

PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

MARCH 1976
45th Year
N° 2

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- Already almost 300 copies of our latest, that by Dhotel on Discernment, have already been sold.
- To date, over 600 copies of that by Lefrank, on the individually-guided Exercises, have been ordered.

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POOR WITH CHRIST SO AS TO SERVE BETTER

THE TWO STANDARDS

Often, in our Christian Life Communities, we speak of our CLC vocation as a "way of life". It is a happy expression. For it tells us in only three words that CLC is not part of our life but all of it: it is a certain way of living.

And if we ask what way of living is meant, the answer would have to be: living the way Christ did. Living a life of service, living for others. And - let us face it - living poorly. For that is the way Christ lived.

All that is simply the Gospel. And yet, each vocation sees Christ and approaches him in its own way. Our way is that of the Spiritual Exercises, which for us in CLC is both "source" - the font of our spirituality - and "instrument" - the tool by which we put its dynamic to work in all of our lives. The "way of life" that was Christ's and to which we are called we find laid out for us all through the Exercises. But perhaps it is in the exercise on the Two Standards that this way of living is most clearly sketched. Reflecting together, then, on this key meditation of the Exercises should help us grasp more surely and live more authentically our "CLC way". Hopefully it will

at the same time let us see how central to our way of living is the theme of Manila '76: POOR WITH CHRIST FOR A BETTER SERVICE. And that to live in this way is, indeed, THE VOCATION OF CLC IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Two Ways of Living The Two Standards... They are really about two ways of living - but only one of them is Christ's. And at every waking moment of life every human being, even if he has never heard of Christ, is opting for, choosing, one of the two ways.

One is a "getting" kind of life, in which one is forever trying to get more and more for oneself : more money, more things, more pleasure, more honor, more power... It is the life of "the idle rich", a life portrayed so vividly in the film "La Dolce Vita". And it is sometimes, too, exactly the life that the poor are dreaming about.

The goals of this kind of life are strikingly put in one of the series of the "Peanuts" comic strip. Lucy, surely the most selfish little girl one has ever met, is watching little Schroeder, the aficionado of Beethoven, play something of the great master, and interrupts him to say, "Phooey, Beethoven wasn't so great!" "What do you mean, Beethoven wasn't so great?" protests Schroeder. Lucy : "He didn't get to be king, did he? Did he get to be king? Huh, did he? How can anyone be called great if he doesn't get to be king?"

But there is another way of living, Christ's way : a "giving" kind of life. A life in which, forgetful of self, one is ever seeking to give all one can to others: sharing with them one's money, one's possessions, one's talents, one's time, ready to sacrifice even one's good name or one's life, if need be, for the good of others.

It is the way of living of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her sisters in their work with the destitute and dying of the wretched slums of cities all over the world. Or that of Dom Helder Camara of Brazil or Jean Vanier of Canada, or Dorothy Day of the United States, all of whose lives were briefly sketched in a recent TIME Magazine cover story on "Living Saints". And of course there are thousands of others too, in every walk of life, quite unknown outside their immediate circle, who are leading "giving" lives, lives totally at the service of others.

around", - and in one form or other, we surely will - it will help us to realize the better our dependence on God alone, to arrive at that humility which is only the truth. This does not at all mean we should fail to insist on the rights of the poor (this will, in fact, often be the most effective means of expressing our solidarity with them), but that, do what we may, being "poor with Christ" in his members is bound to bring us no small measure of opposition, disdain, even perhaps insults. It is part of the price to be paid.

"In the Highest Spiritual Poverty... and Even in Actual"

It is important too, to notice what the Meditation on the Two Standards has to say about spiritual poverty and actual poverty. On the one hand, it clearly gives the higher value to "spiritual poverty" - that is, to a totally selfless detachment from material things which makes one ready to do without them whenever the needs of others require it or the call of the Spirit invites us to that. On the other hand, it knows the capacity we have for deluding ourselves, and how easy it is to imagine one has such detachment when in a situation where, after all, one is lacking nothing. And so, in the colloquy of the exercise, we are invited to ask the Lord, not just for spiritual poverty, but for "actual poverty", on condition that such is the Lord's will for us. The ways may be very different, but if our identification with Christ poor is real, it will somehow be reflected in our life style and our lives.

Mary Shows Us How This grace of being "poor with Christ" the Meditation suggests that we ask first of Mary, before going on to beg it of Jesus himself and of his Father. Could anything be more fitting? For she is Mary, who had to lay her baby in a manger; Mary, whose offering, when Jesus was presented in the Temple, was the "two young pigeons" of the poor; Mary, who sang in her Magnificat of the Lord who "has routed the proud of heart" and "exalted the lowly". More than all other human beings who have lived, it can be said of her that hers was indeed a "giving" kind of life, a wholly unselfish life, a life lived only for others. Truly she was "poor with Christ for a better service", a service that set in motion the liberation of all men, a liberation that we now, in our turn, must help extend to all men and to all sectors of their lives.

