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A NEW GENERAL FOR THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

We warmly welcome the opportunity, in this issue of PROGRESSIO, to express our prayers, best wishes and support to Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach, on his election as General of the Society of Jesus. Fr. Kolvenbach was born in Holland in 1928, and entered the Society of Jesus in 1948. After studies in Holland, Beirut, the Hague and Paris, Father Kolvenbach moved to the Jesuit Province of the Near-East, where he later became Provincial, in Beirut, from 1974-1981. Subsequently he was appointed Rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute and was elected from this post (on the first ballot) to be the 29th General of the Society of Jesus.

In his first message to the Society of Jesus, on September 14th, 1983, Fr. Kolvenbach wrote - "It is with a great faith in the Society that I have taken up this task. The Lord wishes to make use of our Society to announce to the men and women of today's world - with a pastoral preference for those who suffer injustices in this world - the Good News of the Kingdom in a way that speaks to their culture and condition of life. He wants us in this way to serve His Church and the Vicar of Christ, Pope John Paul II."

We look forward to continuing the close and fruitful association with Fr. Kolvenbach that we always enjoyed with Fr. Arrupe, especially since the 33rd General Congregation in its proceedings, has made explicit mention of collaborating with the Christian Life Communities.

Progressio

LETTER TO FATHER ARRUPE

November 1st, 1983

Very dear Father Arrupe,

Our Lord has brought you into our lives, to help us grow strong in Him. For us you have been His witness and the sign of His Spirit.

You have been to us who have had the joy and privilege of meeting you what you have been to all our Community.

Thanks to your profound knowledge of the teaching of Vatican II, you have led us to a better understanding and appreciation of our identity as a community of lay people.

Through the sympathy and encouragement you have shown us, and through your companions throughout the world, we have been helped to grow and develop, and to deepen the Ignatian charism.

You have fostered between the Society and our CLC's a network of relationships that are mutual, exacting and fraternal, faithful to St. Ignatius; for my part, I will continue to develop these relationships.

Personally I have always experienced from you, Father, a warm welcome, a constant support and enlightened advice, since my election in 1979, and during the happy or difficult times in the service of our World Community. Please accept my feelings of profound gratitude.

Very dear Father Arrupe, continue to help us by your prayers. Your serene and trusting acceptance of this new stage in your life is a witness to your fidelity to the Lord. This is the image we treasure of you: faithful witness.

With you we praise the Lord and assure you of our affection and prayers;

Very dear Father Arrupe, Thank you...

Tobie Zakia
President

* * * * *
*
* **A NEW YEAR...** *

* It is very difficult to see what this new year has *
* in store for us. A glance at the world - with its *
* tensions becoming more and more menacing, its wars, *
* its inequalities, its hunger, its unemployment, its *
* injustices - presents a very sombre picture. *

* What of this new year, then? What will be new about *
* it? Might the "newness" begin with our own conver- *
* sion, and the transformation of our own heart and *
* way of thinking? Might we spread this conversion in *
* the places, the activities, the structures, the en- *
* counters where the love and service of others leads *
* us? *

* In fact, have we not recognised and made our own *
* the words of the prophet Micah: "To act justly, to *
* love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God"? *

* On the threshold of this new year, it is good for us *
* to recall this commitment that we have undertaken *
* and to help one another live it out both personally *
* and in our communities. *

* This is the wish that we share, in the hope that *
* the life of Christ in our hearts may spread out to *
* the world. *

*
* *Progressio* *

"DOING PENANCE"

The title of this article may seem very anachronistic. Do we still concern ourselves with this "exterior penance" which St. Ignatius tells us in the Exercises involves cutting down on what is "normal" with regard to eating and sleeping, and inflicting on "the flesh" a "pain which is felt"? (83) Certain people even see in such practices an ambiguity which it would be wise to guard against. For my part, I do not believe that the matter is as simple as that. Firstly because, in the course of the Exercises which have effectively led a retreatant to "order his/her life" in a radical way according to the Gospel, one always sees, it seems to me, that these kinds of penance are taken up spontaneously, at one time or another, sometimes for quite a long period. Secondly, because, on this point, the Exercises in daily life bring a confirmation, which to me seems decisive, by strongly highlighting the role of the body in such a retreat and, at the same time, the value of penance. It is this last aspect I wish to develop here, to contribute to the reflection on the specific characteristics of the Exercises in daily life.

The body

In a retreat of some days or of a month, the body, of course, shares in the spiritual effort which the retreatants undertake. It is with the body that they pray. It is the body which they must keep awake, rest and relax. It is in the body that they feel all sorts of movements that stir them in different ways. But it is also true that many physical needs can be practically disregarded, or considered as secondary, or not so urgent that they can't be dealt with later; certain austerities bring little danger with them because they can be clearly limited and their effects controlled; a demanding sacrifice can quickly find the necessary moment of relaxation after the retreat. But when

the retreat takes place over a period of several months, the body imposes the rules of its equilibrium, rhythms and limits in quite another way. One cannot ignore it at length without provoking internal problems which profoundly alter the conditions of the search for God. It too enters into the condition of humble and continuous submission to the daily reality to which the retreatants submit in all the other aspects of their lives.

Perhaps, above all, it should be said that the body becomes more important each day because it is seen to be the means of fidelity to work, the link which ensures communication with others, the strength on which one draws for whatever has to be done. The retreatants experience their bodies not only as their "flesh", but as the constant manifestation of their way of being in the world. They are aware that the whole universe which attracts and transforms them passes, so to speak, through the "channel" of their own bodies; their instincts, irritations, the way they welcome others, depend in part (and they are unaware to what extent) on the rapport they have with their bodies which are "enslaved" or not yet well ruled and "ordered". The retreat in daily life makes them discover in a very deep way that there can no longer be any question of separating the physical body from the whole complex of human reactions which form the living tissue of their relation to the world.

