

PROGRESSIO

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

NOVEMBER 1978
47th Year
N.6

S U M M A R Y

- THE UNEXPECTED 3
- "HAVE NO FEAR, OPEN WIDE THE DOORS
FOR CHRIST" 5
- WHAT - A SELF PRESENTATION?
(Sidney D'SOUZA S.J.)..... 7

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

- INTEGRATING PRAYER AND DAILY LIFE
(Sr. Roberta WILLIAMS) 13
- CLC ROAD TO FREEDOM (Margaret REBELLO). 18
 - ADVENT: A RESPONSE TO THE KINGDOM
OF CHRIST (J.G.TARRIO S.J.) 21
 - CLC AND THE UNITED NATIONS
(Tom I. MONAHAN) 25
 - ECHOES..... 30

R O M E '79

VIII Assembly Of The General Council
Of The
WORLD FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES
8 - 18 September 1979

* *

Theme

TOWARDS A WORLD COMMUNITY
AT THE SERVICE OF ONE WORLD

THE UNEXPECTED

The sudden death of John Paul I, on the night of September 28, again exposes the emptiness of human predictions made on the occasion of his election. It again reminds us that God's ways are not our ways, that His means and measures are not ours, that His action keeps an opening to the unexpected.

Elected by the close of the first day of the Conclave the announcement did cause surprise. Most people knew almost nothing about Albino Luciani, Patriarch of Venice. Even his name had not figured on the list of "papabili". No, but ... "I have had your name engraved in the palm of My hands" (Is. 49.16) refers also to the Popes. This says it all!!

He took the name of John Paul I to show his desire to continue and make his very own the work begun by his predecessors...

"We wish to continue to put into effect the heritage of the second Vatican Council. Its wise norms should be followed out and perfected. We must be wary of that effort that is generous perhaps but unwarranted. It would not achieve the content and meaning of the Council. On the other hand, we must avoid an approach that is hesitant and fearful - which thus would not realize the magnificent impulse of the renewal and of life".
(1)

His public appearances sent out waves of hope and endearment: a simple bishop, whose goodness shines around and smile conquers. The poverty, learnt in childhood, became later a virtue willingly lived out and the very foundation of his admirable simplicity in dealing with simple people. There was no pretence in the style of his giving audiences. They merely radiated gospel-simplicity operative in the heart of every situation. Concerned with the sufferings of this world, he turned his attention towards humilty and humanity, trying to inject hope.

"My brothers and sisters - all people of the world! We are all obliged to work to raise the world to a condition of greater justice, more stable peace, more sincere cooperation. Therefore we ask and beg all - from the humblest who

are the connective fibres of nations to heads of state responsible for each nation - to work for a new order, one more just and honest.

A dawn of hope spreads over the earth, although it is sometimes touched by sinister merchants of hatred, bloodshed, and war with a darkness which sometimes threatens to obscure the dawn. This humble Vicar of Christ, who begins his mission in fear yet in complete trust, places himself in the disposal of the entire Church and all civil society. We make no distinction as to race or ideology but seek to secure for the world the dawn of a more serene and joyful day". (1)

This death, at the height of activity, at the start of a dynamic pontificate, reminds us that men may go but the mission of evangelization remains. Could this not be a thought for meditation given to us by John Paul I? The brevity of his pontificate turns our eyes towards that which lasts: The Church. Whatever be our feelings, of perplexity or of pain, the death of the Pope brings us back to the essential, to the building up of the Church for the service of the world. "A Church which, in the midst of Nations, is a sign of love and gratitude. A Church which is a call to unity and peace. A Church which, amidst the darkness and noise of the world, proclaims a life that is eternal" (2).

The shock of this sad event leads us to a disposition of deep faith. This alone sustains the pilgrim, and we are all pilgrims, on the road where God frequently manifests Himself through the unexpected.

J.G.

(1) From the first world message of John Paul I

(2) From the Homily of Cardinal Marty, 2nd October 1978.

"HAVE NO FEAR, OPEN WIDE THE DOORS FOR CHRIST"

It is the evening of October 16. The Square of St. Peter's is full of people. The dense crowd keeps watch, as with one eye, on the chimney of the Sistine chapel. Suddenly, there is a tremendous shout-from everyone at the same time. It's white smoke, beyond doubt. Slowly the door of the central balcony of the Basilica is opened and the joyous announcement rings aloud: "Habemus Papam". We have a Pope, young, from Poland, who takes the name: JOHN PAUL II.

"May Jesus Christ be praised" are the first words which the new Pope speaks to the people gathered before the Basilica. Is it the traditional greeting of a deeply christian nation or a reminder of the transcendent One whom we serve? "I was afraid to accept this nomination: But now I have done so in a spirit of obedience to Christ and hope in the Blessed Virgin".

Sunday, October 24: A morning ceremony of the inauguration of a new pontificate. A Pope, come from afar expresses himself in vibrant, energetic and convincing words. While addressing his greetings to the christian communities of the whole world, he goes beyond the "official" languages to use also Lituanian and Ukranian. At the same time, he reminds those listening to him that the Church is rooted in other human strata and cultures.

The highlight of his homily will be the confession of Peter: "You are Christ, the Son of the living God" And this grace of knowing Christ becomes a new and pressing call:

"Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept his power. Help the Pope and all those who wish to serve Christ and with Christ's power to serve the human person and the whole of mankind. Do not be afraid. Open wide the

doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows "what is in man". He alone knows it.

