

PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

JANUARY 1976
45th Year
N° 1

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"May the God of hope bring you
all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may be filled
with the fullness of hope."
(Rom. 15,13)

Such is the wish we make for each of our readers
as this new year dawns. Our hope, then, is that
in Fidelity to this faith and by our love for
men, we become more and more signs of Christ, the
Risen Word.

Just out

Progressio Supplement No. 6, Discerning Community Decisions, by Jean Claude Dhôtel S.J., 92 pages. Price: \$2.00 or 1500 Lire. Write : PROGRESSIO, Borgo Santo Spirito 5, C.P. 9048, 00100 ROME (Italy).

OPEN LETTER
TO NATIONAL CLC FEDERATIONS

Rome, November 1, 1975

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter to congratulate you.

The reason for my congratulations? Your having chosen as theme for Manila '76 : Poor with Christ for a Better Service. I find this a particularly happy choice. When José Gsell asked me to write an article on this subject, I replied, "I will try, and if you allow it, I will do it in the form of a letter. That gives me more liberty to do it in a personal way." In a word, I simply want to open my heart a little. The heart of a poor Jesuit, reaching gradually the end of his years. Poor, and infinitely grateful.

Why has this theme so touched me? There are many reasons. I will limit myself to three of them.

1. "Poor with Christ for a better service" is a very concrete follow-up to Augsburg '73 : "CLC, a community at the service of the liberation of all men." Augsburg was an important event, a decisive step forward, the lived experience of a new integration : Exercises - world Community - liberation. I rejoice that this experience is being continued through specifying it further and deepening it anew.

2. This is the first time that the theme of an Assembly of our World Federation is centered on Christ. In our age of secularization that so often reveals immaturity, this is a real blessing.

3. Manila invites us to contemplate in Jesus the attitude that, I would dare to say, is most specifically Ignatian, his poverty.

For a Better Service

At the close of the Assembly of Augsburg, Roland Calcat summarized all the proposals and suggestions that had been arrived at in the work of the groups. This synthesis comprised the "orientations" for the years ahead. Your insistence on the Exercises ("priority of priorities") and on formation were striking. As to liberation, I single out your recommendation to "take action that aims mainly at the causes of problems, rather than the consequences."

In the line of that document, the theme of Manila, inspired by the Exercises, suggests a deeper formation in Ignatian poverty and is directed at the roots of evil in the world.

Our commitment to liberation must become a better service by a deeper spiritual poverty on our part, thus aiming at eliminating the causes of oppression and injustice, and also by a real and actual poverty, witnessing in this way to our solidarity with the poor. It was especially with them that Jesus identified himself.

Manila will be at the same time an implementation of Rome '67, where the delegates formulated the General Principles in these words: "Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ" (No. 7).

Jesus at the Center

The theme of Manila is an invitation not only to study, but also to contemplation. Its inspiration is not a concept or an idea, but a Person. The Person of Jesus, one with the Father in the Spirit, one with all men, his brothers in the same Spirit.

It is He who will be at the center of your deliberations - Jesus poor and humble, infinitely more than simply a historical Person. He will be present, living, active, giving himself and manifesting himself, inviting all to be with Him. Risen and invisible, he is the Jesus of the Gospel, the incarnation of eternal Love, hidden in his

LETTER FROM LEBANON

Help in Trouble

"We have been very upset by the sad events of such gravity that we have been living through here in Lebanon. The crisis, thanks be to God, seems to be slowly on the way to being resolved, and I have good hope that perhaps the country will come out of it purified and stronger. Our groups have played a very positive role in this situation: those directly involved in it have conducted themselves in an exemplary Christian way, and all the others have assessed themselves so as to be able to help those affected by sending them money and large quantities of clothes and food commodities. So much so that, in a radio interview, the representative of CARITAS thanked them publicly and by name.

Socio-Missionary Camp

Enclosed is a page from the Lebanon Review with an account and pictures of the socio-missionary camp that our youth communities, jointly with the scouts, have arranged. The summer camp for adults that lasted for 40 days also went well. We are waiting impatiently for the return of peace and normal life so as to take up again our apostolic activity. Let me describe the youth camp a little more in detail...

It is a socio-missionary camp of our community from Our Lady of Seven Dolours, in which the youth - ranging in age from 9 to 22 years! - learn to live close to nature and to their Creator.

For us, it involves more than anything else a break from daily routine. Here we live a life less encumbered, more primitive, but also more inspiring and richer. For in

nature, at the heart of creation, the most unresponsive among us feels more the presence of God.

Each summer, this semi-retreat of our youth is based on two rules of living: reflection and action. In this way the camp is a school of development of the personality, of courage, of energy and will. Besides, nature herself teaches us to learn the limits of the possible, of what one can risk, and this contact with reality gives to each thing the importance that it deserves.

