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MANILA '76

In three months the national delegates of CLC will meet in Manila.

Preparations are intensifying. And this not only because of the delegations that will attend. The Assembly's theme, "POOR WITH CHRIST FOR A BETTER SERVICE", has been widely stressed in the different countries (at World CLC Day, courses, group meetings...). So too the suggestion to include in our prayer each day of the week the CLCs of one continent has been widely promoted in the national reviews and CLC bulletins. Almost everywhere, people generally are preparing.

Participation

As we write these lines, 41 countries are registered to attend.

Of these national delegations, 38 will be taking part in the different Formation Courses. Most of the federations have wisely divided their delegation among the 3 courses, so as to get the benefit of the complete series.

As of now we have registered :

- 56 participants for Course I (the CLC way of life)
- 44 participants for Course II (the CLC vocation at the service of mission in the world)
- 71 participants for Course III (the dynamic and pedagogy of the growth process in CLC).

Thus a great number of CLC delegates will be at Manila from July 28 to August 30, taking part in the work of the General Assembly and the various Formation Courses.

For all of us, members of CLC, this is the time to persevere in prayer "with one heart", so that the Lord send His Spirit, so that He strengthen our Community so it may witness to His love in the midst of all our brothers.

THE CONTEMPLATIONS
OF THE SECOND WEEK OF THE EXERCISES

by Louis PAULUSSEN, S.J.

On the desk before me lies the new publication of the Rome Secretariat, "SURVEY of the Formation Process in the Christian Life Communities". It is addressed to the leaders of CLC. It is with joy that I read in the Introduction the following declaration, which I underline :

"They (those in charge) will need to have a vision deep enough to grasp the total picture of formation Without this global vision, the survey document has little worth" (page 2)

After the Exercises, the principal specific source, and after the General Principles, which are an application of the Exercises, we have here a third source for our inspiration. This document, prepared with the most recent national and local experiences as a basis, is closely linked to the preceding sources. It follows faithfully the itinerary of the Exercises.

The quotation given above is not surprising. Just as it is necessary to have a total vision of the Exercises to

understand, for example, the contemplations, and just as it is essential to have a total vision of the General Principles, so in the same way it is indispensable to perceive the process of formation in CLC through a vision of the ensemble.

Contemplative Vision

Practically, this means that CLC leaders need to have from the beginning a clear grasp of what CLC is about. Toward the end of the brochure on formation, this finality is clearly expressed :

"CLC ought, continually and in every possible way, to help its members to find what the Lord wants to say to us" through all things, and so to find what our response of service ought to be". (page 37)

This sentence has a great deal in it! The words need to be weighed. Here I only wish to highlight the fact that the CLCs are called to introduce their members, step by step but "continually" and "in every possible way", to a contemplative vision of all of reality. One wants to form Christians who will be "contemplatives in action". Doubtless, nothing new. But it is a joy to see that this document explicitly confirms an essential quality of the Exercises and so of CLC, one that is not always sufficiently perceived.

Here, then, the most important point of this article is already stated. To be able to grasp the meaning of the contemplations of the Second Week, one must see them in the light of the main thrust that dominates and unifies all of the Exercises: a gradual education toward discovering the action of God in all things and toward abandoning oneself to that action.

This line of inspiration, which has its origin in the Principle and Foundation, is developed and becomes concrete throughout the four Weeks, to find its culminating point in the simple and transparent vision of the Contemplation to Gain Love.

Interior Knowledge

The thirty-odd contemplations of the life of Jesus proposed for the Second Week have as their main purpose to enable me to discover in a more concrete way the divine intentions regarding me in the work of redemption. They initiate me ever more into the depths of the heart of Jesus, to sound his thoughts, his intentions, his sentiments, his desires, his thirst for unity and love, his actions, his suffering. This "interior knowledge" (Sp. Ex. 104) opens my heart ever wider and impels me to "follow" him more: to allow myself to be guided by him, to abandon myself to him.

More practically : am I ready to follow him everywhere? Do I let myself be guided by him always? Even where difficult things are involved?

Here St. Ignatius shows himself uniquely a master. He not only presents me with difficult things, but even with what is the most difficult: to accept gladly and with love contempt and humiliations.

The only motive: Jesus. The way: to contemplate Jesus.

The author of the Exercises does not stint in his efforts to help us do this. How many annotations, additions, indications, suggestions and proposals there are in this little book!

To contemplate Jesus, according to Ignatius, is above all to be fully open, to "see". To see with all my heart. To see, yielding my whole person to the effort. To hand myself over to the truth. To believe. To love.

He has me begin where Jesus willed to begin, in the womb of Mary. Jesus here invites me to "be with him" (Spir. Ex. 93), which means that I should become, in him, very small and helpless.