So often today man does not know what is within him, in the depths of his mind and heart. So often he is uncertain about the meaning of his life on this earth. He is assailed by doubt, a doubt which turns into despair. We ask you therefore, we beg you with humility and trust, let Christ speak to man. He alone has words of life, yes, of eternal life.

Precisely today the whole Church is celebrating "World Mission Day"; that is, she is praying, meditating and acting in order that Christ's words of life may reach all people and be received by them as a message of hope, salvation, and total liberation".

A powerful call which dispels tepidity, destroys laziness and drives away fear. A call which puts Christ back into the very centre of our faith. He it is who works in the heart of man, and in time and space. A call, which points to our being sent on a mission, which captures all reality within the 3 fundamental attitudes of prayer, meditation and action: "so that the words of life may go out from Christ to all men".

No one of us may remain insensitive to this call. It challenges each one, and all together as a community-cell of the Church. "Conscious that we are members of the Church, we participate in the liturgy, meditate upon the Scriptures, promote the doctrine, collaborate with the Pastors, share their concern for the problems and progress of mankind, alive to the situations in which the Church finds itself to day" (GP.5).

The dawn of a new pontificate invites each one of us, and the Christian Life Communities as a whole, to renew our commitment to service of the Church in our world. What is asked of us is that we open ourselves to Christ. Let Him work in us and through us bring about those world changes to which all men aspire.

* * *

At Manila '76, especially in the Youth Section of Formation Course III, the participants responsible for Youth CLC asked insistently that an international assistant be given to them. It was already clear - and recent developments only confirmed it - that Youth CLC had reached a phase of dynamism: great growth in membership, discovery of a pedagogy which is at the same time human and spiritual. The setting up of the International Youth Commission had further increased the awareness of the need of universal guide-lines and of competent assistants.

Fr. Sidney D'Souza, S.J, former CLC national assistant of India, has now been appointed ecclesiastical assistant for Youth CLC. He has arrived in Rome, this past September, to put his dynamism and competence at the service of Youth communities. At the same time, he strengthens the present team working at the Central Secretariate.
(Editor's note)

WHAT - A SELF PRESENTATION?

"Please write your self-presentation in five pages for the next Progressio."

Hearing this I could scarcely hide my goose pimples, nor deny the lump in my throat. The more second thoughts I dwelt upon, the more lost I felt. If I start writing my self-presentation, I might end up composing my warrant of dismissal. If I act as my own publicity agent, it will be obvious that the seeds of humility had fallen on rocky soil. For a moment, it even occurred to present the description in my passport, photo and visa included. But, then, what if this November Progressio falls into their hands? The Italian Intelligence or 'Brigate Rosse' might show interest in our CLC Secretariate!

Finally, I received an inspiration in my sleep (no excuse for my seldom being really awake), to just share some of my gains from simply trying to live CLC. What follows will not be my official, formal understanding of CLC. It may rather benefit me at least to review this decade of grace, to see where I have reached in my pilgrimage to God, to search with even more enthusiasm in the right direction CLC.

My first contact with CLC was around the year 1967, when the draft of the General Principles was being studied all over the world. At Seva Niketan (National CLC Secretariate) Bombay, my intellect then enjoyed discussing CLC, debating and disputing; not that there wasn't more given. From well prepared week-ends, I learnt about christian life for the laity, met these chosen people of God and later began to participate in and even organize week-long formation program for them. 'My CLC' was still just for others and at my head level only.

During these early years, God showed me how my young CLC friends, in their late teens or early twenties and studying in University or mostly working in their first jobs, began to live christian life and experience the joy of growing through CLC programmes. I saw them blossom like beautiful flowers in spring. CLC had the secret they needed to "the more of life".

Yes, I had a hand in this work. It made me happy functioning, achieving...; but not really happy. Isn't it better that a gardener grow together with the plants? Is doing the same as living? It dawned on me that after my Ordination I had settled into a safe plateau of hard work. These young friends and CLC now made me want to live and to grow again, or perhaps to experience, for the first time, real life and growth in Christ!

It was a hard challenge for me to start now searching for 'this more of life', beyond being a mere functionary; to move from the role of a priest to first living as a person, to then being a priest-person. I began to see a difference in degrees of relationships: mere acquaintances, to work-partners, playmates and friends, friends in Christ. Only a relationship of friendship, I felt, could make a community of christian life. I had still to experience being a friend; to be a community person. Thank God, these young CLCers never tired to stretch out their welcoming hands towards me, never stopped opening and sharing their lives with me.

But where and how was I to begin to live and to grow? Well, if Rome was not built in a day, so neither was Rome '73 nor the Assembly, which I attended, to yield a harvest that same year for me. It was only in 1974, after one of our many CLC programmes, that God's invitation to be reborn in Christ and in the Spirit sounded on better ears. For me it took the form of a deep and difficult struggle for self acceptance as I really was; to admit my many fears, dependencies and insecurities without blaming anyone, not even feeling guilty myself; to take humble, joyful and hopeful responsibility for my past, present and future respectively. In willingly "accepting my weakness, I found his strength", His strength in me for my rebirth, to live and to grow again. This is why I have told people that I am only four years old this year. All this was thanks to CLC, to the CLC programmes, to the training in Behavioural Sciences I underwent for them, to the prayerful support of my young friends, to God's still waiting for me.

From then on, life began to appear brighter, like a new dawn for me. (My blood group started to change from "Oh! ve" to "Be+ve"). I could now look back on the past years without continuing the blaming game nor feeling guilty. Gratitude, even for those hard experiences squarely earned, was a lesson I was happy to learn line by line. Self-confidence sprouted and failures or mistakes in my CLC programmes did no more seem like the real end of the world! What a difference it was to laugh from the heart and the guts and not just from the head and the lips. Gone was my fear (excuses!) to make friends. I became freer for healthy relationships, ready to enter a Community of Christian life.

