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AN APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY FOR THE
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE (1)

Max OLIVA S.J.

The Center of Our Commitment

We are called to this ministry of changing unjust social structures by Jesus Christ, who works with us and whose Spirit is the source of our courage, wisdom, power and hope.

God the Father is the center of our lives, the focal point of our identity: his personal love is the basis of our worth. He is our Rock, our Foundation, our Beginning and our End. He is the One for whose sake ultimately we are engaged in the struggle for justice.

The more God is our center, the less chance do the idols that attract us and keep us from a commitment to justice hamper our ministry, idols such as popularity, "success", reputation, endless analysis, and the "good life". The more God is our center, the more effective will be our ministry of justice, for it will become ever more clearly his work.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can develop the kind of apostolic qualities that are necessary for an effective ministry of justice. Let us now consider some apostolic qualities that can help render our actions more fruitful.

Apostolic Qualities for Our Ministry of Justice

Because God is the center of our lives, we can be radically open: open to growth-intrapersonal, interpersonal and societal (our relationship to human environments, struc

(1) Continued from March, 1978.

tures, institutions and processes, especially of a socio-economic-politico-cultural character). Open to new concepts and ideas, such as social sin and social grace, liberation Theology and the use of Marxist tools of analysis for studying the structures in our society. Open to face uncertainty and fear as we come into personal contact with the marginalized and the oppressed people in our society and the environments in which they are forced to live. Open to face our own prejudice, racism and sexism as they are manifested in attitude and language. Open to face our value addictions as they are reflected in our consumption patterns-the kinds of things we buy and why-and in our lifestyle. Open to the possibility of being misunderstood, even rejected, by those with whom we speak about issues of justice, be they members of our family, our community, or our constituents.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can have a capacity for critical reflection such that no ideology, no system or way of life is "sacred" (or defines who we are). None can be free of scrutiny, challenge and, if needed, reform, be it: socialism, communism, capitalism, the American way of life and its values, the Church, our own community or the work of our apostolate.

Because God is the center of our lives, we are not afraid to face the fact that we are converts to our ideas of justice and the actions we undertake for justice. Thus, we are capable of being ruthlessly honest with ourselves, neither becoming self-righteous nor bitter or cynical. Being honest in this way enables us to have what Thomas Cullinan calls "patient endurance", a uniquely Christian virtue, which is centered on Christian hope, without losing a sense of urgency that justice be done.

Because God is the center of our lives, the focus in exercising our ministry of justice is not on "success" as we usually define it. Our success is in the doing or saying what we know we must say to be true to our convictions and the needs of oppressed people. Like the prophets, the doing or not of some words, some action, is not based on people's reactions-be they affirmative or negative-not on how many people like us more or not, not on how many people agree with us more or not, but on being congruent with who we are before God, as we discern it in prayer and consultation. It is the virtue of integrity.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can possess a habitual facility of discernment. In our ministry of social justice, there are two basic areas of input for our process of discernment. The first element of our input is grasping the "signs of the times", that is, the cries of the poor and the oppressed of our world, their struggles,

their needs, their aspirations, their problems and the causes of these problems. Such knowledge and, more importantly, understanding comes, as we said before, primarily by way of some ongoing personal contact with economically poor people and those who are politically powerless and is supplemented by books and articles, films, workshops, or whatever means, serves to increase our consciousness of the problems. Then each of us must look closely at her or his talents, gifts, personality, ministerial strengths, and the kind of ministry she or he is involved in. In a spirit of prayer and with consultation, then, the discernment-reflection process gradually, organically, and continually enables each of us to make action-choices for justice from where we are. For some, such action will involve integrating social justice into classes taught or into the administration of a school or a hospital; for others, it will mean some kind of a political action or public protest. For some, it will mean homilies or retreat talks that show the intimate relationship between one's faith and a commitment to act for justice; for still others, it will involve direct service in an inner-city or rural community or Third World country.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can ask him to fashion in us a heart for the oppressor as well as for the oppressed. Injustice kills the perpetrator since exploitation, tyranny and oppression are signs of death, spiritual death. We love the oppressor when we oppose with all our strength her or his spiritually suicidal behavior of oppression. With God's help we can enter every heart. For the poor, we strive to win rights and the freedom to develop humanly; for the rich, we strive to win moral development. It is important to note, though, that the way in which one manifests one's concern for the oppressor will differ according to the kind of ministry one is involved in. The community organizer's way, for example, will be different from the high school teacher's. Each develops a heart for the oppressor in the context of her or his own situation.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can have empathy with those who are economically and politically oppressed. Empathy is the ability to see life through the eyes of others. In our ministry of social justice it is seeing life through the eyes of the poor. It demands personal contact with people who are poor. It necessitates our taking a "learning stance" in the presence of oppressed people, listening to their needs, their suffering, being willing to be continually educated by their life experiences and their contact with human misery. Empathy is the key to understanding and thus to be able to demythologize our views on why people are poor. Finally, empathy is the way to true solidarity and effective advocacy.

Because God is the center of our lives, we can have a freedom from attachment - in the face of anything which is not in line with our primary goal: the will of God and the building of his kingdom, a kingdom which values and promotes human dignity, equality and development. Having our foundation in God allows us to be free from attachment to any cause or issue, any insight or pre-conceived plan of action, any request for action, or even our own fear of acting. It is the "single-heartedness" of the Beatitudes.

