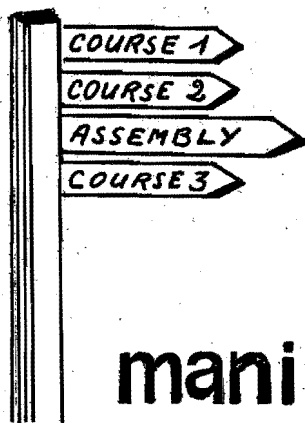


PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1976
45th Year
N° 5-6



manila'76

"That was the month that was!"

PROGRESSIO - C.P. 9048 - 00100 ROME - ITALY; SUBSCRIPTION 2.640 LIRE
OR US \$ 4; ENGLISH-SPANISH-FRENCH EDITIONS; EDITOR: JOSÉ GSELL

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SECRETARIAT OF STATE

No. 305090

From the Vatican, August 6, 1976

Mr. President,

The Holy Father has received with joy the news that the CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES will soon be celebrating their General Assembly, preceded by a formation course. He has given me the agreeable mission of transmitting his encouragement to the leaders, organizers and participants of these important days.

The framework and the program you have chosen to give this gathering are, in themselves, very significant.

You have, in fact, chosen to gather in one of those countries whose people are « engaged with all their energy in the effort and struggle to overcome everything which condemns them to remain on the margin of life », to use the very words of the Apostolic Exhortation « Evangelii Nuntiandi » (n. 30). You are thus deliberately putting yourselves in living contact with the poverty and the desire for integral development that marks today the life of millions of Persons in the entire world. In so doing you affirm that the Christian life, willed, sought and lived by your communities, does not shut their eyes to the serious problems that torture an immense part of humanity. Quite the contrary, it reveals that only a true brotherhood, fashioned by love—is able to provide a solution to the « flagrant inequalities in development » (see Letter, « Octogesima Adveniens, » n. 2), the « undeserved hardship » (see Encyclicals « Rerum Novarum » and « Populorum Progressio », n. 9), the troubles and disorders that are today an open wound in the side of humanity.

Mr. Roland Calcat
President, World Federation of
Christian Life Communities

On the other hand, you have prefaced your sessions with long and intense days. They are days marked at one and the same time by a burning search for the Absolute, God, in the school of St. Ignatius of Loyola, by reflection and serious study of key questions, by modestly learning the best means to announce the Gospel to the men of our time, by the lively and concrete experience of that community life which enters into the very definition of your association and which is its dynamo and its inspiration.

In interpreting the deep concern and the most enthusiastic good wishes of the Holy Father, I would like to suggest to you some major orientations.

The first has to do with the *need for a solid formation*. The active and effective presence of lay persons, as you know, has never ceased to be felt in the Church from its beginning. Proof of this is the list of those who collaborated with the Apostle Paul (see Acts 18:18; Rom. 16:3-16; 2 Tim. 4:19 ff.). Nevertheless this presence has in these last years, and especially since Vatican Council II (see Constitution «Lumen Gentium», chap. 4; Decree «Apostolicam Actuositatem»; «Ad Gentes», nn. 17 and 21), acquired a scope, significance and features more and more remarkable. There, without doubt, is one of the marks of the Church in our time. Now experience shows that the more that the laity take on responsibilities within the ecclesial Community or as Christians in the world, the more they need to be formed for the tasks they will be called on to carry out (see «Apostolicam Actuositatem», nn. 28-32). At bottom there is question, obviously, of as deep as possible a human formation. But this needs to be accompanied and enlightened by a Christian formation that, in order to be integral, will take place on different levels, doctrinal, spiritual and apostolic.

The second guideline concerns *intimacy with God*. There is no apostle except one who knows Jesus Christ, and this not by notions that are more or less intellectual, but by relationships that are personal and permanent. For those to whom you speak about the Lord will not believe you unless you speak as a witness, as a friend, as a confidant (see Exhortation «Evangelii Nuntiandi», nn. 41 and 76; Discourse of Paul VI to members of the Council of the Laity, October 2, 1975). The spiritual life lived at Baguio during these days should not cease with the close of the Assembly but be prolonged in your daily life.

The last guideline completes in some ways the preceding ones: whatever happens, *remain men and women of the Church*. That means, keep the spirit of the Church, suffer or rejoice with the griefs and joys of the Church, listen to the Church, but above all, love the Church (see, among others, the discourse of Paul VI to the general audience of July 21, 1976). Love her with a love that is spontaneous, simple, joyous, open as is the love for one's mother. To carry out now and always her mission, to be able to render to the world her

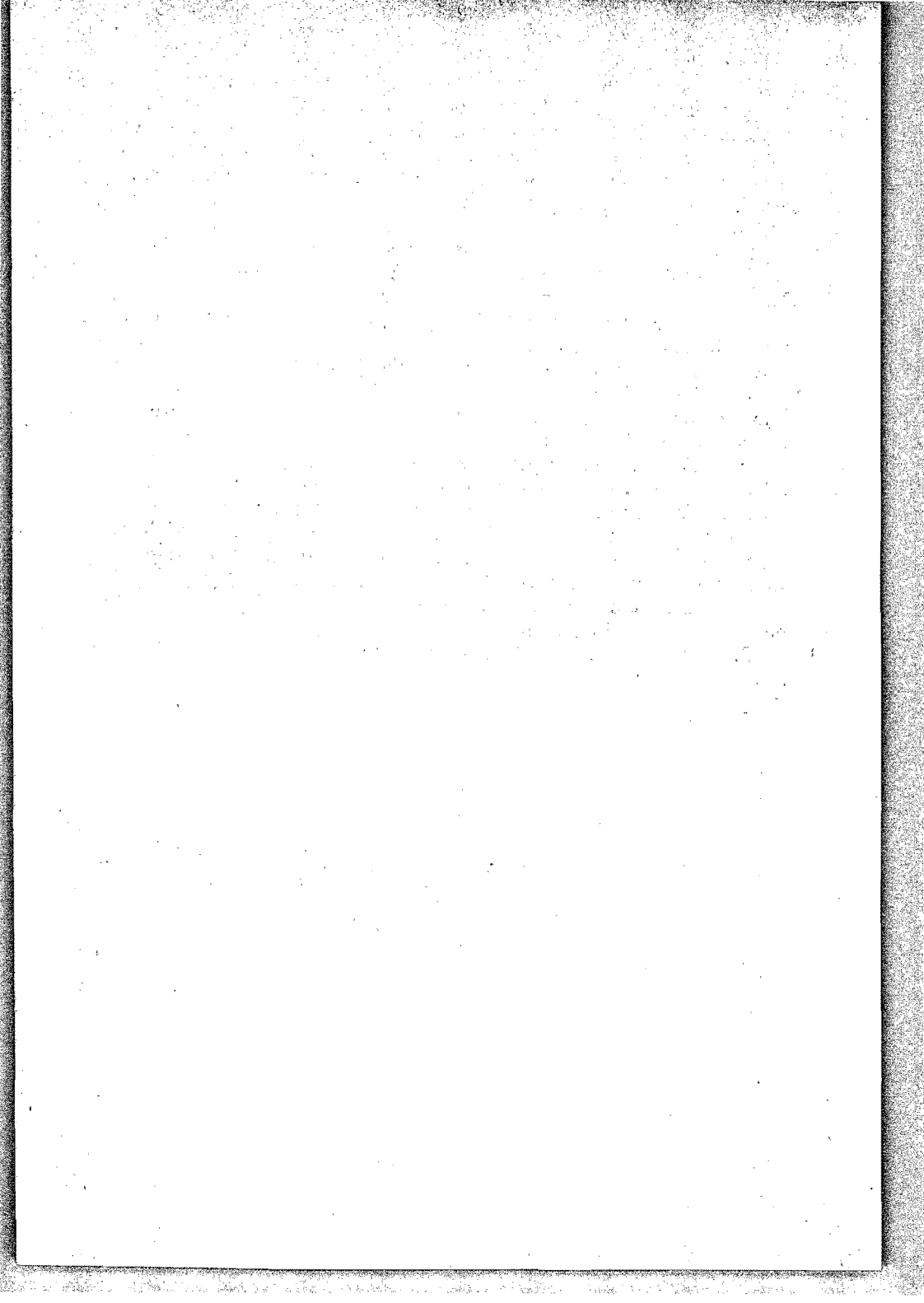
service of salvation, to be truly a place for the communion of men among themselves and for that of humanity with God, the Church needs to be loved. Now this love is, today, often withered by criticism, contestation, reservations. To love the Church means above all not to rend her unity and therefore carefully to maintain union with her pastors, the symbols and the architects of unity, and in particular with the universal Pastor who is the successor of Peter.

At the end of his Apostolic Exhortation « Evangelii Nuntiandi », the Holy Father chose to evoke Mary, the star of evangelization (n. 82). It is she who contemplated in the depths of her heart the mystery of her Son (see Luke 2:19 and 51), she who received the first outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost (Acts 1:14), she who assisted in a motherly way the missionary work of the Twelve at the Church's dawn. She is by a special title linked to your Communities, which formerly bore her name. Do not let anything of her presence and her inspiration be lost in your activity of evangelization.

Such are the encouragements and the hopes that I am happy to address to you, the President of the World Federation, on the part of the Holy Father. They are sent to you, to your immediate collaborators, to your ecclesiastical assistants, to all the participants of the Assembly of Baguio, but also to each of the Christian Life Communities scattered throughout the world. To all of you His Holiness sends, as a pledge of an ever more fruitful apostolate, his special Apostolic Benediction.

Be assured, Mr. President, of my most sincere regards in Our Lord.

+ J. (ard. Villot



FOREWORD

The Assembly of an international community is often a specially important period in its life. This, both because of the "encounter" that it involves, and for the "journey" it there makes. Without a doubt MANILA '76 belongs in the number of such events, marking and orienting the life of a community as well as that of its members.

For sure the preparatory effort that, over some months, each national federation and each participant imposed on themselves played its part in the successful outcome of these five weeks at Manila and Baguio. And to this one must add the special tasks and careful work of the Philippines Federation and of the Executive Council of the World Federation. So too must be singled out the cooperation and the sacrifices made by so many members and friends of CLC that made possible such a gathering. The "Solidarity Fund" stands out as a moving expression of profound faith in the movement's development and of a common effort that shattered all barriers and frontiers. A first result, evident from the start: some 180 delegates of 39 countries, drawn from the five continents, were present, ready to commit themselves together to an experience that, for the majority among them, would last five weeks.

Faithful to our vocation

The three formation courses, in addition to the triennial Assembly of the General Council, came about not only as a rational decision, aimed at profiting to the full from the

fact that all would already be in one location. Beyond these considerations of efficiency, this initiative had arisen as a response to a deep and widely-felt need : that of experiencing the pedagogy of the formation that leads to CLC. The growth of Christian Life Communities in the course of these last years has taught us that such growth must base itself on an experiential grasp by their leaders of this way of life. There needs to be a global vision and an actual experience of the journey to be made, along with the "know-how" to transmit a pedagogy that fuses the content conveyed with the methodology of the practice that is proposed. Parallel with the rediscovery these last few years of the specific way that is CLC's has gone a renewal of creative efforts in the formation of persons and groups. This has made possible such integration of the Spiritual Exercises with the daily living of people and with the development of an apostolic community.

There was still need, though, for all of us to challenge and confront our own experiences in formation. We needed to share with each other about them, and to corroborate the pedagogy that experience of this growth process had revealed. Here the experience made at Manila of the two courses(I and II)offers the wherewithal for an assessment of the pedagogical process based on experience. Course III was geared directly to those who have responsibility for CLC formation in their federation. Its aim was to prepare persons who, identified with the spirituality and the pedagogy of CLC, would be better equipped to promote this way of living.

A concrete step in mission

The General Assembly's theme, POOR WITH CHRIST FOR A BETTER SERVICE : THE VOCATION OF CLC IN THE CHURCH, was chosen as a result of consultation with the national federations. It fitted perfectly into the apostolic outlook that the preceding General Council had already vigorously emphasized.

