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S U M M A R Y

- OUR NEW WORKING-GROUPS
by José GSELL 2
- LUXEMBOURG'83 by Cora SIM 8

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

- INTRODUCTION by Paco SANZ 13
- DECLARATIONS ON YOUTH 15
- WEEK-END IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM
by Bernadette DELFORGE 18
- A CLC'ER IN ACTION
by Stephen JOSEPH 21
- NEWS FROM - JAPAN 24
BOLIVIA 26
- CONTRIBUTIONS FROM - CANADA 28
PERU 29

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OUR WORKING GROUPS: THEIR INSPIRATION

PROGRESSIO, in publishing its special number last January, and in its recent Supplement, *The CLC World Community : origin and meaning of Providence '82*, has spread widely the experience of the last World Assembly of the CLC's.

Providence '82 has been an important event for a number of reasons. In the first place, there was the general consensus which expressed itself in a practically unanimous vote in favour of the World Community. This consensus alone would make an Assembly worthwhile! But there are other significant factors which have strongly emerged, and which reveal something important about the development of our Community. By way of examples, we might mention how the work of the Assembly high-lighted the role of Mary in our community, and the Sense of the Church.

These aspects are not new. There have been many signs and indications that the renewal of the CLC's had led them back to the specific characteristics, one after the other, of their origins. The examples we have just given from the Assembly at Providence are a clear demonstration that the World Community was very much aware of these characteristics and saw itself living them as integral parts of its way of life. In other words, what appeared at Providence was not the result of any external pressure, but a manifestation of the interior life of the CLC's - a life that had been fostered through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. This manifestation of the interior life of the Community showed that it had reached a stage in its growth, as a Community, when it was able to, and wanted to, assume full responsibility for its own specific characteristics, and what they imply. It is not a question of praising the CLC's; all of us are aware of our weaknesses as a Community. However, it remains true that a World Assembly is like a barometer which gives a reading of the real situation of a Community and its aspirations. From the exchanges between the representatives of 44 countries, there emerged common agreement on the weaknesses and needs all felt, and on the hopes they shared. Our Assemblies are key moments for us as they give us the opportunity to survey and to evaluate the CLC reality throughout the world.

* * *

Against the background of this very rich experience of Providence, the members of the Executive Council met at the beginning of April, to work together for one week. The work to be done centred around choosing the appropriate means for the Community to develop further and to serve, in fidelity to the grace that Providence had been. What concrete means would foster the seeds sown at Providence?

After reviewing and studying the recommendations and proposals made by the Assembly, the Executive Council decided to set up 12 working-groups. It assigned to each group a certain task and definite time in which to achieve it. Once the task is completed, the working-group disbands, making room for further initiatives. If there is need, the group can be reconstituted. We have, then, a flexible structure, geared to needs as they appear. The groups rely on the active collaboration of their members and involve a wide range of people. In this way, the development and the service of the CLC's can become more explicitly communitarian, and the responsibility for these more broadly shared.

Initially, some 80 members from 27 countries have been asked to participate in this work. The responses that are coming in are most encouraging. It need hardly be said that this first step is to be improved on, as a wider and more equitable distribution of the work is highly desirable. Nevertheless, one can say that we have got away to a good start, as the style and the spirit of this first step are very promising.

* * *

What, then, are the concrete orientations to be taken up by the groups, and what is the sense of their mandates?

1. Thinking with the Church

"...the decision of Providence shows a profound desire to seek the more universal good. The numerous desires formulated there are all contained in one aspiration - to live Vatican II, as the Marian Congregations in former times directed all their efforts towards implementing the Council of Trent" (J. Ochagavía S.J.; *Progressio Supplement*, 20-21; p.73). To assimilate more deeply the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and to express this spirit concretely in our choices, this working-group will function as a meeting point between the experiences that are going on and the reflections they provoke. The aim of this work is to help us in concrete situations (local, national), by shedding

light on our choice through a profound sense of the Church; and to help us develop this sensitivity which instinctively chooses the ways and means in tune with the teaching of the Council. In other words, it is a question of helping us make the connection between the objective priorities of the Church and our own particular concrete commitments. The results of this work will appear in the form of practical ways for implementing the spirit of Vatican II.

2. North-South Dialogue

The successful outcome of this dialogue is one of the challenges facing the world of today. What does this dialogue mean for us? What can we contribute? The Conference of International Catholic Organisations has already taken up this pressing theme, and a first response on our part is our serious collaboration. Other avenues for contributing may open up for us, and the aim of this group will be to reflect on concrete ways which can further us in our movement towards becoming "one world". Another aspect of this theme concerns twinning between national communities, which began some ten years ago. This operates in terms of a special relation between two countries whereby they undertake to share each other's riches. In spite of progress in this area, and valuable experiences, it has to be said that too often twinning is dominated by one country giving financial assistance to another. We still have to evaluate all the contributions that can be made in this area, and to reconsider twinning, in the context of a north-south dialogue, as an exchange between equals.

3. Continuing theological Reflection

In the context of fostering a deeper sense of the Church, this group has the task of providing background reflections for coming to a balanced and sensitive judgment of contemporary events in the world, and also of developments in our own World Community. By way of an example, we might cite the service rendered by Juan Ochagavía S.J., in the last Supplement of Progressio (no. 20-21): there he has enlightened our understanding and refined our appreciation of Providence '82, through portraying this event in the light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and our Ignatian charism. At the same time, he has deepened our sense of the Church. The need is felt for a continuing theological reflection which will be a solid basis for the future development of our Community and root us firmly in the mainstream of the Church.

4. Mary, model for our Mission

The task given to this group is to promote the role of Mary, as model of our mission. We venerate the Mother of God in a special way, but this devotion should become conformity to her example in the service of her Son. It is interesting to note that this task has been entrusted to two national communities (from Latin America and Oceania), with one person named as being responsible for coordinating the two communities. In this way, the hope is to tap the rich experiences people have and to associate in this work a wide range of members from different milieux, age-groups and backgrounds.

