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INTERVIEW OF FR. LARRY ZORZA, IMC

INTRODUCTION:

On August 22-27, 1980 twenty members of the US Federation of Christian Life Communities went to New York City to represent WFCLC, a Non Government Organization to the United Nations. They attended a 2-day preparatory session of their own and a 3-day session, entitled "Agenda for the 80s". In all there were about 1000 representatives. Fr. Larry Zorza visited with the delegation twice to provide some orientation and to share his points of view on the UN. While the NGO program was taking place there was also a Special Session (XI) of the General Assembly which was also attended intermittently by the delegates. Three weeks later Fr. Zorza is being interviewed by Fred Leone. The following is the result:

* WHO IS LARRY ZORZA

Fred Leone: What is your position at the UN?

Fr. Zorza : I am an attache to the Office of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations popularly known as the Vatican Mission to the United Nations. Specifically, I'm responsible for the area of economics and economic cooperation and development. I joined the Mission about 3 years ago when there was a call for this Special Session which is ending today - the preparation of an agenda for the implementation of the New International Economic Order (NIEO).

* IMPRESSIONS OF CLC REPRESENTATIVES

F.L. : On Sunday August 24 we asked you to join us and share your experiences with us. We came from all parts of the country, New England, New York, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Far West, all to one place in New York. How did you see these 20 individuals who came together to one apartment with sleeping bags and towels?

* STRANGERS AT AREOPAGUS - U.N.

Fr. Z.: My first impression as I met with your group in NY was a little bit of what The Acts of the Apostles

describes on the experience of Paul. He came to Athens to approach the learned Greeks in the Areopagus. Paul tried to be very sophisticated. He tried to speak in their language, Greek, to impress them. He wanted to share his enthusiasm for the cross and the kingdom. He received a very laconic answer: "We'll hear you some other day", which means that we are really not interested in what you have to say. My impression was that you were coming with a great message, a great enthusiasm, to a place, which in fact is filled with appearances, sophistication in dealing with problems of other people and not really getting involved personally. So while I was admiring your enthusiasm, I was afraid of the frustration you would incur as soon as you realized how things work around the UN and even around NY in this big center of the world.

* COMMUNITY LIVING

The other impression was your enthusiasm in doing something by bringing your contribution to the new decade before us, of solving the problems of the world in the right way. I was particularly impressed by your message of community living, that is, bringing this message in the framework of a community and bringing the Christian message to the world which is waiting for it; by your interest in being effective even in your short stay in NY, but leaving a message, reaching out to some key people, trying to find out where and how to be effective. The other part which much impressed me, because it is my daily concern, personally rather than a UN attache, is how we bring the spiritual message and awareness to the UN.

* THE MISSING DIMENSION

We have tried for 35 years to solve the human problem with human means and human tools. And after 35 years we find ourselves at the end of the road with no exit, just with a big, big pile of arms. When a problem becomes very difficult we threaten each other with the use of these arms. Now this is the point we come to. There is a growing concern and awareness at the UN that we must discover the missing dimension, the spiritual dimension, the religious experience, using the wealth of world religious and spiritual experiences, and coming to the realization that these might have something to contribute to the solution of world problems. And here is where you have come with your message.

international presence...

* WHAT WE LEARNED

F.L.: Recall that we met with you again on Tuesday, August 27. Now a double question. What do you think we learned? What do you think we should have learned?

* COMPLEXITY

Fr. Z.: I think what all of you have learned is that the problems are not simple. There is no simple answer to them. They are very complex. All of you have learned that the UN is a place where the whole world comes together with its problems, its hopes, its contributions, with all the many components.

* GLOBAL VISION

Also just by seeing the people around you today you know that it is a must, not only for every Christian but for every human being, to think global, to act global through the channels where we have access. We cannot just think anymore of our little back yard, of keeping it nice or taking very much care of it. We have to have this global vision of the world in front of us.

* POWER

Another natural thing you have learned is how the power works today. We have a couple of components - (1) the political dimension - that controls the politics, the arms, the life of people and (2) the economic dimension - what people need every day. This is particularly alive and timely at this moment we are living in; it is the reason for calling this Special Session of the General Assembly - economics, which is a big dimension in international trade and the use of natural resources. When it comes to food on the table and access to jobs, it comes to real people. When it comes to right to development, it comes to giving up too much control that some people have acquired during the centuries and in the last few decades. So there are the things you have surely learned.

* DEVELOPING A RESPONSE

Now for learning to developing a response it takes a little time. The other thing which most of you should have learned [though it takes time] is how the power works. To whom should we address our needs? What should be the agenda we should be concerned with? How do we develop our ap-

international presence...

proach? Many of us have the experience of action in social justice in the US which has the same dynamics as social justice in the world today. Often this goes through confrontation or just sitting back and denying that there is a problem.

* RESPONSE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY - NORTH SOUTH DIALOGUE

But we must learn the approach of reaching out not just to the oppressed, but particularly to the oppressor, because we know that the way control is exercised in the world today and the key to change is unfortunately not always the oppressed but the oppressor. At this moment of history our Christian communities have a great responsibility. Without looking at the past and who is responsible for the conditions, we realize that there is to be a North-South dialogue. The part we label as the Oppressor is the North. The North is the Christian world. Part of the South is Christian, particularly Latin America. To part of the South we have exported our Christian religion. Also we have exported and imposed upon them our economic system. Now these people are coming back to us and saying "Can we have a voice in this? Can we shape a different economic system (a New International Economic Order)?" Here is where the economic dialogue is going. You as a group, as CLC, I as a priest in my position, we should start another dialogue - a North-South Christian Dialogue. The religion we have exported and presented to the South, how will we live it? Will it be a religion for our minds? a religion we have imposed through canon law? through an organization? Or will it be a religion which will free people, liberate, bring the core of the Christian message? And one of the responsibilities of us Christians in the North is to work with the structures which are "oppressive", which are "exploitive", which are "imposing" a system in the South. It will not come just by boycotts or lengthy articles condemning the group. But it will happen when we talk their language, come to their level, sit around their table with them in a non-threatening way, making them realize that the people in the South are like people in the North, that every person has the same aspirations. Starting with this kind of approach, I think we can bring about changes, and we have examples of positive results from this approach.

