DON'T want to die young .

C.L.C. : A FAMILY AFFAIR

by Stan and Jane GOGOL

We, a CIC family now for 16 years, would like to share with member everywhere some of our hopes, joys, successes and failures.

We find one of the greatest assets as far as the family is concerned is to visit and stay with other CIC families. Our children get a chance to see other people who believe as we do, have the same spirit, and are striving to be more Christ-like. This is a living witness of our family before others and gives our family other living witnesses of what we are aiming at. Three years ago we travelled around the country for about 10 days, staying with four CIC families in different parts of the country. We planned it this way purposely for the benefit of all of us. This experience is one we will never forget. Not only did we see more of the country, customs, etc. but we met many fine people. Every family we stayed with displayed that unique CIC spirit that is second to none in the world. Instant friendship, even though we were strangers but a few minutes before. Instant sharing at a very beautiful level of life and spirituality. We were closer than family to them; and what more can we say. We prayed together, celebrated liturgy together, met with their CICs. Whether any of us realize it or not, we of CIC have a very strong bond that transcends the natural. Our children enjoyed this as much as we did and shared very well. We would recommend this for all to try out.

On our part, as a kind of reciprocity, we invite and

keep our home open for any and all CLCers coming to Toledo. We have had many visitors from other parts of the country to our home with the same wonderful experience. We need each other to give this kind of witnessing to our families.

Some years ago when I was on the National CLC Board and in charge of frequent large liturgies I tried to incorporate the family in working on these as much as possible. I generally did the planning and tested them out on Jane, and then the family would work on various elements of the liturgy themselves. When making one of our explodable or puzzle posters we would have as many as six of the children making parts, painting, etc. Many hours of pleasure our family has had doing this kind of thing for CLC. Then the family would come with us to the National CLC Convention, meet more people, and see their handiwork put to use. Both Jane and I feel this kind of sharing has brought our family closer together. In fact when our last daughter got married she had a shower and invited many women. After it was over she remarked that this was really the only family she had. This kind of community I would like to foster the world over.

Three years ago I had to withdraw somewhat from CLC participation because I was studying to become a deacon, but always kept in touch. After three years of study and work I can truthfully say that I was well prepared for all my studies due primarily to CLC participation and the spiritual Exercises. Through the Exercises I had made the commitment to the diaconate. Of course this was a family decision, made strictly in faith. None of us really knew what this would involve. The diaconate I consider merely an extension of CLC. The Church has called and then the Holy Spirit confirmed this call, and I was ordained a year ago.

Again using CLC direction I chose to enter into the social-justice-and-action field of this diocese. Presently I am working part time for the diocesan director, helping parishes organize social action committees of the parish councils. To date there are three well established commit-

tees out of the nine parishes assigned to me. When I started there were none. Again CLC background helped enormously. I can now thank all my CLC instructors for the help they gave me and can truly say their formation was not in vain.

Along with this ministry of social action, I went into the ministry to the aged and sick in the convalescent homes. Jane was by my side when I started out. She assisted me, encouraged me and gave me some very helpful tips on what I was doing wrong. She also made vestments for me to use for the diaconal ministry. These I wear while serving on the altar as well as at the homes.

A strange phenomenon is the nursing or convalescent homes. In Toledo, a population of 400,000 people, there are 48 of these homes with approximately 3000 catholics. Most of them are elderly, sick and have given their lives to the Church. Now when they need the Church most, where is it? Far too few priests to do the job, and so in justice I consider this to be a prime ministry. I hold communion services with scripture readings, give a homily and distribute communion and finish with prayers. Then I visit each bed-ridden patient and give them communion. Every Sunday I go to some home to do this. Along with Jane (sometimes) there are some young teenage girls who play and sing at the services for the people. Their presence is a tremendous help and a necessity. The presence of the Eucharist and the witness to Christ given by us is a powerful combination to these people. The response we receive from the people says it all. They love the Eucharist, the church and their clergy. We are far too little active in this effort and again I would encourage this to be done by others.

Jane has more time on her hands since the children are all in school now. She presently is a teacher's aide at our ungraded school in the central city of Toledo. This excellent school is the result of the work of many people from our CLC as well as others. This school is a bulwark against poverty, ignorance, race hatred and indifference. This is a

parish school open to the community, staffed by the Notre Dame Sisters, and supported by at least 200 teachers' aides, none of whom get any pay. Jane is one of the teachers' aides, assisting in science and arts. The school is 50% black, 25% Mexican and 25% Anglo-white. It uses also ungraded teaching along the Montessori method to the poor, underprivileged and uncultured with outstanding results. She also participates in fund-raising for the school. On the side she teaches cake-decorating to other members of the CIC.

Jane is chairman of the Liturgy Committee of the parish. Together we plan liturgies for the parish and then present them as ideas to the committee. We are not always successful but we always make them think. Then as a deacon I can assist at the altar to make the liturgies more meaningful for the people. This committee is one where attendance is good.

In her spare time Jane is chairman of the religious group of the parish, a group of ladies who want to do more and grow closer to Christ. This is a very successful group, not in numbers but in commitment and participation.