Finally, because God is the center of our lives, we can have a capacity for suffering-what José Magaña says in his book *Ignatian Exercises: A Strategy for Liberation*, "to rejoice in sufferings because they are the hallmark of every genuine liberating commitment." Such a capacity enables us to make the fundamental Christian option of becoming advocates for the rights of oppressed people. It is also, obviously, intimately bound up with the preceding eight apostolic qualities and with the effort it takes to keep God as one's center. A capacity for suffering is essential for each person's ongoing process of conversion, and we are all called to conversion: "It is too easy to throw back on others responsibility for injustices, if at the same time one does not realize how each one shares in it personally, and how personal conversion is needed first."

Just what is conversion? One of the clearest descriptions the author has read is the following from Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Conversion is getting rid of something so that something else can take its place. It is getting rid of everything that prevents us from being filled with the Holy Spirit. Conversion, then, is a change; a change that takes place deep inside us; a radical change. Let us make no mistake about it; there is nothing superficial about conversion. It is not, for instance, deciding, after a somewhat more fervent retreat, to "give something to the poor", or to be a little more generous to one's "favorite charity". This is a praiseworthy thing in its way, but it is not conversion. Conversion is not a giving of something that we can well afford to lose. It goes much deeper than that. It is a putting away of something that we are: our old self, with its all-too-human, all-too-worldly prejudices, convictions, attitudes, values, ways of thinking and acting; habits which have become so much a part of us that it is agony even to think of parting with them, and yet which are precisely what prevent us from rightly interpreting the signs of the times, from seeing life steadily and seeing it whole.

Our call to conversion as we pursue our ministry of social justice is not a one-time happening, it is an essential element of the Cross-Resurrection dynamic that permeates our lives as Christians. And conversion does involve suffering as well as joy. With God as our center, we can have the courage to face our own need for conversion and the suffering that accompanies it. Such suffering is redemptive.

Conclusion

We are, each, called to a ministry of justice, but our ministry must take place in the rootedness of our faith lest we become simply good humanists or philanthropists. Our commitment must be founded in the love of God and the "Good News" of his. Although this may seem to be an evident premise, it is easy to lose sight of once we become involved in actual work.

We depend on one another for support, for challenge and tolerance. And we are nourished in our commitment to act on behalf of social justice by our prayer and the Eucharist: in prayer, for it is here in the quiet moments that we can face the reality of just who our center is—ourselves or God; in the Eucharist, because it strengthens us to face our timidity and fears, it calls us out of ourselves to be, like Jesus, persons for others.

JOURNEYS AND DREAMS - WFCLC AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Some of us dream dreams while we are asleep - projections of our unconscious hopes and fears. Others of us have dreams while we are wide-awake - expressions of our deeply felt conscious desires and aspirations.

I have been a day-dreaming pilgrim for a long time, searching for everdeeper meaning to my life, personally, and to my life as interconnected to my local, national, and world-wide CLC communities. There is a recurring Exodus element in my journey, a coming-to-awareness of slaveries both personal and social, a need to break out, a growing sense of being part of a ransomed community. My reflections on my past and present experiences, my many passovers, have deepened my sorrow for personal and social sin. Increasingly, I see personal and social sin as deeply-interconnected with unjust social structures - projections of a fallen human nature largely untouched by God's redeeming love.

Along with my growing clarity of social vision, I feel a realistic sense of my own weakness and inadequacy to confront these principalities and powers in high places. How can I, individually or as part of a community, exorcise the demons of terrorism - whether the threatening and established violence of government-owned arsenals or the hit-and-run violence of modern urban guerrillas? Political action is called for, but alone it is not enough. Mary's Magnificat has taken on new meaning:

"He stretched out His mighty arm
And scattered the proud people with all their
plans.
He brought down mighty kings from their thrones
And lifted up the lowly.
He filled the hungry with good things,
And sent the rich away with empty hands.
He kept the promise He made to our ancestors;
He came to the help of his servant Israel"...

Mary was not only thanking God for her very special motherhood. She deeply felt God's saving action in her social and political environment. She summed-up and added-to the Jewish memories of Passover. God was intervening again to save His people.

Somehow, I feel that our WFCLC presence at the United Nations must reflect Mary's experience and vision. I believe that God still desires to save His people and that He uses the small and weak to confront principalities and powers in high places. I believe that He is doing a new (and old) thing - calling His people to acknowledgement of social sin. To this Jewish people languishing in exile God spoke through His prophet:

But O my people, you won't ask my help; you have grown tired of me.. No, you have presented me only with sins, and wearied me with all your faults. I, yes, I alone am he who bolts away your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again. Oh, remind me of this promise of forgiveness, for we must talk about your sins. Plead your case for my forgiving you."... Is 43:22, 24-26.

Many of us have difficulty in understanding social sin because we have for so long been nurtured by a private faith which limits our vision to Jesus and me and my immediate concerns. Our religious and cultural self-centeredness has influenced us more than we realize, and we have been comfortable with our affluence and with the exploitive social structures which support it. God is addressing His people as a community. We need to recognize Jesus - not only as Lord of my life and my personal history. We need to experience Him as Lord of our lives and Lord of human history, with a special concern for the poor and oppressed, as Mary did.

