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ON THE ROAD TO EASTER...

You accept our self-denial
as an act of homage to you;
it softens our proud hearts,
and invites us to imitate your love
by sharing with those who are hungry.

(Preface of Lent)

The days are coming
when Jesus our Saviour
underwent his passion
and rose in glory.
Already now then we celebrate
his victory over evil
and the mystery of our liberation.

(Preface of the Passion)

In destroying the fallen world
of our old nature,
he has made a new creation;
and it is through him that now we enjoy
the life that is his in fullness.

(Preface of Easter)

"AGAIN I SAY, LET US BE PRUDENT, BUT LET US HAVE FAITH. FOR I HAVE A SUSPICION THAT THE CLC'S ARE STARTING DOWN ROADS THAT MAY, AFTER A CERTAIN DISTANCE, BECOME RUGGED TRAILS AND AFTER THAT, BROKEN COUNTRY, AND AFTER THAT, MERE WILDERNESS. AND THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO TRUST IN GOD AND CARVE A ROAD ON WHICH TO TRAVEL, AS THE POET SAID AND AS THE SONG REPEATS : 'CAMINANTE, NO HAY CAMINO. SE HACE CAMINO AL ANDAR'." (O traveler, there is no road marked out. You make the road by walking.)

- Last words addressed by Father Horacio de la COSTA to the CLC, August 17, 1976 during the Assembly of Manila '76

We just learned this morning, March 20, 1977, that Father de la COSTA has entered into the peace of the Lord, after a short but painful illness. The CLCs are losing a longtime friend, who has not ceased to be for them a real help and inspiration. They recommend him to the prayers of all their members, knowing too that they can always count on his intercession.

PAUL VI MEETS WITH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

In a special audience that he gave to the 13 Executive Council members of the World CLC Federation, Pope Paul VI addressed to them these warm words of encouragement :

Dear Sons and Daughters,

We are happy to meet the new Executive Council of your Federation, elected at the General Assembly of Baguio, in the Philippines, last summer. On that occasion we transmitted to you our encouragement and some essential guidelines. Keep on aiming at a solid doctrinal, spiritual and apostolic formation. This will make it possible for you to be authentic witnesses of the Lord in a world that does not know him : "The light shines in the darkness", Christmas night repeats to us. In the same way, maintain constantly that intimate relationship with the Lord that he expects from his friends, like Mary who "kept and meditated all these things in her heart". Lastly, love the Church, make her loved, serve her as a mother" : think and feel with the Church, your Statutes say. Tell all the members of the World Federation of Christian Life Communities again of the hope that the Church places in their apostolate. Your zeal will be all the stronger and your radiant influence more certain, the more that they have as a basis that brotherly sharing that your groups encourage. And may the Virgin Mary, whom we contemplate in a special way at this Christmas season, help you to give a welcome to her Son and to present him to the world! With our Apostolic Benediction.

Pope Paul, tired(it was just after his taxing general audience) but warm and friendly, met and exchanged a few words with each of the Council members. He reminded the Council that he too had been a Sodality member. Peggie Telscher presented him with the latest record album of a youth CLC group, "Blessed Weakness", which he enjoyed receiving.

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FATHER ARRUPPE MEETS WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

We publish below, based on a tape, a part of his comments on formation at the meeting. The text retains its oral style. (Editor's Note)

As regards formation and the integration of the spiritual life and apostolic action, I see three experiences that we need to make.

First of all, the experience of God. This experience is absolutely necessary. What is meant is the intimate experience of God in our personal life, the experience of a profound presence of God in us. Even if it is hard for us to express it, still we are no less certain of this presence of God in our lives. This conviction, which comes from faith, often reveals itself to us with a special clarity. Such is the experience of God. Now this experience is necessary if we wish to be apostles. When we talk it must be on the basis of this experience: not starting from a book, simply from the outside or "from the lips". This is the kind of witness which carries weight, for it transmits life in and through the conviction of the person who is speaking about it.

Our aim should be to lead people to the point where they can make this experience. The best means is the retreat, the Exercises. These have as their goal precisely to put the soul in contact with God, to help one live the experience of God by passing some days alone with Him. So the Exercises director or guide is not an intermediary between God and the soul. He is rather a spectator, who follows the spiritual process from the outside, helping the retreatant to make this great experience of living faith. Of course this experience presupposes a purification of the heart, which is an essential preparation for entering on this supernatural path.

The faith is not something acquired permanently and for good. We have the faith, surely. But we can lose it. Around us people are losing it. So we need to be very humble. If we have had this experience of God, we should thank him for it, but we must not rely on it as if it is something we now possess. We must constantly renew it, deepen it by prayer. If not, at the end of some years we can slip into unbelief. The impact of the world today is very strong. Each of us is subject to bombardment from so many things: ideas that are sometimes current about the Church, about Christ, about dogmas, the unleashing of sexual attractions, antagonisms of all kinds. It is a real bombardment. To hold firm, we need a strong faith, a faith constantly being renewed. For we must not forget that we are subject to the consequences of original sin... We have need, then, of a deep experience of God.

The second experience is that of ourselves, of me, of the person that I am. An understanding of the real me with my limitations and my qualities. No doubt everyone knows himself a little. But to come to know oneself in depth implies a certain atmosphere: that of the desert, of solitude, of silence... The Lord can bring us to have this experience in many ways and in many places. But ordinarily the atmosphere should be such that it actually helps us to make this personal encounter, to confront myself with the real ME. This encounter with the real me then places me in the right attitude: one of humility, of openness. So much so that we can say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me".

