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SUMMARY

- FOREWORD 2
- WHY SUFFERING?
by Louis Paulussen s.j. 3
- THE WORLD REFUGEE PROBLEM:
OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE
by Dieter B. Scholz s.j. 8

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

- YOUTH AND THE WORLD COMMUNITY
by Giovanna Chirri 13
- FLOWERING WITH THE OTHERS,
IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE SOWN!
by Martine Bouillet - Aïn Karim 15
- YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF YOUTH 16
- VENEZUELA - OPTION FOR YOUTH APOSTOLATE
Pedro Zarraga 19
- "GOD WINKS AT US" by Hervé Boulic 21
- ECHOES 25
- WE ARE A WORLD COMMUNITY!
by Stephen Joseph 29

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FOREWORD

In a moving prayer pronounced from the balcony of St. Peter's in Rome on Easter Sunday 1983, John Paul II enumerated the painful wounds of humanity today. In a kind of litany, he assured all the victims about the solidarity of Christians by repeating "we are with you" while addressing each group.

It is in order to echo those needs and that presence promised by the Pope that PROGRESSIO is including in each issue this year a reflection, an attentive examination of one of the deep wounds of the human family. By means of this sensitising we hope to widen our perception of this reality, to make those sufferings our own through a compassion lived in accordance with each one's vocation, and to offer some data with a view to a mission and availability ready to take on more universal and more urgent works of service. In brief, to respond and be able to say in truth, after the manner of John Paul II, "we are with you".

This issue takes up the world-wide problem of refugees. Fr. Dieter Scholz presents it in all its vastness and drama.

Then follows the testimony of Marie Christine Choquet, who has taken a 'sabbatical year' to go with charitable organisations to refugee camps. God winks at us.

Why suffering? A reflection and meditation by Fr. Paulussen echoes the publication of the Apostolic Letter "Sacrificium Doloris".

The news today is about the coordinated effort of six countries in southern Africa which have just held three regional formation sessions for group guides, each involving a week of individually guided Spiritual Exercises.

We are a community: an article by Stephen Joseph published in the Indian CLC newsletter, shows the intelligent care manifested by those in charge in thoroughly examining the nature of our community by means of a dialogue with the members of the CLC.

WHY SUFFERING?

On the occasion of the publication on February 11th, 1984 of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic letter "Salvifici Doloris", on the christian sense of human suffering.

Human life is a mystery. Without doubt, its most mysterious aspect is suffering. Scholars and philosophers of all times have reflected on this 'problem' without ever finding a satisfactory answer.

Today there are even theologians who affirm that a christian answer does not exist. In a certain sense, that is true. On the intellectual level the answer does not exist. But it is clear that Revelation gives us a liberating answer.

Why is human life a cross? Why am I condemned to suffer all my life? Why are there wars, revolutions and divisions in every epoch of history? Why hunger? injustices? earthquakes? floods? droughts? Why is the world today an immense spectacle of sufferings and pains?

THE OLD TESTAMENT ANSWER

The Old Testament tried to find an answer not only to our question, but also to another, which is much more often posed: why must the innocent suffer? The Book of Job does not try to resolve a problem. Quite the contrary: it underlines the fact that man is absolutely incapable of understanding the unfathomable designs of the Creator. It tries to shed light on a mystery.

When it presents God on his throne, surrounded by angels, into the midst of whom has slipped Satan, it seeks to suggest that evil is included in God's plan.

God looks upon Job, who is rich, happy and virtuous, and praises him. Satan sustains that Job is just because he is rich. He challenges God. God, who loves and has confidence in him, gives Satan freedom to tempt him. We know the story. Job remains faithful.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I shall return. Yahweh gave, Yahweh has taken back. Blessed be the name of Yahweh". (Jb. 1,21)

In the same way, when his wife tries to incite him to rebellion, he severely reprimands her.

"That is how foolish women talk. If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?" (Job. 2,10)

Job's friends are more human. They come to console him and comfort him. They know that in such a situation the best consolation is silent presence.

"They sat there on the ground beside him for seven days and seven nights. To Job they spoke never a word, so sad a sight he made". (Jb. 2,13)

In the following chapters (3-37), Job remains faithful, in spite of his human and understandable lamentations. His friends lose themselves in interminable discussions. They claim, in the tradition of the Old Testament, that Job has sinned, because he is suffering. Job, with the same tenacity, affirms his innocence.