Who better, then, to help us learn, through our solidarity with Christ poor in himself and in his members, to live out ever more fully "the vocation of CLC in the mission of the Church"?

Nicholas RIEMAN s.j.

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For the convenience of our readers, we list here the articles that have so far appeared in our current PROGRESSIO series on the Spiritual Exercises :

- January 1975 - SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND CLC
(Justo Gonzalez-Tarrio s.j.)
- March 1975 - GOD'S PLAN AND MAN'S DISCERNMENT
(Miguel Fiorito, s.j.)
- May 1975 - DYNAMIC OF THE PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION
(Gilles Cusson, s.j.)
- July 1975 - THRUST OF THE FIRST WEEK
(Gilles Cusson, s.j.)
- September 1975 - PEDAGOGY OF THE FIRST WEEK
(Richard Haughian, s.j.)
- January 1976 - COME LIVE WITH ME (THE KINGDOM)
(Nicholas Rieman, s.j.)
- March 1976 - POOR WITH CHRIST (THE TWO STANDARDS)
(Nicholas Rieman, s.j.)

To Appear Later This Year :

- CONTEMPLATIONS OF THE SECOND WEEK
- THREE CLASSES OF MEN
- THREE KINDS OF HUMILITY

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

by Carlo MARTINI s.j.

Each Sunday during the present liturgical year the Church is proposing for our reading and meditation an excerpt from the Gospel of Mark. We have asked Father Carlo Martini, Rector of the Biblical Institute in Rome, to help us do this reading. Below we publish the first of a series of four articles to appear in our next issues. What is involved for us is an effort at understanding, trying to grasp the exact interpretation of the text so as to fit us better for contemplating it. (Editor's Note)

I - Ways of Reading the Gospel

There are, without doubt, many ways to read a Gospel and, in particular, that of Mark. One could make a long list of them. I limit myself to highlighting four which I would call: a) a literary reading (that is, a literary analysis)

- b) a critical reading
- c) an exegetical reading
- d) a liturgical reading.

Let us try to describe briefly these four readings to see how they relate to each other, and how the liturgical reading somehow basically supposes, at least in embryonic form, the other three.

a) When I speak of a reading on the level of literary analysis, I take the Gospel of Mark as a literary work, as a text of popular Greek hellinistic literature of the first century. From this point of view one can analyze it

as one does other literary works of the time. It is written in a language called koiné Greek, that is, in a popular language, not in the classical Greek of Plato and the great tragedians, but in an easy Greek, which already is close to the neo-Greek that will develop later, in the Middle Ages. One would read it, noting the literary characteristics of the work : its style, its way of presenting the individual episodes, its composition taken as a whole, etc. We can only touch briefly on this type of reading, enough to provide a framework.

b) A reading of the kind mentioned usually goes on to what can be termed a critical reading. How is this defined? It is a reading that considers the work, not in the form it now presents itself to us, but rather analyzing it in its origin, from its first version to its final text, taking account of all the moments and the steps of its formation. One needs to study the period when it was written, the milieu, the historical and sociological situation in which the Gospel was shaped - everything which in any way influences or converges in this work. A reading therefore which tries to trace the prehistory of the book, to become aware of why it was written and so what its value is as history and what light it can throw on the mentality of its time, etc. Such a critical reading can focus on various aspects or portions of the work. For example, a critical reading that views especially the social, economic and political background of the period. One could call this also a "political" reading, not in the sense of a tendentious interpretation which wants to find in Mark a political text, something the book is not, but in the sense of a reading that tries to consider, critically and scientifically, the political and economic circumstances in which a book of this kind was born.

c) From there, little by little, one can pass on to a reading which is called exegetical. Such a reading takes the book in its entirety as a work in the name of and from God, which brings us His word in human language. Such an exegesis is both literary and critical, and has as its aim understanding the meaning of each passage and of the book as a whole, viewed as the word of God. Every sentence of Mark is situated in its context. The steps of its composition analyzed, its style and specific language studied. And all this in order to deduce the message intended by the author in the definitive text of the work. It is a reading

that becomes a reply to the question : what is the full meaning of the text as it exists? What did the author here intend to say to us about Jesus, about his life, about his approach, about the reactions of his contemporaries, about his death? What message did he want to communicate to us in this account?