This point is so important today! Important for us, for youth, for all. It is curious to see the fear people have of confronting themselves. If there is so much noise, so much radio, so much television, so much interest in external things, is it not because people are afraid of being alone? And yet it is precisely in these moments of desert, of solitude that they can hear themselves and God. To be sure, the solitude I am talking about is sometimes difficult. To cut oneself off from the outer world can make us experience sadness and pain. Confrontation with oneself can be a real trial. Sometimes people feel this isolation: the betrayal of a friend, the news of an incurable sickness, the ruin and loss of everything we possess. All is lost and one remains alone. Sometimes in such a situation

comes the temptation to suicide. But such a confrontation with ourselves can also lead us to discover the presence of God in ourselves, of God dwelling in our very depths. You see, this discovery is very closely linked with coming to know oneself.

We should not be afraid, it seems to me, to propose this experience to others, of course after a fitting preparation and in a suitable atmosphere. Once a person has made this deep experience of himself and of the presence of God in him, he is safe. For in truth, we are with God. "It is indeed in Him that we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Finally, the third indispensable experience is that of the world. In other words, insertion into the world. Here we find a new difficulty... It is easy to talk of justice, to involve people in working for justice. But if one has had personal experience in this field, our witness becomes quite different.

I think, for example, of poverty. To talk about poverty as a concept is inevitably much different from experiencing it in our life style: we need to experience it. Living this experience of poverty gives us the sense of the world of the poor today, of the daily life of people who are our brothers and sisters. And this experience of the world and of life, along with experience of God and of ourselves as we just described, leads us to an interior faith and an evangelical attitude that are quite different. There are many ways to make this experience of the world, but it is ordinarily difficult to do it without action.

A true Christian Life Community should always be made up of persons who know themselves, who know God and who, impregnated with this profound spirituality, come to have a knowledge and experience of the world. In other words, made up of persons who are really complete.

These experiences can be made one after the other, but they can also be made at the same time. No dichotomy! In formation efforts, it is important from the beginning to realize that there is need of these three types of experience. Nonetheless, on the pedagogical level, it will

be preferable to make first the experience of ourselves, then that of God, and finally that of action.

* * *

That brings us to the problem of conscientization. It is a matter of knowing something, then experiencing it in practice, then reflecting on it in the light of faith. This process brings us to a new understanding, one that changes our personality interiorly and makes us perceive reality in an ever deeper way. It is not a circular process, but a spiral. Conscientization is a Christian approach to problems. It is important. It constitutes a real advance, a discovery of recent years. It is not enough just to have a certain experience, one must besides reflect on it so as to grasp what one has not up to now understood. And this new understanding brings with it an internal change. Then one, with a new outlook, returns to reality, perceiving it with a view that is always deeper, an understanding that is always advancing. It is precisely the dynamism of the Spirit. Experience, reflection, action and so on... This process, seemingly complicated, is actually easy, for it is life itself.

Discernment consists in developing this process of conscientization of ourselves. Discernment is an apostolic method of renewing a person, a way of renewing our spirit thanks to the demands of the apostolic activity in which we are engaged. To be a good apostolic worker, I must constantly "read" the world, clearly perceive its needs, discern. That implies indifference, detachment, pury of heart. Indifference consists in adopting in ordinary life the attitude of the election that we have during the retreat. There you have the ideal attitude for living in a Christian way. If one wishes to be of help to others, one must have an interior disposition of total detachment for the love of Christ, so as to be capable of serving more and better.

As you see, there is no dichotomy there any more between the spiritual life and the apostolate. To help the Church, to help God, to help people, I need to be renewed myself. It is by this apostolic approach of discernment

and detachment that I spiritually renew myself and that I place myself at the service of others.

Finally, in all of our work with youth and with adults in CLC, we must remember that the world is changing. If you have made the interior experience of the world of which I spoke, you will realize well that you too have changed. Since everything around us is changing today, we have need of a permanent, continuing formation. I must be abreast of the changes taking place in the world: the current ideologies, social upheavals, the economic situation, how people are thinking about society, new interpretations of the Gospel,... Taking account of all these changes, we must adapt ourselves to the changing needs of the world. Our formation is never finished, and we must not forget this when we set ourselves to work. If we don't, at the end of five years we will be finished, outstripped.

We must insist on two points: on interior and personal renewal through apostolic action, and on progressing in our vocation by permanent formation so as to be a better apostolic instrument. A continuing renewal that unites these two elements will allow us to remain youthful apostolically, to "redo" ourselves through the power of the Spirit, to unceasingly adapt the apostolic instruments that we are, harmonizing ourselves with the mentality of our age, with human progress, with the real situation. These two means will make it possible for us to be witnesses to Christ and to accomplish his mission in the world today.

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On February 11, at the close of their annual meeting, the 31 bishops of the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a 21 - point "Declaration of Commitment". A month before it had opened Catholic schools to all races, and the day previous issued a courageous statement on alleged police brutality. Key points of the two statements follow.
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The Bishops' Conference announced that it will :

- T * Show, by appointing black priests to white parishes, the Church's disaccord with the prevalent social and
 - A political system, and "speed up the promotion of black persons to responsible functions and high positions..
 - K so that the multi-cultural nature of the Church in South Africa may be clearly recognized".
 - I * Initiate equal pay for equal work, and have periodic reviews of wages and working conditions in the
 - N dioceses.
 - G * Promote black consciousness, "in solidarity with all those who work for the promotion of human dignity and the legitimate aspirations of oppressed people".
 - A * Share the funds of wealthier parishes with poorer ones, drawing on Catholic churches throughout the country for this purpose.
 - S * Refrain from patronizing businesses or places that discriminate racially.
 - T * Give special attention to the unemployed, migrant workers, worker organizations, squatters, political detainees and other distressed and displaced persons.
 - A
 - N * Work for equality and freedom for all : "The only solution to racial tension is in conceding full citizenship and human rights to all persons in South Africa, not by choice on the false grounds of colour, but on the grounds of the common humanity of all men".
 - D
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In the movement toward a brotherhood beyond all frontiers that is stirring in the entire Church today, we single out the recent statement of the French Bishops, extracts of which appear below. At the close of the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops, the Conference president addressed a telegram to Cardinal Lorscheider, president of CELAM (Latin-American Episcopal Conference) to assure it of their support and their prayers "for all those in Latin America who are persecuted when they defend human rights".

