

PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

JANUARY 1978
47th Year
N. 1

S U M M A R Y

- THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION
"IUSTITIA ET PAX" AT YOUR SERVICE
by Roger HECKEL S.J. 3
- THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOURTH
WEEK by J.GONZALEZ-TARRIO S.J... 7
- THE GIFT OF THE POOR WOMAN 12

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

- YOUTH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY
IN IRELAND by Bernie Mc DONNEL 14
- YOUTH CLC FORMATION CAMP IN THE
PHILIPPINES by Arlene LEBRILLA 16
- VOLUNTEER WORK EXPERIENCE AT
"COTTOLONGO" 18
- FROM INDIA by Tony D'SILVA 20
- INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS
by Betty LEONE 21
- WITH CHRIST POOR AT THE SERVICE
OF MAN by J.Claude SAILLY 28

TO THE READERS OF PROGRESSIO spread all over 79 countries of the world : this first issue of the year would like to bring to all of you the assurance of fraternal friendship and of deep link that unites us.

What unites us is essential: the same love of Jesus Christ and the same humble will to follow Him in His Church, learning from Him to be witnesses of love there where we live.

What differentiates us is unique : a diversity of races, languages, cultures, which gives to our friendship the dimension of the world and opens our horizon to the whole humanity.

What we share is the same concern to work always with a more "for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all men" (G.P.2).

AND NOW, MAY 1978 BE FOR EACH ONE OF US A YEAR OF GRACE, OF PEACE, AND OF OPENNESS TO THE SPIRIT, REMEMBERING AND MAKING OURS THE RECOMMENDATION OF ST. PAUL:

"BE AWAKE TO ALL THE DANGERS : STAY FIRM IN THE FAITH; BE BRAVE AND BE STRONG. LET EVERYTHING YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE." (I Cor. 16: 13-14).

THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION "IUSTITIA ET PAX"
AT YOUR SERVICE

The Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax" (CPJP) was called for by the Second Vatican Council within the framework of the Pastoral Commission "Gaudium et Spes": "The Council regards it as most opportune that some agency of the universal Church be set up... to stimulate the Catholic community to foster progress in needy regions, and social justice on the international scene" (G.S. no.90, par.4 English edition). Created by Paul VI in 1967, this office has now received the status of a permanent department in the Roman Curia after an experimental period of ten years.

As often happens in the Church, we are dealing, then, with ideas that first developed in individual churches and contributed to the thinking that led to the Constitution "Gaudium et Spes"; through the establishment in Rome of an official organism of the universal Church these ideas are given approval and new encouragement. Of itself, then, and from its origin and by its nature, the CPJP is not a social "super-center" or a central body trying to draw to itself what grows naturally in local churches: it is a service offered to all which, while respecting particular missions, aims to help all towards the active pursuit in their work of this apostolic dimension: the service of justice and peace in human societies.

In this insistence on international peace and jus

tice, the Council wishes, as appears also in the statutes of the Pontifical Commission, to take note of the fact that "the social problem has become a world problem", to use the expression in "Populorum Progressio". But, it is particularly in the area of the social teaching of the magisterium, that the CPJP is called on to study and expound in dialogue with all and particularly with those more directly working for the same end.

===

===

From its position close to the Holy Father, the main concern of the CPJP is the service it provides for particular churches. It values direct contacts with episcopal conferences and tries to have relations with all socially-oriented organizations working for various hierarchies. Among these organizations a privileged, though by no means exclusive, position is occupied by the national Commissions on Justice and Peace which have grown up in different countries and to which we are bound by common experiences and special historical responsibilities.

We depend on different publications to give meaning to this dialogue. Two brochures of different types, published this year, show the direction of our efforts: the main purpose of one was the gathering of documents of the magisterium about a current problem ("The Church and Disarmament"); the other was more concerned with theory, on the occasion of the great international debate which is presently being conducted in the Meeting on the Law of the Sea ("The Universal Purpose of Created Things"). (1)

Direct contacts with our office (Palazzo San Calisto) are very valuable for us. Within the means at our disposal, we are ready to help especially International Catholic Organizations in preparing programmes or meetings of a more directly social nature. In this way recently we were able to give active help in the preparation of the forthcoming congress of the International Office of Catholic Education (O.I.E.C.) which has as its theme: "Education

(1) These brochures are available in different languages from our Secretariat, Piazza San Calisto 16 - 00153 ROME.

The Church and Disarmament (German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese) : U.S.Dollars 1.15 each.

The Universal Purpose of Created Things (English, Spanish, French) : U.S.Dollars 0.15 each.

Price reduction for orders in quantity.

for peace, justice and new international relations". We also try to consult regularly with International Catholic Organizations when arranging our research programmes and, in time, pass on to them news of our projects to ensure their co-operation.

===
===

One important part of our work is being directly at the service of the Papal Secretariate (the Secretariate of State) and of the various departments of the Roman Curia. In this way we have continuing contact with the Council for the Laity, with "Cor Unum", with the Congregation for Catholic Education, with the Secretariat for Unity. The ecumenical dimension has developed very much since the foundation of the Commission: we meet regularly with groups similar to our own at the Ecumenical Council of Geneva and since 1967 a common group, Sodepax (Commission for Society, Development and Peace), puts its experience and dynamism at the service of groups in which Catholics and other Christians reflect and work together in order to promote justice and peace.

===
===

The Apostolic Letter "Evangelii Nuntiandi" sets forth in a particularly clear and pertinent way the meaning of what we are trying to do.