Every day, according to a carefully planned program, the young people - besides the "housekeeping" chores that help them learn how to count on themselves - have a shared reflection on a specific theme such as sharing, responsibility, the notion of one's country, etc. The afternoons are given to outside efforts in the village. Thus our members come to know the others after first coming to know themselves. We are anxious to develop the maximum contact of the campers with the local population (which, in any case, at once adopted them), for our goal is not only that they make contact with nature but also with men. These gatherings between city folk and mountain dwellers build a better mutual understanding, and so are an effective means toward social renewal. The excursions of the youth in the localities nearby, the surveys they have conducted in the homes, have given them a better understanding of their country. Far from prejudices and false values they have discovered their land in its true light, and have found in the villages the true visage of their race, often far removed from the images presented to us by politicians and men of affairs. There is the true sense of our mission in this camp.

Brotherhood

I'm not sure if you know that I am living in a community set up in a neighborhood of the Region-West of Beirut, a neighborhood 85 per cent Moslem. During all the recent events, we stayed where we were. That allowed us to witness to Christian-Moslem solidarity. The Christians took courage in seeing us remain there, and the Moslems appreciated our trust in ourselves and in them. Three weeks ago, the Moslems of the apartment house came to ask us to arrange some courses for their children; and now our sitting-room has been transformed into a school from 8:00 to 12:30 each morning.... I close by recommending myself to your prayers and assuring you of mine."

creatures, humble, simple, powerless, silent. What an eloquent poverty! But also, if I discover Him, if I see Him, what freedom!

Is it not in this way that Ignatius contemplated and loved him, praying "Eternal Lord of all things..."? (Spir. Ex. 98).

What Kind of Poverty?

I am happy, dear friends, that you want to deepen your sense of evangelical poverty. You know that the Exercises are an inestimable help. The key meditations of the Second Week introduce us to it in a special way. Here I would like to mention at least the incomparable meditation on the Two Standards (Spir. Ex. 136).

Here it is question above all of spiritual poverty, but then too of "actual" poverty. All without exception are called to the first; it means detachment, purity of heart. The meditation on the Two Standards is an invitation to the highest degree of this purity, to "the highest spiritual poverty" (Spir. Ex. 146).

If spiritual poverty makes us free, the highest spiritual poverty makes us unbelievably free. The Exercises help us to live the Gospel in a way that is radical and total. This radicality and this totality lead us here to the breaking of even the strongest and most subtle attachments, for they are all obstacles in the way of true life and true liberty.

The Gospel is filled with marvelous examples of this liberty on the part of Jesus. Attached only to the will of the Father, he is immune to the least pressure, no matter where it comes from. Lord and Master of situations, he seeks neither esteem, nor success, nor security, nor certitude, nor understanding, nor support, nor satisfaction. True Man with a human heart, He is simple, independent and free as regards everyone. Not only as regards political and religious authorities, but also as regards the people and its desires. He disconcerts his friends and his disciples, he opposes himself to his fellow countrymen, to his family, even to his mother.

To be poor with Christ means to be free with Him. But we are still on the way. We must - always with Him - cross the desert, go through the dark night, the dryness and emptiness, the desolation, the suffering, the annihilation.

To be poor with Christ means to accept and to embrace with love daily life, including its insults, its hurts, its disillusionments and its humiliations. The Exercises speak, and with insistence, of the desire for humiliations and contempt...(Spir. Ex. 98, 146, 167).

As for me, I see here the very heart of our spirituality : whoever wants to see and love God in all things must be purified and liberated in all things. That supposes depth, radicality, totality. It supposes above all that we live what we are: one with Jesus poor and humiliated. I am deeply convinced that this "highest spiritual poverty" and a more profound humility are essential for the renewal and rejuvenation of the Church today. Those who are privileged to consider Ignatian spirituality as their characteristic way have here a very special vocation. To be even more specific : I believe that this poverty - a great gift of God - is available to all those who make the experience of the authentic Exercises. Without this poverty-purification, our "disponibility" and discernment, our prayer and our commitment, do not go very far...

Dear friends, you perhaps understand still better now why I congratulate you.

With you always, in Him,

L. Paulussen, S.J.

THE MEANING OF "MISSION" IN CLC

Justo GONZALEZ-TARRIO, s.j.

The word "mission" should be the central focus of everything in the Christian Life Communities. Its meaning is clearly that of "sending" or "the action of sending". We are sent by Jesus Christ through the mediation of the Church. For this reason we need to make the noun "mission" more explicit by adding the adjective "apostolic".

In his mystical experiences, St. Ignatius came to a very deep understanding of the concept of mission beginning with the mystery itself of the Trinity. He says, "Here I understood other things, such as how the Son first sent the apostles to preach in poverty, and how afterwards the Holy Spirit confirmed this by giving them his spirit and the gift of tongues, and so how, with the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit, all three persons confirmed that mission." (Cf. MI, Const., 90-91).