In the end, God himself intervenes with an impressive speech. He shows the marvels and the grandeur of creation and puts man in his place (38-41). Suffering is a mystery of God, who knows what he is doing. He reproaches the three friends for their useless discussion, and again praises his

servant Job. He gives him twice as much of everything that he had owned before (ch.42).

God's confidence in man is fully justified. Satan, representing evil, is conquered. Job, representing man, is happier than ever.

From the Old Testament, therefore, we can extract three elements. Suffering is a mystery of God. It is an invitation to a greater love. For God it is an opportunity to further communicate himself.

THE REAL ANSWER: JESUS CHRIST

the mystery

In order to comment on the New Testament answer let us go back and read chapter three of the Book of Genesis, applying the same procedure that we find in the Book of Job. Here Satan humiliates Adam and Eve. They are faithful to God because they are loaded up with privileges and riches. God is challenged by Satan. Evil enters paradise. Men are not faithful. They will have to suffer and die. But God, who loves them, remains faithful.

*"Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life".
(Jn. 3,16)*

Man has fallen. The true Man will not fall. From all eternity God sees man in the Man, the sons in the Son, who is invincible.

"Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons through Jesus Christ, for his own kind purposes". (Eph. 1,4-5)

Again God is glorified, Satan humiliated, man saved.

We understand Satan's hatred for Jesus Christ. This man must be eliminated, destroyed, killed. Jesus' life is a continual struggle against evil. He is attacked by sufferings, evils, injustices, humiliations, and finally by death. He has to be exposed to infidelity and rebellion. In order to save men, Jesus 'must' suffer, as he himself says to the disciples at Emmaus. Death and sufferings are necessary, but they are not the end. The aim of the whole plan of God is the resurrection and life.

the invitation

If all is going well in my life and I love God, that is excellent. If all is going badly in my life and I go on loving God, that is even better. That supposes a greater love.

If I live in Christ and he lives in me, I am able to grow in his greater love. If Jesus is my life, I am invincible.

"Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. As scripture promised: For your sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord". (Rom. 8, 35-39)

twofold

Thanks to his fidelity, Job received twice as much of what he had possessed before.

Thanks to Jesus' fidelity, we now receive a hundredfold. The terrestrial paradise is lost, but in Jesus we receive

the celestial paradise. Not only in eternity but from now on. The christian life is the beginning on earth of eternal life in heaven. What Adam and Eve could never imagine, is given to us to live. The Son of God is our Brother and our All.

"After saying this, what can we add? With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse us anything he can give".
(Rom. 8,31-32).

CONCLUSION

Suffering is a mystery of God, who is infinite Love. God wants neither death nor suffering for themselves. He only wants to communicate himself further and give life to men in abundance.

Jesus never went in search of the cross. The cross went in search of Jesus, precisely because he was innocent. The powers of darkness never accept light.

If I try to grow in union with God, I attract evil and sufferings, but infinitely more do I attract the merciful love of God, who gives me peace of heart, interior freedom, the life of Jesus for the world.

In Jesus God accepts death as testimony of his infinite love for men. The cross is the crowning of the greatest love between God and man. In Jesus God gives his life for men. In Jesus men give their life for God.

The famous "magis" of the Spiritual Exercises is not a technique invented by St. Ignatius. This dynamic force is the natural law of love, which always wants to give itself further.

Louis Paulussen, s.j.

THE WORLD REFUGEE PROBLEM: OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE

Extracts from an address given at the Third International Symposium of the Institute for the Study of Social Justice at Sophia University, Tokyo, December 9-11, 1983.