Now, I felt the touch of life. Persons, experiences and events began to have a rich meaning and purpose. I was pleasantly surprised to find myself one day really appreciating my christian, priestly and Jesuit vocation, genuinely thanking God for them all. The old questioning, the 'why me' seemed possible to live with. My being an over anxious person cooled off to having bearable concerns. I began to actually enjoy my work and travel opportunities for which people all along envied me. I even put on some weight! Grace was building on my nature and christian life was slowly making me human.

Gradually, persons in CLC and community members appeared as God's gifts and graces to me. They were bridges and channels between me and Christ, the Life. I now cultivated relationships, did no longer consider it a waste of time just being with people instead of only working for them. Letter writing to CLCers all over the world became a

joy, even when replies did not come! These people slowly formed my World Community and it was happy work to share news with distant ones and to entertain those who passed through Bombay.

As my inner liberation increased, freedom from self and for others, I began to experience the work I was doing not as an obligation, nor as an act of obedience, nor as a self-justification before the world. It was an offer in service to people still free to accept it and still responsible for their own lives. My early home-life and later Social Work training as a Professional Community Organizer had already given me a preference for the poor and the oppressed. But now while directing the 10 Social Work Departments of Seva Niketan, the new CLC Spirit in me saw it as an extension of Christ's mission of service. This spirit kept me from frustration and from giving up in the face of the overwhelming magnitude and variety of Indian social problems. It helped me see that success lies in the effort and not only in the achievement; that God asks me to do my little bit and not necessarily to work world wonders. Even the smaller services and realities of daily life took on an apostolic meaning. Yet the more I worked, the more I now wondered who really was the poor, who the served and what would be my response if I were on their side!

Manila '76 was for me a valuable CLC experience, as also one of working right to the bone. I could feel mine creek, though not crack! "Poor with Christ for better service" became there a daily reality, as I grappled with my many limitations and poverties in guiding Retreatants and even in carrying out my small responsibilities. It was a practical lesson, from the Divine Guru, to help me realize my having to need Christ: and from there to slowly move on to my wanting to need Him in my life. This recognition of my helplessness became my way of "living a poor and simple life style", since there wasn't very much I could further cut down on the material and economic scale.

On returning and reporting to my Provincial in Bombay, he asked me casually what I had gained in Manila. I added to the preceding paragraph: "a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Ignatian Exercises with their inner dynamics through Course III." CLC formation, which till then I had understood and given mainly as a series of christian themes and modern techniques, now came home to me as a clear life process. I began to see the few steps in my own development in Christ, where I was and where I could go from here.

Then came the Ex. Co. Meeting, April '78, with the probability of my working with Youth CLC through the Rome Secretariate. This gave me my first real taste of discernment with very important consequences for me. I realized how God was encouraging me to struggle for deeper inner freedom (indifference), to seek and find His will alone! After a month and a half, my little Yes turned out to be an infant step in faith to leave behind the pleasant securities of friends, work and country in order to journey towards a promised land still to be shown!

To be honest, it is only at this time of my discernment and of making a conscious faith-response to God's plan that I now took Mary into my life as a Model of the same. Slowly I see Her as a Member of our Christian community and hope to find and experience Her as Mother again. However, I know and believe that She never failed to intercede for me from all these positions.

What I have shared so far are not just some experiences of the recent past. They are very much part of my present state of life. However incipient each experience may be, I feel strongly that God, who has begun them for me through CLC, will also help them move towards completion in CLC. He will give newer ones too!

Of course, there is nothing novel nor original about these experiences. Their newness is not in their content or process, but that they are now my own and part of my CLC Life, whereas before I was probably blocked to them. Their novelty for me is that these have moved from my head level as mere teachings in books, the property of others, to which I gave intellectual assent and service. Now they are my own very personal life experiences too.

This is not a description of Youth CLC nor a doctor's prescription for this age group. It is only an informal self-statement of my youth in CLC.

Sidney D'SOUZA S.J.

FROM CHILE

University CLC's:

Day for the assistants: Sept. 22-24 - a day of formation for the assistants of adult groups as well as university and secondary school communities was held; its theme: "Community Prayer". Present were assistants from Arica, Concepcion, Valparaiso, Limache and Santiago.

Prayer Session

Every Wednesday, from 7:00 to 8:00p.m., a prayer session is being held. Participation is free for all who are interested. Each session is independent of another.

Trip

The president of our federation leaves for Rome on the 8th of November to take part in the International Course for Guides of the Exercises and of CLC's organized by the World Federation. We wish him success!

Month of Mary

Starting from November 8th Mary will be the central figure and theme of the Eucharist on Sundays and of the Prayer Session.

Mission

Mission work for summer has already been planned; this year it will be held from the 3rd to the 4th of January in Linares. The leaders are Felipe Arteaga and Aris tides Moreno. Those who are interested are required to get prior information which is currently being planned.

Mini-Manila

Registration is opened for 2 formation courses for January, 1979 (levels I and II). Discernment in their respective communities and consultation with Eddie are necessary for those who wish to participate in Course I. The Course for Level II is only for those who have already made the first one. Information may be obtained from the Secretariate.

Adult CLC

Day of Formation - to be held for a full day on Wednesday, November 1st from 9:30 a.m. at P.Hurtado. All are invited.