It was an invitation to "take another step".That, perhaps, of moving from a generous will to the concrete choices that it implied. That, perhaps, of more of a "felt knowledge" of the path taken by Christ Jesus poor and among men. That, perhaps, of discovering in the concrete the

responsibility of a community of the Church in the existential world.

The experience of MANILA '76 left in the heart of each one the call to "the next step". Each national delegation saw the effort to be made, the work to be done, so that the CICs of its country would respond to the grace of Manila. As for the worldwide Christian Life Community, unquestionably it broke new ground in the strength of its cohesion and in its understanding of that which united it. But more than that, it was perhaps the first time it so clearly felt its responsibility to each member and to all its members, and made its own the problems of all. The sharing that took place between the participants of Course II about the principal needs of their respective countries remains one of the most convincing proofs of this.

* * *

This issue of PROGRESSIO tries to convey to readers something of MANILA '76. It lets participants themselves speak most of the time, giving us their impressions and voicing their experiences. Here and there it adds bits of information or reminders that complete, in so far as they can, the overall picture of these five weeks. Lastly, it presents the main orientations taken by the General Council and the new team it has mandated to put them into effect.

Our hope is that the impressions, the experiences, the information which this issue brings may help you to "live" or to "relive" a little the "encounter" and the "journey" that were MANILA '76. If they do, we will have reason to rejoice and perhaps to hear that Filipino greeting - "MA-BUHAI" - which contains the best wishes that you could offer to anyone.

José (Rome)

October 1, 1976

Dear Frank,

It's been 3 weeks now since I'm back from the Philippines. What a trip! And what recollections! I must tell you about it.

I didn't know much what to expect when I was elected as one of our Federation delegates. What I quickly gathered was that it involved a rather demanding effort during the 7 months of preparation. The Rome Secretariat sent you material to read and reflect on, questionnaires, points of meditation. In short, a whole lineup of things that, for sure, made me reflect. And they arrived with the punctuality of an assembly line ... And with all that they say the postal system works poorly! For those who were getting ready for Courses II and III, there were even some "extras". I did my best to digest all that. Of course the preparatory meetings of our national delegation helped. We met 6 times to see how our personal preparations were coming along and to see how best to share this with all the members of our Federation.

I had to get my "shots" too against all sorts of infections. Just in case ... one never knows. Finally came July 25, departure date. The night before, of course, I took a good bit of time to pack my bags. Things for hot weather and for the rain, for the "steam bath" of Manila and the breezes of Baguio. Believe me, it takes some doing to think of all that. And then there were the VIP (very important papers!), the GP, the preparatory mailings, the Survey ...

As I climbed on the plane, I was a bit awed by the trip ahead. But mostly I was looking forward to meeting the delegates from other countries. It would be the first time!

Our arrival was heart-warming. There was a whole Filipino delegation at the Manila Airport to welcome us and bring us to the center where we spent the night. The next day we took the bus to go up to Baguio. "Go up" is the right word. Baguio is sandwiched in between the mountains. The tourist guidebook says grandly that it's a vacation resort. It's very nicely situated and - when it's good weather - is delightful. So far we've mainly seen it through rain (it's the rainy season!) and the storms spun off by the typhoons, which come one after the other. But there were several beautiful days to prove the tourist guidebook was right. They warmed us up again!

I was down for Course I. This was for participants who had already done an initial stage in CLC and who during this intensive Course were going to compare their own experience so far with the CLC way of living. I found myself there with 68 other participants from 22 countries. There were 46 men and 23 women. Or, looked at another way, 47 lay people and 22 religious or clergy. About 20 or so young people in the group. And then, one must add the 4 members of the Course's guiding team and the 10 guides for the Exercises.

First we made 8 days of the Exercises, individually guided, in complete silence. Then, for the second part of the Course, we were in small groups of 7 or 8 members, very mixed, a little from everywhere, but



speaking or trying to speak the same language. I noted in my personal resolutions that I absolutely had to make an effort to learn a second language. And I have begun to... Two busy weeks they were. Is there anything we didn't, during these days, reflect on, pray over, share about, assimilate, discuss, evaluate?! How can we realize how close we've been and how much we were going forward together!

EXPERIENCING THE CLC WAY OF LIFE

To give our impressions of Course I, Manila '76, means to describe what we felt during each moment of that experience. And there will be many things that were felt but that cannot easily be put down on paper.

From the time we felt Manila for Baguio we could sense already what the atmosphere of Course I would be. A climate of joy and friendship prevailed from the minute we began our bus trip of six hours, and this was the best means for furthering unity between all the participants. For already, though we came from different parts of the world, and had different languages, cultures and customs, we had a common ideal, and this overcame all the rest. And we were coming together there at this moment because we held too a common objective: "to meet each other and Christ living in each other" and "to share about and learn more a bout our way of life".

When we noticed the atmosphere in which our exchanges were taking place, we knew that the action of the Lord would certainly fall on fertile soil, since the hearts of all were open to receive it.

After that long trip we reached Baguio, to be our home for the duration of our sessions. Arriving at that house set high on a hill above the city was like breathing the Lord's presence in every direction one looked. And now

it was time to begin the first lap of the course: The Spiritual Exercises. We could talk much about them and say very little; we prefer to say little and to live them more. Certainly to open our hearts to Christ and to see that He loves me and to ask that we love him with our whole hearts (and not just our heads) was something grand. One might suppose that such an experience is a common and ordinary one. But the fact is that feeling that love is something which fulfills and surpasses completely all our expectations.

When we become aware of the whole series of barriers that we place to that love, how can we fail to accept something so wonderful, and that is freely given us? More than that, to feel our faults and our guilt gives us a real joy and interior force, since we realize that to face ourselves as we are with our failures is the first step toward overcoming them in the Lord. For us the Spiritual Exercises meant really meeting Christ again in our lives.

After the experience of those eight days we had the opportunity to share in community experiences with the others. For this we formed work groups with those with whom we were living the different stages of life of a community.

Seeing and studying the development of a community in one week does of course have real limitations. But it is a very suitable way of experiencing and getting a general idea of the distinctive steps involved in building a community. But for us the most interesting thing was the specific ways in which the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises is related to the various facets of a community's life.

In this part of the course we saw the close and unbreakable relationship existing between CIC and the Spiritual Exercises. Exchanging between persons from different cultures about CIC experiences let us see that our spirituality is not something rigid but is applicable to the particular situations of each country and each group of persons.

In the course of this second portion of the Course there surfaced in the work groups all those elements that

tend to shape community life. Some of them, we saw clearly, were these :

- international tensions or frictions
- leadership
- times of intimate community sharing
- evaluations of what has been done.

So too our attention focused especially on the method of making a personal discernment with the help of the community, and on the way to draw up a plan of action in the face of a concrete problem.

So at the end of the course all the participants left filled with ideas and enthusiasm. In the measure, too, that we worked together, we were at every moment growing in knowledge, understanding and affection for each other. That is why when we finished the 15-day course, though we were very tired, we were also happy. For we had met new friends and in particular one new, great and unconditional friend : CHRIST.

Diego and Santiago (Chile)

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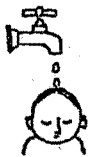
Tony, he, was registered for Course II. He stayed at Manila, for the first part of that course included a social insertion of 3 days in the slums of the capital. Their group was made up of 51 par-



ticipants from 21 countries. They all arrived at Baguio after 7 intensive days in Manila, to make at Baguio 8 days of the Exercises, individually-guided. Tony exchanged with me at length about what he had seen and experienced at Manila. I could see he like the others had found the experience very challenging, both for himself and for the CLCs of our country. So much so that the 8 days of retreat were timed just right to help him assimilate it all. On our way back home, we talked a long time about what the experience meant and what it invited us to as the next step.

Tony thinks that the Course fell in just right as a preparation for the Assembly. For it involved living poorly, with poor means, among the poor. I have the feeling that we took a step forward there. I'd almost say we've taken the road but that we're still at the start of the journey.

Living conditions at Manila were rather rough. The center they stayed in is close to a steel plant that only stops at 2 o'clock in the morning, and it's next to a river channel that draws the mosquitoes. Tony says it didn't stop raining but that while outside it was pouring, inside they didn't have any water. But as he said, 'There is nothing like experience!....'



COME AND SEE,
THEN
GO AND ACT

Beautiful music with lights playing on fountains set a good tone for the CLC members who arrived at Manila Airport on Tuesday, July 27, to begin Course II. The large posters and Manila '76 shirts which the welcoming Filipinos wore made us feel at home from the start. There was a further warm welcome for us at the Apostolic Centre where the CLC offices are, and in no time we had found our rooms and had got a taste of Filipino food and discovered that water was not always available for the necessary ablutions!

To quote from the preparatory mailing for Course II :
"This course, like Course I, is an intensive experience of the CLC way of life. It gives a large place to reflection on our social commitment and to challenging our manner of being 'on mission' with and for Christ who "identified Himself with the poor".

The build-up of the course is easily understood in the light of the goal as given above :

- * Getting to know each other. Reflecting again on the CLC way of life;
- * Mission - the aim of our CLC's;
- * Sharing our personal experience of working with the poor; presenting with visual aids the social needs and problems of our various countries;
- * A three-day insertion into the poorer sections of Manila. For this experience we were divided into about 11 groups of 4-5 people each with a Filipino CLC guide.

INSERTION

I can only speak in this short account of my own experience and my own reaction to it. The living conditions of the people in the squatter area my group visited are appalling. Vast numbers of people live in tiny make-shift houses of mainly wood and tin; where privacy simply does not exist and there is semi-darkness all the time; where there are open sewers and toilet facilities are primitive; where many houses are built on reclaimed swampy ground accessible only by means of a cat-walk. Very few of these houses have running water. For practically all the people water has to be paid for by the bucket and carried often considerable distances by young children. Personal experience of such conditions really jolted me.

And yet in the very midst of this extreme poverty we were privileged to meet extraordinarily beautiful and competent people. The Filipino CIC's had been in touch in advance with all the areas which our groups were due to visit. Not only did the people agree to receive us, they did so with open arms, with a warmth and simplicity that really touched us. The area which we visited is very highly organised. In the early 70's when the squatters realised that they needed to organise in order to protect themselves and to obtain what was their due in terms of reasonable living conditions and security, they were offered the help of a social worker by the World Council of Churches. This social worker from Seattle certainly did a tremendous job among them. The people were not only vocal about their situation, they grasped all the ins and outs of it and were able to put forward their own case both eloquently and reasonably. They are not a violent people. They only seek what they rightly feel is their due as Filipino citizens: their own plot of land on which to build their own houses within reasonable distance of the place where they make their living. They strenuously object to those in authority making plans to 'cure' their problems without paying any heed to the wishes and genuine needs of the people themselves.

Despite their being so well organised in the area and the strength that goes with standing together, these tens of thousands of poor people feel very helpless in the face

of a government that sometimes does not seem to care about them as people. In this situation they feel very much that international opinion is one of their greatest supports.

For many of us CLC members, our insertion into this kind of situation sharpened our awareness of the entire Asian reality. The living conditions of these people truly shocked us. On the other hand, their happiness truly amazed us. We were amazed too by the leaders that had emerged from among them, by their ability to critically examine their own situation, run their own seminars, face up to government directives that on occasion resulted in the imprisonment of their members. An extremely consoling aspect of the whole situation in this land where 80% of the people live in dire poverty is the fact that here the Church has emerged in recent years as the champion of the poor - the voice for justice that refuses to be silenced.

Apart from being very impressed by the quality and commitment of the leaders of the squatters, we were greatly impressed also by the quality of the CLC members who were our guides during those days of insertion. The young teacher who was our guide was exquisitely sensitive both to the people whom we visited and to our feelings in the situation. We could not but note in her, as in the other Filipino members, a tremendous appreciation of the Spiritual Exercises and a real skill in using their dynamic in helping others to develop and respond to the call of God in their lives. This brought home to us very powerfully how easy it is to adapt the specific spirituality of CLC to any cultural situation.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

* After our 3 days of insertion we were given an objective analysis of the Philippine situation by Fr J. Doherty, a very competent sociologist, Fr Jose Blanco spoke to us on the role of the Church and of Christians in bringing about a just order. And Ronnie Villegas presented to us the response of the Filipino CLCs. In being faced with the Church's, and CLC's, commitment to fight for justice for all in the Philippines, I found myself challenged immediately to see to what extent I and our CLC's in Ireland were committed to the same struggle on the Irish scene.