I believe that God is calling His church to be a sign

and a community of reconciliation, that within the church WFCLC and our national and local CLCs are called to be communities of hope, increasingly aware of our individual and collective passover experience:

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. I will gather you from east and west, from north and south.... You are my witnesses and my servants, chosen to believe me and to understand that I alone am God ...Whenever you have thrown away your idols, I have shown you my power."... Is: 43: 5,10,12.

Our world federation has acquired the status of a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) accredited to the United Nations. In that capacity we are also in dialogue with other international Catholic Organizations (ICOs) which likewise have UN representation. The possibility exists for centers or communities in Paris, Geneva, Rome and New York. I am uncomfortable with the idea of one or two individuals attempting to represent WFCLC in any of these places. I believe that WFCLC has something special to contribute.

In my day-dream I visualize small, international communities sharing hospitality, prayer, and political action. These communities would reflect our world-wide diversity: men and women, young and old, different nationalities, races and ministries. Central to such communities would be the availability of the Spiritual Exercises in many flexible forms - a resource not only for community members, but especially for persons working at the UN and for members of ICOs. An ecumenical dimension would be a welcome development. Such a WFCLC community would really be a mission group with a specialized call to ministry.

Such a community would be a sign of God's Kingdom and a microcosm of our world reality- The lack of trust, vested national interests and divisiveness so apparent in the UN could be contrasted by a different model of relationships- a small, international CLC community including 3rd and 1st world members and different races sharing a simple life-style in trust and relating with practical concern to the human needs in their environment.

Such a community would encourage individual and group discernment as to God's Will in a global political context confronting the demonic

in economic structures which deny the right to life to the poor;
in political structures which dominate and make prisoners of whole populations;
in military structures which divert funds from human needs and which guarantee mutual assured destruction for whole populations.

Such a community could offer experiences and resources for personal and institutional reconciliation. The sharing of national and institutional histories could provide the environment for acknowledgement of social sin and develop structures to encourage reconciliation.

Such a community would provide a ministry to the person.

UN and ICO offices appear to be places for important business, legalities and intellectual expertise. Caring human relationships are minimal. Communities of hospitality could minister to the needs of our own NGO and ICO representatives and be a support group for our delegates. Such communities could also offer formation experiences for visiting CLCers interested in mission and service.

Such are the BIG dreams of this daydreaming pilgrim. I can hear my practical friends asking, "Where will we find people to develop and participate in such communities? Look at the reality of our national federations! How many people do we have committed to a world-view?"... Others will look at our precarious financial condition. My hope and expectation are sustained by the example of Jesus when He fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fishes. I am confident that God who calls us to His service will provide the means to fulfill His desires. He can do great things with very ordinary people - as He did with His apostles.

This vision of communities was first articulated and shared with fellow members of the WFCLC Mission and Service Commission at a recent meeting in Rome. We now share it with Progressio readers. Our needs are many:

1. People with social consciousness formed by an integrated experience of the Exercises. This includes --
 - a. People who have a learned or acquired interest in

world affairs.

- b. Core-group people who are willing to consider a long-term commitment to developing a Christian Community in New York, Paris, Geneva or Rome, or perhaps Washington.
 - c. People who might make themselves available as community members for a specified period of time.
 - d. Exercises guides who could make a specific commitment to such a community.
2. Houses or places to use as hospitality centers.

Thank you for letting me share my dream with you, Now, I invite you to criticize, to comment or to elaborate. Please share your dreams with me and with the Commission. Together, we will bring the presence of WFCLC in its fullness to the United Nations.

Betty LEONE

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

Dear Friends,

The theme of this month's youth-Progressio is "discovery: self, others, the world around me, and God in everything." This is one of the fundamental goals of youth-CLC, which is stressed especially from the beginning stages; however, this discovery is continued and deepened over the course of time, as all of us have experienced.

In this issue, then, we have two articles which do express, in a concise and concrete way, how youth CLC members can be introduced to this kind of discovery. Although the methods used may be different from culture to culture, if one looks closely, the underlying dynamic of this discovery is truly universal. Young people everywhere are looking earnestly for the answers to the questions in their lives. The following articles are a good representation of what is happening in youth CLC, in two vastly different countries, India and West Germany.

Peggie TELSCHER

WONDERS AT KHANDALA

When Fr. Sidney had asked us to send a write-up about our experiences in the Leadership Camp, we were more than willing to do it because we had wanted to let as many persons as possible to know about the camp and the experiences we had in it.

This was the 25th Leadership Camp organized by the CLC. It had as its theme "The Search". A better setting than Khandala, with its out-of-this-world serene atmosphere,

cannot be imagined. From November 9 to 20, 1977 we stayed at St. Xavier's Villa which is perched on a hill with a commanding view of the sun-kist hill slopes.

Not knowing what to expect or what was expected of us we were a little apprehensive on the first day, but, as everyone was so friendly and warm, we soon felt at home.

The Encounter Group (1) was a once-in-a lifetime experience. At the start everyone was tense and locked up within themselves, but, thanks to the fantasies (2), we slowly began to come out of our shells. Very gently we probed into the lives of others only to discover our own selves and others more deeply through them. This discovery came as a result of a lot of sharing and it had taken a lot of courage from us to make the Encounter a truly deep and meaningful one. There was a lot of struggles too in accepting each other as we are and in accepting the feedback we got. One great discovery we made was the importance of getting in touch with our feelings. Before, it had just been a matter of "I feel this" or "I feel that", but now we realized that our feelings were deep and meaningful and that they could be acted upon. We realized that a lot of problems could be solved and that the solutions could be reached as we become aware of our true feelings.