d) Now, what is meant by a liturgical reading in relation to these other ways of reading the Gospel of Mark? It is a reading that, taking account of the previous readings, searches for the meaning of a passage of Mark for a specific community in which the word is proclaimed within the liturgy. It means that, having done the necessary preparatory work of exegesis, I consider the text read in a particular Eucharistic celebration, noting its connection with the cycle of readings for the year, with the liturgical season, and with other Scriptural passages read in the same celebration. From all this I seek to gather the meaning of the word of God for this assembly now. Such is the "liturgical" reading. This is the kind of reading that, with the help of the homily, we are invited to make during the year, as a community, as a parish assembly. The homily (presuming that the necessary previous critical and exegetical work has been done) should help the listeners to discover the message the word of God has for them at this time in the liturgical assembly.

Having said this, let us now simply ask ourselves what some of the fundamental characteristics of the Gospel of Mark are.

II - Some Characteristics of Mark's Gospel

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four. It is also the least known, and usually the least read and commented on. Why? Being the briefest it includes less content than the others, and in particular contains less material on the discourses of Jesus. In Mark, Jesus acts, moves, works; rarely does he give talks. Mark does not transmit to us the beatitudes, which seem to us a precious pearl of the Gospel. He does not teach the Our Father. He reports for us only a few parables. What is the reason for such reserve? Probably the Gospel of Mark is that of the first initiation of Christians. The Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John were written for successive stages in the

formation of Christians. Matthew serves for the catechetical education of members, Luke for their "theological" education, John for the "mystical" education of those in the community ready to open themselves to contemplation. Mark is in a sense the manual for beginners. It could be called a Gospel for catechumens, for it presents the first notions, the first things that a Christian, or one who is not a Christian but wants to become one, should learn in order to know Jesus.

One can argue that Mark is thus in some sense a Gospel for catechumens also from the fact that it is probably the oldest of the gospels; it is the first the Church had need of. One cannot say with precision in what year it was written. Some scholars lean to the years between 62 and 69, at Rome. The hypothesis has also been advanced that Mark is older still. Three years ago it was proposed that some tiny fragments of parchment found in the Desert of Juda, and containing some Greek letters, should be identified with a passage from the Gospel of Mark. If this claim were true, Mark would have to be placed not at 68-69 but rather in the fifties. But this supposition remains very uncertain. In any case, scholars today agree on the fact that Mark is the oldest of the gospels.

This does not mean, though, that it is an easy gospel. If after a first hearing of a text of Mark, in which we seem to have grasped the overall sense of the passage, we ask ourselves the exact meaning of the individual words and phrases, we will see that not rarely even the translation, and still more the meaning, presents difficulty. It is a Gospel that came to be read in a community which was at the same time aware of and formed by other scriptural writings. The catechumens received a solid biblical formation, and the Gospel that was placed in their hands was not a rudimentary catechism, but a work that demanded careful reading and oral explanation.

This Gospel is difficult to interpret also because of the different materials of which it is composed. There are two styles that alternate in Mark. There is one style that is usually called "petrine", one that might derive from the typical preaching of Peter. It is a vivid style, immediate, with flashes of local color; one feels it was written first-hand. If you read Mark 5: 41-43, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the scene is described as if it

(continued p. 17)

YOUTH

The E.K.A. of MADAGASCAR, CELL of the CHURCH

by Romuald Ralaysomay

"If I live, it is no longer me,
but Christ who lives in me"

(Gal. 2:20)

Distributed over some 100 groups throughout Madagascar, The "Ekipa Kristianina Ankehitriny - EKA" or "Equipe Chrétien Aujourd'hui" (Christian Group Today) is not a youth movement in the usual sense of the word; Through its interior dynamism and its spirituality, it identifies itself with Christian Life Community as an expression of Malagasy youth. EKA's are small communities of 5-12 people who feel the need to share their desires as youth, their ideas about the present and the future, but above all their search for God, for a living God. They are also youth who do not want to stay where they are, but who need to go beyond themselves to live more truly. It could be said that the EKA are a constant constructive dispute; an incessant questioning of oneself regarding faith, with a further resolve to progress.

This personal, positive, and self-challenging "attitude of life" is sought in the group. The EKA is conscious that it is together that we try to live "discoveries"; we feel also that our desires of youth and our faith in Christ need to be shared with others in order to be strengthened. To achieve this, we believe strongly that it is the risen Christ (speaking through the others) who walks with us and who acts through others to purify and make us more authentic, by giving us more light.

