



JANUARY 1981  
50th year  
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January 1st., 1981

The beginning of a new year is a special time for reading - in the light of grace - the work of God in the world, in the Church, in our Community and in the lives of each one of us. We read the Lord's action, to meditate on it, to identify with it and to serve whole-heartedly.

In our last assemblies, we have recognised certain appeals throughout our world which have become priorities for our mission. Then we have dispersed to witness, in our living situation, to Him who sends us. Our witness lies in our personal life, and in our community life which mirrors the Gospel through a constant concern for justice and the dignity of all men, and through our participating, as apostles, in the building up of the world.

For the fruits which have appeared, let us thank the Lord; for our negligences and weaknesses, let us beg pardon; and for the new time ahead, let us learn from Mary and repeat with her: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word".

My fervent wishes for 1981 go to each one of the members of our world Community, and to their local, regional and national communities. May all of us continue faithfully in our Ignatian way so that being free to love, we may participate humbly and joyfully in the mission of the Church. And finally, through our mutual support and missionary zeal, may our Community experience the fullness of God giving Himself to us all.

Tobie ZAKIA  
President

## LETTER TO OUR CHILDREN

by Maryanne ROUSE\*

Dear Tom and Tracy,

I agreed to write an article that would witness to the impact that Christian Life Community has on Dad's and my life as a couple. Not long into my reflection on the topic, I realized that any such story would have to include the impact CLC has on us as a quartet. That is where the two of you come in. Finally, I decided to write this as a letter to you. It is good news, and I'm happy to take this chance to share it with you in this way.

My preparation for this began with a conversation with your Dad; the major content of what follows came from that conversation. Next I requested your input. I was anxious when I asked you, "What effect do you think CLC has on our lives?" Tom, you said, "I really don't know". Then after a pause, "no, I really can't think of any." Tracy, you answered quite quickly, "I think it's boring (your general all-purpose word), and besides they make too much noise when they're here for meetings and I'm trying to get to sleep. And it takes you away from me too much!"

My anxiety, it seems was well founded. For you, Tom, no felt difference (at least at the moment I asked you). For you, Tracy, verbal confirmation that you do not appreciate CLC's taking us "away" from home four evenings a month, several weekends a year, and an entire week every other year. What if you also understood that the money we use for CLC activities significantly diminishes the amount available for such things as a second car, frequent vacations, expensive toys, etc. Not only that, but the values that we have developed, largely through CLC, have caused us to look negatively at spending money for such as these, even if we had it. Our "open door" policy to pilgrims from all parts of the world has meant less privacy for you at times, and a general need to be open and flexible about family space.

CLC has led us to value opportunities for you to experience as naturally as possible people right here in Omaha who have obvious differences from us—differences of color, educational background, economic status, religious prefer-

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ence. That has resulted in your being in the public school here. It also means a continuous struggle to make a good or better situation out of once-a-week "religious education". This, as you know all too well, is no small source of conflict between us.

"Why, then, do we subject all of us to CLC when it has visited so many problems on us?" you could well be asking, or "When do we get to the 'good news' part?" It's coming, but first a few questions of my own: Why do you continue to breathe when the air at times makes you sneeze? Why are you grateful for eyes when they see not only beauty but ugliness as well? Why does medicine that does good, taste so bad? Your answers to these last questions relate directly to my answers to the first two.

CLC has been our way of life for so long there really is little doubt that we have been called to this movement. As I understand vocation, God's call, who we are can be more easily developed in CLC than anywhere else. In CLC, we experience the best "ground" for our growth; we belong here. Dad and I are who we are today in many, many ways as a result of our CLC vision, formation, activity - all of which began nearly 25 years ago, over ten years before you were born! Therefore, on our good days together, you can give credit to CLC. In the middle of a fight, you may wish to blame it.

Because CLC is such a basic source of our growth and development, even though it does take time that we otherwise might be spending with you, I believe that we are enabled to give a much more quality presence when we are here than we could if CLC were not part of our lives. I hope that as you grow older, you will come to appreciate this.

As to the effects that you can measure more easily and more positively, I would mention our friends. CLC has given us opportunities to encounter marvellous people from all parts of the world, as you know. You have been able to meet many of them, too. I recall your Dominican "brother", Guillermo, who "adopted" us after one summer and continues to be a part of our lives though that was seven years ago. There were briefer visits of Gerald from Australia, Ed from Japan, Mary Grant from Ireland, and so on. Add to that our United States CLC friends who visit here often and are too

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numerous to list in this letter. In our own city, CLC has affected our choice of friends, which of course has made an impact on you. Having close relationships with people of similar values and struggles become increasingly important to all of us. I expect that we will feel this more dramatically (and gratefully as our efforts at pairing down our lifestyle makes us more countercultural - and potentially lonely!)

Our CLC communities have members from all the various vocations: married, single, religious, clerical, and lay. Our deep sharings have given us first-hand knowledge and experiences of the similarities and the differences in lifestyles. We've also acquired a deeper conviction about ours for us and an appreciation of the others. For us who have few relatives nearby, CLC has provided a large extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins for you.

In all of this, CLC has encouraged a broadened perspective of life and people that greets difference not as threat but as promise and new experience not as peril but as adventure.

CLC had led us to some courses of action that have brought you experiences that are a bit unusual for people your age (As I write this, Tom, you are 12 and Tracy, you are 11.). One major decision was Dad's entering political life, first as a school board member and three years ago as a City Council member. Because of that, you are seasoned campaigners and government issues are often found smack right in the center of our dinner table! You attend Council meetings as "insiders", so to speak. You pay attention to the Council decisions, knowing that unpopular ones will relate to your ability to use our phone. Angry citizens call frequently! Our recent trip to Washington, DC, the US capital, had added meaning for you because of your familiarity with local government.

You both know that I returned home from Rome '78, the six-week CLC formation course that I attended, with several resolutions. Two I will mention here. First was my decision to study Spanish. This came from my feeling excessively impoverished and uncomfortably arrogant there, because I was unable to speak with anyone in anything but English. At the same time, my fellow course mates were struggling to talk to me. For most of them English was a third or fourth

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language. While I've only just begun, I imagine some effect as Spanish becomes (hopefully) a "second" language in our home.

Second was my need to structure into my life some on-going encounter with people who are physically oppressed and poor. Reasons for this that I have already discussed with you include my desire to become more sensitive to poverty. I also wish to identify myself more as a citizen of the world. Being with my friends in Rome, many of them from very poor countries, was a terrific beginning for this. My hope is that in knowing real people with names and faces who are oppressed by the structures of our society, I will be more attuned to those that I myself support and more compelled to attack them. It took me nearly two years, but as you know, I've recently begun to tutor in the jail here. Already your questions and interest in this weekly activity of mine forecast that this will indeed have an effect on you, too.

Because CLC is such a pervasive reality in our lives, it is impossible to identify all elements of the difference it makes. I've tried here to highlight some of the most obvious. In doing this, I do not intend to imply that I believe CLC is the only way of life that fosters growth or challenges openness, etc. I do intend to state that your father and I have chosen it as our vocation and our witness to it is simply our lives. As our children, how we live most radically affects the two of you. That is why I decided to address this, our written witness, to you.

Our loving Father has blessed Dad and me with many gifts of love: each other; You, Tom; you, Tracy; and CLC are the very most significant! And I believe that to be very Good News indeed!