That is why the retreatants are led very naturally to question themselves on the use they make of their bodies, in their openness to their neighbours, in their moods, in their capacity to experience the reality of a situation: a body that is strained or very dissatisfied, even as a result of conscious sacrifice, does not permit a peaceful and fraternal encounter with the "other"; a body which is a slave to needs and which a blind, impulsive urge makes difficult to control, creates a kind of shadow which filters the truth, both in communication, and in the gift of oneself. Starting from these affirmations, the retreatant tries not to "chastise the flesh", but to give his/her body the balance and the strength that make it the means of a more true relationship with others, and of a greater fidelity to his/her own desire for truth and peace.

Is it a question of depriving oneself of sleep, food, leisure, and even certain pleasures? Perhaps, but that risks

not making much sense. In fact, in the course of the Exercises in daily life, it is not in this direction that the retreatants seem to usually turn. They seek rather, and first of all, what makes for better communication with others, through fostering patience, an openness of heart and control of their outbursts of temper. Then they seek what makes for the channelling of (whilst maintaining respect for) their personal strengths and energies which are like constant calls of the Spirit through the impulses that are most closely bound up with the development of their physical being. Finally they seek what fosters the relaxation, the restoration of their whole being, a positive attitude towards a universe which is not so familiar to them and to which they feel they should open themselves in order to escape more intelligently from the limits of their culture and their habits.

These examples which I have just mentioned, in too abstract a way, have not been chosen at random. It is, in fact, in this way that some retreatants try to "do penance", obliging their bodies to modify their urges, their compulsions, their limits. They force themselves to go out and meet such and such a person, to accept such and such a responsibility or such and such an initiative, to subdue their own tastes in order to create a milieu in which their neighbours may be happier. That does not at all impede recourse to fasting and bodily privations, but that is not where the essential is: perhaps, in the Exercises in daily life, that even takes on an unreal aspect inasmuch as these are not the "penances" which affect the body precisely as the place of encounter with others.

In the way in which they introduce into the heart of the Exercises these concrete practices which are all the fruit of small decisions, the retreatants in daily life relate more or less explicitly to one or other of the three motives which St. Ignatius gives for "bodily penance"(87-89). Faced with the disordered use of certain bodily impulses, they feel the need to "make amends", that is, to turn to good those forces that make up their being; they want to escape from the irrational and uncontrolled aspect of these impulses; they make of their penance the means of knowing themselves better according to the truth of their spiritual reality. But with each one of these motives it is a question of adapting oneself better to daily life, in accordance with the rhythm of the discoveries which foster the progress of the retreat.

Penance and Temperance

It is actually quite difficult to draw a line between the two practices which St. Ignatius distinguishes, in a way which to him seems very obvious: on the one hand penance, which cuts down on what is "normal" ("lo conveniente"), and on the other hand temperance, which cuts down on the "superfluous". He gives an explanation of this with respect to eating and sleeping (83-84), and, in addition, his commentary shows the nuances peculiar to each of these two cases. But, in the Exercises in daily life, is this distinction quite so helpful? If, in many cases, the superfluous can easily be recognised and dealt with, what will be the criterion for recognising what is "normal"? It is nothing other than the quality of the relationship which the retreatants maintain with the whole of the reality which constitutes their life for them.

Their penance consists in constantly adjusting, each in relationship to the others, their prayer, fidelity to their work, availability to their neighbour, and, primarily, their closest neighbour, i.e. their own family. Numerous attempts are made in the course of the retreat, in cooperation with the grace proper to each stage. These attempts concern, it is true, food, sleep and all the material conditions in the life of a person who wants to get right away from the sort of comfort that can begin to stifle. Nevertheless, these attempts bear much more on situations of day to day behaviour when a person is faced with events, difficulties in a relationship, signs of their limitations, and their reaction to a situation of injustice or calumny. Each time the body is called into question because it is the body that reacts and it is the body's outbursts or weaknesses that must be overcome. The retreatants modify certain decisions or habits in order to find what will help them develop the most authentic attitude which will bring together their whole being and the present moment which they must live. The Exercises as a closed retreat devote considerable attention to the retreatants' relationship with their physical bodies, and to the penance that they can practise in this regard; in the retreat in daily life it is the whole field of human experience that helps each one to "intensify his/her activity" in order to find exactly "what is most suitable for him/her" (89).

But the distinction between "superfluous" and "normal" tends to disappear because it is precisely in relation to the "normal" that the retreatants, in every situation, try to adjust themselves. If there is a distinction to be made it is between moderation and excess, between harmony with life and a feeling of uneasiness, between interior unity and a lack of integration with reality, etc. According to what they experience, the retreatants take more initiatives, to better control their bodies and bodily impulses so that their relation to others and to the world may be lived more peacefully under the grace of God that is charity; or else they look to the quality of their presence, in concrete living, from a physical or emotional point of view, so that their bodies may find a new equilibrium in this regard. At any rate, an effort at being unambiguously faithful to one's work, or else a more consciously relaxed openness when faced with a situation of conflict constitute a spiritual initiative that is more suitable than would be a prolonged fast or a privation which would only affect the physical body.

Would there not be from the outset and throughout the retreat the almost spontaneous application of what St. Ignatius suggests in the fourth week: "In place of penance, let one attend to temperance and moderation in all" (229)? Not that one intends to live before its time the grace of the Resurrection proper to the fourth week of the Exercises. But the circumstances of the retreat in daily life most often render impossible penances which would be inflicted on the body in such a way as to alter its relationship with what constitutes daily living; they even introduce an element that is not quite appropriate, because the retreatants well know that genuine initiatives await them elsewhere; certainly with regard to their bodies but their bodies in the totality of their human life. The whole effort is therefore for them a searching for this "moderation" which assures them of their fidelity to the Spirit in fidelity to the reality that is theirs, and which makes itself only felt even more as the place of authentically encountering God.

Penance and "Desolation"

A third aspect must be underlined: the circumstances of the Exercises in daily life reveal a very strong link

between penance and discernment, or rather between penance and each of the two series of feelings that are consolations and desolations. St. Ignatius makes particular note of the link between penance and desolation: that is why I am now going to take up this point. "In desolation", he writes, "it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity... we can make an effort in a suitable way to do some penance ..."(319).