To contemplate is to be open, with my whole being: at times to see, to observe, to regard, to consider, at times to hear, to listen, to converse, to ask. On a deeper level, to contemplate can become to feel, to taste or even to touch...And above all to "reflect within myself", to enter into the depths of my heart, in order to "see" more

clearly. There where I am most myself, where I am most intimately united to Jesus, I ask what he wishes to say to me, what is his will regarding me. This is the moment to give myself more concretely, to "follow" Jesus, to let myself be guided by him.

To contemplate is to....., but who can exhaust the expressions of love?

Practical Knowledge

So, CLC is for "contemplatives"? Not exactly. But it seems to me very clear that contemplation belongs to our way of praying, working and living. Christian Life means growth in the divine life within us. To grow in Christ, to grow in love. My identification with Jesus will be ever more real by my fidelity to contemplation. I share more and more his vision, his love. Little by-little, my contemplation becomes something habitual. Gradually, my faithfulness becomes "a growing attention to, and facility in, finding God in all things" (SURVEY, page 37), listening to his word, abandoning myself to his action.

What is directly in question here is myself. I am, evidently, rooted with every fiber of my being in all of humanity. But in the Exercises, there is question first of all, of me, precisely so as to better serve others. Everything is directed towards the specifics and the practice of my personal life. Above all the Second Week. The contemplations, joined to the considerations of the Kingdom, the Two Standards, the Three Classes of Men, the Three Degrees of Humility, are an almost irresistible force. I begin to see and to live in a more concrete way the practical consequences of my union with Jesus. I begin to realize that Love "became man for me"! (Sp. Ex. 104).

Christians know very well that Jesus lived and gave his life for all men. But very few realize that he lived and gave his life for each one personally, for me.

We must not "divide" Jesus Christ! His love is always one and indivisible. He cannot - as we, poor creatures - love in part. He always loves with all his heart, and his

love is always perfect. So he is everything for all men. So he is everything for me.

If you but knew the gift of God...!

This continual "for me", repeated, repeated over, and still repeated again, reveals to us the intensity and the depth of the experiences of Ignatius. It reveals to us his desire to help us. His desire to communicate to us something of what he has lived. The experience of the personal love of Jesus for me is perhaps the most powerful thing in the Ignatian contemplations. Without this personal love, the spirituality and the work of St. Ignatius are inexplicable. He contemplated. He saw. He touched the truth. And his life was changed.

Having reached the core of the Second Week, it is difficult to escape any more from the invitation of Love. The Incarnate Word, in all the mysteries of his life, is there for me. He effects my liberation while carrying me always in his heart. He has done all and suffered all so as to purify me and to unite me yet more closely to him. All the moments of my life are already changed by this. Through him and with him, all is prepared for me. All is ready. A banquet is waiting for me. So, what is to be done?

I have contemplated. I have seen. The pearl of the gospel is there at my fingertips. The fountain of life is right there before me. To be able to live the fulness of the present moment, I have only to open my heart. There is only one thing to be done : to let the living water flow and to receive "the gift of God" (John 4:10).

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In preparing for the coming feast :

MAY 27 : ASCENSION

JUNE 6 : PENTECOST

"Then, from the Mount of Olives, they went back to Jerusalem...When they reached the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying..." (Acts 1: 12-13).

So begins the history of the Church. At the moment when Jesus, disappeared into the clouds, leaves to itself a "Church" apparently defenseless and vulnerable. A small group of men, in no way ready to conquer the world. Would they even be able to obtain a hearing at Jerusalem, these men who had abandoned their master when he was arrested, and who, on the morrow, locked themselves in for fear of the Jews? Their reaction, too, is revealing: just as forty days ago, before Jesus risen came to surprise them, they shut themselves up within the upper room. Will they go out for anything else than to quietly scatter, putting an end to the adventure they had had with Jesus of Nazareth?...

But what a contrast between Ascension evening and Pentecost morning! Not only does the group of friends of Jesus dare to show themselves, but they "lift up their voice" (Acts 2:14), and challenge the crowds of Jews assembled for the feast. "Standing with the eleven", Peter boldly makes Jesus known, shows that in him the words of the prophets are fulfilled, proclaims that he is risen, and that "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

A spectacular about-face, that only the irruption of the Spirit of God explains. On this morning the Church of Christ, enlightened, strengthened, all confusion and uncertainty banished by the Holy Spirit, begins its course...

Henri HOLSTEIN - The Experience of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL OF MARK (continued)

By Carlo MARTINI s.j.

What structural elements allow us to grasp the basic idea of Mark? We spoke already of the "summaries", those synthetic accounts that assemble the various fragments relating to the period from the first ministry in Galilee to the Passion. In this sense Mark's Gospel appears as a long introduction to the Passion of Jesus. Jesus has fulfilled the will of God, even to the supreme sacrifice. But this does not yet tell us the specific characteristics of this Gospel. There are other things that let us understand better what Mark wished to say to his readers. One of these is the difference in vocabulary between the first and the second parts of the Gospel.

