

PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

SEPTEMBER 1978
47th Year
N. 5

S U M M A R Y

- A LONG CALVARY..... 2
- BETWEEN SORROW AND HOPE
(JUSTO G. TARRÍO, S.J.)..... 3
- THE SENSE OF THE CHURCH IN THE
LIGHT OF A PONTIFICATE
(JOSE GSELL)..... 5
- POPULORUM PROGRESSIO AND ITS RE-
LEVANCE TO THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
ORDER (ROGER HECKEL, S.J.)..... 9
- DAILY PERSONAL PRAYER
(JOHN PARTRIDGE)..... 16

ECHOES - ECHOES - ECHOES

- Meeting of the Delegates..... 20
- Asunción (Paraguay)..... 23
- CLC in Barcelona..... 23
- Small Country, Great Hopes..... 25
- An Important Weekend..... 26
- Encounter: CLC-IBMV..... 27
- World CLC Day..... 28
- Walloon, Belgium..... 31

PROGRESSIO * C.P. 6139 * Borgo S. Spirito 5 * 00100 ROME * ITALY
ENGLISH - SPANISH - FRENCH EDITIONS; EDITOR: JOSE GSELL

A LONG CALVARY

From August 6 to the 13th we should have had the first formation course in Beirut. We prepared it together with our Lebanese friends. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of July we sent all the necessary texts and documents so that they could be translated into Arabic. It was then that new shellings started to rain on this country which has already been so tested. On the 19th of July we received the following letter from the National Assistant:

"It was terrible! Destruction, death and some 2000 families escaping to the mountain. Calm could last only briefly because tensions continue. And in spite of the high morale of our men, security is still lacking and spirits restless.

J.M., with whom I have shared your letter, fears that our session, so much desired, might have to be postponed, if not cancelled. We have decided to cable you by the end of July on the turn of events and the feeling of our interested participants. Thank you for your sympathy and your responsibility. And LONG LIVE JESUS CHRIST!"

Some days later he confirmed to us the unfavorable situation. At the moment of writing these lines, news reporters still speak of shellings. Caritas International has launched a new appeal in the name of the people of Lebanon. We know that all the members of our groups in Lebanon are committed to helping the refugees and the many afflicted. During the previous trials they were distinguished by their active involvement, which merited for them the explicit appreciation of the leaders of Caritas International.

Let our prayers and our support not be lacking; this is the sense of our community and of our commitment to all peoples so that all people may live freely and enjoy all their rights.

BETWEEN SORROW AND HOPE

While we were preparing the September issue of PROGRESSIO the sad news reached us: at nine-forty in the evening of Sunday, August 6, the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI entered into the peace of the Lord. Although his health had deteriorated noticeably in the last few months, no one expected such a brusque end. It seems that the only one aware of his imminent death was the Pope himself. He made many allusions to death's proximity, but always peacefully, as one who knows he is completely in the gentle hands of the Father.

The Church has lost an extraordinary pastor; humanity has lost an exceptional guide and moral authority in a convulsed world of growing violence and diminishing religious feeling.

We cannot synthesize here the meaning of his pontificate. Worldwide mass media has portrayed well the spiritual and human figure of Paul VI. We grieve for the loss of a great man who was, at the same time, Father, Pastor and friend of all men, sensitive to sorrow and injustice, trying to give back to mankind the image of God made flesh for us.

As members of the CLC, we especially lament the loss of the Pope who approved our General Principles and who showed such affection for and interest in this movement of laymen and laywomen. He himself was a Sodality member. The audience that we had with him - especially the warm reception during our formation course and General Assembly of 1973 (at Castel Gandolfo) and in November, 1976, after Manila, when he received in special audience the newly elected members of the Executive Council - were unforgettable occasions during which we were made vividly aware of one of the characteristics of our spirituality: "sentire cum ecclesia".

Our sorrow is shared not only among ourselves but with all Christians of the world, feeling the vacuum, the absence of a Successor of Peter, the living presence of Christ's Vicar.

Together with sorrow and sadness the Lord offers us the opportunity to reflect for a moment on the Pope and a chance for a brief examination of conscience, reviewing our personal attitudes towards him. How many superficial judgments, perhaps, in our conversations, human judgments which might have earned the hard words of the Lord: Depart from me! But we also have the grace of time to repent, to begin to think and act "secundum spiritum" instead of "secundum carnem".

Sorrow for this loss, yes; legitimate sadness because we have lost a Father and Pastor. But we are also filled with a great hope. The Lord has not left us orphans; a brief moment "after which you will see me again". Yes, this is certainly the reason for our hope: when the Conclave, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will return into our midst the Successor of Peter, the new Pope. It is a time of joyful waiting and hoping, of fervent prayers that the Lord will send us His chosen one to guide us, to help us to become better members of the Church, a purified and renewed Church that will lead us to Truth.

Thank you, Paul VI, for your fifteen years of untiring service for the Church and for mankind. Thank you for having left us a splendid legacy deeper than mere words. Thank you for your nearness to all men and women of good will. Thank you, above all, for a radical witness that encourages us in our own lives to reduce the difference between what we profess and what we do.

And thank you, Lord, for the new Pope, your representative on earth. Thank you, because once more we are participating in your mystery of death and resurrection, that mystery that lies between sorrow and hope.

Justo G. TARRÍO

Rome, August 7, 1978.

THE SENSE OF THE CHURCH
IN THE LIGHT OF A PONTIFICATE

The death of a pope brings to mind and into focus the course of his past years at the head of the Church, his way of life, the specific efforts and significant events that marked his path.

