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TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED IGNATIAN FORMATION

Reflections

A Report and Witness

*to the experience at Rome'78 :
Course for Formation and Retreat
Guides.*

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F O R E W O R D

From November 12 to December 20, 1978, the World Federation of Christian Life Communities organized, in the suburbs of Rome, the first formation course for guides of communities. The course also provided an opportunity for each one to discern whether or not there might be a call for him to become a guide for the Spiritual Exercises. This formation course followed one of the recommendations made during the Manila '76 Assembly which strongly urged the Executive Council to undertake such a task.

The preparation and the development of the course were the results of prayerful exchanges and sharing on what we considered to be a priority in our objective : Towards an Integrated Ignatian Formation for Service.

We are devoting this issue of PROGRESSIO to this event, publishing the experiences shared by some participants of the Rome '78 Course; the introduction is an interesting and profound reflection by Filoteo A. Mangulabnan, a Filipino Jesuit from the Gregorian University in Rome. This is only a beginning that has to be complemented and developed, but nevertheless it can help our CLC leaders in their reflection and in the implementation of their formation programs which prepare people for our CLC way of life. This issue also serves as an invitation to all those who are responsible for CLC promotion, especially those who have the responsibility for formation, to share with us their reflections and experiences. We all know that here we are touching on a point that will determine the future of our CLCs.

PROGRESSIO

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED IGNATIAN FORMATION

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First of all, some statements on what this article is not. It is not a concrete HOW in the sense of a course outline or detailed program for formation. More competent and resourceful persons deeply involved in the movement have offered such programs to a very successful degree. Neither is this a substitute for courses and other painstaking plans being undertaken by the CLC to deepen the commitment of its members. Finally, I do not presume to offer an exhaustive and comprehensive view of personal integration which is obviously a very complex and life-long process. Rather, within the general context of the CLC, and my limited knowledge of it, I hope to emphasize some salient and essential elements which I personally feel should come into the process of integrated Ignatian formation.

With these clarifications then, let us now proceed to our discussion. I propose a general framework within which this integrated formation should be seen in principle. Specifically, the context for our consideration is the CLC member's existential experience of a dialectic within himself; a dialectic which consists of two closely intertwined poles, the objective and the subjective.

THE TWO POLES OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The objective pole refers to the global vision and perspective, the level of ideals so-called, enunciated in the first two paragraphs of the Preamble of the General Principles. The theological elements specifically mentioned in this section are :

- 1) God's call and invitation to the member to a total and unconditional love and personal surrender to Him, Who through Christ's incarnation and work of redemption, first showed the depths of His love.

2) This total response demands a deep level of faith and trust in God, since the CLC member is called to a communion of life with Him in Christ, centering his whole existence on Him and abandoning himself trustingly to the course God has outlined for him. Moreover, he allows God to guide him by His word in the circumstances of his daily life and profession along with other members of his freely chosen community. This community is composed of persons of diverse professions and "callings" around one and the same vision and vocation. The characteristic aspects which define this community are: union with Christ, a profound fraternal union and support, commitment to a life of service, a sense of the Church, a way of life and participation in the mission of the Church (GP, no. 6).

Faith in this sense then means more than agreeing to the truthfulness and objective validity of the Christian message. It involves more specifically a permanent commitment and decision to surrender in trust and love, a gesture which must be continually actualized and exercised in the circumstances of one's daily life; an exodus, an attitude of getting "out of our desires and interests," as Ignatius poignantly puts it, of opening one's heart generously to God's mystery revealing Himself to him in Christ.

3) The CLC's "yes" to Christ in faith implies a "yes" to His mission in the world of today. This is precisely where his sense of the Church comes in. For every Christian, by virtue of faith and baptism, assumes a responsibility for the Body of Christ. And a fortiori the CLC member because of his special calling has to model his diakonia on Christ's diakonia. *"Whatever be the service asked... it always forms part of this one perspective and so is a participation in the mission that Jesus confided to the Church. The forms it takes are manifold... But in underlining the promotion of justice, love, freedom, and the dignity of man - and by that fact, of peace - the Preamble orients us toward the great needs of today; makes us aware that liberation from injustice is a permanent dimension of our service; makes clear the very close link, one could better say, the identity, that exists between our service and our way of life."* ("Deepening Our Understanding of the GP", No. 4). From these then it becomes clear that faith also means freedom to stand in solidarity with men of our time.

4) Since grace builds on nature, and never does violence to it, this objective, global track respects and fosters the uniqueness of each personal vocation and profession of the CLC member as well as his individuality. Thus, we can say that the transcendence asked of him makes him more man in his personal and social reality.

5) Obviously, the foundation of this faith and the model of self-surrender to God's will, and the fulfilment of the redemptive mission is our Lord Jesus Christ. For His love, obedience, hope, total gift of Self are the human configurations of His Divine Sonship. And, of course, the Blessed Mother played a decisive role in this redemptive work; she is the perfect example of identification with Christ and co-operation in His mission.

6) A specific instrumentality for achieving and fostering the orientation of the objective ideals is through the Spiritual Exercises. Through this fundamental experience one makes generic vocational discernment to dedicate one's life to the service of Christ in the hierarchical Church. A desire to take an active part in God's saving work springs up in the heart of the CLC member as God's gift of grace. In spite of the realization of his own physical, moral and psychological limits, in spite of his awareness of personal and collective sin, or rather, because of this consciousness, he is led to contemplate the world of today and hear its pleas and needs. Human and social reality then is perceived in the light of faith and the vision of Christ's redeeming work.