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

In this and the next issue of Youth-Progressio, our highlight is on prayer. Sr. Roberta M. Williams, SNJM of Oakland, California will share with us something from her experience with young people - particularly university students - in this realm of deepening and integrating one's spirituality and daily life. She was kind enough to send so much on the subject, it wouldn't fit into one issue, so please watch for the continuation of this theme in the January issue!

*
*
*

INTEGRATING PRAYER AND DAILY LIFE

I think it is a true assumption to say that young people become interested in CLC or are already involved in the movement because they are serious about living their Christian lives more deeply--are eager to begin or to deepen their relationship with the Lord. I would like to share with you some of the aids I have found helpful in both this living and relating. Although these have been used with collegiate CLC'ers and other young adults, I think they might well be useful for both younger and older people too. Becoming more and more a "Christ-ed" person in thought and action, both personally and in community, is what we are all about at any stage of our development.

I would like to concentrate on a few helps for this prayer/life integration. A prayer which is a method of the application of the senses and which relates immediately to life has been used with much fruit, both in a "one-on-one" situation in retreat, and with groups.

Whoever is guiding the prayer for that time chooses a Scripture passage which lends itself to this method--say the simple passage of Matt.13:1-3. Participants close their eyes and get into the scene--feeling the sand under their feet, smelling the sea air, seeing Jesus sitting out there in the boat, watching the crowd on the shore, hearing the voice (but not the words, as he is too far away) as Jesus is speaking. When his discourse is over, Jesus leaves the boat, and as the crowd goes away, he walks over to where you are standing... (the YOU can be personal or collective, as the situation calls for.) What does he say to you? (Allow time for some personal reflection here.) What do you respond to him? (Allow time again). Then gradually end the experience by seeing Jesus walk on. If you are guiding a group experience, and depending upon the trust level of the group, a sharing may take place at this point. The idea is for any guide to "set the scene" gently, allowing much time for the most important part--the meeting between Jesus and the person or persons.

I have found this method to be one that people, young or old, really like, whether they are beginners in prayer or have been praying for some time. The Lord speaks to us where we are, and it is important to get in touch with the REAL Jesus and the REAL me. This is one way, and is a help to developing both an attitude and a habit of prayer in daily life.

Another good prayer/life method is what Father Mark Link S.J. calls "relating the experience of world to Word." The idea here is to relate Gospel events to contemporary events--especially events in one's own experience. I think this is especially valuable as one tries more and more to integrate the faith and justice dimensions on one's life. Here is an example: Ask the group to look at a number of magazine ads--those which encourage them to buy...buy...buy...buy! What are the reasons they give for this buying? (more status? more beauty? more luxury?) Help people get in touch with their consumer mentality as much as they can. Then counterpose Gospel values--e.g., Mark 10: 17-27. Share on what values are being expressed here. Reflect on one's own values as expressed in life... Share again. This is a kind of personal-communal reflection, very helpful for building a greater awareness of the movements within one---the motivations which operate in all of us.

Looking more specifically at the prayer of the Exercises, I believe that more and more young people are able to make the Spiritual Exercises and want to do so. A while

back at our college, we had a five-day retreat off-campus during the long January break. Those who made this retreat hoped it would be longer the next time we were able to have it. Since it was a first experience for all of us, I would like to share our format with you:

We gathered at a certain time in the morning (after breakfast). This was called our "centering time". A retreat guide shared a few thoughts that could be helpful to the prayer experience people were about to have. Then everybody went off to pray. (I should say at this point that people were on this retreat who had already been praying with Scripture for a little time). An interview with a retreat guide followed the prayer experience. All were encouraged to walk during their free time, quietly spending some time "feeling" their environment. After lunch there was a period of relaxation--a community volley ball game. After this break, a second "centering time" took place, followed by a prayer period and a second interview. There was also time for quiet reading, napping, etc. Liturgy took place in the late afternoon, followed by supper. After supper there was both community sharing on the day and a time to "create" something that spoke of the mood of the day to each person (an illustrated journal, a collage, etc.) There was a final gathering time--a shared prayer--and quiet retiring.

Last year we had several students who wanted to make the 19th Annotation Retreat (the retreat over a longer period of time, right in the middle of daily life where retreatants can only give an hour or so a day). We hope to continue that this year, and there are six or seven faculty members who are also qualified retreat directors.

If you are interested in making the Spiritual Exercises, or in directing them too, look for these things in yourself: a certain generosity and desire to be open to the Lord; a habit of fairly regular prayer; a willingness to share simply with the one who accompanies you, and a growing ability to get in touch with what is happening inside of you.

Besides the two example with which I began, here are some other means which can be used both to prepare for the Exercises experience and to continue to integrate it into life and living, both personally and in community, after retreat. These "Ignatian Themes" can be used on a weekend, a day of reflection, or even at a special evening meeting designed for the purpose:

1) Principle and Foundation: Getting in touch with who God is for me now. (Idea from Fr. Joe Caldwell, S.J., El Retiro, Los Altos, CA.)

Centering involves relationships to God--self--others
"Where God dwells."

Basic questions:

I. God:

What is your image of God? (Can you draw it? What color do you associate with God? What sex or gender?).

How do you perceive God? (Does your perception change during the day?)

How do you experience God?

Write a letter to God--what kinds of things do you find yourself telling him?

II. Others:

Who or what are the significant others in your life?

How do you think of these?

How do you experience them?

(It is important to be in touch with your feelings about significant others. A good relationship with God is very much dependent upon a good relationship with others).