It is our conviction that a lived and reflected experience of encounter with God in Jesus Christ constitutes the best antidote against the temptation towards a uni-dimensional social life enclosed within itself. Men of today are searching for a new art of living that is less utilitarian and more liberating: the Church has to enlighten them with the Good News and the communities' living of it will provide such space for liberation. This life in Jesus Christ remains foremost and central in evangelization and catechesis.

Social involvement finds common ground with this new life and assures the place where it can grow and bear fruits at the service of men. The apostolate includes a permanent effort to permeate the whole existence, structures and mentalities with the inspiration and the light of the Gospel.

Nevertheless, it is important to indicate to people of all ages that the profound unity, in one and the same life, between the gift of God welcomed as a grace and the

actions of man where it bears fruit, is not confused : the actions of man are never the measure of the gift of God which overflows everywhere; the progress of civilizations towards greater humanity, justice, brotherhood has a great significance for the progress of the Kingdom of Christ and receives from Him the lights and unsurpassable energies, but the progress of civilizations never expresses in an adequate way the growth of the Kingdom and does not constitute the measure of it (see "Gaudium et Spes", nos.39,40).

We will not, then, wait to teach Jesus Christ to the poor unless the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace helped by all those in the Church who have committed themselves to work for justice and peace have first succeeded in freeing the poor from all injustices and violence... We would then have to wait indefinitely and the Commission itself would be deprived of its essential dynamism, Faith, Hope and Divine Charity which are always far ahead of our poor human efforts.

Roger HECKEL, S.J.
Secretary
Pontifical Commission
"Iustitia et Pax"

===
===

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOURTH WEEK

Introduction

In the November, 1977 issue of PROGRESSIO we have offered some reflections on the unity between the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises : a first vision of the unity between the Paschal Mystery and some more specific points of the Third Week.

Now we would like to dwell more on the significance of the Fourth Week, the climax of which is the Contemplation to Obtain Love ("ad amorem"). I think it is no longer necessary to stress again the intimate connection of the Fourth Week with the previous week since they form a unity. Christ died in order to be raised up : we must also die with Him in order to be raised up with Him, to live with Him, to carry on a new way of being with Him.

=====

When we contemplate the Cross of our Lord the image that remains in our sight, or more deeply, in our heart - in the interior vision of our faith - is different for each one : for one it might be the Lamb of God of Grünnewald, with the hand of John the Baptist pointing to him: "it is right that He must grow greater and I must grow smaller"; for others Christ's death united all men as reflected in the serene landscape painting of Fra Angelico; and for some others it might be as Christ of the Romanesque era of the twelfth century: Christ the High Priest, pierced and exalted, with his eyes opened.

In these various images what is important is that our spiritual feelings enter into the mystery of the Cross and that it marks our life.

=====

In this crucial point of the "passage" from the death of Christ to the Resurrection, Mary occupies a significant position : Mary in her solitude. The whole meditation of the Church on Christ's Cross is centered on the soul of the Virgin. Before the eyes and in the feelings of men, it is only a "corpse": it is the sadness, for example, of the disciples at Emmaus thinking that all is finished although a memory is asleep and a hope is dawning.

But Mary sees otherwise. She bows down in complete acceptance of His word though it meant concretely beneath the heavy weight of the Word of the Cross. She has accepted to die with Him in His bodily feelings as she had accepted to live intimately with Him.

Her feelings are not limited to what is apparent; they are already deeper feelings, feelings of faith that look beyond the appearance : "they look on the one whom they have pierced."

"Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled." The Word of Christ was fulfilled in His Passion and in His Resurrection principally in her and for her.

=====

The Gospels do not mention Mary as being among the official witnesses of the Resurrection. The manifestation of the glory of the Risen Christ to Mary cannot simply be counted as one more testimony to be added to all the witnessess of the disciples: it is the epitome of all of them. Mary comprises all the witnesses, like the Church: Mary concentrates all, lives all with a unique, original and essential depth. The faith of the Church in the Resurrection of Christ is born of the Mother; just as the faith in the Incarnation is born in Israel so is that of the Church born in the heart of the Blessed Virgin, handmaid of the Lord.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

In order to rise with Him it is necessary to die with Him. "... to rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord" (221) it is necessary to have received the grace that our feelings not judge according to appearances but according to the truth as those of Mary: to leave behind our sinful self and to let the Lord

convert us to a life of grace, of thanksgiving and of communion in love.

St. Ignatius proposes different visions (three in all) that in the end, answer to different spiritual stages. Let us take two examples:

- Those whom the Lord calls to live a deeper life of faith. Peter and John went to the sepulcher; "he saw and believed"; What did he see? Nothing, an empty tomb, some pieces of bandages. What did he believe? Everything! That is, Christ has risen. A look was enough sign for the disciple who had contemplated on the One whom they have pierced and who had made His death his own, just like Mary.
- Those who are contemplating the Lord, seeking Him in love : Mary Magdalene, weeping at the tomb, judging from appearances, but through her attachment to the Person of Christ she was elevated to a greater love.

Jesus fulfills his office as consoler (224) : He does not rise for himself but in order to live with and in his brothers with personal love.

The same personal love of Christ is revealed to us through the Ascension (312): the presence is already real but nevertheless, "do not cling to Me": to cling to Him would mean to want to take possession of His grace as something tangible and it would mean not having risen with Him. Jesus ascended in order that we could follow Him in faith and in hope.