Christ as the Way, that is, the CLC member's participation in His universal, priestly and sacrificial mission, becomes as it were the first principle of discernment. And the second prerequisite principle closely tied up with the first is the deepening awareness of the individual's Christian existence in the truth of his own personal history, as well as his generosity of personal surrender.

Thus we can say that this global perspective and vision entails a process of formation which is often long and difficult. The dynamic it follows is that of the Spiritual Exercises in one's life: from the perspective of God's universal and personal love to all men to the reality of sin and "unfreedom" in one's life and history and social situation, to the Person of Christ as Savior and King Who wants

all men to share in God's life. This is where the crux of integration comes in. It demands an abiding presence of and fidelity to such a vision. As such, objective knowledge of faith and the economy of God's plan of salvation is not merely sufficient. The concrete spiritual experience which develops in time must also be considered. For the CLC member is nourished not only by his acquisition of faith, but he also needs to pass from the level of desires and ideals to the level of life, commitment and action. The law of progress and integration must manifest this characteristic: from the global, universal vision to the various phases of his concrete life and experience. This is where the subjective pole comes in.

In this connection, allow me first to make a short digression. Fr. Rulla's distinction of "subjective" and "objective" holiness is relevant to our understanding of these two poles. Subjective holiness corresponds to the extent to which the individual de facto makes use of the free capacities and possibilities received from God. God alone can sanctify individuals who do not refuse His fully gratuitous actions. On the other hand, objective holiness is constituted not only by the free capacities of the individual but also by those which are not free but can be rendered free. Therefore, objective holiness would correspond to the degree of sanctity an individual would have if all his capacities were free and fully used. Subjective dispositions, more precisely, one's given psychodynamics, at least those which are unconscious, have no intrinsic connection with God's gratuitous actions. For a person cooperates and responds to God fully within his own limits and powers, and thus becomes subjectively holy. However, psychodynamic factors may affect the degree of the individual's receptivity and freedom to respond to God's grace. Thus we can say that objective holiness depends in an intrinsic way on the given psychological and subjective dispositions of the individual.

The above considerations underline the aspect of receptivity and vulnerability of the CLC member as he comes face to face with the universal vision and perspective of the ideals proposed to him. In spite of subjective good will and a conscious desire to attain such high ideals, in

spite of an intellectual conviction of their objective intrinsic worth, he feels "pulled down" by forces within himself in the realization of his ideals. Often enough his capacity to integrate and internalize these ideals is hampered by psychological limitations he is subject to. Of course these are further aggravated by the reality of sin and concupiscence in one's life.

More specifically then, the subjective pole refers to a complex series of elements on the part of the subject which affect his response to God's call to love and service in his concrete existential life. These are the somatic, affective, intellective and volitive elements; it also includes, without conscious awareness most of the time, residues of one's social, cultural, family upbringing and development, as well as his free choices. Taken together along with the reality of personal and social sin, these factors determine to some extent the quality of his response and the depth, i.e. internalization, of his ideals.

Furthermore, one's given psychodynamics and subjective dispositions affect not only his perception of objective values but also his growth including his spiritual development. And this is also true even in cases of professed commitment to values like the CLC with a desire and readiness for personal renunciation. For the prevalence of personal inconsistencies over consistencies affects not only the individual's expectations with respect to his future, and his capacity to internalize objective values and grow in inner freedom, but also his tolerance for limits and frustrations. Moreover, various studies and researches in the field of psychology have confirmed the difficulties the individual has in meeting the demands of daily life and ordinary social relationships. Lack of personal maturity aggravates the difficulties of life and pushes people often unconsciously to seek refuge in a variety of evasive and compensatory mechanisms. Added to this, freedom and objectivity on the levels of our human operations of knowing, understanding, critical reflection and judgment can be clearly undermined by emotional interferences and personal limitations. This is naturally to be expected, especially if the individual is threatened and insecure, and is led to protect himself from harm or anxiety or a lessening of his self-esteem. To ward off such threat and harm, such an individual resorts to utilizing attitudes and values for ego-defensive purposes. It becomes clear

that such inconsistencies and psychological limitations have an intrinsic connection with one's religious commitment like the CLC.

What are the implications of all these for integrated Ignatian formation? One implication is for the CLC member to realize that notional knowledge of ideals is not enough. For decisions, i.e. acting according to values perceived, do not necessarily follow from knowledge of universal and lofty principles. A second implication is that the element of personal renunciation asked of the individual as the price to be paid in the following of Christ can often be difficult without his own awareness, recognition and acceptance of his psychological limitations. And a third implication is that, for the subject who desires to achieve a real integration, the element of continuous "conversion" is indispensable. For distortions are generally made at the expense of others as well as at the expense of the truth of one's existence.

LONERGAN'S THEORY OF THREE CONVERSIONS

Conversion means the exercise of freedom by which one's horizon is changed. When a new horizon is not merely an expansion of the previous horizon but is in some sense a standing-over-against an older horizon, then conversion is said to occur. By conversion is also meant a transformation of the subject and his world. Normally this is a prolonged process though its explicit acknowledgment may be concentrated in a few momentous judgments and decisions, e.g. results of "formation" courses in the CLC or the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. It is a resultant change of action and direction, a falling apart of one's previous, narrow and selfish world-view, and an emergence of something new that fructifies in the interlocking and integration of all levels of human living. Thus it is intensely existential, personal and utterly intimate.