* Our final day was devoted to reflecting together, mainly in our small groups, on the situation of our own CLC, in the area of mission. One sentence that rings out loud and clear in my mind is: "No mission, no CLC". This is saying in other words what the Spiritual Exercises are all about. We strive by the grace of the Spirit to become total ly free for the service of others. Our CLCs must never be comfortable, 'inward-looking' groups, but apostolic communities ever burning with an urgent desire to share with others what they themselves have received.

* *
*

I found this course extremely helpful. I know that some found it very taxing. Many of us were not used to water scarcity, to the oppressive heat of monsoon conditions, to the hordes of mosquitoes, to sleeping 4-5 in a room, to a rice and fish diet very different from what we were used to! Despite the distress caused by such things we had no major calamities. All of us survived for the 6-hour bus journey to Baguio, to begin our retreat. And what a climb that was - more than 5,000 feet!

While I had very little time to think in advance of the guided retreat, I found I was in very good 'condition' for the 8 days alone with the Lord and my guide. Despite the many days during which we found ourselves enveloped in cloud and rain, the atmosphere of prayer and earnest seeking of the will of the Lord during the retreat was inspiring.... During these days all of us seemed to feel a deeper call of Christ inviting us to a greater integration of life to a better service.

This is the first course of its kind which the World Federation has sponsored. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to them for it, especially to the Guiding Team of José Gsell, Fr. Jose Blanco and Fr. Claude Flipo. With suitable modifications I think that similar courses can be organised by national or regional federations.

Val (Ireland)

IMPRESSIONS ON THE SECOND COURSE

No one who did the second course can possibly return home without a deep impression of the wonderful work the Church in the Philippines is doing in the cause of Justice and in the work for the underprivileged. And, of course, in this work the CIC has a very important role. The problems facing the Philippines are perhaps not unlike the problems in so many third world countries but there the Church is doing something to support the oppressed.

Now the question for us all is : What does Christ want me to do? On my return home, the newspapers were full of the pending trial of Bishop Lamont who had openly defied the strict security and counter-insurgency laws. Was this defiance for us CIC members? Much discernment is needed in this delicate situation.

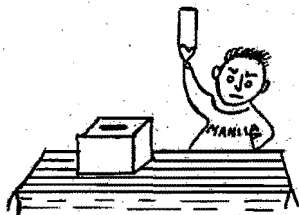
Denis (Rhodesia)

(...) This short social exposure experience was possible due to the involvement of a number of Philippines CIC members in development. They work with the poor in cooperatives, schools, dispensaries, etc., and spot there the men and women who appear to be natural leaders. The CICs then suggest to them a period of formation, or help them to express themselves, or show them through the Bible how God has always wanted the liberation of men and desires it today, or finally, prod, them to acquire a political, social and economic awareness of their situation. And this effort--of, at one and the same time, political and religious liberation - we saw operative in the slums. We were all struck by the welcome reserved for us: there where we expected distrust, ill-feeling, resignation, we found courtesy, smiles, love and sharing. And in these small grass roots communities with their alert and aware leaders, hope and the will to change the situation were evident in spite of the deprivation, the unhealthy surroundings, the undernourishment... Truly Christ was among them! (...)

Catherine (France)

One day of rest on finishing the Course and we began the General Assembly. A bit of small-talk with the new arrivals and at once we were launched into new small groups, renewing acquaintance with the others and getting rapidly into gear with the new tempo of things.

This time it was the meeting of the General Council, which had chosen as its theme "Poor with Christ for a Better Service: The Vocation of CLC in the Church". The aim was to dip out and to specify the directions for the 3 years to come and to elect the new team in charge of implementing them. It was a rough schedule.



One thing that really struck me was the presence of such a large number of delegates coming from so many countries. Japanese, Chinese, Indians, Africans, South and North Americans, Europeans, Australians. People from everywhere - or almost - were there. And they all represented the CLCs of their countries. Never till then had I realized so much that I belong to a very large family, a real world community. I assure you that since then, when I listen to the news or when I read in the paper what happens in these countries, it is a little as if it were happening to me. For I see before my eyes the people that I came to know at Baguio and I say, "what is their reaction to this? what can I do to help them?" A gathering of that sort expands unbelievably one's heart. One doesn't live in quite the same way after as before. "Your" world has become much larger.

And when this whole world of people decide to-
gether on a more committed and poorer life so as to give witness to Jesus Christ among the people of today, then you understand better. You understand that your life has no meaning unless it is in line with and at the service of this effort that surpasses yourself. You feel a deep gratitude at having been chosen as part of this and at being able to count on the brotherly support of so many friends.

SIX PACKED, CHALLENGING DAYS

There were 153 of us CLC members--though, if one adds staff, translators and participants in the courses only, the number came close to 200--who gathered, that night of August 14 in Baguio, Philippines, for the Seventh General Assembly of the World Federation. But to us the opening session was, in a sense, a continuation rather than a beginning. For the extensive and varied preparation asked of us had given us all some acquaintance with the Assembly's theme and concerns. And three-fourths of us had already lived together the sixteen deep and demanding days of Courses I or II. Not surprisingly, then, we slipped easily, that first evening and the day that followed, into the Assembly's atmosphere and concerns.

I - Getting Our Feet Get

We were very warmly welcomed by the Philippines CLC president, and inspired--and challenged--by the messages of Church and CLC leaders, some spoken, some written, and by the opening talk of Roland Calcat, our president. A good night's sleep in the cool (though rainy) climate of Baguio, and we were ready to begin. A lively "meet-your-neighbor" exercise gave the new arrivals, the Course I people, and those of Course II, a good chance to meet each other--or, in more than a few cases, to renew CLC friendships made at Augsburg in '73 or many years before.

After mastering the intricacies of the simultaneous translation system (English, French, Spanish,) we listened with interest to José Gsell's summary of CLC life and activity for the three years preceding, with short accounts of the work of each of the commissions, given by their chairpersons, built into her presentation, which made it rather interesting. Another report told us how our World Federation stood financially--still solvent, but with need of firmer support. And, meeting for the first time in stable small language-groups of 8-9 persons (each drawn from at least 6 different countries), we became better acquainted, especially with the persons and federations represented in our own group. And that evening we relaxed as we enjoyed the incredible artistry and beauty of the native Filipino dances of the region. We had broken the ice.

II - Probing the Theme

The next three days were spent exploring the Assembly's theme : Poor with Christ for a Better Service : The Vocation of CLC in the Mission of the Church, a process unexpectedly aided by the somewhat spartan accommodations and our periodic problems with water and space. We tackled the theme in three steps: the world's challenge today, the Church's mission in that world, the CLC response as our co operation in that mission. Each of the three days began by an introduction to the topic, with the three speakers coming from the Philippines, the United States, Mexico. After a period of silent reflection on the talk with the help of a few leading questions, we met in our small groups, first to share our reflections, then to try to find common group.

Later in the afternoon, in general assembly, the groups (half one day, half the next) presented to us the key elements of their approach, with some opportunity for reactions from the floor, though time kept these to a minimum. Each evening, too, Father Horacio de la Costa led us in a kind of synthesis-evaluation of the day--where we'd been and where we were headed--and different CLC members offered us some simple points, in line with the morrow's theme, to stimulate our personal prayer next morning.

III - Other Facets of the Gathering

Of course, being a once-in-three-years gathering of the world Christian Life Community, Manila '76 provided occasion too for a variety of other events or aspects more-or-less closely allied with the Assembly. Each of the five continents' delegations met to exchange about its special concerns; and, without exception, these gatherings evinced a growing awareness of the values of regional communication and collaboration. A special meeting of married members with young children underlined the need for greater effort to develop this sector of CIC. A gathering on "twinning" provided a forum for exchanges on experiences of federations involved in such arrangements, and stimulated the growing desire for wider international exchanges. At their request, Hong Kong delegates explored in a free-ranging exchange with other interested delegates how they should prepare for changes that may lie ahead for them. One meeting presented the apostolic challenge offered by United Nations concerns. And probably there were others too, that I've forgotten.

Naturally, CIC youth delegates met--twice, in fact. Not only to exchange about what they'd been doing, but to choose themselves the two youth delegates from each continent to make up for the next three years the Youth Commission, as well as to make their recommendations for the Commission's chairperson. Then, under their new leadership, they met again to plan and to suggest for the years ahead.

And, specially, the song festival. For two long evenings CIC delegations of the various countries or regions regaled us with their native songs and dances, so strikingly reflective of the richness and variety of each culture.

Perhaps, too, this is the place for a word on the liturgies. They formed, as was fitting, an integral part of the program, closely reflecting each day's theme, a celebration of what as Christians we had lived. And the rich variety of languages (easily a dozen) appearing in the songs and petitions, the warm sense of community, and the world apostolic vision expressed in the prayers, gave striking proof of what a truly international community CIC is.

IV - Day of Decision

The fourth day was the one the others had been pointing to. The national delegations, most of whom had met, (sometimes often) before arriving at Baguio, or at least at the Assembly itself, met now to prepare any questions, observations or recommendations they wished to present to the Assembly. These they aired before the general assembly. During a period, delegates had a chance to pose questions to the Executive Council. The Activities and Financial Reports were approved. And then, the elections...

Already several months before, data on the candidates and their replies to leading questions had been in the hands of delegates. At Baguio, not only were the candidates publicly introduced, but a special time was allotted in which participants could meet and exchange with them. Using an approach that included silent prayer and then a last deliberation of national delegations before each vote, there were elected in turn the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The three consultants, chosen in the past by a single ballot, were now, at the wish of some delegations, each elected separately, the idea being to offer electors a better chance to give a certain balance to the Council as a whole. There was question at one point of the precise election procedure, but otherwise the elections proceeded smoothly. As usual, the new Council elected was truly international, drawn from four different continents.

Our new president, who is Marte Vinzons of the Philippines, then gave a short address, sharing with the delegates his hopes and plans. He challenged us by saying that, though we were all quite tired (most had by now spent three demanding weeks at Baguio), yet in our commitment to the service of others, and especially of the poor, there would be need to become yet more tired in the years ahead. Lastly, the Assembly was given an oral summary of the conclusions and orientations that emerged from both the work of the small groups and that of the national federations (a fuller, written account of this will be sent to us later). And we closed, fittingly, with the Eucharist.

V - Looking Back and Looking Ahead

It was a packed week, the Assembly. Looking back now, how does it appear, taken as a whole? We are still too close to it to see it well, and, too, reactions are sure to differ somewhat. But it does seem clear that the participants generally were very happy with the theme, liked too the way it was approached: the world, the Church's mission, CLC's part in that mission. All were pleased too that, thanks to the Solidarity Fund, the Assembly was so broadly representative of the world CLC reality. And most seemed to feel the gathering manifested a climate of prayer, of

CONTINENTAL GATHERINGS. Clearly evident at Manila '76 was a growing continental sense: in each of the 5 continental meetings held during the Assembly one felt this desire for more sharing of information and personnel between neighboring countries, this need for a greater coordination and collaboration. For the African delegations, it was the first such meeting, and every one of the 15 delegates from 6 countries of Africa and Madagascar present took part. With the aid of English-French translation, they shared their achievements, their problems, their hopes. They found their situations very different, yet alike too in the fact that in all their countries CLC is as yet in its early stages, either making a first start, or renewing older groups, or expanding gradually from the youth to the adult level. They felt a strong need for CLC formation, and believe regional or national formation courses may be part of the answer. And they stressed their desire for help from the World Federation and its organs in personnel and materials so that the swiftly-developing Church of Africa and Madagascar may be served by a gradually-maturing continental CLC movement.

earnest searching together for what the Spirit desires of our worldwide Christian Life Community at this time. There were, of course, thoughtful questions raised by some. Were

all delegates as knowledgeable and experienced in CLC as was desirable? Was the program flexible enough? Could time have been allotted for the conclusions and recommendations (of the small groups and of the national federations) to be gradually refined into a few key orientations, then to be voted on by the Assembly? Did the packed program allow enough time for informal contacts? Good questions to ponder on and pray over. Yet, all in all, almost all of us who experienced Manila '76 felt, I believe, that the Assembly had been much blessed by the Lord, and that in it the World CLC Federation had taken an important forward step.