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T The peoples of a number of countries of Latin America
A are undergoing an ordeal. (...) One can no longer ignore
K the fact that the number of victims of these persecutions
I is considerable. Priests and bishops are not spared. Just
N in the month of July 1976, five priests in Argentina and
G two in Brazil were assassinated. The following month Bishop
A Angelelli of La Rioja in Argentina died in what was a strange
S auto accident. In October another Brazilian priest was struck
T down by a police officer before the eyes of his bishop. On August
A 12, 1976, an event without precedent and very symbolic,
N the government of Ecuador arrested seventeen bishops who
D were gathered with other Christians at the house of one of
their number, Bishop Proano of Riobamba, for a pastoral
conference, then released them while insisting that they
leave the country.

If this is so for many Christians, and for priests and bishops, it is because, in the climate of fear that obtains in certain countries, they have resolutely taken the side of the Gospel. Undergoing the same suffering as the people, they take their part in the struggle for respect for the fundamental human rights of every person. They speak up so that those who have been reduced to silence will be heard and defended. (...)

We express our solidarity with such a Church, both in its love for the peoples whose suffering it shares and in its witness to the Gospel at the price of the life of a number of its members. But honesty demands that

T we go further and lay bare the mechanisms of a system
A with its roots in our own countries.

K We in Europe who belong to nations that lay claim to
I being the most advanced in the world, we are among
N those who profit from the developing countries by ex-
G ploiting them. We do not see the suffering that re-
A sults from this for entire peoples, in body and spir-
S it. We contribute to reinforcing the division of the
T world today, with its striking domination of the poor
A by the rich, of the weak by the powerful. Are we aware
N that our squandering of resources and of raw materials
D would not be possible without the control of commerce
and exchange by the western countries? Do we see who
profits from the arms trade, in which our country, sad-
ly, so distinguishes itself? Do we grasp the fact that
the turning to military governments in the poor coun-
tries is one of the consequences of the economic and
cultural domination exercised by the industrialized
countries, whose life is ruled by the concern for prof-
it and the power of money?

It is urgent that we, French and Europeans, look be-
yond our frontiers in order to understand better our
own problems and then to face up better to the require-
ments of justice and of human brotherhood on the world
level. (...)

It is to this struggle for justice and dignity that
more and more Christians, in the midst of their broth-
ers, are committing themselves. Their witness is for
the Church a pride and a hope. As one of them said so
well, "death in all its forms, the persecution of
those who make their option in favor of the little
ones, is always, through the paschal power that jolts
and stirs the history of man, the seed of new resurrec-
tions".

For us, their witness is also a challenge. Are we wor-
thy of these Christians who struggle with the people
with the sole aim of proclaiming the Good News of Sal-
vation and liberation of the oppressed?

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO



One of the items decided on at the last W.F. Executive Council meeting was the mandate of our Youth Commission. Here it is :

Youth Commission Mandate

To implement CLC identity at the youth level, the Youth Commission will :

- clarify and publish a pedagogy for youth CLC
- work on the question of transition from youth CLC to adult CLC
- elaborate the General Principles for youth
- repeat Formation Course III for guides and foster youth formation courses, using flying team
- prepare pages for youth-Progressio
- establish communication link between youth CLCs at all levels.

Your continental representatives will contact you about ways in which you can collaborate (see January '77 issue for the names of the representatives). Of course, feel free to write to them first, if you wish!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

As you know, Gian Carlo Murkovic is our new Youth Commission chairman, representing us on the World Executive Council. We thought you would want to get to know him better. So he agreed to tell us a bit about himself :

"Praise the Lord!..."

I'm just 23 years old. I live with my family, in Italy, at Trieste. I was born in Argentina, of Croatian parents. At Buenos Aires I lived nine quiet and serene years. Of that city I remember especially how the bustle and noise disturbed me. Later on, in Italy, I found myself a little uprooted. Climate, culture, surroundings : everything was different! Today, I can say I'm quite happy to be in Europe. I have four brothers and two sisters

(I'm right in the middle). In the family we're all quite close to each other, thank God. Each of us has his or her own interests and lots of things to do but during the day--usually very full for everyone--there is never lacking a moment to be together.

• Right now I am working with my father in a small commercial enterprise. We are not aiming at becoming rich, we're satisfied to make enough to live on. No need to say that, for a tradesman, that's already a step backward!

When I was 16, I came in contact with an institutional situation that left a strong impression on me. I had begun to spend time--as a volunteer--at schools that took care of neglected children. I saw children living without families and undergoing continually the harshness of a lack of love and this prodded me--along with some friends--to devote much of my free time to them. That went on for about six years. Meanwhile I was discovering the Sodality of Our Lady. How? By accompanying my parents--who had been members for some time--to Mass there on Saturdays. To tell the truth, I went... to keep them happy! I got to know the national dimension of the movement (which in the meantime had become CLC) during a convention. That experience made me so enthusiastic that I decided to get together all the youths who were going with their parents to the meetings, since I wasn't the only one in that situation. From that first meeting of the youth group till today (a little less than three years have passed), my involvement in the movement has been gradually growing: permanent commitment, member of the CLC Council of Trieste, then of the National Executive Council, and now on the World one, as youth chairman. It's an advantage for my activity in the movement that I work with my father. I work out my activity and travel in agreement with him and he often helps me with useful suggestions.