THE WORLD REFUGEE PROBLEM: THE INDIVIDUAL TRAGEDIES OF SIXTEEN MILLION WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MEN

Two years after my arrival, on November 11, 1965, the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith, declared his country unilaterally independent from the British Crown and established the Republic of Rhodesia in order to preserve for ever, as he said, Western civilisation and Christian values in Southern Africa, a euphemism which summed up the philosophy of his all-white Rhodesian Front Party, which stood for white power, white wealth and white social privilege for a thousand years. There were at that time about 200.000 white settlers in the country and 6 million black Zimbabweans. Another seven years later, on Christmas Eve 1972, Zimbabwean guerillas launched their first attack on a white farm in north-eastern Rhodesia, a few miles from the mission where I worked, signalling the start of what has so far been certainly the longest and perhaps the bloodiest independence war on the African continent. It lasted nearly 10 years, claimed between 50.000 and 100.000 lives and left over one million people homeless. Another million Zimbabweans were forcibly resettled by the Rhodesian security forces into so-called 'Protected Villages', about 250.000 black teenagers fled across the border into neighbouring Mozambique and Zambia from where Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo led the independence struggle.

In 1978, the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops' Conference created an emergency relief project for Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique and Zambia, which had its headquarters in London and which I was asked to direct. I began making extended visits to the refugees in the camps and discovered that most of them were young boys and girls who until their

flight across the border had been studying at our mission schools. There was an immediate bond of friendship and trust as we were able to communicate in Shona, their mother tongue. Via London we were able to send them regular news from home as well as provide a mail service from the camps to the parents and friends who had remained behind in the embattled rural areas of Rhodesia. Direct mail services between Rhodesia and most black African countries, including Mozambique and Zambia, had been suspended since 1965.

The first thing I learned in my new work was that any body who has not actually been a refugee should speak about the subject with great caution and reserve lest he appear presumptuous, misjudging people and distorting issues. Most refugees who have been through the ordeal, and who survived, are reluctant to expose the horror of their experience.

What I secondly discovered about the needs of refugees, especially young refugees, was this : a tent or a hut to give shelter from the rain, from the blazing sun during the day and the freezing cold during the night is important; food, however little and poor, to keep the body going on the long march through the bush, and medicines to heal the wounds and diseases are more important; but what the young Zimbabweans living in the forests of northern Zambia and Mozambique appreciated most was friendship, trust and a shared commitment to the cause for which they felt forced to leave their families and abandon a place at school, which most of them had won after fierce competition and at the cost of incredible sacrifices by their parents and brothers and sisters. Friendship, trust and commitment gave them hope in a struggle against overwhelming odds. Without hope, few would have survived as physically healthy and mentally sane persons.

The third thing I learned was that so long as there is hope, even when there is neither shelter nor food nor medicine, refugees, even the most vulnerable ones, can overcome formidable difficulties and obstacles.

The words spoken by Swiss Federal Counsellor Wahlen in his 1963 address on the occasion of the award of the Nansen Medal, have often been quoted before; let me repeat them here today, for Counsellor Wahlen pointed to an aspect of refugee work which ought to be present in our deliberations and discussions throughout the next three days and, even more important, in our work with refugees in the field: *"All the State subsidies in the world will never be*

able to replace the warmth of assistance rendered by one individual, one human being to another. Help given by the State is usually anonymous and lacking in human compassion. It is man alone by his personal charity who can really bring succour to his neighbour in need."

The problem of today's refugees has been and continues to be discussed in terms of their growing numbers, the ordeals and sufferings of their journeys overland or on the high seas and the aid and resettlement programmes provided through international and national government and voluntary agencies.

Much less attention has been given to the more fundamental question of why there are 16 million refugees today in Asia, Africa and Central and Latin America. Why is this question not being addressed openly and publicly? Or why are refugees sometimes treated as though they are personally responsible and therefore to blame for their fate? It is easy to blame the victims, especially if they cannot defend themselves. The fact is that most of today's 16 million refugees were forced to leave their homes as a result of political decisions taken wholly outside and beyond their sphere of influence and responsibility.

If it appears politically expedient such decisions may be condemned and the refugee disasters resulting from them deplored in public.