Another touching experience was the atmosphere of trust existing all around. It had meant a great deal to trust people, whom we had just met for the first time, with secrets and personal problems and to accept what they might say about our lives. By the end of the Encounter we had grown immensely and had learned to confront ourselves. We had come to know our positive points and how to improve them and our negative points and how to work on them. This discovery gave us a boost in self-confidence. A deep relationship was established among the different members of the group and there was a mutual feeling of being wanted, loved and cared for.

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- (1) 3 groups of 10 members each including the Facilitator. They spent 7 hours together daily for 3 days for the purpose of enhancing personality growth on the Intra personal, interpersonal and micro-social levels.
 - (2) An exercise of the imagination where one freely and spontaneously projects oneself. The experience is then shared with the group and reflected upon for personal insights.

After the three day Encounter each succeeding day carried a theme on which we centered our day's activities and experiences. There was a remarkable change in the quality of our sharing as we became more open and trusting.

The theme "The Way of Life" made us feel the Call to follow a Way of Life. Through group discussions and exercises we felt the need to trust and to be willing to risk and to give ourself to the Way into which we are being called. It brought into focus our aims and goals in life and what before had been a hazy future had now become a visible goal.

The CLC's aim for the "More of Life" was brought home to us very clearly the following day as we began to understand that knowing ourselves and others was not enough; we have to venture out and grow, to take bold steps towards ideals and to walk firmly along the path of Faith.

Living together in Khandala as a community was a new experience and a little demanding as we had to make sacrifices to give of ourselves. But the caring and sharing involved was wonderful and so the theme "Community Living and Communications" became very real to us. We discovered how every individual is unique and important to the community. There was a beautiful sense of meaning and joy in being involved in building the community as we gradually made ourselves one during those days.

But these realizations were not enough. Through the theme on "The Call to Serve" we learned that we have to go out and to give more of ourselves. There were various exercises on the importance of individual participation in the group for the general good. The celebration of the Eucharist on this day had a special meaning. It was done by candlelight to signify that we should go out and be lights in the lives of others. It was the Mass of the Last Supper and those of us who felt they are called went and washed the feet of a member of the group as a sign of the willingness to serve. We felt the love and peace that comes from serving and were touched by the celebration.

On the last day we had a general summary of the CLC Way of Life and the Call to Walk Along This Path of Christ.

Entertainments and fun were not lacking. We had talented guitarists and jokers among us so there was never

a dull moment. One afternoon we strolled through the country side and visited the nearby zoo and spent time in the nearby town of Lonovala. On the last day we built a campfire and had lots of singing and merriment. The hours spent in recreation had also been moments of growth and learning.

By the end of the Camp we have come to know each other deeply and have become attached to one another in such a way that it was really difficult to part. We will never forget the ten days we have spent together which have affected us and changed us in ways we have not thought possible. Our attitudes and outlooks have been transformed in many respects and we actually feel ourselves growing to be mature adult Christians.

We are very grateful to the CLC for giving us this opportunity to grow and we hope that more people would be given the chance to experience it so that they could live life more fully.

Audry LOBO
Olinda D'SOUZA
Anita PERES-DA-SILVA

(Anyone interested to know about the program in greater detail could write to Fr. Sidney D'SOUZA, S.J., Seva Niketan, SR. J.J. Road, Byculla, Bombay 400 008, INDIA).

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FROM THE EUROPEAN YOUTH COMMISSION

Invitations have been sent out last March to the members of the European CLC Youth Commission and to some other CLC Youth Groups for the meeting scheduled from September 23 to 28, 1978 in Innsbruck, Austria. This meeting, termed AUSTRIA'78, was planned through the initiative of Giancarlo Murkovic (Italy) and Heribert Bastel (Austria).

The meeting aims to foster a real community spirit among the members and to plan out the different steps to be taken by the Commission for the CLC Youth Groups in Europe. Briefly, the program includes four days of deepening in the CLC way of life and in knowing one another and two days of planning. The meeting is foreseen to be an important step towards consolidating the efforts made by the different CLC groups.

WERKWOCHEN (SEMINARS)

Age level, duration, number of participants

14-16 year-olds from our communities are invited to the basic seminar. The participants of the intermediate seminar are 17-19 year-old boys and girls.

One seminar lasts 6 days, including time for travel.

The number of participants is approximately 20, with a guiding team of 3 persons (one of whom is a religious).

Goal

The participants should be enabled to have experiences which help them to "live in community", and to begin to take charge of their own faith in a personal way. This positive basic experience should become the basis for daily life. It might also be called a "model of introduction to the CLC way of life"; i.e., a life of greater awareness of everything going on inside oneself and in one's environment (broadened view of reality), a greater willingness and ability for encounter, more individuality in decisions and behavior, and in all of this, to be oriented towards the person of Jesus. The group should act as a help for one's personal life journey, as a place of initiation for social attitude and as a support for commitment.

Methods

The approach to the above mentioned goal is inductive. At first, experiences are given central importance. Reflection and information do help in sorting out one's previous experiences as well as those of the seminar itself. By becoming conscious of certain conditions in one's own life and analyzing one's life situation (in which one is unhappy), a new orientation in these situations could be facili

tated. Also, the corresponding practice in ways of behavior, as they flow out of one's faith, may be facilitated.