Open to all youth (students at schools, universities, people in the country 16 years and older), the EKA try to live an ideal : friendship in Christ. It is Christ who is

at the center of the life of EKA. Therefore the EKA defines itself as a school of life and of interior dynamism, offering formation to all members with a view to vital union with Christ. This friendship in Christ, and through Him the community of men, becomes more personal, more authentic, radiant and apostolic. Living in His love, united with Him in the gift of self, the EKA will be a messenger to others. But such a life requires nourishment to keep it alive, and that is the Eucharist. A Eucharist experienced every day, which leads to the commitment of EKA to Christ and His mother. For He is source and foundation of all human love.

The EKA defines itself also by becoming aware of belonging to Christ and His Church. The field of action of EKA is the Church, without limit, without specification; one finds himself a spiritual animator of the parish in liturgy, in catechism, in ministry of the sick and aged, in Catholic Action movements, in the evangelization of the un believing world...

The EKA's are at the disposal of youth groups who feel that the presence of an older person is necessary to back them up in their process of becoming human and Christian persons. Whether this is a lay person, religious or priest, he is not only accepted, but seen as indispensable to the youth group. He is not the leader, but the counselor who is there to help through his experience of spiritual life and discernment, to discover together step by step the way of this life of union with Christ, the first and older brother of all.

First, there is the "spirit of listening" which is the basic attitude of each EKA. This requires deep trust and makes great demands on each person, for a "disponibility" to respond to diverse calls is very difficult. This attitude is situated on four levels:

- "listening to oneself" which implies that each one believes he has something to say, something so essential that someone else could not say it for him, because it is the Spirit of God who is working through him. To grow in this, one is formed in individual as well as communal discernment through the "révision de vie", which is a rule of life of each EKA.

- "listening to others" helps the EKA to live with others, so that each can sense acceptance for expressing

himself freely. This leads to respect for others, because the others possess a part of the truth.

- "listening to God" which is already in "listening to others", is a personal invitation to receive the word of God, to understand and deepen it through reading, meditation of Scripture, and individual and communal prayer. Beyond that, there is "sharing the Gospel": in prayer form, a sharing of the Word received during the Gospel reading; each shares with others instead of keeping what he has discovered to himself.

- "listening to the world" should make the young EKA able to hear the call of men and therefore able to contribute to the liberation of the world. He should have an attentive concern for the needs of the world, and be conscious of solidarity with all men.

Beyond this basic attitude, the principal means of formation of EKA is the meeting, which is a time of communal search, in contact with Christ, for re-conforming oneself to His truth. Questions regarding the daily life of EKA are discussed there, according to the group's needs. There is sharing of action, of study and reflection on Holy Scripture and sometimes a "revision de vie."

But what really constitutes the spiritual framework of these meetings is formation in the "steps of a full Christian life", which is based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, adapted for youth. Just as Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:), so there are three steps in the EKA which form a "pedagogy of encountering God. Beginning with initiation into encounter with God, the spiritual process seeks to lead to identification with the life of Christ. In outline form:

1st Step: the "choice". It corresponds to the "penitential rite" of mass. This period of the process emphasizes the aspect of human personality development, which cannot blossom except in and through Christ. It is an initiation into the "life of union" with Christ; its equivalent is the "first week" of the Exercises and the election.

2nd Step: the "tradition of the Gospels." An initiation deepened by the "liturgy of the word." The emphasis is on familiarity and relationship with the person of Christ, as well as communion with the Church all through the grace of the Gospel. It corresponds to the kingdom med

itation of the second week of the Exercises.

3rd Step : the "consecration". It corresponds to the "liturgy of the Eucharist", the intense time of every authentic Christian life, making all secular life into a lived mass.

Each of these steps is confirmed by the Church through a ceremony made during a mass within a parish, or with several groups, involving the young EKA in giving and bearing witness before other youth and people to a life centered in Christ.

Meetings alone do not suffice. There are privileged times which are the periodic recollections in the course of the year; annual retreats which are usually according to the Exercises. Formation camps are times for Christian education to a faith which is more communal and closer to life. There are meetings on a diocesan or interdiocesan level. A bulletin appears. "Firaisan-Kina-Lien", as a means of a communication between all the groups of the island.

So we have presented the "Ekipa Kristianina Ankehitriny" which are set up for youth, gathered together in Christ, true cell of the Church by their dynamism and "way of life." They are centers of friendship and of love guided by the Holy Spirit, and bearers of a message of salvation offered to all-in our case to the youth of Madagascar.