We are, then, invited to participate with the Risen Lord. Not as an abstract idea of participation but as a constant, dynamic and growing vital experience that starts with the faith, hope and love of and in the Resurrected Christ.

=====

Our reform of life, or our election, is situated in this context : the truth of our life before Christ Himself. He is the originating center and the source of everything: our conduct before all things-(culture, values, etc.); before all persons - here, for example, the celibate acquires the full sense for the Kingdom: witnessing joyfully to the Resurrection of Christ and His Ascension, of His second Coming - because this is the height and the perfection of all human efforts to love more.

Finally, in the Resurrection everything changes for us who have risen with Christ. He comes and goes freely. So must we! Let us explain a little:

The world is no longer a wall -(for how many of our fellow men is the world a wall!): the values, the good, the evil, the moral and social order, culture, all these seem to create obstacles that impede the free expression of themselves. Men no longer communicate with each other, not even through these values...Not having understood what the Resurrection of Christ means, without realizing it, they dream of a "resurrection without substance": pure liberty without anything to distinguish it, to express it better or more concretely : to them any expression of this liberty is as good as all others. Furthermore, they hit their heads against the wall and remain without an answer! But we know this desire is already fulfilled and it is fulfilled in us through love. We are giving this humble and joyful testimony to it, not to condemn our fellow men but to help them have a better and firmer hope.

Thus, the substance of culture is material words that we learn; they are structures and statutes; they are mathematical signs and physical realities. All of them are permeated by the human spirit; they are like the vessels of the spirit and in that spirit Christ and the Spirit He had sent after His Resurrection are ever present. And so each time men are united, the Spirit of Christ is operating in that union. The power of the Resurrection permeates the human effort and our mission is to give witness to it.

My body : My physical body and the prints it leaves in the world around me are also permeated by the power of the Risen Lord. How to convince ourselves so that this joyful conviction transforms our body and bodily expressions to pure manifestations of love and of communion!? Though the physical expressions may be different among Christians (they are distinct in married life and in celibacy) nevertheless, there exists in them a body that wants to be a sign of love, the manifestation and reality of love.

Thus, the commission of Christ to us is understood: he sends us to be witnesses of His Resurrection in varied ways but all these ways point to this central fact, to this core: the Resurrected Body of Christ who realizes the love among men.

=====

In this perspective, the Church, filled with the Holy

Spirit, receives, too, the mission to be the visible and effective sign of reconciliation of all men with each other and with God.

=====

If Christ has risen, why do we think that there is nothing more to hope for? It is simply our illusion and our impatience! We would like to canonize our own love and to think that there is nothing more that we need to receive when in fact, our whole being and love is pure receiving from the Grace of the Father.

Because of this Jesus escaped from the sight of his disciples so that He Himself does not become part of this dangerous illusion.

He will come in the same manner: we live torn between this reality and this hope. It is the tension of the Church : of Him all are giving witness. Come Lord Jesus!

Justo GONZALEZ-TARRIO S.J.

THE GIFT OF THE POOR WOMAN

- "Father, it is already late..."
- "Yes?..."
- "Father, I came..."
- "I thank you... What can I do for you?"
- "Father, I would like to speak with you. I come to unload my pain... I can no longer bear it alone... it weighs heavily in my heart. My husband died... he died... Two full moons have passed since he left me... he left. He was the first; he made me a woman in my youth... I followed him in all the paths he treaded... but now he has gone... to a place I do not know. He did not look back.... he did not wait when he reached the peak... he made no sign... I look... and look... I gaze at the sun and the moon, at the path through the stars. My eyes are blind... I can no longer see where he has laid his head... my eyes have no more tears
O, Father...

"O, Father, he was as my son.... a part of me. He was the ornament of the house... the fire in my home. He was the pillar... the roof over our heads. He was my shield and my refuge... BUT the pillar has broken... the house has collapsed ... I am under the ruins...

"O, Father, forgive me for causing you pain... for giving you my pain. Perhaps you have your own pain... each man has his own load of pain... but I can no longer live... My burden has become too heavy... I have no more strength... I can no longer find my way".

The other day the woman came back carrying a small dish with a piece of fish:

- "O, my son, look!... I bring you this small share of my poverty... it has no price... but I am old... my heart is worn out... it is a GIFT of my being..."

From a conversation sent
to us from Zaire.

YOUTH- PROGRESSIO

Dear Friends,

At the start of this new year 1978, may we simply wish you much joy and renewed hope in the love of our Lord.

This year in Youth-Progressio, we will offer, for the first time, a series of articles on the different stages and aspects of youth CLC. Starting with the next, issue, people from all continents will share their experiences and reflection on youth formation - everything from getting the group started, up to making the transition into adult CLC. The March issue, then, will begin the series with this theme: "finding members for youth CLC."

At the same time, we will continue to include news and information on various national federations' activities with youth. For example, this month we have information on 4 different countries, written by youth CLC members there. In the coming months as always, we count on hearing from you too. Please feel free to send on any news of youth CLC happenings to our Rome secretariate. God's work in our communities is much too good to keep it just for our own national federations, right? In the words of St. Paul, "what I wish is that we may be mutually encouraged by our common faith." (Rom. 1:12)

Once again, dear friends, let us wish God's finest blessings for each other throughout the course of this year.

Sincerely in Him,
Peggie TELSCHER

YOUTH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY IN IRELAND

Youth Christian Life Community in Ireland is still in its infancy but it is strong and growing. The first group was started as recently as October 1976, in Dublin. At present there are four youth groups, all in Dublin. The groups have different origins - the first two started in a girls' hostel in the city. One of these groups has since been joined by young male members. Ages range from 19-25 years and members pursue a variety of careers. Meetings are held weekly.