Joy, peace, and love,  
Mom and Dad

\* *Maryanne ROUSE, CLC member, was elected this year president of the Omaha Leadership community. Her big activities outside of CLC are the League of Women Voters (hostesses for the controversial Presidential debates during this US campaign) and the Omaha Catholic Social Services Board (like Catholic Charities). She has also begun the ministry of retreat guidance and spiritual direction.*

## TO BE ELEGANT\*...BUT HOW?

Once there was an Eskimo who lived happily in the immense, icy wastes of the Arctic circle. It happened that he was invited for a two-day visit to a large, modern town. This was a terrible and most painful experience for him: he could not understand anything about the town and he did not enjoy himself at all.

What scandalised him especially was the way people lived, so crowded together; there were no wide open spaces for them, as there were for him, to hunt in. When they spoke, it was almost impossible for him to listen to them as their language was harsh and indecipherable. Their music (was it really music?) was quite unpredictable: it recalled nothing of the howling of the reckless wind, nor of the baying of the hungry wolves, nor any of the mysterious sounds from his frozen north land. As for their clothes (how strange they were!) - the people seemed awkward in them and their movements were such a contrast with the graceful style of the polar bear or the delicate poise of the seal. The smells of the place were strange and disagreeable and it was so hot that it was almost impossible to breathe! Moreover, the people were so stupid and so badly brought up that they seemed hardly human. Their ways of acting, of eating, of moving, of greeting one another jarred on his sensitivity and sense of harmony.

Ah, he thought (the poor man!) what sort of a world is this these people live in where it is so unfriendly and so hot! Doubtless for him their manners were most disagreeable; perhaps they were lacking in humanity, elegance and character. But in any case, nothing could have been further

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\* (The English word "elegant" hardly captures the nuances of the word as it is used in the Romance languages (e.g. Spanish or French) "Compelling" gets rather close, but then if you want to slip into the noun, you end up with "Compulsion", which will never do for "elegance". Any suggestions? - "Groovey" has already been tried, and found wanting! Now read on: this is one of the finest articles I've read. Translator's note).

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from his mind than the desire to imitate them! Truly, who on earth would want to imitate them?

In the course of the history of the world, different cultures - different ways of expressing and living out the 'human situation' - have come and gone. Each one of these cultures has developed ways of being and behaving, according to their own vision of man and how they distinguish between good and evil. Little by little the different peoples have elaborated their particular laws, their language, their ways of feeling and acting; for their life in common to be harmonious, one necessary ingredient is that their hierarchy of values be commonly accepted, vital and enlivening. In each people there appears what may be called a national spirit, based on a common heritage and pointing towards a definite future. This national spirit brings about a consensus with regard to a particular scale of values and aspirations, which then find concrete expressions in the way the people live. These concrete expressions will be good or bad depending on whether or not they are in accord with the deep aspiration of the particular group.

And so it is that the manners of thinking about and living the ideal of "nobility" or of "elegance" in the courts of different peoples of antiquity are extremely diversified and often opposed. In Assyria, like Sparta, marks of distinction referred to their general preoccupation with war. This is very different from the idea and the living ideal of elegance, and nobility, that we find in a humanist culture like Greece in her golden age; or among the people of Israel, on account of the importance they gave to the Alliance between God and His people, as recorded in their Holy Writings. Each culture, then, elaborates its own models of 'excellence', and these are usually inspired by what we admire in those who are 'at the top', for they are the embodiment of the particular way in question of looking at the world. For example, the most desirable and the most elegant people in a kingdom will be those who live, act and are like the king - they imitate him. And so in this way, then, in a given culture, the people establish marks of excellence and distinction.

Now, in our world of today, excellence, elegance and desirable human values are understood very differently by people, depending on whether one is in a capitalist country or in a country that is struggling for freedom; what is a



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mark of distinction in a big city is by no means the same for our Eskimo. There are different ways of looking at the world and at man which give rise to different aspirations, and which consequently establish different ways of behaving.

I write all this with the painful feeling that, in a manner which is becoming more and more marked, Christians are experiencing in their relationship with Christ and the Kingdom He came to establish something of what our Eskimo experienced. It seems to me that we are hearing His language less and less and understanding less what constitutes real elegance and distinction in His Kingdom; we are moving further and further away from His way of being powerful, rich and the Lord.

As Christians, we recognise Christ Jesus as King, Lord and Model. Unfortunately, this recognition is just a matter of words and so becomes, it seems to me, another crowning of thorns, a mockery. The fact is that we find neither elegant nor distinguished this Jesus who was born in a stable, who lived and worked as a carpenter to support himself, and who died the most humiliating death of his time.

We no longer find convincing the models of elegance that He has created for His Kingdom; we consider them to say the least, ineffectual, colourless, dull; whether sad or frightening, the models are simply "creeps". Really, who wants to be like that?

Jesus lived His life to establish the Kingdom of the Father, the Kingdom of the God of the universe, in our world which is so diversified and so disoriented. And He has revealed to us that this Kingdom was first inaugurated in His own person, in what He did, in His manner of living. It is, then, in the person of Christ, that the "models" of the new Kingdom appear, models which have their origin in a special vision of the world and of men - the vision of God. With Jesus there appears a new kind of elegance and distinction; with Him there is established a new model of excellence - a new 'aristocracy' which is closely linked with and strongly resembles the new King who actually is the God of the universe. Now, there are ways of being powerful, rich, elegant and distinguished that, very sadly, we do not understand.... We live our lives trying to reconcile what cannot be reconciled: models and interests of kingdom

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that are diametrically opposed; hence the danger of being undermined or of schizophrenia is not too far away...Though we recognise in Jesus the mouth of God, our life does not measure up to this truth; we do not seek to imitate Him.

What is current in the world today is the desire to be rich, powerful, elegant, not tied down, to have at hand the latest commodities and the latest benefits provided by the consumer society, and, as far as possible, to be completely carefree.

We have ceased to understand poverty, simplicity, humility, self-denial, devotion to serving others that Jesus taught and proposed as a necessary attitude for following Him. We no longer see these as the treasure hidden in a field that must be looked for.

It is not only a question of the external propaganda we are subjected to in newspapers, magazines and television: be a winner, have possessions, buy something, be brilliant, be young, dynamic, fascinating, have beautiful hair, choose the easy way, get a good position, etc.; all that strikes a chord in us and we choose "models", ways of feeling and acting that are completely opposed to those we see in Jesus Christ. The passion to have possessions, seeking to be brilliant, the desire to be beautiful, attractive, elegant - these centre the person on himself and tend to close him off from others; the growth of our own needs hinders our readiness to go out to meet the needs of others. The consumer society becomes more and more a part of us, driving us to need all sorts of different commodities, so that the need to "have" escalates and can never be satisfied. On the contrary, Jesus teaches, by His words and His life, to detach ourselves from things to attach ourselves to others, not to seek ourselves but to go out to others, to prefer to give rather than to have.

We consider it just so important to be involved with the "right people" - people who are bright, influential, brilliant, etc.; but who are the people the Lord tells us to invite to our table? Who are the ones His example encourages us to associate with? His usual company was among the humble and the simple - and also among every kind of outcast in society.

Our admiration and our respect are reserved for the

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powerful, the rich, the daring ones; we try to follow them and imitate them, to find models of elegance. Now, the hierarchy of values implied in following these models is clearly opposed to the one Jesus teaches in the Gospel. Where do we place our confidence? In the Father of Jesus who counts every one of the hairs of our head and who knows what we need, or rather in those who have money and security? With whom do we agree? With Him who tells us, "What God had joined together, let no man put asunder", or rather with someone who tells us, "If anyone has the misfortune to see his marriage break up, there is no problem if he wants to start all over again"?