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(continued from p. 12)

had just been seen. Jesus, "taking the hand of the girl, said to her 'talitha kumi', which means, little girl, I am telling you : get up. And at once the little girl got up and began to walk. She was twelve years old. And at once they were overcome with amazement. Jesus told them strictly that no one should know of this, and told them to give her something to eat." A series of descriptive particulars that seem to take one directly to the scene and to have been narrated by an eyewitness. Many passages in Mark are like that. But they are interspersed with other passages in which the language is rather vague and general, unlinked to any local situation. These seem to be a language of a catechesis already fixed in its main lines. For example, Mark 6:7 says of Jesus that, having called the Twelve, he began to send them out two by two, and to give them power over unclean spirits. It is not exactly said when he called them, or where and in what situation they were. Were they near the lake, or in the hills? Just what did he say to them? What were their reactions? These two styles alternate with each other, and experts recognize in these two styles diverse origins. Some accounts probably come from the preaching of Peter at Rome. Others are rather passages of a catechetical nature that Mark gathered together so as to give a certain unity to his work.

These broad divisions based on style are not enough. Scholars have divided the Gospel as well according to its diverse "literary forms". Let us give some examples. Some passages serve the function of giving a setting for some words of Jesus. An account is given, which terminates in a saying of the Lord. For example, Mark 2: 23-27. It tells how Jesus was passing through a field of grain, and the disciples as they walked began to pick out the kernels. It is a scene that could have happened at any time while Jesus was walking through Galilee during harvest-time. But the passage has the purpose of noting the response of Jesus : "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath". Some other passages are simple accounts of miracles. There are about 17 in Mark, and they are generally linked with specific places. Other passages are accounts of a generally biographical type : there are 30 of these that speak of specific moments in the life of Jesus.

There is also another quite different portion, called

"the summaries". These are synthetic accounts, which do not narrate what happened on this occasion or on that, but rather what Jesus was accustomed to do. In these accounts the imperfect tense is often used: "Jesus was going about Galilee preaching in the synagogues and casting out devils". The whole - episodes linked with sayings of Jesus, biographical accounts, miracles, along with the summaries mentioned - gives us the Gospel of Mark.

What gives unity to all this material? Some exegetes feel that no clear answer can be given to this question, and that it is useless to look for a clearly-defined unity in the Gospel of Mark. They would see it as a simple collection of traditions and recollections with little order except a vague chronological succession. In this view Mark would have no real structure nor specific message beyond that contained in the diverse facts collected together. Other biblical scholars - and today they are ever more numerous - hold that, instead, we are faced with a work that, under a somewhat disordered and random appearance, presents an organic series of elements collected and arranged with a specific end in view. According to some, Mark would have written with the definite objective of dissociating the Church from Israel at the moment when the Church began to be distinguished from the Hebrew people, and that he wished to do this also with regard to the political authorities. Mark, they think, wrote his work to make clearly understood the specific identity of this new church with regard to the broad movement that preceded it. Such is the hypothesis suggested by some scholars several years ago. Today exegetes are inclined, and, I believe, with greater reason, to more comprehensive theological views. They emphasize that the Gospel of Mark is centered on the person of Christ, and that its interest is fundamentally christological: to present to the catechumen the figure of Christ. But what specific aspect of the figure of Christ? What would seem to be particularly insisted on in this series of narratives that Mark has put together? It would take too long to give a full answer to this question, but I would like to give some indications.

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(to be continued)

CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD

We present today, for our readers to reflect on, one of the earliest witnesses we have concerning the attitude of Christians in the world. The text was written in the form of a letter(1) and dates from the years 190 to 200 after Christ. It was discovered at Constantinople much later.

This text, ancient but ever modern, reflects the attitudes and permanent values that grow out of an identification with Christ poor. It serves to sharpen our outlook and to help us to better evaluate our daily life and our efforts to participate in the true liberation of humanity, whether by applying a remedy to the causes or by relieving the needs that result. (N.D.L.R.)

"Christians distinguish themselves from other men neither by their country, nor their language, nor their dress. They do not live in towns set apart, they employ no

(1) Letter to Diognetus, Coll. "Sources Chrétiennes", Ed. du Cerf, 1952.

unusual dialect, their manner of living has nothing strange about it. It is not from the ramblings of the imagination or the dreams of excited fancies that their doctrine takes its origin; for they do not make themselves, as so many others, the champions of a human teaching. One finds them scattered in the cities of both Greeks and barbarians as chance has arranged. They follow the local customs as to clothes, food and mode of life, yet all the while reflecting the extraordinary and truly paradoxical laws of their spiritual republic.

They each reside in their own country, but as strangers dwelling there. They carry out all their duties as citizens, and pay all their taxes just as others do. They are at home in every foreign land, and yet somehow strangers in their own. They marry like everyone else, they have children, but they do not abandon their infants to let them die. They all share the same table, but they do not all share the same bed.