The vocabulary of the first part is characterized by words that mean "comprehend", "understand", "listen", "know". Jesus rebukes his disciples: "Do you not grasp it?"; "Have you not understood?"; "He who has ears to hear, let him hear". In the first part of his ministry, Jesus asks for an understanding of the Kingdom, exhorts his hearers to look beyond appearances. Starting from Chap

ter 8, the demands of Jesus change. Now he is not insisting on understanding the Kingdom, on opening one's eyes and one's ears, but on doing something for the Kingdom: giving oneself, giving one's own life, being willing to commit oneself. Only he who loses his life will save it... it is necessary to leave house, brothers, sisters, parents, sons, daughters, fields for the Gospel and for eternal life... if necessary, do not hesitate to cut off your hand or your foot, or to pluck out your eye.... Mark here, then, is presenting a progression in the preaching of Jesus, in which he moves from a simple announcement of the mystery to its implementation, from understanding to doing.

A second element lets us grasp this fact better. In the first eight chapters the insistence on the person of Jesus is rather veiled. Thus, Jesus is rather reticent about himself, he does not wish that his followers speak about his powers and prerogatives, he even directly forbids them to do so. This is what is sometimes called the Messianic secret: Jesus demands of those who are healed that they not divulge his name.

Starting with Chapter 8, a new element enters the picture. There remains the reserve of Jesus with regard to the crowd, but he begins to draw the attention of his disciples to the mystery of his person. "Who am I?", is the question that Jesus puts to Peter at Cesarea Philippi. Here begins the second part of the Gospel. The first part spoke of the Kingdom of God in general, the second begins to explain the mystery of the Son of Man. This Son of Man must suffer, must undergo mysterious trials. Jesus explains to his disciples the sense of his Messianic role, which includes the passage through death to resurrection. This Christological presentation of Mark aims at gradually leading the catechumen from a first external hearing of the word to a penetration of it into his heart. The path of the disciple is not that of an easy following in enthusiasm of a miracle-working leader, but a progressive identification with the mystery itself of the Lord, who was rejected and killed. Thus the catechumen becomes able to understand what is meant by Baptism. It is not the admission into a rather rich and fortunate community, which can help him socially and economically. It is to enter into a myste

ry of death and resurrection through which he will be able in Christ to be of help to many.

There is a third element that lets us recognize the progressive education of the catechumen contained in the second of the gospels. We see it in the use itself of the word, "Gospel", a use that is typical of Mark. He is the only one of the evangelists who begins with the work, "gospel": "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The word, "gospel", is found eight times in Mark, and always at important points in the narrative; it is found less frequently in Matthew and never in Luke. What different shades of meaning does it have in Mark? Mainly two, corresponding to the two periods of the preaching of Jesus as reported in Mark that we have already tried to trace. In the first part, the term has a generic meaning: an announcement of the message that God comes, that he remembers humanity. "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news": so begins the preaching of Jesus according to Mark. The Gospel is the good news that originates with God, the salvation that God offers to men. Starting from Chapter 8 we again find the word, but with an important addition. In Mark 8:35 Jesus says, "he who loses his own life for my sake and for the Gospel, will find it"; and in Mark 10:29, "no one who has left house or brothers.... or lands for my sake and for the Gospel" will lack his reward.

What has happened? The word, "Gospel", has taken on a new content, or better, has revealed its true content. The Gospel is not simply a message, good news, it is Jesus himself among us. It is his destiny of death and resurrection that the Christian, the catechumen, is called on to experience in himself. Mark therefore orients us to a reading of the facts about Jesus, which involves our listening to the accounts of Peter and of the traditions of the primitive Church, but at the same time he invites the catechumen to face the fundamental problem: what am I asking for in baptism? what am I committing myself to? what is the essence of this new attitude that I intend to embrace in my life?

From what we have seen, Mark's Gospel could be defined thus : a catechumen's approach to understanding the

mystery of Christ. An approach because it is a first initiation. Luke and Matthew will say more. John will make us penetrate more deeply into the Trinitarian riches of the mystery. Mark gives us only a first presentation. A catechumen's approach : the catechumen comes to know the Jesus of history, admires him as a miracle-worker, as a man full of goodness and of kindness to the sick. He feels himself attracted to Him. And through this exterior attraction he comes to understand the mystery of Christ.

(to be continued)

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REPORT OF ASIAN TRIP

by Peggie TELSCHER

This is an account of my journey through Bombay, Sri Lanka, Bangkok, and Hong Kong during November, 1975. I had the great privilege to visit CLCs in those places, primarily youth groups, on the way from Rome to Manila (my new home, at least until Manila '76.) I'd like to share with you as much of the experience as space permits: so this will be in journal form, and will not limit itself to objective facts about CLC members and groups I met, but will seek to include my impressions as an American young person traveling through these Asian countries for the first time. So please regard what I say about certain groups or places as my own interpretation, which I give you frankly, in the spirit of openness we keep among our CLCs. Suitcase, guitar, let's go!...