In the course of the Exercises in daily life, desolation hits the retreatants, starting with all the elements that constitute their present existence: not only their prayer, but even more the various events which "test" their sensitivity, the people with whom they relate, their work - all these are so many occasions for them to experience inner movements of discouragement, of difficulty, and of suffering which mark inevitable moments in the progress of a person's awareness. Then it is that faith, that is, the personal relationship with God to whom one wants to cling, finds itself threatened. The ordeal obviously has a thousand human causes; but what makes it spiritual desolation is the fact that the certainty of God's word and trust in his presence seem to disappear, so much so that the soul feels "as it were, separated from its Creator and Lord"(317).

In such moments the retreatant may have recourse to bodily penance "in a suitable measure" in order that "our sensual nature obey reason"(87). But the Exercises in daily life usually lead the retreatants to an attitude that is, without doubt, more consistent with the whole complex of the spiritual conditions of their retreat. It is for them a matter of affirming the act of faith through which they rely on God alone, whilst continuing to live fully the human reality that is theirs. There is a genuine "penance" here which, it seems to me, is performed in three ways.

The first consists in diminishing and calming the rhythm of the psychological process by which a person's consciousness finds itself more and more invaded by forces which have negative and disintegrating effects. The retreatants cannot act directly on the interior movement that constitutes their trial, but they can be on the watch to no longer entertain thoughts, images, behaviour which are food on which desolation feeds. They quickly get to know within themselves what gives rise to their sadness, loneli-

ness, darkness: it is there that they can take the initiatives that are effectively refusals to let themselves be dragged along by destructive forces. The retreatants then live a very special experience: in trying to curb the various tangible consequences of the movement of desolation, they gradually find again the motives for their adhesion to God in faith, beyond all human support. Their penance is not performed through exterior means which act upon the physical body, but through control of the human processes that continually run the risk of substituting the impulses they generate for the integrity of the act of adhering to God.

A second form of penance concerns, perhaps more simply, their habitual behaviour. The retreatants know that, in the period of desolation, they must find for themselves the attitude which, with respect to life in the concrete and its demands, fosters an interior balance in spite of the ordeal that is experienced. "To intensify our activity against the desolation"(319) is to find again authentic and simple submission to daily reality, by accepting what remains shrouded in mystery and darkness, by offering oneself to the life of each day as the surest response to the questioning that one continues to carry within oneself. Is this penance, to submit to the inevitable? Yes, to the extent that this inevitable is seen as a gift, and where the response consists in reaffirming one's liberty in the midst of forces that restrain it.

Finally, a third form of penance lies in the frank acceptance of this "absence" of God that often characterises desolation. Absence, separation, exile, silence: each one experiences this trial through his/her own temperament. Life in the concrete often makes it very heavy to bear because it is aggravated by the multiplicity of situations in which it is present. Such an absence cannot be compensated for. It is precisely on this point that penance can come to the fore: the retreatants refuse (at any rate, try) to seek human satisfaction through other presences that could allay the tortured feeling of emptiness. Penance can then take on many aspects according to the retreatants' experience of desolation in their work, in their relations with others, in a close relationship, with regard to their bodies, in their most secret longings which the life of each day awakens like a restless force. But the attitude of penance is always linked to the will of the retreatants, who, to the extent that it depends on their own initiative, only try to move out of this desolation by entering more resolutely into this absence

of God in order to reach, through it, - in an act of faith that is more pure and more lucid - a new form of presence which is not so tied up with feelings and their repercussions in a person's consciousness.

From such a practice of penance comes, at the same time as an education in faith, a kind of "wisdom". Wisdom attuned to God, certainly, since it is always an act of faith that inspires it. But a wisdom that springs in its entirety from the very circumstances of concrete life, and the illumination of a new light. If it is, in effect, through life that the retreatants experience their desolation and through it that they overcome desolation, refusing to be crushed by it, it is also through life that they learn to come to terms with themselves: they know the risks and the inclinations of their temperament, they know the points of equilibrium and the boundaries that should not be exceeded. They put in their proper place the human phenomena that affect their sensitivity. Penance is, then, a precious means of progress in the affirmation of faith in God through the whole of life.

One realises that the retreatants can be invited to this attitude of penance at each stage of the Exercises. Will it be more so in the first week, when they meditate on the forgiveness of God, who delivers them from sin, or in the third week when they contemplate the Passion of Christ? This is not certain. It seems rather that the remark made by St. Ignatius in the second week applies to the whole experience of the retreat: in what concerns penance "...the exercitant must conduct himself as the mysteries he is contemplating demand. Some call for penance; others do not" (130). It is not that the content of the contemplation gives rise by itself to the movement that leads to penance; it is rather that the retreatants, by making present to themselves the mystery that they are contemplating, take up spontaneously the initiatives that affect their relationship to daily life and, consequently, their bodies. Penance thus accompanies the whole movement of conversion which takes place throughout the Exercises in daily life.

Maurice Giuliani s.j.

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

YOUTH AND THE WORLD COMMUNITY

In this article I would like to offer a reflection on the contribution that we young people can make to the building up of the world community. I will concentrate only on the ideal aspects involved, leaving the practical questions of 'how to' to another time.

The community of youth comprises a number of factors which, if they develop together harmoniously, can lead very early to the living out of a christian life, thereby introducing new blood into the community of adults, and giving body to the world community. With a group of young people, the experience of coming together has many repercussions; the experience of formation goes hand in hand with psychological growth and a self-awareness that establishes the person; the experience of discovering God is accompanied by the discovery of the 'other' and the world, which is a very rich and fruitful experience.

If these three aspects develop harmoniously together, the experience of community becomes an essential part of a person's life: the experience of God and of the 'other', the experience of service and mission, the experience of responsibility vis-à-vis the world and society are all rooted in the person who lives these out. They become an essential part of his/her way of being and change his/her very existence and the way it is lived out and built up.

All this - linked with the energy, enthusiasm and impulsiveness typical of young people - when it is supported by a spirituality like ours, provides the basis for an effective christian existence, in which the Lord is central to a person's life and the decisions they make.

This is quite an achievement, and something that is often lacking in a community of adults which develops more painfully due to people having their own set ideas, fixed positions and particular experiences of life.