The individual methods could be given in three different steps which, in varying order, are the elements of any seminar.

a) Personal Reflection

Times of reflection and meditation are planned between small group activities and plenary exchanges. Meaningful questions are a help in becoming aware of one's key, past experiences, one's present strengths and weaknesses, one's faults, expectations and anxieties. This personal reflection is a fundamental prerequisite for taking a positive stand on one's own life, and so to get enough courage to be more conscious and perceptive of oneself, others, and the events in one's life. To be able to encounter others freely, it is important to know who one is and what one wants.

b) Small Group Activity - Community Experience

The small group work leads to self-experience, to interpersonal relationship (communication, cooperation, partnership), to sharing with others and finding one's own position, as well as to active involvement with and for others. In addition, one's previous values could be questioned and new ones tried out. Positive experiences could be obtained by being accepted, give-and-take, openness, review and evaluation, commitment.

At the same time, exercises such as communication games, role-play etc. provide the background for evaluative reflection and discussion. Extended exercises permit risk-free experimentation with new ways of acting. Conscientization exercises, Scripture sharing, meditation exchange, and Eucharistic celebrations are integrated into the course of the week.

Games, singing, dancing, strolling at night, and so on are as much part of self-experience as the above-mentioned exercises, and they are outlets of creativity as well.

Included in the rhythm of each day is half-an-hour of prayer or reflection, of evaluation of the individual exercises, of day and of the week.

c) Inductive Reasoning

It doesn't stop at an emotional experience of community and faith. It is helpful for some people to work objectively on some topic, on the theoretical background information about group experience, self-discovery, etc. For others, reflection and discussion are helpful in grasping their experience so that the individual might really be

changed and carry this experience into his later life. In the last days of the week, therefore, knowledge of daily situations are brought into the picture; the participants try to see, from the experiences of the week, what is valid for their daily life (e.g. basic human needs, behavior patterns, conflict situation). It is important that the relationship to the outside world be consciously integrated in to the seminar.

Preparation and Follow-Up

Preparation of the participants has also proved useful. By establishing contact in daily life with the guiding team, they can begin the process of the seminar in advance.

It has also proved helpful, in transferring the seminar's experiences to one's daily life to have some follow-up and exchange about the time interval after the seminar. This is done at a weekend meeting some 2 or 3 months after the seminar.

Presentation of the Course of a Basic Seminar

FIRST DAY - Exercise to get to know one another; for example: presenting a photo of childhood; each evening group then makes a poster with all the photos and presents it to the general assembly.
Exchange on previous experiences of seminars and their effects on one's life.

SECOND DAY - Work around the theme: for example "The Ship on the Water" in order to slowly enter into sharing with others.
morning Collage-making with the symbol of "The Ship on the Water". Gather all associations connected with the symbol.
afternoon Personal reflection on the life of each one in the various groups (ship) where they come from. Sharing in two. Assemble slides in groups that express what has been recognized.
evening Eucharistic Celebration with slides.

THIRD DAY - Getting in Touch with the Environment
morning Interview in the city with questions like: "What do you feel is necessary to make life happy?", "What put obstacles to this?".
Listening to the tapes of the interview in groups. Decision to find out an important answer for group sharing.
afternoon Each one asks himself/herself the same questions. Listening group about this.
evening Evaluation of the seminar so far.

FOURTH DAY - Deepening of Experiences of the Previous Day.
 morning Written meditation. Possibility of a personal
 afternoon talk with the members of the guiding team.
 evening an excursion together to the surrounding area
 Exercise "To Allow To Guide" as a preparation
 for the following day;

FIFTH DAY -
 morning Meditation using metaphors: "Trust is like..."
 Work in group: slides on the theme "Trust -
 Stupidity or virtue"
 Sharing/talking in plenary session.
 afternoon Film "The Parable". Exchanges about the film
 in group. Reflection on the meaning of the
 film for each one. What happened through Je-
 sus? In which situations of my unfreedom can
 he liberate me?
 Eucharistic celebration prepared by all.
 evening feast.

SIXTH DAY - Scripture talk on "Imitation".
 Personal evaluation of the seminar; listening
 group; question on the follow-up of each one
 in their respective groups at home.
 Eucharistic Celebration with thanksgiving and
 prayer intentions.

Critical Consideration

A difficulty is that the emotional and rational levels cannot always be brought into harmony in the way required; i.e., the realm of experience predominates over what can lead to unrealistic daily expectations; the seminar may be seen as a place of refuge and so the transition into daily life would not be successful. Another harmony to be sought is between personal and interpersonal problems in general; and confrontation with faith. This can be achieved if Jesus and his message are incorporated into the analysis of human conflicts.

Place of the Guiding Team

Since it is an initiation into the CLC way of life, the guiding team members must meet high personal and experiential requirements. Therefore, one of the federation leaders should be on the team, since these prerequisites are expected of him "ex officio". The inclusion of other leaders and their becoming able to conduct seminars on their own ensure that, with time, it is possible to offer seminars on a diocesan level. At any rate, it is certain that these inter-regional contacts offer the participants

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ECHOES-ECHOES-ECHOES-EC

CLC IN INDONESIA

CLCs in Indonesia exist only in the five big cities of Yogyakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Jakarta in the island of Java. The transition from Marian Congregation to CLC began after the visit of Fr. Nick Rieman, José Gsell and Fred Leone in 1972 and it was given a further impetus when our three delegates to the General Assembly in 1973, Frs. Depoortere, Ismartano and Frans Bonang, returned from Augsburg. Enriched by the experiences there they came back enthusiastic and convinced that this would be profitable for Indonesia.