As now we look ahead to the next three years, certain emphases of the Assembly of Baguio will surely have their effect. Our commitment to justice for the poor will and must be stronger, more energetic. After Baguio, we are as a world movement much more keenly aware of our life style, and that we are followers of Christ poor. More clearly than ever, too, by its witness and decision, did the Assembly make clear that the CLC way is based upon the Spiritual Exercises. And the three weeks—or, if one includes Course III, the five weeks—that so many of us spent together in close living and sharing, has, I believe, far more even than we realize, brought us much further along the road to becoming in truth one worldwide Christian Community. And at the same time, made us feel the desire and need for, and helped us begin to see the means to, a much greater continental and regional collaboration. And more and more clearly, too, I believe,—and Manila '76 was both an expression and a deepening of this—we see how and why Our Lady is the perfect model of that collaboration in the mission of Christ which is what above all CLC aims at.

Nick (Rome)

IMPRESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Although this is my third General Assembly, I still am amazed at the easy way in which we all come together and mix. The difference in background and culture seem to

matter little when we are gathered together to do the work of Christ as member of the Christian Life Communities.

My own group, where we shared the theme of the day, came from all over the world. Asia was well represented but

HONG KONG EXCHANGE. Can one's CLC brothers from other countries help one understand and respond to a situation in one's own? The 4 Hong Kong delegates, a rather young group, thought so. Their problem: how can we Hong Kong CLC members prepare for, and adapt to, the vastly changed socio-political situation that almost certainly lies ahead for us? They felt they received both light and strength from the informal meeting with 35 of the delegates that resulted, being helped to see better both the limitations and possibilities in a changing situation. They felt a deeper trust in the Spirit, readier to face the uncertain future without illusions but also without discouragement. The rest of the participants seemed to gain as much, in their deeper understanding and sympathy with a fellow national community. Perhaps, too, in a lived experience of how their own national federations might move towards the discerning of apostolic priorities, the call of Christ's mission in the concrete, in their own countries.

all the other areas were present. Alas the language barrier did not disappear but still a lot of communication was achieved. Fr. Horacio de la Costa's talk was for me one of the highlights. Indeed I think we all looked forward to his syntheses and interventions. We "got what we wanted and wanted what we got".

The pace of the Assembly, as always, was fast. However on the last afternoon as the new system of voting for the Executive dragged on, the wisdom of it became clear and though tired, we ended our Assembly on a very happy note.

Denis (Rhodesia)

MY FIRST INVOLVEMENT IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF OUR FEDERATION

For CIC members like myself who had not yet had any opportunity of attending and participating in a CIC General Council of the World Federation, this year's participation in the General Assembly held in Manila and Baguio in the Philippines from the 27th July to the 30th August, was a wonderful experience.

To find yourself in the company of two hundred other CIC members from forty different countries from the five continents of the world and be able to live with them for a few weeks in a community of love through shared prayers, reflection periods, group discussions, the sharing of the Eucharist as well as during meal times and mid-morning coffee breaks, was indeed an exceptional opportunity of true Christian Life Community living.

The happiness permeating the General Assembly sessions, the deep spiritual encounter with Christ that many of us had during the Spiritual Exercises we made on Formation Courses I or II, the profound sense of brotherhood we experienced during the shared prayer sessions we had regularly in our small groups, all this left a very lasting impression which many of us will cherish for years to come.

The theme of this year's General World Assembly : "Poor with Christ for a better service", truly necessitated the setting of a third world country. And the Philippines was an ideal place to hold it, being a country consisting of a 2% rich minority and a 90% poor majority. The Philippine setting enabled us to witness from close quarters the misery and poverty of many people living in the 'Squatters' area of the slums in Manila.

Through the social 'insertion experience' in the slums of Manila that those of us on Formation Course 2 had, we had the privilege of making friends with some of the slum dwellers - poor in terms of material wealth, but rich indeed in terms of human warmth, friendliness and affection, with a genuine sense of openness and a great simplicity of manner and behaviour.

For me, this experience left a deep impression. I was struck and edified by the genuine concern, friendliness and warmth shown to us by a group of women from the "Squatters Community" in the very depressing slummy area around

MARRIED COUPLES' MEETING. Surfacing often at Manila was the feeling that more attention needs to be given to CLC among married people. One result was the special meeting one night of married CLC members, in a particular way those with young children. Among the 25 or 30 taking part, representatives from Japan, the United States and France were especially prominent in the exchanges, though a dozen countries were present. From actual experiences of countries and members, the participants searched for concrete means to make more practically possible the wider involvement of young married couples in CLC formation programs, assemblies, courses, retreats. The group felt keenly that, since most of the world's adult population is made up of married people, they should be much more broadly represented in the membership and leadership of CLC (General Assembly, Executive Council, commissions, etc.). There was a desire, too, that specific family concerns—abortion, the consumer society, sharing CLC values with the family, etc. receive more attention in CLC.

Makati in Manila. There was a great deal I learnt from the sense of generosity with which they share the little they possess with others, and the warm welcome they gave us in their modest one-roomed house bare of furniture or other comforts.

The remote preparation of the participants given them through preparatory mailings from the World Secretariat

which started in December 1975 and continued steadily right up to June 1976, contributed considerably to the great success of Manila '76. The documents on the theme of "Poor with Christ for a better service" ranging from articles as "Waste among Some, Starvation among others. Why?", to the documents of Pope Paul VI and the World Synod of Bishops on peace and justice in our World today, helped to orientate us better for the various themes that were expounded in the course of the basic programme of the General Assembly itself, namely : the World today, the Mission of the Church in the World today, the Response of the Christian Life Communities.

The outcome of our reflections and deliberations on these themes during the General Assembly in Manila and Baguio provided the individual National Federations as well as the World Federation with the thrust for our mission in Christian Life Community for the next three years. A strong desire was experienced by many of us to assume a simpler life-style and a closer identification with Christ poor. At the same time we also experienced an urgent need to align our solidarity with the poor of the world today in their aspirations for greater justice.

On our arrival back in our own respective countries, it will be now our major task to start planning seriously our CIC plan of action on a national level with the Manila 1976 theme "Poor with Christ for a Better Service" very much in our mind.

May Mary, our blessed mother, help us in our endeavour in the coming three years!

Helen (Malta)

REFLEXIONS ON THE MANILA '76 ASSEMBLY

To get a picture of the Assembly of Manila '76, the reader needs more than just to understand this article. He needs to feel Manila '76, for a good part of it relates to this aspect.

For the same reason one cannot fail to mention the two courses that preceded it, since they gave to it a special flavor. The experience people had in these courses of social insertion, community and the Spiritual Exercises, created an atmosphere that was warmer, more real, more open to the will of God; it was something more than a simple participation. It was not an assembly such as one might find in political, economic, and other fields, but something more: it was a world community.

A world community that, in spite of the differences in culture, social situations, mentalities, etc., was felt and still is felt in the unity experienced in Manila '76. This needs to be stressed, for, above and beyond the tensions and differences that were present, all the federations identified themselves with the conclusions arrived at. Even more, they were one in a common spirit of support and of service. At times such unity can pass unnoticed, and yet it is a very striking expression of the fact that God is among us.

I felt the development of the theme (world, Church, CLC) helped to make our experience a concrete one. As a result, the words of Manila '76 were for us words of life, of practical application, and this assured us of their validity.

Beyond doubt Manila '76 marked a step in giving direction to our communities. A direction that produced a "restless openness". It situated and concretized for us the who, the where and the how of poverty. It gave it more emphasis, so that it came to occupy for us the place it really ought to have in our communities and in their life. And it made us concerned and anxious to apply what we learned. It made us open, because the approach did not fall into the error frequently made, that of presenting a simple and well-marked-out itinerary to be taken. Most of the work to be done, most of our expectations, are rooted and situated in the national federations. That is where poverty in service and for a better service must be implemented.

The conclusion that a greater social insertion is needed is one of the most important coming from the Assembly. This stance in favor of solidarity with the poor is

also an index of the degree of evolution of our communities in building a kingdom of justice, love and peace. A "conformist" World Federation would not have pleased me; nor did I see such a federation, for clearly it would not have pleased anyone else there.

Joined to this was the integration of a deeper spirituality, so as to make us effective instruments of the love that makes us possible, that is truth, that leads us to our fulfillment, which is the love of God. In this sense the physiognomy of our Federation became better marked, as shown in the conclusions as regards Mary and the Spiritual Exercises.

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS. Several events linked with Manila '76 showed a growing--though still quite limited--international concern... A proposal for "reverse mission", stressing the contribution that Third World members could make to the sensitizing of the developed world by their presence and activity, stirred much interest. Though the Assembly, not fully satisfied with the proposal's form and wording, did not pass it, it did ask the Executive Council to see how best to further the main thrust of the proposal... Led by Betty Leone and 3 other Course II participants, an effort was made to inform delegates of some questionable aspects of the coming International Monetary Fund meet in Manila (lavish preparations, displacement of urban and rural poor by IMF projects) and to urge appropriate action by their national groups... Perhaps as significant: 4 or 5 different national federations or small groups suggested an International Affairs commission be set up, so as to stimulate greater effort of the World Federation in the international apostolate.

On the other hand, we must not fail to recognize that in the course of the Assembly there arose some tensions that at times gave way to a certain "parliamentarism". We know such tensions can be a source of growth if we allow them to manifest themselves. But one can ask oneself to what extent such tensions are natural, or are rather the product of prejudices due to lack of communication, lack

of openness, lack of understanding—in a word, lack of discernment? Clearly discernment, both personal and communitarian, needs to receive more attention at the national and international levels.

I have the impression that the tensions of Manila '76 helped us to grow, and that we will continue to grow because of a greater maturity that reaches its fullness in discernment. For example, I feel that we made considerable progress in our handling of tensions at Manila '76, and that we need to make more by searching for a structure that will be effective yet balanced, and with the freedom necessary to keep growing in openness to the signs of the times. But there exists the risk or the temptation to create structures or directives that are not necessary and that can oblige federations to serve these structures when they ought to serve for a more effective evangelization. I feel that we have structures of service, created by us and for us.

Another possible source of disunity and "parliamentarism" is the system of elections. Personally I feel that the arrangement of a secret vote is not helpful for the building of a world community in the true sense, a world body. One may ask whether we all agree on the reasons for this, or whether it is time for another type of election, such as open voting, etc., that might make us become more of a community.

It is necessary, then, that we all feel ourselves members of this world community so as to be "Church". A Church that responds and is active there where needed. A Church that moves toward the transformation of the consumer society, stained with the blemishes of the slums and the "favelas". A Church that aims at the changes needed, in love. This is the Church that I felt at Manila '76, a Church aware of itself, a force that sprung and sprouted from each of our plenary sessions. A force that leads us, prods us, guides us, a force we know exists already.

Finally, Manila '76 cannot be summed up in just one conclusion or one vision. It comprised many facets of life that a short account like this cannot cover. And we all

know that it is each federation which must integrate Manila '76 as a step in its growth within its concrete situation.

Alvaro (Uruguay)

MINDANAO EARTHQUAKE. The devastating earthquake and tidal wave that struck the southern Philippines early in the sessions left its mark indirectly too on Manila '76. How could it be otherwise, when this worst earthquake in Filipino history left 4000 dead and countless others homeless and with nothing. Two Assembly delegates were from the area; and, though his family was safe, the village of one was utterly destroyed. The delegates responded with energy, collecting and sending not only a sizeable sum of money, but divesting themselves of considerable amounts of clothes, etc. to send to the victims. It was a heartening expression of practical solidarity with those in need, an unexpected opportunity to implement the Manila '76 theme.

AQUINO TRIAL. Another current happening, this time political, drew the attention of some: the trial of opposition leader Benigno Aquino. Through their presence at one of the trial sessions, several members both expressed their own concern that justice be done, and sharpened their own sense of the importance of involvement by Christians in the political processes of their own country.

DIRECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE ASSEMBLY

A clear orientation found general acceptance. It could be formulated thus :

"The CLCs are aware that they have rediscovered their specific nature in the path of the Spiritual Exercises; this they now confirm. They confirm too the orientation taken at Augsburg in favor of a commitment to the liberation of the whole man and of all men. But the continuation of this direction is now matched by the very widespread option of a preference for the poor, an option that must express itself in a concrete insertion and a service with and for the poor."

Major Points of Emphasis

1) Concerning SERVICE :

- a clear option "in favor of the poor" in our life and our apostolate
- this option is shown by a commitment to justice, and by a service of and identification with the poor, especially by working for the establishment of CLCs among the poorer classes
- a discernment needs to be done at the national levels to recognize priorities (in the area of justice), then to make the choices and take the decisions needed and to integrate our efforts in an overall pastoral approach. Insisted on is collaboration with other organisms and communities, as well as our relationships with the bishops.
- the question of discernment at the international level is raised. Might not this be the moment, it is asked, to arrive at a priority (the example given is

that of hunger in the world)? A delegation makes the proposal that the Executive Council, after consulting with member federations, carry out a discernment with regard to specific world problems.

- insistence on witness in our personal life by :
 - * a quality of life that expresses the dignity of the human person, integrating the Gospel and the spirit of the Exercises
 - * simplicity in our life-style and continual challenging of it
- a strong stress on considering attentively and assisting in the creation of and leadership in Christian communities. Underlined is the reference of Paul VI to the role of small communities in his letter on E-vangelization. Members can render the best service in this domain by working with the poor in such groups.
- efforts so that the Church may have a credible image among the poor and among all people
- the support of the World Federation is asked for actions of national CIC federations that have been carefully discerned. There is a desire that the World Federation make itself heard among the hierarchy, and that it take positions where necessary in the public forum, especially as a non-governmental organization represented at the United Nations.

2) Concerning FORMATION :

The insistence on formation is very widespread. It reflects a concern to consolidate the efforts of the last 3 years by putting a strong accent on its being rooted in concrete situations and in an insertion in the poorer sectors.

Concrete requests and proposals are the following :

- spread of Formation Courses I and II within this general framework; promoting a total formation, including sensitizing and the socio-political dimension
- special attention to the formation of CIC leaders
- setting up a formation for Spiritual Exercises guides, both clergy and lay persons
- emphasis on the help to be given so that the dynamic of the Exercises is lived and implemented
- assistance so that CICs (communities) enter into a process of discernment in view of their service

- working for the inculturation of the Gospel, the Exercises and the formation process in the respective countries. In this perspective, it is suggested that formation courses be organized at the regional or continental level and that WFCIC lend its contribution by the collaboration of formed leaders to this effort. Four groups suggest how useful it would be to have persons available for this purpose.
- with a view to a fuller integration of youth Communities in the World Federation, it is requested that a special help be furnished in the formation of youth teams. It is asked that the commentary on the GP for youth that was initiated be pursued
- work at building up more Communities of couples.

3) Concerning COMMUNICATION :

One should notice, first of all, the kind of exchanges that are asked for in order to further the growth of persons and communities.

In first place, exchange of persons between countries, above all between First and Third World; this is linked with the concern of having a concrete experience of other countries and other cultures.

In second place, make more use of publications such as Progressio and Projects; of twinning; or of international gatherings for sharing information about specific situations and the methodology of action taken up.

In third place, it is stressed that the exchange of national periodicals and working papers between national federations is as useful as ever.

4) Concerning PROGRESSIO :

The general thrust of this Assembly is reflected in the suggestions made for Progressio. People ask for :

- a balance between articles of theory and of reflection (in as simple a language as possible) and of accounts of experiences and of news of the countries
- a description too at times of social situations in countries
- articles touching on themes such as the building of Christian communities, witness given to justice. And that it continue to give an adequate spiritual formation.

Finally, stress is laid on the broad effort to be made to increase its subscribers, which would make it possible too to improve its format.

SUGGESTIONS

In addition, very many concrete suggestions were made, too many to enumerate here. The above, however, convey sufficiently, it would seem, the main orientations and perspectives emphasized by the General Assembly.

In the course of the General Assembly, the youth delegates present elected the

NEW YOUTH COMMISSION

which, let us recall, is made up of 2 representatives by continent. The result of this election was the following :

AFRICA	: Romuald Ralaysomay (Madagascar)
	Vincent Sandamuka (Zambia)
ASIA	: Che Avengoza (Philippines)
	Mary Yeung (Hong Kong)
EUROPE	: Angela Clarke (England)
	Giancarlo Murkovic (Italy)
LATIN AMERICA	: Alvaro Capurro (Uruguay)
	Sergio Garcia (Mexico)
NORTH AMERICA	: Peggie Telscher (U.S.A.)
	(Second member still to be chosen)

The center pages of PROGRESSIO will continue to be reserved for CLC youth experiences. If this issue seems to be an exception, we nonetheless point out that three of the articles (those signed by Diego and Santiago, Alvaro and Christian) have as their authors CLC youth representatives.

THE NEW PRESIDENT ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY

Many of my friends have asked me how I feel about being elected. I guess you will agree with me, as we near the end of our General Assembly, that we are all feeling tired after the hectic schedule we have had. Nevertheless, along with this feeling, I also feel an immense peace in my heart, and a great enthusiasm to immerse myself fully in the work that lies ahead.

Before the election this afternoon I had a great feeling of fear within me. The fear of being elected as the president of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities. I think this fear was due to the uncertainty of what lies ahead and the implications in my life, and for my wife and my small son, of being the lowest servant of all the Christian Life Communities all over the world. But now I feel a great peace within me and the presence of our Lord.

I remember the synthesis of Father De la Costa last night as if it were addressed to me personally. That to be Poor with Christ for a Better Service to all, especially to the poor, I must be ready to take a leap in the dark. This darkness of uncertainty is frightening because for me it means a complete offering of my life to the Lord in all its dimensions and putting my complete trust in Him. And also, the road that I will be taking will not be easy and familiar. At times it may even mean building a new path and clearing the wilderness before me. But now I can only say with complete peace: "I am the Lord's servant; may it happen to me as you have said."

I also feel an immense joy and honor because I have been chosen by the Lord to be His servant. I have been praying to Our Blessed Mother Mary to ask her son Jesus to

let me be one of His servants. And, being elected as president to serve you, I thank our Mother Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ for choosing me through you, who participated in the election this afternoon, to be of service to Him through the Christian Life Communities.

As I said before I know we are all tired. But to be continuously at the service of our brothers, we must increase this tiredness. For to be of service means hard work and this means to continuously experience being tired. To serve, to work and to be tired in the service of the poor and oppressed is a clear indication that we are chosen by Christ to be with Him in His redemption-liberation mission.

The real work has not yet been done in this assembly. The real work will be done when we all go back to our respective countries. Many insights, reflections, awarenesses and realizations we will all bring back home. We will need to discern, personally and as a community, how this assembly's theme of "better service" to our poor and oppressed brothers in our countries, in the world, will be concretized. Many of us will be asking how to do this. This assembly did not offer us any solution, for that was not its purpose. But it did challenge us to be continually reflecting and becoming aware of the extent of poverty and oppression around us. The real work will be done by your National Federations and local communities. In this situation we will also find ourselves walking an unfamiliar road or even having to make the road ourselves. In this situation too we are invited to take that leap in the dark and have full trust that the Lord is guiding us.

Your new Executive Council will be walking too an unfamiliar road after this General Assembly. There will be some familiar signs but we do not have a complete chart or map of the way we want to take. The only way we will know that we are on the right track is through you, your National Federations and local communities. Your new Executive Council is at your service. We invite you to be critical of our work. We invite you to communicate with us, to tell us what services you need. We will try to respond and serve you the best we can. The World Federation is you and it is only through your constant solidarity that we can be effective as your Executive Council.

To end my brief talk and to take the leap in dark with complete faith in our Lord, I am closing it with a prayer. A prayer of St. Ignatius in the Contemplation to Attain Love.

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To thee, O Lord, I return it. All is thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me only Thy Love and Thy Grace, for these are sufficient to me.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat, at magandang gabi sa inyo.

Marte (Philippines)

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WHO IS MARTE VINZONS

Who is the new president of the World CIO Federation?

Marte Vinzons is 33 years old. He was born and grew up in the province of Camerines Norte in the lower part of Luzon, largest and most important island in the Philippines. He and his wife Luisa (Luay to her friends) and their infant son Luis, born last year, live in the parental home in Daet, the provincial capital, a city of about 50,000.

Marte's family is well-known in the province, and one of the towns bears the family name. The Vinzons family has long been active in civic affairs and, in the period preceding the present martial law, was active politically as well. Both Fernando Vinzons, Marte's father, and Wenceslaus, a relative, were elected to the First National Constitutional Convention that paved the way for independence in 1935. Wenceslaus is regarded as a national hero because, after having been governor and then congressman, he led the opposition to the Japanese invaders and so, with his wife and two children, was murdered in 1942.

Marte's father has been an exporter of coconuts and, in connection with his work, both he and Marte's mother have visited all the continents. Both were internationally active in church organizations, and Fernando was given the Knights of Columbus "Pro Ecclesia" award. He was as well a member of the National Council of the Boy Scouts and a leader in the Red Cross. Because of their opposition to the Japanese invasion Marte's mother landed in prison, and Marte himself was born in a prison camp as a result.

Marte did the usual studies, then went to work in the export-import trade in Manila. He was for five years export manager of The Southern Products Corporation and during four years general manager of Woodson Brothers Company, Inc. Meanwhile, too, he was active in various civic and church organizations.

Nine years ago he made his first acquaintance with what was then the Sodality of Our Lady, in a local group that gave leadership and Christian renewal courses to youth. But his group felt the Sodality itself needed renewal, and when the following year the new General Principles became available in the Philippines, his group entered enthusiastically into the new approach. Some months later Marte was asked to attend a national CLC training seminar of CLC and he says that "it was there that I got a true understanding of what CLC is". Over two years his CLC group plunged into a renewal program, digging into the new General Principles, studying scripture, sharing prayer, probing the documents of Vatican Council II, analyzing contemporary situations. Realizing the need of more time for sharing, study and planning for action, they began to meet weekly and sometimes informally between the regular meetings. Marte became chairman of his local unit, had more contact with the national secretariat, helped arrange for two 5-day experiences of the Spiritual Exercises with the national assistant. In 1971 he was elected president of the National Federation, a post he held till 1973. As such he played a key part in the ever-deeper rooting of the Philippines movement in Ignatian spirituality and its ever-clearer expression in efforts for justice and solidarity with the poor. Marte took part in the World Assembly of Augsburg '73 and the Rome Formation Course that preceded it, and was a group facilitator in the latter. Since 1974 he has been a Consultor of the Philippines Federation.

Two years ago Marte married Luisa Hocson, who had also been quite active and committed in CLC, like Marte also in Manila. But even before this, Marte felt the need for a drastic change in his way of living. "When I was working in Manila my sole aim was to increase my earning capacity as well as I could. When I got more involved in CLC--and consequently deeply involved with the person of Christ--I had to change my orientation. My background and training

is to be a trader. But now I looked for a way that these could be used to be of service to others at the same time that I had to earn a living for my family." So he and Luay moved back to Daet, "more rural than urban, where the very nature of the place is a help for us to follow a simple way of life".

Near Daet, Marte, with two other partners, has started a small fish-farm by building a dike in the adjacent river. He employs local people to build the dike and help with the fish-pond, thus stimulating their curiosity, and believes in time he can help some to set up their own fish ponds and become self-sufficient. He sees it too as a way to contribute to the most urgent need of the country, that of food-production for the burgeoning population, now at 40 millions. Another effort of Marte and Luay is directed to developing a simple local industry by producing baskets and other products from coconut leaves. In this as in all their efforts they work closely with the poorer farmers or fishermen, in a process they see as involving three steps: 1) building local communities for vitalizing the Church by prayer-groups, etc; 2) helping people become aware of their own personal, family and social problems and of their possibilities for common effort; 3) gradually developing a certain social and political maturity of the communities, with less need of outside support. In addition to these efforts, Luay teaches social work, land management and English in the college of Daet.