Our very heart is divided, more attached to human values than to those that the Father seeks to communicate to us in Jesus. He has sought to reveal Himself, to put Himself within our reach, to enable us to fulfill the perennial desire of man which is to want to be like God. He has done all this so that we may follow the way which leads - without any possibility of error or deceit - to authentic power, authentic riches, authentic joy, the 'very fullness of God Himself'. On the one hand we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the most high God, and on the other hand we consider His ways as absurd, ineffectual and gloomy.

Almost 2,000 years have passed since Jesus of Nazareth was born, lived and died on the cross. His resurrection has shown to His disciples, and through them to the world, that He was a transcendent being, and not just a 'passer-by'. It has shown that in this man, God has intervened in a totally new and original way in our world. Through the power of this glorious Resurrection which has led to Christ being enthroned as King and Lord of the whole universe, the new-born Church received His Spirit at Pentecost which vitalised the timid circle of the Apostles. Pentecost filled them with the Spirit of Jesus crucified and risen - His way of seeing things, His way of feeling; and this Spirit launched them to conquer the world for the Kingdom of the Father, with the means and models of Jesus crucified - means and models which consequently showed themselves to be powerful and effective.

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Almost 2,000 years have passed since these events which are the foundation of our faith...But they have always scandalised people, perhaps today even more so...The "effective means" and the "models" of Jesus are a scandal not only for the non-Christian world, but also an obvious scandal for ourselves who consider our faith as such a precious gift - this faith of ours which is characteristically passed on from father to son and which, with such deep and solid roots, tells us to be Christians, like Christ. But alas, it is precisely the Christian countries which do not give an evangelical witness, especially social groupings which are traditionally considered as Christian...

Lest this painful schizophrenia, which forces us to live in a kingdom according to the "models" of the enemy, fragment and destroy us, it is important to learn the "models" of the Kingdom of Christ. But how to begin to learn His language, to understand His models, to perceive the nuances of what is "distinguished" in our proper Homeland? So many of us are deeply estranged from our own Homeland!

To understand the strength, the elegance and the splendour of this Land, our Homeland, which is the Kingdom of the Father, it is most important that we let ourselves be taught, we let ourselves be led there not in virtue of any right we have but by reason of a gift freely given. And to let ourselves be taught, it is important to recognise that, like little children, we do not know, we do not understand while at the same time recognising that all this is a gift, a gesture of "elegance", a chivalrous gesture on the part of the Kingdom.

We must recognise ourselves for what we are : infirm people who need to be healed if we are to see clearly and understand properly. We must realise that our sensitivity is blunted, our understanding is rather obtuse and somewhat defective in not realising that "all that glitters is not gold". If we do realise these things, we enter fully on the way of truth; and once we have entered, further understanding comes more easily under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord who takes us in hand to teach us.

With the powerful aid of the Holy Spirit who seeks to sanctify us, to make us like Christ, to "Christify" us - the

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Holy Spirit who establishes the unique title of "nobility" in the Kingdom - we can little by little come to live a life attentive to what Jesus has taught. In the Gospels we can contemplate His life so as to bring ourselves to imitate Him, to try to reproduce in ourselves His ways of being, His models which are so powerful and elegant in His Kingdom. His Spirit will impress on us His standards, His way of seeing things, of feeling, of loving.

Then, and as something freely given, the Gospel values will no longer seem to us to be ridiculous - beautiful but quite impractical, like a romantic phantasy. If we undertake to come to grips with and to expose ourselves, without any barriers, to His teaching, He will show us the power, the strength and the truth which are contained in the ways and the models of His Kingdom, and which these models signalise. We will find ourselves - thanks to Him - on His "wave length", able to hear the words and understand the messages He gives. He will refine our powers of perception, enabling us to pick up, savour and pass on the wonders of His divine Love, Truth and Beauty which He seeks to pour out on our sad and fragmented world, to bring it to life. He will give us an unaffected belief in the truth; we can see this gift expressed in the simplicity of the family life at Nazareth as an elegant and attractive ideal to which we may aspire in this world.

Then, and then only, we will be able to stop fighting for things and appearances and we will begin to turn ourselves towards other persons and the desire to share. We will stop admiring so much the rich who in fact are so impoverished and so fragile in their ivory tower, so crude in comparison with the models of the Kingdom where we find true elegance. We will understand finally the joy of living in poverty, simplicity and humility - which Jesus lived. Thanks to the power of the Spirit of Jesus in us Who makes us one family, one people, the models that we contemplate in our King will become comprehensible and desirable, and little by little, they will become ours. In our own family and in our own Homeland, we will cease to be like the Eskimo in a strange town. Many ways of being and feeling that we have taken on, on account of their apparent value, will betray their emptiness. Many aspirations that we used to have will seem quite out of place, for they just will not fit in with Jesus' way of being, feeling and acting.

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It is only in Jesus that we can discover what God is; it is only in Him that God shows Himself in a tangible form, capable of guiding and marking with His "models" those who believe in Him and adhere to Him: He who was born poor, simple and humble in a stable, who lived and worked 30 years at Nazareth in poverty, simplicity and humility, He who preached the Kingdom of the Father using poor, simple and humble means - this Kingdom which comes to us as gift. He gave Himself to serving others, to teaching, to healing the sick and the hurt, to aiding the helpless, these little children so loved by the Father. He did all that without bothering about His own well-being, without creating any needs for Himself. His self-forgetfulness was so total that He overcame the rejection He encountered. He preached the forgiveness of injuries, and He forgave injuries even up to the extremity of the Cross.

Such is the Kingdom which appeared in Jesus and manifests itself as poor, simple and humble in our world; it is the Kingdom of the God of the universe, of the Creator of the world Who is the End of every creature. Henceforth, to be like Jesus, to imitate His ways of being is, in all truth, to be like God - because He is God. Henceforth it is in the poverty of Jesus that we see all the riches that could be desired or imagined; in His simplicity we see the elegance and the splendour of the divinity; and it is in His simplicity that we find all the strength of the power of God.

Josefina ERRAZURIZ\*

\* Josefina Errázuriz, from Chile, mother of 6 children (ranging from 2 to 17 years), member of one of the first adult CLC groups set up at Santiago in 1975, is a member of the Formation Commission for the World Federation of the CLC's. She has just obtained her Licentiate in Theology and teaches in several faculties, as well as in a catechetical centre which gives formation courses to teachers and catechists.

## OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

### How It Functions

#### BACKGROUND

Anawim CLC--that is what we call our local Christian Life Community. Anawim, I think you know, is an Old Testament term meaning the poor of Yahweh, or God's little ones. That is, people who may possess little or much, but who put all their trust in God. It tells you something about our i deals.

Anawim is in the Detroit area of the United States, northwest Detroit and its suburbs to be exact. Right now there are eleven of us--three couples, a married woman, three single women, and a Jesuit. In age we range from the mid-thirties to sixty, with most members around forty or so. A nawim CLC began about four years ago, but it merged with part of another CLC two years since. So its members' experience of CLC is quite varied, for several fifteen years or more, for two of them less than a year. Occupations of members are all different--lawyer, social worker, nurse, educators, to name a few. Four of the families have children. Except for the new members, all have made the Spiritual Exercises. Meetings are usually every two weeks, from 7:00-10:00 Sunday evenings. We find it helpful to meet at the same place each time, which right now is a religious education office where one member works. At times, too, we have met in members' homes.