Following the theory of Lonergan (Method in Theology, Chapters 3 and 10), this conversion has three essential components or types: intellectual, moral and religious. Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification, and consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn

and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity and human knowledge. The myth in question is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at.

Essential to intellectual conversion is the criterion of objectivity, truth and reality. To discover this, an attitude of critical realism is indispensable, i.e. the capacity to meet the relevant conditions for truth, to discover the self-transcendence proper to the human process of coming to know, and to break often long-ingrained habits of thought and speech. As such, intellectual should not be equated with possession of knowledge. Rather, it implies taking a stand on the nature of knowledge and truth, together with a corresponding definition of the task involved in coming to know, and a willingness to undertake that task, no matter how difficult and unpleasant it may be.

Moral conversion differs from intellectual conversion in that it involves choices and decisions, and not only judgment of values. Moral conversion changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions, i.e. what pleases me, to values. Specifically, this demands a constant scrutiny and examination of one's intentional responses to values and implicit scales of preferences. It demands listening to criticism and protest; a readiness to learn from others. One needs to constantly uncover the roots of one's biases and inconsistencies, and understand them as they affect one's knowing, deciding and doing. Therefore, like intellectual conversion, moral conversion is not to be equated with reaching moral perfection. On the contrary, it is a task of acquiring morally relevant knowledge, learning about one's values and motives, and acquiring the habits of morally good men. This is more difficult than intellectual conversion since one does not merely affirm values like a spectator. And the difficulties become more acute as one passes from the level of theory to the concrete, and assumes new responsibilities and makes personal renunciations. Furthermore, moral conversion raises further questions which arise from the cost of commitment.

Religious conversion is to be grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total

and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations. But it is such a surrender, not as an act, but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed in retrospect as an undertow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness perhaps as an increasing passivity in prayer. It is interpreted differently in the context of different religious traditions. For Christians it is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. It is a gift of grace.

Again, it must be emphasized that religious conversion like the other two conversions, must be conceived of as a beginning. To love without qualifications, reservations and conditions is not a task accomplished overnight! There always remains the task and challenge to make religious conversion effective in one's life.

From a causal point of view, religious conversion comes first. For first there is God's gift of His love. Next the eye of this love reveals values in their splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization and that is moral conversion. Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truth taught by the religious tradition and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. The word spoken and heard has a content which is not just a content of experience but a content of experience, understanding and judging and deciding. For it is on this level that personal encounter with Jesus Christ occurs.

Within these three essential types of conversion - religious, moral and intellectual - the CLC's life and process of integration must be conceived. The actual implementation and living out of these series of conversions depends to a large extent on the existential reality and psychology of the individual.

As was already said, intellectual conversion, especially the aspects of critical realism and reflection in its efforts to attain objectivity and truth, can be undermined by emotional pressures. Moreover, the distortions in the area of experiencing, understanding and judgment of reality around us, and perception of right values, are due to the psychological limitations and "unfreedom" in the individual.

As far as moral conversion is concerned, one's sensitivity to values, especially spiritual values, reflects the personality and character of the individual. Thus, even if one perceives the intrinsic worth of objective values, resistance to them due to subconscious forces can still occur. And inconsistencies, if conflictual, can give rise to defective forms of motivation like compliance and non-internalizing identification. As a result, the good is chosen and done not for itself, but for some other ulterior motive.

Even religious conversion can also be adversely impaired by significant personal inconsistencies. Areas which are highly susceptible are : one's ability to listen to God's word, as well as one's apostolic effectiveness. Dependence needs and desires for personal recognition can run counter to the message of Christ of disinterested love and service. Moreover, researches in the psychology of religion have shown that one's conception and formulation of God are influenced by developmental factors like cognitive stimulation from the social environment, the type of parental love and affection received especially in childhood, and difficulties encountered in one's social upbringing.

CONCLUSIONS

It becomes clear then that an integrated Ignatian formation must take into consideration the whole human person. A summary outline of these levels was made in the rather simple exposition of Lonergan's theory of three conversions. Thus, an individual's transformation and growth as a man, Christian and CLC member can not overlook his existential situation of "unfreedom" due to sin and the influence of his psychological limitations. For when he meets the challenge of the global vision and perspective proposed in the Spiritual Exercises these factors actively come into play consciously and unconsciously.

Attempts to unravel, recognize and accept these limitations have been made in some CLC formation courses, and these should rightly be encouraged.

I would like to end by repeating what I said at the beginning of this article. I do not at all profess to offer the one solution to the process of integrated Ignatian formation. Lonergan's theory of the three conversions with their psychological implications is offered merely as a "model" in principle for such a process since it aptly describes the various levels or modes of man's self-transcendence. To attain knowledge and intellectual conviction of the global perspective offered by the Spiritual Exercises and the General Principles is merely the first step in the life-project and direction God invites the CLC member to take. Based on his conviction of the intrinsic worth of the ideals presented him, must take new challenges, make decisions, assume new responsibilities and show a readiness for personal renunciation. For the life he is called to live, and the mission he should undertake, is that of the Son. And this sustains and integrates his knowledge of the truth and decision to be configured to His image.

Lito A. MANGULABNAN, S.J.