An unusual activity of Marte and Luay relates to a radio station. Established by his father, and reaching a radius of about 85 miles, the station, in the service of his father's firm, was at first mainly a means of maintaining communication between people of the area. Marte and Luay have been able to broaden the activity of the station, including with the local and national news also international happenings, and broadcasts that can be useful to people for land management, human development, and education in faith and justice. The station is recognized by the state; thus far all of the broadcasts have received the approbation needed.

Marte is aware that the presidency of the World Federation will put heavy demands on his time and energies. But

he feels his other activities will simply have to be adapted to the demands the position makes, and is sure his wife, as fully committed to CLC as he is, will help him make those adjustments. How does he feel as he looks to the work ahead? "My initial reaction when asked to be a candidate for the presidency was to decline. But after some reconsideration and more prayers, I just laid myself open to what or where the Lord will lead me. I also reflected, when I prayed about accepting the candidacy, that to be of service to the Lord is to be willing to choose the most challenging task available. And to me, the role of the president of our movement is one of the most challenging tasks there is."

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OTHER NEWLY-ELECTED MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Vice-president : Hildegard Ehrtmann (Germany)

Was social worker (community organization, public welfare, supervision) for 13 years. Member CLC since 1954, with CLC experience in U.S.A. ('57-'60), Canada ('61-'63) and Germany. Since 1964, full-time executive secretary of German National Federation. Was secretary of WFCLC 1970 - 1976, co-chairperson of Formation Commission 1973-1976. Key role in preparing and guiding Formation Courses of Rome '73 and Manila '76.

Secretary : Maria Magdalena Palencia Gomez (Mexico)

Private accountant. Has been head of the accounting department at leading international firm, and assistant office manager. Member CLC since 1953, Secretary of Mexican National Federation '72-'75 and '76-'79. Member National CLC Formation Commission, Commission for CLC Development. Organizer and coordinator of National Formation Course, 1974.

Treasurer : Jose Antonio Esquivel, sj (U.S.A.)

Director of Religious Activities, counsellor and theology teacher at Colegio de Belén, Miami, catering especially to

students of Cuban origin. Entered CLC 1955. Initiated and directed faith-experience sessions. Assistant Jesuit Provincial Treasurer over several years. Chairman WFCCLC Finance Commission '73-'76. Member WFCCLC Formation Commission '73-'76.

Consultor : Madeleine Alix (France)

Was leader of Young Christian Students at university. Rural pastoral activity later. Was chairperson of an association of directors of youth hostels. At present professor of psychology and personnel manager of a religious residence. Regional chairperson for Maine-Anjou Region of CLC 1971-73. Since December '74, Executive Secretary for CLC in France.

Consultor : Sidney D'Souza, sj (India)

Socio-pastoral worker, university lecturer in community organization, directed various formation courses. Director of Social Services and Superior of Seva Niketan, social center in Bombay. Member of CLC since 1966. Diocesan Vice-Assistant since 1968. Vice-Assistant Indian National Federation 1973 to present. Member WFCCLC Liberation Commission 1974-1976.

Consultor : Clara Julia Migliaro (Argentina)

Lawyer and social worker. University professor 1966-1973. Head of social service in Military Hospital of Campo Mayo '68-'70. As lawyer, conducts criminological study of condemned delinquents. As social worker, works with released prisoners and their families. In CLC since 1964. Organizing and coordinating of regional and national CLC formation courses, 1973-1976.

Youth Consultor : Gian Carlo Murkovic (Italy)

(NOTE : The Youth Consultor is an appointed member of the Executive Council, designated by the Council on the recommendation of the elected members of the World Youth CLC Commission.)

Works with father in small enterprise. Leader of youth CLC in Trieste for several years. Very active in local and nat

ional CLC youth gatherings and projects. Member of Italian CLC Executive Council. Besides Italian, speaks fluently Spanish and Croatian. Participated in Manila '76 (Formation Course I and Assembly) and elected continental youth representative. Chairman of WPCLC Youth Commission.

CLC OF SILENCE. There were, too, countries not represented at Manila '76 because of government interdiction or rigid restriction of CLC activity. Thus all contact with one federation, present at Augsburg '73, has since, under a new political regime, been lost, and all CLC activity there apparently suppressed. In some other countries (they exist on at least 3 continents) such suppression is already a fact of long standing. In a very few such countries, a handful of CLC groups have managed to carry on a tenuous existence, at times reluctantly tolerated by oppressive regimes, but unable to form any federation, and always under severe restrictions, especially with regard to outside contacts. They could, of course, not be present at Baguio, but the World Federation did there take special note of them. For they too are part of our worldwide Christian Life Community, even if they remain wholly or to a large extent the CLC of silence.

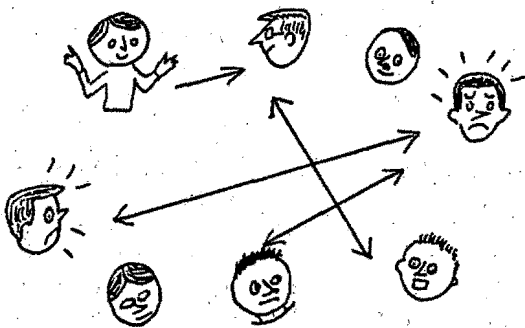
By the time we finished the General Assembly I was, I admit, a bit tired. That was now 3 good weeks during which we had not, I assure you, done any loafing. And in spite of that, there were 101 of us participants staying on to take part in Course III.

Clearly this Course was much looked forward to. Pretty much everybody realized that the time had come to line up together the means of formation that pave the way for CLC. What was involved

was to recognize jointly the path that was ours, to distinguish the different stages that we and everyone in our groups is called on to undergo. It meant searching out together how this specific growth of CLC could go forward,

a process that takes the whole person and tries to ground him in concrete service patterned after that of Jesus Christ.

It's a big problem, that of formation. We all know of too many groups that go in circles, or stop short, or go off the track, simply because they haven't been given and don't know how to obtain the help and advice that are indispensable for them to move ahead. I'm sure you understand we were not trying to draw up a formation program. It's up to those in charge nationally and locally to see what program is needed in terms of their situation, the needs of their members, etc... Only, it's hard, in fact impossible, to really promote CLC at any level if we don't have a clear vision of the road to be travelled, if we don't know the boundaries that mark it out. That was the aim of Course III.



THE NEW HORIZON
(Transmitting the CIC Vocation)

After the very inspiring talks given by Fr. Horacio de la Costa entitled "Asia Through a Glass, Darkly", Fr. Larry Stnn on "The Mission of the Church" and Magdalena Palencia on "The CIC Response", the waves of complacency had little chance to put a break to that inner drive that had gripped our tired bodies (after the hectic week of the General Assembly). Here were men and woman who had seen the vision of Christ's kingdom on earth as a challenge and a dream worth working for, a people inspired by the personal love of Christ.

Right from the very first day when Hildegard Ehartmann gave us an overall view of the Course, CICers from all over the world began mentally ticking off what they would like to get from the course, as was apparent from the very first small-group exchange we had when we put on a poster, after sharing with each other, our expectations and fears. It was interesting to see the variety of expectations that surfaced and the bond of closeness people felt when they found another with similar expectations.

It was apparent from the introduction to this Formation Course III as well as the preparatory mailings that this was not a course to equip people with a few techniques for being a formation expert and conducting a similar course back home, but rather a time where the CIC world

family would look together at that unique and universal process of CIG formation to help us to understand and identify with this process. This of course could be possible only by sharing the individual, interpersonal and societal dimensions that go into making CIGers, people capable of loving and serving, people actively engaged in the work of changing the world and society into a liberating society, people for whom Christ is the very center of life.

From the start we were asked to be prepared for a few tensions, and to make these tensions stepping stones instead of hindrances. Tensions arising from fatigue and ambition (that being the fifth week for members who had attended the earlier courses and General Assembly), tensions between the fixed program and the desire to change it, between the ideal and the poverty of means.

This I think was a very wise warning, because that is how our first day in the small group of six began. We were divided into groups of six members each and we seemed to run into all the tensions forecast by Hildegard with the first subject - Criteria for Selection and Recruitment. There was dis-satisfaction with the role-play suggested, questions about the Survey document proposed for study and reflection. While half the group wanted to go ahead with the programme for the day, the other half seemed most dissatisfied with the whole set-up. I said to myself "..... I thought crisis usually comes after the 'inclusion stage'; here we go "bang" into a crisis at the very start!" We were all confused as to how to proceed and literally were at first half-hearted, since the group seemed divided on whether we should go according to the programme suggested or find different means. By the next morning we realised that we could not go ahead with just half the group wanting to stick to the schedule and since we knew of similar situations in two other groups (though to a lesser degree) we found it more practical to reorganise just these three groups in such a way that those wanting to follow the programme should form one group and those interested in evolving a new method joined another group. I joined the group who decided to follow the programme, which comprised six people - 4 women and 2 men (both priests),: 2 Irish, 1 French, 1 Mexican and 2 Indians. The rest of the 8 groups functioned smoothly.

The schedule for the day was the following: Individual reflection and prayer for 1 hr.15 min; small group sharing in prayer for 20 min; General Assembly (all groups together) for introduction to the day's theme 1/2 hr; individual reflection on the subject 3/4th hr; coffee with that special morning smile; General Assembly for introduction to the exercises in small groups; small group sharing 2 1/2 hrs; lunch and rest; General Assembly for introduction to topics for discussion and sharing at 3 p. m.; followed by small group reflection and sharing which lasted for 2 1/2 hrs with a very welcome break for tea around 3.40 (the sleepest hour of the day!); Eucharist at 6.30, which was the high point of the day both when celebrated in small groups as well as with the whole assembly adding colour with readings and hymns in different languages. The small groups met once again from 8.15 till 9 p.m. to review the group process of the day.

From the moment this reorganised small group met I was reminded of General Principle No. 3 : "...each Christian Life Community is formed of people with similar ideals and each community organises itself to meet the demands of vital Christian living for its members". Though our group was a day behind schedule we began in real earnest to make up for time lost by putting our heart and soul into Formation Course III.

The programme for the nine days and the topics dealt with under each heading were the following :

- 1) Itinerary of CLC Formation Process;
- 2) Preliminary steps - initial selection - recruitment and experiences of preliminary forms used in different countries;
- 3) Reality - Awareness around me - Phase of initiation of preconfidence, role of life experience (personal, interpersonal, societal) for entering the process, role of knowledge of group process; role of group leader, community development in initial stages;
- 4) Reality - Awareness: I am loved-Recognition of personal potential, of social dependence on basic human needs, impact of social norms and culture, experiences of preliminary

forms of Spiritual Exercises;

5) Awareness of Social Evil - Stage of Taking Roots, social disorder, exchange on value and problems of crisis-phase in human-spiritual development. Role of group life in this phase;

6) Awareness of personal refusal of love - personal conversion, role of capacity for interpersonal relationship, conflict handling in groups. REVIEW of the course;

7) Jesus Christ, His call to His life and service - contemplation of an encounter with Christ, means of CLC : Frame for growing freedom and service;

8) To follow Christ - Discernment - Decision - Commitment reflection on mission - discernment - role of community for CLC commitment, integration in formation process;

9) Integration of all toward Mission - Dynamics of CLC vocation, Formation toward mission in each phase of development, consequences for formation - programs in respective cultures, CLC - World Community in evolution.

The reflection at the night session on group process moved along the following lines : a) Inclusion and Trust b) Goals of the Group c) Power and Control d) Leadership Roles e) Decision-Making, f) Climate of the group, g) Resources of the group and h) Group Cohesiveness. These night sessions ended with a prayer in thanksgiving for the day and the examen.

As you will see from the above, this was indeed a lot of matter to be covered within just 9 days and I'd like to say that the Formation Course III has begun and it is a long road. It was good to get a bird's-eye view of this road because we as CLCers should know where we are choosing to go. The sincerity and dedication of each and every member in our small group helped us to reflect and ask ourselves very personal questions about our CLC response. I was struck by some of the points (not for the first time though) which will mean a great enrichment for the CLCers in India and I suppose all over the world too, and a deeper search :

1) There is a definite parallelism between the Spiritual

Exercises, personal growth, and social dimension in the CLC process.