III. Self:

(Have a conversation with yourself to get the feeling of how you treat yourself: Most of us treat ourselves terribly--probably one of the greatest sins we commit!)

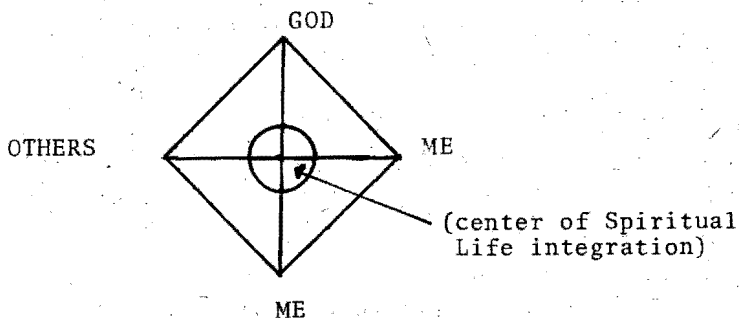
What image do I have of myself? Right now? Does the image change as I sketch it? Draw a self portrait. Color? Form?

Who do I perceive myself? Think of self? Together? Selfish? Intelligent?

How do I experience myself? Feel myself as Good?
Satisfied? Happy?
Depressed? Lonely?
Etc.?

(Getting in touch with parts of self which need to be related to God is important. God cannot heal something we do not present to him. We can bring that to prayer).

How do you treat yourself when you are depressed?



Ask people to look at their lives and list ten things that they love to do and five things that they are concerned about and would like to change. (Give plenty of time for this exercise). Then a reading from Scripture follows: Gal. 5: 1 and 13-14. Participants then write answer to the following questions (or reflect on them without writing - whichever is preferred).

Among the things I listed above (the ten and the five) or in other areas of my life, where do I experience the most freedom? Where do I experience the least freedom?

There is a faith sharing based on these questions for those who wish after...

Sr. Roberta WILLIAMS

(To be continued in January issue)

CLC ROAD TO FREEDOM

CLC is not just a way of life; it has become a 'more of life' for me. As I look back on my five years as a CLMer I am left dumbfounded when I perceive the tremendous growth; spiritual, emotional and intellectual, that I have experienced. It has been a long road to freedom.

WALKING WITH JESUS

I started walking in 1974, at a CLC camp in Mahableswar, where up in the cool of the hills around Bombay I made my first attempts to grow. I started experiencing the Love of Jesus by letting other people enter my life and walk beside me. This experience gave me great HOPE and a desire to Live more fully in and with Christ.

1975 saw me walking further on this road to freedom. Again it was through friends who entered my life, confirming and deepening the process of Liberation and helping me remove some of the blocks that prevented me from experiencing Jesus more fully. I knew now that Jesus walked beside me. I was not alone.

With my thirst for growth and the presence of Christ, I saw myself walking miles on the road to freedom from then

on. I received much, I grew, I wanted to give, to share. In 1976 I began helping others experience what I had experienced. I tried to fill them with hope and a thirst for the Christ I now know. It was during this year that I started reaching out to the poor in Bangalore, living with them and loving them as Christ asked me to Love.

A LANDMARK

A landmark on the road to freedom was my retreat experience in 1977. I went into the spiritual exercises with no expectations, no plans; fully open to the movements of the spirit and the guiding hand of the Lord.

This retreat was an experience of freedom to be myself, to explore areas in my life that I had never ventured into before, to search and discover the truth for myself in the light of Christ's love and to enjoy freely and without fear, God's creation in and around me. My guide used his skill in therapy to clear blocks and heal old wounds that had been quietly festering and colouring my image of God, my acceptance of His love and my relationships with others. The emphasis was both on prayer and therapy when necessary. It was not just the cost of discipleship that we were asked to reflect on but also on the rewards of discipleship, not just the pain of the passion, but also Christ's great love in wanting to give Himself, in suffering.

If I look back on this experience I can see that I was in the predisposition stage when I was deepening the process of liberation and experiencing Christ's love for me. All I can say is that I had covered great distance on my road to freedom at this retreat. I experienced Christ as a liberator, Saviour, friend and not as one who demanded and wanted to pounce and punish. The Christ I met was kind, gentle, loving and true and this gave me renewed hope and desire to enter more fully into the Ignatian retreat.

THREEFOLD DEEPENING

The all India CLC Institute for trainers held in Bombay in May 1978 was perhaps a summing up and a deepening of the process of freedom I had been experiencing. This 22 day programme held in a bungalow at Versova overlooking the sea was an intense experience of learning and living the CLC Way of Life, discovering, exploring, loving, receiving

and giving. I came for the course bringing with me all that I had gained during the four years, eager for more and as I watched the determined, powerful waves lash the shore. I was reminded of tremendous strength I had in me to live fully.

The programme was divided into 3 phases: Social Awareness, Spiritual Growth, and Personal Growth. These were the three areas in my life in which I had grown through CLC, and the programme only served to deepen and create greater awareness and understanding of CLC as a way of life, of growth in Christ as integrate growth. I realized more than ever what a beautiful person I am and how much God loves me and how much I have to give.

This knowledge is my strength as I go further and further on my road to freedom, confident and hopeful that God who has begun a good work in me will complete it.

Margaret REBELLO

ADVENT : A response to the Kingdom of Christ

"Advent": one single word which evokes many memories and spiritual experiences for a Christian. Once again we find ourselves in this liturgical season, which in context and in expressions, forms 'The Praying Church'. Once again this is the auspicious time, replete with possibilities for us to turn to God, who himself comes towards us. It invites us to make a response which is in keeping with the initiative in God's love ("He first loved us..."). He it is who wants to come close to our life, to build His tent amongst us so as to share in our joys and sorrows, hopes and frustrations.