5. Family Life

Eight CLC couples, from different countries, have been asked to reflect on and to share their experience of family life. We all know that the family is the basic unit which appreciably conditions our attitude and our contribution to the world around us, and to the Church. Taking the Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, of John Paul II as a basic text for reflection, this group will work through this document, pick out the aspects or themes which more deeply affect us (because of their importance or significance for us, given the atmosphere in which we live), and finally reflect and exchange on these aspects. The result of this work is intended as a service not only to CLC families but also as a contribution to the pastoral care of the family.

6. Youth

The mandate for this group is based on a brief inquiry that Paco Sanz carried out after Providence. It is oriented to the participation of youth in the mission and service of the World Community, within each one's regional and cultural context, and in accordance with the teaching of the Church. Young people are a priority in the world of today and the Church - especially through the appeals of John Paul II and the directives of different Episcopal Conferences - is constantly drawing the attention of Christians to the men and women of the future. The Youth group, through reflecting on and sharing their experiences, hopes to offer ways and means for helping young people, in their particular situation, interiorise and then spread around them a real participation in the mission of the Church.

7. Ad Hoc Commission

This group carries on the work of the previous Ad Hoc Commission. Its task is to reconsider our structures and our juridical texts (General Principles, Statutes), and to propose to the next General Assembly desirable changes which will better express the CLC reality, as it revealed itself at Providence. This work will be carried out in consultation and communication with all the national communities.

The five groups which remain are all concerned with different aspects of formation. They are:

8. Formation of guides, assistants and group leaders

Experience has taught us that the development of a group depends, to a large extent, on the guidance it receives. The quality of the service that is given and the specific contribution of those who carry a responsibility guarantee to a CLC group the best possible conditions for growth. This working group which has been formed to promote the formation of guides, assistants and group leaders, will first of all clarify the different roles of these three. Then it will make available appropriate means (seminars, courses, documentation) for helping national communities in their work of formation. It will diversify its service so as to respond to needs which appear - groups just beginning, youth groups, groups in a stage of transition, successive stages for groups...

9. Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises

This working-group will be involved in two areas. One area concerns all the forms of preparation and the means which help people acquire the necessary maturity in the different facets of their life, so that they can profitably enter into the experience of the Exercises. The other area concerns retreat experiences where the person makes "some Exercises" - how to do this so that the person benefits from the experience?

10. Ignatian forms of Prayer

The mandate here is to diffuse information and material on the different forms of prayer that we find in the Spiritual Exercises. There is a great richness and an enormous variety here which we are convinced is not being exploited, either during retreats (which are often too short) or outside retreat. The task consists in presenting the different forms of prayer in contemporary language, in

making them known, and helping people understand how to introduce them and how to practise them.

11. The Exercises in Daily Life

The promotion of the Exercises in daily life corresponds to a need that is making itself felt more and more widely. The task of this group is to be concerned both with the diffusion of experiences and information coming from people who have either given or made the Exercises in daily life, and also with the formation of guides.

12. Bulletin on Church Documents and Social Analysis

Many people know the documents of the Church through what is said in the press. Nevertheless, often these need to be explained and opened up for people coming from different backgrounds. So the task here is to offer material, through a bulletin, which will help our groups read, understand and assimilate the content of the more important documents, within the context of their CLC way of life. Likewise, the aim is also to help our members read a social situation and to gather information which will lead to a further discernment.

* * *

These, then, are the first decisions taken by the Executive Council as a follow-up to Providence. The working-groups mentioned are by no means a sudden inspiration; rather, their mandates correspond to the needs and recommendations expressed at the Assembly. It is our hope that as each group undertakes its task and follows it through, in this way we will be giving a first response to the grace of Providence '82. The fact that two thirds of the people approached have already replied and that their letters express interest and enthusiasm for the work asked of them reinforces the conviction that Providence was not only an Assembly. It is, also, a spirit that goes before us and which, while taking account of our inevitable fumbleings and weaknesses, ultimately produces results that are an expression of the source which inspires it. As we know from Scripture, the Lord always blesses and accompanies those who say YES to His invitation.

José GSELL

LUXEMBOURG '83

Cora SIM

In answer to the invitation of the Luxembourg CLC Community, José and I attended the European meeting of Presidents, Assistants and European link persons of each national community which took place in that small, beautiful city from April 29 to May 2nd. The weather was bright and sunny when we arrived. It was to be a good indicator of the proceedings of the meeting. Everyone was given a warm welcome by the Luxembourg CLC members. One already gets a good first impression of their disponibility at this point, ever ready to serve in whatever way. The impression grew into admiration as the days went on, with the occasions to see how they worked to keep the meeting going, share with them during prayer time, breaks and meals...

It was a grand reunion, meeting persons I have known from different assemblies - Manila, Rome and most recently Providence. It was most encouraging too to see new faces, especially young ones: Mario from Portugal, Fatima and Iris from Switzerland, Inma and Javier from Spain, Marceline from Malta, etc. All the 14 European National Communities were represented.

On Friday evening, April 29, Lucie opened the meeting with a word of welcome and Fr. Klopp, assistant of the Luxembourg CLC, said the opening prayer. There were the usual introductions of those present. The day ended with the celebration of the Eucharist by Werner from Switzerland, who also gave the meditation points for the personal prayer and sharing of the following morning. There was, however, quite a number who held their last session of the evening at the basement bar!

The program of the two full days of the meeting is packed. It starts at 7:15 with personal prayer and sharing in small groups and goes until 10:00 in the evening for the evaluation of the day and the meditation points given by Jacques de l'Arbre s.j. from Luxembourg.