To be formed as a young person for christian living is to make a choice for people and the Lord, from the time when one really starts to make choices. The adult community, as well as allowing itself to be challenged, should be in a position to foster such a process, and build up communities of young people with this attitude.

The world community could only be enriched by this. As it is not a structure like an institution but rather a communion of sentiments, of experience, of faith and of common aims, it would thrive on this common heritage of life, of ideas, of living in the Lord, of being there for one another - all characterized by the experience of youth.

Youth is creative, enthusiastic, breaks new ground, is tireless, enterprising and courageous. Young people have the capacity to change, to question the established order of things, to criticise society and the way things are, which is a very enriching gift.

As the young person is not yet caught up in the grind of productivity, he or she has little to lose, much to risk and many things to denounce. Being on the margin of society, the young person experiences its contradictions, feels them more strongly than others and is in a position to denounce them. And as he or she is not taken up with the problem of survival, the young person can shake settled certainties and unmask so many fears. Furthermore youth can contribute to building a different sort of world, and cooperate with the Lord who makes all things new.

This capacity to change is a responsibility for each one of us. A spiritual and human formation should trace out the path for this, and the response to the needs of the world should imbue it with meaning. Moreover, confronting the reality of different countries adds a further impetus.

Our poor, bleeding world, of the oppressed and the deprived, needs a touch of courage and imagination, and just so much love. It needs each one of us to build up on this earth a place where the dreams of justice, peace and universal brotherhood will come true. It also needs a world community which will show glimpses of the Kingdom of God among men.

Giovanna CHIRRI

CLG FORMATION COURSE AT OTSHIKUKU, NAMIBIA

(2-5 September 1983)

Last year I was asked to present what C.L.G. is all about to a group of people (laity and sisters), doing a Youth Leader's course at Khanyisa, Natal.

A Benedictine sister, Sr. Magdalena, from Namibia, was 'touched' by what she heard, and on her return home began some C.L.G. groups in the high schools in her area. The area she is working in is very far north, and near the Angolan border - therefore being in the so-called 'operational area'.

She began groups in ten schools and kept in touch with me as she moved step by step. A few months ago we both felt that I should go up there to run a 'Formation Course' for the young people. Plans were made and dates were set, with the young people even subsidising my travel expenses.

It was with a great deal of apprehension that I left Koinonia at 5:45 a.m. on 29 August. After a three hour flight and a long 'trek' by car, which took us through five road-blocks - I arrived at my destination at 3:15 p.m. the following day. I was now in Otshikuku - a very large mission about 35 km beyond Oshikati. We had travelled through vast expanses of nothingness, where the landscape changed many times, becoming more flat and more desert-like the further we went.

I received a very warm welcome from the Benedictine sisters with whom I would stay. They are quite a big community - with eighteen novices and twenty-four junior professed sisters.

The mission is very large - with a junior and a high school, a very big hospital, a small leper colony, and the parish and Novitiate. The school used to be with boarding too - but because of the war parents preferred to have their children at home, and it was closed.

My course began on Friday, with 119 participants. Because of the political situation the people have rejected

Afrikaans, (the language of the 'boers'), and schooling has been in English for the past two years. This is still very much a transition period - and their English is not very good yet. The course itself was therefore very hard-going, as I had to repeat and re-phrase myself many times. The Lord was very near - as there were times when I heard myself saying things which I had not planned and thought about before, but which fitted in very well. The potential for leadership was very evident - as was their enthusiasm and openness to all which was given. The 'caring' was also very touching - e.g. careful preparation of lovely name-tags by one group, and a welcome to the course in big letters outside the hall, and the spirit of co-operation during meals and after.

We were privileged to have the ordination to the Diaconate of one of the married laymen in the parish on Sunday. There were approximately 2-1/2 thousand people there for the Mass which began at 10 a.m. and finished at 12:45 p.m. This event gave the young people both a very profound 'sense of Church', as well as prodding to consciousness the role of each person within the Church today.

The Bishop, who had come up for the ordination, came to visit the group too. He challenged the young people to deep involvement and commitment to the Lord - within His Church and among His people.

When the young people were looking at the 'dark places' in their country where Christ's light has not yet penetrated - i.e. at sin, especially social sin, they showed great honesty, profound perception and deep hurt. Group after group listed war, unfair beatings (by the soldiers) of the people, rape and alcoholism, as just some of the areas which are in need of being bathed in the light and saving action of Christ. Even though these young people live daily in contact with these "darkness" it was touching to witness their faith, their hope and their longing to love.

I am hoping that two young people - a teacher and a third-year agriculture student - will be able to attend our National Formation Course in December. I am hoping too that they will be the people who will water and nurture the seed which I was given to sow - so that the young people in Namibia may be the herald of peace, of justice and of joy in their Lord.

It was with a heavy heart that I bade farewell to the sisters and to all those young people on Monday morning. Their gratitude was expressed in their singing - which carried on and on, until the combi finally left at 8:30 a.m.

But my experiences were only beginning... I was travelling down to Windhoek in a combi with some people who had gone up for the ordination. We could not leave too early for fear of land-mines on the dirt road to Oshikati. And so, when we met the military about midway - checking for mines - we felt very "protected" by the Lord.

As on the trip up, there were many road-blocks again. At one we were told to get out, and the luggage of the African people had to be taken out for searching. It was painful to feel so divided from people - and so the other white - a brother - and myself, took our luggage out and insisted that it be searched too.

The next hour or so of our journey, was for me one of the most valuable experiences I had. Each person in the combi simply shared their feelings - of hurt, of anger, of humiliation, of frustration... and I felt with them. It was from that time too that I felt accepted by the other people in the combi - and when we had to part much later that day, it was like saying good-bye to friends. The bond of shared pain is not easily broken.

On the last evening of the course, the young people told me that I had to have some "spiritual food" for my journey, and they told me to read Mark 1, 1-3:

"This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to clear the way for you'. Someone is shouting in the desert, 'get the road ready for the Lord: make a straight path for him to travel'."

Food for reflection and prayer...