Our group doesn't have permanent officers. Instead, we designate someone to act as leader and coordinate our activities for a limited period, say six months or a year. Usually each meeting is prepared in its main lines by some one whom the leader asks to do this. (In some CLCs I have been part of, my own role has been that of an assistant, more or less as the General Principles describe it. In Anawim CLC, since some of the lay members have deep grounding and long experience in CLC, my role is more like that of an ordinary member, though I make my own special contributions. I never, of course, function as leader, since CLC is essentially a lay movement).

What are our meetings like? There is no pattern, beyond the fact that scriptural prayer, rather deep exchanges about our life and work, and social or church needs and our response to them come into many meetings. Sometimes too we share liturgy in an informal setting. Occasionally we gather just for fun, as at a picnic last summer where one member,

community...

in full clown costume, entertained our members and their children.

#### WHAT THE COMMUNITY DOES FOR ITS MEMBERS

One way of telling how our community functions is to look first at what the community does for its members, then at what the members contribute to the community. In both cases, of course, the thrust is strongly outward beyond ourselves toward mission and service, for that is, after all, what CLC is all about. So let's glance first at what Anawim does for those who are part of it.

#### Faith Life

To start with, the community strongly stimulates its members' prayer. In many gatherings, a scripture passage linked to the meeting's main topic is read, followed by 20 minutes or so of silent personal prayer by each, after which we share our reflections. When we don't do that, we may close the meetings with 10-15 minutes of informal shared prayer, often of thanksgiving or petition. On special occasions like Lent or around Christmas or as part of an evening of renewal, or when members make their CLC commitment, the liturgy provides a strong prayer focus. And now and then we do a community evaluation covering some months of CLC life.

Clearly too, Anawim is a strong encouragement to its members to experience the Spiritual Exercises, which most members do every year for six or eight days, or else while continuing their daily life and work. This encouragement comes less from any direct action on the community's part than from this or that member telling of his or her retreat plans and asking our prayers, or commenting afterwards on the grace their retreat experience was. Where husband and wife are both members of CLC, one partner sometimes cares for the children while the other does the Exercises. On occasion other members perform the same service.

Each of the last two years, our entire Anawim CLC has spent a faith-sharing weekend together at Colombiere Spiritual Exercises Center. One of these focused on the personal salvation-history of each member, the other more on each one's work and ministry. Both did much to forge stronger ties between community members.



# YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

Dear friends,

Many things happened last summer; for example, the formation programme offered by the federation of Chile to the CLC-youth of the countries of the first world, the European formation programme in Manresa etc. The Youth Commission is fully alive and strives to fulfil the points of its mandate. But, I want to speak a bit about the travel of Erik and myself to India. I still often think of the youth of Bombay who have welcomed us with an amazing openness and hospitality. My special thanks are due to Joe Fernandes, the president of the Indian federation; he has made our travel to be a real CLC experience. My thanks go also to Ozy Gonsalves SJ who looked after us in Seva. One of the high points of our travel was without doubt the meeting with Margaret Rebello, Indian member of World Youth Commission. I was happy to meet her, to share with her my CLC experiences; her complete commitment, her lifestyle without compromise have helped me to continue on the way of my CLC vocation. Many federations, many communities would be happy to count such a deep person among them. The travel has helped me to perceive my limits, it has shown the face of poverty that is waiting at each corner. A Christian commitment in the slums like the work of Florie Freitas is a real sign of the presence of Christ.

It was joyful to see that we are getting slowly a world community and my way as a seminarian is very enriched by this.

Jean-Claude HOLLERICH

## YOUTH COMMISSION VISIT TO SOUTH INDIA

Erik's and Jean-Claude's visit to India, especially to Bangalore and Madras lit a spark of hope and instilled into our CLCers a lot of enthusiasm. Their visit to our units helped to throw light on the problems which we in India were facing in our groups. It also helped us to realize that we were a world community, a community of love and that we were all brothers and sisters. Personally their visit was a reliving of a deep experience of Christ's love for me and an experience that in spite of coming from such a distance we are still brothers and sisters, all belonging to one family which I had experienced at Villa Cavalletti and Assisi.

In Bangalore they had an experience of the way we conduct our CLC meetings as they visited three units, one school group, one college group and of course a leaders' group. They interchanged ideas with our CLC leaders on how to run the group and shared with them the way their CLC's were run back home.

They never forgot the cultural aspect of India. They visited places of interest in and around Bangalore. They visited for example Mysore, a city which was once the seat of the Wodeyar clan who was ruling Mysore; they visited the palace in which the Maharajas once lived and saw the pomp and pleasure in which they lived.

It was on the 7th of August they bid goodbye to the garden city of India-Bangalore- by boarding the Brindawan express which took them to Madras, a big port on the east coast of India. Here they spent one day and saw some places concerning St Thomas. They also visited the one and only group in Madras and threw some light on the problems they were experiencing there. It was a real challenge, for the grown-ups who were members threw many questions to them which they had to answer and which they did in a very convincing manner. It was here that they experienced a lot of problems which with Jesus' help they were able to overcome, thus making them feel His presence, turning to him in prayer.

On the whole it was an experience which I am sure they will never forget and will cherish for a long time.

Margaret REBELLO

## A FORMATION EXPERIENCE

This is the report of a formation experience that took place from the 23rd of April to the 13th of May at Seva Niketan in Bombay.

When people are living in committed relationship with Christ, there is an almost daily experience of the loving and healing power of Holy Spirit. This is what happened to us during this 21 day All-India CLC institute in Bombay, organised by Oriol Pujol to whom we owe much thanks. The programme was divided into 5 phases:

- 1) Service by Ozy Gonsalves
- 2) Interpersonal Relationship by Tarun Shet
- 3) Personal Growth by Jos Mekat
- 4) CLC Themes by Oriol and Dona
- 5) Spiritual Growth by Alwyn Fernandes

Hats off to the facilitators for their able facilitation.

We were 10 participants from different parts of the country including Victor Alphonso SJ of Seva Niketan, Bombay. God really worked through him, he was so full of the Spirit. Apart from this, for each phase 4 to 5 Bombay CLCers joined the group thus maintaining a strength of 14 to 15 participants throughout. Each time new people joining our group was a thrilling experience; what made it more thrilling was that new people felt accepted by the group and felt at home.

Though all of us were from different places with different backgrounds and from different age groups, we lived as a community where we experienced tremendous love, care and concern. I was amazed by the trust and openness of each individual in the group.

Interpersonal Relationship helped us in building the community and facilitated better interpersonal relationship. It also made me become sensitive to others' feelings and to get in touch with my own feelings.

The group-encounters enable each member to work upon his problems during Personal Growth under able facilitation of Jos Mekat and Oriol. These group-encounters led us to self acceptance and maturity and set the group to grow fully, which brought oneness. It was almost unbelievable to see the change in our lives after these sessions. Each one of us was bubbling with new life after experiencing love, peace, joy and happiness.

In Spiritual Growth Alwyn proved "Without Jesus we can do nothing". We experienced Christ during these days and a sense of deep joy and peace. This phase enabled me to build up my personal relationship with God. The experience of relief that Christ gave to the tensions and hangups was tremendous in this life of confusion and uncertainty.

On the whole it was wonderfully beautiful. As we left Seva many of our eyes were moist; we had fallen into love with each other.

L. Anthony DASS  
Bangalore

#### NATIONAL MEETING OF YOUTH-CLC, Mexico

Twelve communities federated to Youth CLC participated. Besides these, there were other unfederated groups, some being pre-communities, some belonging to no ecclesial movement or forming other type of movements. There were also observers, both from among the youth as well as the adults. In all we were about 90 persons, who with great enthusiasm and openness lived together and shared experiences of formation and information regarding our respective localities, regions and country.