In the context of this response of man (of humanity) to God, let us now meditate and pray. Situating ourselves in this history of salvation, we can contemplate Advent as a response to the Kingdom of Christ. This is the same as to say that we dispose ourselves, with greater determination, to meet the requirements which St. Ignatius enumerates for the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises.

Man Responding to the Kingdom: We enter into a world of grace which exists much before our own will and knowledge. Chapter 11 of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us of "all these witness of faith surrounding us like a cloud" (Heb. 12:1). This is the People of God, journeying towards the city (Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God). It is a People who makes a response because first they are called and their very journey is a pilgrimage of faith.

The names of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Moses, David, Samuel... "and time is too short for me to tell the stories of others" (Heb. 11,33) remind the author of the letter of the great constancy and courage needed "to throw off every encumbrance... to fix our eyes on Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish" (Heb. 12. 1-2).

From among these names, we may focus our spiritual

attention on Abraham, our father in faith. It is the embodiment of all that our ancestors had to experience along their journey to God.

Response of Abraham: He receives the gratuitous choice of God (Heb. 11,8-17). The same Lord, God, makes him leave his country: "God said to Abram: "Go out of your land, from your fatherland, from the house of your father, to the land which I will show you" (Gen. 12, 1). He asks him to walk in faith towards a land which he will be shown not now, but only at the end of his journey. The first freedom or renunciation which is demanded by God's Call is to believe unconditionally, without questioning, in a "Kingdom to come". Its "when" and "how" will be determined by God's good pleasure. This necessitates a radical decision in the very first step towards this meeting with the Lord who comes.

In faith he believed also in the promised blessing, not however seen in the first instant: descendants, a great posterity made up of those who will continue to hope and believe down the centuries. And because "Abraham believed in Yahweh he was reputed just" (Gen. 15,6). The relevant page in the Jerusalem Bible has a footnote: "The faith of Abraham is an act of trust in a promise, humanly inaccomplishable, yet which God alone can fulfil". And so extraordinary was this confidence in the ways of God that even Jesus could say to the Jews: "Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day; he saw it and was glad!" (John 8,56). It is when the eyes of the heart are illumined by faith - (to use the expression of Paul) - that one sees beyond the horizon... Abraham responded, hoped and saw the Kingdom of Christ.

The Test: In this interior process, experienced by our father in faith, God wishes to test Abraham, as a forewarning to all temptation and struggle implied in making an option for and in assuring at the Kingdom (Cf. Sp. Ex. 136-143). Yes, God tested Abraham with the absurd: "God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham' He called. 'Here I am', he replied. 'Take your son', God said 'your only child Isaac whom you love... you shall offer him as a burnt offering...' (Gen. 22,1-2). But through this absurdity, a very personal relationship is established and the very person of God is met, which is unforgettable and beyond all categories of ethics, God establishes Himself as the God of the living, who desires life and resurrects the dead:

"Through the line of Isaac your posterity. For he reckoned that God had power even to raise from the dead - and from the dead, he did, in a sense, receive him back." (Heb. 11, 19).

Abraham's posterity according to the Spirit: God blessed Abraham, giving him above all a posterity unbelievably abundant in the Spirit. It is best summed up in the beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel: "Geneology of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" Hence, in the father of all believers we find our own salvation history begun, because the Promise made is Christ Himself. Hence also Mary can proclaim in the Magnificat: "firm in His promise to our forefathers, he has not forgotten to show mercy to Abraham and to his children's children, for ever"(Luke 1,55).

In this posterity, we recognize Jesus as the beginning and end of our faith, as the author of the letter to the Hebrews would like us to acknowledge. Hence Jesus is also a sign of that dialogue between the Father and men. This dialogue is perfected by love in the death of His Son, Jesus.

Response of Mary: The answer of Abraham, which is the beginning of our salvation history, is so much built up in a masculine dimension that the fact of the very acceptance in faith may be lost. Hence Revelation gives another essential dimension: "Our Lady humbling herself and making herself pleasing to the Divine Majesty..."(Sp. Ex. 108). "Like a young man marrying virgin, so will the one who built you wed you, and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you"(Isaiah 62,5).

Just as in Abraham's history, we find condensed a long line of faith-witnesses, so also in Mary is epitomized a long history of relationships and responses, belonging both to the Old and New Testaments.

God seeks His People as if they were a bride: "I will betroth you to myself forever, betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love; I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness, and you will come to know Yahweh" (Hosea 2,21-22) With this people, God has celebrated a marriage ceremony in the desert: Thither He has drawn them and there He has shown them His face and His love.

This is also the tragic part of history that this es-

poused-people has sinned. Nevertheless, the saving justice of God so punishes this people that they may be converted to Him. His fidelity attaches Him to this Little Remnant, to the Daughter of Zion to whom His promise is reserved and through whom the joy of salvation is announced.

Mary certainly appears to us as the embodiment and most concrete personification of this Remnant : She is the Daughter of Zion, the Daughter of Abraham, the Daughter of David... And for her too the history of mankind is concentrated in herself. It is not without reason, then, that when St. Ignatius presents the contemplation of the Incarnation and Annunciation, he makes us remind ourselves of this mankind, in the first point: "...to see the various persons.. in such a diversity...some being born and others dying..." (Sp.Ex. 106). The history of the love of God becomes the history of man: "...He becomes man to save the human race" (Sp.Ex. 102,107).