(to be continued in next issue)

Fred LEONE

(Continued from January)

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY-HOW IT FUNCTIONS

WHAT MEMBERS GIVE TO THE COMMUNITY

Now let's look at things from the other side: what are the contributions that the members of Anawim make to it as a community? I can think of at least three ways in which they contribute.

Responsibility for Community Life and Growth

Obviously Anawim CLC only exists and functions because of the presence and active participation of its members. Even just managing to attend meetings is not easy for any of us in Anawim. Though we try to meet at a central spot, most of us travel 30-60 minutes to get to a meeting. More of an obstacle is the fact every one of us is heavily involved in social, civic or church activities, besides our fulltime occupations, not to mention the family demands of some members. If CLC wasn't a priority for us, a way of life, we'd have given it up long ago. Even with the best efforts, often two or three of the eleven members simply cannot attend. Sometimes too we just have to cancel a meeting or postpone it because of other necessary commitments of members. Still, we manage. And we don't simply attend. All actively participate--there are no passive members in the group. And at times and according to talents, each of us handles this or that, with the leader seeing to it that it happens.

I've already spoken of our faith-sharing weekends. Both are striking examples of what members contribute to the community, for in these sessions each shared not just what each had but what each was. Again, while our social gatherings as a community are few, we think them important, for it sometimes happens that we come to know each other better when we play than when we work or study or even pray together.

Planning and preparing meetings or other Anawim gatherings is also a contribution members must and do make. We learned quickly that for meetings to be fruitful, they need to be planned, even though in the meeting itself we are quite flexible in implementing what's been planned. Giving the time and energy necessary to plan things is a contribution of community members that is not always easy, but is important.

community...

Members help too by offering the hospitality of their home or sometimes their office for a meeting or a liturgy or a picnic. Over the past three years we've shifted our meeting place at least three times, as circumstances changed. And not rarely, if they live nearby, members furnish transportation for CLC events to their fellow members.

A key contribution that members make to Anawim's life is the recruiting and formation of new members. About once each year we make a coordinated effort to attract new members, and for this arrange a special meeting to present CLC to interested persons, with all of us assisting in one way or other with the meeting. Following this informational presentation, we ask those who wish to explore CLC further to commit themselves to at least two months of formation meetings. If at the end of that time they are beginning to sense that CLC may be their vocation, they commit themselves to CLC for at least a year. During that year we try to assure that new members' formation continues, drawing for this on the quite effective Formation Program that our national CLC movement has developed. A formation team for our region of the country, Midwest I, is to be designated soon, and would then assume responsibility for overseeing formation in our region. But at present our group must do this, and we take pains to insure that it is done well, though with flexibility. Naturally, experiencing the Spiritual Exercises in depth is an important part of this formation, and this usually happens within a year of the member's joining. Whether new recruits form a separate grouping or become part of our existing community depends on how many there are, also on their background. In the last two recruiting efforts that resulted in new members, the number joining was eventually only two or three, and so it seemed best for them to join our existing group. A new group just now recruited may turn out to be larger, in which case we might well let them develop as a separate community, with our assistance and guidance.

Sharing Members' Talents With the Community

To Anawim's life and functioning, members' gifts are continually contributing. Janice's creativity, Carol's expertise in group process, Ken's skill in multimedia, Pat's Latin-American experience, Sharon's gift for leading scriptural prayer, Jerry's ability to get things done, Jo's

community...

thoroughness, Mary's knowledge of family and religious education, John's organizational ability and knowledge of the national CLC movement, Ann's warmth and friendliness, my own Jesuit background--all are drawn on. For since CLC deals with all of life, sooner or later it has need of all these gifts, and of all the expertise it can muster.

In a vibrant CLC, there is always need too for much information and for many contacts--whether for a formation session, or for background on an issue, or whatever. This too is a contribution members can make to the community, and do. Some of those in Anawim have knowledge and contacts in public or Catholic education, others are knowledgeable in matters of women's equality or local politics or church structures or the retreat movement or the Third World or liturgical music. I believe I can say that our Anawim CLC finds it an advantage that we are not all of one sex or profession or class or status or background--without denying that it can at times be useful for a local Christian Life Community to assemble persons of a single profession or interest.

It is sure too that individual members are in fact contributing to the community when they use their expertise or contacts or information to help another individual member, for in a true community what helps any member helps the entire group. Examples are easy. A lawyer member's advice helped resolve another member's public utilities problems. Involvement of one member in a county work-education project encouraged and facilitated a second member's activity in such efforts at her school. Another member's participation in a Lay Spiritual Growth Center advisory board led to the inclusion of two other members in the same project. Again, there are two or three members competent in giving the Spiritual Exercises, and they have, when asked, used this gift as well in directing the retreat of this or that fellow member.

Finally, to be quite practical, something else members contribute to Anawim is their dues. With our community, money is very secondary, but we do need some of it to survive. There are minimum annual dues per person or per couple, mostly to pay for formation materials or expenses

community...

incurred in special events. Trips for CLC purposes are some times paid for by the community if we have the money and this seems advisable, but usually individuals do this themselves. It is taken for granted that those with more income will contribute more and in fact this takes place, however it is done. Theoretically, we would prefer to pay all such expenses as those for annual retreats, faith-sharing weekends or CLC trips out of a common fund, to underline our bond as a community; in practice, we haven't arrived at that as yet. Besides supporting our own local group, we of course contribute also to the expenses of our regional, national and world community, for we are part of them.

Contributing to the Community's Mission and Service

From time to time our Anawim group takes up specific actions or "projects". These may involve all or some of our community, but are considered and planned as group efforts. In other words, all members help with them, at least in planning and support. Some examples: the hunger workshop and Canal treaty efforts, already mentioned.