ROME '78 - A COURSE FOR GUIDES OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
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How do I prepare myself to be a guide of the Spiritual Exercises? Can I be a good guide? These questions have been coming back to my mind frequently. In fact from the time Alex Lefrank visited India in 1976 on his way to Manila '76, and gave us a three day session on the Spiritual Exercises, my own interest in the Spiritual Exercises has grown. In the past couple or years after being actively involved in all types of personal growth groups I suddenly felt I needed a break. I needed someone who would be able to tell me in what direction the Lord was leading me in my life. Perhaps Rome '78 would give me some answers, I thought. What follows are my personal reflections and impressions on the Rome experience.

When I first heard of the Rome Course being organized, I felt a great desire and longing to participate in it as I wanted to experience the Spiritual Exercises more deeply. But then I knew I'd never make it as the number of participants from each nation was limited. Later, my hopes rose as I was personally invited to come as a priest-witness, to give my testimony to the CLC Way of Life. Difficulties kept springing up from unexpected quar

ters, and just when I had, with a heavy heart, resigned my self to the fact of my not being permitted to go to Rome, they were cleared and I was ready for Rome.

What were my feelings before going? I was excited, grateful to be called as a witness. There was a deep urge to share what the CLC had done for me in my life, both as a priest and as a human being. I eagerly awaited the experience of the guided retreat and I was going with one question: "Which way, Lord?" I needed to see which way the Lord was leading me through my recent transfer, change of work and other baffling experiences of my life. Was CLC for me? Was it my special calling?

When I did arrive at Villa Cavalletti I felt I was in a dream world; for quite some time I could not believe I had at last made it. I was glad to meet so many CLCers from various parts of the world. As the course slowly unfolded, I came to know them more deeply and barriers of language and culture gradually broke down as we grew into one world CLC community with a common goal and vision.

After barely a day of introduction and getting to know each other, we broke up into language sub-groups for self awareness exercises and personal interaction in these small groups. Paul Robb, Director of the Institute of Spiritual Leadership, Chicago, U.S.A., was our group facilitator, and he helped us, with a series of awareness exercises, to get in touch with our entire life from early childhood to the present day. As we went through the various sessions we were helped to get a feel of our life, to become aware of the tension or problem areas in our life which affected our day to day existence. I found myself quite at home as I had participated previously in my own country - India - in several encounters, T.A., and other personal growth groups. I was able to share my life experiences with the group and in the process, different experiences fell into place and life seemed to be more integrated. I found this an excellent preparation for the retreat.

(Cont. on page 23)

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

Dear friends,

Beginning in this issue and continued in the next, we can read about a very special experience had by two students from Hong Kong, Mary Yeung and Maria Chow. They spent three months traveling through Asia, including a seven-week stay in Calcutta, working with the Missionaries of Charity. This should already make it clear that this journey was no ordinary sightseeing tour. From start (well-organized planning) to finish (deep reflection) it was a valuable experience for both. We are grateful that they are sharing their "souvenirs" with us in these two issues.

It should be added that the two, starting in January of this year, did make the long Spiritual Exercises in the 19 annotation form ("open" retreat). They are a striking witness of the deep commitment God can call forth from young people.

Peggie TELSCHER

Motivation of our trip : "Unselfish human love is the sacramental introduction to the God of love. Man must go through the door of human giving to find the God who gives Himself." (J. Powell, S.J.) "whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did to me!" (Matt.25).

PURPOSES:

1. To have an in-depth experience of the lives of the poor through working as volunteers with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, to be in touch with the people and their sufferings;
2. To have a better understanding of the poverty dimension of the Asian countries as a whole;
3. Having gained these experiences, we hope to make the 30 days' Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, in preparation for the total commitment and the giving of ourselves to be POOR WITH CHRIST, FOR A BETTER SERVICE TO THE WORLD.

HOW WE CAME TO DECIDE ON MAKING THIS TRIP

During our summer vacation in 1977, we both had a chance to visit some countries. After coming back, we came to the conclusion that it was not really the scenery that mattered much during a journey, we should have a detailed plan (e.g. clear objectives, prior preparation and arrangement, etc.) in order to gain the maximum benefit from the journey.

After such reflection, we felt motivated to make another journey from which we could gain as much experience as possible to enrich ourselves. Tentatively, we then

planned to go during our next summer vacation, which was also our last summer vacation in the university. The reason for this choice was twofold. One was that this would be our last long holiday (long enough to have an in-depth experience) which we would no longer have after coming out to work.

Lastly, inspired by the 1976 CLC World Assembly theme "Poor with Christ for a better service," we decided that the main objective of our trip was to be with the poor and to expose ourselves to poverty. As we came to know Brother Andrew, M.C. (through Fr. James Hurley S.J.) and talked with him, we decided that India would be the main destination to realize our "dream".

PREPARATION

Without really knowing what the outcome of our plan would be, we started to outline our plan in a detailed manner, including all sorts of preparatory work to be done from September 1977 onwards. This included writing to our CLC friends in various countries to seek their advice and support; collecting information and reference material about the countries we planned to visit and meeting people in Hong Kong who had been to India before, asking them about their trips

With very warm support from Fr. James Hurley S.J., we met once a month to discuss this trip and any problems arising from it, e.g. finances. Finally, after our final examination, we made a retreat in which we had an intensive discussion on "poverty" and hence reaffirmed our objectives for this trip. Besides this, we also had a deep sharing of our faith experience in which both saw that it was God who had chosen us for this trip. Hence, we set off with trust in our Lord who has guided us throughout, ever since our preparation.