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Mission, therefore, should be the key to our reading of the world, as we "seek to achieve this unity of life which is a response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live" (G.P. 3).

The General Principles therefore direct us to consider the world as the object of our mission, its finality. We are called "...to love Christ more ardently and follow him more closely", and, in the meditation on the Kingdom, he himself calls us. He "chooses so many persons, apostles, disciples, etc., and sends them throughout the whole world, to spread his sacred doctrine" (Spir. Ex. 145).

We must, then, look with love on this world, to which we are sent. And we must look at it with eyes that reflect our own charism, that is, with a love for men, and for other creatures because of their relationship to man. A love

that "comes down from the Divine Goodness" and makes us feel ourselves called-with and sent-with the Word as his companions. A love that is universal.

But to understand our mission - one with the mission of Christ entrusted to his Church - we must see "how the three Divine Persons look down upon the whole expanse or circuit of all the earth, filled with human beings" (Spir. Ex. 102). We must "see the different persons ...in such great diversity" (Spir. Ex. 106) and see how the Trinity acts so that we may act in the same way.

Mission, in fact, manifests clearly the concrete will of God, that which the Lord desires of each of us, personally and as a community, by means of spiritual discernment, in the "here and now" (See Progressio Supplement No. 6, November 1975).

A mission, we must understand clearly, leads us to the world, incorporating us into the "history of salvation". It is this same mission that gives a salvific meaning to our own life.

If as members of CLC we take action on mission, we will need to discover the importance of "discerning what is most urgent and universal" (GP 7).

I believe that here is where we must situate a criterion - one that is eminently evangelical and Ignatian - to enable us to discern what our mission is in the world of today. The dynamic of the "magis" (the more) of the Spiritual Exercises demands it of us. Each day we will be challenged by the world. Our world will present to us the aspirations and needs of all men, as well as its possibilities, its progress, etc. It will ask our brotherly hand, as we share its life, in its search for orientations, for possible solutions.

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In this context we cannot overlook one aspect of our mission, that of its communitarian dimension.

As members of the World CLC Federation - which is, let us not forget, a community! - our individual mission implies a SENSE OF THE BODY. And this body, as such, has

recognized that "we must consecrate ourselves first of all (-a priority, therefore) to the renewal and sanctification of the temporal order...participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination", finding our "permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ, so that we work in a spirit of service to establish justice and peace among all men" (GP 7).

* * *

Before drawing some conclusions, let us recall once again that CLCs are communities essentially apostolic, in as much as they have as their end to make possible and to facilitate the carrying out of the mission entrusted. Such is the principal objective of our CLC life both at the level of local community and that of world community. This means, and I would like to repeat it as strongly as I can, that our communities need to resolve the necessary tension that exists in our "union with a view to dispersion" (See Progressio Supplement No. 4, November 1974, first article). And this will be resolved in connection with the execution of the mission.

In Augsburg '73, the world CLC community, united in General Assembly, deliberated - with the delegates of the national communities - about our common mission. And, keeping in mind some of the underlying principles of our spirituality, I remember that in one way or other were emphasized the following:

- a) the primacy of the divine (all for the greater glory of God): seeking in everything the greater glory of God (Spir. Ex. 23).
- b) the second principle - to use the expression of Jesus in the Gospel (Matthew 22:39), "is like the first": the human. Man, the whole man, all men.

These two first principles will avoid both a supernaturalism or spiritualism not rooted in history, and a naturalism incapable of grasping the transcendental and divine aspect of man.

- c) the ecclesial character, a characteristic of

all mission, and one deeply rooted in our spirituality, since it is the Ignatian principle of "thinking with the Church". It is very necessary for us, who cannot and must not oppose the Church to Christ, nor oppose institution to mystery, but rather to see the mystery in the institution.

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Logically, it is not very difficult to show these relationships to our apostolic mission. But we need to be aware of the difficulties we will meet in living out in its fulness this sense of mission. It is not easy to live these elements at the base of our apostolic mission which, at times, may seem to be in opposition. We need constantly, to ask the Lord for grace and to lay great stress on deepening those elements in such a way that we are able to reduce them to a principle of a higher order, in which the tension between these basic elements is integrated in a single higher value. For example, the ability to be "contemplatives in action": the possible tension between prayer/action is integrated and unified in an active life of a higher order, that of "finding God in all things" (a typical Ignatian expression), in which both action and prayer are reduced to being continually with God, whom one perceives as present both when praying and when acting.

Examples could be multiplied; here what matters is to see how mission as one carries it out in life requires of us a continual deepening, which leads us to greater perfection and greater progress in the service of God and men. Thus we will find ourselves continually stimulated, so that the personal living of our specific CLC charism enriches us more and more.