A third group evolved from a group of friends who lived in the same locality. This is a large group having fourteen members - and ages range from 16-21 years. Members of this group are mostly at school or college. This group is also interested in the Charismatic Movement. Meetings are held twice weekly.

The fourth is an amalgam of two former C.L.C. schools' groups - and members are either at college or are already working.

In Ireland C.L.C. youth meetings vary in style from week to week. The preparation of meetings rotates amongst all members of a group. Normally a particular theme is chosen, e.g. relationships, materialism etc. and this theme is presented by the use of an aid such as slides, music, scripture passage, pictures etc. The meeting may then follow the form of a discussion or a listening session. Periods of silence, prayers and sometimes some type of creative work are part of our meetings. Prayer has an important place in all our meetings which generally last for two to three hours.

Youth groups in Dublin visit one another from time to time especially to share the Eucharist. We also come together for other activities such as holidays, hikes and walks, social work etc.

We had our first youth C.L.C. weekend in this country during February 1977. The weekend was prepared by the Youth Committee which consisted of two members from each group and included Father Val Mac Lochlainn S.J., our National Promoter of C.L.C. in Ireland. About 50 young people participated in the weekend - some of whom were not previously involved in C.L.C. but had come to learn about it. We were blessed to have Peggie Telscher (World Youth C.L.C. Representative) with us for the weekend. Peggie was a great gift to us and contributed greatly to the success of our gathering - the theme of which was "My Way to God". There was much small group interaction throughout the weekend, interspersed with general sessions and of course our daily Liturgy. Activities included a "Getting to Know You" session (called computer statements!), Meditation using slides, Nature Meditation, Gospel Enquiries, Guided contemplation, Talk on Prayer, Personal and Shared Prayer, Evaluation and Singing! (lots of it).

The Holy Spirit guided the weekend and all who took part felt helped - to a greater or lesser degree - on their way to God. As a result of our gathering it is hoped to set up a new youth group after the summer holidays.

C.L.C. offers the youth of Ireland a chance to belong to a closely knit christian community. It gives us an opportunity to be reflective and helps develop in us a greater sense of awareness; it encourages us to really listen to others' points of view; it helps us share our thoughts and ideas; it furthers our understanding and appreciation of the Sacraments and our Christian lives and to know the joy of living for the Lord.

C.L.C. offers us youth in Ireland a refreshing and challenging life to those who wish to follow this way of Christian Living.

Bernie Mc DONNELL

=====

YOUTH CLC FORMATION CAMP IN THE PHILIPPINES

Once in a while, one looks eagerly forward to a chance to be free from the bustle and hustle of the maddening world and to be shut away in an atmosphere of tranquility and peacefulness. Such happened to five groups of Youth Christian Life Community (YCLC) members who left their respective environments and gathered together in the calm, serene, pollution-free fields of Guimaras Island, Sub-province of Iloilo for a weeklong summer camping activity. While in the family, community and the home, the tenets of Christian family living and community involvement are stressed, still it is hoped that complementing same, this summer camping aimed to develop in the members traits of leadership, emphasize attitudes for proper application of Christian habits and norms, foster comradeship among them and inculcate in them a renewed sense of service and love for God.

The participating communities for the summer camping were St. Joseph School of Guimaras Island, Colegio de Las Hijas de Jesus of Iloilo City, Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepcion of Pototan, Iloilo, Dao Catholic School of Dao, Antique and Nazareth School of Manila.

The opening ceremonies started on the night of April 13 with a Eucharistic Celebration officiated by Fr. Edgard Palmos, Jordan Parish Priest. With a bit of pageantry, a campfire provided us light under the stars. The day following was filled with sessions centering on two themes : God in Nature and Sanctifying Nature. More themes were introduced in the succeeding days such as: The Importance of Work Sharing; and Personal and Community Commitment. Part of the the camping was a hiking spree to the Trappist Monastery for one Eucharistic Celebration, with a Trappist Monk, Fr. Victor Assad as the celebrant. Evenings were devoted to socializations.

A Eucharistic Celebration preceded by confessions,

tete-a-tete - with the three monks, Fr. Fabian, Fr. Gabriel and Fr. Victor, and a short talk, penitential service and the Eucharist by and with the latter completed the Reconciliation Day.

Then came the most awaited day - the pilgrimage to Bala-an Bukid (Holy Mountain) perched high on the top of Guimaras Island. The journey had been deadly tiresome. Profuse sweat trickled down everyone's face as they inched their way up the mountain slopes. Undaunted, though, they soon reached the top - and conquered. Over-awed at the spectacle before them - the surrounding blue sea, waves lashing the shores, the island itself standing majestically, deeply engrossed in her own affairs - they could only marvel at the immense mysteries of nature. And what a perfect place for reflection!

And suddenly, it dawned on everyone that the day of departing was at hand. It was a time most welcome, for had not the YCLCians felt so nostalgic for home and loved ones when alone to themselves, after each hectic day - this, to most, being the first time that they had been away. Again, around the campfire and under the starry night, a Eucharistic Celebration was celebrated by Fr. Edgard Palmos, thanking the Lord for our safe and fruitful stay. An impromptu program that followed buoyed up our spirits even more. Each community contributed a bit of their talents to the enjoyment of everyone. Nothing then was more delightful and exhilarating! Imbued with a sense of service for the upliftment of the Christian family and community, the communities headed for home. Indeed leave-taking was somewhat regrettable - albeit, sad - but it has to be done over with and not after expressions of gratitude began to pour from the lips of one and all for the sterling cooperation and motherly affection shown by the Sisters.