Father Paulussen has written that CLC is "a way to serve in the Church". I have chosen this way and made it mine. All the same, the danger of living inconsistently with this way is strong. Manila '76 remains for me a kind of warning signal, and one that has been precious for me. Above all is this true of the eight days of the individually-guided Spiritual Exercises, made and then lived out again (in their basic steps) with a small group of friends from all over the world. What is asked today of us commit-

ted Christians? Not words but deeds. Not "grand ventures" but concrete witness. Not just gestures but simplicity of life, which is also "the best expression of our poverty", as Father Arrupe wrote us at Baguio. It's sure that the events of the last years have left their mark on the different stages of my journey.

As to my new task, I am happy that the Lord has called me--along with the other members of the new commission--to serve Him : me just as I am with many limitations and defects. I am glad too to be of service to those who make up our wider community, that at the international level. If the Lord wills it, we will travel together a road, more or less long, and whose route we do not know. But there is one thing we know for sure, just one : the view at the road's end will open up surely and totally toward Him! I don't feel drawn to make forecasts and much less grand programs. We need to try to share together--in spite of the distance between us--the problems that touch closely us youth. Let's join hands with this hope, knowing that Christ is our strength and his love the visible sign of our unity."

Gian Carlo Murkovic

...SINCE MANILA, WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE?

Italy : October 31-November 3, at Colvalenza (near Assisi) - a youth assembly was held, in which 250 participated. Its theme was the Beatitudes. Questions such as Christian life style, the school, and the political situation, were treated in an atmosphere of discussion and prayer. Decisions were made about future formation courses for youth in Italy.

Malta : A 4-day live-in seminar took place last November, in which most of the participants were youth. The theme was liberation : the first day, a study of what liberation entails; the second, dedicated to the Spiritual Exercises; and another, to the social apostolate. As one participant related, "Some proposal was made for a team of youths to go and help Mother Teresa's congregation at work among the poor in Sicily. I hope that even before doing this we may have some of our members making the 8 day Spiritual Exercises." The last day of the seminar was spent in reflection and in making decisions on a plan for the future of CLC in Malta.

Belgium : November 12-14, in Brussels - 650 participated in a youth rally, organized by Father Jacques van de Gucht sj and youth leaders for the Walloon region. Its theme was "Renewal in the Holy Spirit". Several were invited from other countries, such as Pio Caso and Gian Carlo Murkovic from Italy, Christian Kuhn from Austria, and others from France and Luxemburg. Information was given about the Youth Commissions on the international and European levels. Simplicity was a trademark of this assembly : sleeping bags, simple meals, simple style of meeting, sharing in small groups. It was an experience of prayer, singing and joy, masses in the 'charismatic' style.

An Eastern European Country : Mid - December - Gian Carlo visited a CLC group of 25 seminarians. The members were very interested in CLC around the world and asked many questions. This group's meeting generally has one topic, on which the members do research/discussion in small groups, coming together to evaluate in prayer at the end. Their apostolate is to spend time with poor families in their area, visiting, helping in various ways. The GPs have just been translated into this country's language.

Germany : January 5-7, Freising (near Munich) - the annual meeting for youth guides and delegates. 150 participants explored the theme "Seeking the Essential", particularly with regard to the school, Church, and the Third World, in a serious manner. Among those present were Mathil de Krumbachner, Karl-Ludwig Hundemer, Father Arnold Brychey sj and Gian Carlo.

SPECIAL BLESSING. On December 29, '76, the Executive Council had a private audience with Pope Paul. Gian Carlo and Peggie assured him of the support of all youth CLC members. He was very moved, and gave a special blessing for our entire world youth movement.

ON YOUTH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES - By Pedro Arrupe SJ

Father Arrupe, the Jesuit General, met for over an hour with the Executive Council at their recent Rome meeting. Some of his remarks concerned youth CLC :

Youth is vital. It is very important.

This because, first, it is a way of initiating the movement for adults. It is a way to gradually develop and form adults who will be exercising responsibilities in important positions. This will add a certain value to the movement, because you then have in it persons already active in society, who have been solidly formed and developed. They can give a kind of weight to the whole movement, and this is something required from the very beginning of CIO.

But youth is necessary too. First of all because the future belongs to youth. And then because they have the dynamism and the idealism. And therefore it is very important that little by little you develop this movement among youth...

I think that one can notice a certain change in youth recently that makes them more open to CIO. The strong political activism that was so popular and that reflected the best ideals of youth, this is changing. They are recognizing that they need to have effective social movements that move more along evangelical, pastoral lines. So I think they are looking for a real convergence of social action and evangelical inspiration, and that movements proposing this can have a great influence at this time on youth, and that the dynamism of such a movement can attract them.

On the one hand, one finds in CIO now a more "down-to-earth" approach: CIOs are really taking account of the actual human situation, including the social situation. Therefore the CIO way of living is not something just devotional or merely abstract or only "spiritual". What I mean is that it is not a disincarnated spiritualism, but rather making its spirituality be of help to the men of today.

On the other hand, one finds the more activist elements, the politically activist people, and many young people among them, moving toward a more spiritual outlook. The more horizontal, natural activism is moving toward the supernatural. CIO can help them make a convergence, make the step to move toward the practical, the pastoral, the evangelical, so as to further the evangelization of the world in the concrete circumstances in which it exists.

So I think this is a moment in which we have to be very clear about these two converging developments and to in-

tegrate them : to give to formation in CLC, in a deep way, both the vertical and the horizontal aspects that are part of it.

We must show youth, who are so idealistic and want to change the structures of the world, that the first, absolutely essential need to do it is that of personal conversion. That one must change the hearts of men in order to change the structures.