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We have tried in these lines to show how mission is a primordial element in our conception of the Christian Life Communities, so primordial that it is the key to understanding, deepening and living the charisma and the "identity" of CLC.

YOUTH CLCs IN GERMANY

by Karl Ludwig Hundemer

The aim of this article is not to give an overall view of the Youth CLCs of Germany. The communities are too diverse to easily accomplish this. So we will try simply to point out in this report their goals, orientation and development, the motivations of young men who enter CLC, the relationship between youth CLCs and the adult Communities, and future perspectives.

Development in the last years is seen first of all at the level of structures. Diocesan federations, the grouping therefore of communities at the diocesan level, are becoming stronger. One result is that the local community is no longer the only group with meaning for members, a thing which sometimes used to contribute to an impoverishment of the group's life. Leaders in the diocesan federations, instead, are becoming more and more the determining factors in the orientation and goals of the movement. These latter are worked out and transmitted to members through the gatherings, the sessions for leaders, and the formation.

What objectives, then, are sought in the Youth-CLCs? We see, to begin with, that there is not just a single orientation but several of them, with different methods, determined by the persons in charge at the regional level. Aspects emphasized include religious education, political awareness and attitudes, intellectual and spiritual formation of the personality, apostolic commitment within the school and within society. National CLC-youth leaders give support to the effort by offering various courses:

- the Exercises, to recognize in an attitude of openness the will of God and so arrive at a life of faith;
- seminars for leaders in the areas of "creativity", "style of work and responsibility", "management and marketing", "coeducation", to improve the professional competence of our leaders;
- sessions aimed at a positive life pattern in a reciprocal

relationship between participants and leaders;
- lived experiences aimed at developing the human personality, using group experiences and group dynamics. Taken together, the different sessions offered in 1975 are trying to respond to Article 7 of the General Principles, whose goal is "to be by our words and actions witnesses to Christ before men".

What leads a boy of 11 or 12 years to want to enter into a youth group? What is his aim, his expectations? Rarely does he have a clear vision of what he will find; very often it is a matter of organizing his free time in a more intelligent way to compensate for the tension he feels from the scholastic demands made on him. Nonetheless, quite soon one of the important elements of the movement will be given him, namely, living in community and the experience of a community faith process. This will very often lead to a wider process, a more spiritual orientation of the life of the different members of the group. This religious orientation does not of itself include the option for the CLC way of life. This is confirmed by the fact that only a small number of young people go on later to become members of CLCs of university students or of adults. To ask for such a decision on the part of youth would certainly not answer their needs.

Youth CLCs in Germany are divided into two independent federations, one for boys and one for girls, but they work together in close collaboration. Both groups are part of the National CLC Federation of Germany. The adults have proposed, during the year just finished, courses and individually-guided Spiritual Exercises for the older members of the youth groups, which has been generally looked on as an appreciable help. However, one quite often notices a lack of contact at the local level between the groups of youth and those of adults. Often not only is there a certain lack of common interest, but even a lack of reciprocal information.

Before long, we will find ourselves faced with important decisions about our youth CLCs: our coming General Council of 1976 will need to decide whether the girls' and boys' federations in Germany will be merged. An affirmative decision will have results in the areas of organization and structure. As regards content, there would result a wider gamut of viewpoints and of offerings, since the

specific emphases of the two partners would be available to youth as a whole.

One finds, besides, a growing sense of responsibility among the youth toward the world as a whole; it expresses itself in the need for a greater simplicity. This development is linked with a desire to be welcomed and accepted. It will be the task of CLC to provide an answer to these demands which, while taking account of the needs of youth, point in the direction of our goal, which is fulfillment in Christ.

Jesus in West-Germany

My name is Harry Fuchs. I'm 20 years old, and right now am fulfilling my "conscientious-objector" service in the German CLC Secretariate. (Here in West-Germany it is possible to refuse service in the army.) After having passed the test, if you are really refusing for reasons of conscience, then you must give a substitute civil service in places such as children's homes, youth hostels, hospitals, youth organizations, etc.

I have been with CLC in some form for ten years. First - when I was 10 years old - it was the pre-group in Würzburg with their games, the trips together, camping, and masses; then later, the community I found, which took me in and kept me. There I discovered also my "love" for working with youth - which would soon develop into a career for me. In this community, which concerned itself with the human needs of youth, especially our relationship with the person Jesus, I could really feel the presence of Jesus. I felt this presence as well in the boys' group which I led for 4 years: through solving problems, difficulties which came up, the joy of accomplishments, and the valuable experiences with my "kids". Also, as a member in other groups, and through contacts with various other CLCers, He was and is simply there for me - in His Words and in people.