To sum up : The Guimaras Summer Formation Camp, a major activity of the YCLCians for the school year 1976-1977 was a profound success.

Arlene LEBRILLA

=====

VOLUNTEER WORK EXPERIENCE AT "COTTOLENGO"

(The volunteers were : Giuseppe-2nd year in medicine, Luisa-2nd year in languages, and Massimo-2nd year in law; all three are 20 years old and belong to the Cagliari CLC group).

Before relating to you our volunteer work experience, some time during our vacation, at the Piccola Casa della Divina Provvidenza (Small Home of Divine Providence) also known as "Cottolengo", we deem it necessary to give a brief background of the operations of "Cottolengo".

This was founded in Torino in the year 1830 through the initiative of a priest, San Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo. After an initial period of great difficulty, and perhaps even going beyond what he envisioned, the Piccola Casa expanded to various cities in Italy, the United States and Kenya. The goal of the Piccola Casa remains today what it was when it was founded: to receive and to serve those whom he called the "masters"; this means all those who are poor, particularly the seriously sick. The mother house was built in the worst area of Torino; this house was big and beautiful and practically self-sufficient. Besides housing all the departments of the hospital, it has its own bakeshop, cinema, different offices, etc.... Counting the sick and the staff (sisters, brothers, nurses) 15,000 persons live there. The ages of the sick range from children 2 or 3 years old to old people over 90 years.

To give you an idea of the work of the volunteers we think it is useful to describe a typical work day in this place: rising time is at 6 o'clock in the morning, then work starts at 7 and continues until 11 o'clock. The first jobs consist of cleaning and washing the sick, dressing them and putting those who cannot walk in the wheelchairs. The rest of the morning is spent in bathing, shaving, brushing the teeth and changing those who have no control of their muscles, if they dirty themselves frequently. Lunch time is from 11 to 12 noon; we feed those unable to eat by

themselves. There is usually less work in the afternoons so we could spend time for more personal and livelier rapport with the sick. Work finishes after 9 o'clock in the evening when all the sick would have gone to bed. Living such intensive days, we felt it necessary to find time for Mass and moments of prayer.

Now comes the difficult task of expressing in words the sentiments and feelings we had while living this experience. Frankly, we could not find the exact reason that brought us to Cottolengo for the first time; it was simply a need to "help the suffering". We discovered the motivation as we live the new, diverse and wonderful experiences of each day. One of the first emotions we felt was how little we could do for the sick as we are confronted by the way they accept their sickness with joy, peace and serenity, by seeing in them the image of Christ suffering; feeling the warmth they had for us made it easier to return their affection more totally. Living with them made us realize how little and sometimes how unreal our own problems are and how much better it is to live a simpler life.

In conclusion we would like to underscore two aspects we have already mentioned and which we feel we were not able to fulfill completely: the first is the requirement for more time for daily encounter with God because it is only through the Lord that the work in Piccola Casa becomes meaningful. Only through the personal relationship with Christ can each action, though it may be the most routine, become an act of love. To explain ourselves better we share with you some lines from a letter written by one of our friends who has consecrated his life for his suffering brothers: "... to have to clean their asses from morning till night is not an easy task but the love for them gives us the strength to do it... Fraternal love is to love the others in the light of faith... it is loving God in our neighbors and it means to love them because God loves them and in the way that God loves them". And finally, "... Now I want to conclude, not because I have nothing more to say to you but because the need of prayer calls me and because without prayer our life is nothing, our activity is nothing". The second is the need to "lose" our time with the sick, to listen to them, to their family dramas, their pain, their solitude, their feeling useless, allowing them to relive their life before and during their stay in Cottolengo, and even in these we also learn from them.

=====

FROM INDIA

CLC in India is still in its infancy, in fact in many places CLC is just being born. However, there are other places where CLC is very well developed. So speak first of the well developed places in CLC, they are mainly Bombay and Calcutta: here true CLC life exists and the youth have really plunged into CLC to make it a way of life, the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius are becoming more and more popular, in fact the CLC in Bombay has of late been encouraging all units to bring the CLC through the faith sharing experience lasting about 2-3 days, so far about 10 out of 17 units have gone through this experience, and in all probability all will be going through the experience in the near future. Apart from that a number of members have made a 7 day personally guided retreat. CLC in Bombay, since late has launched as a new project for couples - so far there are 2 such units and they have met with great success under the able guidance of Fr. Pujol, S.J.

Among the other activities we have in Bombay are the 15 days leadership camps and shorter programs are conducted off and on especially in T.A. and group dynamic. Of late a special 8 Sunday's successions have been conducted for the leaders of various groups of CLC to help them run their units more efficiently. These are also true of Calcutta, in addition the Public Speaking course of 8 Sundays is becoming very popular.

As regards the rest of India, they are still in the growth process and they are growing fast mainly due to the guidance the moderators receive through the moderators' course and it won't be long before CLC really becomes a powerful organisation in India.

Tony D'SILVA

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

Gian Carlo Murkovic, with 3 other CLCers from Germany and Belgium, was invited to participate in a meeting of the German Catholic Youth (BDKJ) and its member organizations with the responsible leaders of the European unions of the catholic youth organizations and movements. This conference - held in Altenberg near Cologne, from November 24 to 26 1977 - discussed the questions of common interest in the field of youth work and the church.

INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS

Collective Reflections on Sinful Social Structures.

Earlier this year, in June to be exact, I came in contact with a very interesting international project with a long title : "International Study Days For a Society Overcoming Domination" (1). Initiated by the Brazilian Bishops' Conference and co-sponsored by other Bishops' Conferences and other groups, the study days aim at deepening the concern and activity of church and educational groups regarding structures of domination and oppression. There is a strong focus on the violation of human rights occasioned by these situations of oppression, and there is the hope of educating people to understand, overcome and transform the structures of domination and the mechanisms of oppression.

My spontaneous reaction to the discovery of "Study Days" was one of joy and hope. What a marvellous vehicle for sharing the concerns of WFCLC's Commission on Mission

(1) Editor's Note: Information on the International Study days may be obtained from - Projects Secretariats: Secretariado General Da Conferencia Dos Bispos Do Brasil - CNBB, Caixa Postal 13-2067, 70000 Brasilia D.F., Brazil, or, Secretariat D'Appui Des Journées Internationales, 14 rue Saint Benoit, 75006, Paris, France.

and Service! Of course, the project is enormous, but it could help our groups grow in the awareness of social sin and our need for collective as well as individual repentance and transformation.

Since the end of June I have been receiving Case Studies describing structural situations of domination in various countries: Immigrant workers in France, Housing problems in Portugal, Problems of Indigenous Tribes in Cameroun "Encountering" Development, Unjust Economic structures in Sri Lanka, etc. Very recently I received a Case Study from my own country USA. It is an excellent description and analysis of the work of the Washington Justice Lobbies, groups whose work I value highly. These are coalitions of church and political groups which are very conscious of the disastrous effects of US political and economic priorities and policies. Their efforts confront policy-makers with a shared vision of a new world and effectively challenge the Status-quo. Along with the Case Studies I have received Discussion Texts : The school and the Teacher - Agents of Domination? Another text on Structural Cases situates the struggle against domination in the Christian context and asks what is the mission of the people of God.

I believe that WFCLC through its national federations has a real contribution to make to this dialogue. I believe that conscientization - becoming aware of domination (lack of freedom) outside ourselves in the structures of society corresponds to our growing understanding of personal sin (interior unfreedoms). I believe that our unjust economic structures and social violence are projections of our interior injustice and violence which have been untouched by Christ's Spirit.

With all this preliminary explanation, I will now share with Progressio readers my struggle to utilise these materials in our national federation (USA). My first problem involved getting people's attention. No-one had time to listen and the busyness had to do with board-meetings, summer interns, our biennial convention...all very legitimate concerns. My next thought was to use some of the ideas from Study Days documents in my "changing life-styles" workshop at our convention at New Orleans last August. This time, great distances and difficult communication stood in the way as well as a too brief time period allowed in the convention schedule. Another effort involved our national community meeting in mid-October. I was even asked to prepare material for a one-day workshop which would encourage

reflection on areas of concern in our lives as Christians: on our use of technology, our economic system, political priorities, education and church as influenced by our culture. Again, my plans were changed by factors beyond my control.

However, the Lord was working in ways unknown to me. Within the past week, I received the October issue of our national CLC newspaper, the Communicator. What a marvellous surprise! The whole issue is devoted to Human Rights: Right to life, Liberty, Worship, Speech, Work. The final section deals with our responses as Christians. I believe the Lord as well as a good Communicator staff had a hand in our shared national reflection by newspaper. Even my independently written meditation on the message of Amos fitted in. I would like to share this meditation with Progressio readers. Amos was doing in his day what we are trying to do in the last quarter of the twentieth century: encouraging collective reflections on sinful social structures.

Amos : A Missionary to the Jewish People and Us

Among the Prophetic books of the Old Testament Amos stands out as a moving expression of concern for oppressed people and their human rights. In giving voice to his anguish, Amos, as God's spokesman, rails against religious and government leaders and the Jewish people as well as the inhabitants of neighbouring countries. His charges are shocking:

- Taking advantage of people
- Robbing the poor
- Making economic slaves of people
- Accepting bribes
- Sharp business practices and profiteering
- Perversion of Justice in the courts
- Selling shoddy goods
- Putting profit before people
- Luxurious life-styles, "conspicuous consumption"
- Wars of conquest and aggression
- War crimes
- Religious observance which is only external
- Silencing of prophets

Strangely absent from his list is any mention of theft by the poor of the rich.

It is apparent that the nations of Israel and Judah were prosperous. The prophet is addressing church-going people who lived in beautiful homes, owned much property and operated highly profitable businesses. There was a confident military establishment and external religious practices were observed. Life for the well-to-do was luxurious with an abundance of choice foods, wines and entertainment. Coexisting in this affluent society were wide-spread injustice and insensitivity to the needs of the poor.

Amos reported that God was extremely displeased with the national economic and religious life-style and that it would come to an abrupt and violent end. He reminded his fellow citizens that God had been trying to get their attention through various localised hardships, dry weather, irregular rainfall, blighted crops, insect pests, epidemics, wars and local urban disasters. Amos tried to convert his fellow country-men and to stay God's wrath.

"My people have you forgotten what it means to do right". Amos 3:10

"I want to see a mighty flood of justice - a torrent of doing good." Amos 5:24.

This call to repentance and conversion is echoed again and again in the Old and New Testaments. How can people call God Father with their lips while denying loving and caring relationships with those in need? How can religious people unquestioningly accept an economic system which puts profit first and people second?