And we, as the Christian Life Communities, have, and can offer here a tremendous strength through our spirituality and our living. We can offer something that each of them can afterwards use, personally and freely, in any political movement they choose. That is the strength of the Christian Life Communities : that they can form persons and help them develop a real personal strength which they can then use afterwards on their own. We are not building in CLC a political movement, we are building a Christian Life Community, something evangelical, something that is the Gospel, something for everybody. And then, afterwards, every one has to make his choices according to his own ideas and in line with political, economic, human needs.

That is very important : that we not only be Christians, but that our simplicity and our way of living show that we are really evangelical, that we are committed to the Gospel, that our commitment is not to any part, not to any ideology, but to the Gospel of Christ. We have to show this, and at the same time to make sure that we are helping Christ, Christ who is incarnate in people. The actual Mystical Body of Christ is around us with all its problems. And so through Christ we have to try to solve the actual needs of human bodies and hearts.

RETREAT EXPERIENCE AT CEBU CITY

Dear Friends,

Last October 20-26, our CLC (made up of university and high school students) had a special retreat experience. Let me start from the beginning.

On the morning of the 20th, happy and expectant faces of many young people were soon seen in the Holy Family Retreat House. And Father Dacanay sj and Father Heras sj (our group guide) were with us.

Like any other group, we didn't know what we were supposed to do, but Fr. Dacanay certainly did--and he showed in not so many words that silence was important. Some of us were worried, because we didn't think we could keep silent for long, especially during meals, when silence was more pronounced. Sometimes we found ourselves talking in whispers! It was only later in the retreat that we got along better with silence, and learned how important silence was for our meditation.

Another feature in the retreat was prayer based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Having the Bible as a guide in our prayer was not totally new to us; but it certainly was more emphasized this time. Our concern was trying to become aware of Christ's presence in us--and because we tried to feel it, sometimes we doubted whether He really was present or not. This problem could be accounted for by the fact that we are not used to meditating and reflecting. Another hindrance at that time was the noise of other people in using the retreat house. We received a rewarding response, however, during our group sharing, in that it made us more open to one another--although we usually found ourselves trying to formulate the right words to express what we experienced.

Another thing made popular in the retreat by Fr. Dacanay was Vatican Council II. Before each meditation, he read to us a paragraph which was usually taken from the Vatican II documents. It seemed that if there were any doubts or questions, one could easily find answers to them in these documents. They seemed so understandable to us while listening to them--but when we went for our meditation, we realized that we had not fully understood them after all!

Gradually our eyes were opened to the truth: that we must relate ourselves to Christ, to others, and to society. That is, intrapersonally, interpersonally, and societally. We were delighted with the many examples Fr. Dacanay shared with us, especially when they came out of his own experiences. It made us aware of our responsibility to our country and its needs.

To sum it all up, we started thinking that there was more to CIC life than meets the eye. We have not, really been committed as a CICer ought to be.

On the way home, all of us had sad faces and feelings because the six days were over. But on the other hand, we were eager to go back and start to make improvements and be more committed. That day, we went back to the bustle of city life armed with new vigor and energy to make our CLC more alive in the spirit!

It has been wonderful sharing with you and recalling for you our experience. We only hope we have not tired you nor bored you in any way!

Your friend in Christ,

Belen Chua
CLC, Sacred Heart Church
Cebu City, Philippines

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THE "ELECTION" ACCORDING TO THE EXERCISES

by Claude VIARD S.J.

Part I - Making the Election

We have already, in this series, dealt with the exercise on the Three Classes of Men and the consideration on the Three Kinds of Humility. These prepare the retreatant who is making the Exercises to "take up the election", that is, to make the final step toward "seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of his life" (Spir. Exercises, 1). Stirred by the question, "what ought I to do for Christ?", the retreatant has come to a state of indifference and entered into the paschal process of Christ: he awaits the response that is maturing within him. Now arrives the moment for formulating that response. And this takes place by means of a decision, a choice. That is what is meant by "making the election".

In this, the first of several articles that focus on the election according to the Exercises, we will explain the election itself. In the articles that follow we will turn to the methods of making the election that St. Ignatius proposes.

To Choose Is to Eliminate

In today's terminology, the term "election" refers to the choice one makes, by vote, between different candidates, in order to designate the one to whom a specific responsibility in an organization will be entrusted. The one who votes decides to choose one among several. And he who obtains the most votes is elected, while the others are eliminated. In this sense, to elect--in line with the word's Latin etymology--is to choose among several possible persons. The use of the word "election" in the sense that the Exercises give it is not now very current. But we can continue to use it thus, recognizing that it here refers to the choice or decision that a retreatant makes

with regard to his basic orientation or to some important point of his existence, and which he will then try to live out in the light of his Christian faith. But we must keep for this word "election" in the Exercises all the force it has by etymology and that it preserves in its usage today. To elect is to choose one candidate and to eliminate the others; to make an election in the Exercises is to choose one solution and eliminate the other. All of a sudden we see the solid basis and force of the expression, "to make an election". It does mean committing ourselves to what will follow from a choice, a decision that, in a certain sense, concludes what has been a debate. For to choose is to decide, and to decide by eliminating.

Between Alternatives

Looked at in this way, "to make an election" is to resolve something in favor of one alternative, by choosing among several possible ones. In the simplest case, it will be a choice between a "yes" and a "no" : "should I do this or not?". At all events, there is an alternative, and it is important to pose the question in terms of alternatives: one gives greater weight to the questions, one gauges better what is at stake, one guards better against ambiguities.