The content of these days may be divided under six coherently united headings:

1. CELAM (Bishops' Conference of Latin America): a study of this pastoral document, which well situates us as an ecclesial movement within our historical context of Latin America. It speaks of the preferential option for the poor and for youth in this "Continent of Hope" (a name given by John Paul II during his visit to Mexico).
2. An analysis of the reality of our localities, regions and country, so that our apostolate and work for the Kingdom do not remain in the clouds. This is an important point for staying out of the error of voluntarism.
3. The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, which are like the electric current that moves us, maintains and reinforces our options, both personal and communitarian.

4. The CLC Community, its process, objectives, means, goals, experiences of people living in community. Our good intentions can otherwise be lost if we just close our selves and lean upon others having just the same anxieties and uncertainties.
5. Action Plans, sharing of experiences of work done in the different localities. Challenges from other kinds of works and action plans which are good for people in search but who cannot implement them.
6. The minimum of organization which helps to keep us free from over-structuring and at the same time which serves to revitalize inter-communication and growth among the different groups and communities of CLC. Contact with other groups which can help, like Basic Communities (CCB), Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEB) and other types of movements which are democratic and independent.

It may be good to mention here that the size of Mexico is approximately 2,000,000 square kilometers and so the distances are obstacles to be overcome.

Mario TAPIA Alba

#### THE DAILY REVIEW - A TIME TO SAY "YOU"

This article deals with the daily review of one's life, a point which is important and not to be neglected in our spirituality. This does not refer to an examination of conscience meant to separate the good from the doubtful actions of the day, nor to distinguish the moral from the immoral. Such a practice would not be going beyond humanism and would easily tend to a dualism in the christian religion.

First of all one must remember God. He it is who addresses a familiar and friendly "You" to man, even to me. Surrounded by this great love, without limit, this "You" is spoken to man through the whole of creation which unceasingly talks of God. I would even say that this "You" of God sustains all creation and that creation does not live except through this relationship. Accordingly, the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is addressed directly by God to man, to me, He is this "You" become flesh. What is more, God calls me by my name and guides me along my road to

salvation, where also one can feel the communication from God.

In the first minutes, one becomes conscious of this "You" of God, conscious of the different manifestations of this divine contact. One makes oneself peaceful and comfortable while putting oneself in the presence of God. Here, different fantasy-exercises can be of help, since one needs to allow oneself to be surrounded by the presence and the love of the Lord.

Speaking in the second person and using a direct speech, this "You" always offers a call, an invitation by God. Prayer, service and mission, prayer and life are all interlinked. This "You" of God expects, asks and awaits the response of man.

This response to the call of God will come in the second instant, when one directly addresses oneself to Christ, to the Word of God. This can be done by using for example even very ancient forms of prayer like the Litany or of calling Christ by the different names attributed to Him in the New Testament: Master, Lord, Son of Man... Naturally, one can also repeat without ceasing this little word "You", relishing it on one's lips and putting into it all the tenderness of which one is capable.

Christianity is the religion of the concrete, of the incarnation, of the descent of the absolute to the relative, thus sanctifying even the ordinary realities of daily life. Christianity is also a communitarian religion lived in the Church. So, I cannot respond to the call of the Absolute while refusing the concrete, or while refusing solidarity with man.

The third stage of our review will be to look at this "You" addressed to all men. But since one is limited, one can only see it addressed to certain men. This means that we review our interpersonal relations of the day, we encircle them all and offer them within this "You" given by God. In other words, one unrolls before the eyes of God the film of one's many contacts with people during the day, to see how one has been able to address this "You" to other men.

This is a point of great importance, for since we are freely accepted by God, we too ought to accept others with the same liberty. We are not the centre of the world around

which all other human relationships rotate, as the planets go round the sun. We are men, free beings among other free beings; we are deficient among other deficient persons. We may not refuse to meet the other, not fail to address our "You" to him. Unfortunately, we may be often so centered around ourselves that we consider the other at our service, as a mirror in which we contemplate ourselves with great satisfaction. Often we do not take the other seriously in his differences. But we only love him in so far as he is similar to ourselves.

The fourth stage will be now to give this "You" to others, which we have refused them during the day; to address this very significant little word to them now in the presence of God.

Perhaps this article can seem unorthodox to some, or perhaps the spiritual dimension is not profound enough for them. But I can only report on my experience, which is not that of a spiritual hero. For those, however, who wish to try "the daily review - a time to say 'You'", I can assure them of this that their life and their relations will improve thanks to prayer and the grace of God.

Jean-Claude HOLLERICH

#### THE REVISION OF LIFE

- Is a search for a new vision of this life, in which all that is lived out in a temporal action now makes persons appear on the road towards someone much greater than them selves.
- Is a search for the will of God, Who speaks through life; it is a common search for participating more in the very mission of God on earth.
- Is a means of transformation, to purify ourselves, to convert ourselves towards that which is most profound within us; in a word, it is to find God ever more and more.
- Is a means for a joint-discovery of God by the whole com munity; it is not just personal sanctification, but a step together in sanctity.
- Is a call by Christ to service and to mission; He, through life, teaches us what He expects of us towards the building of His Kingdom, for the announcing of His Good News.

- Is an act of the Church, within the very mission of the Church, to find God while one makes Him known to others.
- Is a means of learning to see God in all things.

It is to stop oneself to see how in a part of life, and through the life of others who have been planted and watered before us, the action of God can be witnessed in their sowing the seed, helping the seed to sprout and develop into a ear full of corn. It is to become aware, with joy and hope, that this grain one day will die, when the time of the monsoons comes. Then those who have believed will open wide their doors.

Taken from Pierre CAZAUX  
The Absolute of God



community...

Though we seldom discuss specific books as part of our program, one or other member is always waxing enthusiastic about some book or article recently read, which of course stirs others among us to read it too, or related books on the same topic.

Since many meetings have built into them a period in which each member in turn shares what one has been involved in over the last two weeks, and what events or issues have elicited one's concern, our community exchanges are continually widening our exposure to things some of us would not otherwise be too aware of: teacher contract negotiations, or the teen-age subculture, or hospices for the dying, or the problems of a parish council, or the frightening prevalence of "battered wives" as victims of violence by their husbands.

The circumstance that three of our members have held national or international CLC office or been involved in world CLC gatherings furnishes an acute sense of belonging to a national and worldwide Christian Life Community.

Occasional common projects that Anawim has taken up, focusing on social or ecclesial issues, have done much to keep us all better informed and sensitized on the topics involved. It's sure too that we members are strongly impelled toward a simpler life-style in our own lives by our exchanges on this theme in the community. We don't feel, however, that we've yet gone as deeply into this area as our community can and should.

### Supporting Each Other

Besides what it does for the faith-life of its members, Anawim clearly is a strong source of mutual support between those who make it up. Some examples may help.

Over a period of some meetings, each of us took about an hour to tell our fellow-members about "my worlds". That is, the several areas of my life that engage my time and interest, and my efforts to live out the gospel in each of them. One married member's worlds were his law profession, his wife and two children, his CLC commitments (he's a national officer) and his woes and joys as chairman of his parish council. After a member finishes presenting his/her

*community...*

"worlds", other members respond with their affirmation, questions, insights. It is a strongly positive faith-experience.