Our participation in regional and national CLC gatherings is also a group effort, even though it is rare that all of us can participate. Our part in the two national CLC deliberations and in last year's national convention were especially effective. In the latter, besides other roles in staging the convention, four members presented modules in the areas of spirituality, justice, and the world dimension of CLC.

Anawim members have also taken part in special CLC presentations to Jesuit novices, to Jesuit collegians, and to the Internship Program for retreat directors. Some of our group have twice exchanged with staff members of the Spiritual Exercises Center to explore common objectives. And twice Anawim representatives have contributed to a Detroit Province Day on CLC for Jesuits. For while our main efforts are aimed at challenging injustice and responding to human needs, we know too that part of our apostolate is to the clergy.

CELL IN THE WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY

That gives you at least a sketchy notion of what our

community...

local Christian Life Community is like and how it functions. Because it is a group of living persons, it reflects all the ups and downs, the shifts and changes, the achievements and failures, of life as it is actually lived. We its members are far more conscious than anyone else could possibly be of what a pilgrim community it is, and how much it yet needs to grow in spirituality, in community spirit, in commitment to service. Yet it is true that for every one of us, Anawim CLC is something very special and wonderful in our lives, not just an organization we belong to but a way of living, our way of following Jesus.

We are keenly aware too that Anawim is but a cell in a wider community--regional, national and world. Our deepest bond--this becomes clear when, as has happened, some of us move to other places--is not simply to Anawim but to the universal Christian Life Community, with which we feel immediately at home wherever we find it. We identify fully with the direction taken by last year's World CLC Assembly in Rome: "Towards a World Community at the Service of One World". But we know too that much of our CLC life and service is rooted in the life of our local community, through that "membership in a particular group" that the General Principles (10) say is a normal expression of CLC living. And we thank God for our CLC vocation, and for the grace that is Anawim, the local community in which we live out this our vocation.

Nicholas RIEMAN S.J.

GOD WANTS TO HEAL US

(reflections on: what is spiritual direction?)

While writing this article I strongly experienced the difficulty of describing with clearly defined words a living reality which touches the uncomprehensible mystery: God. It is frustrating to realize that no words fit the experience I want to express. Other people might be able to find a satisfactory way of describing what spiritual direction is about. I do not think I have. Nevertheless I hope that you might be able to touch the living experience that is hidden behind the words.

As much as I love spiritual direction I do not like the name "spiritual direction". For many people it has an authoritarian connotation and it suggests a relationship between a director knowing where to go and a directee totally depending on the former concerning direction. However if there is someone who knows where to go it is none of the two persons but the Holy Spirit. If we understand spiritual direction as a direction given by the Holy Spirit I think we could keep the name. But, as a matter of fact, when we say spiritual direction we mostly think of the director and the directee. Therefore I would prefer to call it "spiritual companionship" or "spiritual friendship". A spiritual companion accompanies a person and helps him/her to become more aware of the way God wants to relate in order to respond in a more appropriate way to God's invitation.

After having mentioned my uneasiness about the name "spiritual direction" I feel o.k. to use it since it is a 'trademark' in English!

The Spiritual direction I will describe is very much based on Ignatian spirituality. I personally found it very helpful. Several times I was amazed to see that heavy problems or hard experiences received another face when people deepened their relationship to the Lord. The problems often lost their heaviness although they didn't disappear. Some times however they were resolved through God's healing power.

It might help to understand what spiritual direction is about when comparing with other helping relationships like counseling and therapy.

Counseling is more solution-oriented. The clients are

CLC means...

helped to find a solution to their problems. Therapy is more dealing with feelings and experiences and the underlying reality and it is more working with the personality structure. During the session the clients learn to become aware of where they are at; they can find some relief of personal tensions; they try to understand their reactions and start new behavior. What they learn in the session they have to practise in real life. In counseling and therapy the relationship between the counselor/therapist and the client is very crucial for the healing process, or even more : within the relationship to the counselor/therapist, the client expects and experiences healing.

In spiritual direction the directees are also helped to become aware of what is going on inwardly during prayer or in other important moments in life. However the relationship between the director and the directee has more a preparatory importance. Real healing is expected from the relationship between the directee and God. Where do I expect healing from? That question points to the difference between spiritual direction and other helping relationships.

However in reality there is no clear line of separation between counseling and spiritual direction. Similar approaches are used to help the clients and the directees. On the one hand what is helpful to a client in counseling I can use in spiritual direction, too, if only I know and respect my competency and limits and if I am aware what I am doing. I might be convinced that e.g. rehearsing (the directee is invited to tell me what he/she would like to tell somebody else, but he/she has not yet the courage to do so) is important for a directee. In such a situation I admit by doing, that rehearsing is a greater help than what I expect from God at the moment. I believe that such a situation can also be a challenge where God wants to use our human abilities before turning directly towards Him. On the other hand it might well be that a counselor, too, relies on God's healing power. In such a case I think he does in fact spiritual direction.

As spiritual director I keep the focus on God's will to heal each one of us. In other words: I believe that God can touch the concrete person in front of me. Therefore I propose help in order to grow and deepen the directee's relationship to God.

(Continued on page 21)

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

Dear friends,

This issue of Youth Progressio will not present so much news as articles about evaluation and prayer. The January issue already presented an article about evaluation, so you see that this will be one of our main themes for 81. My article of March is more theoretical, but, do not be afraid; it is a theory that is the result of experience, of life. It is the evaluation offered to us by Saint Ignatius; it is the living skeleton that we have to fill out with flesh; it is the glasses through which we have to read all the articles about evaluation in Youth Progressio 81.

Evaluation and daily meditation do not suffocate freedom in prayer, the spontaneity so much appreciated by youth. They rather help us to distinguish the spontaneity given to us by the Spirit, which is the full manifestation of ourselves, from the spontaneity which is the fruit of our egoism. You see here the strong relationship between evaluation and discernment, and, in fact, I hope to be able to present you some articles about discernment this year.

Evaluation is also a time of prayer and not at all a reflection about oneself on how to become perfect. It is not a matter of moralizing! Contemplation and evaluation are both necessary; so, you will not be surprised to find some articles about prayer in the next issues.