Saturday, April 30, we continue to have a beautiful, sunny day, and so is the atmosphere of the meeting. The morning session is dedicated to listening to the report

of each national community on the question: "What were the reactions and how have we realised the call to a World Community in our country after Providence?" For almost all the National Communities, except Portugal and Switzerland, it was a time spent mostly to sensitise the members about the experience at Providence and the process is still going on in most countries.

Portugal considers itself still a very young federation in the process of building its national community, with a sign of hope as members begin to make the Exercises. It was said that the call to the Kingdom cannot be limited simply to a "small" Kingdom. In Switzerland, the seeds have just been sown and hopefully as the members also begin to make the 8-day retreat and have contacts with other national communities, like Germany, by attending their formation courses, these will blossom to CLC. But in the meantime, it is still premature to speak of the World Community.

There were other aspects mentioned in the reports. French-speaking Belgium spoke about the important but difficult task of communicating the idea of the World Community to its members as most of them are youth CLC's still in need of a greater awareness of the world we live in. But the reaction was positive and there was a clear demonstration of interest for the World Community. However, the members expressed their fear that these be just big words; there is need for concrete action, however small. France also spoke about not limiting the World Community to words but that it be expressed in action leading to the universal mission. Germany mentioned the social dimension, the need to rouse the consciousness of their members to their personal responsibility in building a world of justice and peace and not to leave decision-making only to influential people. It gave a specific suggestion that the European CLC community look into the European life-style to see its effects on the other parts of the world. Spain, though also only a young community about to have its first national meeting in July, said that from the beginning the world dimension is already incorporated into the existence of the communities. The members are aware of their belonging to a wider community, like the sense of belonging to the universal Church - being young has its own advantages.

For the afternoon session, the participants were asked to reflect about what they had heard and as a national delegation to come up with the challenges the European CLC's are faced with and the priorities for the future of the European community. We sat the rest of the afternoon to listen to the

suggestions of each national community which were summarised for the session of the following day. We had Eucharist to end the day's work. Jean-Claude Hollerich, our good friend at the World Secretariate, announced during Mass that today is a great feast in honor of Our Lady of Luxembourg.

Sunday, May 1st, the rain had started to pour since early morning. Sailing was to be rough in today's session. The suggestions given the previous day were summarised as follows:

- 1) need for Contacts:
 - a) personal, individual
 - b) exchange of publications
 - c) East Europe
 - d) address list
 - e) twinning
- 2) Courses:
 - a) information on specific subjects like Spiritual Exercises
 - b) formation at European level, for both youth and adults
 - c) summer holiday
- 3) Meetings:
 - a) grass-root level
 - b) assistants
 - c) work camps
- 4) Integration of youth in the whole movement
- 5) Amendments to the European Team Charter

One got the impression that the cart was being put before the horse and for this reason it was not possible to move ahead but only to go around in circles. The suggestions summarised were all means, but for what purpose - nobody seemed to know. Somebody threw in a suggestion to the floor to start first with the aim; it was to remain on the floor. Spain, Italy and Malta specifically mentioned the mission and service aspect but this was neither given in the summary nor picked up in the plenary session. As if matters were not complicated enough, proposal for a new European Team Charter was brought up and so discussion went in all directions. Frustrations were piling up, time running out and pressures mounting.

Under these circumstances several decisions were taken:

- 1) to have a European meeting in Netherlands, April 27 to May 1st, 1984. The dates and place are set.
- 2) to have a Formation Course similar to Manila Course II to be organised by French-speaking Belgium - July 1984.

- 3) to hold a summer holiday camp sponsored by the French CLC's: August 1-10, 1984.
- 4) to have a European meeting for Presidents, Assistants and Euro-link persons in Italy from May 3 to 6, 1985.

For the rest of the session of the day, voting was made on some aspects of the European Team Charter. The term of office of the European Team was changed from two to four years and its composition kept to three persons. The members of the new European Team are : Antoinette Borda (Malta) - coordinator, Dermot O'Connor (England and Wales) and Clement Mercadal (France). After the elections of the new ET, there were expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the out going team.

The Bishop of Luxembourg, Msgr. Jean Hengen, celebrated Mass with us. After supper he gave what could have been an interesting talk about European Institutions, the Church and their relationship with one another, the need for more lay participation and collaboration in the life of the Church. But delivered at the end of such a heavy day, it was a challenge to keep awake and be attentive. Everyone had great admiration for Dermot who did a real service translating for us.

Monday, May 2nd, the final half day of the meeting. We started early with Mass. The program of the morning had to be changed. Instead of spending the whole morning in groups of Assistants, of Presidents, of Euro-link persons and of youth, and a plenary session to listen to the reports of these four groups, there was a request that the reports be submitted and given to the participants at a later date and to use the plenary session for an evaluation of the meeting. The request was granted.

There was a general feeling of disappointment expressed during the evaluation: disappointment that there was neither orientation nor direction agreed upon on how the European Community can implement the decision of PROVIDENCE towards a World Community, great disappointment that mission and service where the European CLC can look concretely into their relationship with their brothers and sisters in the other parts of the world, especially Latin America, Asia and Africa, was hardly taken into consideration except at the last hour of the meeting, disappointment that there was a marked lack of prayer and reflection in the proceedings, disappointment that no link was made between the meeting and Providence which could have been most helpful especially at

the start, disappointment and pain that only one language (English) was insisted upon in a meeting of Presidents and Assistants where decisions had to be taken. It was certainly not elating to end the meeting on such a negative note.

This poses a tremendous challenge to the European CLC's and especially to the new European Team. Will they be able to take the evaluation positively and profit from this experience and look more closely and concretely into its role in the World Community? Will it be a sign of hope, however small, to their brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and Latin America where the majority are suffering from an unjust economic order as most of us know? The dates and place have been set for the next European meeting in 1984; will serious consideration be given to use this opportunity to develop one of the most essential aspect of the CLC way of life: the mission and service of the European CLC in the World Community?