At the moment of Paul VI's death, it is appropriate to recall the time of his pontificate in order to help us grasp more consciously his witness and, through him, to define our own sense of the Church more clearly. It is not a matter of painting a complete picture but of re-reading together; or better, of meditating the signs and the way in which he lived that have something to teach us.

In 1963 when Paul VI was elected, the Church found herself in full Council: an event that awakens great hope and opens an impressive future. Convened by his predecessor John XXIII, the new Pope resumes it, leads the Council to the end, then applies it day after day and translates it progressively into realities so that its spirit and its constitutions and decrees would pass into the life of the Church. Successor of an uninterrupted line of pastors, he receives the deposit of faith entrusted to him and takes up the responsibility to make it fruitful and to transmit it. Following Christ, he receives the mission and assumes it.

In the image of St. Paul whose name he adopted, the Pope widens the boundaries of the Church. Missionary Pope, Paul VI undertakes 9 great trips in five continents, including the ones among the non-Christian populations. He seeks contacts with "his parish" whose extension is the whole world. The destination of each journey is part of a whole program and, at the same time, an illustration of a live apostolic sensibility: Jerusalem (January 1964), Bombay (December 1964), New York, UN (October 1965), Fatima (May 1967), Constantinople (July 1967), Bogota (August 1968), Geneva (June 1969), Kampala (August 1969), Far East and Oceania: Manila, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Colombo, Sydney, Samoa (November-December 1970). In each of the trips, his concern to meet people and to announce the Gospel are virtually linked together.

The sense of the universal mission appears also in his numerous messages and encyclicals. How often he demands the development of people, the aid to the third world, the respect for life and human rights, the end of conflicts, progressive and multilateral disarmament! These objectives which interest the whole world he pursues effectively as an "expert in humanity" such that he himself presented them before the United Nations in 1965. Present in all sectors where humanity is being formed, he embodies the "Church in the world of our times". The pastoral constitution "Gaudium et Spes" finds in him the authorized echo of this desire of the Council for a Servant Church.

In the apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi" (1975), he gives us the perspective of the service of the Church:

"For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new'. But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel. The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the Message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs."

An action, therefore, at the service of the renewal of humanity. An action, also, at the service of the "areas of humanity that are to be transformed". Paul VI continues:

"For the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation."

This example and this teaching provide us with a formative theme, of great clarity and precision, to hold up to our own apostolic efforts, so that we can test the sense of the Church that inspires our activity. It is good to take some time out for an evaluation, both personal and communitarian, in which we place side by side this universal mission of the Church and our own subjective response as individual members and as a Christian Life Community. The truth of our missionary witness will be discovered by the measure of agreement.

A pilgrim on the highways of the world, present to human needs, faithful custodian of the pledge entrusted to him, Paul VI manifested by striking gesture his immense love for the Church. He spent himself relentlessly in the difficult labour of setting in motion reform and renewal so that "there may shine on all men the light of Christ which the Church reflects" (LG 1). The same unremitting labour he dedicated to reconciliation within the Church. The quest for unity brought him to the Mount of Olives to meet Athenagoras, the Patriarch of Constantinople. He took up many initiatives in the ecumenical area because he suffered from the wound in the Mystical Body of Christ. He took up and extended the task of John XXIII. To the Secretariate for Christian Unity, established by his predecessor, he added the Secretariate for Non-Christian Religions and the Secretariate for Non-Believers. Through these decisions and actions looking to the future there breaks through that same sense of universality which is the attribute of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. *"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one."* (John 17:20-21).

Great lines and profound attitudes which orient a pontificate and find their echo again in his testament:

"And most important of all, on taking my leave of this earthly scene, and going to face the judgment and mercy of God, there are so many things I should say, indeed so many. On the state of the Church: let her give ear to some words of ours which we uttered on her behalf seriously and lovingly. On the Council: let it be brought to a good conclusion, and let its prescriptions be put into effect. As regards ecumenism: the approach to the separated Brethren must go on,

with great understanding and patience, with great love; but without deflecting from the true Catholic doctrine. As regards the world: one must not think to help it by following its ways of thought, its habits and tastes, but by studying it, loving it and serving it."

The glorious achievement of Paul VI, however, is not just a matter of striking gestures, shrewd measures, setting in motion the decisions of the Council. It is much more truly and completely a matter of the kind of man he was - simple, humble, patient. The servant Church was embodied in him, the servant of the servants. A poverty marked by hardship and trial. His implementation of the Council decisions did not meet universal acceptance; it awoke lack of comprehension and resistance, as well as impatience with the slow pace of reform. A careful listener in a very difficult historical juncture, Paul VI will always be the man of dialogue who kept moving forward in the renewal he began, taking pains to avoid scandalising one extreme and discouraging the other.

Tied up with the profound transformation brought about by his pastoral, political and diplomatic initiatives, there appears a new style, a style that brought the Pope close to people.

This may be a suitable occasion to recall the words which he addressed to the Christian Life Communities when he welcomed the Executive Council on January 15, 1972:

"We encourage you to realize ever more completely that concern of yours which I am happy to quote from your General Principles: 'sentire cum Ecclesia'. Dear sons and daughters, keep alive that deep and faithful love for the Church, this openness to her pastoral works, this insertion in the ecclesial communities of which you are a part and to which you contribute what may be your special characteristic: your continuous dependence, as on a source, on Christ and His paschal mystery, under the patronage of Mary."