So, I simply wish that this series of articles may help you to go, together with Saint Ignatius, the way to the freedom given by God "so that as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honour to dishonour, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things."

Jean-Claude HOLLERICH

PRAYER IS LIKE HOLDING A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Teenagers are amazing. They speak with friends on the telephone for thirty to ninety minutes without considering that a long time. When their parents ask: "What do you talk about?", their response is frequently: "Nothing", "And when was the last time you saw this particular friend?" "This afternoon after school".

In an age in which "we have lost the art of conversation", teenagers are not at a loss for words. Their exchanges may not be about anything earth-shaking; more likely, they are about what went on during the day, about other friends, about themselves. Nevertheless, what happens during these telephone colloquies may be extremely important. Primarily, there is the deepening of the relationship of friendship; even when they are apart from one another, they think of one another and call. Other reasons for keeping in touch may be less weighty, for example: needed recreation, a way to dissipate loneliness or a request for advice. But the result of these calls is the mutual influencing by friends and a delving into what makes a friend a friend.

Prayer is very similar to this type of telephone conversation with a friend. Thus, I would like to develop this similarity in the hope that youth in Christian Life Communities will be able to recognize the analogy and, thereby, acquire a little more ease and confidence in their prayer. Prayer is conversation, using the language of faith and love. God is not only a Supreme Being, infinitely transcendent; He is also a person who delights to be with human beings (Prov. 8:31).

When a teenager is disposed to talk, he not only dials his friend's number but also puts aside other tasks, turns down the television or stereo, or even goes into his own room trailing the phone cord behind. If that same person desires to share a point with God, he will think of Him, put aside distractions, and even shut the door so that he may pray to his heavenly Father in secret (Mt 6:6).

The content of one's prayer is similar to that of the teenagers' conversations. It may not be about earth-shattering events; but it is about what happened during the day, about a request for another friend, and, most likely, about one's own thoughts and feelings.

The results of prayer are likewise similar to those of the teenagers' conversations. Primarily, there is a

deepening of the relationship of friendships between God and the person; this individual feels more content that God is close to him and is urging him with His Spirit. During prayer, one is never alone; through prayer, the person is influenced to listen and to follow the ways and suggestions of God; in prayer, the individual finds meaning and direction for his life. As a result, the pray-er finds himself attracted to God, desires to be with Him, becomes more ready to accept God's will, and is more eager to serve God and his fellow men and women. A person who has talked with God is not ashamed to have Him as a friend.

Conversation is a dialogue. When teenagers pick up the phone, they expect their friends to respond to what they say, thus assuring a continuance of their exchange. Prayer is also a dialogue. A person has to recall that God, however, is the first speaker: He is the one who inspires the person to pray. He communicates with human beings in the things that happen and especially in His Word, the Scriptures. Events like a national disaster, the death of a relative, the sickness of a friend, a big test, a bad day, a hit song or some self-discovery can be occasions for a person to talk about these realities with God. The Bible is the Word of God. "In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our fathers through the prophets; in this, the final age, He has spoken to us through His Son" (Heb 1:1-2). Therefore, it is necessary for the pray-er to respond to God. A good way to do this is to find a quiet place, to relax, to reflect that one is in the presence of God, to read a passage of Scripture (about ten verses) to comprehend the meaning of the entire passage, and then to reread the passage slowly, pausing after each sentence to consider that each sentence is God's statement to the individual; the individual may relish the insight he has received, or tell God how he feels about His message, or simply stand in awe at the marvellous closeness God has with him. He is then in the midst of deep prayer, conversing with his God as his friend.

This concept of prayer as a telephone conversation with God may help youth to approach their own prayer as a way to respond to their best Friend.

Dominic TOTARO

EVALUATION-EXAMEN-ACCORDING TO ST. IGNATIUS

The Spirit of Christ calls us, challenges us and deals with each one of us in a uniquely personal way. Our life is an open book in which God traces out our salvation history. It is up to us to accept His call, to decipher the lines of His love for us, to become sensitive to the intervention of the Spirit of Christ during our day, and to confront our reality with the marvellous truth that God offers each one of us.

In contemplation, we experience the revelation of the Father in Christ; the Spirit helps us respond to this revelation by giving our lives a particular orientation towards it. We may respond in this way then, thanks to the daily examen (evaluation) which alerts us to the imprint of Christ in our life and helps us see what in ourselves would eliminate this 'seal'. God wants to make a marvellous work of art of each one of us, but in the fabric of our lives - as precious as they are - there are layers of fibres which resist His workmanship. For our part, we have to become sensitive to Him working within us, and to our own secret resistance. Prayer and evaluation complement one another: to put some order into our life is our response to the contact we have had with the Father in prayer. Evaluation, the continuation of contemplative prayer, is a means for "finding God in all things"; it goes beyond the limits of formal prayer and helps us incarnate our prayer in the concrete reality of daily life.

"How is this possible?" someone might ask - "How can this brief period of 15 minutes, this exercise which is so dry and artificial - how can this help us bring prayer and life together, and turn intellectual faith into a living faith?" I must admit I had exactly the same difficulties myself at the beginning. But I kept at it and slowly saw the living reality behind what, at first sight, seems artificial and stylised; I can only invite others to do the same. It really is like going back to school and passing through the rather tiresome stage of discovering that the individ-

ual letters we spell out so laboriously actually form a whole, and make sense - maybe even a beautiful poem. We must be humble enough for this experience, because we do not have the gift God gave Solomon: "Because you have asked for the wisdom to rule justly, instead of long life for yourself or riches or the death of your enemies, I will do what you have asked. I will give you more wisdom and understanding than anyone has ever had before..." (1 Kings 3/11 - 12). We might imitate the example of Solomon, as we take our first steps in this area of evaluation, and ask God to give us wisdom, discernment. God's gift to Solomon was not limited to a fixed time, which for us would be the experience of evaluation, but he passed his whole life in an attitude of continual discernment. Our daily evaluation is one of the means we can offer God for Him to give us a discerning heart throughout our day.