Several times during the meeting Europe had been compared to a mosaic, made up of pieces of different sizes, shapes and colors. The mosaic can surely become a beautiful piece of art if the individual pieces can find their proper places and make use of the richness of their cultures and their resources to create the European CLC identity.

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* SOON TO APPEAR - A SERIES OF EIGHT BOOKLETS GIVING *
* THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND *
* PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION OF YOUTH *
* LEADERS (FORPYL - Formation Program for Youth *
* Leaders). *
*
* Based on the experiences of the CLC's in Chile, *
* and at present being used by different dioceses, *
* it is a program covering several week-ends spread *
* throughout the year. *
*
* The first four booklets will be available at the *
* end of October 1983 and the other four at the *
* beginning of 1984. Those interested may request *
* for them at the CLC Secretariate *
* C.P. 6139 *
* 00195 Rome - Italy *
* * * * *

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

Dear friends,

In this issue of YOUTH-PROGRESSIO I would like to share with you how I see the contribution of youth in the CLC's taking shape since the Assembly at Providence and after the recent meeting of the World Ex-Co. I would also like to share my experience in the Executive Council.

Of course I am not an "expert" in this matter, but I believe the basic idea is clear: we, the youth, are all part of the whole CLC movement since we share in the same Ignatian spirituality. Furthermore, our life and our groups are open to the deepening of our relationship with Christ and to following Him in the service of all men/women. It is also evident that there are some specific characteristics which mark our reality as youth in our personal development and in that of our groups. This can be noted in the aspect of building a community of Life (personal evaluation, relationships within the group) as well as a community of Faith (introduction to and first experiences of the Exercises, community prayer, revision of life), and lastly a community of Action (discovering the world that surrounds us and giving our response to it).

All this produces, besides great richness because it is a process of continuous discovery, also some needs. For example: the need of a pedagogy of the CLC formation process adapted to groups which are just starting, introduction to the experience of the Exercises, orientation for the stage of transition from pre-communities to CLC's... On the other hand, we have a special desire to share our experiences and ideas with others and we have a particular contribution to give in the Mission and Service dimension of the World CLC Community.

In this perspective are to be seen the orientations of the World Assembly and the later work of the Ex-Co which sought to implement these ideas.

This is clearly seen in the fact that the issues I have first mentioned, and many others, are taken up in the work

ing groups and the commissions, and that there are youth members present in each of these working-groups and commissions, to contribute not so much technical knowledge as their experiences based on membership in their own local groups. One working group will develop the specific theme of the contribution of youth in the mission and service of the World CLC.

The important question of communication can be met through publicising in YOUTH PROGRESSIO reunions which take place, our presence and participation in meetings of local groups which deal with the question of the development of the World Community and other matters more directly affecting young people. In this way there will be an on-going exchange amongst all of us, and we will all be moving together.

As you may be aware, many of these projects have been started and worked on previously; some are being undertaken for the first time, but whichever be the case, their future now depends on us.

I have promised to speak about my experience in the Ex-Co. Those of you who were at Providence will surely remember how my being a member of the Ex-Co came as a "surprise". From that time on until the present moment, I can share with you a number of things: the satisfaction I feel to work in the Ex-Co as a community at the service of the world CLC in a spirit of openness and discernment; and also that my contribution to the Ex-Co is not so much in terms of "techniques" or ideas but rather the experience I have, in being rooted in my own daily life, in my local CLC group and in what I receive from other communities.

Well, I should end now. In the next issues of PROGRESSIO we will have the chance to share more extensively the ideas that have been brought out here and those that you may suggest. In this issue you will find some material to help your reflection on youth groups and CLC mission and service. These documents express what the Church has to say to the youth of today.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Paco SANZ

MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON YOUTH

To make explicit what is the participation of youth in the world CLC mission and service, according to each regional and cultural context and the teaching of the Church, and to share experiences in this field.

We publish below the declarations made on this subject by the bishops of Latin America and Europe. Declarations made by bishops of other continents will be given in subsequent issues. We invite our youth groups to participate in the work of the Youth group in CLC Mission and Service by sending us their reflections, suggestions, ... THANK YOU.

At Puebla (January 1979)

... The document starts with an analysis of the situation of youth in Latin America. It points out the contrasts in the socio-economic condition of young people (Puebla nos. 1175-1177). The majority of the population is poor and young. Therefore, the preferential options for youth and the poor are closely linked together. On the other hand, the Conference makes reference to the social characteristics of youth; among those pointed out are their authenticity, their sensitivity to social problems, their legitimate political concerns and the clear awareness of their social power. At the same time, the Church perceives that youth lack balanced guidance and adequate social and political formation (1170-1172).

Before this reality the Church shows her confidence in the youth because they are her hope and because she sees in them a great power for evangelisation, a dynamic force in the social and ecclesial body (1186)..

The pastoral concern for youth which Puebla presents can be characterised by its global approach in as much as it tries to embrace the whole of youth, through the differentiation it makes with regard to various sectors (students, peasants, workers) (1187), and it is articulated in terms of the stages of development in the formation and commitment of youth.

Furthermore, this pastoral concern for youth has to start from social reality; it has to lead to a deepening in faith, to a growth in communion with God and with others and to open channels where youth can participate actively in the Church and in the transformation of society (1187).

In this sense the youth movements and communities and the centers of christian education should offer a formation understood as a process of education in the faith. This process appears in Puebla with specific characteristics, and it is worth recalling.

First of all, the process is rooted in Christ, God and Man (1194). It calls to conversion and leads to a serious spirituality based on prayer and on the knowledge of the Word of God (1195) and to solidarity in Christ with one's brothers and sisters (1194).

The formation of youth has to include a gradual sociopolitical preparation in accordance with the social doctrine of the Church (1196). This will allow them to develop a critical sense in front of the bombardment of mass media, and also to develop a better discernment of ideologies and political commitments (1197).