We call to mind these words to throw light on the example that was given to us through the fifteen years of his pontificate, so that we may bring a keener awareness and a more ready generosity to the mission of the Church in the world of this age.

José GSELL

POPULORUM PROGRESSIO And Its Relevance To
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER*

1. 1967. The Encyclical "Populorum Progressio" (PP), for which the way was paved by "Gaudium et Spes", "Pacem in Terris" and "Mater et Magistra", quite naturally echoed that active hope which had been raised and symbolized by the movement for the "development of peoples". It contributed certain prophetic intuitions:

- it was a plea for concrete action towards man's complete development and the development of all mankind;
- it was a plea for all men and peoples to be the responsible architects of their own development; a plea to find the source of all life, the center of cohesion and control, and the driving force toward universal solidarity in each man and each human culture.

* Published by the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace in "Brief Notes", February 12, 1977.

2. 1977. The climate and the outlook have radically changed. The path that had been opened up with a certain degree of euphoria has produced some unpleasant surprises. People are having second thoughts faced with a task that is wider-ranging and more complex than anyone could have foreseen. The theme of development is no longer a driving force. For several years the poor countries have been endeavoring to replace it with a more ambitious notion (and symbol): *The New International Order* (NIO). The U.N. has given its official blessing. All the important international gatherings rally to the call. Throughout the world the most famous research institutes and organizations are devoting studies and seminars to it, but... public opinion is largely unaffected by it.

3. Bringing "*Populorum Progressio*" up to date means that we must first dispel the gloom that has set in. The core intuitions of PP, the reflexion and the actions of the Holy See and the local Churches have played an active role in creating the idea expressed by the symbol NIO. They can therefore work fruitfully on common ground.

- Too vague an idea, some will claim. But was the idea of development any less vague in 1967?

- Too disrupting, others will say, since the idea makes no bones about moving in the direction of a far reaching remodelling of the behavior and structures of international society. When dealing with the idea of "development" it was still at least possible to keep the comforting feeling of universalising existing models, without upsetting things too much. This may well be, but not if one reads PP faithfully: "development demands bold transformations, innovations that go deep" (No. 32), and a "conscience that conveys a new message for our times" (No. 47). This was expressed among other ideas through a critical and unequivocal estimate of prevailing ideas about property (Nos. 22-24), liberal capitalism (Nos. 25, 56 and ff.), violence (Nos. 30 & 31), and nationalism (No. 62); it advocated a positive orientation towards organic programs and solidarity (Nos. 33, 50-55), but not complete collectivization or arbitrary planning (No. 33), and urged the raising of the moral standards of the competitive market making it more human (No. 61).

4. Although PP was oriented towards the provision of service to the poor countries to enable them to shape their own development themselves, it stressed the duties and the tasks incumbent on the rich countries, in the cause of solidarity. *In this regard, the Encyclical mainly develops its thinking on the basis of the duties incumbent on the rich countries.* With NIO, and in the absence of any proposals from the rich countries, the poor countries are taking the initiative and demanding from now on a greater say in and power over their own development and over the reconstruction of a world order. By adopting this approach, the Church should be in a position to *follow up and further develop its thinking on the basis of the responsibilities, rights and duties of the poor countries.*
5. PP was principally an appeal intended to *awaken people's consciences.* And it was, of course, an appeal raised to *enlighten people's minds and direct their endeavors towards the real-life situations of today's world.* An encyclical does not set out to vie with the analyses of the various social sciences that are attempting to describe a given situation and pick out the evolutionary forces at work within it. It is expected to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the findings of these sciences to be able to develop its teaching in terms of the real-life situation. PP was very much in touch with the concrete problems of its time.

But since then, the situation has changed greatly. It is for the Christian communities, in the very spirit of PP itself, to take a fresh look at it to see how the intuitions contained in PP (or other documents of the Magisterium) may be developed further. Among the striking facts which have occurred or which have had repercussions of unthought-of extent in the past ten years are:

- the experience of *famine* in various regions (Sahel) and the spectre of new threats of famine which brutally demand of us, not to give up the idea of "development", but to direct our actions and thinking towards giving priority to directly providing the most basic needs; this was clearly perceived by PP (No.1, 45);

- concern about the *environment* and the *supply of energy and raw materials* which make it clear that it is not possible to envisage generalizing about development models that are largely based on waste; on the contrary, what is required is to re-think these models in the rich countries themselves, much more searchingly than one could possibly have foreseen in the heady atmosphere of ten years ago;
- the rapid succession of monetary *crises* and the experience of general economic crisis which has reached proportions unheard-of since the war, bringing both inflation and unemployment; all this has created the material and psychological conditions which hardly encourage any new initiatives; the optimism of the sixties, reflected in PP, has been undermined by the effects of these;
- to this one must add the widespread *political malaise*, slim or uncertain majorities are limiting or even inhibiting (in the pre-electoral period) the possibilities of the rich countries' governments; violence and the attacks on human rights in every continent are creating a feeling of insecurity and nervousness - and this includes the field of international relations - which very often distract attention away from the great tasks of development.

The necessary appeal to people's consciences can only be made if it lucidly takes account of these new situations, if it opens up the most far-reaching motivations (clearly set out in PP, for example under nos. 3, 5, 15-23, 44-45, and 66) and if, at the same time, it finds a way of speaking the language of hard work, *audacity*, renunciation - those sources of *joie de vivre* and endeavor which are too often overlooked.