Before speaking of the example that we find in the life of St. Ignatius, I would like to quote a paragraph from the article by George Aschenbrenner SJ., "Consciousness Examen" (which appeared in "Review for Religious", January 1972): "... the five steps of the exercise of examen as presented in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (no. 43) are to be seen, and gradually experienced in faith, as dimensions of the Christian consciousness, formed by God and His work in the heart as it confronts and grows within this world, and all of reality. If we allow the Father gradually to transform our mind and heart into that of His Son, to become truly Christian, through our living experience in this world, then the examen, with its separate elements now seen as integrated dimensions of our own consciousness looking out on the world, is much more organic to our outlook and will seem much less contrived".

At the end of his life, Ignatius tells us that "he was able to find God when he wanted to, at no matter what hour" (Autobiography, no. 99). He had succeeded, with the grace of God, in finding Him in all things throughout the day; he was constantly aware of his heart and his feelings and knew how to direct them towards the sort of life to which God had called him. As a companion of Christ, he was given to the examen of 'consciousness' as a way of remaining obedient to the Father. This instrument of evaluation without doubt contributed to the spiritual greatness of the saint.

Of course we are far from that stage, but if our place

is in the CLC's, we are called by God to a similar attitude of continual discernment. To achieve this, we need the support of a daily evaluation. We have a long way to go and we cannot afford to skip any stage; and so for us the regular practice of our daily evaluation is really necessary.

The method of Ignatius - his five points for evaluating - will be presented in the next issue of Progressio.

Jean-Claude HOLLERICH

NEWS

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MANRESA '80

After Austria 80, Bavaria 79 and Assisi 79, the Youth Commission organized a new formation programme: Spain 80. "Towards a CLC beyond frontiers, Projection of our local community" was the theme of this programme that included also 6 days of individually guided Exercises. I would like to present the experience of Andreas Ranner from Austria:

Before we started our 6-days retreat the wire of my telephone to God was nearly cut. And I wanted to connect the line of my telephone again. So I expected days of hard work, days of feeling alone...but nothing like that happened. From the first day I knew and felt that God was accepting and loving me; I had no problems to talk with Him. On the fourth day I thought about my vocation and I asked the Lord for strength and faith (to be light for the others).... I asked him so many and great things. Nevertheless Javier Leach SJ. (my guide) stopped my prayers by leading me on another way (namely to stay in front of God). And then on the last day I suddenly realized that now it was not my vocation to be a

great light, hero or apostle. No, it was and is my vocation to do everything I am doing at the moment with all my heart and mind in the name of Christ. I think that was the most important experience of my Exercises. After the Exercises I wondered why it was so easy for me to talk with the Lord, though my "telephone" was out of order. Now I know - all the others lent me theirs till I had repaired mine.

CHILE '80

The experience of social insertion together with the Exercises and a programme of social discernment was a great success. Even if the number of participants was low (there were 9 persons: 6 from Ireland, 1 from Germany, 1 from the States and 1 from Belgium) it was a unique experience that will bring fruit for the participants, their groups and their federations.

Here the experience of Cearan McKinney from Ireland:

The course in Chile was a very important experience for me. The experience of living in the slums for a week allowed me to feel poverty. I was made aware of how lucky and privileged my life has been. I was touched by the warmth and generosity of the people who were very poor. The retreat was very prayerful and I felt very close to the Lord, during and after it. I began to see that the Lord is calling me as a christian to get to know him better and to give him more of my personal time. I feel that we experienced a good sense of community between ourselves and the Chilean CLC members and I now feel that I have many brothers and sisters living there. It was an uplifting experience, difficult at times, but one which gave me great inspiration and teaching.

AFRICA

In December and January Sidney d'Souza SJ, ecclesiastical assistant for youth CLC, went to Africa for giving there formation programmes. In Zambia he gave two formation

programmes for university students and young adults. In Zimbabwe there were two days of general information meetings about CLC and a formation programme for young adults who want a commitment in CLC. His third stay was in Botswana where he gave one programme for assistants and leaders and another one for Botswanian and South African youth. There was also an information day about CLC for the diocese. Then he came to Lesotho just in time to finish a programme that was followed by another one for assistants and leaders. At the moment of editing we do not know if he also could go to Tanzania and Kenya as he wanted to.

FORMATION MATERIAL FOR A RESPONSIBLE DECISION TODAY

- This document is the fruit of 10 years' work with young people and adolescents.
- The material, the reflections and the experiences recounted all mirror the actual situation of Uruguay, but they can easily be adapted.
- The document insists on an initial preparation for the Exercises which embraces 4 experiences: a fundamental experience of faith, a conscientisation with regard to justice, an experience of community and an experience of 'interiority'-inner stillness.
- The document envisages a period of 8 days and contains an introduction, an over-all framework for the 'course', exercises, documentation, practical suggestions, including suggestions for celebrations. There is also a very good guide for those giving the 'course'.
- This work from Uruguay is to be highly recommended and should prove invaluable for those working with youth. It is published only in Spanish; copies are obtainable from P. Jorge Crovara S.J.

Jose E. Rodó 2074
Montevideo - URUGUAY

The healing relationship between God and the directee happens very often in prayer. We have to take prayer in a broad sense: to verbalize oneself before the Lord, or: to bring all thoughts, feelings and experiences before the Lord. Such a prayer can be quiet or loud, peaceful or angry, screaming or pleading, with tears or with laughter. The healing relationship between God and the directee is also realized in many human experiences, especially where a person is totally present. We call such moments contemplative; there, a person is totally absorbed by something, like a child who plays. This can happen in nature when admiring a beautiful sunset, or with people when being fascinated by the look of another person, or in a desert when being hit by an insight out of the blue sky. These contemplative moments are very important, because the person allows himself/herself to be touched at a level which ordinarily remains hidden. In such moments a religious experience happens: God touches that person in a special way and the person realizes it.