The alternatives at stake in the election relate, of course, to the outlook and the dynamic of choice that runs through the Exercises. On the one hand, there is the radical option expressed in its full force in the symbolism of the Two Standards : the choice between two opposing paths that correspond to two opposing intentions: "the intention of Christ our Lord, and on the other hand, that of the enemy of our human nature" (Sp. Ex., 135). But there is also, within this radical option--and this latter choice is very important too--the choice in favor of a better service expressed by the word "the more" (magis), that runs like a leitmotif all through the Exercises. This choice so marked in the approach of the Exercises, and which therefore transmits all its force to the election in its aspect of being an alternative, is affirmed already in the Principle and Foundation : what is involved is that "our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created" (Sp. Ex., 23). It is recalled in the contemplation on the Kingdom: "those who wish to give greater proof of their love..." (Sp. Ex., 97). And it is the

grace to be asked for in the meditation on the Three Classes of Men : "ask for the grace to choose what is more for the glory of his Divine Majesty..." (Sp. Ex., 152).

To speak thus of alternatives in reference to the election comes down to assigning them their full force, and to make the alternative chosen appear for what it is : not one choice among many, not a useful way to arrive at a decision, but in fact the decisive choice of the best means to be taken in order to respond more to the call of God by committing all one's strength to this choice, however modest it may be in itself. It means finding how best to correspond to the gift of God, how best to unite oneself with the mission of Christ that is continued in his Church. There is the strength of the choice between alternatives that marks the election: it reminds us that there is among the alternatives one that can incarnate "the more".

Finally, it is because there are alternatives that spiritual discernment comes into the picture. To put it briefly, there is something to be chosen, and so something to be seen clearly, to be elucidated, so as to guard oneself from illusions--even generous ones--as well as to remove the resistance there is to going forward. In a word, to feel to which side one is drawn by the grace of God.... --but we will come back to this more at length in the article that follows.

Need for a Reversal

To be in the line of "the more", the election must be the result of an interior reversal of outlook : "to regulate one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment", writes St. Ignatius in his title describing the Spiritual Exercises (21). Left to himself, man is slave to his own interests, to a blind egoism, to his immediate needs. A reversal of direction is proposed in the Exercises, one that fosters the "opening up" of one who is closed in on himself "by his self-love, self-will and his own interests" (Sp. Ex., 189). A pathway to freedom is thus opened, when man makes the experience of receiving from God the truth about his life in place of remaining the prisoner of his own limited horizons.

This reversal is verified in the passage one makes in and through "indifference". The outcome of that indiffer-

ence is an attachment to Christ. And this becomes the basis of a provisional detachment as regards both alternatives; (1) By this reversal, the election is in truth a self-discovery, and this in an attitude with regard to self which is equally an affirmative response to God. Let us reread the description of the Exercises given in the 1st Annotation: "By the term 'Spiritual Exercises' is meant... every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul"(Sp.Ex. 1). Let us underline the expression, "disposition of our life": what is involved is to make of our life a response to the call of God in whom we are established. In other words, to live out our life as a vocation in line with the dynamic of baptism, which has made us members of the Body of Christ and so one with its destiny. This is the goal of which Ignatius speaks when he presents the election in terms of end and means; "not subjecting and fitting the end to the means, but the means to the end"(Sp. Ex., 169).

The Ignatian election appears then as a way to enter, by means of the choices to which life calls us, into the dynamic of the mission of Christ, of the building of the Kingdom. A man can make the experience of inserting his own history into the total work of Christ when he accepts letting his actions and his projects be measured on the basis of this totality that goes beyond him. And this in fact draws on his deepest strength according to the most profound meaning of his destiny. Seen thus, he can discover how to achieve that to which he is deeply attracted by the very dynamism of his being. For him, then, to do the will of God is nothing else than, in the truest sense, to find himself.

Different Areas But the Same Depth

In the Exercises, the election can bear on different areas or sectors, and so be more or less inclusive. For example, for one who feels himself called to make a very conscious choice between religious life and marriage, it can involve a radical option that commits him to a state of life. Again, it can focus on a decision to change com-

(1) See "The Three Classes of Men", in PROGRESSIO, July 1976, pp. 5-6

pletely one's way of life or to resituate oneself socially. But the election can also be, in its forms and its consequences, a less radical decision; it can be a rather modest decision on a particular point, or again a decision regarding a commitment that may even be temporary. But whatever its form or however extensive or restricted the area that it covers, every true election profoundly involves the free adhesion of man to the love of God. It is this level of depth rather than its "coverage" that makes it an "election": it is a choice by which a man says "yes" to God; it is a spiritual decision that leads him who makes it to allow himself to be led a little more closely in the footsteps of Christ; it is, in the spirit in which it is taken, a decision and an enterprise, a conversion, a growth in freedom. And it is because the election is a commitment in depth of one's being that St. Ignatius, in the Exercises themselves, clearly distinguishes it from a simple "reform of life" (see Sp. Ex., 189).

In Daily Life

Finally, one can suppose an application of the Ignatian election outside the Exercises properly so called. In effect, one can extract from the approach underlying the election a pedagogy of decision, applicable throughout all of life. Related to such a pedagogy is, for example, the concern to situate any questions to be resolved in a more global perspective, that of the service of God and men in Christ; the habit of posing questions to be decided in terms of alternatives so as to approach them more lucidly; the courage to take the detachment needed to assure that one is indifferent before deciding. As regards the means to be taken to carry out what one has decided, we will speak further about this later on.

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ACCOUNT OF THE EVOLUTION OF A SODALITY

A page in the Life of an Important Professional Milieu
of Luxemburg

by Lucie REYTER

On December 27, 1916, the Sodality of Our Lady of Luxemburg Teachers was founded by Father Dominic Hentges, S. J. It was a modest beginning, a small group of instructors, but a viable community and one capable of making progress. Under the title of "Seat of Wisdom" it was aggregated to the Prima Primaria of Rome. Monthly and regional meetings and recollections and retreats were organized to deepen and stimulate the ideal of the Christian teacher. The general assemblies, sections or "academies", missionary days and jubilees were highlights of the life of the group. Their links were strengthened and these fortified their joy in God.