Sr. Cecilia Smit, o.p.

We publish below some reflections prepared by the Sacred Congregation for Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture. Reading this text and discussing it at one of our meetings can be one way of involving ourselves in the celebration of the World Day for Peace - January 1st, 1984. The theme for the World Day is: "The seeds of Peace spring from a new heart". (Editor's note).

REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATING YOUTH FOR PEACE

1. Youth and War Today

The first observation to be made in this area is that while appeals for Peace are growing and growing, many young people are under arms and fighting in a number of places throughout the world. This is a sad fact, and the end is nowhere in sight. Many of these young people have to fight because those who hold political or military power force them to do so. Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke of such absolute power and opposed it in his new teaching on authority as a service (cf. Lk 22, 25ff). When faced with a ruling power, young people are defenceless. Refusal to fight would be considered as a crime of desertion, with all its consequences. But there are also cases where young people take up arms to serve some violent ideology that has captured their hearts.

As we reflect on this current situation, we cannot help wondering - why, even in our day, are so many young people forced to kill, or have persuaded themselves that they have to kill?

2. War in the Culture of Youth

For young people at school, wars are always a topic to be studied - ancient and modern wars, national and world wars. To youth, all of history seems to be marked by the wounds of war. War appears as an inevitable fate, hanging over the human family. As they grow older, youth become acquainted not only with the history of wars, but also with the doctrine of war. They learn to look on war as a law of

nature (Hobbes), as a political decision (von Clausewitz), as a necessary evil for the protection of nations (Hegel, Nietzsche, Renan), and lastly as a means to world revolution (Lenin, etc.). Similar observations could also be made regarding modern "guerrilla" warfare; it is also part of youth culture. Mass-media contributes to nourish this culture of war and violence.

A reflective young person should ask the question: why does so much human blood still have to be shed in the world when the very first pages of the Scripture carry a divine warning directed to the whole of humanity - "What have you done? Listen to the sound of your brother's blood, crying out to Me from the ground"(Gen 4,10).

3. "Conversion" of Minds to the Christian Message of Peace

However, something new and decisive has come into our world. The Gospel message of Peace is completely opposed to the reality and the doctrine of war: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good-will"(Lk 2, 14). Our Lord Jesus Christ addressed the invitation to everyone: "Repent, and believe the Good News"(Mk 1, 15). To be converted to the Gospel means also to be converted to its message of Peace. The Gospel and Peace are inseparable, just as Christian love and war are irreconcilable. The evangelical message challenges the theories and the reality of war. This is why it represents a turning point in the tortured history of mankind. Christ's supreme sacrifice was a sacrifice of reconciliation. The first generations of Christians understood it in this sense: "... God wanted... all things to be reconciled through Him and for Him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when He made peace by His death on the Cross"(Col 1, 19-20). The blood of Christ was poured out on the earth to eliminate any further bloodshed, for that would be a denial of His new commandment of universal love. "Conversion" of minds to the evangelical message of Peace is consequently the starting point for any progress in educating people to have a feeling for Peace, and to work for this.

Again we wonder - why do so many young people show themselves so little open to the Christian message of Peace? Why do they seem so little convinced of its effectiveness vis-à-vis historical reality?

4. "Conversion" of hearts - to want Peace and to work for it

Nothing is willed unless it is known and loved. A young person's heart remains closed to the evangelical message of Peace if he/she does not learn, at an appropriate time, to know it, to love it and to prefer it to opposing messages. But people have to move from faith to life, from conviction to action. For young people, the Christian message raises problems of conscience. In other words, it pushes them to have a better understanding of the mystery of their own heart. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "...For it is from within, from men's hearts, that evil intentions emerge...murder ... malice... deceit" (Mk 7,21-22). War is the terrifying culmination of all the wickedness that comes out of the heart of man. It is the quintessence of all that is inhuman. "Conversion" of hearts, purifying the intentions of one's heart, eventually clears the way for a young person to be educated to want Peace, and to work for it. People do not stay young for very long, but during this special time, purifying one's heart can reach a very profound level.

Young people with an untrammelled heart, a new heart, are open to hope. They feel that their longing for Peace, and their working for Peace, are not useless. They are encouraged by the words of Our Lord: "... Look around you... look at the fields; already they are white and ready for harvest! ... For the proverb holds good: one sows, another reaps" (Jn 4, 35-37). Let young people, then, turn their eyes to the world and let them imagine millions and millions of other young people, already converted in mind and heart to the Christian message of Peace. All together, they make up a very considerable force for Peace. It is young people who bring to the world a feeling for humanity, brotherly understanding, respect for different races, cultures and religions. They carry a hunger and thirst for justice to be won without violence; they have confidence in the ability of intelligence and reason - gifts of God - to resolve political and social problems, without having recourse to war, which appears more and more as a return to a state of barbarism.

"One sows, another reaps". The gospel message of Peace can, in time, go very far if fostered in the hearts of large numbers of young people who give themselves to it. No one should be discouraged through what is going on in the world today. What is important now is to sow Peace in the world.

ECHOES ... ECHOES ... ECHOES ...

NEWS FROM OCEANIA

Australia

May '82 marked a new phase for the CLC's in Australia; a 12 day course for group guides led to the setting up of new groups in different cities around the country.

Being fully aware that CLC formation is a long affair and that it entails not only helping directly people and their groups, but also preparing competent guides, the national leaders decided to have a second session in August '83.

- * At Perth, on the west coast of Australia, there was a week-end of initiation into the CLC's, which attracted just over 100 people.
- * In Adelaide, Maxine Hogan and Patrick O'Sullivan S.J. conducted a 4-day course, aimed mainly at consolidating groups in South Australia.
- * Two sessions of 12 days were conducted in Sydney, for group guides and possible guides in the future. 92 people participated in the first course; roughly a third were lay people, and the rest were priests and religious from different congregations. The second session was geared specifically for people who had made the course in May '82; it aimed at building on this experience and deepening the manner of living the CLC's. Both sessions began with a week of the Spiritual Exercises, individually guided, which had a marked effect on the days that followed. There was a quality and depth of experience and a sense of commitment that was quite tangible. It was precisely this awareness of the work of grace which led the CLC leaders present to come together to see what would foster the union of the CLC's on the national level, and to decide on some common initiatives in the area of formation and mutual help.