Bombay: arrived here on Nov. 14. There at the airport were good friends from Augsburg 73 like Fr. Sidney D'Souza and Florie Freitas, as well as several soon-to-be CLC friends from Bombay. The ride from the airport to Seva-Niketan (CLC Service House) was my first sight of Asia. And what a sight! Miserable slums, pavement dwellers, begging children juxtaposed with luxurious modern buildings. So this is why Fr. Sidney calls Bombay a city of contrasts... the introduction to Bombay which that ride afforded will be continued and deepened throughout the next 8 days. But later this evening, much joy: the wedding of two CLCers, Carmen and Leo.

15/11: today, an evaluation meeting of the "CLC Institute". This program will be explained in another Progressio article. Briefly, it is a year-long sequence of training sessions in various aspects of CLC, for leaders, developed by Fr. Oriol Pujol SJ. This type of comprehensive program is very effective, and needed--other federations are also moving in this direction.

16/11: an all-day session for representatives from the 19

youth CLCs of Bombay, about 55 participants in all. Youth CLCs in India are mostly working people in their 20's, somewhat older than youth members in other countries. Today's theme was growth. The program included small listening groups, an A-V presentation of the book Hope for the Flowers, Eucharist; information on my part on the World Youth Commission and CLC in the U.S. We ended with "fantasy prayer" (a type of guided contemplation) on Luke 5:1-11, Jesus calling His first disciples, and us. After that, a meeting with the Bombay Federation's ExCo. Fitting finish to this full but positive day was a (late!) supper at Florie Freitas' house. Two words to describe Indian food : delicious, but dynamite. (easy on the chilis, thanks!)

17/11: the morning was spent in a slum, one in which Seva-Niketan workers have organized a school and medical dispensary. This experience, though too brief, had a tremendous impact on me. As I walked with the social worker down muddy narrow lanes between their makeshift huts, small children gathered around - I was fighting back tears, of shock and helplessness at this inhuman environment, but those children were smiling at me. A lady even invited me into her home and offered tea. Is this the blessedness of the poor? That they are so ready to share themselves and whatever they do have?

This evening, a CLC unit meeting at a parish (each evening this coming week; a different unit). The atmosphere here (and at every CLC I met along the trip) was one of listening first, to God's word in Scripture, then to His word in each other. We shared what CLC is to us, what it means for our lives at this time. And of course, always celebration in song, laughter.

18-20/11: saw some of Bombay and various social welfare projects, some CLC-sponsored, others like Mother Theresa's Bombay Home for the Destitute and Dying. I am meeting many witnesses of Jesus' love, who give themselves so completely in service to others. It's a big challenge...

21/11: time to talk with Fr. Sidney about CLC programs, and Seva-Niketan. This building houses 10 social service agencies, from child guidance to Alcoholics Anonymous. One of tonight's CLC meetings was different. It was with "Seniors", instead of a youth group. They were eager to get information about youth CLC in other countries, and expressed a

desire for young members in their groups. Very encouraging.

22/11: leaving Bombay today, I feel I came to know in a short time the beautiful people "behind" Seva-Niketan, behind the many good CLC programs. The movement here will continue to grow, to deepen, to serve many, thanks to the Lord and their loving efforts.

Sri Lanka: my stay here being short (3 days), Fr. Pat Perera and Pres. Joe Ranasinghe made full use of each day. From the airport we drove to Chilaw (fishing town - we met tonight with the youth CLCs in that area), making a stop in Wennapuwa for another Y-CLC. Most of the groups, adult and youth, are parishbased as in India; some Y-CLCs here, school based. They are well-organized by the moderators (priests and sisters), who are enthusiastic and good leaders. Ceylonese people are experts at making you feel a king (queen, in my case)! They have many beautiful customs for welcoming visitors: giving betel leaves, native dancing, lamp-lighting, singing... the country itself, "pearl of the east", is an island paradise nearly as lovely as its people.

23/11: after a Sinhalese Eucharist with the Y-CLCs in Chilaw, back to Colombo. Here, a meeting with adult and youth groups from that diocese; it was a good chance to meet each of them and share ideas. Afterward, I visited one group in particular, the Regina Mundi CLC. They showed me two elements of their "Mission to the Poorest": low-cost housing (houses they built themselves) and the carpentry training project. Unemployment is a big problem in Sri Lanka - training is very needed to give people a marketable skill.