6. The scope and complexity of the field opened up by the development decades naturally lead people to think in terms of seeking out a *global approach* to the problems involved. The idea of an "*integrated program*" is a

constituent feature of NIO. PP foresaw this very clearly (Nos. 50 and ff.). The poor countries quite rightly feel that if advances are made on all fronts as far as they can at one time, then with the benefits being set off against the sacrifices, the present state of reluctance will be overcome. They also feel, and for the same reasons, that this is the way to maintain and foster cohesion among themselves, to have a greater say in wielding power and to obtain fairer and more advantageous terms with regard to indebtedness contracts. The very controversial idea of a world fund as a practical means of setting up this integrated program was already explicitly mentioned in PP (Nos. 51 and ff.). This does not mean that the religious authorities are unaware of the real difficulties involved in setting up such a Fund. In no way do they claim to be able to offer a definite solution to them, this can only be reached after negotiations between the parties concerned.

To make any headway towards a global approach it will be necessary to make fresh progress in the structures of international organizations and in the very conception of world powers. These are decisive matters and the hesitation is both great in the practice and in the theoretical research involved. The Church's thinking broached in "Pacem in Terris" (chapter 4) and "Gaudium et Spes" (Nos. 83 and ff.), needs to be followed up. Not so much from a concrete organizational point of view, but rather in a renewed effort to make the basic notions of the unity of the human family and of "socialization" (in the sense of "Mater et Magistra", part II, Chapter 2, and "Pacem in Terris", Chapter 4) more active in people's hearts, and to convince people of the need to give organic and effective expression to the examples of international solidarity which have already been encountered or which need help in being developed ("Pacem in Terris", chapter 4).

7. In practice, while we talk so much about this "global approach", we see that in fact, to a certain extent, it is the *contrary that is happening*. The great powers are hardly likely to sit back and see their worldwide economic and financial power being eroded, nor the basis upon which they rely to retain it: their *national sovereignty*. For their part, the poor countries retort that they want total and exclusive sovereignty over their commodities and assets, their national economies

and over their political and social options: this is the *nationalistic* phase which they feel to be necessary to safeguard their chances of building their own personality.

In such a climate it is difficult to expect very much substantial progress in the idea of world solidarity. But the picture is not completely negative. Behind the rigidity of these formulae and the ambiguous motives involved, it may simply be that people are becoming more aware of the fact that the development of peoples and of human solidarity is not primarily a question of setting up vast, centralized bureaucracies, but needs to be based on peoples who are truly masters of their own destiny and capable of creating their own personality in line with their various cultures. The theme of *self-reliance* has a very positive significance, basically. For the time being we should just like to state that the wealth of the Church's teaching on the principle of subsidiarity, intermediary bodies, property and the values of nationhood may be able to throw some light on the question of self-reliance and at the same time make this an occasion for a fruitful re-reading with new developments for itself.

Today's insistence on self-reliance may once again show the value of so much simple and unambitious effort that was made in the past in the cause of human advancement and which one particular school of thought tended to write off, claiming that everything needed to be rigorously integrated in a global approach and an official ideology.

8. Something that is too often forgotten when discussing PP is that when it talks about integral development the Encyclical resolutely puts the accent upon *the filial relationship with God in the love of Jesus Christ* as the source, the end and the constituent dimension of a total humanism (Nos. 16, 21, & 75). The task to be undertaken demands more than economic and technological growth. More than moral endeavor, even. What is needed is to add a truly spiritual impetus, by opening up to the Spirit of God present at the heart of human history. From now on human beings in whatever situation they may be in, and without waiting for liberation or human advancement to come to them first,

Roger HECKEL, S.J.

- 15

DAILY PERSONAL PRAYER

"We are convinced that personal prayer and spiritual guidance are essential if we are to seek and find God in all things" (GP no.4).

Sounds marvellous, doesn't it? gives you a nice warm holy feeling just to read it. But, if you're new to CLC and you try to put it into daily practise then all sorts of questions come to mind. Why? Where? When? For how long? What? and HOW, above all HOW?

After 20 years in the Movement, 14 of them married to Margaret who is also a member and now sharing with her in the raising of our 3 children, I've come up with some of my answers which may be of interest to you. Note, I say, my answers, they may not suit you, but they may help you towards yours.

Why do we try to pray daily? Briefly, to get to KNOW Christ, not to get to know about Christ, we're not trying to become Scripture scholars or theologians, we're just trying to get to know Our Lord as a real person in our lives.

OK so we accept the reason for trying now, where do we do all this praying? I say do it wherever is most convenient to you. It might be somewhere in your home, or walking to work or school or on a bus or perhaps in a convenient church but, wherever you choose, make it a regular place that you can use most days and keep to it.

The same attitude should, I think, apply to WHEN you pray. In the morning if, like me, you find it easier to pray then rather than late at night, or sometime during your dinner break might be more convenient. But again, whatever time you choose, try to keep to it every day. You might have to make some adjustments for weekends but again if you can make it the same adjustment every weekend then you can get into a routine where your day revolves around

your prayer time rather than just fitting in a prayer 'slot' as and when it is convenient. It is a matter of giving prayer some priority in your life.

The amount of time you devote to this prayer will increase as you get more used to it. Five minutes can be a long stretch when you first start, eventually half an hour isn't long enough. Set yourself a minimum time you will set aside for God each day, suppose we say fifteen minutes after you've been trying for about a year, and, within reason, keep to that whatever happens. If the house catches fire or the baby falls out of its pram consider yourself excused, but don't let it happen too often.