Australia? It is a country the size of a continent where the CLC's have begun in a modest but authentic way, ever attentive to what the Lord may be saying to them.

New Zealand

Two months before the session in Australia, the question of New Zealand came up. Jocelyn Franklin, a member of her diocesan Commission for Development and Evangelisation, knocked at the door of the Rome Secretariate, and asked - "Why not kill two birds with the one stone? If you will be in Australia, why not come to New Zealand?"

And so it happened that the first initiation session into the CLC's was held at Auckland, from September 7-10th. Twenty lay people, 2 sisters from the Cenacle and one diocesan priest took part. All the participants, as was obvious from their parish and other commitments, were familiar with the experience of service in the Church. We began with the essential characteristics of the CLC. Gradually the canvas was filled in, and the integration of a life given to Christ appeared in the light of what the CLC has to offer. At the end of the session, Sheila said - "The different threads of my life have come together."

On September 27th we received a letter from New Zealand: "There is a firm 'yes' to commencing a CLC programme - a core group within our own training centre, and maybe others who attended the course."

Already there are contacts between Australia and New Zealand; mutual aid, on the regional level, is under way.

ON CHINESE SOIL

The CLC leaders in *Hong Kong* had set up three programs which ran from 8th to 14th August:

- a day for CLC assistants;
- three days for people interested in "The Spiritual Exercises and spirituality for the laity";
- three days on deepening our way of living for CLC members.

It is clear that things are progressing in *Hong Kong* - what signs of growth and deepening since last year's session in May! Of course there are difficulties, as there are everywhere, namely a lack of assistants and guides for the groups. However, the maturity of the older members and the interest of a number of religious are on the way to dealing realistically with needs and developments as they appear.

Not far away, at *Macao* (Chinese territory under Portuguese administration), there is an old Marian Congregation, made up of young adults, which as yet had had no contact

with the CLC's. It seemed a good moment to make contact, so on the morning of August 15th, in heavy rain, we took the boat with Sean and Eadaoin, and spent the afternoon and evening with the leader of the Congregation. We were given a warm welcome, which helped us to get to know one another, and have some exchanges on the CLC around the world. Bonds are formed. We promise to remain in contact - the Secretariate will do this by correspondence, and the Hong Kong CLC through regular personal contact.

The flight for Australia is scheduled for August 16th, at 10 pm, so we make the most of the time available to take part in a guided tour of mainland China. An adventure, a discovery - certainly. But also a prayer for the future when, in God's good time, His Word will once more be sown in people's hearts.

Jose Gsell

FROM SPAIN

The National Federation of Spain began this summer with its first Assembly - the first stage of its history. Jose Maria Riera and Aurora Camps have written to us about their experience of the Assembly.

Dear friends,

This is the first time that we are writing to you all. Javier Leach asked us to give a short summary of our experiences and impressions of the first Assembly of the CLC in Spain and it seems to us to be a very good idea to be in contact, in this way, with each person and each community in Spain.

The Assembly took place in Madrid, last July, from the 7th to the 10th. The Assembly itself was of crucial importance because it signified the crystallisation of the efforts and the dream of many people who were living and seeking to live the CLC way of life. It also meant the possibility of explaining to everyone what we were and what we ought to be, through recalling and owning our past history, living and cherishing our present while looking to the future in the context of the new stage just beginning.

The Assembly was an ENCOUNTER; we learnt about and shared the realities of the CLC's in Spain, appreciating the specific characteristics of each one, their charisms, their potentialities, their hopes and dreams, realising once again that diversity enriches everyone. We believe that this diver

sity is more in form than in substance since we all agree on the essential: a Christocentric Spirituality based on the Spiritual Exercises which open us up and dispose us to serve in the concrete situations of our daily life.

The Assembly was a place of DIALOGUE, open and spontaneous; we had the good fortune to have with us Tobie Zakia, president of the World Federation of the CLC's, and both his talk and the subsequent exchanges were most enriching. The experience of formation with CLC Youth groups, which Jesus Diaz Baizan explained to us in his talk, was also very interesting. On the Saturday afternoon we worked in groups on a number of themes: Marriage and the Family, Youth, Formation... On the Sunday we had a visit from the President of the Bishops' Conference of Spain, Bishop Rafael Torija.

What characterized the sessions was an atmosphere of active participation, listening and respect. The Assembly was also a place of DECISIONS; it had to make important decisions for the future of the Federation, like formulating orientations and recommendations for the Executive Council, which it then proceeded to elect.

Tobie, Javier Leach and Angel Gonzalez Alorda (the process guide) all remarked on the serious and sensitive way the elections were carried out. It was not a question of electing exceptional or specially qualified people, but people who were available to serve and who could represent the local communities. The voting was finalised on the last day and the Executive Council was formed.

The whole Assembly was conducted in an atmosphere of prayer, with special emphasis on the figure of Mary, model for all of us, model for service. A highpoint and a very deep experience for us was the "Holy Hour". On Saturday night we were together for an hour in prayer; we felt profoundly united, a true community, with Christ as the centre and the way of union between us. In that moment we experienced the culmination of all that had been going on, and before Him, the true and only source, we felt committed to pursue, with our failings and limitations, the constant search for God.

From now on we will be counting on your help and prayers for all the community of the Executive Council. We begin our work in a spirit of enthusiasm; we want to be known to all of you personally, to share our joys and our difficulties, as we work to grow together in love and service.

Affectionately yours,

José Ma. Riera & Aurora Camps

FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CLC'S IN EGYPT

The first National Assembly of the CLC's in Egypt opened at the De la Salle College, Daher, Cairo, at 5 p.m. on September 14th. About 60 people attended, coming from Alexandria, Cairo and Upper Egypt. The majority of participants were lay people, and there were a certain number of religious, and even some seminarians. The opening Mass was celebrated by Mgr. Ignace, Auxiliary Bishop of Assiout (Upper Egypt), whom delegates at Providence would have known under the name of Father Eliyya Yacoub S.J. The majority of the lay people came from the 6 CLC groups already established.