If God is healing, what is the director's task? As a presupposition I am supposed to be more or less in touch with my own feelings and reactions. The more I am clear about myself and present as a whole person the better I can attend to a directee and receive what is shared. Unfortunately there is not one method or technique that would help every directee to grow in prayer. Each person is unique, and each situation is unique, too: therefore I need a unique way to meet a directee. I have to learn to work with my own abilities. The more I am able to use my personal perception and my own strengths and to be present as a believing person the more I will be able to meet the person in his/her particular situation.

Although there is not much said explicitly about psychological realities, it is absolutely necessary to have a basic psychological understanding of the human being. However I do not have to understand everything in my head. I have to trust also my gut-reactions which are often a good indicator that something important has been shared. Sometimes it is not easy to trust them since I am a child of our time who wants to understand and to see all the connections...

As director I am not just a mirror or a computer that asks questions, but I am a person who reacts, expresses hopes, affirms and asks. However I am not a judge to tell

CLC means...

what is right and wrong. Respecting the directee's individuality I want to help him/her to listen to God's personal messages. Therefore I need to have experience in recognizing key-moments in prayer or other capital events like religious experiences in life and to notice movements of the different spirits.

I help a directee to recognize for him/herself contemplative moments in life, where real religious experiences happen. I help to unfold such experiences so that the directee can get deeper in touch with God's way of relating. Often I have to evoke aspects that the directee has not yet been aware of. Sharing an experience and especially going into details and staying with it confirms the directee's confidence. It makes more real what happened in the experience. It happens often that the directee realizes during the sharing how deep an experience was, even though it happened e.g. by looking at a spiderweb with some water drops. Our ordinary life, unfortunately does not help us to realize deeply what is happening in us.

During the whole session my basic attitude is to "stay with" whatever the directee shares. I will encourage him/her to go and share with the Lord what he/she had said to me. There might be some fear to tell the Lord what the person really felt. Then I might ask whether it would be possible to tell the Lord that he/she is afraid of sharing. I just want to help the person to be totally him/herself before the Lord, whether the situation is joyful or terrible. Sometimes I might not find the way to help a person. But after having done my best I have to keep in mind that I do not claim to heal and that the Spirit leads both of us. Then I can only believe that the Spirit will make up for what I missed. When the person leaves the session I do not know in which direction the Lord will lead him/her. That is a challenge to my confidence in the Lord.

Not much is healed during a session; however the person becomes more able to share with the Lord. Nevertheless I do not want to minimize that simply being accepted in the session has a healing influence on the directee. Being able to admit who he/she is and what he/she felt without being judged brings out some healing.

There are many difficulties that disturb me as director and many directees, too. I just want to mention a couple because they are typical for our society.

We often think that we have to do "our thing" whatever it might be (e.g. to pray regularly, or not to do or feel such and such...) before God will be able to heal. We often do not expect enough from God. Therefore we have to learn to say how we feel and what we want, and then we can give God a chance to relate the way He wants to meet us. Many people have already been surprised how God really wants to touch them.

Often we have an "agenda" about the way God should act, and it might well be according to what we learnt in catechism. Having an agenda can blindfold us-as director or directees-and not allow to see that God can go beyond our expectations. Our agenda works also in another way: often we do not give ourselves enough time to be healed: if we used to live for 20 or 30 years in a certain way, and now we expect to be changed after two or three weeks...that could be impatience.

Difficulties come back again and again, sometimes more subtle than before. Therefore many directors nowadays seek supervision on spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction is not for perfect people. It is for people who live and struggle, who love and hate, who want to be free and to relate in a deeper way with the Lord. Many in spiritual direction pray regularly, others don't. Some want to pray and never get to it. They might be in a deep struggle. If only the person is convinced in his/her heart that somehow God is important and that he/she wants to relate to God, then the desire to make that importance of God real is a beginning even though one might not know how to go about it. The desire for God in my heart: that's enough to begin spiritual direction.

I believe spiritual direction is today even more important than yesterday. In former times the whole societal structure helped me to be faithful to my way of life. Today many of these formerly helping structures like the family, the community or the church are not the same support-system any more. I feel more alone in dealing with life-issues than I used to. I cannot rely simply on a common life structure. I have to rely on myself. Therefore it is so important to find a personal standpoint in life. I believe that spiritual direction is an excellent help towards a personal christian orientation of life. Today when I am looking for a spiritual director - and I really do - I realize that I do not want somebody who tells me what is right or wrong,

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but somebody I can trust and who will stay with me whatever I share and wherever the Spirit will lead me.

P.S. In this whole article I did not touch the importance of the community of christians. The focus was on spiritual direction from the point of view of a director. However I believe that the director as a friend - not so much as a directing person - represents the community of the faithful to the directee, and so director and directee together realize a small cell of the christian community.

Werner BRUNNER S.J.
(Switzerland)

AN EXPERIENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

At a Jesuit boarding school I realized for the first time that there is a God who has something to do with me. With this conviction I started to think, talk and work in the area of religion as many other school youth do. And so I found myself in Taize, during the summer holidays some years ago. Here I met my spiritual director in a very special way.

I was one of the hundreds of youth taking part in the sharing groups and prayer services of this ecumenical community in France. It was a great place to be. Real human values were clearly evident in the people gathered on that little hill in the Bourgogne-region. I was very interested in the social situation in Groningen, at the time of my stay in Taize. When I saw someone in a Dutch car listening to the news I joined him. After the broadcast we started a conversation. He appeared to be a Jesuit, which came as a real surprise to me. As he had to leave the next morning, we talked a little bit during a walk that night. I remember that one of the things which we discussed was prayer. This conversation was the beginning of a new friendship. Some years later I asked this particular Jesuit to be my spiritual director. But actually spiritual direction had started already before that.

Spiritual direction by mail

When my holidays were over and school began again, I started to write letters to my new friend, who had moved to

the United States. In the conversation in Taizé I had discovered someone whom I liked. Naturally I began to tell him who I was, but I did it in a different way than with other people, because in his way of talking to me this man had touched upon a special string. Even very common things he picked up in a way which made clear that he was a good listener. I knew instinctively that he really understood me - and therefore I felt free to write to him things which I would otherwise have kept to myself. My letters were filled with news about my personal circumstances, I found words to share my joys and hopes, to describe the questions which I faced; in short, I expressed myself before someone who I knew could listen and say something sensible in answer to me.