This is the salvific plan pleasing to God. The response to it is one of obedience in faith (Rom. 1,5) which is the same as total disponibility to the Divine Will. This is a disponibility and an obedience which make for the quality of true liberty in response to the love of God; a liberty also before man, as a consequence of that absolute trust that God will be faithful to His word. Hence Elizabeth could say with all correctness : Yes, blessed is she who believed!! blessed are you who have believed in Him.

Our Response: Inserted as we all are in salvation history, (history of our own salvation and liberation), "let us keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection" (Heb. 12,2). This running on ahead is our struggle for faith which brings us near to our meeting the Lord. This Lord comes and is coming constantly in our lives through the various signs of suffering. This is a response which implies great perseverance in the face of contradictions and conflicts that engulf our poor little world. Such perseverance and constancy qualify our response to the Kingdom of Christ. He makes Himself a child and poor at Bethlehem. This same Christ also presents Himself Poor and Dispossessed amidst the homeless, the poor, the oppressed, the sick, the sorrowful...to show us the conditions essential for entering and belonging to the Kingdom. Thus, making ourselves poor, with Christ Poor, for better service is the best response we can make during Advent.

Justo G. TARRIO S.J.

CLC AND THE UNITED NATIONS

For many the subjects of the United Nations and of CLC's presence at the UN can evoke a negative response because of the apparent ineffectiveness of the Security Council in settling disputes between nations and in the acrimonious charges levelled by one bloc of nations against another nation or bloc of nations in the General Assembly. What is not understood by such commentators - due to bias or prejudice, or because of the failure of government agencies and the media - is the considerable amount of good being done by the UN Secretariat and the several independent specialized agencies (UNESCO, WHO, ILO, UNICEF) under their board, as well as specific mandates from the General Assembly.

Within the framework of the UN a two-way communications network has been established between the UN and the public, in which the Office of Public Information reports on the programs and activities of the various UN agencies to concerned public organizations and in which the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Labor Organization (ILO) solicit advice from recognized and approved international organizations (BGO) on matters with which they are concerned and which fall within the competence of the Council. The Council recognizes that these organizations should have the opportunity to express their views and that they often possess special experience or technical knowledge that would be of great value to the Council in its work.

In March 1975 WFCLC was granted consultative status by ECOSOC and as an officially recognized NGO is entitled to sit in on meetings of the Council, its commissions and committees. For the past 18 months I have represented WFCLC at

the several conferences and briefings sponsored by OPI and have attended several ECOSOC meetings. It is my hope, and prayer, to extend and deepen our involvement at the UN. Future reports and commentaries on key UN issues and activities will be reported in Progressio and Projects.

"Clearly, the most important world issue today is the growing gap between the developed and the developing nations and the subsequent strains between the rich and the poor. It is the greatest threat to world peace and survival. The times indicate that it is now imperative that we in the developed nations better understand the issues and concerns of world development as expressed by the governments of the world's developing nations. The expression of these concerns have been and continue to be articulated with remarkable solidarity by the call for a New International Economic Order in the UN".

With these words the International Division of the US National Board of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA) in cooperation with several other agencies announced the convening of a National Working Seminar on Development, which was held in New York on September 26-28, 1978. Since this program exemplifies the serious work of the UN, I have adapted the material for the purpose of this article.

Child Services. Next year, 1979, has been declared by the UN as International Year of the Child (IYC), marking the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. UNICEF has embarked on a program of "basic services" for children in developing countries. This work group considered the proposals of IYC for children everywhere, with particular focus on the way in which children are affected by development in the context of the New International Economic Order.

Commodities and Trade. The developing countries call for a reformulation of present trading arrangements. This workgroup examined proposals for an "integrated commodity programme", a "common fund" to finance buffer stocks of basic raw materials produced by developing countries, and other schemes for stabilizing commodity prices and providing preferences for developing countries. How will such trade changes affect developing countries? the United States, Canada and other developed countries? What role can CLC and similar organizations play in preparing its membership for such changes? These topics are particularly timely for preparations for UNCTAD V (UN Conference on Trade and Development) in Manila in May, 1979.

Disarmament and Development. The tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, on Disarmament, was held in May and June of 1978, and a Plan of Action was suggested. This workgroup examined the results of the Special Session, the key issues of disarmament, the relationship of disarmament to development, and the structure of the arms race. How will the escalating arms race and arms sales impact world and human development? Is there a role for a local voluntary organization? How does the arms race affect developing nations? Our local communities?

Energy, Science and Technology. The major international conference for 1979 may very well be the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development in Vienna in August, 1979. The developing nations are calling for a massive transfer of technology from the developed to the developing countries. They are calling for new energy resources in developing nations. What does this mean to communities in developed nations? What types of energy should be supplied to the Third World? What does the transfer of technology mean to the problems of urbanization in developing nations? What forms of technology are appropriate for developing nations?

Environment and Development. The most comprehensive assessment of the state of the world's environment took place at the UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972. Since that time the United Nations Environment Programme headquartered in Nairobi has been relating worldwide environmental concerns to the development concerns of the Third World. This workgroup reviewed progress in the environment field over the past six years and assessed whether the quest for a healthier environment is compatible with rapid development in the Third World. Questions related to the Law of the Sea, desertification, land and water resource utilization were also addressed.

Finance and Development. Some of the most important decisions affecting economic relations between states are made in the board rooms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the World Bank. This workgroup looked into the terms and conditions of World Bank loans, bonds, International Development Assistance (IDA), replenishment, and IMF decision-making processes. Can the World Bank restructure itself to cope with the changing monetary balance? Can the cycle of Third World debts be diminished? Do the terms of credit really assist the poorest peoples within developing nations? What is the role of private banking in development?