24/11: drove south to Kalatara, to visit another Y-CLC. In general, the youth members in Sri Lanka are young - about 13-20 yrs. - but I was impressed by their spirit of prayer, and desire to really live Gospel values. An observation I would also make is that CLCs here are somewhat "segregated". There may be profit in mixing - men and women, youth and adult. They certainly have much to offer each other, in terms of Christian experience, witness and service.

25/11: saw more CLC-built homes, then to the Catholic news paper for an informal interview. I leave for Bangkok today, but not without memories and deep gratitude for the hospitality and spirit of the CLC members of Sri Lanka.

Bangkok: 26-27/11—there are no CLCs yet in Thailand, but I met with two Jesuits interested in forming some in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Christians make up only 0.5% of the Thai population. I have great respect for the priests and nuns I met here, some forced to leave Viet Nam, Burma... you need lots of faith to work for the Kingdom in such an environment. Fr. Miguel Manzanera SJ (Bangkok) plans to participate in Manila '76.

Hong-Kong: 27/11 - extra reason to give thanks - today is U.S. Thanksgiving Day. Instead of the usual turkey tonight, a wonderful Chinese supper with Pres. Alice Ho, Anthony Cheung, Fr. John Foley SJ and other CLC members.

29/11: morning-meeting with resp. from the six youth CLCs of Hong-Kong. A session with the six adult groups (young adults) was in the afternoon. The concern in the movement here seems to be formation at this time. The leaders have a great desire to learn methods. Also, the members want to become more aware of Hong Kong's social problems and get involved in some area. This is not just a vague wish, they are moving in that direction already. I got the impression, however, that some of the moderators have a different idea of CLC than the younger, socially progressive members. Differences of outlook can be constructive if worked out in a spirit of prayer and acceptance; I hope this will be the case for Hong Kong's CLCs too. A positive point is the relatively small number of members in the CLCs; that facilitates closer sharing.

30/11: this morning some CLCers gave me a look at the social problems they talked about. We went to a squatter's area, where people simply set up residence with whatever materials they can find - and then to a government - sponsored housing project, somewhat better than the squatter's area but still shockingly inadequate. The question of the CLCs: where should we begin?

And so I arrived Nov. 30 in Manila, my head and heart full of experiences, knowing too that there were many more to come here in the Philippines.

* * *

CLC HOW IT STARTED IN HOLLAND

by Mary BLICKMAN

When I was asked, some time ago, to write something about our work in Holland, I seriously considered things before doing so, because what we do is still in a preparatory phase. We even wonder if we can call it CLC yet. But the little fire is lit, and perhaps it can be of help to others, so I will try to explain our experience.

How did it all start? I think I have to go back to 1967. I did some work as a member of the Parent-Teacher Association of the Jesuit College in Haren (Groningen). Through this work of organizing religious programs for parents, discussion groups for teenagers, etc., I got to know Father Jan Kemme S.J. We did a great deal of work together and became friends.

Through Fr. Kemme we got in contact with Fr. Paulussen; he came to visit our house, and we also became friends. In 1973 Fr. Paulussen asked Fr. Kemme and me to attend the CLC World Assembly in Augsburg, and as a preparation for that congress, to come first to Rome to do an individually - guided retreat and formation course. A great decision: I had to be away from my husband and six children. Thanks to this dear husband I went, without really knowing what to expect. Fr. Paulussen did tell us that

people from all over the world would be present, but for the rest he did not explain much... "Go and see for yourself".

In Rome I made, for the first time in my life, a retreat. After this the formation course followed: eight days in small groups, with people from all over the world, and a tight schedule. The first days were far from easy: why did I have to leave husband and children to just sit on the floor and stick pieces of paper together? Why talk with people, whom I would possibly never see again? But at the same time, something dawned.... we were doing things TOGETHER. We were actually living life, and became, all of us, real friends.

And all these people wanted the same thing: serving God in every-day life.

This experience, and Augsburg afterwards, left a deep impression on both of us, Fr. Kemme and myself. We felt we could not just leave it like that. There was a definite message for us too: to try to find the same friends in our own surroundings.

In September '73 we went to see the Jesuit Provincial in the Hague. We told him about our Rome-Augsburg experience; we realized that nothing was left of the old sodalities, and that we could give it a try.

So, together with Fr. Provincial we asked eight Jesuits to attend an "introduction-weekend for CLC". Each Jesuit was asked to bring one lay person.

We had to select these people carefully. In Holland we gladly put people into boxes, labelled: conservative, progressive, or nothing-at-all. We did not want boxes, let alone labels.

The weekend was to be held the 5th of January '74. Twenty people were present, among them Nicholas Roorda, the world representative of CLC in person. It was a good weekend, we made new friends...

After that first weekend, five more followed, to introduce new people all over the country.

We tried to get a small group of young people interested in the Spiritual Exercises, and had another spiritual-weekend for a group of people who had been together as "CLC-group" already for some time, since their first "introduction-weekend".