One advantage of writing down really personal experiences has been that I had to think well about my life. In a letter I can't put as much as in a conversation, but the things which get written down generally are the ones which are more important to me. They were not isolated or sterile, but framed in the context of my daily living. Thus every letter became a painting of myself. Like other paintings, also mine were admired and criticised. I was always encouraged by my spiritual director and every letter from him taught me something new. He gave me new points of view on my experiences, and I learned about theoretical things (e.g. distinction between meditation and contemplation). This exchange of letters continued for 2 years, which were a time of growing fidelity and deepening of faith (an initiation in spiritual direction).

I'd like to say something more about the element of fidelity. This notion played an important role in my years of receiving spiritual direction by mail. Everyone who writes letters knows how difficult it is to be faithful in his writing. By showing this fidelity I feel the foundation was laid for a bigger construction.

When my friend had returned to Holland after 2 years, I asked him to be my spiritual director. I needed someone whom I could tell things to which others don't hear, specifically in the area of faith-life. Now there was a possibility to talk instead of write. The moment had come for me to ask for a spiritual director; I was ready for it. My question - the first time when we met after his return - came as a definition of our relation. In fact I hadn't really understood that we had started spiritual direction

long before. This realization came as we began to meet every 6 weeks or so.

Spiritual direction face or face

One year has passed again. It is a year which may be characterized in the way I once put it before a Dublin CLC group: "become who you are". It was a struggle to accept myself as I am, to see the beauty of my being with all its good qualities - which I like - and with all its weaknesses and limitations which I denied. It was a year in which I began to face myself in the light of God. Speaking with my spiritual director forced me into this struggle. A fight for freedom. God was calling.

I wanted to develop "christian attitudes", but I was completely thrown back upon myself to become the one who I am, instead of making someone who I am not. Everything which I had hidden away had to become again part of myself. This gave me a big space to breathe, to love... to live!

First of all, it's a question of graces. A few elements, however, played an important role.

- 1) Personal prayer. My spiritual director has given me much advice, or rather: he asked a lot of me. I needed quite some time to find a proper method as well as a suitable time for prayer. The content of my prayer has changed considerably as did the length of time spent in it each day.
- 2) Life experiences. My life as a student alternated with many CLC experiences. The starting point for our talk was very often some occasion in my everyday life. It is good to note that my participation in CLC allowed me to enter more deeply into the experiences of life. Thus CLC was an important thing in relation to spiritual direction.
- 3) Retreats. One 8-day and two 6-day retreats were very helpful for my spiritual growth. They were a time dedicated more intensively to my relation with the Lord who always welcomed me very warmly and showed me his love. These retreats have provided the basis for receiving spiritual direction.

Such were my experiences in spiritual direction. To end, I'd like to say that if you could see the way in which I wrote this account - with as many erasures as clear lines - you would understand how difficult it is to see what happens in spiritual direction. But one conviction stands out above all the haziness: receiving spiritual direction is a great gift and a real help to become a free person and a faith person.

Erik de JONGH

A FORMATION SESSION FOR GUIDES

"Love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words". (Sp.Ex. no. 230)

From Sept. 15th to Oct. 15th, at Villa Cavalletti (Rome), 25 of us - men and women; lay people, religious, priests - came together from the 5 continents to 'live out' a formation course for CLC guides. Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, India, Egypt, Madagascar, Australia, the Philippines, Cuba, the United States and Canada were the countries represented. The language of communication was sometimes verbal, often non-verbal. But in spite of our different origins, cultures and languages, we experienced a "Communion" that went beyond words. And that surely was the work of the Spirit!

Given our members and our language difficulty, we were divided into two groups - an Italian-speaking group, and a French-speaking group. Quite often we came together as one large group, to share what had been going on in our smaller groups. The times for work, relaxation, rest and celebration were well apportioned, which made for a smooth rhythm of life.

On the level of organisation, we had the benefit of an excellent international guiding-team, whose contributions helped us achieve the goal of this session:

- a. To deepen one's spiritual life and its apostolic thrust, together with the awareness of what it means to be a guide of the Spiritual Exercises, and of communities that draw their inspiration from the Exercises.
- b. To help one discern if the Lord is calling him/her to this specific vocation of being someone responsible for the growth of persons and of groups.
- c. To help one become aware of the gifts one has received, and of one's weaknesses and strengths.

The session called for a complete personal involvement on all levels - mind, feelings, will, imagination, body, soul, and heart.

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We then began - were plunged into - a learning process where Experience was the key word - which after all is also one of the key ideas in the Spiritual Exercises.

Content of the Session

Our month was divided into 4 weeks;

The first week (Sept. 16 - 20) was an Experience of openness and of getting to know, in a living practical way, ourselves, others, the world around us and Him who lives within us. To this end, each shared his/her own "salvation history" in the small groups. The atmosphere of total trust, of prayerful silence and of listening with respect to one another enabled us to 'feel' and to 'taste' the wonders of God in each story that was told. We were able to see that there is nothing small or insignificant in our lives; in spite of appearances, each instant is a touch of God's caress. God hides Himself there where we do not expect to find Him, often in our deepest wounds. He is with us in our sufferings and calls us to share His glory. Such was our Experience of Healing.

This "Faith-experience" went on for several days, at the end of which we all made a "consciousness walk" to help us take in the effects of social sin. We were divided into groups of 3, to spend one day in Rome, passing our time in the poorer areas. Our mid-day meal was bread and water. The group that I was in saw this experience very much as a pilgrimage with Mary, contemplating Christ still nailed to His cross.

Everywhere we saw signs of this tremendous thirst for the living water that Jesus offers us now, "Samaritans" that we are: "If only you knew the gift of God..." (Jn. 4/10).