Of course I'm not saying that the only time we pray during the day is during this prayer 'slot'. One member at a recent CLC gathering said she didn't think she prayed very much but that during the day she often just talked to God about the things she was doing or that were going on around her. This beautifully illustrated something Fr. East well said at the same meeting, that lay people were too modest about their prayer lives and that in fact they often pray far more than they think they do.

Now, what do we pray about? For me the main source has to be the Gospels. Here you meet Christ in person, He speaks directly to you. He can inspire you to prayer ... prayers of praise, adoration, thanksgiving, sorrow or supplication, and that's the whole point of the passage to, as it were, give you 'lift off' into praying... talking to God.

Other parts of Scripture can, of course, be used as can some of the more common prayers. It's amazing how the word OUR at the start of one common prayer (no prizes for guessing which one) can quickly lead you into praise and thanksgiving, or sorrow.

Spiritual books can be used but you have to be very firm with yourself otherwise you find you have spent all your prayer time in reading, and that was not the object of the exercise.

Having chosen the subject of our prayer how do we go about praying? The first thing I do is to become aware of

all the things that are likely to distract me during my prayer time and pray quickly about them and so put them more easily out of my mind. Things like the traffic, or the children in the next room, or some particular ache or pain. Then, because I pray in the morning I make my morning offering. If you pray at other times then that's out, so you can go straight onto asking his help in the meditation you are about to do. If Our Lady or any of the Apostles are involved in the passage it's not a bad idea to have a word with them too.

Alright, you've done all these things and you're ready to start, now what do you do? One of the simplest ways is just to read the passage through slowly to get an overall impression of it, then re-read it stopping whenever anything strikes you and talk to Our Lord about it or just respond with some specific type of prayer, i.e. praise, thanksgiving, etc. You may find you spend all your prayer time on the first sentence, that's fine, there's no prizes for reading the most Scripture.

Another idea is to put yourself in the place of someone, real or imaginary, in a particular scene and live through the scene as that person. For instance a few weeks ago I was meditating on the Transfiguration trying to see it through the eyes of St. John, I looked up and saw Christ in Glory and of course that led me straight into prayers of praise and adoration. That was, for me, one of the rare occasions when I somehow stop being someone else in the scene and become myself present there able to react as myself. That, of course, is something you can set out to do right from the start if you want to.

Doing a mini gospel enquiry on the passage is worth trying too, ask yourself such questions as:

- What was Christ teaching through this passage 2000 years ago?
- What is Christ teaching through this passage now?
- How does this affect me?
- What am I going to do about it?

Taking a common prayer to pieces and pondering individual phrases can be really fruitful as I've already said and, as a development of that, taking a Canon of the Mass as your subject can add to your appreciation of it at future masses. The 'read slowly and prayerfully' method is the only one I can think of for this type of meditation.

Prayer, I have said, is talking to God, but that implies that God might want to talk back to us, so how do we fit that in? Listening is, I am sure, one of the most difficult but most important parts of our prayer life and I, for one, am not very good at it. Of course God talks to us all day in many ways, through people we meet or through situations we find ourselves in but let's just think, for the moment, of trying to listen to Him during our prayer time. Being still, emptying my mind, just 'being' are, for me, not just difficult, they're impossible so I get as near a listening pose as I can by just sitting still and saying, or rather thinking, the words 'Lord Jesus' in time with my breathing. Not perfect but it is all I can manage at the moment. I would certainly like to hear of any other methods people use to achieve this listening to God.

Distractions are an old but very powerful difficulty in any quiet prayer situation. The only way I know of dealing with them is to pray about them and then get back to the real subject of your prayer. You may have to repeat this action several times but don't worry about that, the main thing is, keep on praying, don't stop because you keep having distractions.

The same advice is applicable to a far more serious prayer problem, dryness. The biggest problem here is that you feel hypocritical, here you are trying to pray and you couldn't care less about it, you haven't a holy thought in your head so why go on kidding yourself. Now here is where you start to pray the 'prayer of presence' that is, your prayer consists in just being there for the time you have set yourself and in effect saying to Our Lord, "here I am Lord, at your disposal, I can't pray, I don't even want to pray but here I am, use me." You are praying for God's sake now, not for your own.

That's all I have to say, for the present at any rate, on private prayer. Some of it you may agree with, some you may think a lot of nonsense. That's fine, but will you share your views with all of us, so that we can all learn from each other. We can have a written Listening Group on prayer in the columns of Focus.

John PARTRIDGE

MEETING OF THE DELEGATES OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
April 21-23, 1978: Munich-Fürstenreid

Once a year, all the leaders of the different CLC groups in Germany meet for an encounter of the Delegates of the National Federation. This year the meeting took place at the Retreat House in Munich-Fürstenreid from April 21 to 23.

The communities of the National Federation are very different from each other with regards to their origin and their internal structure; therefore, the delegates' assembly, far from being homogeneous, was streaked with varied colors: youth representatives and representatives of adult communities, priests and lay people, single and married, men or women originally from the Sodalties who have joined the CLC, but also others who have only recently come to know about it. This diversity of experiences and of horizons has the advantage of eliminating partiality of judgments about our reality, but on the other hand, such an encounter only with difficulty responds to the expectations of the participants.

The goal of the meeting this year can be summed up in three points as follows:

1. Election of the new National Council
2. Evaluation of the development of our situation after meeting of the delegates in 1977, in relation to the problems discussed then: the question of animating and guiding the groups; faith and justice; style of life, etc.
3. Orientation for subsequent work.