Today we have eleven groups that come together once every 3-4 weeks. These groups are in eight different places in Holland. Their assistant is Fr. Ed Niessen S.J., and I asked him how he had brought these people together.

Fr. Niessen told me he is deeply convinced that nobody can be a Christian all by himself. Because of his work in a parish, he gets in contact with a great variety of people. He visits the people who are asking for "more", and becomes friends with them. Once he knows them better, he waits very modestly for the "given" moment. Then he suggests a meeting with other interested people. It depends on every person's basic interest and need, what suggestion he makes: Foucauld, or CLC. After all, Fr. Paulussen always told us to remember that CLC is only one way to be dedicated in the Church...

It is thus that in Nijmegen three very different CLC groups have started (students, young married people, middle-aged people). The weekends have proved to be another good way to begin.

The contents of these weekends are a direct result of two formation courses: the one of Rome '73, and the one of St-Flour '74. They have been of great inspiration and value to us. Also Nicholas Roorda's experience with meetings all over the world, and the German "Werkhefte". We had the French "Année d'accueil" translated, so as to be able to give the first groups something to start with.

We start these weekends on Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, and usually finish Sunday afternoon around 3 o'clock.

After a short : "Who is who"?, we divide into small groups with never more than eight nor less than six persons. The total number of people varies: the largest group was 44... somewhat too large a group. Some elements used:

- The picture-method has been useful to introduce people to each other. You can do so much with one well-chosen picture in hand. Try to explain why you took it, what you expect from the future; or, take a picture that means you at this moment. Also try to make a story of all the pictures selected in your group. It is amazing how many different stories you get, and how we each need the other to make the story complete.
- Word-associations are helpful to learn to share your inner-feelings, and are a good introduction to meditation.
- We always have a meditation-exercise. Some explanation first : how to just be silent and at ease, with a psalm, or a picture, and/or some music.
- We have made much use of Ronnie Villegas' (Philippines) explanation on how to work with a Bible text : re-write it in your own words; try to discover what in it is meaningful for you at this moment in your own everyday life; share it, but without discussion.
- A short explanation is given of the Spiritual Exercises, and of CLC in the world.

Each weekend is prepared with those persons who are responsible for each group. This is why each weekend is very different from the one before.

To tell people in Holland what we have been doing and are planning to do, we have published short articles, or simply announcements in the Jesuit Monthly. Also we send to everyone who has been to a weekend, or takes part in a group, a leaflet with some news, and coming dates. As a matter of fact, all the newsletters and bulletins from the different countries have been of great inspiration to us too.

Mostly, I want to say, we are impressed by the real friendship we have found, not only with people from all over the world, but also with people we are working with here in Holland. This friendship has been the basis of all our efforts, and gives us the courage to go on. This friendship makes us very thankful indeed for what has grown, and will help us to do this work for the Lord : ad maiorem Dei gloriam.

SPAIN : A VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

Applying the Community Spiritual Exercises to Members of A University CIC.

At the College "Del Salvador" in Saragossa, December 26-31 1975, an effort was made to adapt the experience of Father John Futrell, "Community Spiritual Exercises" (taken from CIS, No. 15, 1974, I) to the members of CIC, according to their own way of living.

Members who took part in the experience : 10 university students of 2nd, 3rd and 4th year (medicine, law, veterinary, engineering, liberal arts, and one non-university student; all had had experience of the Exercises except the last).

Aim and Approach : The first evening was given to explaining what was aimed at, the goal envisioned: TO FORM A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, concretely a CIC. Why the "Community" Exercises? To distinguish them from the individually-guided ones and from those given to large groups. To underline that man is essentially social. Faith develops and is conserved "in community". We needed to reach a true "community commitment" which, in CIC, ought eventually to be permanent. It was also "communitarian" in the methods used, which were of that nature :

- choosing Scripture texts for reflection together; shared prayer
- spiritual community discernment (individual discernment being presupposed)
- community deliberation (according to the guidelines for an election of St. Ignatius) for the determination of priorities.
- a community evaluation; sharing of our experiences.