2) This process is an invitation to live an integrated life as expressed in GP N.3.

3) It is very important for those responsible for formation to be aware of and understand this process, see clearly the goal and stages a group will go through, and give the kind of support and stimulus that will enable a group to go ahead.

4) It is important to realise our limitations and rely on Christ to do His work - here I must say the CLC'er must be a person who has lived through and identified with the Spiritual Exercises.

5) Conflicts are to be faced, and we have to grow through them rather than avoid them.

6) The group cannot truly discern until the individuals have lived through the First and Second Weeks of the Exercises in their own personal lives. A group is as deep as the individuals that make up this group.

7) Everything is a preparation for His coming and His Kingdom on earth and a CLC'er is a person who lives in hope.

The Survey document proved invaluable in helping us probe deeper into the stages of the group life of our units, though I must say that to do full justice to it requires more time.

We in India are grateful to our national CLC formation leaders who have put us on the right road through the number of formation and training programmes that we have had over the past few years. Yet, as one who has been part of the formation team, some of the questions I ask myself are :

1) Having tasted of the life of Christ and having met persons whose life is marked by this constant urge for sharing in His life and mission, both in India and at this Course, how can we use the "dynamics of the Exercises" to better implement "integration of all toward mission"?

2) What are the implications of "Poor with Christ for a Better Service" for me as an Indian - as a member of a Third

World country - and for my fellow CLCers?

While I realise it will mean a long weary road, I am also excited at the possibility of travelling along this road with Christ - my irresistible God!

Matilda (India)

more material
on the KEY THEMES OF MANILA '76

Over and over again, at Manila '76 and since, people have been asking for "more materials" on the themes stressed at the World Assembly and Courses. As of now we have available :

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Today (Supplement 5) - J.A. ESQUIVEL, s.j. 0.75

On FORMATION

- Survey of the Formation Process in CLC
(overall view of the whole of formation) 2.00
- Introduction to Formation (Program for initial
stage of adult CLC formation, used in France) 1.40

On COMMUNITY

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Special Group Report

Some members wished to pursue an approach somewhat different from that originally foreseen, though within the overall framework of the Survey, and with the accord of the guiding-team did so. They worked together in a group of 13; the following gives an account of their efforts and conclusions.

These reflections lack the refinement only further experimentation and seasoned reflection will bring. We offer them as a stimulus to work in implementing "MANILA '76" in the formation efforts of the next three years.

What is the primary focus of formation? Are we not being formed and forming others in an apostolic way of life? How do we approach formation if the main focus should be directed to service? These questions were our point of departure.

We agreed on a methodology for our work which would move :

1. from a sharing and clarification of concrete experiences of formation for service,
2. to seeing what patterns or conclusions emerged (with prayer throughout but especially here),
3. and finally to articulating principles for formation, a pedagogy as we eventually came to call it.

We began the sharing of experiences with a brainstorming. Then we focused on three concrete experiences from Ger-

many, Japan and Philippines. We began to reflect on common patterns to draw some initial conclusions.

Elements of a Pedagogy and its Long-term Deepening

The basic assumption of this pedagogy is that concrete life situations are a privileged starting point for formation. Individual growth and the process of growth in the community should be at the service of a deepening response to God's call from within local life situations. And so, as important as it is to see the linear progression of formation, it is as important to clarify the elements involved in a pedagogy of response to a specific situation.

We saw several elements of such a way of living concrete situations. While these are elements of a CIC way of life, we were not yet concerned with CIC explicitly:

- To identify an issue which affects in a significant way our lives as human persons and Christians. This could be a family situation, a problem in the neighborhood, parish or city,...
- Become aware of what is actually going on in this situation. This awareness could be expanded by locating the local situation in its total context, all the way to the condition of the poor and oppressed of the developing world.
- Begin to ask : What is the Christian response? (Search Scripture; consider what the Church has said concerning similar issues; personal prayer for inner freedom and light to see clearly, communication exercises to unblock interaction in the community).
- Plan how that response will be concretized in action. This action is part of a formation process for the community and its members.
- Evaluate the action undertaken, its results, the entire process.

These are elements of a way of living concrete life situations. They constitute a possible pedagogy for living in a perspective of service from the beginning of a formation process.

Such a response will need to deepen over the course of time. We suggest several phases or times of growth. A relationship to the phases of the Survey is evident.

During a first period of time, the desire to respond to the situation has me as its center. The response here is mainly on a human level, even though prayer and reflection on the Gospel play a part. At some point, there will be a significant deepening which amounts to a conversion to a whole new way of living the very same pedagogical elements. As a result, it is no longer I but Christ who is the center. It is no longer my ideas and projects but concerns for his plans. I allow myself to be confronted by the total message of the Gospel. There is a similar openness to how others in the Church (hierarchy, prophetic voices, theological reflection, grass-roots witness) have looked at this or like situations.

For now I am liberated from myself and Christ is the center. The group's experience is also one of liberation in their service. Now mission with Christ is the bond of the community. This conversion reflects a deepening of the quality of the service rendered. It represents an entrance into a second phase of deepening response.

Some of these first two times could last quite a long while. At some point during the second phase, however, an explicit attraction to CLC and the CLC way of life may develop and raise the question of living such a service to God and man in and through CLC. Is God calling me to live my participation in Christ's mission in communion with these persons and communities?

Although the Spiritual Exercises in some form have been a part of the deepening during the first two times, now they would be made in a fuller form in order to clarify whether God is calling me to CLC. If the answer is "Yes" a third time begins during which, for me personally, identification with Christ and his mission is in and through CLC. This can come about either by the community which supports me in service becoming a CLC, or by my leaving to seek my primary support community in CLC.

In sum, then, we are suggesting that there be both a pedagogy for responding to concrete life situations from the beginning of formation and, a vision of long-term growth in a service perspective. A deepening of this way of living would allow God to call those involved to CLC when and if he chooses.

As this pedagogy took form, we came to realize the importance of a guide. The guide's presence is crucial if the group is to learn to live concrete situations in this way and to deepen in time the quality of their response to God's calls.

The guide must have integrated in his own person and life the three dimensions such a pedagogy implies :

- Individual (Spiritual Exercises guide)
- Communal (Community guide)
- Societal (social change agent)

If he or she has integrated these personally but lacks the guiding skills in one dimension or another, this can be supplied by others.

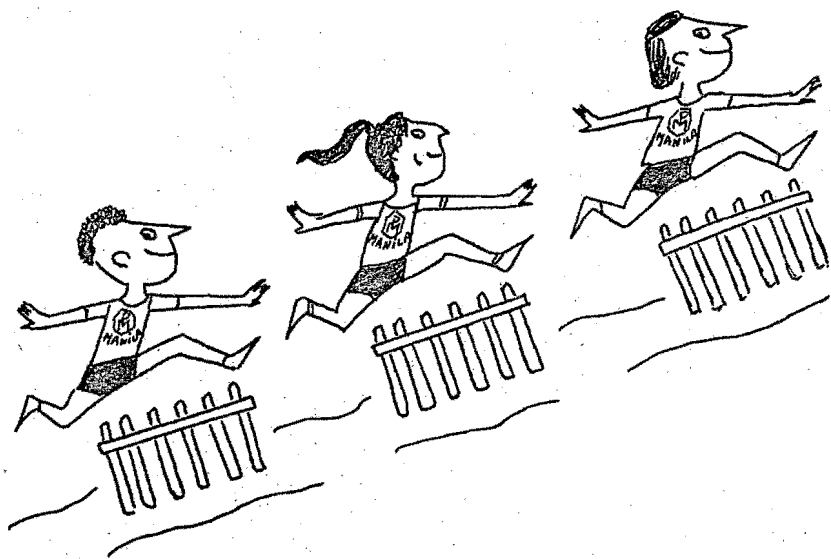
What is a guide? He is both a facilitator and a witness. As a facilitator, he must listen to and dialogue with those he is guiding, evoking their needs and allowing them to express, to decide and to do, even let them make mistakes and afterwards evaluate and learn from them.

On the other hand, he is a witness who represents Christ, Gospel values and Church orientations. To guide in this way, the guide himself or herself needs :

- 1) to belong to a support community,
- 2) to constantly evaluate what he or she is doing (the support community will be helpful for this) and
- 3) to be in constant dialogue with those he or she is guiding.

As always the methodology used was a very active one. It keeps you from sharing just "ideas" and goes right to your experience, which prods you a little ... But I really think this course III was an important milestone for the future growth of CLC. More immediately, it seemed to me to be a sort of challenge thrown out to those who wish to be and who feel themselves called to be, leaders in promoting CLC.

A very interesting effort was that done by the youth section. A group of about thirty persons shared their experience in applying the CLC pedagogy to youth groups. It was a huge step forward, and just at the moment when youth groups are developing quite widely.



**FOR THE FIRST TIME :
AN INTERNATIONAL CLC YOUTH COURSE**

It is well-known that half the world's population today is "youth". The world is becoming continually "younger".

Obviously, this is not without reference to our CLC groups. In some countries there exist many youth groups, and sometimes these are even in the majority.

It is clear that in many things youth requires its own dynamic and imposes its own approach. For this reason the organizers of Formation Course III, at Baguio in the Philippines, August 21-30, 1976, took account of this. Using as a basis the SURVEY OF THE FORMATION PROCESS IN CLC, the Course was divided into two sections, one for the formation of adults, the other for youth formation.

From the beginning it was evident that this did not imply any separation between the two, for the introduction each day of the themes was made to both groups together. Here were explained the topics of each day, as they corresponded to the steps of the process : awareness of reality around us and in us; I am loved; evil in the world; the role of the Church; our commitment.

In addition, the youth-formation section (which included both youth and adults within it) underlined this refusal to separate too much youth and adults by emphasizing

that the CLC youth communities form part of the one, single CLC movement.

Prayer Together

The importance of prayer and its central place in all CLC action was not only recognized theoretically, but effectively put into practice. Each morning there was an hour of prayer in common, in which we learned new forms of prayer : praying a psalm in community; meditation on pictures; exchange on the way in which we experience Jesus. For example, parallel to the words of Jesus that "I am" (e.g., "I am the light of the world"), each one could, in all liberty, voice a similar phrase, such as "I am peace", or "I am the one who suffers hunger in the neighborhoods of the poor...". At night, there was an evaluation of the day.

On the first day we searched, in small work groups, for the qualities that ought to be present in youth for them to be interested in the CLC way of life. Most often mentioned, and what seemed to us all the most important, was openness: openness to personal growth, to growth in the faith, to social relationships.

Different Periods in the Group

Father Eddie Mercieca (who, along with Peggie Telscher, conducted the Course), distinguished three periods in the establishment of a CLC group:

- 1) The pre-community. This is an initial period to which belong the essentials of psychological development : getting to know oneself, experiencing oneself within a community. The bond of the individual with the group is here still very loose and the members change often.
- 2) The Christian community. The main thrust of the group at this point is social. The group feels itself to be a community, the members enter into mutual relationships and are strongly identified with the group. The "sense of the Church" grows. Generally this period lasts several years until the group becomes a CLC.
- 3) The Christian Life Community. Now the spiritual is what becomes most important. The group becomes a group of dis-

cernment and of searching for the concrete will of God in the life of each one. It is stable as a community and in its commitments.

In the involvement in these phases, it is important that there not be a separation between the psychological, social and spiritual sectors, but that rather they mutually reinforce each other. Also, that participation in the group does not impose a kind of "accepted way" that would pressure a person into following the group process.

"I am loved"

In the youth groups, the pre-community period takes on great importance, for it is then they make the experience of being accepted, that of being able to say, "I am loved", which is shown to be capital for all the development that follows.