Human Factor in Development. The UN Declaration for a New International Economic Order, a statement of economic relations between states, rarely mentions peoples. This workgroup addressed some of the human aspects of the NIEO: employment opportunities, wages, housing, education, human rights, health services, community development, and the role of women in development. What is the role of people's organizations, such as CLC, in emphasizing the human factor in the development process?

Hunger and Malnutrition. Can the world food supply be ensured within 20 years? This workgroup considered current schemes for insuring (1) emergency food supplies, (2) a system of world food security, (3) proper levels of nutrition and (4) adequate food distribution within developing countries. How do these schemes affect US agriculture, that of other major food producers, agribusiness corporations, and consumers in the US and developed countries? What can organizations such as CLC and others do about these issues? The workgroup also considered issues to be discussed at the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform in Rome at FAO Headquarters.

Industrialization and Economic Conversion. In 1975, at the Second UN Conference on Industrialization (UNIDO) in Lima, Peru, the developing countries proposed that one of the NIEO targets be to increase the share of the world's industry located in developing countries from 7% to 25% by the year 2000. This workgroup examined the implications for developing countries, as well as to United States and other developed countries, if such a strategy were to be realized. What factors are involved in retraining workers, redefining industrial priorities, and other aspects of economic redistribution on a world scale. Many of the issues relate also to conversion from the armaments industry. The workgroup's efforts relate to preparations underway for UNIDO III.

Population and Development. What progress has been made in the population field since the World Population Conference in Bucharest in 1974? This workgroup looked at population trends, techniques for family planning, and the relationship between population and development. The population field is one of considerable priority for many non-governmental organizations working in the developing countries.

Role of the Transnationals. A new center at the UN has been set up to study the role of the giant corporations,

many of whom are wealthier and more powerful than the majority of nations at the UN. This workgroup considered the TNC's role and responsibility in development, transfers of technology, and world employment. What kind of code of conduct can be agreed upon which will be effective for the operation of TNCs in developing countries?

The meeting's finding will be summarized, with a commentary and critique, in an article in an early issue of Progressio.

Thomas I. MONAHAN

TWO CONTRIBUTIONS TO FORMATION

Without formation there is no growth nor strengthening in life. Without formation the CLC's also cannot develop and take roots in the different parts of the world. All of us feel it is a necessity, a priority in our world community.

Happily, and with the grace of God, we continue to receive news and information from the different national federations concerning the efforts they are making in this line and relating to us their good results.

Today we present to you two programs : one from India and the other from the United States. If, through this information we give, you feel these programs can help you, please do not hesitate to get in touch with those who are in charge of these programs. They will be more than willing to send you their documentation.

INDIA The program was prepared by Oriol Pujol, S.J.; its title is "COMMITMENT IS FOR LOVERS". As you well know, commitment is a fundamental aspect in our CLC way of life. Based on this point the program is divided into three parts:

Part 1 :

It is made up of a half-day session for groups that have just started recently, in their first three to six months of group life. During this session each one

answers the question "What are you searching for?" and gives their response to Christ as the Light of the World.

Part 2 :

Here a full day is required. It is for groups that have already been going on for about a year. Its aim is to reflect more deeply on the life of the group in the light of the CLC. It is a kind of evaluation on how each has answered to the call during this time and how to continue to respond later on.

Part 3 :

Three full days of profound experience in mature faith sharing as an immediate preparation for assuming greater responsibility, especially when this involves CLC leaders.

The author, with the help of Maria Xavier and Rayna Stanley, has prepared a pamphlet of about 20 pages, cyclo-styled and well presented, with a series of suggestions and practical exercises. In order to make full use of their suggestions one needs to refer to a previous publication : "The More of Life". I believe that it is a well-scaled program since it helps the members to perceive better the varying degrees of commitment in the formation process of some group desiring to be authentic CLC's.

If you are interested, you may contact

Oriol PUJOL S.J.
Seva Niketan, Sir J.J. Road
Byculla
BOMBAV 400 008 - INDIA

USA The U.S.National Federation has sent us an excellent and complete "Formation Program". The guiding team, under the direction of Paul Roy, S.J. and Marie Schimelfening, has prepared this document, very important and comprehensive, that touches on all essential aspects of the spirituality and mission of the CLC. The content of the program is divided into four cycles:

The Introductory Cycle is divided into 3 parts composed of a total of 17 sessions; the three parts are:

- Over-all view of the CLC (4 sessions)
- Introduction to the General Principles (5 sessions)
- Characteristics of the CLC's

Foundation Cycle, that is the presentation of the mystery of Christ to the participant. It is developed during the course of 8 sessions.

Spirituality Cycle, concretely of Ignatian spirituality where the spirit of the Exercises appears in a very pedagogical way in personal as well as community growth. This cycle runs for 7 sessions.

Service Cycle, underlying the service of the CLC in the real world of today and helping the participants identify themselves with the concrete situations in which they are called to serve, to a greater awareness of the situations, to planning for action and to evaluating the action undertaken. This cycle lasts also for 7 sessions.

This program also contains a rich index of a series of topics to aid in carrying out the program; it is more of a manual for the leaders.

Through this program we think the North American CLC's have given a valuable and practical contribution to the initiatives and needs for formation on a national as well as world level. The material presentation is impeccable as well as very manageable. Those interested may write

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CLC
3721 Westminster Place
ST. LOUIS, Missouri 63108
U.S.A