* * *

BANGKOK, Thailand, June 10-13, 1978. Here we studied the student movement, the problems of the slum and the prostitutes.

CALCUTTA, India, June 13-August 1, 1978. Here we spent 7 weeks in all, working with the Brothers of the Missionaries of Charity, whose foundress is Mother Teresa. The aim of this society is to quench the infinite thirst of Jesus Christ for love by giving whole-hearted service to the poorest of the poor. Fortunately, we were able to stay in some of the communities from time to time with the Brothers, so that we could not only participate in the work but also the life and spirit of the Missionaries of Charity.

The kind of work we could do was in the Home for the Dying Destitutes, Home for the Babies and Children, teaching in slum area and footpath schools; picking up dying people from the street or railway station; leprosy work, dispensary work; some relief work (distribution of biscuits, bread, bulgar, milk powder etc.); visiting villages and hospital visits. We long to share all of these experiences with you, but since space is limited, we have to select just a few...

Home for the Dying Destitutes

As you know, the people brought here are those found to be dying on streets or in railway stations. Here we helped to prepare and distribute food, feed the patients, dress their wounds, cut their nails and so some cleaning and washing work.

Initially, it presented us with a very gloomy situation: rows of beds on which lay the dying patients. All are very bony, their limbs on the point of breaking if not handled with care. Many eyes reflect hopelessness. Some remain silent, motionless, or sleeping, seemingly waiting for the moment of greatest relief - death. When fed, some do not bother to open their mouths; others are not used to food for such a long time that they vomit. Besides feeling depressed and shocked, we also reacted to the situation with rage, anger and impatience. We felt there should be an urgent change in the society to undo all these sufferings of the people.

Yet somehow, there are encouraging phenomena despite the apparently hopeless atmosphere. For example, there is one female patient who always sings to entertain the other people and lift up their hearts. There is one cancer pa-

tient who can endure great pain; she never groaned when her neck wound was being dressed, though tears were rolling down her cheeks. Above all, the Sisters and Brothers who nurse the patients so tenderly give them love and hope, and most importantly : human dignity. We then began to see the beauty of this work. The problem is so immense, yet the need is so urgent that there is no time to wait for the change of the structure to save the dying and the poor. No matter what service they are doing, the Missionaries of Charity are doing it to somebody, and not for something. This is indeed the work of God.

Nursery Homes

Here we helped in feeding, nursing the babies and playing with the older children, who are either orphans or abandoned by their parents. There was, for example, a boy called Kumar who was born without two arms. He was about nine months old and used his legs to take toys or touch things. He was picked up by Mother Teresa at Darjeeling. It is recently learned that he has been adopted by someone in the United States.

Here the atmosphere is more lively and full of hope. There is no grief nor sorrow amid the noise and crying of the kids. One cannot help feeling happy on seeing the lively faces and sweet smiles of the children, who are so innocent, yet victims of the society.

Leprosy work

This is perhaps the most challenging and interesting work of all. In Howrah, several Brothers, headed by a trained one set up a weekly clinic at the side of the street, divided into 4 sections : regular treatment for old patients, tests for new ones, dispensary and injections, and dressing wounds. We helped in the dispensary section and sometimes gave injections to patients.

There are 4 million lepers in the world : half of them are found in India. They are much rejected by society and even their families. One well-organized leprosarium, Titaghar, serving 110 in-patients and 6,00 out-patients, includes workshops and workers' quarters for those

(Cont. in July 1979 issue)

It is a pity that these children do not receive any special training apart from shelter and food. The Brothers responsible here have not received any specialization in this field. If one is really to help and serve the mentally retarded, he should treat them in a special way. We wish that trained personnel could design programs for the children to help them develop more as persons.

They are all good-natured, knowing only love, no hate. This may best be illustrated by one normal boy (something wrong with his left leg) who always takes care of a spasmodic mentally retarded child younger than he: he washes his face and gives him water to drink.

As we do not speak their language, it was difficult to sing songs or play games with them; we managed to have communication, however, through hand gestures and facial expressions. We tried to teach some normal children English alphabets and it was quite successful. We also cut their nails, which seemed to be fun and interesting for the children.

There are about 40 of them at the Noorpur community. Some are normal, others are only physically handicapped.

Mentally retarded children

who have been healed. This is important. Ten even healed patients are still re-entire into the family or society. This is a promising project because they can earn their own living, can have a future.

YOUTH MEETINGS

ROME '79: Within a few months, the General Assembly of the World Federation will become a reality for us. As a matter of fact, at this Assembly, we (the Youth CLC) ought to be numerically better represented than before, because our World Federation has recommended that each National Federation should include, in its delegation, a youth CLC member of 25 years or below.

The Assembly also provides occasions for special Youth Meetings. At these, we will be required to elect 10 representatives (2 per continent) to form the new Youth Commission, which will stay in office until the next Assembly.

ASSISI '79: An International Meeting of Youth, Members of the Christian Life Communities, will take place at Assisi (Umbria, Italy), from September 21 to 28, 1979. Here, the participants will be all the Youth delegates at the Rome '79 Assembly, certain number of the European Youth Group and those presently committed to the promotion of CLC. A group of Italian Youth will be our hosts at this birth place of St. Clare and St. Francis.