The program was organized by Fathers Jean Faure, Fadel Sidarouss and Olivier Borg Olivier. The assembly lasted from the afternoon of September 14th to late in the evening of the 17th. The program was divided over two afternoons and two full days. To get to know one another, at the opening of the assembly each existing group presented itself, giving the names of its members, where it came from, a brief history of the community, and the common aim and the structure of one of its meetings. Several groups discovered that they had not yet chosen a name for themselves, and that often that was associated with the fact that the common aim was not yet clarified and adopted by everyone. Next Fr. Olivier spoke of the "aims and perspectives" of the CLC. Questions and discussion followed this presentation. The opening Mass was a good occasion to celebrate the joy of finding oneself with so many brothers and sisters hitherto unknown in many cases.

These days were for us a good introduction to Ignatian spirituality, as the characteristic spirituality of the CLC's. Quite naturally those who had grown in faith with the help of other spiritualities had a number of questions to put. Did their previous experiences count for nothing? Was there a contradiction between such previous experiences and what one was seeking to live in the CLC's? The answer to these questions came not only in the course of the exchanges which followed the presentation of the different topics, but also, during the meetings of the different groups and communities, after the conclusion of the national assembly. Each presentation was followed by a sharing in small groups, helped along by a series of questions for personal reflection, before sharing. This sharing in small groups was, without doubt, one of the aspects of the whole assembly that was most appreciated, and helped considerably in forging a national community. It taught us, on a mutual basis, to know ourselves, to accept ourselves and to appreciate ourselves.

In the course of the second evening, Fr. Jean Faure presented "the principal ideas of Ignatian spirituality and the spirituality of the CLC's". In addition, Fr. Fadel told us about the examen of consciousness, prayer, and the revision of life according to St. Ignatius. The examen of consciousness was a revelation for most of us and we saw in what way that could help us make progress towards the "more" ("magis"). Each day closed with Mass; this was a special moment when we were united around the table of the Father to give thanks, to sing our joy and to share our lives. Our liturgies were simple, helped along by Rafik Salama's guitar and Madeleine's voice, and the very simplicity created a prayerful atmosphere.

On the morning of Friday 16th, a community that had been together for some time gave us a practical demonstration of what a meeting could be like. As a matter of fact, they simply agreed to hold their meeting in front of everybody. We were all touched by the simplicity, the frankness and the love that reflected the spirit of this meeting. In this way, it was much easier to understand how a meeting goes, than to have read about it in a book or a review. The 'demonstration' was followed by an animated evaluation and questions of clarification. The community which gave us this demonstration is our community of 3 young couples.

On the last day we had a very full program. In the morning, Fr. Olivier spoke to us of the different stages of formation of a CLC community. Then each group or community met to examine and evaluate the stages they had passed through. All agreed that this was a very rich and profound experience, which left its mark on us and encouraged us to keep moving forward. The afternoon was put aside for the election of the first National Council. But there we struck a problem; we did not know one another well enough to have proper elections. Consequently, after discussing this thoroughly in each group or community, we decided to present a member from each of our groups or communities, and ask the 3 Fathers who were handling the Assembly to form a National Council for one year, until we would know one another better. This was a further consideration for asking for a new session over the vacation-time at mid-year, and another during the summer of '84. We want to live at the level of a national community and not lose the impetus we have been given. The first CLC Council for Egypt was then constituted, made up of 7 lay people from different communities, and Fr. Olivier.

The final Mass was celebrated by Fr. Olivier. We had good reason to give thanks to God, who had guided us with so much love during these 4 days, at the end of which we felt we were able to say that finally, even in Egypt, the CLC was a movement of lay people, directed by lay people (something that the priests had continually repeated in their talks). We do not say that in a challenging sense, but rather because we feel we have just crossed a threshold which is both important and necessary. The needs that we felt and the desires we expressed were the following: to give serious attention to the formation of assistants and leaders; to deepen the bonds uniting the national community, and hence the importance of sessions and a review; to publish, in Arabic, articles and small booklets on Ignatian spirituality and the way of living CLC; to have contact with the world community; to study more deeply, within our groups, the General Principles; to organise Spiritual Exercises in the course of the year, to help us experience them and to know them better.

We add some reactions, noted by the Council and by Fr. Olivier after the Assembly:

- We were touched by the friendship and the hospitality of the Cairo communities; that made us feel that we form a large community. We have decided to begin the year with a day of prayer in the desert. Then we will be in union with all of you and the other CLC's in Egypt.
- The session has given us a new boost and has helped us enormously to pursue our life together.
- Now I understand that the CLC's are not religious activities, but a way of living, a vocation, and I really want to share that with others who have this same vocation.
- We have discovered the way of going about discernment and the revision of life, and the style of our meetings has changed as a result.
- We have discovered that our prayer was not really connected with what we were sharing during our meetings: now we begin with a text from Scripture which ties in with our topic and a quarter of an hour of silence and reflection before sharing. The sharing has grown in depth.
- We have decided to devote a certain time, at each meeting, to the study of some aspect of Ignatian spirituality.

Hoda Adib - Olivier Borg Olivier S.J.

The "Religious NGOs" are an informal group of personnel who represent international or American organizations affiliated with church-, synagogue or other-oriented denominations. We meet regularly on a monthly basis to discuss UN agenda items of immediate concern to us. We prepare an inter-denominational prayer service which is held at the beginning of each General Assembly and we compile an annual "assessment" of the work of each General Assembly.

Upon reading the enclosed report one may be struck by the apparent absence of a spiritual tone that goes beyond merely superficial considerations of the critical issues before the world community. One may raise the question whether religion is really relevant today. On the other hand there is the opportunity - and challenge - to organizations such as the Christian Life Communities to develop an in-depth program at the United Nations, its several centers, and at those specialized agencies whose concerns identify with the global dimensions of Ignatian spirituality. A task which must be addressed by CLC over the next several years.