In order to deal with such an extensive program, small work groups, each with 6 participants, were quickly formed. The formation of these groups was made easy by a kind of game: a portion of the texts about the general themes were written on small cards. Each of the participants drew one card and then had to seek the partner whose card carried the complementary part. Frequently words alone were not enough to evoke the general themes because a good number of the participants could not find their partner except with the help of the whole text. All in all, this set the Assembly moving and the atmosphere, which at the start was much guided and "official", became amicable and trusting, as was more appropriate for the meeting.

The development of the meeting can be best understood only by its internal dynamics, which is proper to the style of life of our communities: to see, to discern, to decide, to respond. However, the preparation and the carrying out of the election of the new council showed the difficulty of incarnating in deeds this style of life.

From the first afternoon, the candidates had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the work groups and to converse with them in the foyer. The election took place during the last day of the meeting, after a long period of prayer, reflection, and dialogue among the delegates. The election followed the ordinary rules of democracy, and the decision was taken by a majority vote cast in secret ballots. Of the five candidates, four obtained the absolute majority necessary, the fifth lacked a little.

Zita Klöfer was elected as vice-president by a majority of votes. Walter Fincke remains as the President since the election of the president does not take place until next year.

The question of wanting to know if an election, as a result of discernment, can be made without secret ballots, was brought to the floor.

The second problem of the meeting of the delegates - the evaluation of the developments of the past year and the orientation of the new - was also entered upon in the spirit of discernment and of decision.

The very intensive exchange in the small groups about small, concrete steps taken in relation to the question of faith and justice, of style of life, etc. made during the past year, revealed a great number of encouraging examples. This showed that the question of style of life has become central in all the CLC communities and that it will remain so.

The young are specially in continuous search of a style of life that refuses to be identified with consumerism and prestige. On this point it was remarked that the search of the young should be associated with the practical experience of adults in order to avoid useless mistakes.

The results of the reflections of the small groups were written on posters and presented in the plenary session. After a time of prayer and individual reflection, the delegations had the chance to discuss the problems related to future work. This point needed more time.

The climax of the meeting of the delegates was the eucharistic celebration together, immediately after the exchanges in the session with the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the National Federation, Mgr. Joseph Stimpfle, of Augsburg.

In addition to these high points of the meeting I appreciated very much the numerous personal dialogues with some participants. I was deeply impressed in particular to learn from an Indian priest, Fr. Sidney D'Souza, that the same style of life, the same Ignatian spirituality that strengthens us to live in our CLC communities, also gives to the persons of a country so far away as India, freedom in the service of God and that it helps them to surmount suffering. Also, I experienced the openness and cordiality of the members of the CLC whom until then I had not known. Finally, in the communal meditation of the Sacred Scripture and above all in the Eucharistic celebration, I felt anew the presence and the action of the Holy Spirit in our communities.

All this, expressing the experiences of a living community, was possible only because from the beginning the whole meeting was inspired by the search for the will of God.

Wolfgang SCHMUSCH

GOOD NEWS FROM ASUNCION (PARAGUAY)

A youth group, composed of 14 students, 6 workers and employees, 2 seminarians and 1 brother, started out in 1976. Founded on solid base, with a clear vision of what CLC is, its program of formation is inspired by and follows the steps given in the "Survey of Formation". Its assistant informs us that among the 20 youth members, from ages 20 - 25, 7 have religious vocations and the others have reached the point of forming new groups where they are the group guides. *"He who sows well reaps much"*.

CLC TAKES ROOTS IN BARCELONA

For me it all began about three years ago in 1976 when Juan Marti Tusquets, S.J. invited me to conduct formation courses at the CLC Center, Forum Verges, Barcelona, Spain. I had not yet been in touch with CLC groups there but I was aware of the fact that several Jesuits were working for the renewal of the Sodalties through the establishment of new Christian Life Communities. I stayed for six weeks and the programs I conducted were basically those of initiation: personal growth, team building, community formation. I worked in close collaboration with Juan Marti Tusquets, sometimes conducting programs together with him. The enthusiastic response to the courses was more than encouraging. Several existing groups were strengthened in their resolve to continue meeting for mutual support, growth and fuller living, while new groups also came into existence.

In 1977 I was again invited to Barcelona. Existing groups were in the process of defining their objectives, searching for a way of life, and for the seven weeks that I was there I worked again with Juan Marti to consolidate

these groups. We also initiated new groups...the numbers, the requests, especially by those who were eager for personal growth programs, were more than we could cope with.

During my last visit, January/February 1978, we saw the results of steady growth in the groups that had continued meeting regularly with Fr.Juan Marti as their Moderator. A clarity of vision was evident, as well as a desire for greater fullness. Consequently I conducted the Spiritual Exercises for those who wanted them. There were 14 retreatants in all and their experience was the climax of their maturation in depth and intensity with the passage of time. The Spiritual Exercises gave meaning to whatever had been theretofore initiated. The enthusiasm of the retreatants was so contagious that when I left Barcelona in April, 1978, I had the satisfaction of seeing that more people were keenly interested in experiencing the Exercises, which meant that CLC was more firmly established in Barcelona.

Reflecting on my experience in Spain, I see a similarity between what happened there and what we witness in India where CLC has gradually taken roots. The approach has been more or less the same, the integration of the human and the spiritual as one total reality. On an average, we have seen that the removal of psychological blocks facilitates to a great extent, an openness to the spiritual experience and helps in the process of making a retreat experience of the exercise a more lasting, integrated reality in the life of the individual...a way of life.