It is worthwhile to note that membership in the Church in Indonesia has increased four times during the last thirty years. The growth in number, however, was not accompanied by corresponding growth in depth. Parishes were enlarged and became more organized to the detriment of community life which is very essential in Indonesian society. Liturgy has become impersonal though it still uses the Indonesian dialects.

Convinced that CLC, with its element of community life and method of "shared prayer" among other things, has something

to offer to the Church in Indonesia, Frs. Depoortere and Ismartano introduced it in Yogyakarta and Bandung. At the start they were foreseeing a lot of problems and difficulties with "shared prayer", but, on the contrary, the groups welcomed it and immediately felt free to share at a deep level. It seemed to meet one of their spiritual needs.

In Yogyakarta several CLC groups had been started but during the course of time some groups have died a natural death, others have persevered and are continuing and for some groups where many members have left the remaining ones joined together to form new groups. At present there are nine groups existing. Most of them are still pre-communities where the main aim is still the development of human relationship. It would take a while for the groups to become real communities.

In Bandung CLC emerged from a student sodality. It has about 30 members who meet regularly once a week; for "shared prayer" the group is divided into smaller groups. Membership ranges from newcomers to those who have been members for six years and have undergone some form of Ignatian retreats, even of five days only.

Half a year ago a CLC group for professionals was started. This has twelve members who were Sodalists before. They meet once a month.

The CLC in Semarang developed differently. It started with separate groups for "fathers" and "mothers" in 1975. From these a group for "older couples" was formed. Most of the members have been baptized many years ago and are now active in the apostolate. They are searching for depth in their prayer and faith life. Instead of group dynamics they prefer to start their meeting with prayer based on Scripture.

Here, there are also several youth CLC groups in the secondary schools.

Surabaya has the biggest number of members. Here, too, CLC has developed from the Sodalities. Though there is a certain continuity, it is difficult for them to adapt to the CLC way of life.

Jakarta (where Frans Bonang the coordinator of our National Federation lives) is still facing the trials and problems of "beginning"... No real groups or communities exist until now because Frans has not been able to find leaders who can give more of their time for CLC.

As CLC is still too new and too small a movement at present it is difficult to determine the impact it has on the development of the Church in Indonesia. The important question to ask is "What is the impact of Manila'76 on the CLC in Indonesia?" or "What is its impact on the six Indonesian delegates?", what have they passed on?

The person on whom we had placed our hopes was Arthur Depoortere. At a short but intensive national CLC meeting in Yogyakarta last December Arthur transmitted the most important ideals and spirit of Manila. Due to the excellent quality of his papers, the CLCs in Semarang and Bandung had them duplicated; an official publication is being prepared.

Shortly after this meeting Arthur became seriously ill and had to be transferred immediately to Holland where he died on June 10, 1977. Arthur will definitely continue to give inspirations to our CLCs as he had done when he was with us. Fr. Subagya, also a participant in Manila, is now in charge of Arthur's CLC groups.

John Vossen is the successor of Arthur as the National Ecclesiastical Assistant. Besides being the editor of our national bulletin INSPIRASI and taking care of the CLC groups in Semarang, he continues to be the pastor of a big parish. Consequently, much as he would like to be more involved, it is still not possible. Just the same he has started to visit CLC groups and communities and his visit to Bandung last May proved very fruitful.

Fr. Tandayan and Ibu Sanoesi in Surabaya have written very good articles about Manila '76 in INSPIRASI, but due to lack of contact we do not have any further information regarding their activities.

Despite the fact that Wences Laus is a year behind schedule in his studies because of his participation in Manila, Wences has no regrets and continues to pass on his experiences with great enthusiasm. No one has tired of lis

tening to his accounts which he relates in the smallest detail and this has resulted in a growing consciousness in Bandung of the international CLC community.

Most of our CLCs are student groups. Some who have finished their studies and are now working in the islands have started small informal groups. This is very encouraging for the future.

So far, all of us have been working part time for the CLC and we manage together as a team. We have organized a formation course in January, 1978 for future leaders and interested persons and the number of those who want to participate is more than what we can manage. Eventually we hope to organize formation courses annually as more groups develop and by then we hope to have a full-time worker.

John VOSSEN s.j.



MY EXPERIENCE IN THE CLC FORMATION COURSE OF 1978 IN CHILE

As a member of a CLC composed of 7 married couples I attended the Formation Course for two main interests: first, to try to be closer to God and, secondly, to have some formation so as to be able to participate more actively and positively in the communities to which I belong. With the grace of God I believe both objectives were reached.

The first week on the personally guided Spiritual Exercises made me have a clearer awareness of the love God has for me and the obstacles that have prevented me from being closer to Him. At times I experienced difficulties and discouragement, but the feeling of desolation and loneliness after meditating on my sins against the Lord was soon followed by one of great consolation and peace.

I received from God the gift of hope, something from which I was estranged and which is excessively important for my life. God revealed Himself to me as a Father who loves and who forgives this miserable sinner.... it was a humbling and at the same time elevating experience that made me accept myself and prepared me to receive the mission that the Lord would call me to do.