This relationship with my "Brother" and with youth-work was strengthened through CLC programs offered here like leadership training, days of recollection, retreats, live-in seminars, and counseling; also, through experiences

with Jesus and people in all possible and impossible situations. So again and again I am made conscious of His presence, for instance when I get letters from friends and former group members, or when I can help people or bring someone joy. Likewise, through the people who help me in this unfamiliar city, through the members of the group in which I was admitted, when we prepare and have mass together. He always gives me new strength - to keep going. One of the ways He does this is through contact with CLCers from other countries, like Sidney D'Souza of India or Peggie Telscher of the United States, who through their way of life and radiating conviction make me sense Christ's life in them and help to embody HIM for me.

His life also helped me to decide against serving in the army. That's why for 15 months I am giving a substitute service in the Secretariate of the KSJ-GCL (boys' groups) in Augsburg. (The Secretariate of the GCL-J, girls' groups and the National Secretariate are in the same house.) At this time, the boys' and girls' CLCs are "officially" separate, although in part they work together - and should be come soon one Federation, officially as well.

In West-Germany we have about 7,200 youth members in about 80 local communities, up to 20 years of age, and about 200 university student CLCers. Several CLC publications are put out by the Secretariates, as well as by different local communities. So I work, for example, on "Smoky", a magazine for group leaders - a small part of my task as a conscientious-objector worker for the KSJ-GCL Federation. The girls' publication is called "Antenne", and the university students have what they call the "Drehscheibe".

The German Youth-CLC is divided into 3 levels: The Executive Council (elected by the representatives of the communities), the Diocesan Council (elected by the leaders of the communities) and the grass-roots level, made up of the individual members of the communities.

That's it for today, something about Jesus, Youth-CLC and myself. We're one in the Spirit!

Harry Fuchs

COME LIVE WITH ME

Nicholas RIEMAN, s.j.

The Kingdom meditation in the Spiritual Exercises is pivotal: it is the fulcrum on which the entire experience turns.

In the Principle and Foundation (if I have experienced the Exercises), I have pondered and viewed the world as it was meant to be in God's love-design, recalled also the positive expressions and reflections of that love-design, recalled too the positive expressions and reflections of that love-plan in my own existence to date.

Then, in the First Week, I came face to face with the awful reality of evil - an evil multiform, insinuating, persistent - in the world and in me. I became aware, perhaps for the first time, that I was "part of what's wrong with the world", aware of my own bankruptcy. Left to myself, all was black, hopeless, a blind alley. And yet, all was bright with a vista of infinite hope, for the Lord himself offered me salvation as a free gift. In a word, if the First Week has worked its full effect, I have come to know who I am and that, just as I am, God loves me. He has become my salvation.

At this point in the Exercises, into the pages of humankind's history and into the pages of my own life history steps the person of Jesus Christ with his ringing call, "Come join me in my plan, my struggle to save the world and to set it free." Or, as he put it long ago to two other men, "Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). It is the call of the Kingdom, the call to join him, to live like him, to live his kind of life as together we labor to build the kingdom.

The Kingdom meditation is, then, a global view of the mission of Christ and the way he goes about it, and an invitation to associate myself with him in the effort. As such it is a bridge between the First Week of the Exercises and the Weeks that follow. At the close of the First Week I had

come to experience Christ as my personal saviour, Christ-for-me. Now the focus becomes with-Christ-for-the-world (cf. Lefrank, Freedom for Service, Progressio Supplement No. 3, April 1974, P. 60). While remaining always my Saviour, he now becomes my Friend. "Come join me. Come live with me as we fight the battle together." And all the rest of the Spiritual Exercises will be a deepening assimilation of, and gradual identification with, his life and his mission. The Kingdom meditation introduces me to that Person, life and mission, for they are all one.

To help us grasp in part how great and how vast this call is and how utterly unique the Man who extends it, Ignatius prefaces it with an example of "the call of an earthly king". Time was when such an image could stir hearts, but no more. "Today, sociological reality is much too complex to have one and the same image correspond to all exercitants" (Lefrank, p. 63). And yet, we have seen names like Gandhi, Kennedy, Martin Luther King, John XXIII command the loyalties of whole nations, even the admiration of people everywhere. But Jesus Christ is utterly unique. He is truly "the Son of Man", man at his best, man at his fulness: strong yet tender, humble yet fearless, unyielding on principle yet forgiving "seventy times seven", utterly selfless, a man whose only law was love. And the cause to which he calls is one - the only one - that transcends all space and all time, from the most secret depths of human hearts to the most striking achievements of man's mind and spirit. This is the Man, a divine Man in sober truth, who invites me to be his friend and collaborator.

And the call is personal. Not a faceless offer, but one that comes to me at a particular moment in my life, in accents quite special. One that invites me, not to an assembly-line task where only hands, not persons, are wanted, but to a contribution to the kingdom that takes full account of my own unique personality, one that I alone can make.