In reverses at work, in family difficulties, in sickness or death of loved ones, in assistance with personal projects, Anawim members are a great support to each other. Sometimes it's only a friendly call, or an offer to help, or prayer for each other's intentions. At times, too, there is help in more tangible ways.

There are as well those special moments when a member is trying to discern where the Spirit calls in a decision about marriage or profession or change of job or of residence. At such a time one's CLC is obviously a privileged group to turn to, not in order to shift a responsibility that can only be one's own, but precisely to help one discern better, with greater awareness of the options involved and greater openness. Some members have drawn on our Anawim Community to help them in such discernments. I wouldn't say, however, that it's as yet felt by all as a natural facet of community sharing.

Children of members, too, naturally have come to know each other, and now and then enjoy each other's company. Because few of the members live near to each other, close friendships have generally not developed between children of the different families. Yet there is a certain support felt between them, perhaps especially in the consciousness that here one finds a common values-system and life-style operative, one quite different from what they find among many of their peers.

An instance of the mutual support among CLC families that occurs took place two years ago. Our Anawim group was presenting a weekend workshop that it had carefully planned, on spirituality and world hunger, to the regional CLC gathering. Ken Yoder, a member, was handling the media part of it--some short films--strips, projections, records. Another member's 14-year-old son, Michael Brown, avid for experience in using media, worked closely with Ken in doing this. It was something that Michael's father John, for all his varied talents, could not have furnished, for electronics is not his forte. In the process, of course, Michael not only learned more about using multimedia, but experienced as well

community...

the warm spirit of Christian Life Community and its commitment to justice.

### An Aid to Action

Besides the faith stimulus and mutual support Anawim members receive from CLC, they find it a great help to them in their action and service. One member last year found that exposing to his Anawim Community the facets of his parish's sponsorship of a Vietnamese refugee family helped him in guiding his parish council through the project.

Earlier, our CLC's reseaching and then active advocacy with legislators of the Panama Canal Treaty made each of us far better informed and actively involved than we would have been individually. One couple in our group had lived in both Panama and Bolivia and could transmit to us both their own first-hand knowledge of the situation and something of Latin-American feelings on the issue. As a result, our group probed the matter with some thoroughness, and so we made our findings available to other CLC groups through the COMMUNICATOR, our national CLC review. None of this would have happened without our community.

It is because of our local community, too, that we are enriched when CLC members from other countries come to our area. Two years ago Alex Tan, a Filipino Jesuit active in CLC there, was studying in the Detroit area. His active membership in our Anawim group during his year's stay was a grace the community afforded to all of us, at the same time that it kept alive his own CLC interest. This year, Sister Mary Grant of Belfast met for a long exchange with our Anawim group. Her warmth and dedication, her first-hand experience of the Northern Ireland struggle, her sharing of the ups and downs of the CLC groups there that she works with--none of this would have been ours if our community had not invited her and hosted her appearance. Just one more instance of the many ways our community benefits its members.

(WHAT MEMBERS GIVE TO THE COMMUNITY)

(to be continued in next issue)

Nicholas RIEMAN S.J.

## GROUP EVALUATION

*Mother of 5, Mrs. Chapleau is a member of a CLC parish group which has been going for 18 months. Here she shares with us the experience of regular evaluation as practised in her group.*

To accept the CLC way of life is to accept to work with others rather than by oneself. As my understanding of the CLC's has grown, I have felt the challenge to make its goals my own and to work for these goals through the means it recommends. I was really impressed by the vitality of the CLC's and felt the need to share in its projects, difficulties, successes, set-backs and to see if I was genuinely working with other members - like the member of a choir who tries to lose his own voice in the midst of other voices to achieve a proper harmony. The community evaluation has shown itself to be an indispensable means for each one of us to see himself/herself in relation to the team, and for helping us to work together.

The fact that the evaluation takes place within the group ensures, to my mind, a better chance of its being thorough, objective, calm and constructive.

*Thorough:* It is worth recalling that "two heads are better than one". It is possible that a particular detail may so absorb my attention as to lead me to forget other important aspects; the observations of the others will complement my own.

*Objective:* It takes very little to make a wrong judgment; hearing other opinions different from my own obliges me

to question and to rectify the way I see things.

*Calm:* Maybe I am impressionable and emotional; the calm and serenity of others in the group will help me to remain level-headed.

*Constructive:* Perhaps a time of dryness can make everything seem black, fill me with doubt and lead me to take a negative approach; someone else in the group can communicate their enthusiasm to me, help me get back my confidence and so their 'fullness' overflows into my emptiness.

In our group, we are taking more and more care with the evaluation which terminates every one of our meetings. But I believe that in so doing we are reinforcing more the strong points of our meeting since our evaluation runs right through the whole of our meeting.

In effect, the flow of exchanges, the questionings, the attention to others keep us constantly in "a state of examen", so to speak - a little like what St. Ignatius invites us to do throughout the day. In addition, the evaluation has helped us considerably to make progress; for example, here are the different stages we have gone through:

1. We accept to express ourselves
2. We learn to express ourselves
3. We deliberately try to take account of others
4. We open ourselves to our environment and learn to discern
5. We become aware of the needs around us and then move to doing something.

1. We accept to express ourselves

At the beginning, our group evaluation was by no means easy for us: not knowing ourselves very well, we hesitated to trust and were inclined to hold back. The fear of being misunderstood or badly thought of prevented us from sharing confidences easily. For some, a natural timidity complicated matters. Really, like the little Prince and the Fox of Saint-Exupéry, we had to be "tamed".

But with prayer and the passage of time, with medita-

CLC 'group process'...

tion and perseverance, together with a deeper knowledge of the nature and the goals of the CLC's, common inclinations and aspirations began to be formed; we had in mind the same objectives, which facilitated our growing closer together. A climate of confidence developed amongst us and this encouraged understanding and acceptance: the barriers were down.

## 2. We learn to express ourselves

Our initial polite and formal exchanges give way to animated sharing; we have a great deal to say. Here it is not a question of deep and soul-searching analysis; rather, we exchange impressions and we simply like to talk. At this stage the meetings often go beyond the time allotted as we wander from the subject. But our guide keeps a watchful eye...gently she invites us to make an evaluation of what we have done. Gradually we sort out what is too personal and is best kept to oneself, what is sheer verbiage, and what can be a help to everyone. Discernment begins to dawn in the group. At the same time, we begin to take special care with our reflection to "bring together our ideas", with a view to clarifying the strong points, the dominant factors of our meetings. This 'intellectual' move disheartened us at the beginning, but now we face it with less dismay. However, we are not yet completely at home with it.

## 3. We deliberately try to take account of others

Little by little, we pass from talking about ourselves to listening to others, and then to understanding and accepting them. We still have some way to go, but now I believe we have sufficient confidence in one another to say quite frankly what we think, even though we presume not everyone will agree with what we say. We believe that a calm and objective discussion will lead us to a consensus. For example, I think of Bérengère, 19 years old, who finds the personal prayer at the beginning of our meetings too long, while Monique, mother of grown-up family, cannot get enough of these prolonged silences. Both have expressed their needs during our evaluation. Now, while bearing in mind the program for our meeting, we try to respect the limits judged reasonable by the group. Discernment made together on this occasion has taught us to distinguish

between what is desirable, essential or inadequate.

In this way, then, we learn to take account of others and each one feels challenged to ask himself/herself: Does the image I project help others feel at ease? Do I give each person the opportunity to express himself/herself? Am I the cause of any blocks? So real communication takes place where each person reveals himself/herself little by little.