We still have time for the many demands of the family. Presently we have nine children, six married, with ten grandchildren. I have had the honor to baptize two of my own grandchildren, which could only happen in today's church. This in itself is an awe-inspiring thing. To know that you are introducing this child to Christ for the first time brings a great deal of mystery and wonder to this great event.

Where do we get our strength? Consult the General Principles, it is all there. Great Love for the Eucharist, many hours of prayer, especially the Spiritual Exercises, is our foundation. It is Our Lord Jesus who is at work in us and through us: that is the only answer. He is the strength of our weakness and the strength of our strength. I can truly say that Christ has used us to achieve His works. We

have had this experience many times and can witness to this fact. I can also testify to the time-worn statement "All things are possible with Christ." We fail only when we try to do things without Our Lord. This family then is a living witness to the power of Christ and the power of His love for all of us. For with us His love reigns supreme.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRAY

by Josette BEAUBIEN

In the January, 1975 Progressio we took up preparation for prayer and in the May issue we took a look at bodily positions in prayer. Now we will consider different ways of praying.

Stop - Look - Listen

STOP-LOOK-LISTEN. Three key words that sum up the interior activity of the person who wants to meet God in prayer. These three activities are important not just for the beginning of prayer but all during the encounter that we have with Jesus Christ.

Stop: To stop before the person one is meeting is an elementary gesture of courtesy. At the moment that we meet the Lord, let us begin by stopping, not only on the outside but above all on the inside. Silence of heart and of mind, silence of thoughts and of imagination, silence to hear God, who speaks very softly. We remember the meeting of God with Eliah at Horeb. God had made an appointment with Eliah (for prayer is an appointment with God). There came a mighty wind, says Scripture, but God was not in the mighty wind. There came an earthquake, then a fire, but God was not in the earthquake, nor in the fire. There came a gentle breeze, and God was in the soft breeze (1 Kings [or, in certain editions, 3 Kings] 19:11-13). God does not usually speak in noise and clamor. One must be silent to hear him.

Look: We can look at the God with whom we have entered into dialogue, since "the kingdom of God", recalls Jesus, "is within you" (Luke 17:21). "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him we will come to him, and make our home with him" (John 14:23). So I look at Jesus, the human face of the tenderness of God. I look at him with the eyes of the heart, for "one does not see well except with one's heart", remarks St.-Exupery; what is essential is invisible to the eyes". That essential, for us, is Jesus Christ. Prayer is a heart-to-heart talk with him, for one prays as one loves, mostly with one's heart.

All during prayer, let us keep our eyes fixed on him who keeps his own continually fixed on us. By accustoming ourselves to look at Jesus in prayer, we will become accustomed to see him everywhere, in each person and in each event. It is this which will give our life its true dimension.

Listen: Since prayer is a dialogue, we must listen to what God wants to say to us. For that we need to make ourselves open, receptive, poor, like one who has something to receive. For God reveals himself, it is not we who allure him. We think of the time when someone in the crowd cried out to Jesus: "Happy the womb that bore you!". And Jesus replied: "Rather, happy are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28). The Word that I receive, it is Jesus Christ himself. It is he who will transform me. God assures me: "The word that goes out from mouth will not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and accomplishing what it was sent to do" (Isaiah 55:11).

If we acquire the habit of listening to God in prayer, we will become able to listen to our brothers. Too many encounters are summed up as a monologue of one person before another! Done in that way, how is it possible to bring a true response to the real needs of our brothers? Is not the greatest service we can render them to bring them the response of God? He is the true Liberator of each person and of all people. In his school, we learn to pray in order better to love.

Finding one's own way of Praying

Stop-look-listen. Having grasped these basic activities, we can now look at the different methods of prayer suggested by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises.

1. Prayer that takes its start from one's body (Sp.Ex. 247-248) and from all that one is (246), prayer that begins with the demands of one's baptismal commitment (238-245), there you have what St. Ignatius groups together under the expression "the first method of prayer".

2. In the same vein, the Exercises propose subjects and methods of prayer that begin with what one has that is most personal: one's daily life and one's interior world, affected by the action of different spirits (general and particular examens, 24-26, 43), one's personal salvation history (medi

tation on personal sin, 55-61; contemplation to gain love, 234, first point).

3. To let ripen in prayer a decision to be taken (notes on the election, 168-189; rules for the distribution of alms; one could speak here too of "how to divide and spend one's time", 338-343), who does not recognize that this is an approach that intimately links prayer and action, faith and life, reflection and commitment?

Alongside these starting points, which are directly related to the subjective situation of each one, Ignatius suggests others, more objective.

4. Prayer that takes its origin from the external world that surrounds us and from what our brothers mean for us (contemplation to obtain love, 235-238) is a form of prayer that initiates or furthers a movement of our attention away from ourselves.

5. To deepen our appreciation of the implications of an event by trying to view it as God does, St. Ignatius proposes the "meditation on the powers of the soul" (45-54), which one can make use of every bit as well for prayer on an event described in the daily newspaper or on television news.