For it is a call, indeed, to work in a cause, but that is not its central focus. Rather it is a call to be with Christ, to travel the same path as he, as a friend. This is especially underlined in the first part of the meditation, where the one invited is told, "he must work with me by day, and watch with me by night, that as he has had

a share in the toil with me, afterwards he may share in the victory with me" (Spir. Ex. 93; underlining author's). It is, then, nothing less than an invitation to personal friendship, an invitation to "come live with me and be my love"; as the old English ballad puts it. And those who respond to it become "friends in the Lord", "companions of Jesus".

If my response, like the invitation, is one of love, then of course I "will want to give greater proof of my love... not only offering myself entirely for the work" but wanting to give and to do more, to "make offerings of greater value and of more importance". It is the magis, the more, a characteristic attitude of all Ignatian spirituality. It is not by chance that the General Principles of CLC declare that our aim in the Christian Life Communities is "to give ourselves always more generously to God" (GP 1), that our groups are for those "who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fulness of their Christian faith" and aim at "preparing members more effectively for the apostolate" (3), that our community life "teaches us to discern what is most urgent and universal" (7); that we aim at "following more closely Christ in his poverty... and to become ever more competent and convincing" in our apostolic witness (11) (underlining throughout author's). Is it surprising, then, that the theme of the coming CLC General Assembly of Manila next year was chosen to be "poor with Christ for a better service"?

And this kingdom we are asked to help Christ to fashion, what kind of kingdom is it? It is, quite simply, the kingdom described in the Gospels: a world in which all will be happy because all will love. It is a kingdom that begins in this world, grows in spite of many setbacks and obstacles, to come to full flower in the life without end. It is a kingdom at once interior and social: interior, for its greatest task is to change hearts; but inescapably and strikingly social as well, for if love is real, it must fashion structures that are just and loving. And let us be careful not to think of the kingdom in too "churchy" a way; while the Church is undoubtedly Christ's spearhead in the effort, the kingdom is perhaps best described in the Preface of the Liturgy for the Feast of Christ King: "an everlasting and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life,

a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace."

The invitation of the Kingdom meditation is very realistic. It offers victory and glory, but only at the cost of "blood, sweat and tears", of hardship, labor and suffering. Quite specifically, we are invited to offer ourselves for "all wrongs and all abuse, and all poverty, both actual and spiritual." (94) If we are to live and work with Christ, to "be content with the same food, drink, clothing etc." as he (93), can it be otherwise? Remember, our Friend is a man who was born in a manger, worked as a carpenter, often had nowhere to lay his head; and when he died, men threw dice to see who would get his cloak, the only property he left. Remember, our Friend is a man who was accused of being a wine-bibber and a friend of sinners and casting out devils through Beelzebul himself; a man whose fellow-townsmen tried to throw him off a cliff; who was falsely accused, tried and condemned, and died as a criminal. In one way or other, those who "throw in their lot with Christ" can expect contradiction and frustration, although it may come in any one of a thousand forms. As the old Negro spiritual has it, "you can't go to heaven on roller skates." And it was the Lord himself who said of Paul, when he called him to the greatest of the apostles: "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

The call of the Kingdom is a call to growing identification with Jesus, with his person and his life. It is a call to share with him ever more deeply in his paschal mystery, and that involves, in one form or other, growing assimilation to Christ poor and humiliated—whether in himself or in his members alive today. That is the price of helping him to build a kingdom of justice, love and peace. But the paschal mystery ends in victory, eternal victory. In the words of a beautiful stone sculpture of Christ rising that dominates the grounds of Colombiere College, Detroit, words inspired by the Kingdom meditation, "WHO FIGHT THE BATTLE WITH ME WILL RISE IN VICTORY WITH ME."

LETTER FROM CHINA : TAIWAN

Very Dear Friends,

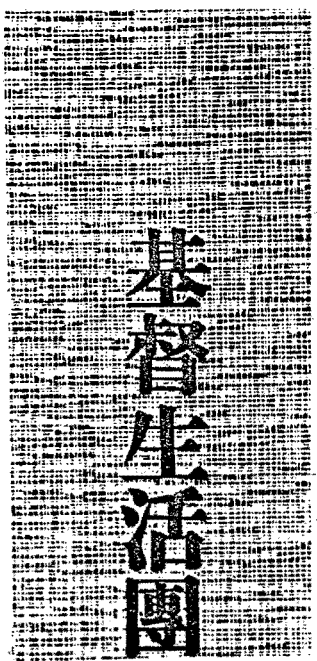
We, the CLCs from Taiwan, send you our greetings and tell you that during the past hot summer we have passed days together that were rich and full of meaning. This was the program:

- CLC Formation Courses at the National Level:
 - July 1-7, with 72 members taking part
 - September 2-9, with 85 members taking part
- 8-Day Individually-guided Spiritual Exercises:
 - July 1-9, with 18 members
 - July 10-18, with 10 members
- Theology Course in the Jesuit Theologate
 - the entire month of August, with 36 members participating
- Live-in of the Coordinators of each of the 30 Communities:
 - September 9-11.