4. We open ourselves to our environment and learn to discern

Our group evaluation helps us situate ourselves in the concrete reality of daily living; in some way it is an incentive which stops us from turning in on ourselves. Consequently, as we come to trust one another more and more, we also come to speak more confidentially of our environment (family, parish, social, professional). In this regard, I recall one 'revision of life' we experienced involving François.

Indirectly and against his will, François became involved in a case of bribery which led to serious pangs of conscience; he decided to share his anxiety with the group. Together, according to the method SEE-JUDGE-ACT, we tried to help him discern the will of the Lord.

SEE: François is part of a group of workers whom a municipality assigns to different works. When his group is assigned to repair roads or foot-paths, it is quite common for local residents to offer the workers a sizeable tip if they will do a similar job on the resident's property, during working hours and using materials 'provided' by the municipality. So the workers earn extra money and the residents get something done at little expense.

François does not accept these 'tips', but as he is the only one who disapproves, he is not able to stop what goes on. He is loath to report his fellow-workers, and in any case, the immediate superiors would prefer to turn a blind eye. He has tried to touch the professional conscience of his companions, but quite unsuccessfully.

JUDGE AND ACT: Each member of the team is asked to say, as objectively as possible and without imposing his/her view, how the teaching of the Gospel sheds light on the sit

CIC 'group process'...

uation. It is up to François and his wife to make the final decision. After prayer and reflection François takes the radical decision to leave his employment and accept another job, which is quite an upheaval as it means shifting house. And so our group loses two members.

5. We become aware of the needs around us and then move to doing something

In the group we have become progressively aware of the necessity to become concretely engaged in our environment, and it is through our evaluation that we have been able to discern what is demanded of each one. Innumerable inspirations have come to us in our times together and encouraged us on our way. Our group is not large, our means are quite modest, and so we have no spectacular achievements to point to. Each member, always in his own name, goes about his service: helping out the local church on the occasion of a retreat, or special mass or special ceremony; bringing communion to the aged or sick; cleaning the house for an old, handicapped person; being organist for the local church; assisting in running 'faith work-shops' for young parents.

The group evaluation was always most important for each of these engagements. For example, John and Madeleine had accepted to join their Parish Pastoral Council. After some time, they felt ill at ease without exactly knowing why. The group evaluation helped them discern that they had responded too quickly to the invitation to go on the Council, without making sure it was a call from the Lord. After a meeting with the Parish Priest, they resigned.

However, not long afterwards, we approached the Parish Priest - this time as a group - and offered to help in creating a more Christian approach to Mother's Day, and Father's Day which have become very commercialised. As a result, we prepared a small circular, appropriate for each Day, which we distributed to members of the congregations at each of the parish Masses.

Conclusion

In this way, helping one another and advising one another through our group support, we try in our modest way really to be "a people of God on the march", striving



to grow in a faith that is solidly anchored in daily realities and involved in the life of those about us. The regular evaluation in our group prevents us from succumbing to routine, that form of spiritual lethargy that no one is immuned from. Didn't the Apostles themselves fall asleep during Our Lord's terrible Agony in the Garden? Our evaluation also encourages us to be alert christians: "Happy that servant who is found at his task when his master comes". (Lk 12/43)

Alice CHAPLEAU

### FORMATION DOCUMENTS

Of National Federation of the CLC's (Canada)

CLC PAPERS: this dossier of 21 papers sets out a "Formation Process" (inspired by the Spiritual Exercises), lasting from 3 to 4 years. It is divided into 3 stages and is meant for members and group leaders. Price, \$ 5

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR MEETINGS: How to get the most out of a meeting, Gospel sharing, Written meditation, Game of metaphors, Meditation through pictures, Evaluation of a meeting, Price \$ 0,35.

"LIVING STONES" PAPERS: for young people in pre-CLC groups (known as "Living Stones" groups). This dossier comprises 22 Papers; 10 deal with the experience of "personal encounter", and 9 with spiritual and human formation. Price, \$ 1 (Translator's note: I wonder about the other 3 Papers, too).

NEW "LIVING STONES" PAPERS: Ten Papers, for 20 to 25 meetings. These offer different ways of helping young people grow in their faith and their ability to meet God and other people. Roneoed, illustrated. Price, \$ 4.

SIGNS: bulletin published by the Leunis Centre. This offers daily meditations, throughout the year, drawn from the liturgy. In 1980-81, the texts, articles and personal witness es will all be devoted to "The Family", the theme for the next Synod of Bishops. 100 pages, roneoed, 8 nos. each year. Price \$ 4; \$ 6 air mail.

OUR LADY IN THE IGNATIAN EXPERIENCE, Ludger Brien S.J. Supplement no. 7 in "Cahiers de Spiritualité Ignatienne". A short but very rich study, in 5 sections; one section is on Mary in the experience of the Exercises, and another is on Mary in the spiritual pedagogy of the CLC's. 64 pages. Price \$ 2.50.

LOVE UNRECOGNIZED, Ludger Brien S.J. Ten Folders, each one being 2 pages of reflections on the mysteries of the life of Jesus, abundantly illustrated by Scriptural references and works of the Masters; the folders fit together into a case. Helpful for the meditations in the Exercises. Price, \$ 3.50.

LOVE UNRECOGNIZED, Ludger Brien S.J. An English translation of the above, without the pictures. 29 pages. Price, \$ 2.

N.B. Requests for material should be sent to:

CENTRE LEUNIS  
4100 av. de Vendôme  
MONTREAL - CANADA H4A 3N1

Postage is not included in the prices given.

Just published!

JOURNEY INTO HOPE, by Mary Grant. Editor : Christian Journals Ltd, Belfast - Dublin - Ottawa.

Mary Grant - one of our CLC leaders in Belfast - has written a new book, "Journey into hope", which is a Journal-autobiography. 'It is more than ideas, thoughts and words: it is life and people living, loving, suffering and transfigured at such depth that the reader almost experiences his own life being laid bare...' "If you had not been in touch with your own inner self, you would never have recognised mine".

## THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

The year 1981 was designated International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) in a 1976 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in order to "draw attention of the international community to a major social problem". The overall theme of the Year is "full participation and equality" in society by disabled persons, including its social and cultural aspects. Its objectives are to promote measures and/or services designed to assist the physical and psychological adjustment of disabled persons; to promote national and international efforts in the fields of training, counselling and employment opportunities; to encourage study and research projects; to educate and inform the public of the rights of disabled persons; to promote effective measures to prevent disabilities and to rehabilitate the handicapped. There will be no world conference but, as in the case of the International Year of the Child, the emphasis will be on the national and local levels.

It is considered that the greatest contribution the IYDP can make is in educating the general public in the many facets of the problems of disability to change attitudes toward the disabled, and in creating advocates for the necessary policies on the social level.

The question of the rights of handicapped persons "is not just an economic issue, not just a human issue. It is a divine issue that parallels what is happening in the liberation of other minorities. Ultimately, it is a political problem".

The World Health Organization has defined impairment as the physical defect, disability as the functional loss resulting from it and handicap as the burden society places upon someone because of his or her defect.

UN concern for the handicapped, sparked in large measures by voluntary agencies, dates from the early '50's. In 1971 the General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Rights of the Mentally Retarded, and in 1975 a Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. In essence the latter reaffirms the right to respect for their human dignity and their basic human rights; the right to services to enable them to de

*international presence...*

velop their capabilities and skills "to the maximum" and to participate in society; the right to economic and social security and to a decent level of living; the "right to live with their families or foster parents and to participate in all social, creative and recreational activities". They are to be protected against exploitation and to have the right to qualified legal aid.