This experience was followed by a time for us to 'make our own' what we had seen, to evaluate and then to share. The CLC's invite us to be fully alive as Christians, which involves: really making our own and changing (conversion) the way we see ourselves and the world around us, and a certain "alertness" (evaluation) to discern what the Lord is calling us to (mission).

This last experience finished off our first week and prepared us for the second week (Sept. 21-29), which was an

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experience of the Spiritual Exercises, individually guided: a time for being close to the Lord, at the heart of our session.

It is worth noting that the reason why the Spiritual Exercises were at the heart of our session is because they are at the heart of our way of life in the CLC's. And at the same time this fact underlines the distinctive character of our communities, which is to be rooted in the Ignatian tradition as it is lived out in the Church.

September 29 was a break-day and people were free to do whatever they wanted. For myself, I took the opportunity to visit the Vatican Museum, to see the magnificent Sistine Chapel: the work of man recognising the splendour of God, his Creator and Saviour. Then I went to the Basilica of St. Peter, to contemplate the Pietà which is, so to speak, a synthesis of the mystery of Love: this Love which saves and gives new life. Though we see Jesus dead in the arms of His Mother, at the foot of the Cross, nevertheless this sculpture symbolises a Life that is continually re-born with Jesus and Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. There we see an image of Faith: the same faith which led Mary to say - "Let it be done unto me according to your word". These break-days became an integral part of our Experience of Faith which we lived through during the whole of the session.

The third week (Sept. 30th - Aug. 4th) was principally a reflection on the growth process of the Exercises, led by Fr. John Futrell from the United States. Fr. Futrell skillfully guided our reflection, and helped us recognise the grace proper to the Experience of the Exercises, with special reference to the retreats we had just finished.

The Spiritual Exercises, we saw much more clearly, are a school of interior freedom for clarifying what we really want: an Experience which is a dynamic movement to God who makes a Covenant with His chosen ones. By passing through the different levels of our "multi-dimensional mess" we come to this "well-spring" at the heart of our being where we find our deepest desire which gives a decisive orientation to the whole of our existence. Through the Exercises, our concerns are gradually transformed to become a Faith-vision. And this faith-vision becomes 'operative', we might say, through our praying to the Lord our deepest desire; in

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other words, through our explicitly addressing to the Lord who loves us "id quod volo" - "what I want most of all".

Progressively, the Exercises lead us to pass from contemplating the divine mysteries to communion with the Lord who saves us. I begin from where I am now, in my history as a sinner who is pardoned and called to live in the now of the love of God: the Father's word of judgment on us is the pierced heart of His Son. He comes to meet me and, in His liberating Love, He guides me towards a personal choice which is a personal response to a personal call. This experience is at the heart of spiritual discernment, which opens out on the perspective of mission, and this in turn is experienced through our contemplating the Love which leads us, with Christ, to offer ourselves and all that we are.

The dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises, which leads us to discover God in all things, goes beyond the particular time of retreat and overflows into our ordinary, daily life. This was very well expressed in the way Fr. Futrell presented the Examen to us as a dialogue between people who love one another; the Examen is the language of love: "Thank you... help me, I am so needy... how have I failed in my love for you, because I really do love you?... forgive me... stay with me..."

During the 4th and last week of our session (Oct. 6th-13th), we were invited to live the transition from 'learning' the Ignatian experience to actually 'applying' it. This involved seeing how to help people or groups progress in their desire to move towards CLC, through picking up the signs which show the different stages of their evolution. In this we were helped by very practical pedagogical means, inspired by the Spiritual Exercises: For example -

- recalling happy or painful moments in our life when we have perceived the Love of God present and active
- letting oneself be challenged by the "pedagogy" of Jesus in His meeting with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4/1-42)
- thinking up community activities which might enable or permit people to live the Principle and Foundation
- seeing how to make positive and constructive evaluations in our communities, while insisting on the importance of discovering the Love of God in every human experience.

In a word, we learnt to see clearly how very important it is:

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1) To develop a positive vision of the God who loves us personally. Even in the negative experiences, He is there!

2) To become more sensitive to the means which help us grow authentically: the Church, the Sacraments, the Word of God, prayer, the Spiritual Exercises... everything which leads us to a growing identification with Jesus Christ.

3) To be aware that in our community meetings, we cannot afford to be just passively present. Rather, we are called to live our meetings which are privileged times for sharing, genuine listening and silence - silence which is not just an empty space but a transcendent moment giving the opportunity for prayer which frees us to go where God wants us to be.

At this stage of our session, Oct. 10th, I had to leave and return to Belgium to take my first vows in the Society of Jesus on Oct. 12th. I really cannot say anything about the last few days that ended the session, but, by way of conclusion, I would like to give some impressions on the whole of this experience:

Truly, this session was, for me, a visible sign of faith at work in the heart of each participant. At the Eucharist which we celebrated each day, the 5 continents were represented, and when we exchanged the peace of Christ, I had the impression that I was embracing the whole world. We lived the fellowship that we are called to live, through Him, with Him and in Him.

Overall, this was an experience for me which helped me grow in hope. I have come to realise that the CLC "movement" is more than a "movement". It is a seed in the hearts of people who live a life full of hope which is rooted in our Ignatian tradition and which, drawing its strength from the love of the Trinity, calls us to be 'more'.

The CLC's touch every aspect of life. They are the work of Him who does not cease to love us so much, and who now accomplishes - as always - His mission as "Saviour of Men".

I appreciated very much the emphasis on the experience of faith which is the creation and so the foundation of our very existence. As community, we want to proclaim the living Christ in all that we do and in all that we are.

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In the course of the session, each one was for everyone else a living witness to the Divine Tenderness. Let me give an example : everyone knew that I was to take my vows on Oct. 12th. Before I left, we had a Mass at which all present had a special prayer for myself. I was so touched by the faith and sincere and unaffected friendship of the group that no words are adequate to express my feelings. I will never forget this experience.

As I left Rome on the 10th of October, I saw a sign which said to me that the Lord had been 'watching' what we had been doing and "He saw that it was good..." I saw a rain-bow - "This is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings" (Gen. 9/17).

"My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour..."

Pierre FAUBERT