Thomas I. Monahan

**RELIGIOUS NGO'S ASSESSMENT
OF THE 37TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(A REPORT)

The 37th United Nations General Assembly, while in many ways routine, was marked by two encouraging trends. First, leaders and governments called for commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. Second, the Assembly recognized the importance of public opinion and non-governmental organizations in the effort to create a world of peace with justice.

The 139 items on the Session's agenda included many familiar topics: the situation in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Cyprus, the Middle East, and southern Africa; nuclear and conventional disarmament; refugees; economic development;

questions of youth, the elderly, and disabled persons; the status of women; and decolonization. The delegates also dealt with administrative and budgetary matters and elected members to serve on the Security Council and other U.N. bodies.

The speeches and resolutions reflected a new sense of urgency. Meeting against a backdrop of global depression, conflict in Lebanon, Iran-Iraq, Afghanistan, Namibia, Central America and elsewhere, the increased arms race and the imminent deployment of new and destabilizing weapons, as well as the massive violation of human rights, speakers warned that the U.N.'s effectiveness and its very existence are endangered as never before.

U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressed this concern in his first report to the General Assembly. Breaking with tradition, the Secretary-General focused on one overriding issue: the crisis in the multilateral approach to international affairs. He charged that governments have strayed from the ideals of the Charter and he called for a conscious recommitment to the original aims of the United Nations. He urged the five permanent members of the Security Council to support measures to implement the Council's resolutions and to use the Council as a negotiating forum. Calling for a special meeting of the Council at the highest level to discuss these problems, Mr. Perez de Cuellar pledged to expand the fact-finding role of the Secretary-General's office. He concluded: "I cannot disguise my deep anxiety at present trends, for I am absolutely convinced that the United Nations is indispensable in a world fraught with tension and peril. Institutions such as this are not built in a day. They require constant work and fidelity to the principles on which they are based."

The Secretary-General's report crystallized a concern felt by many delegations. Several speakers endorsed the report during General Debate. Of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China, France, and the United Kingdom welcomed the report. The Assembly adopted, without a vote, a resolution, originally sponsored by Sierra Leone, expressing concern over the growing tendency of states to use force as well as "the inability of the Security Council to take decisive action" for the maintenance of international peace and security. The resolution requests the Security

Council to study the question of implementation of the collective security provisions of the Charter and to report back to the 1983 General Assembly. These actions are small, but encouraging, steps toward a renewed respect for the Charter.

A second encouraging sign was widespread recognition of the role of public opinion and non-governmental organizations. Once again, the Secretary-General's report set the tone. Noting the actions of hundreds of thousands of "gentle protesters" who have marched during the last year in opposition to the arms race, the Secretary-General declared, "they recall us to the standards and duties which we set ourselves in the Charter of the United Nations." Similarly, Ambassador Alphonso Garcia Robles, who, with Mrs. Alva Myrdal of Sweden, received the Nobel Peace Prize, told the Assembly's First Committee that the award was a recognition of the world-wide peace movement, as well as an honor bestowed on him, his country, Latin America, and the United Nations. Many resolutions expressly called for NGO implementation, a number of which are in the field of human rights, including the adoption of plans of action on disabled persons and aging.

As religious people we congratulate and commend the Secretary-General for his report. He echoes the belief that the U.N. is potentially an important instrument for solving problems. We urge our governments to recommit themselves - in action as well as words - to the Charter.

In addition to the positive points listed above, other successes of the 37th Session of the U.N. General Assembly include the following:

1. The adoption of a resolution urging the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to freeze the development, manufacture, and deployment of nuclear weapons and their carriers as a first step toward the Comprehensive Program of Disarmament.
2. The adoption of a general framework and 1983 program of action of the World Disarmament Campaign, which is intended to help people everywhere recognize the danger of the present situation and to mobilize public opinion on behalf of disarmament.

3. A resolution calling for implementation of the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.
4. The five-year extension of the mandate of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, a non-political and humanitarian program. The Assembly also considered a report on mass exoduses and the topic of new flows of refugees.
5. Plans for action on aging and disabled persons were adopted; the decade 1983-1992 was designated the International Decade of Disabled Persons.
6. Resolution reaffirming the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), moving beyond previous resolutions in spelling out specific actions to enhance the status of women. The Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle for the Strengthening of International Peace.
7. A resolution calling for the parties to the Falklands/Malvinas dispute to find a negotiated solution.
8. Resolutions drawing attention to human rights violations in Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala.
9. A call for all nations to sign the Law of the Sea Convention (on December 10, 119 nations, including five of eleven pioneer seabed mining nations, signed the Convention in Jamaica.)
10. Efforts by the Secretary-General to improve conditions which have eroded the morale of the United Nations personnel.

The disappointments of the 37 General Session include:

1. No formula for launching the Global Negotiations on the world economy was found.
2. Although 58 disarmament resolutions were adopted, the stalemate for progress in disarmament continues.
3. At a time when multilateral programs are more important than ever, financial support for the United Nations and

its agencies declined. The Assembly reduced the Regular Budget for 1982-83 by \$33 million (out of \$1.5 billion).

4. Contributions to voluntary programs have also been limited. These programs include important economic, social, and humanitarian activities such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF. The U.N. Development Program's financial support declined 6% in 1981.
5. Despite the upgrade of the U.N. Division for Human Rights to a Centre, long-running efforts to establish a High Commissioner for Human Rights and other alternative means have not been successful.
6. Many governments continued to use the General Assembly to castigate others. Even in the Assembly's Third Committee - devoted as it is to humanitarian items, social development issues, and human rights - debates were especially vituperative.
7. Little progress was noted in the question of Namibia. The linking of Cuban troops in Angola with Namibian independence is an example of the Secretary-General's contention that the U.N.'s effectiveness is impaired by lack of commitment by member states to abide by the decisions of the Security Council.
8. There was little progress in decolonization issues including the questions of the Western Sahara, Micronesia, and East Timor.

As representatives of religious non-governmental organizations representing various traditions which provide moral and ethical motivations for action, we recognize our special role in promoting the successes of the Session and our obligation to encourage our leaders to move beyond the disappointments.

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