The Church at Puebla sees the mission to youth as being linked with establishing the civilization of peace and justice, which she refers to as "the civilization of love" (1188), through communion with God and with men/women, especially by announcing the Good News to the poorest, a message which should include promotion of the human person in accordance with their condition as children of God (475).

"This pastoral concern for youth will be a service of joy and of hope which will transmit the good news of salvation to a world which is oftentimes sad, oppressed and despairing, in search of its liberation". (John Paul II - 1205).

(Taken from "Fe Cristiana y Compromiso Social", Department of social Action - CELAM, edited by Pierre Bigô s.j. and Fernando Bastos de Avila s.j. pp. 461-462).

FOURTH SYMPOSIUM OF THE EUROPEAN BISHOPS, ON THE THEME :

"Youth and Faith"

(Rome, June 19-21, 1979)

The conclusions of the Symposium:

- The Bishops returned home with a deeper knowledge of the diversity of young people in the different countries. Very different socio-cultural situations were thoroughly gone in to, and at the same time, certain common approaches clearly appeared which, given the plurality of the forms of evangelisation, allow a common, fundamental orientation for the service of young people today.
- Perhaps the Church has never been more preoccupied with young people, and yet many distance themselves from her. The values, the language, the mentality and the life-style of young people are by no means identified with the values that the Church represents or seems to represent in their eyes. They expect above all from the Church that she should be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and create for them the possibility of being able to experience true freedom - the freedom which is so seriously threatened today.
- The Bishops are convinced that it is necessary for them to establish personal contact with young people: the Gospel cannot take root among young people without the active presence and commitment of the Bishops. For this mission, the Bishops should be able to count on the collaboration of the whole christian community, especially on the priests and lay people engaged in the formation of youth.
- The young people themselves should be the educators of their companions, being with them to create communities of faith and hope.
- The extension of the time spent at school calls for a specific pastoral approach. Explicitly announcing and witnessing to the Gospel are necessary at this age when the personality begins to mature and when the capacity to be critical of one's milieu is formed.
- The urgency of evangelisation, at the service of young people, imposes on our ecclesial communities, at all levels, a better division of present apostolic resources, people knowing one another and one another's experiences, and also an effective pastoral coordination.

(From "Documentation Catholique", July 15, 1979, p. 668).

WEEK-END IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

(Diglette, 25-27 February 1983)

"Excuse me, Miss, do you think society is happy?"... Some weeks ago, someone stopped me on the street and posed the question, and I just answered him quite evasively.

Society! Justice! Peace! Just words, all of them! Words whose value we have often pondered upon; those nights as students when we "would re-build the world around a table, at the corner of a coffee-shop." Words which I often hear spoken of around me with "yes" and "we do what we can"... And some sentences that go like: "Life is but a game"... or "once a person is content with themselves, everything else follows." Daily life dampens our enthusiasm. Above all, no one should be naive or a simpleton.

Nevertheless, there is God. I believe that, with my head, with my reasoning. I would have wanted to believe with my heart. I would have wanted to feel the warmth of this Divine Love. To move from a reasonable and "reasoned" faith to a real leap towards God... difficult! Above all, if alone! Perhaps with the CLC's? Perhaps!

Yes, this is what I expect from the new CLC teams of young adults which Fr. Michel Ulens will be launching at Verviers. Not one, but two! Two teams of young adults searching, groping, moving ahead. And because they are already plunged in the somewhat rude realities of life, their search is loaded with a certain quality and authenticity very rich to share.

And so as a young ambassador of the team of Verviers I travel this Friday evening to Diglette. I carry with me the hope of finding myself face to face with myself and with God; always with the same "leitmotif": to be content with myself... but with God, if possible! It never occurred to me that this group of some 40 youth who were waiting for me were going to cause an earthquake in my well-established little plans.

First impressions: faces that express welcome, look that truly see, smiles that give joy. A meal which is already a sharing. But careful! There is no question of remaining in

these encouraging first impressions. For the same evening the talk of Edouard really shakes us, enlarges our world and breaks down barriers. And so each act we do in our daily life, each object we possess, is filled with unknown people from far away. Will we be able to understand to what extent we depend on persons who perhaps we will never meet? In my work, how many persons are there who intervene "to prepare the ground", or for whom I prepare it?

The world, then, is not just my own little world. I am not responsible simply to the persons who are close to me. I already perceive a call to go further. To venture to intervene at a level which is not my own, in an obvious way. To venture to take into account the structures governing the world, understand their role and their significance, and to seek to transform them so that justice be not only a useless word.

Let me recover my breath! I will need this whole weekend at Diglette to begin to catch a glimpse of the real importance of these words! Through small groups, personal reflexions, prayer. To understand little by little the meaning of words such as responsibility, mission, conversion. To arrive gently at this hope: I am not an isolated boat in the ocean. I am continually in contact with a world much wider than I have ever imagined!

And I, this small being I believe to be crushed by forces beyond me, I can act on this world. I have in my hands the possibility to make it better. Even if it be only a drop of water in the ocean. Even if the task seems to me unsurmountable. This is what God asks of me. There lies the meaning of the word "mission". And because this is beyond me, because I am but a human being, with my limitations, I need God to bring this about.

At Diglette, my vision takes on another dimension, my prayer has a new meaning: when the action posed is beyond us, when human hope is about to be shaken, we can become an instrument of the Hope of God. When our forces fail us, there is the Force of the Love of God.

Opposed to this is all that hinders me, that will still hinder me from acting solely for God and for what He expects of me. All that blocks my confidence - like barriers erected with spikes that I have patiently raised up against others and against God. There are "weapons which I have already prepared to defend myself" before talking with others. There

is the difficulty to actually accept not being the only person who counts in my life; and to understand finally that "I do not have as an objective only the fulfillment of myself in what I do, but what is rather at stake is the fulfillment of others". It is not easy to tear down the barriers that "have protected" us for many years; nor is it easy even to discover where the barriers are and how I am going to overcome them.