A few words on each of these...

Our Formation Course in 1975 was the twelfth annual one we have held for CLC members at the national level. We used to conduct one of these in winter and one in summer, but with so many wanting to take part we have now arranged 3 courses: 2 in summer and 1 in winter. The theme for this year's Course was "The Risk of the Faith".

Spiritual Exercises retreats: These are especially for the university students who will soon finish their studies. The objective is to help them, in a climate of profound prayer, to discern the direction of their lives.



Theology Course: The aim of this is to continue the faith-formation of CLC members. This takes place in a climate of serious study and research, but includes at the same time a deep community experience.

Live-in of the Community coordinators: This is done twice a year, with the aim of evaluating the past and programming the future. This time the direction to give to youth CLCs was especially gone into. We saw the positive points and the progress of each community and this was a stimulus for us all. And what we think is more important, each of the leaders leave this live-in convinced of their responsibility and the spirit they must communicate, through listening to and inspiring each other.

Our 30 communities are divided into 3 zones, each with a president and vice-president who are, as a team, responsible for visiting the communities, planning and stimulating contact between them and establishing new communities.

The coordinators of each zone meet monthly to plan their activity, and all 3 zones meet together annually, at which time members make their consecration or commitment. There is collaboration in apostolic activity, for example visits to hospitals, prisons, parishes. But the main thing required is a witness in their university milieu. Once a semester all the council members of each community meet to evaluate and to plan for the future.

Up till now in Taiwan, the university groups have developed well and with real dynamism. But the postgraduates, who now have a certain responsibility in society have been somewhat neglected. The two main reasons for this phenomenon seem to be:

- more attention has always been given to the university students
- after graduating, they either enter military service, emigrate abroad, or are simply lost in the crowd.

For this reason, we evaluated the matter seriously, and now, of the 113 university graduates this year who are CLC members, we have now formed 3 new communities. We have much more to do in this area.

Please do not forget us in your prayers.
In the name of all,

(Sister) Tecla Yue, MMB

REPORT ON THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LAITY

It was the People of God in microcosm. Almost 300 of them, of every race and age and language, came together at Rome from 70 countries. Even the newest, Papua-New Guinea, was represented. There were, besides, delegates from 45 international Catholic organizations, CIC of course among them. Mostly they were lay people, but with several bishops and a score of priests as well. And 14 ecumenical observers from other Christian communities. Truly a cross-section of God's People.

They came together at the invitation of the Council of the Laity, a department of the Holy See established by the Pope after Vatican Council II to further the active role of the laity in the Church. And so this World Assembly of the Council of the Laity gathered for over a week (October 7-15, 1975) to exchange, to pray, to reflect, to voice its views in this consultation. Thus it was in the line of the World Congresses of the Lay Apostolate of '51, '57 and '67; and though much smaller in numbers, of no less importance, and perhaps better prepared and executed.

The aim of the consultation was that the laity's voice be more clearly heard. To achieve this, the Assembly focused for the first several days on man's searchings today: his search for identity, his search for justice, his search for God. Then the pastoral implications of these yearnings in the fields of evangelization, the ecclesial community, its mission in the world, were explored. The method used was a coordinated ensemble of conferences, exchanges of experience and discussions in small groups, and general assemblies, with simultaneous translations into

English, French and Spanish where needed. The entire results of the Assembly and its various groups and sessions will be made use of by the Council of the Laity; in addition, it approved specific recommendations on a number of key points:

- the need for better structures to further dialogue between laity and Church leaders and to make operative the shared responsibility of the laity
- the strong commitment to justice (especially international justice) and to solidarity with the poor that must be part of the faith and life of Christians
- the need for total formation, namely formation in its spiritual, intellectual, social and political aspects
- an evangelization that starts from the local situation, and is "inculturated" into it
- a wider role for women in society and in the Church.

The atmosphere of the gathering was prayerful, integrated, mature. Each day began with a biblical reflection - the opening one in which a slide projection of sculptures of different continents was used to show how man today, just as in the Old Testament, pursues his search for meaning and for God, was especially effective - and the liturgies were fully integrated with the days' themes. An integrated approach, linking spirituality and justice, evangelization and human promotion, was strongly evident. And one noticed in these lay leaders a certain maturity: a sense of the Church, an awareness of both their rights and their responsibilities, an ability to speak frankly and even strongly, but without bitterness or self-justification.

A Holy Year service of reconciliation, held in the Catecombs, formed part of the program too. And of course an audience with the Holy Father, whose words to the Assembly included this comment: "Contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to masters... It is your honor to be Christ's witnesses in the midst of secular activities... this witness of a whole life can be very demanding. It supposes that you will be constantly nourishing your belief and your zeal... at the living sources of faith and grace... The quality of the yeast that you are called upon to insert in the dough of this world depends on your entire fidelity!"