The theme of our meeting: "The Orientations of Rome '79 concretely lived by Youth". This may give us an idea of what should be each one's motivation and expectation when coming to this week of community experience. The official languages will be English, French and Spanish. (It is enough to know one of them).

There are still a few more registrations possible and, therefore, we request those interested in participating at Assisi '79 to please quickly book themselves a place through the CLC Secretariate, Borgo Santo Spirito 5, C.P. 6139, 00100 Rome, Italy, mentioning on their envelope or Registration "Assisi '79".

GENERAL PRINCIPLES: This Summer, July 23 to 29, some CLC members of the European Youth Group will meet at Altendorf (Bavaria, West Germany), to deepen the youth understanding of our General Principle. This meeting is in response to a need being felt by youth in different countries during these last years.

Sidney D. Souza, S.J. has begun his "Full-time service" in this capacity, since April 1st. You may read his self-presentation in Progressio n. 6, November 1978. During his first 5 months, he has already devoted himself to conducting a CLC Formation session for some African Countries (Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, Kenya,.) as a first contact there. Hence, we are grateful to God (and to the Indian CLC) and we extend our best wishes to him for a happy stay among us.

YOUTH ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT

FORMATION DOCUMENTS: The pedagogy of Manila Course III, "Youth Modality," is already published and available at the Rome Secretariate. This document is aimed at helping those who are committed to Youth Formation and responsible for assisting such CLC groups.

(cont. from page 14)

With this awareness I was ready for the ten day guided retreat with my guide, Michael Kyne. The English speaking group moved to Nemi, to a beautiful Retreat House run by the Convent of Jesus and Mary nuns, situated right opposite Lake Nemi. The place, the atmosphere, the service rendered by the sisters were most conducive to the retreat experience. Although I had not known my guide before I found that we established a rapport. I found him deeply human, holy and humorous. Often I felt challenged yet never pushed; I was guided yet left free to move on my own, and this helped me immensely to get in touch with the process of discernment which is the heart of the Spiritual Exercises.

My retreat experience was the climax of the entire course. I had gone with one question: "Which way, Lord?", yet now I was ready to wait for the answer. I found prayer very easy, simple and appealing. Simple breathing exercises helped me to get into the mood of prayer and using fantasy and imagination made scripture come alive for me. After a couple of days of taking in God's special love for me, I soon felt the call to launch out into the deep. Reflecting on my life situation I realized that for some years I had found CLC work so satisfying and rewarding that I had begun to identify my work with myself. Consequently CLC work became the all important thing. Now I felt the Lord asking me to let go of those things which meant most to me. Could I launch out into the unknown? Could I let go of my work, even CLC work? Could I let go of relationships with people who meant much to me?

As I went through the various stages of discernment I experienced a deeper call to the CLC way of life and at the same time a new found freedom and peace. I did not feel the need of knowing the answers to my question. The retreat concretized itself in two priorities - "Waiting" and "Doing His Will". This became my new dream that I would struggle to live in my daily life.

The period of reflection that followed the retreat helped me to concretize my experience and to clarify my

understanding of the Ignatian experience. This was followed by a four day session given by Tony De Mello. Tony's talks were further affirming and gave me a personal insight into the dynamism of the exercises. He gave us a lot of sessions on keeping the "Intensive Journal". By getting in touch with our own identity and the identity of the exercises a gradual insight and relationship was built up. What became most clear was that very few people are ready for the exercises and since these are the characteristic source of the CLC, we need to prepare people for the exercises and at the same time not be surprised that only a few will be capable of going through the Spiritual Exercises. What was also clear to me was that if I was going to be a guide, what would help me most in guidance would be my own experience of the exercises.

What followed was a reflection on the process of the Spiritual Exercises applied to CLC formation. The practical exercises and sharing were interesting. Unfortunately not all the participants had much experience of CLC group life, or formation work, so the sharing at times was idealistic rather than down to earth. The day we shared the social reality of each of our countries was a real eye-opener. It was interesting, at the same time painful, to hear of the oppressive conditions and structures in most countries, and the cry for justice for the downtrodden. In this part we missed the guidance of a trained sociologist who would have helped us make a social analysis of the world situation and its impact on our CLC calling today. The happiest day for me during the course was when I gave my testimony as a diocesan priest trying to live the CLC way of life. I shared what the CLC had done for me, how it had changed my life making it more intense and giving it a new direction. Clearly, this course itself affirmed for me the direction of my life and at the same time filled me with a lot of hope for the future.

After this part, we had a couple of talks on the General Principles and the Charism of the Exercises. I found these talks too academic, and uninspiring in vision. They did provoke a lot of introspection and helped, in an unexpected way, each one to formulate his or her own experience of the exercises. This led to the evaluation of the whole

course. The group that I participated in made a very thorough evaluation of oneself of one's strengths as a guide and of one another; this helped each one to draw up a concrete action plan for himself.

Looking back on the course now, after coming back to India, I realize that this course has been an important experience of my life in many ways. Through this course I was able to understand better the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, I feel more confident of being a guide, while at the same time aware of the areas of my life where I need to grow. Here too, I experienced the CLC as a world community. This course had made me more aware of all the wealth of life's experience of joy and pain, with which I have been enriched, in and through the CLC. And so, my prayer to the Lord is : "For all that has been - Thanks, Forl all that is to come - Amen".

Jude BOTELHO
Priest

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WE HAVE RECEIVED...