Thus, much has been written in the West about the plight of the 2.3 million Afghan refugees in order to condemn the Soviet Union for its invasion of that country in particular and its evil and aggressive politics in general. Much less is said by those same Western governments about their support of the dictatorships in Southern Africa and Central and Latin America. The governments in these regions are considered by the West as political allies, and if people flee from the persecution, oppression and injustice, and because their lives are in danger, the tendency is to blame the victims. Refugees, it is then often alleged, are 'communist terrorists' or at least 'terrorist sympathisers', as though that would justify, even if it were true, the horrific massacres perpetrated when Rhodesian security forces attacked the refugee camps at Nyadzonia, Tembwe and Chimoio in Mozambique (August 1976 to November 1977), and Freedom Camp in Zambia (October 18, 1978); when South African planes bombed the Namibian refugee camp at Kasinga in Angola (May 4, 1978); when Palestinians were massacred in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in

West Beirut (September 18, 1982); when a group of Salvadoran refugees were arrested in La Virtud refugee camp in Honduras and, with their hands tied behind their backs, taken away across the border into El Salvador by so-called 'unidentified gunmen' (November 16, 1981), and so on.

I hold no brief to criticize the West and would certainly not want to be understood as implying that the Soviet Union and their allies are by any standards more humane in their treatment of refugees. They are not, and they do not claim to be, while most Western governments do and are deeply offended when allegations of this nature are levelled against them.

On several occasions in recent months the UN Secretary General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, has deplored the inability of the United Nations to mediate effectively in situations of acute political crisis which tend to be at the origin of major refugee movements. The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, on the other hand, believes that while maintaining a non-political role it has the authority "to insist that governments of countries of asylum and competent UN agencies do their political part to increase the safety of refugees".

We have come full circle in our argument. The refugee problem is a political issue and is recognised as such. The widest international forum to solve political crises and conflicts is the United Nations. Its Secretary General has deplored the growing inability of this body to fulfill its function. The largest international refugee agency is the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. His two principal responsibilities are to protect refugees and to provide material assistance. While thousands of refugees are savagely attacked and killed in refugee camps around the world, all the UN High Commissioner's office, it seems, is able to do is "to propose to the General Assembly a resolution, a solemn declaration which would enhance general world-wide international interest in this burning problem and also strengthen the authority of the High Commissioner to do everything he can, in these circumstances, to improve the safety of refugees. There is no miracle solution available but anything that can be done will undoubtedly have a useful and benign impact on this very tragic problem". I ask you, if you were a refugee, how well would you feel your life protected by these procedures?

CONCLUSION

This conference has been convened to examine the world refugee problem in its relationship to the human rights issue and our individual and collective responsibility.

This presentation has drawn attention to two aspects of the refugee problem: Given the growing numbers of refugees the world over and the increasing burden of coping with the logistics of providing food, shelter and medical care, it is becoming more and more difficult for refugee workers to find the time and energy for developing relationships of trust and friendship, which is often the only way left of giving hope to refugees, the hope that there is a future for them beyond the barbed wire perimeter of the camp. Without such hope, food, shelter and medicine will in the long term fail to sustain the refugee as an integral person, healthy in mind and body.

It has secondly been suggested that the roots of the world refugee problem are essentially political. In seeking answers to the very complex issues involved one of the basic questions to ask is 'Who is responsible?', rather than: 'What are the factors causing the problem?' It is political decisions which force people to flee, as well as the growing tendency to use military means in an attempt to resolve problems which are essentially non-military in nature.

The two propositions are related in the sense that they define the refugee problem primarily as a human problem and a moral issue. Charity should permeate our relationships with refugees, and justice be our criterion when having to bear judgement on the politics involved in the refugee crisis of our time.

I do not see many signs of hope that a rapid change for the better is imminent. But I do believe that a shared commitment to charity and justice on the part of those working with refugees can gradually transform the quality of the refugee problem itself, making the suffering of millions of people less unbearable and giving hope without which no person can live. In that sense I fully agree with the UNHCR poster which says: "The refugee problem isn't hopeless. Unless you think so".

Dieter B. Scholz, S.J.

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

YOUTH AND THE WORLD COMMUNITY

I should like to take up again the subject of young people and the world community and present a series of questions which revolve around the points for reflection suggested in my previous article (cf. PROGRESSIO, November 1983).

This kind of questionnaire purports to be a means of looking at ourselves in order to discover who we are and how we are spiritually and humanly constituted. A means, therefore, for groups and communities.

But it also purports to be a guideline to which to respond in order to make others aware of the particular realities which make up the World CLC.

A means of communication, therefore, which could aid the knowledge and growth of all, which also favours the awakening of themes that are still in embryo, such as the relationship with the adult world and the role of young people in the world community. It is in this light that I propose it to you, hoping for replies that will complete the discussion and give birth to the most fruitful confrontation possible.