As in Amos' time, the call to repentance and personal conversion is a starting point. However, Amos' special contribution to our religious understanding is the picture he draws of social sin. He describes a culture (much like ours) in which injustice, indifference to human rights, and self interest are built into the economic, social and religious institutions. God was even displeased with public religious services which ignored these conditions. (AMOS 5:21-23) These social, institutionalised sins were so great that Amos predicted a "famine on the land - not famine of bread or water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." (Amos 8: 11)

Is the prophetic word being spoken to us in these times? Are there contemporary prophets? God seems to pick

unlikely (and sometimes unwillingly) spokespersons. When charged by the Jewish religious and government leaders with being a traitor and fomenting a rebellion, Amos declared that he really wasn't a prophet. It didn't run in the family - he was just a herdsman and fruit picker. Where do we hear the voice of prophecy in 1977?

In the persecuted churches around the world there are contemporary prophets who are challenging an unjust social order. These prophets are speaking out publicly and paying up personally - as Jesus did. The struggle for human rights goes on close to home as well - in discrimination against race or sex, against unemployment, urban decay, pollution, - whatever prevents human development.

Where do we CLC'ers fit into this struggle for human rights? Some of us are involved in various ways personally and locally. However our segregated housing patterns and our busyness stifle our sensitivity. Sometimes our new sources fail to keep us clearly informed on the local, national and international levels. We need to search for information.

As a national federation of CLC's in this country we are linked with other national federations of CLC in 43 countries around the world. Our commitment is to full human development for all persons. (World meeting Augsburg '73). Our special preference is evolving towards service for and with the world's poor and oppressed. (World meeting in Manila '76). We aspire to be communities of concern not only locally and nationally, but internationally as well. Our to-be developed role as a non GO (Non governmental organisation) at the United Nations includes a reconciling role and a search for a collective people's voice which will transcend national self-interests. It involves discovery of and dialogue with other NGO's in preparation for UN conferences such as a special session on Disarmament which takes place in New York in May, 1978. Finally, there is a potential for a religious presence at the UN - a dream of a small, international CLC community, contemplatives in action and a channel for God's grace in the centre of the world of politics.

A little reflection on daily and weekly news sources will reveal the contemporary urgency of Amos' message.

Jesus' sermon on the Mount sums up the challenge to

CLC's "You are the world's seasoning, to make it tolerable. If you lose your flavour, what will happen to the world?"

You will find below some guidelines issued by the "Commission of the International Study Days for a society overcoming Domination". I believe that we will develop our own case study with this help or with any other way in order, to follow up Manila'76. We still have a long way to go.

Bettie LEONE

GUIDELINES

These guidelines are meant only to help you in telling the story of your situation, your work, your dreams. You may find that only some of the items in these guidelines apply to your situation or work. There are listed, five general areas for reflection and should express the reflections of your group.

1. The Story of Your Struggle

- a) Why did you begin to work together? What was your situation? What were your problems? Are these problems inevitable? Does your situation have to be this way?
- b) Briefly describe the story of your struggle. Who works with you and how? What kinds of oppression have you been fighting? What success have you had? What setbacks have you had? Why?

2. The Analysis of your situation

- a) What is the immediate reason for your problems, your oppression? Who causes your oppression? Why? For what reason?
- b) How does the person, or group, or institution that causes your oppression keep you in the same situation? What techniques are used for this?
- c) What persons, groups or institutions are on the side of those who directly oppress you? Who supports your oppressor? How? Why? Who makes the important decisions?

3. The Analysis of your particular struggle

- a) What are your immediate objectives? What are your long range objectives? What alternatives do you see for your situation? What is your dream?
- b) What steps do you take to achieve your immediate objectives? How? Why? How do these steps relate to your long range objectives?
- c) Who do you depend on for funds for your actions? How do you feel about this dependency?
- d) What are the main obstacles to your work? Why?
- e) Who is on your side in your struggle? Why? Who could be on your side? Why? Who could not be on your side? Why? How do you try to get others to support your struggle? What things do you do?

4. The analysis of the larger (nation-wide, world-wide) struggle

- a) What connections do you see between your problems and struggles and the other problems, struggles in your area? your country? in the world? or other specific countries.
- b) Who are your friends in these other struggles?
- c) How is your action related to other actions in the larger struggle to overcome oppression, domination? What does this larger (world-wide) struggle have to do with your own particular problems?

5. Evaluation of your actions

- a) Do you evaluate the results of your actions? How? When? How Often?
- b) Do you evaluate your own organization? Its structure? Your way of working together? Your way of making plans, decisions?

WITH CHRIST POOR AT THE SERVICE OF MAN

From October 29 to November 1, 1977 some 400 members of the French CLC met near Paris for their Congress which is held every three years. These were four days of prayer and of discernment on the theme: WITH CHRIST POOR AT THE SERVICE OF MAN. We publish below the priorities that emerged from these four days deeply marked by the need of conversion and by the search for apostolic choices as they were presented in the last general assembly of the Congress.
(Editor's note).

There is no gap between our Eucharistic Assembly held before and our plenary sessions now. It is always a listening to the Lord. It is always a thanksgiving.

A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

We have lived together a congress of discernment. We have made a common spiritual experience in the larger community and this was the goal of the congress.

Though it was seriously prepared for, there were no preliminary talks to move the work towards a certain direction. There was only some skeleton idea based on the contemplation of Christ poor and of Christ being at the service of man... only the desire to listen to Christ and to each other in our deep longing and in our life experiences.... only the will of being available to God, to our CLC brothers and to the world that surrounds us.