Oriol PUJOL s.j.
(India)

SMALL COUNTRY, GREAT HOPES

From December 10th to the 20th, 1977, we had our first FORMATION COURSE in Lesotho. Twenty-four of us were given the chance to enjoy this first experience.

It was presented to us by the CLC team of Lesotho, two of whom had experienced the Formation Courses held in Manila '76.

His Lordship, Bishop Paul Khoarai of the Diocese of Leribe opened the Session with words of very warm welcome and encouragement. The session took place at the St. Joseph's Seminary in Leribe, since we still do not have a CLC center. Religious and lay people took part in it and we were happy to know one another and appreciated this chance of getting together. We were indeed of one mind and one heart, oriented towards the same vision.

The different aspects and questions were gradually introduced to us as days passed by; these were:

- Why have I come here?
- What is the spirit required by the CLC? Does it resemble the "Fiat" in the Annunciation in any way?
- Awareness of Reality around us: a challenge, need of CLC
- the key of the CLC: human, apostolic, spiritual integration
- Formation of CLC groups
 - * Initiation Stage : Pre-confidence phase
 - * The Stage of Taking Roots : the problem of evil
 - * Stage of Deepening
- IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST and commitment
- Other questions, evening evaluations.

All the sessions were held in a climate of prayer and wholesome interactions. During those days, time for reflection was also given.

Now we understand our role as assistants better and we hope that someday we will be able to have Formation Courses with CLC leaders of other federations.

We praise the Lord for this experience, one of the most enriching of our lives.

Sister Rose-Mary, s.c.o.
(Lesotho)

AN IMPORTANT WEEKEND

The Ascension Weekend, May 3 to 7, was a vital landmark in the history of the CLC in South Africa. Forty-six young CLC leaders from all over the country converged at Koinonia - the CLC National Secretariate and Community Center - to participate in both our first National Leadership Course for young people and the election of our first National Executive Council.

The leaders, young men and women from all race groups, came from as far as Durban, Port Elizabeth, Welkom and Pietersburg. Their goal: to grow together as a team so as to be better able to elect the first National Executive Council.

During the first two and a half days a team of six adults together with Sr. Eugene-Marie, the National Promoter, led the young people to experience deep personal prayer in order to help the participants to get in touch with Christ, with themselves and with their neighbours.

This was followed by an experiential leadership seminar. Input on various aspects of leadership was followed by personal reflection and then small group sharing. Exercises and role-plays also demonstrated to all the need for sensitive, well-trained leaders.

On the last day the participants from the various regions were invited for the election. From the forty-six present, six people - two women and four men - were elected to represent the various regions in the National Executive Council. It will now be their responsibility to help coordinate the work of the young people and to oversee the continuing growth and development of the groups both nationally and locally with whatever assistance they might need from the National Secretariate.

Greg LOURINS
(South Africa)

ENCOUNTER AND COMMON REFLECTION CLC-IBMV*

For the first time, in a session held from March 18th to the 22nd, 1978, a meeting was organized with the Marie-Ward Sisters who, in order to reflect on the problems of their new orientation, wanted to have a dialogue with the CLC on: similarities with regards to Ignatian Spirituality, possibility of common efforts... also, problems of action on youth with the CLC.

The session was carefully prepared and the guiding team was composed of: Fr. Paulussen, S.J. from Rome, Hildegard Ehardt from Augsburg, Fr. Franz-Reinhard - parish priest of Hörtzhausen. Marianne Milde, responsible for the youth CLC, and Mathilde Krumbachner, the leader last year and now member of the National Council, were at the disposal of the Sisters during the whole session; the sisters were able to profit from their practical experiences. One afternoon, 4 CLC members had the opportunity to share their experience in the CLC; they were a countrywoman - mother of 3 children, a diocesan priest, a theology student and a social worker and catechist who is actually an IBMV novice.

The report of Sister Ortrud Braun, Provincial of the IBMV, gives a personal account of these days:

"For the 58 Marie-Ward Sisters coming from 9 different provinces of our Institute to Augsburg, these days were precious: the days delivered what the program promised.

The session made possible a lively encounter with the CLC guiding team. Never was there an impression that the program was just mere words nor was there a need to insist that it be taken seriously. On the contrary, a vital spirit was manifested everywhere, the witness of persons who, in ordinary life, seized by Christ, are trying hard to follow Him. Besides the witness of the leaders, I would like to

*IBMV: Congregation of the Religious of the Blessed Virgin Mary; foundress - Marie Ward.

add that it served as a true encounter for the Sisters. Often we are afraid to talk to each other about spiritual things. These days enabled us to experience with joy that, through some discreet manner and careful efforts, openness and freedom to share in words and prayer were finally possible. Until the end of the session, the guiding team and the Sisters were in harmony with the Lord. Based on this, good work was done. These days also stimulated us to real reflection.

The methods and possibilities for action presented to us were not always new for some, especially for the Sisters who have already been actively working with the CLC during the year. Nevertheless, the multiple possibilities brought to all an enrichment: we rediscovered that the words of our Foundress were in perfect agreement. I particularly appreciated the fact that one does not resort to intelligence alone but addresses oneself to the whole person; the psycho-biological energies were awoken and even bodily expression was not lacking - thanks to some exercises -, which were for some of us truly a new experience."