They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They pass their life on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the established laws, but their way of life is more perfect than that of the laws.

They love all people, and all people persecute them. They are misunderstood, they are condemned, they are killed, and in their death they gain life. They are poor, and yet enrich a great number. They lack everything, and yet somehow they superabound. They are treated with contempt, and in that contempt they find their glory. People slander them, and yet they are shown to have acted rightly. People insult them, and their only response is a blessing. To those who abuse them, they pay respect. They do nothing but good, and they are punished as evildoers. And when they are punished, they are in joy as if they were being born to life. The Jews oppose them as they do strangers; they are persecuted by the Greeks; and those who abhor them could give no reason for their hate.

In a word, what the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all members of the body as are Christians through the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, and yet is not

of the body, just as Christians dwell in the world but are not of the world. The soul is invisible, but enclosed in a visible body; so too Christians can everywhere be seen, but the worship they render to God remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul and is at war with it, even though it has received from it no wrong, for the soul keeps it from indulging its pleasures; in the same way the world hates the Christians who have done it no wrong, because it opposes itself to the world's pleasures. The soul loves this body that detests it, and its members, just as Christians love those who detest them. The soul is imprisoned in the body, and yet it is the soul that keeps the body alive; Christians are as if enclosed within the prison of the world, and yet it is they who preserve the world. The soul, though immortal, dwells within a bodily tent; Christians pitch their tents within the corruptible world, while awaiting heavenly incorruptibility. The soul grows in grandeur when mortified by hunger and thirst; Christians, persecuted, yet multiply more and more every day. So noble is the position God has assigned them, that it is not permitted for them to desert."

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E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C

Canada. "Here the work is in full swing. Among other things, I am working with a CLC in a parish milieu, and a very stimulating experience it is, with 40 members who meet each week. Right now we are assimilating the General Principles...Five new groups, too, are in formation in the diocese, with the help of persons from the Centre...On January 26, Father Brien began a second series of courses on deepening the faith...On February 1, we held a meeting at the Centre for CLC leaders... February 15 and 22 were occupied with diocesan recollections for CLC members and those of the youth teams, Pierres Vivantes ... Between now and June, we will be arranging five introductory sessions to the Spiritual Exercises".

H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H

Ethiopia. "Let me explain what I have been doing since we last met. I rented a large house - 11 rooms. It has become the Loyola Center, a social development and religious center (with library and meeting rooms). As you know, since the revolution, senior schools and university have up to now been closed, and students have been sent to the countryside to help rural development and to organize farmers' associations. I asked for a group of

students: 44 in all. We have been working together on various development projects. We worked on 7 wells. We built a 30-kilometer road with farmers. We are building 25 houses for 100 families from the slums of Dire Dawa. We are continuing the road started last year. We are planning an integrated rural development for the area where we built the road, etc. It is most interesting. We get the financing from various agencies.

About 12 of the students live in the Center. We collaborate well together. Since we have to deal with development problems, I am now organizing a reference library on the subject: wells, roads, farming, development in general, Christian views on the subject of socialism, etc. By the way, if you find books or magazines dealing with such problems, you know my address! With my group of students - mostly Orthodox - we meet every evening for prayer and a bit of meditation. Most of them are between 16 and 25 years of age... I am still teaching school too: 26 periods a week. No time for temptation! Please keep Ethiopia and us in your prayers."

O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O

Spain. The Spanish Confederation has sent its members a 2 - page explanation of the what and the why of Manila '76, and of the Solidarity Fund to help support it. Here are the paragraph headings:

Why in Manila?

- in the Third World, in the great continent of Asia
- because of the vitality and depth of the Filipino CVX.

What Have the CLCs Done in the Years Since 1970?

- A Community at the world level
- A Community entering more deeply into its own vocation
- A Community that identifies with the problems of the world.

What Will be Do at Manila?

- reflect on the evolution of CLC since Augsburg '73
- share our reflections, our critiques, our projects
- discern the orientation for the next three years of our reflections, formation, action.

A Condition - Among Others - for the Effectiveness of Manila '76 : A World Participation

- Augsburg '73 was possible because of the Solidarity Fund
- Today expenses are higher and CLC more widespread and more committed. The Fund needs your help even more."

E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E

Indonesia. "A few days ago we finished our first Indonesian Formation Course. The team members - there were five of them - and the participants all agreed that we should be very grateful for the results. The Course took 7 full days. We managed to get a grant for part of the funds needed, and the rest was obtained locally or from the participants themselves.