On this subject we exchanged during an entire day, in small groups, about our experiences, seeking methods of establishing such a foundation. We come to suggest quite concrete and practical methods, as the two following examples show:

- 1) All the members of the group in turn tell one among them what they find positive in him, this in an atmosphere of prayer.
- 2) A variation. The question is asked : where is it that I see the "figure of Christ", the Person of Christ, transparent and evident? What are the qualities and traits of Christ that I perceive in the other? This is then expressed publicly and becomes the subject of sharing within the group. At the end (this is done also after the first method) the members of the group make specific prayers for each other. These exercises help the young person to discover that he or she has received much, that he has much to give, and that the others have much to give him.

As regards such "techniques", it was stressed that they should be used with great freedom and only if they can be of use, for they are never an end in themselves.

Crises...

"Crisis" does not of itself have a pejorative sense. It can be a sign of true progress, real possibility of renewal.

The causes of a crisis are many. They can come :

- from outside the group
- from the group itself (focusing only on itself, "narcissism", being closed to what is outside; "activism" without any interior life, etc.)
- relationships between persons (jealousy, change of leader,...).

It was for us very useful to share our experiences in this regard, and to seek how these crises can be overcome and how they can become fruitful for the group.

A whole day was given to preliminary forms of the Spiritual Exercises for youth. It was not possible for us as had been planned, to work out a "model", and perhaps such a project is unrealizable. Still it was helpful to learn of the specific forms used in several countries (faith experiences, meditation weekends, three-days' Spiritual Exercises).

Evaluation of the Activity of a Youth-Group Guide

The requests for help that came up in the small groups, and the things we talked about in general, were then sketched out in such a way as to help us to judge what the role of a guide in a youth group would need to be. The aim was to search out as to what was the motivation in our youth work, to examine our relations with each member of our group, our work methods, our "sense of the Church", etc. The results of this effort to evaluate our own work was of very great value for each of us personally, even though one cannot really communicate to others.

Results?

It is impossible to express here the riches of the concrete suggestions that resulted from this Course and that were passed on to the Executive Council for its con-

sideration. The principal points seem to be these :

- The goal of CLC activity is not a "process" nor a determined "type of group", to be attained at any cost. Rather, the first goal is the young person himself as a person with his own problems and his own needs.
- Youth-CLC is a part of the single CLC movement; this is why the SURVEY was developed and applied in a particular approach for Youth-CLC. Many felt too that there should be a special ecclesiastical assistant for them on the world level.

Other Suggestions:

- The publication of a version of the General Principles, with special application to youth.
- Gathering together various methods for the work in groups, for this could be helpful for certain objectives and in certain situations.
- For the next General Assembly, each delegation should have one youth representative.
- Preparing a documentary film (or slides) to show the CLC way of life as adapted to the needs of youth.
- More exchange of information between the different countries on what is taking place in each as regards publications, meetings, but also of needs.

The 30-or-so participants not only worked together, but became more conscious that they were a community. This appeared in the farewell gathering organized by Ted Letendre(USA) and Angela Clarke (Great Britain) the final morning when the members prayed for each other aloud. There we expressed the great appreciation we felt to the Lord after this week so rich. But also, more specifically, the appreciation we felt as regards the guiding team (Eddie, Peggie) and all the participants who, though many have passed the age of youth, worked together during the Course.

Christian (Austria)

The morning of August 30 we parted. Course III had finished the night before. Two big buses were waiting at Villa Mirador to take us to Manila. Everything was arranged. The Philippines Federation had furnished us, during the whole session and up to the last minute, a secretariat whose staff were as friendly as they were competent.

The moment of saying goodbye is always touching. But there was something special about it here when we said "Adios" "Arrivederci" or "God bless you". In them were all the warmth that 5 weeks together of experience and of searching to deepen our apostolic service had caused to be born in us and to grow. Our affection expressed itself simply. Would we see each other again? Maybe. But what did it matter, for if not, we would write. You know you'll all be in my prayers. I'm counting on yours... Don't forget to keep us informed about what you do in your country... Agreed... Goodbye, we're one, one, ONE... Yes, that was it. That is what I felt, I am one, I'll stay one, with each person and with the whole group. And somehow I felt obligated to each one - obligated to be faithful and to carry out my service in CLC.

Do you get some idea, Frank, of what Manila '76 meant for me and for all of us? Those who took part will all be talking about it in their own countries, you wait and see. Everyone left filled with energy and enthusiasm and plans.

Hope to see you before too long. Till then, in warm friendship.

Pete

FOR THE SEVENTH TIME...

Repeatedly and with good reason, delegates praised the excellent preparation for the various meetings of Manila '76. They referred especially to the immediate preparation, during the months preceding the meetings.

There is yet another preparation, more distant : that of history. This goes back to the 16th century, when small groups of lay people united around the first Jesuits in order to serve better.

To illustrate very briefly this long-term preparation, I limit myself here to more recent history--that since the Apostolic Constitution Bis Saeculari (1948), which initiated a new period for CLC. By its vigorous directives for renewal and reform, this document anticipated in some sort Vatican Council II (1962-1965). The establishment of the World Federation (1953) furnished us with the instrument indispensable for implementing this pressing call to renewal.

According to the Statutes, the General Council is "the sovereign body" of this Federation. By and through this Council, the whole world movement can act. It is this Council too which elects the Executive Council, which, in turn, designates those in charge of the Secretariat of Rome.

I will try to single out some characteristics of the six assemblies of the General Council that preceded that of Manila '76.

Rome '54 : "Point of Departure for a Universal Renewal"

The first meeting of the General Council took place September 8 in one of the meeting rooms of Gregorian University (the direct continuation of the Roman College, where, 400 years ago, the first Sodality of Our Lady was born). The Council lasted but three hours : introductions, validation of delegates' credentials, election of an Executive Council, questions and discussions. It was all quite improvised ("once and for all, a start has to be made"), in a charming disorder, with a democratic flavor and a fine spirit. Later, the Executive Council formulated the main goal : "The Congress of Rome must be the point of departure for a universal renewal".

The meeting of the Council was surrounded by a grandiose congress, organized with the cooperation of our Italian friends. It was a veritable explosion of vitality and enthusiasm, and quite a surprise for Rome and for the Vatican. The papers spoke of a "historic gathering". Msgr. Montini, representative of the Holy See, was visibly moved on seeing, at the magnificent artistic presentation under the stars, the 10,000 Sodalists of 54 countries.

Newark '59 : First Steps Toward the General Principles

Like Rome, Newark was above all a great congress. Impressive organization, with religious, artistic and cultural presentations, and with an outstanding press service. As at Rome, the meeting of the General Council was very short. But more than at Rome, one felt a growing will to set in motion the desired renewal.

Thanks to the challenging spirit that dominated the General Council, the leading delegates were able to pursue the meeting in informal sessions. There, all affirmed their complete confidence in the World Federation and charged the Rome Secretariat to begin without delay the preparation of new Rules. It was the first step toward the General Principles.

Ten resolutions came out of the meeting. The first bore on Vatican Council II, already announced by John XXIII. The next two dealt with the international aposto-

late. Another insisted on the promotion of the Spiritual Exercises made "in their integral form or at least during as long a time as possible".

Bombay '65 : Waiting for the End of Vatican II

This meeting took place from December 3-5, during the International Eucharistic Congress. Each day there was a 4-hour session. This was progress, no doubt, but here too the time was too short. Another advance : the Assembly--made up of 80 delegates from 20 countries--pronounced itself several times and with unanimity for a radical renovation. When can we finally have the General Principles? Everything was ready, but Vatican Council II had not yet finished its work. Some delegates impatiently demanded the immediate promulgation of the new GPs, but the majority rejected this proposal. It was clear that our Principles should be in harmony with the most recent documents of the Church. In particular, we were still waiting for the Decree On the Lay Apostolate and the Constitution The Church in the Modern World. So, the thing to do was to wait!

An effort to change the name of the Sodality of Our Lady was rejected by a small margin. Unanimously approved was the proposal to change the Statutes: in future the General Council would meet at least every three years (in place of every five).

The next assembly would not take place in Latin America, as a great many desired, but at Rome, on the occasion of the Third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate.

Rome '67 : "Almost a New Beginning"

Participating in this fourth meeting of the General Council were 140 delegates from 37 countries, of whom 34 had the right of vote. An unforgettable assembly, a historic event! For the first time in our history, a world "constituency" formulated its own documents. A gathering truly dynamic, with moving testimonies, reflecting a growing unity in diversity, and above all a great charity. Three packed days, full of life and action. After voting on the individual Principles and Statutes, the Council, toward the close of the third day, approved the whole unanimously.

Rome '67 marked the point of departure of a new evolution. It has been called a re-birth, "almost a new beginning": new fundamental Principles, new Statutes, a new juridical structure, a new name, a new mission in its common commitment to "struggle against poverty and injustice". Lastly, neither the General of the Jesuits nor the Prima Primaria retain authority in the World Federation. The Federation itself becomes the bond of unity and the guarantor of the authenticity of the movement.

Santo Domingo '70 : Challenge for the Future

After the enthusiasm of Rome, now we see the trial by fire. A renewed and rejuvenated movement appeared. How live this renewal? The documents of Rome spoke much about community deliberation, our specific method for finding the will of God. This profoundly spiritual method was supposed to characterize the Council of Santo Domingo. Had the implementation of this valid desire been exaggerated? Was the movement ready for it?

Whatever the answer be, it was clear from the start that this Council would not be at all of the usual type. The radical change in the program that had been planned, the withdrawal of several Latin American federations (later, it will become clear that there was question in fact, rather of a number of individuals), the tensions, the groping to find a solution, all that revealed a crisis. "The crisis in the Church"—that was the theme of the Assembly—had become our crisis too.

The shock was salutary. If Rome '67 marked a new evolution, that evolution made itself apparent after the experience of 1970. The new leaders drew the consequences. The "synthesis of reactions" after Santo Domingo insisted on, among others, the following points: the Spiritual Exercises as a common base, the full application of the General Principles, our common mission in the world, the growing discovery of our being a world community.

Augsburg '73 : Our Service : To Liberate All Men

The challenge of Santo Domingo here found an eloquent response : a General Council set within the framework, not

of spectacular presentations, but of the Spiritual Exercises and a Formation Course. Rome-Augsburg '73 represents the implementation of the main aspirations of the preceding Council. This General Council lasted five full days. One day only was given to "business". There was adequate time for prayer and personal reflection. There was plenty of time for deliberation together in small groups. Very special attention was given to our common mission, that of liberation. The Eucharistic celebrations were sober and impressive. A Solidarity Fund had made sure that all countries could participate. One found a strong community awareness in the sharing and in the desire to serve better by moving forward together.

The influence of the Rome-Augsburg experience has been enormous. One saw prolonged and extended on national, regional and continental levels the spirit and the approach of these days. The Rome Secretariat did everything possible to carry out all the orientations and conclusions. This sixth meeting of the Council was without doubt a culminating point : the youthful World Federation was really beginning to function.

Manila '76 : For a Better Service, Poor With Christ

It is hardly surprising that at Manila too one felt the influence of the preceding Council. There was a similarity in the two events.

This does not mean that Manila lacked its own special character. Quite the contrary. Personally, I lived these five weeks as an original and special experience. Why? I think above all of the poverty. I do not remember that people talked about poverty; they lived it. The social insertion experience, a privilege reserved to the participants of Course II, had touched in a small way all the others as well. I think of the spiritual climate of serenity, of calm, of simplicity. As at other times, there were differences, but here they were set forth unpretentiously, prudently. I think of our Asiatic friends, of their serene and smiling presence. I think, of course, of so many young people who, along with the adults, "made" Manila '76. I think of our unity in Christ, so often felt and lived. Who could ever, indeed, forget the Council's close, and that

outpouring of the Spirit as people gave each other the Eucharistic kiss of peace?

And the negative aspects? As always and everywhere, they were not lacking, but regular evaluations were not lacking either. And love was stronger.

* * *

All human history is, in its deepest reality, the history of divine action. "Consider", says Saint Ignatius, "how God works and labors for me in all things..." (Sp. Ex. no. 236).

The history that I have just evoked, so short and so limited, reveals a moment in the history of salvation. It invites us to contemplation, in order to grow in love.

It invites us to the best of all actions, abandonment to the divine action.

Louis PAULUSSEN s.j.