And finally, there is this basic question : to fight for more justice. Yes! Not to accept injustices anymore, such as a wrong distribution of work or of riches. Agree! But how? Where to begin? What exactly does God ask of me? There again, my only recourse is to prayer.

To be really aware of all this, and to continue to live just like before - these two seem to me to be incompatible. Even if I am only at the beginning of the way, even if there are still many open questions for me, some things have already changed:

Just open the newspaper and read "the news of the world" tinted with a color of love I did not know. I can no longer stop myself from thinking, while doing my courses: "If a friend who is less blessed than you are were with you, would you have the courage to buy that?"; ...; a greater sobriety in life becomes a way of loving. There is born in me the desire to meet this less favored friend I have just been thinking of. All of a sudden I have the longing to know him/her, to know something of his/her life. That is how prayer has acquired a totally new place in my life; now it is an encounter of love, a call to go further, a constant question: "How? What do You want me to do?"

Because all this is new to me, because I am full of admiration for the experience of this week-end, and full of fear on account of the fragility of my all-too-new hope, I have the desire to share this with you... and to thank all those who have gone this part of the journey with me.

Bernadette DELFORGE

A CLC'ER IN ACTION

In 1977, the air in Borivli, one of the suburbs of Bombay, was charged with election fever. One of the candidates contesting the Parliamentary seat was making a vehement speech to a select audience that consisted of many prominent citizens of Borivli. His election promises made an impressive list.

After the speech was over, one member of the audience came to the microphone and made a suggestion. "These promises," he said, "if fulfilled, will change the face of Borivli. Why don't we organize ourselves and form an Association that will keep a check on these promises?" The suggestion was enthusiastically accepted.

Thus was born the "Citizens' Forum--Borivli". The author of the suggestion was Mr. Joe Fernandes, President of the All-India CLC Federation.

Today, after five years of its existence and active involvement of its members, Borivli is a much better place to live in -- cleaner, safer, more beautiful, having a variety of facilities which are denied to most other towns. Joe Fernandes is still one of its most active members, being the Secretary of the Forum. Here are excerpts from an interview with Joe:

Q. Joe, I have heard a lot about the Citizens' Forum. A few months ago, I read an article about its activities in the newspaper. It seems to have an impressive success story. To what do you attribute its success?

A. Well, it is because we are trying to be closer to the people and their problems. The Forum has clear objectives. Its activities and method of functioning are well delineated. Last but not least, ours is a group of committed, enthusiastic members.

Q. What are the objectives of the Forum?

A. Our Constitution lists four objectives: (1) Making citizens conscious of their duties, responsibilities and

civic, political and social rights; (2) Creating a platform for expressing powerful public opinion; (3) Encouraging leadership qualities in social, civic and political fields; and (4) Organizing social welfare activities free from party affiliations.

Q. What kind of activities do you undertake?

A. We undertake any activity which we think will improve the life of the citizens of our Constituency, like reviewing the performance of elected representatives and making them accountable to citizens; propagating political morality; slum improvement schemes; opportunities for women; checking corruption; solving citizens' problems; organizing debates, seminars; medical assistance; pursuing problems of citizens with the authorities concerned, etc.

Q. Who are the members of the Forum?

A. According to our Constitution, any major citizen residing in our constituency and applying in the prescribed form can be a member provided he is not involved in any party politics. We have nearly 400 members. They include lawyers, doctors, engineers, social workers and others belonging to a variety of professions. We meet once a month to discuss the activities of the Forum.

Q. What do you think, Joe, are some of the achievements of the Forum?

A. We do have some achievements to our credit. Last year, for instance, after conducting a spot survey on civic complaints, we put pressure on the Municipal authorities and got the following jobs done:

- Pre - and post-monsoon treatment of many roads
- Many roads widened
- Public urinals regularly cleaned
- Regular area-wise fumigation to eliminate pests
- Control of stray dogs' menace
- Rounding up of unauthorised hawkers on roadsides.

In February last year, we organized a Blood Donation Drive.

In March, we organized a Symposium on the Union Budget, in which many prominent economists took part.

Periodically, the Members of Parliament, of the Legislative Assembly, and of the Municipal Corporation were invited to render an account of the work done by them in the Constituency.

We also took up issues like the irregular supply of domestic gas, the irregular running of city buses, etc.

We periodically visit the local Government Hospital and discuss problems with the Superintendent and help provide better amenities for the patients.

Q. Well, Joe, the work of the Forum is surely impressive. Obviously, you have been instrumental in founding the Forum, and you are still the main force behind it. I should think that it demands a good deal of time, energy and dedication on your part. I know that you have a full time job, and you are also the President of the All-India CLC Federation. Do you think that your long years of membership in the CLC have given you the inspiration for this spirit of active service?

A. I do believe so. The long period of CLC formation and experience of the Spiritual Exercises have helped me to discern and discover my hidden talents and strengths and also an eagerness to serve. I have a five-day working week; I keep Saturdays for social apostolate, and Sundays I spend with my family and relax. Normally, I reserve my annual leave for Spiritual Exercises or formation courses. I look forward to each day that dawns as another God-given opportunity for service.

Stephen JOSEPH

NEWS :

THE CLC'S IN JAPAN - WHAT IS HAPPENING ?

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As people may know, we no longer have a National Secretariate; we disbanded the office and its full-time worker about 5 years ago, and the experience of doing this has been very positive. Not only have we saved money in rent and salaries, but we feel we have benefited spiritually. Now the work of the secretariate is done by different members spread over the country, which has increased the consciousness of CLC as our movement. In other words, the CLC is not something that stays in Tokyo, for people to visit, for there is no such place; if there are no members who live the CLC, and promote it, then the CLC does not exist and nothing moves. Another grace we have experienced is that every year, at the National gathering of the Federation, we make two lists; the first list is of the needs to be met or the works to be done, and the second list is of members who volunteer their services. In this way we distribute the work according to the desires and the availability of our members. This collaboration has helped us to become closer as a National Community, and to see our National Community not as something that works for us, but as something, or rather, someone, for whom we have or want to work.