6. To contemplate at length and lovingly the person of Jes us by making oneself present to his life very concretely, simply, almost naively, this is a way to pray that returns all through three weeks of the Exercises, from the Incarna tion of Christ (101-109) up to the Ascension (312).

7. To give a new taste to vocal prayers that have become trite through frequent usage, but also to moderate our own expressions of piety and keep them from becoming excessive or too subjective, Ignatius suggests contemplating and savoring leisurely the words of this or that vocal prayer (second method of prayer, 249-257).

8. At the point where the sentient and the spiritual most closely touch each other, he does not hesitate to suggest "the applying of the five senses" in order to grasp intuitively spiritual realities either the most disconcerting (meditation on hell, 65-71) or the most marvelous (the earth ly life of Jesus, 121-126, 128, 206, 226).

9. Along the lines of the intuition of the oriental mystics, who are little inclined to a body-soul dichotomy, Ignatius

indicates a method of praying "by rhythm" which unites in the same movement the sigh of breathing and that of the heart (258-260).

10. Finally, from the beginning to the end of the Exercises, Ignatius is not afraid to invite the retreatant to make a repetition of the preceding prayers (62-64, 99, 118-119, 128-129, 148, 159, 204, 226), so as to rid the prayer of what in it might be focused too much on the curious, or purely due to impulse, and to make the heart more and more attentive to the infinitely personal touch of the Spirit in each one.

11. Even the evaluation of the prayer becomes a kind of prayer (77).

The above listing may be a bit overly schematic, yet it gives an idea of the eminently flexible pedagogy of St. Ignatius, and of his very practical approach. Whatever the point of departure suggested for the retreatant's prayer, whatever the method proposed, Ignatius has one thing in mind: that the human will coincide with that of the Lord, in an active and loving adhesion to his plan of Love. In this enterprise he involves all the energies and mobilizes all the powers of the person: the bodily senses; the imaginative or spiritual senses, the memory, the intelligence, the will. He makes use of with the same freedom events apparently the most ordinary or mysteries the most elevated, the most transparent vocal prayer or the most ambiguous interior movements, memories that dwell in the heart or situations that call for a decision.

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Jesus, being constantly united with his Father, was able to work effectively for the salvation of his brothers. The goal of prayer is to make of us "contemplatives in action", after the manner of Jesus. The way we make use of to pray is quite secondary. What is essential is to meet God, to open ourselves to him, and above all, to let him open himself to us: "I call you friends, because all that I have learned from my Father, I have made known to you" (John 15: 15). It is up to each one to find his own form of prayer, that which will stir up the Spirit within him. Because she believed in the Word of God and was faithful to it to the end, Mary can teach us to pray, to discover the Word of God, and to give a clear and generous response to this Love which calls us to serve the Lord and our brothers and sisters in the world today.

INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S YEAR : A CHALLENGE TO CLC

THE EVENT

- The UNITED NATIONS has designated 1975 as International Woman's Year.
- In so doing, it assigned as its theme :
 - equality : promoting equality between men and women
 - development : ensuring the full integration of women in the total effort for economic, social and cultural development at national, regional and international levels.
 - peace : recognizing the importance of woman's increasing contribution to development of friendly relations and co-operation between states and to the strengthening of peace in the world.
- As part of the Year, a United Nations Conference on Woman will take place in Mexico City June 19-July 2.

THE CONCERN OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- Vatican Council II :

"The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect, and a power, never hitherto achieved."

(Message at Solemn Closing, December 8, 1965)

- Paul VI :

"There is so much to be done in this field! Is it necessary to point out that there are still millions of women who do not enjoy essential rights nor elementary marks of respect?...it is the whole Church that is concerned; it is in the local communities that we must encourage a review of life ...as to women's participation in social life on the one hand, and in the mission of the Church on the other."

(Address to Committee for International Women's Year, April 18, 1975)

WHAT TO DO ?

The Study Commission on Woman in Society and the Church, established by Pope Paul already in 1973, has prepared a Study Kit with background on the topic and suggestions as to the direction committed Christian action might take. Here are some brief excerpts:

Social, economic and political action :

"Programs and activities should be directed towards certain specific goals :

- full equality before the law
- equality in meeting health needs and providing social services
- eliminating illiteracy and ensuring equality of educational opportunity in all fields...
- equality of rights and responsibilities in the family
- equality of economic rights, improvement of living and working conditions, improvement in the quality of rural life and in the status of rural women
- protection of working mothers... (vacations, leave of absence, refresher courses)
- struggle against prostitution and particularly against its "regulation"
- opportunity for women as well as men to take a full part in decision-making at all levels."

Equality within the Church : Questions for reflection as a basis for action :

"Questions for the local Churches :

- To what extent do women - sisters or lay persons, married or single - contribute to the life of the ecclesial community ?
- In mixed associations, do women share the real responsibilities ? If not, why not ?
- Have lay ministries open to women been experienced ?
- When women are asked to undertake service involving responsibilities, is this done :
 - as a concession or privilege ?
 - only because there are no men available ?
 - or rather, because their character as baptized persons and their personal aptitudes are being recognized ?

NOTE: An article reflecting on this theme in more depth will appear later, following the UN Conference.