Sources of Material for our Effort :

- Bible
- Book of the Exercises
- Article in CIS by Fr. Futrell
- Discernment of Spirits, by Fr. GIULIANI
- Notes on Discernment, by Fr. González-TARRIO
- Articles in PROGRESSIO 1974 by Ingeborg VON GRAPEN-STEIN and Fr. Nicholas RIEMAN
- Elements of Group Dynamics

Development of the Theme During the Session :

- First Day : Spiritual discernment. The Reality of God. Our options must be according to God.
 - Second Day: Vital prayer. The dynamic of discernment. Do I let myself be dominated by events? Or rather, do I foresee things, and act with freedom in the face of them?
 - Third Day : Dynamic memory, for a Faith-Community. God in all. Putting oneself in contact with one's own salvation history.
 - Fourth Day: The Christian life in a Christian Life Community. The charisma of CLC. What fundamental direction is to be given by me to my life? What will be the level of my commitment?
 - Fifth Day : Vocation. Formulating in my own words the objective and the content of our vocation. Vocation in view of the mission. To what am I called? What do we wish to build? Involved here is to concretize a little our priorities as a group..., from them select the three main ones, and see what convergence there is in the group.
- The "brain-storming" method was applied (during a quarter of an hour)...., every thing read aloud that we had expressed, the three "priorities" were searched out, and there was unanimous agreement: OUR FIRST STEP IS TO FORM A COMMUNITY.
- At the end, a community evaluation of the session was made.

1776 - 1976 : AMERICAN CLCS ASK SOME QUESTIONS

All twelve pages of a recent issue of The Communicator, monthly publication of the National CLC Federation of the U.S.A., were devoted to the American Bicentennial, and its meaning for the CLCs of that country. We reproduce here part of the article introducing the issue, plus a summary of the remaining contents, as an example of how one National Federation is helping its groups to respond as Christians and as CLC members to an important secular event.

Putting Meaning into a Misunderstood Bicentennial

By Marie A. Schimelfening, Executive Director, NFCLC

"With all of the hoorahs, parades and preparations that have been going on within the past year, one would think that the 200th birthday of our country had already passed. And it has not. In many ways preparations for the big day are still being made. Much reminiscing is going on as we go back 200 years as reflected in today's activities. For example, history stories can be seen on television, scenes from Philadelphia and especially the Liberty Bell are present in the magazines and newspapers we read today. The colors are flying - red, white, and blue - from our American flag to license plates on cars. Everywhere songs are heard which reflect the particular era we are brought to think about. And perhaps we can even hear ourselves humming the "Star-Spangled Banner" or "America, the Beautiful" or "My Country, 'Tis of Thee".

In all of these activities there seems to be an experience of happiness and sadness. Celebrating is fun and I'm sure much more of it will be going on in the months ahead. The experience of sadness is seen and felt when we realize that so much more could and should have been done in our country the last two hundred years to really have "liberty and justice for all".

In the following pages of this COMMUNICATOR, articles have been written to help us consider and reflect on areas that should be of concern to us. Each one is a part of a whole, the whole being a program sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops with the theme, "Liberty and Justice for All". It attempts to be "the principal mode of Catholic participation in the bicentennial celebration of our country. Its primary objective is to stimulate a process of reflection, examination, planning and action by the Catholic community in the United States on the topic of freedom and justice in our society and in the global community. The second objective of the program is to initiate a dialogue with the American society about how we move from inequality to equality, from injustice to justice, on a broad spectrum of issue".

Read and reflect on the articles in this issue, and discuss them at your next CLC meeting. Invite others too to read them. Call the chancery in your diocese to see if the Liberty and Justice program has been initiated in your diocese. If yes, get involved in it! If not, ask why not, and if possible offer your services... We the people must take seriously our Declaration of Independence. We the people must seek constantly for ways that all persons, in all areas of our vast world, can experience liberty and justice."

Articles in the COMMUNICATOR include :

- Work
- Personhood
- Ethnicity and Race
- The Church at Prayer During the Bicentennial
- Our Mission, as Church
- The Nation's Christian Social Conscience
- Pope Paul's Message of Peace : An Analysis
- America Is Not Yet Living Up to its Dream (5 short contributions by CLC youth members).

The issue closes with the suggestion that the topic for the World CLC Day this year in the USA be "The Lord Secures Justice and the Rights of All the Oppressed", and that a "hunger meal" form part of CLC Day, with the proceeds going to the work of the World Federation.

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BELGIUM (FLANDERS) : BUILDING THE KINGDOM TOGETHER

Since 15 years ago, groups of the Christian Life Communities have been developing among the youth of the Flemish region of Belgium. Besides their local group meetings and provincial recollections, all - or at least a delegation from each group - are every year invited to two days of CLC praying and living.

This past January there were 500, between 16 and 22 years of age, sloshing through the snow toward the Institute of Our Lady at Berchem-Antwerp. There a regional delegation and a team of "the older ones" was waiting to welcome them and pilot them through the hours together.

"BUILDING THE KINGDOM TOGETHER", that was the theme suggested by the youth themselves. By that they meant: readiness to respond to the call of the Lord to spread the Kingdom. Each one was ready, and had brought his or her "stone", that is, painted pasteboard box on which each had inscribed the gospel text he thought best expresses the building of the Kingdom of God.