The exceptional love with which Father Marshall guided my Exercises was a valuable spiritual help; likewise was, in a very special way, the prayer of Fr. Contreras the adviser of my CLC said at the moment when I needed it most: he was praying for me and making penance for my conversion. This prayer was a beautiful sign of God's love for me and an expression of the power of prayer by others. When he knelt to contemplate my misery, it lifted my spirit and produced an enormous happiness in me.

The experiences of praying, especially based on meditation of the Gospel and the Psalms, were also valuable helps for my spiritual life.

During the second part of the Formation Course, the experience of community discernment in a small group directed by a young North American Jesuit Fr. Frank Kaminsky demonstrated to me the internal vitality, based on fraternal love and understanding, that animates the Christian Life Communities. In the midst of the diversity of the group (where there were 16 year old students, 40 year old professionals, a nun, university students, Bolivians, persons from Chile, Peru and Uruguay, and North Americans), friendship and mutual respect among us were so deep that the farewell at the end was felt by all of us. The high point was the Revision of Life. With the spirit of support for one another the community expressed to each one his opinion about them, asking for the grace of the Spirit to say only the necessary words inspired by the Lord.

It was an unforgettable experience which was emotional and psychologically moving, where several of us felt the necessity of accepting ourselves as we really are before this group that accepted us and loved us freely as it was moved by the Spirit of God.

In the relationships with other retreatants outside of the small group the natural and deep way with which many recognized their past faults, without depriving themselves of hope and enthusiasm, was also a significant lesson.

The last part of the Course on social discernment placed before me my responsibility towards my country. This necessary aspect of my Christian Life was integrated with personal and communitarian discernment which was given great emphasis during the first two parts of the Course.

For me this experience, especially of the Spiritual Exercises which I believe will have significant fruits during the course of the year, has been very enriching. The talks and points given made me advance further in Ignatian Spirituality. The hope the Lord bestowed on me during the first week was also an unexpected gift for my life.

Like the others I feel spiritually united with all the participants who have lived this course especially with the members of my small group. Knowing that the prayers of all will be with us during the coming year gives us strength and joy in accomplishing our tasks.

I am fully indebted to all the persons who have prepared the Course and who made it possible for me to participate in it. I hope God will allow me to show my gratitude in what I plan to do this year for the communities to which I belong for the extension of the message of Christ and His hope to all of those who will cross my path.

Eduardo Azocar BRUNNER

From this Latin American corner we want to send our fraternal greetings in Christ to the World Federation of CLC.

Brethren from seven countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela), a total number of 58 men and women, we have shared 15 days of deep encounter with Christ through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the CLC formation course.

As a result of this we lived a new style of life in an atmosphere of authentic brotherhood.

The experience of God obtained during the retreat enabled us to understand, to dialogue, to mutually respect our brothers by means of a common language not only in terms of words and expressions but also in the ideals of searching for the liberation of our people.

We have committed ourselves to deepen in the pillars of CLC spirituality, to tighten the links among our fede-

rations, to fight together with the oppressed people in order to make their ideals a reality.

We ended our formation course praying to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, for our people and our communities and thanking her for the privilege of having the meeting. Lastly, we thank the CLC federation of Chile for their work in order to make this course possible.

PUNTA DE YRALCA



A GLIMPSE OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Summer is always a busy season for most CLC federations. It is often the period for more intensive and extensive formation courses, retreats and seminars. This year the leaders of the Philippine CLC federation take a bold step forward by holding two formation courses, each a month long, simultaneously in April and May.

The first of this, to be held from April 15 to May 14 in Cebu City in the island of the Visayas, is a course for training guides for groups and for Spiritual Exercises. This felt need for more guides and assistants was expressed very strongly by all leaders and members present during the national general council meeting last year, a felt need even on the international level. The course aims to help the participants have a better grasp and experience of the internal dynamism of the Spiritual Exercises in a community context so that they can guide others along this line and help CLC members become more committed for service.

Very briefly the program for this course includes firstly: four days of preparation - community building, prayer program, social dimensions; secondly: eight days of individually guided retreat; and lastly, fourteen days of explication on the elements/experience of the Spiritual Exercises with the help of competent persons.

The second course, termed CLC Training Institute, will be at the Apostolic Center in Manila from April 16 to May 13. This course is part of the on-going process of formation for leaders and members throughout the country which

has been given almost every year since 1972, though the content and the process have been modified since then. For the second time this training institute is incorporated with the course being given by the Apostolic Center staff of lay people and Jesuits. It aims to deepen the understanding of the CLC way of life integrating the spiritual, political, economic and social (SPES) dimensions with the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. The program starts with a 7-day individually guided retreat followed by about three weeks of study and reflections on the different aspects mentioned.

For both courses, discernment by the different CLC groups for selecting the participants is recommended. Furthermore, the prospective participants are recommended by resource persons: officers, full-time CLC workers and members of the Formation Committee who have direct contact with each CLC group and consequently they are found to be in a good position to undertake this task. Part of the preparations before the courses actually begin includes meditations and reflections on various themes for prayer drawn by the responsible committee.

The highlight and culmination of these national CLC activities for summer is the annual General Council Meeting which immediately follows the two formation courses. This goes on from May 16 to 20 also in Cebu City.