There is considerable interest in the Exercises in Daily Life, and in the Tokyo area they are constantly going on. We have a shorter form which consists in two weeks' preparation and then 8 weeks during which people meet with their guide, and come together for sharing and input. The team is made up of 7 to 10 members who are priests and sisters, and usually the group of retreatants is between 20 and 30. In the case of married couples, as far as possible the guide visits them in their homes and meets with the children and the rest of the family. The Exercises are the source of our CLC identity, and they are also our service to the Japanese Church, as they provide Christians with the opportunity for a deep prayer experience, and give them a feeling of what CLC is all about.

In March for students, and in summer, and also over the Christmas holidays, there are 8 day retreats which are held in 3 or 4 different parts of the country. One interesting event this year was a whole family (parents and 4 children) making the Exercises together; the whole family found this

a very consoling experience and it led to drastic changes in their life. In the island of Kyushu, a CLC member - in fact, our young National President, 75 years of age! - bought an old convent and turned it into a retreat house, under the care of the Parish priest of Kumamoto, where the house is located. More and more it is becoming a centre of spirituality, and we hope that in the near future, one of our members will be involved, not only as an administrator but also as a retreat director. Work-shops in spiritual direction, to prepare people to become retreat directors, are held three times a year, and the attendance from all over Japan is between 20 and 40 each time.

There are two areas in which we want to grow and develop. The first one is Evangelisation, and we have developed a method of presenting the Christian message for non-Christians which is based on our revision of life. We are in the process of putting this method into print; already we have published 9 pamphlets, and we hope to finish the series of about 20 pamphlets by the end of the year. Some of the pamphlets are published as supplementary numbers of our monthly bulletin; we regret that not only are they published in Japanese, but they are specifically for our Japanese milieu, which means that other Federations cannot use them.

Our second area of concern is to develop the spirituality of social commitment, and simplicity of life-style, which is needed in our Japanese society, which has a particular responsibility for Asia, and the world. The system we are in is very powerful and the challenge is beyond human resources. We need many, many prayers not to be unfaithful to the Lord calling to us in the structures of our society and through the poor. Your prayers and suggestions, or reflections on your own experience would be a great grace to us.

Ryu SUZUKI
Isidoro RIBAS S.J.

NEWS:

FORMATION COURSE IN BOLIVIA

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Jorge VILA S.J.

For various reasons, contrary to the desire of the National CLC Committee, it was not possible to hold the National CLC Encounter this year : it was to have been the third of its series.

In front of this situation, after consulting with the different leaders, it was decided to hold short courses instead, that is, to have a course in each region. The first to experience this was at Oruro when seven members from the place met for a week.

Based on this experience, it was noted that because all participants came from the same city, it was possible to give a greater impulse and coherence to the youth movement. This is an advantage which makes up for the lack of national experience.

Thus Divine Providence led us to this new experience, because we were unable to hold the Third National Encounter.

Furthermore, the organization of such smaller meetings is more feasible under all aspects : spiritual direction, search for speakers, financial matters, places, etc.

The length of the meeting, six days, was the same for all. The program was as follows:

- * five-and-a-half days for an Ignatian experience in its strict sense: five hours of prayer, daily Eucharist lasting about two hours, evaluation after each prayer period, application of the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits of the First Week, etc.
- * one-and-a-half days for the following:
 - half-day to explain the life and dynamics of a group (Micro-Community)
 - half-day to give an analysis of the actual social structure of Bolivia (Macro-Community)
 - half-day to explain the history of the CLC's.

We also included the basic outlines used for the explications of the micro-community and the macro-community.

The participants gave themselves whole-heartedly to prayer during the first five days. The celebration of the Eucharist was usually prolonged because everyone wanted to express, in all simplicity and fervor, their deepest consolations, and their most difficult struggle with selfishness. The participants themselves confessed that during the first two days, it was hard to be faithful to the full hour of each exercise but that as they progressed in their dialogue with Christ, the hours seemed shorter. During the last day they wished the prayer period were more than 60 minutes.

All this brought about a deepening of friendship among the participants, which was no longer based on external circumstances but on the harmony lived in union with their great friend Jesus.

On the subject of micro-community, the question most discussed was that it is not enough that the members know the life of a group, but that the assistants themselves should be very dedicated to their role in the life of the group. They asked that some course for assistants be organized.

The overall vision of the history of Bolivia filled out the knowledge people already had from their studies in secondary school. They recognised that the data was organized in such a way as to give a more coherent and dynamic vision. They expressed the desire that in future courses, at least a full day be given to this vision of the history of Bolivia.

What surprised the participants was that the peasantry was considered as the focal point around which the whole history of Bolivia revolved. And they considered it unacceptable that forming the majority of the Bolivian population, the peasants were constantly disregarded, as were the miners; though in truth they were the most dynamic force within the Bolivian society, they could not bring about serious change. It is good to note that the seven participants came from families of miners, since Oruro is the mining capital of Bolivia.

As a result of this experience we have been even more encouraged to carry on with our new plan for this year: to hold courses on a city or regional level, with an approximate number of 7 participants.

This is the general vision.

CONTRIBUTION FROM:

French-speaking **CANADA** : PREPARATION FOR WORLD CLC DAY

(Guidelines proposed by the National Secretariate)

Our idea is to prepare for World CLC Day in union with Mary, our model. With this in mind, we invite each one to learn from Mary, through imitating one of her virtues. A particular virtue will be assigned to each person by lot, and each person will then make every effort to acquire it or to progress in it - through confident prayer, contemplation on the life of Mary, concrete practices accompanied by the particular examen, reading, and so on.