"It has been 2 months since we ended the unusual experience at Cavalletti and I feel very grateful for all that this experience has done for me and for the group. Only the Lord knows the effort that you have made to bring this about. I can imagine, and I believe, that it had not been easy. This somehow made it turn out so well (...). As we looked over all that happened during the course, we continue to thank God, as we did at Cavalletti, for all the blessings He has given us through you.

"CLC work here will be slow. We have plans of starting new groups, but above all of forming persons who, knowing Ignatian spirituality, would be interested to become TRANS
MITTERS of the CLC spirit".

A participant

"I continue to reap the fruits of the Exercises we made at Cavalletti. With God's help I am following the experience of the Second Week in daily life. It is somewhat difficult, but I believe that through this, new ways of spirituality will be opened for lay people who have no opportunity to stay in a retreat house for a full month. The Lord will light up the path".

A participant

"The aim of the Course was to deepen the CLC way of life. It was hoped that the participants would acquire the indispensable elements for doing formation work in this way of life in our countries. CLC offers definite aims, a methodology and a process that make up the whole style of life, in such a way as, for example, we feel is the case for the Jesuit who has a style of life that helps him face the total reality of life. This style of life is supported by basic Ignatian attitudes and a christian reading of the urgent needs of the times in which we live. CLC hopes to bring about the integration between what we would call growth in faith and a radical commitment to the realities of our world".

(taken from "News of the Jesuit Province", written by a participant).

"As I told you, I was not at all keen on coming to help with the retreat but I find it a real privilege to meet both the retreatants and all of you who did the real work of arranging everything. The result is that I am a genuine convert to the CLC in a way I could not have claimed to be in the past and would be very glad to help it either in this country or in another in any way I could".

A retreat guide

"I would like to tell you once again how happy and 'consoled' I am (in the Ignatian sense) for the work that we could do. I am have also been very much impressed by the quality of formation work that the CLCs accomplish. Many thanks for allowing me to participate in this experience".

A retreat guide

YES, MY FRIENDS,...

Yes, my friends, during the course the Lord gave me many graces. He gave me the opportunity to confront many unfinished events of my life, especially those which occurred in the last four years, 1974-8. He showed to me that the pains I'd endured while trying to understand him were gifts from him. Before him, I now saw that the history of commitment in my past was a sign, a design, of love from him inviting me to greater closeness to him. Previous to the Rome course I was an "angry young man" committed to the radically "Social Christ" - Christ working with the poor, Christ who was poor, Christ one with the poor - and I tried to follow him in the farmers, tried myself to be one with the farmers as he was, and to be poor with them. As they were powerless, I tried to divest myself of power in order to allow them to discover something of their own power within them. But I experienced my success to be frustratingly insufficient: I did not experience the unending insecurity of the farmer; I did not have the hands of the farmer; my feet were not caloused and bare. Nor was I the saint I felt others expected me to be. How then was a radical following of Christ possible for me?

During the first five days of the course guided by Paul Robb, SJ, I entered as openly as I could into its dynamic and gradually came to a consciousness of my historical roots, the quality of my temperament and the nuance of my

psychological make-up, and so I was led to confront the roots of authoritarianism in my past which still colored my present, and I saw that Christ and such authoritarianism were not one. Indeed I saw that following Christ did not mean fitting myself into pre-fabricated social roles of perfection, forcing myself into pre-molded ideal forms, but discovering the Christ who was not merely outside me in the poor, in the sick and in the suffering, but even within me, accepting me, not as a saint but as I am. Suddenly the "Social Christ" I'd always followed was personal. Suddenly, I felt joy, acceptance, happiness, perhaps something of ecstasy. This discovery was later confirmed and deepened in the Spiritual Exercises. Even the theory of Tony de Mello, SJ, presenting the Exercises not as a rigid ideal but as a "personality" in dialogue with another living personality confirmed my insight into my experience. Other more competent writers may treat the objective development of the other parts of the course, but since I do not belong to their category, please be content with this story of...love.

So there you are! I have described the main current of the river of my life:

*I loved the Lord. He called me. I followed him.
He gave himself, his time, his love to the poor;
I gave myself, my time, my love to poor farmers.
He turned to me and asked, "Do you love me?"
So many times he asked me, "Do you love me?"
I was hurt, and I protested, "You know me..."
Now he tells me:*

*"Feel me in you deeply,
you in me and I in you.
In the midst of hard realities
I call you and others
to love in person:
in this Person
I call all to love
the whole of man in all men."*

Clear to me now : no third-world, no first-world nor second-world Christ, but only one world's Christ. I feel certain I have experienced the Lord of the Dance, the Lord of History, the Lord of One World uniquely - in a manner that cannot be duplicated in the lives of millions of other Filipinos.

And what has this to do with announced goal of the course? The course was for guides of communities and guides of the Spiritual Exercises. Obviously, the course aimed at developing competent and effective guides for authentic formation of persons and communities. Definitely the course achieved the purpose of having people understand deeply the charism of the Spiritual Exercises, which is the characteristic and specific instrument of the spirituality of our CLC. From the individual and whole-group evaluation of the course during its last two days, it was clear that everyone was positively convinced of the powerful role of the Spiritual Exercises in the lives of the CLCers. I now ask myself : "With my new experience, am I now competent to be a guide of the Spiritual Exercises and of communities?" Here in Europe, I cannot say yes; I cannot say no. I still have a long way to go.