Cora SIM



COURSES IN MEXICO

AGUASCALIENTES 77 was the title of the program of formation composed of two short courses organized by the National CLC Federation of Mexico in August last year.

The first of these courses was conducted for a group of 56 religious whose apostolate is centered, in a special way, around the colleges they direct in the northern part of the country. The course had as its objective to present the CLC way of life.

Through a series of reflections and small work groups deeper differentiation between Association, team or work group and community, between Piety and Christian Life was perceived where the first is always considered as an element of the second. Other important topics taken were: the Christ-centeredness of our communities and the role of Mary in them. The elements for knowing and understanding the different roles in a community, the different phases of community growth process and the role of the assistants in each of the steps were also given.

The second course, conducted for leaders and Assistants of CLC, had fifty-five participants. The course made clear the link between the leaders and the assistants especially in the lines of spirituality, community life and service.

The introductions as well as the work of the small groups, in this case, were oriented towards determining, first of all, the response of the CLCs to the fundamental needs of the individual: the style of life through deepening in the evangelic-prophetic consciousness according to the different gifts, dealing on the themes: "The reality of the Church in the socio-political context", "My CLC in this Church and here in Mexico", "Interpretations of this Reality through the Eyes of Faith" and "the Role of my CLC in the Interpretation of that Reality".

It continued with the re-study of the General Principles, stressing the aspects: "the community responding to the whole man of today as described in the General Principles", "Living this community in the Church of today means to have and to accentuate my evangelic-prophetic consciousness that the actual moment demands", and "Explanation of the other important points of the same Principles". It ended with a personal and communitarian confrontation of "My previous response to the CLC style of Life."

To summarize it was a step further in the process began by our federation in seeking to build authentic CLC groups in accordance with the General Principles and the orientation of the Assemblies in Augsburg and Manila.

M. Magdalena PALENCIA

NEWS FROM MADAGASCAR

After Manila '76 a firm decision was taken by the National Office to go on a trip to conscientize the members about CLC. We have been rewarded above all expectations. There are about 70 groups scattered all over the island; these groups are composed of new elements of young married couples and students in secondary schools. The majority comes from the old sodalities (...). We have foreseen different phases of evolution: from knowledge of oneself, style Manila '76, going through consciousness of one's personal vocation to reach personal and communitarian commitment.



RE-ORGANIZATION PROCESS IN SRI LANKA

As our CLC movement was at a standstill and seemed to be having no impact on the life situation of today, a "thinking group" was appointed by the Executive Council to analyze the reason for this apathy and to suggest means of revitalizing it.

Our group met on several occasions and in the process of our discussions we passed through many crises until we finally realized that though as individuals each CLC member has his or her own goal and concept of the CLC, we have no common vision of where the movement is heading.

Having made this break-through, the group recognized that man as he is today should be the movement's main concern. All its efforts should be directed towards helping him develop himself as a total person until he reaches the fulness of Christ.

BASIC NOTIONS FOR RE-ORIENTATION

--- The fundamental theme in the CLC movement is the INCARNATION, i.e. God. becoming a "HUMAN PERSON" in Christ.

- We read in the General Principles that God became man to give Himself to all persons and to invite all persons to do the same. Thus for God the object of his revelation and love is the "HUMAN PERSON".
- Christ's whole life was lived for the people he met. Every person we find in his life was the object of his love and concern. Christ in all his preaching and miracles, in his suffering and death, invites each one to make the "person" the main preoccupation of his life.
- Perceiving the invitation of God to follow his Son Jesus Christ, the CLC movement finds its meaning only when it is committed to "human person".
- Thus for the movement in Sri Lanka the main objective of its mission will be the "HUMAN PERSON" wherever we may find him in this country. Every man and woman in Sri Lanka is a challenge for the CLC. The Christian Life Community, composed of its members and leaders, will be committed to seek constantly the answer to the needs of our people and to work together (as a community) for progress, peace, justice, charity, liberty, and the dignity of every person in Sri Lanka.
- A PERSON in Sri Lanka today, whether he is in an Urban or Rural area
 - has his own values
 - has to be free to think or decide for himself
 - is suffering because of unequal distribution of wealth
 - faces problems of poverty and unemployment
 - is isolated due to social conditions such as race, caste, religion.
- The CLC envisions this "PERSON" as one
 - who finds meaning for his life in Christ
 - who reflects on his own situation and is capable of making his own decisions
 - who takes the initiative to uplift other PERSONS
 - who lives in Community and works for the total development of his environment.
- In accordance to the spirit of the Gospel and of the General Principles all the CLC members accept the uniqueness of each Person and each Community to seek, to see, to form, to organize and to encourage all persons to respond to God in Christ together with others.
- BASIC IDEAS IN ORGANIZATION
 - The whole organization is to be geared towards help

ing each one in the community (i.e. unit) to be the "person" envisioned by the CLC.

- The organization will evolve from dissemination of information, initiation and formation.
- These three factors will take into account the person in all spheres of life.



(Continued from page 12)

the possibility of recognizing CLC as a community on a larger level in that they receive information from various CLC groups and attention is given to further contact after the seminar.

On the other hand, for the national leaders themselves, the seminar means an acquaintance with the grass-root level for whom they are working and whose members, and not only officers, are present here. This direct, reciprocal contact makes possible better mutual understanding. As a result, the national leaders can meet youth's needs more effectively.

Gabi RITZKE
Mathilde KRUMBACHNER