We began with 3 days of the Spiritual Exercises. For the underlying dynamic of this we followed Alex LeFrank's Progressio Supplement on Freedom for Service; that is, an experience of God's nearness, an initial positive experience (personal ideals), recognizing our true situation, encountering Christ. Of course, all this could only be a preparatory form of the Exercises, but I feel sure we got optimal results. During these three days we used music meditations, personal reflection and prayer, sharing, and personal guidance in the evenings after supper.

The remaining 4 days were filled with themes from the Rome Course, with stress on the personal level : "the real me", the Jesus prayer (instead of Zen meditation), the history of salvation, the development of Christian community, the decision process, the mission of CLC. There were talks related to these themes and exercises taken from the Serendipity Books, also some we composed ourselves. We were all convinced - for personal guidance accompanied the course throughout - that a real personal growth process and a community growth process took place, although the first of these was what was primarily aimed at.

The number of participants was 25. Of these, 14 (9 men and 5 women) were under 25 years of age, and 11 (2 men and 9 women) were over 25. This latter group included 3 sisters who give promise of being future ecclesiastical assistants. We had a few interested visitors too who could

only stay for a few days. In the evaluation by the team made afterwards, we realized that in the future we may have to form a sort of mobile team, because it is difficult for people from the different regions to get together. We did find three or four aspects of the Course that should be improved, but, seen as a first venture, we felt it went very well. All the local groups left with clear ideas about what needed to be done locally, and their plans seem to be realistic."

S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S

Japan. "It is really wonderful to receive from you and the Commissions such good letters, material and suggestions. We are trying our best to translate and present all this to our members here, so that we share in all the spirit that God is giving us... January 1 we had to move from our former office. Our new place is not quite as good as far as communications go. But the advantage of this new place is that people can stay over-night, which fits in with our programs of "commuting Exercises" and our stress on married couples' groups... For the Solidarity Fund, many of our members have been very cooperative, so we shall send you next week a sizeable contribution for the Fund... Father Jose M. Fernandez, S.J. is now co-national assistant with me; he is specially good in giving the Exercises and in group prayer and discernment. He would like to take part in Formation Course III, so I am applying for that for him too... Our Federation has now extended all over Japan, with groups in all the five main is lands. More and more our members are taking responsibility for the movement. We need grace, that is all."

E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E

Argentina. "Several days ago we returned from Mendoza, where we spent a week giving and taking part in the CIC Formation Course, based on that of Rome '73. Taking part were married couples and students, the priest-assistant of Mendoza, Juan Carlos Pangrazi, and a sister of the Company of Mary... For various reasons the Course could not be complete, that is with the week of the Exercises as the first part of it, but only the second part. For

this reason Father Ruiz - Bilbao preferred to begin with a day of recollection, giving 3 meditations: "The Traveler", "The Road of God" and "The Road of Man". It was an introduction to the Spiritual Exercises, and helped create the right atmosphere for beginning the Course the next day. At the evaluation on the final day of the course, everyone remarked what a help this day of renewal had been to set a favorable climate for beginning the course... The participants see in the CLC style of living all of the authenticity and help they have been searching for. They plan to make the Spiritual Exercises soon with Father Pangrazi. And they are already planning to themselves give this course to other groups... I should stress that this course was able to be held largely due to the financial help received from the Federation of Professional CLCs in Germany. Their generosity allowed us, at this difficult period, to meet the costs of printed material, help with travel costs, etc."

C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C

England. Some excerpts from "Finding God in Prayer", by the National CLC Chairman, John Partridge, writing in the January issue of FOCUS, the English CLC bulletin:

"Where and When? These generally go together, don't they? The short answer is, I suppose, anywhere and anytime, but I would strongly recommend that you try to pick a time and place that you can be fairly sure of keeping to every day, otherwise you leave it to chance, which, being translated, means the last quarter of an hour before you drop off to sleep. The place can be anywhere you choose: your bedroom, a church, top of a bus, walking through the park on the way to work or school - anywhere you find convenient.

How and What? These are linked too, of course, because one method will suit some types of material and not others. Some obvious sources are Scripture (either picking your own passages or using the texts in the day's liturgy, or those quoted on the back page of FOCUS.Spiritual books, common prayers (these can become much more meaningful after they have been pondered for awhile). Even your daily paper can be your "prayer book".

"Hello, God..." The first thing I do when I start my meditation is to say a short prayer, a sort of "Hullo, God, I'm here - are you there?" type of prayer. Then I do a preview of the day, of what I shall be doing and talk to him about it, ask for help and guidance, pray for the people I shall be meeting, and so on. It helps if you can put every thing that has happened during the day previous to your meditation out of your mind: not too difficult for me since I usually pray early in the morning, and all that has happened is that I have washed, shaved, dressed...