Lastly, where there are competent guides in national federations or regions who can develop courses such as we experienced, I would strongly encourage such adventures, especially for possible participants who have a lot of experience of life's joys, crises, and struggles. The adventure, however, would be of little profit for those without CLC experience, or for those who are merely curious. To CLCers who experience something similar to what I experienced - being full of countless "unfinished events" and rather mixed-up by them! - I recommend : pack up your things and beg to be admitted to such a course!

Smilingly yours

Herminigildo Liberato ESPERO

"REVIWING EXPERIENCES AND IMPRESSIONS
OF THE COURSE FOR CLC FORMATION GUIDES"

Rome, Nov. 12 - Dec. 20, 1978

On November 12, 1978, at Villa Cavalletti, participants arrived for the Course for CLC Formation Guides. Those present at this arrival might perhaps have guessed some characteristics of the experience that was to follow : universality and plurality, complementarity and union, wonder and expectation at how so many persons of different ages, cultures, nationalities, socio-political-historical and religious backgrounds were going to unite themselves in a common task and to live a CLC community experience.

As if to confirm these first impressions, there came the final evaluation. This, done in common, further strengthened the personal and communitarian bonds between the 34 participants, representing 26 nations. This turned out to be a dynamic synthesis of the same communitarian experience lived during 40 days. What generally impressed everyone of the participants was a deep awareness that the content and process of formation, implied in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and in the pedagogy proper to the Society of Jesus, answer the needs of the Church today as one way of living the Gospel in its totality.

What makes the CLC formation process to be one of the most educative and convincing is the global values it proposes, the integration of life it aims at, the service it renders by the progressive and dynamic method followed. This was clearly demonstrated by the 5 stages lived in our experience at Cavalletti.

This Ignatian pedagogy proved its worth by the way it dealt with man in his totality. Again, it was freeing. Finally it offered a unique instrument for discerning God's will regarding the individual as well as for the community, regarding the world as well as the society in which we live. This discernment constantly keeps in sight a personal participation in the mission of Christ, one lived as a concrete answer to His Call (2nd week).

It is not easy to describe briefly what the Spirit did within me through this experience at Cavalletti. Yet one aspect stands out in my awareness. The point of departure for each person was not a theory, nor lessons that were moral or pedagogical. It was founded in a life-experience in which the radical attachment in love to the Absolute One made relative all other good things and gave internal freedom. This made one entirely live and serve, with one's whole creature-hood, according to the will of God.

From this it follows that the experience proposed by the "Principle and Foundation", in the Ignatian Exercises, is the very basis and point of departure for this road which makes a person discover the joy of a free and passionate attachment to Christ.

In this connection, what most caught my attention was the fact or realization that to be a CLC assistant it is not enough "to know" or even "to have made" the Spiritual Exercises. It is essential to experience the whole development of this way of life in all its different stages. The formation guide will always keep in mind the specific objectives of each stage, so as to adapt the formation to the different needs of each person, at each period of growth. In this way the guide will direct the CLC formation to the whole person in every aspect of his life, at the same time

harmoniously integrating everything into one process of growth which responds to the challenges of Gods' will for this person.

I believe that this realization or intuition was one of the most important benefits which each participant at Cavalletti reaped. On this, each had to base his personal decision regarding his conscious call to work with CLC.

And it was necessary to personally experience all of this in a continuous attitude of discerning one's presently lived experiences. We realized that CLC demands of its assistants that they do not transmit their own ideas and convictions, but that they constantly live those graces, which St. Ignatius proposes as pre-requisites, to people who desire to experience the Spiritual Exercises.

There is still something more. We understood that CLC needs persons, who have not only assimilated the spirituality of the Exercises and live it at their own personal level, but who are also capable of putting this spirituality at the service of a process of growth for others.

This experience, which I personally wanted to go through, was intensely lived by all participants. One limiting factor was that of time. But even this aspect served to confront us with the need to value every moment of our day, from a well deserved rest to personal prayer, from work of personal reflection to sharing in groups, from the daily liturgy to the lively and joyous sessions of evening entertainment.

The very dynamic process, included in the Course of Cavalletti, itself integrated all these diverse moments of our day, according to the objective proper to each stage of our experience. This was worked out with minute attention and was the fruit of their continual discernment on the part of the Guiding Team. Their example was in itself an education and made a deep positive impression on all the participants.

The Course of Cavalletti was certainly a grace of God. Through this grace, all the participants, despite all their diversities of culture, nationalities and personalities, were able to experience what is universally proposed in the Spiritual Exercises as a methodical formation process. Besides this, I believe that this Course has fulfilled its aim i.e. to give an opportunity to each one to discern whether or not the Lord is calling him to be responsible for the growth of persons and groups within this CLC way of life.

Each participant will have answered this, within the privacy of his own conscience, knowing that the very road traced out by this Course was a wonderful experience and an instrument to develop a CLC community at a world level.

Enrico MARIOTTI s.j.

*"What we have seen and heard
we declare to you,
so that you and we together
may share in a common life...
And we write this in order
that the joy of us all may be complete".
(1 John 1)*

FOR THE TIME OF THE PENTECOST

Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O Lord!
the earth is full of your creatures.
If you take away their breath, they perish
and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are
created,
and you renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord be glad in his works!
Pleasing to him be my theme;
I will be glad in the Lord.

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