The Holy Spirit worked in diverse ways : in the small

groups, in the internal witnesses refreshed by the air that came from the witnesses of the non-CLC members who were with us, in the meetings, in the Eucharist, in the chain of prayer during the vigil of the Blessed Sacrament. He operated in each one of us, in the larger community He built with us during these four days.

Yes, it is a spiritual experience we have lived! that is the most important. That was the goal of the Congress. That is the first fruit of the Congress, a fruit heavy of consequences for the future. How would it be possible not to thank God! The assembly we have here is always immersed in the Eucharistic Assembly held before.

UNTRANSLATABLE INTO WORDS

How could we report this richness? How could we measure it? Is it possible to capture the Holy Spirit? Is it possible to comprehend every detail of his actions? Each of us has lived something untranslatable and unique, according to his age and life history. Each small group, too, has lived something untranslatable (the group reporters know it well) and probably unique according to its composition.

The future bursts forth from what each one of us has lived, what each small group has lived. The consequence of this Congress is just starting. We could not measure the fruits of a congress like this on the morning that it closes.

RESUME OF THE PRIORITIES

Nevertheless, what is untranslatable, what is different between the individual and the group, what is just starting ... all these we have to try to translate into words. We have to harmonize them a little and to put them into texts and this was the formulation of the priorities that groups three and four made.

It is inevitable that some of us will find this formulation inadequate and clumsy. It does not say all that we have lived; it cannot exhaust the lived spiritual experience. It is a poverty we have to admit because we could only impoverize the richness of God when we try to imprison it in phrases. But it is also a richness as we try to find in this formulation of priorities the fruit of the discernment made in listening and in prayer. When we go beyond the words and sentences, then we find material to help us to advance in the love of Christ and of others.

This being said, I now content myself in presenting to you, clearly, the ideas contained in the proposals without commenting on them, without adding anything to them.

"The synthesis team" did not make any synthesis; it limited itself to assembling in the simplest order possible the most priorities of all the priorities. It is not a new formulation but simply a neat arrangement of all the texts you have given to us. You will receive a copy as you leave this room. This copy contains references to the complete list of 59 proposals which came out of the congress; this list together with all the suggestions you have added becomes a document of the Congress.

There seems to be three main lines of convergence and here we present the priorities:

- resentment to the need to convert ourselves
- urgency to do concrete actions that will lead us simultaneously to conversion and to the fruits of this conversion.
- recourse to specific means that our spirituality offers.

CONVERSION

We felt the imperative need for conversion. No eloquence can point this out, BUT, what a reality! What a call of Christ! To convert ourselves to whom? To Christ, certainly! but also to all the consequences this conversion brings on the manner in which we see ourselves, of considering the others, and of envisioning our conduct in the building of the Kingdom.

If we convert ourselves we change our regard for ourselves and for the others. We accept ourselves as we are; we accept the others and open ourselves to them as they are. We are able to see them as Christ sees them.

If we convert ourselves we change our attitude in three directions:

- we then have the desire to be freer, to be freed from our fears, from our prejudices, from our submission to this materialistic society;
- we then want to be more daring for Christ, to risk more for Him, to enter more freely in His adventures; conversion becomes the big leap;
- we then have the desire to live a life more marked by the gospel simplicity in this society of unbelievers and of being anti-Gospel.

ACTION

This conversion of which we feel the imperative need always leads to action. It has to be translated into concrete commitment which will provide us with opportunities to be more and more converted. Many of us insisted on leaving behind discourses and on materializing this conversion in definite acts, though modest or limited in time.

We have to live our ordinary way of life in contact with different environments, different in the conditions of life, different as to the degrees of social involvement (with minorities, with those who have been up-rooted, ignored, ...) different as to their spiritual or ideological orientations, different in age (youth...). We take as model Christ: how did he approach and transform them? We have to discover concrete means of sharing and of being with them. We have to work with the concerned persons, to work with them and not for them. We have to enter into the collective structures.

MEANS

Concerning the specific means to be used we stressed, first of all, the irreplaceable contribution of the community to help us in this conversion process and in these actions. It is the community that determines the decisions to be made and that assures their continuity. It is the privilege place where discernment is made.

At the same time emphasis was also made on the Spiritual Exercises: they make possible conversion; they allow genuine questioning and discernment according to the gospel. We have to instil in people the desire to do the Exercises, to multiply the forms (strict retreats - in daily life, in courses, etc.), to de-mystify them and to simplify the vocabulary.

We emphasize again how prayer - in a significant way - is the place of conversion, of changing heart (where we receive love and are humbled), of transformation of outlook (discovering in the whole man the face of Christ and discovering that every man is a revelation of Christ), of the preparation for personal and community discernment, of evaluation.

In summary, it is the wish to possess a better Christian knowledge of the needs and injustices and of encourage

ment to actions(or petitions) which are proposed to all by one another.

In all these conversion does not only mean changing our hearts and our attitudes, it also means transforming the world individually (in our own specific way) and collectively.

We are not simply transmitting this to others on whom we rely to do the work. It is a light shed by the Holy Spirit on us. It is a call the Holy Spirit initiated in each one of us, in each of our groups and in the whole CLC. It is a gift of God we receive with humility and thankfulness. We need to collect our thoughts in some moments of silence to thank the Lord for this gift and to listen again to the call He gives us.

Jean Claude SAILLY

=====