In their place. One method I use is to try to imagine myself as one of the characters in a scene. This assumes I'm meditating on a scripture scene. I try to act and react as that person might have done to see if Our Lord can tell me more about the passage through that person's eyes. ..Imagine you're an innkeeper one dark December night 2000 years ago..."

H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H

Zambia. In its suggestions on how to celebrate World CIC day and its theme of "Poor With Christ for a Better Service", the Zambia Federation included this:

"Members can go out to meet people to experience their lives - their joys and sorrows, difficulties, concerns. Examples :

- a) Go to the UTH and spend one hour waiting in line.
- b) Go to the Central Police Station and talk to one of the policemen outside the building.
- c) Spend one hour in town just comparing prices.
- d) Spend one hour talking to a refugee from the East.
- e) Wear old clothes and sit in the District Office looking for a job.
- f) Visit a church service other than your own.

Later those who did these different things will come together to evaluate their experiences. Then the day can be concluded with a celebration of our unity with Christ poor in his service of all."

O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O E S - E C H O

MARCH 25

ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

"I AM THE HANDMAID OF
THE LORD", SAID MARY.
"LET WHAT YOU HAVE SAID
BE DONE TO ME".

With Christ Poor, Wherever We Find Him. It is not by chance that the persons described in the article mentioned above are all "poor with Christ", persons living simply and poorly as he did. It is important, however, to be entirely clear about this poverty. The poverty, misery and wretchedness that is the lot of so much of mankind is one of the greatest evils existing in the world today. And so as Christians we have no choice except to identify ourselves with the poor of the world in their struggle for justice. But our aim is not that the poor may in time rival the rich in their capacity to lead a "getting" kind of life. Rather it is that they will receive all they need - and have a right to - in order to live lives of human dignity and, hopefully, of service. We commit ourselves, then, to the struggle of the poor for liberation because it is a struggle for justice and truth. In this sense, then, poverty is an evil and we are struggling to put an end to it.

This we do because we love our brothers, and want to serve them. We desire to live for others, to make of our existence a "giving" kind of life. Which means giving to others whatever we have that is superfluous. Which means sharing with others all we have, even if it is quite limited. Which means living more simply, if we can, in order to share the better with others. Which means, in some sense, being poor - though just to what degree and in what way must depend on the call of the Spirit as it comes to each of us in the concrete texture of our own life.

And this poverty we choose above all because we love Christ and want to be like him. We want to be one with him in his poverty. And the place we find Christ poor today is in his members: in all who suffer oppression in any form - and the forms are myriad - but in a special way in the two-thirds of mankind who suffer from material poverty, and often even from misery or destitution. For it is idle to talk of identification with Christ poor unless we identify with what St. Augustine calls "the whole Christ" - Christ both in his person and in his members who are living right now.

The Dynamic of the Two Ways In his presentation of the Meditation on the Two Standards (Spiritual Exercises, 136-147), Ignatius portrays each

way of living in terms of three steps :

- the way of Satan (one could say, too, "the way of the world") : riches, then honor, then pride.
- the way of Christ : poverty, then insults, then humility.

Have we ever reflected on how accurate a picture these two ways are of the life history of many persons?

If one places a high priority on money and the material comforts and pleasures it can buy, then the number of selfish, unprincipled and oppressive actions one will justify in order to acquire them are almost without number. One should notice something else : that if a person makes money and material things the top priority of his life, it is much more likely (though by no means certain) that, one way or another, he will acquire more of them. And if one does in fact become wealthy, be sure that "honor" will follow; it always does. For inevitably, money brings power. And people know the "prudence" of staying "on the right side" of the powerful. Thus the rich always have people praising them, telling them how great they are, agreeing with them, esteeming them... And the third step, then, is wholly natural : if one is always being kowtowed to, told how great he is, his least wish fulfilled instantly, after a while it becomes very difficult for him not to believe that all this is deserved, that it is due to him. And so comes pride. The steps, then, from money to honor (and power) to pride are easy, almost natural. It is not without reason that pride is almost an occupational disease of the wealthy.

The dynamic of "the other way", the way of Christ, may be less evident at first glance, but it is just as real. If one doesn't think money and material things are very important (though recognizing that all men need and have a right to a certain minimum of this world's goods), he is much less likely to acquire very much of them. And if one is actually poor - without money, without power, without influential friends - he is sure to be "pushed around", treated with disregard, with disdain, sometimes even with contempt or insults. Does anyone really think, if Joseph and Mary had appeared in Bethlehem with the clothes and camels and servants that marked them as obviously wealthy people, that they would have found "no room in the inn"? And if, in our solidarity with the poor, we do get "pushed