Over 450 million human beings (a number equal to the combined populations of the USA and the USSR) suffer some form of disability and the number is increasing by about 3 million a year. At least 10 percent of the population of any country is born with or is likely to acquire a physical or mental disability that hinders their functioning in society as fully as other persons of the same age and sex. An estimated two-thirds of the world's disabled live in developing countries, mostly in rural villages or urban slums, at little more than subsistence level, unreached by whatever limited services do exist.

Over the centuries the disabled have been the victims of ignorance, superstition, fear and assorted myths, at best treated as inferior or "ab-normal", with pity or indifference, at worst degraded under the shadow of shame or guilt attached to being born with some physical or mental defect. There is still a great lack of information about disability - its causes, treatment and consequences - not only among illiterate villagers, but among families, schools, government officials and international development planners and administrators. Even in the industrialized countries, which have come so far in the treatment of disabilities in the last thirty years, there are still traditions and prejudices to be overcome.

A report, prepared by Rehabilitation International, a major non-governmental organization dealing with the problems of the disabled, listed disabling conditions to be found among children everywhere: "Children considered to be severely mentally impaired, deficient or retarded; children considered to be slow learners; children considered to have speech or language defects; children who are hearing impaired; children who are blind; children who are partially sighted; children who are motor handicapped; children with specific types of learning disabilities; children who have behavioral problems; maladjusted and psychotic children; and children with various combinations of such conditions".

*international presence...*

Impairment of millions of children could be prevented or limited by simple measures within the capabilities of their families or communities. Many childhood impairments are temporary and reversible and, if detected early and treated, do not become permanent disabilities. A great majority of the children who suffer impairment are capable of adapting to its limitations and of developing relatively normally, if they are permitted to do so and are assisted as necessary, but are not over-protected by a caring family nor neglected through ignorance or superstition, as happens in poor and illiterate rural areas.

It is necessary to preserve as far as possible the normal cycle of the child's development instead of concentrating entirely on the impairment itself; it is necessary to move away from the traditional, usually high cost, institutions, elaborate equipment and highly specialized professional care - that reach comparatively few at best - and design programs which use the resources of the family, supported when necessary by community resources and services.

Two Catholic organizations - the Movement for a Better World, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with ECOSOC (the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations), and Stauros International, a group concerned with the religious and spiritual meaning of suffering - sponsored a colloquium on IYDP at the United Nations in September 1980. Since there is a moral imperative that we move toward the "full participation" of disabled persons in all aspects of life, the colloquium examined the ethical and moral implications of "the dignity and worth of the human person" and "full participation". Rejecting the notion that disability can be identified with sin (John 9), each person - disabled or non-disabled - has the right to wholeness and to acceptance as an equal before God. Furthermore, society needs from the disabled their gifts: perseverance, coping, understanding, among many others. The disabled person has the right to define his or her role in society, the right to shape his or her destiny. The disabled ask the non disabled to accept roles as advocates with, rather than for the disabled.

We in CLC have the opportunity afforded by IYDP to re-examine our attitudes toward the handicapped or disabled. Are our approaches to them as open as we are to other mino

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rities? Do we welcome the disabled into our local CLC communities as full partners and equals, or are we over-protective? Do we, in seeking the "liberation of the whole person and of each person", work to support the disabled persons in their rightful demand for justice?

"We all struggle with life. We must carry this struggle in a spirit of mutual love, inspired by Christ's teaching. ..In doing so we build a community of interdependent people and discover the Kingdom of God in our midst". (Pastoral Statement of the US Bishops on Handicapped People, 1978)

Thomas I. MONAHAN

## ECHOES

### WHAT ARE WE DOING IN THE NETHERLANDS?

We just had our national meeting of group-representatives, and that makes it easy to give an overall view of what is going on in our small country. For those who have lost track of us: we started CLC in 1974, after Rome '73, out of nothing. Very carefully we formed until 1979 about 20 groups. Grass-root-level work, with only a few who had some idea of what CLC should be.

To day we have fifteen CLC-groups, most have been together for 4 or more years. We lost groups due to all sorts of reasons, main reason was that some wanted another kind of spirituality.

We were very thankful that for the first time we felt at this meeting that CLC was dawning, was something worthwhile to get interested in, besides getting interested in individual group-members, and getting interested in group-methods. Most groups find strength and warmth in a deep sharing of the Gospel. To some of you it may sound as if we are very careful and not so outspoken. But therefore you have to keep in mind that the more north in Europe you come the more reserved people are. Add the very difficult situation of the church, and you can guess why we are careful. After our annual meeting we felt that we could go ahead, with the feeling that so many more were on the same path, feeling, believing and searching the CLC-way of life.

We still organize information-and formation week-ends; about three or four every year. We have started last year to introduce formation days, and this year again we will have two formation days, open for all members. One about "Ignatian spirituality and-prayer methods", given by Fr. Jan van Deenen SJ, and another about "Church today: what is possible, what not possible?" given by Fr. H. van Leeuwen SJ, provincial. And apart from these days and week-ends, more people are interested in the individually guided retreats. We have a team together with Flanders that 'operates' during the summermonth, and a team with our new Centre of Spirituality in Deventer. Also together with the Cenacle sisters we start this fall the so called "At Home Retreats". (Progressio Jan. '80). A pre-CLC effort is made with pupils of our college and university. We are thinking of giving a 6-evening-course to introduce CLC to all ages, in some parts of the Netherlands. Out of the French "année d'accueil" and the Indian "The More of Life" we made this year one book, inspired by the German "workbook". The book was spontaneously called "the golden book"... as its color is light yellow, so we sincerely hope that with this golden tool, we can work at a 'golden' future.

Mary BLICKMAN

### BRASIL

The first session for CLC Assistants was held at Japui ba, Rio de Janeiro, from 10th - 14th October. In all there were 27 participants - 14 Jesuits, 1 diocesan priest, 8 Sisters and 4 lay people. This session was a wonderful opportunity

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nity for gaining a better knowledge of the CLC's and for preparing assistants for new groups which are just beginning.

Three lay persons (Gina, Raphael and Liceya) from the "Council for Service" adapted experiences and techniques they had learnt at previous sessions in Rome and Santiago. In this way they helped the participants experience, in 5 days, the necessary steps for forming a CLC group and for assimilating a little more the dynamics of a community.

Everyone was deeply involved in the programme and found it a very fruitful experience, as the final evaluations clearly show. The presence of the Jesuit Provincial of the Central-East province during the last day of the course, and his message to the participants, were very encouraging and a sure sign of the hope and interest that the Provincials of Brasil are showing in the development of the CLC's.

The publishers "Loyola de São Paulo" are going to produce a little booklet which will contain the material presented during our session, together with an explanation of the first steps towards establishing a CLC group. The assistant Provincial, Fr. Cesar Augusto S.J., has undertaken to visit other cities, to talk about and explain the CLC's.

The letter from Fr. Arrupe, read at the beginning of the session, and the letter from Fr. Patrick O'Sullivan, encouraged us all greatly.

#### ZAIRE (Lubumbashi)

"Our group has been going for 7 months. All the 6 couples who compose the group have finally decided to give a hundredth of their salary to the poor of the parish. It is a small gesture, not amounting to very much at all, but nevertheless a very significant one as the group wants to be concerned with the poorest in the parish. We also want to begin the Spiritual Exercises in daily life, which will probably be next month. All for now. Work well. Yours in Christ".