To broaden the objectives of the congregation, the MLK--its abbreviated name--was divided into different sections: the Eucharistic section, aimed at providing an anchor for the interior life; the mission section, helping the Luxemburg missionaries; the Caritas section, busying itself with the needy of the country; the song section, whose work included theatrical presentations, big assemblies and pilgrimages; the pedagogical section (much appreciated by the younger members), dealing with problems of education and of teaching through study circles. Out of all these sections, two still remain: the section Caritas and that of "Project Sharing" for assistance to the Third World.

Since the MLK brought together members from all over the country, it needed a review, as a bond uniting and informing all and throwing light on their vocation. This review is still published today under the title, Educators. The number of members grew continually. But the group had difficult moments too in its inner life. World War II proved well-nigh fatal: the review was suspended, meetings were forbidden, the treasury confiscated, the chronicle and all the books and records of the MLK destroyed so as not to fall into the hands of the occupying power. But if all external activity was banned, love and trust grew stronger.

After the country's liberation, the MLK was slowly re born. The Director of Women's Catholic Action, Monsignor Pierre Posing, finally succeeded in bringing together again the former Sodalists. Nothing essential was changed. Structurally, the Sodality made up a section of Women's Catholic Action so as to avoid splitting the membership. In this way, it was felt, the country's needs were being taken account of. The post-war leaders, competent and dedicated, took up the torch lighted by the founders and succeeded in creating a vital and well-structured Sodality. Their triple objective was a solid spiritual formation, a vigorous apostolic influence--using as means both an excellent professional competence and an apostolate of service, especially in the social sector--and all this in an ecclesial and Marian climate.

Then, in 1967, came the promulgation of the new General Principles. The community element seemed somewhat new, even though the Sodality had always fostered mutual union. In accord with the desire of the bishop, the MLK kept its name. But that did not dispense the members from imbibing the new spirit that animated the General Principles.

The first steps toward renewal were the participation of members in CLC gatherings at Chantilly, Manresa and Brussels. Finally, in 1973, after lengthy hesitation and mature reflection, the committee voted to take the new name of "Christian Life Community of Luxemburg Teachers".

The real opening to the current movement took place after the General Council of Augsburg '73, which was a new Pentecost for all the participants. The result was that three members spontaneously signed up for the regional formation course (German) at Brixen. This course was a great grace for all who took part. They were glad to have been able to make the unique experience of the individually-guided Exercises, to have lived this intimacy with God that led them along the path of conversion and personal liberation. And the week of formation that followed introduced them little by little into the CLC way of life.

As we were still quite at the beginning, and transmitting such an experience was not easy, we organized a 3-day formation session in our country with the help of two German leaders, Maria and Paula Pollety of Friburg and Altötting. Following that, about 20 members of our CLC have been

meeting regularly in three small groups and trying to live the content of the General Principles, the essential elements of our way of life. The periodicals and publications of neighboring countries, like Werkheft of the German Federation and Introduction to Formation of the French CLC, have helped us much on the road to life in community. The Spiritual Exercises made together have helped too. We appreciate very much too the document of the World Federation, Survey of the Formation Process in CLC.

Margot Reuland, member of one of the small groups, tells us her own experience living in this renewed CLC:

Since 1956, I have been a member of the Sodality of Teachers. By my consecration to Our Lady, I committed myself to follow Christ and to cooperate in building his Kingdom. Over the years, I received a solid spiritual formation, a profound sense of the meaning of life and a deepening of my faith. To devote myself with greater wholeheartedness and effectiveness to the service of God and men in the world of today, I entered a CLC group in the fall of 1974. At the start I was hesitant to open up to the members of the small group. Little by little I noticed that I was accepted as I am. Soon I experienced a feeling of joy in coming to meetings and in forming part of an authentic community. Gradually I came to have a taste for meditating on Scripture.

The Christian Life Community is for me a place of "fraternal communion". This Christian life is vital; it liberates me from egocentrism. It is in the group that I learn really to listen to my neighbor. There I put myself aside, I wait expectantly for the next word I will receive from someone, perhaps a word addressed to me by God. In this way I come to understand better my colleagues who are making the journey with me, and to recognize that the bonds that unite us are forged in the charity of Christ.

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BOLIVIA - Our Christian Life Community is based at the College of the Sacred Heart, in Sucre, a beautiful city of 60,000 inhabitants. It is called the "white city" for its open colonial style, and is very much a student town. This marks strongly our Community, made up for the most part of students, both from the university and teachers' college and from secondary school.

Though we are located at a particular school, most of our members come from the "colegios fiscales", or, as we were saying, from the teacher-training, university or workers' milieu. And this makes our Community a very friendly one, for it is open to a great variety of experiences. We have been in existence for just 12 years, and the climate of our group is one of unity, brotherhood and joy.

Our main activity is in each one's environment, be that school, factory or office. Our aim is to live as CHRISTIANS to the highest degree we can. We try to Christianize those around us by our example and the challenge our life offers. We hope we are succeeding...!

Another commitment we have taken on our shoulders is the series of visits we are making to the peasant

farmers round us, who are of Quechua Indian background. Our Sundays we reserve for them. Each Sunday we go out with our assistant, Father Jose Cabanach S.J. to a different village. We have mass there, and while Father hears the confessions of the country people, we find out about their way of living, the main health problems of the area, their food habits, etc... All that helps us carry out a socio - human study of the whole region visited. It is a real meeting between diverse cultures, those of the city and of the rural areas. We recognize clearly that we have learned much from these visits.