On Saturday the accent was on getting acquainted with each other, beginning with small groups (10 persons each), with the help of 50 facilitators. The groups got started and, after an evening picnic, Herman Boon, the priest-animater for the evening, presented the theme, based on texts of the Gospel but recounted in modern language, adapting them to the situation today. These were then expressed in rhythmic dances, so that the ideas penetrated bodies as well as spirits and hearts. The "stones" for the construction of the Kingdom were arranged and balanced on top of one another to form, with a little creativity, the city of peace, the new Jerusalem.

Sunday one breathed an atmosphere of peace and prayer. With the help of a short introduction, given by Carlo Lenaerts and followed by an exchange in groups, complete silence was achieved. A suggestive text, along with some brief elaborations of the day's theme, "Act while praying and pray while acting" formed the thread of this half-hour of personal contact with the Lord. A community prayer ended the morning, with much praise and awareness of the Lord.

The impressive sight of these 500 youth, praying in silence, was mentioned by several journalists, present at this moving moment, in their articles. One of them concluded by saying that this weekend of CLC youth might well be considered a kind of miniature "Taize" of the Flemish Catholics. Everyone, especially CLC leaders, were happy with it. And then, the noon meal was happily reinforced at the end with a milk-shake, pleasant surprise!

In the afternoon, a plenary session led by Rita Steyaert, Paul Van Hecke and Carlo Lenaerts. Any participant was able to introduce freely his or her witness, so enriching and so revealing, both as regards himself and as regards others. The contributions made by the participants were interspersed with songs and prayers.

The Eucharist, concelebrated by the priest-assistants and topped by an enthusiastic homily of Father Van de Kerchove, closed this inspiring gathering. Everyone had become more conscious of the absolute necessity of "seeking the Kingdom and its justice", confident that all the rest would be given them besides (Matthew 6:31).

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CHILE : CLC STIRRINGS

What follows are excerpts of a letter written to Father Justo Gonzalez-Tarrio, CLC Continental Assistant for Latin America, by one of the CLC leaders of Chile. The topics touched on reflect well the achievements and hopes and problems of a National Federation that is growing steadily.
(- Editor's Note)

"You have no idea how much good is done by your letters and news! Really, your interest and help fires us all. Here are some local news that might be of interest...

With regard to the CLC - Booklets being put out here in Chile :

- Booklet No. 6 gives something on practical methods for conducting a revision of life and other evaluations.
- No. 2, fittingly, is on "The Specifics of CLC"
- No. 7, just appeared, is on "How to Live Prayer". Quite simple, on various methods of prayer in community, followed by some explanation of the liturgy; this last answers a need among local youth.
- No. 8 gives the methodology of one of the types of youth
- CLCs here in Chile and I know will be of interest to people, as it is well done.
- No. 1 is being reprinted, in an improved version, since we ran out of it.... We hope to bring a copy of all 8 of these booklets to Manila.... We are thinking too - we presume there will be no problem on the part of the CLC Secretariat of Rome - of publishing one or two booklets with a kind of selection of articles and items from PROGRESSIO in recent years.

On March 14, CLC got started in its new location in Riquelme; it is much better than our former one : furniture, light, etc. We are trying to buy the house. But with rents getting higher right along we have not managed to do so. It is a problem. We will see...

God willing, we will have, starting in April, the 1st Sunday of the month in Riquelme as a formation day for university CLC members. We have been doing this monthly since the last 4 months of '75, when it worked out well...

Also in April is the traditional day-of-retreat at Hurtado Street during Holy Week... A team to prepare us on the theme of Manila is already functioning. It is using, of course, the Manila theme: "Poor with Christ for a Better Service". Father Nacho Vergara, S.J. (a worker-priest), is animating this group. We have photocopied the basic Manila materials received so as to get in the swing of it. There will be about 100 university students taking part. Keep it in your prayers.

A positive note: at the moment there are three communities (and communities in the true sense) of adult women operating, one in Valparaiso, one in Antofagasta and one in Santiago. They are groups with much promise; some have made the full Exercises. What is interesting is that each group is, in a certain sense, specialized. The group in the North all work in hospitals, the Valparaiso group do parish work, work in the slums, catechetics. The Santiago group includes 4 who have theology degrees, and is interested in working with girls' groups. It would be great to bring the 3 groups together one day, as they are not acquainted with each other. I visited the group at Valparaiso, but not that of Antofagasta. No money for that. The difficult thing is that every paragraph I write always ends up on the subject of money.

There will be a good group of Jesuit novices again this year, thank God. You will not be surprised if I tell you the majority are from CLC. It is not that CLC is something for developing vocations. No, not that. But it is a sign that the thing is of God. If there is a truly committed community life among youth, religious vocations cannot help but come out of it; at least, so it seems to me.

Several weeks ago a Jesuit from Uruguay, much interested in CLC, came to talk to us. And in May one of the World Federation leaders from the USA, here for professional reasons, will spend a weekend with us. These contacts, I feel, do us all much good."