HOW TO PROCEED

At the next meeting (or as soon as possible), the group all together will choose the virtues of Mary that they would like to imitate (for example, charity, faith, humility, joy, silence, apostolic zeal, abandonment, obedience, etc.), and these will be written on sheets of paper prepared in advance (preferably more sheets than there are members to give as wide a choice as possible). Then each person will draw a sheet, to see what virtue he or she will concentrate on.

REGARDING PRAYER

As Mary is presented to us as the model of our mission, we can contemplate her as often as desired, in the mysteries of her life (select passages from Scripture), from three different angles:

- how she lives the virtue I want to imitate
- how this virtue helps her welcome and live out her own mission
- how I can imitate her.

THE TEAM MEETING

At the end of this time for acquiring a particular virtue of Mary's (one or two weeks before World CLC Day), there will be a meeting of the team (or group), very much in the style of "Bringing the Best together". Each member will then share with the others the best aspects of his or her prayer, or of the fruits he or she has drawn from the effort to imitate Mary, or of the discoveries made etc.

CONTRIBUTION FROM:

PERU: A REVISION OF LIFE ACCORDING TO THE CLC CHARISM

(The outline proposed below first of all traces the profile of our manner of life, and then offers some questions concerning each one of the points. This could be a useful instrument for our groups).

- * We set up an objective, and so we examine how to proceed in order to best achieve it.
- * Every personal relationship is a growing thing. Thus, our relationships with one another as believers, friends and members of a Community and of a specific town, require constant revision so as to respond better to the "other".
- * ... So, we give the following points as an aid in making a revision of life at the personal and communitarian level, according to the fundamental characteristics and charism of our Movement.

We offer them as guidelines in order to best assure our fidelity to the call of Christ to follow him in a process of growth and renewal in a CLC group, FOR A BETTER SERVICE.

The CLC is a:

- 1) Lay
- 2) Apostolic
- 3) Communitarian and
- 4) Ignatian Movement.

I. The CLC is a LAY Movement:

- a) It is a call to live in union with Christ who lives in the Church:
- a call to the apostolate
 - a call to sanctity.

The members accomplish their role in the mission of the Church through their work of evangelizing and sanctifying men/women and by perfecting and filling the temporal order with the spirit of the gospel.

- b) Through their gift of self, they give witness to Christ by the example of their life and word, and work for the salvation of men/women. They constantly nourish a deeper unity of life and faith.
- c) They assume the responsibility proper to the laity by "acting directly and concretely" in establishing and ordering temporal affairs according to the Plan of God.

They participate actively and responsibly in the life of the other communities of the Church: their immediate faith community, the Parish, the Diocese and the universal community of the People of God.

- d) They carry out their apostolate in union with those designated to govern the Church.

II. The CLC is an APOSTOLIC Movement:

- a) The apostle is one "who is sent". Each member maintains constant reference to and vital relationship with the Lord who sends them. They are serious but at the same time flexible in their prayer life in order to be able to listen and to respond to God who speaks through each concrete situation.
- b) They are disposed to serve persons in their real needs and exercise influence on the structures of their environment (family, friends, work, studies, society).
- c) They are committed persons. While being active and reliable in relation to what they take on, they discover they are being personally challenged by such undertakings. They evaluate the methods and the results of their apostolic action and confront their way of life with the Gospel.
- d) They seriously prepare the activities they carry out and maintain a broad and critical knowledge of social reality. They constantly seek to perfect their formation.
- e) They know how to serve without seeking for power and its appearances for themselves.

- f) They support others and are open to receive support from them. They know how to listen and to work in a team.
- g) Their way of being is not "neutral". They follow Christ poor who lived with the poor and accomplished his mission among them. Therefore, open to all, they embody in themselves a preferential option for the poor and live it out with simplicity and a certain austerity.

III. In the CLC, the gift of self finds its expression in COMMUNITY LIFE

- a) They seek to be united with others, in a bond of true friendship, in order to transmit and to live an apostolic life in the footsteps of Christ.
- b) They mature progressively in becoming a "person for others". They share, evaluate, celebrate and plan their life with their group with a certain degree of depth, and enlightened by faith.
- c) Freely assuming their commitment to a particular group, they are open to other communities and persons. Their immediate responsibility prompts an undertaking that enriches and promotes other communities.
- d) As their faith in Christ is the fundamental dimension of their unity of love and action, they give special importance to the celebration of the Eucharist.

V. In the CLC's, "we consider the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as a specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality": THE IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY.

- a) Moved by an interior force towards God and towards men and women of today, they give priority to their personal relationship with the Lord. They seek the ways and means most suited to deepen this relationship.
- b) Their prayer life springs from life itself, while at the same time they are encouraged to serve God

in it. They seek to find God in all things and to find all things in God.

- c) They recognise the reality of sin in their own life and in society, yet they respond humbly and constantly to the love of God who calls and liberates them through Christ.
- d) They center their life in Christ poor and humble, who calls them to follow him, opting for what would lead them best to love and service in the Kingdom.
- e) They have a filial devotion to Mary, the Mother of the Lord, who inspires them to know and to follow her Son.
- f) In "seeking and finding the will of God" they grow in their interior ability to recognise the signs of the Lord-"spiritual discretion". They go for "spiritual direction" as a help to achieve this.

NOTE:

In giving these guidelines, let us remember this fundamental point. Revision of life presupposes a disposition of great sincerity, within the context of prayer and openness to God. It is not a matter of passing judgment but, motivated by love, of SEEKING AND FINDING THE WILL OF GOD, here and now. The following questions might be helpful for this reflection:

- 1) How do I perceive the reality of my life in the light of this point?
- 2) During the past months/weeks/days have I changed in this? How? Am I becoming more coherent between what I say and what I do?
- 3) What concrete means have I used for this purpose? Which will I use?
- 4) What do I plan to do?