For this past Christmas we arranged a campaign with the suggestive name of OPERATION SMILE, in collaboration with Radio Loyola of our city. It meant begging like the poor from door to door and afterwards turning over all that had been gathered to homes for the aged, hospitals, etc., which have need of this extra help. Although it wasn't easy, since not everyone welcomed us, we took up the project with much enthusiasm. And now we can smile with satisfaction, for we have seen the campaign crowned with success. This is now the third such campaign that we were responsible for.

Our group includes both young men and women, and most of the members are of university age. As of now there are about 30 of us who take part regularly in the meetings, which take place every Saturday starting at 7 in the evening.

In the meetings we read and comment on the Word of God, that of Sunday's liturgy. Then we exchange about a key theme, often in small groups. Various other activities conclude the first section of the meeting: projects, work to be done, relaxation, etc. The second part is made up by the Eucharist, which we try to live as intensely as possible, in a style well adapted to youth. This is what really gives us strength for our activities, and most unites us to the group. When some of us have had to travel and be away from our CLC meetings for a time, we miss these Eucharists. Many have said this on various occasions.

Besides this, our Community is divided into groups for reflection and for our evaluations (revisions of life). We try in this way to deepen our friendship with God and among ourselves. Our aim is thus to live more fully our CLC way.

We would like to close by saying that we receive with deep joy and with a

sense of world brotherhood the issues of the review, PROGRESSIO. It makes us feel that we are not alone in our efforts to live CLC. We are aware too that there are Christian Life Communities in other cities of Bolivia following a similar approach to ours. And all of this common search of ours for the Lord stirs and encourages our efforts.

MADAGASCAR - October 27-31, all the leaders of youth movements in Madagascar met, focusing on the theme, "Role of the Young Catholic in the New Social Order"... Then, December 8-12, we had our national retreat in which 70 young people of E.C.A. (the name of our youth movement here) came as delegates of their groups. So we had 3 days of closed retreat given by Father Julien Rakotoson, who has just been named national assistant for E.C.A. The retreat covered 3 steps of our formation, which, as you know, follows the essential lines of the Exercises. The 2 other days were given to a formation session on the insertion of our groups in the life of our country, and the commitment and role they should take in this. The essential points and decisions of Manila'76, insisting above all on the concern to share the life of the poor (called among

us "madinika", the little ones). The second day was given to listening techniques, and Course I that I had made helped me much to contribute to making this a lively session. In any case, these 5 days passed at Fianarantsoa were for our movement a renewal that fired with enthusiasm all who took part.

ARGENTINA - Unfortunately, the course we had so enthusiastically been preparing for January 1977, it was impossible to have, for health reasons. We will devote this year to facilitating the individually-guided Exercises, and already have some who wish to do this. We will work too at intensifying the formation of new communities, which, thank God, are springing up like a blessing. All of '77 we will focus on those two things. Then later we will have Course No. I, which we hope will give real strength to CLC in Argentina.

REP. OF CHINA - It's been a busy semester here in Taiwan since Manila '76. The delegates went to visit our CLC groups in different places, sharing with them the experiences and joys they brought back from the General Assembly and the Formation Courses. We also had a seminar for all CLC assistants and used the SURVEY as the frame-

work for discussions. Many young people here are sincerely searching for the liberating truth and the genuine way of living. In general, our CLCs are at the stages of initiation and taking roots (we found the guidelines of the 4 stages to be very, very helpful)... As for activities, we had the guided retreat for adult CLCs December 31-January 3, and 55 made it with 9 Jesuit directors. January 27-February 2 was the live-in winter camp for college and University CLC groups, and February 3-5 a 3-day seminar for all CLC college chairpersons. February 6-14 was an 8-day individually-directed retreat for "advanced" CLC members. And the Chinese New Year fell on February 18.

ITALY - Seeking "fewer words, more action", and inspired by Father Arrupe's statement at the last international Eucharistic Congress that "we cannot properly receive the Bread of Life unless at the same time we give bread for life to those in need" (see PROGRESSIO, January '77, page 10), the Italian CLC Federation is inviting its communities to do just that, in a letter that concludes with these words, "Concretely for us this means that each time we meet in our communities to celebrate the Eucharist, we prepare our-

selves for this moment by a sincere spirit of full sharing with our less fortunate brothers. This involves taking up, on the occasion of the Eucharistic celebration, a 'collection of some importance'. The money thus gathered will be put together at the National Center to be used for some small project someplace in the Third World."

CHILE - Recent Activities:

1) "Mini-Manila". A Formation Course for Adults (8 days Exercises, 8 days seminar), January 14 - 29. Making it were 25 adults (from Arica, Antofagasta, Valparaiso, Santiago and Puer to Montt), 6 of them from Argentina, and 15 university students from Santiago. Practically all were either group guides or professors. The guiding team was made up of the delegates to Manila plus 2 Jesuits.

2) 3rd Formation Camp for Pre-Communities, at Atacolco, Chillan. Taking part were 6 pre-communities and the guides who work with them.

3) Missions. Some 30 or more youth communities went "on mission" to the peasant farmers ("campesinos"). One place, for example, was a parish that covers almost 400 square miles.

INDIA - Let me share with you some news of CLC in India and request your support in prayer. The Executive community themselves will make the 8-day Spiritual Exercises in October '77, at Baga, Goa. All through the year, and all over India, formation programmes on the Manila pattern have been planned of longer or shorter duration with a stress on the social dimension. This will include in May '77 a National CLC Institute of 3 weeks at Bombay for CLC leaders of different Federations. Flying teams visit it and bring formation courses to several Federations in India in order to put new life into the groups. Members of these teams are also visiting Spain, Sri Lanka, etc. This year Five commissions - CLC for Better service, Formation, Youth, Communications (including Publications) and Finance Commissions have been formed for better administration.