But the most moving part of the gathering was the witness of some of the participants: of a young African husband, seldom able to be with his wife and family because of racial government restrictions; of a delegate from a Communist country, and the constant governmental interference he meets in Christian life and activity (5 countries with large Catholic populations were not even represented at the Assembly because atheistic governments would not allow it); of a young Brazilian worker, whose deep faith and quiet account merits having her story briefly recounted here...

She came from a family of 16, had a very poor childhood, went to work early in a factory. Her father used to say that their poverty was the will of God and must be endured, but she rebelled against this, began to study nights so she could somehow get out of her wretched poverty. Then one day a militant Catholic worker said to her, "If you want to work your way out of this misery, just you and your family, you have a right to do so; but if you do, thousands of others will stay in misery and oppression just as they are; the right way is to go out together, to work with them to overcome together injustice and poverty."

She understood then that this was part of the paschal mystery, of the struggle and pain leading to the resurrection of the whole man that Jesus came to bring, and made her decision that such would be her life. She began organizing her first groups of workers. Eventually she went abroad to take part in seminars, study more for this purpose, became vice-president of the World Movement of Catholic Workers. When she came back to Brazil, she went again to work in a factory, and was criticized by her family for this. Her labor activities landed her in prison for many months. When she got out, even some of the workers kept their distance from her, for fear that being too close to one who had been in trouble with the government would not be good. And she had no job - in fact, she was still unemployed at the time she took part in the Assembly. But her faith in Christ and attachment to his Church were firm as ever, for she had come to know, even through her own experience, and not without cost, that in the cooperative effort of people to free themselves from oppression and slavery the Lord's Kingdom is being built, and

the way prepared for the resurrection. ... Truly her account was moving; and when she finished, the entire Assembly gave her a 3-minute ovation.

The Assembly then was many things: witness and brotherly exchange and prayerful reflection on the word of God and on its meaning in today's world. But first and foremost, it was a consultation, in which the worldwide voice of the laity was clearly heard. An important step therefore in the ongoing pilgrimage of the People of God.

PERU HAPPENINGS

by B. Elena GRANADOS

Introduction to Formation, fruit of the experience of the Christian Life Communities in France, and brought to us in a translation from the French (1) by Father Justo Gonzalez-Tarrio, was used by us to furnish a lived experience of what one aspires to in CLC. This session was promoted and coordinated by the Executive Council of our National Federation. Taking part in it were 35 leaders from different Communities of Lima, including their religious assistants. It lasted 6 days, with an average of 3 hours daily given to it. Because of time limitations, we chose only 5 of the 8 themes developed in the document, namely:

- discovering oneself in depth
- living together in brotherly union
- hearing the call of Christ
- discerning the better in our daily decisions
- consecrated for the mission in the world.

The themes were presented by various members of the Executive Council. Then followed the process suggested in the document: assimilation of the theme through a meeting in small groups where people prayed, reflected individually and shared their experiences together; a plenary session in which this was brought together and evaluated; and the "proposal for the month" which aimed at putting into practise the experience had in ongoing daily living. The course helped us to adapt better to concrete reality and to the objectives we were aiming at.

(1) This document, which outlines a program for the first year of CLC formation, is available in English and Spanish from the World CLC Secretariat, and in the original French from the French CLC center at 14 rue de la Tombe-Issoire, 75014 Paris, France.

Our purpose was not to accumulate knowledge or information. Rather we were trying to share together the basic experiences that characterize a Christian Life Community, and bring back to our respective groups the motivation and Experience needed to implement the course effectively.

Taking part in the session too were some persons (lay and religious) who are in close contact with our Federation or with CLC members. All of these showed interest in encouraging new CLC groups, both in the capital of the country and in the interior. We can add that during this session we took part in the launching of a new CLC group now functioning in Lima.

As to the worth of the course, we have concluded that it has been very useful both for new members and for those already active in CLC for some years. All of us experienced the Lord's presence, which was reflected also in the community. Among the many good results, which surpassed our expectations, we can mention that in all our groups we are now making use of the document mentioned (and the practical exercises that form part of it). We recommend them to other groups.

* * *

The coming of Justo Gonzalez-Tarrio always brings us new faith in our commitment to the Christian Life Communities. On his last visit two members of our Executive Council traveled with him to Arequipa (one of the key cities of Peru) to carry out extensive work of information and motivation in the youth sector. On this occasion a young group of university and high school students showed a desire to establish a CLC. The formation documents we had sent them earlier were a big help in this.

* * *

Our Executive Council, along with delegates from each CLC group of Lima, had a fruitful dialogue with Cardinal Juan Landazuri Ricketts and Father Jose Luis Blanco Encargado of the Department of the Laity for Peru. The initiative came from them, and the personal exchange about our concerns and outlook enriched both the authorities and every one of us.