1978 WORLD CLC DAY

We continue to receive news about the different celebrations occasioned by the WORLD CLC DAY. Each National Federation has lived it in its own way, in union with the CLC's throughout the world. The brief account that follows shows how this day can be a celebration, a deepening, a communion. It is that of the CLC's of Bavaria which made this an occasion to be reunited with all (N.D.L.R.).

The World CLC Day enabled us to experience once more that this day is not only an opportunity to be more aware of the solidarity with the World Community but also that it gives us, at the same time, the occasion to reinforce the link among the members of the local level.

Sometime ago, "we" - says an adult CLC group in the neighborhood of Augsburg - tried to make the contact, which had been somewhat paralyzed, - with the CLC's of the city and of the diocese. Two years ago we succeeded by meeting together to listen to Fr. Sidney D'Souza talk to us about Seva Niketan and about the CLC's in India. The World CLC Day, then seemed to us to be a good occasion to be united with one another; the theme of the day itself spoke in favor of a common effort that affected our groups.

For this reason, therefore, this year we did not limit ourselves only to the groups in the diocese but we also invited all the other groups in the vicinity (Augsburg, Kaufbeuren, Munich, Eichstätt). They came to Augsburg on April 16, 1978, where we met in the spacious premises of a school that enabled us to have a lively participation as the day rolled on.

Besides the fact that we have small rooms at our disposal, we had a large hall that made it possible for us to organize a mini-exposition. An idea about the World Federation was given through pictures, maps and many other materials; this awakened a great interest among the 40 participants.

But the World Community was much more directly represented by the presence of Clara Julia Migliaro who had stayed on in Augsburg for a few days on her way back after the meeting of the Executive Council. For an hour, she - together with Hildegard Ehardt - was given the opportunity to answer some questions about the situation in other countries and particularly in Argentina and in Latin America. Zita Klöffler (from the National Council of Germany) presented the different branches of the German CLC (Diocesan Federations of adults, youth and student groups). A sign of mutual sharing, of "give and take", with the world community, ought to consist also in financial sharing for the World Federation: the Our Father was printed in six languages (of five continents) - among them Tagalog and Hindi - on cards which were "bought" with enthusiasm.

Within this framework where the world view was enlarged, work in small groups of six participants about the theme of the day "Incarnation: the YES to Human Dignity", theme of inexhaustible and worldwide scale, took place. Where did we start?

We proposed to deal with it in two steps: the morning should help us analyze the situation: how are human dignity and human rights present today in us, in our country, in other countries? Instead of a complete analysis, a great vitality and diversity of insights on the different aspects surfaced in the exchange of experiences in small groups which were very heterogeneous with regards to their background and points of view. To avoid the danger of falling into theorization, the exchanges and discussions emerged from an exercise: by means of photographs (each one was asked to choose 2 or 3 that seemed to him/her to be significant of the theme and to explain to others his/her choice) and by written meditation on the proverb "Most men, in order to be happy, use their neighbour as an anvil". The afternoon, much more than the morning, was situated in an atmosphere of mutual stimulation arising from the question: "Where do we see in ourselves the beginning of acquiescing to this YES of God to human dignity, to work for more justice, freedom and sensitivity...?" The realization of this, which each one recognized as a call, will be pursued in his/her own life and in the local group.

This day was but a beginning, which was made evident when we viewed the film "The Parable" (from the Pastoral Council of Protestant Churches in New York) as a preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist. The human form and action of Christ appeared in some ways under the guise of a clown who takes the place of others and risks his life. The consternation that it gave to the participants in the plenary session that followed showed how this movie presented the significance of the Incarnation as the YES of God to human dignity; it also showed what it means to follow Christ along this road. With this, the celebration of the Eucharist brought the day to a close. It was a day not only full of thanksgiving for the encounter and the unity experienced with the other CLCs but also a day marked by a sincere prayer that our Lord breaks through our resistances in His own way - so that his YES might be continued and pursued by us.

NEWS FROM WALLOON, BELGIUM

A year ago a work group was formed to try to come up with some points on doctrine and methods important for the guiding teams. It met on several occasions. The aim - to coordinate efforts, strengthen bonds both on the national and international level and to facilitate sharing.

The participants worked very arduously, taking into account the vastness and complexity of the matter dealt with, and also the richness and diversity of a spiritual experience grown over the years which needs adequate adaptation in the light of the signs of the times.

In May 1978, at La Plante, a short but fruitful meeting made a course of action clear to us. The project and the program (foreseen a year before) of a more substantial session was agreed upon. This six day session would present all the essential aspects of a CLC.

The session encountered many difficulties. It was scheduled for a period of six full days at the beginning of July, the start of the holidays after a tiresome school year. Each one's calendar had already been planned out. This could have discouraged even persons of good will. Nevertheless, all agreed to carry out the session fully, and a group of 13 regular participants gathered.

That is why we met at Ittre. The program was familiar to all; it was planned at La Plante and information about that meeting was distributed to the participants.

Although heavy, the program was fully followed. Eleven subjects (of the twelve, two were combined) were amply treated starting from thorough and basic exposition or from appropriate questions. These followed three guidelines accepted at the beginning:

- a) recalling the doctrine of the Council;
- b) maintaining the spirituality of the Exercises;
- c) seeking a concrete pedagogy to apply at the CLC level.

The program was thus, in short, a complete reflection for our teams on basic doctrine and pedagogies.

It is materially impossible to summarize this work within the limits of these pages. Fifty pages would not be enough to give a full account. It was therefore decided that it would be best to present the contents little by little (after the basic reports have been received) rather than to burden the guides with the weight of a massive report.

* * *