MEETINGS

- Where are our youth groups born? (schools, parishes, centers of social activity, etc.)
- Around whom do they gather? (peers or adults, lay people or religious, groups or individuals who run a social or sporting or formation activity, etc.)
- Of what kind are the meetings? (debates on present-day themes, readings of Scripture texts, the study of subjects pertaining to the Faith or works of service, the examination of political or social problems, prayer meetings, games, etc.)
- How often are meetings held?
- Are there periods of life and holidays in common?
- What kind of involvement is there in the group to which one belongs?

FORMATION

- How are solidarity and a sense of cooperation born and developed?
- What does the group contribute to the spiritual growth of the individual?

- Is there a spiritual guide for individuals and for the group?
- Are there experiences of the Spiritual Exercises? At what age do they begin? With what frequency and characteristics? (in groups, individually, closed, in daily life?)
- What place does catechesis have in the life of the group?

SERVICE

- Are there experiences of service?
- How does one choose the sectors in which to insert and commit oneself?
- What does it mean for our groups to be at the service of the world?
- Is there within the group a confrontation on service, on how to render it and live it, on the problems it poses?
- Are there experiences of service lived individually, or is it the whole group that commits itself to a specific activity?

CHRISTIAN LIFE

- How do we set down the basics of a life lived in a christian way?
- What importance has the analysis and contribution of the group in the choices regarding:
 - the kind of work,
 - the relationship to money and society,
 - peace and war,
 - military service, etc.

ADULT COMMUNITY

- Is the youth group only an appendix to the adult one, or is it an adult community in embryo?
- Are there common acts of service, liturgy in common, common meetings, periods of common life between adult and youth groups?

WORLD COMMUNITY

- What representation is there in the heart of the World Community?
- Are there meetings between the youth communities of the world and common initiatives to be taken, to which to adhere and in which to work?

These are just a few pointers which I hope can be deepened and completed by the contribution of everybody. Your comments and feed-back are most welcome. Please send them to

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FLOWERING WITH THE OTHERS, IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE SOWN!

There was once a Gardener who was madly in love with his job. He loved each seed for itself and wanted it to reach the pinnacle of its possibilities. That is why he entrusted some of them to the wind of his spirit so that they might go on growing in his love.

Each of us has sprung from such a love. Having made a study of the best meteorological conditions and the best soil, the Gardener gave the wind the job of depositing our seed in the most suitable spot. Each seed gave birth to a flower.

To the delight of the Gardener, some seeds shoot up very quickly and flower as early as the first year; others take longer to form their petals and long years pass before they produce a flower, a marvel of patience and love. For each seed time is different, or rather, time does not exist. The Gardener has eternity before him. There are no seeds which grow quickly nor some which grow more slowly... all arrive in their time and are accepted and loved in their growth and in their own flowering.

The Gardener has an infinite variety in his stock of seeds: no two of them are alike. Some become pure roses that stand up straight before their creator to sing his praises. Others are orchids hidden away, which take years to form their really beautiful flowers and delight the Gardener with their splendour. Still others are tulips or jonquils and are the first to arrive in all simplicity to sing their joy. There are also violets and forget-me-nots, small and shy, but also necessary for the harmony of the garden. There are even thistles which look forbidding or aggressive but have beautiful and immortal flowers. Each of us is a flower, growing or blooming, or even drooping, waiting for a new spring.

When he had planted the seeds, the Gardener looked at his work and found the plants and flowers splendid, but so alone, so isolated. He therefore entrusted to his spirit some new seeds to be sown among the flowers. And they developed and produced shrubs and bushes of trust and friendship.

Like all the plants, they have their seasons, which have nothing to do with the earth's rotation around the sun, but depend on the welcome we give them. If the seed of friendship falls on favorable ground between two flowers, between two hearts, it will extend its roots in a hidden

way, spring up and soon a shoot will appear. If its appearance causes delight the plant grows much more quickly; it extends its branches around the two hearts and shelters them from the storm.

Let us not forget that we are responsible for this friendship. If we get irritated about its growth or are indifferent, the plant will droop for lack of sun and air. It will put its strength, its reserve sap into its roots and wait for better days. If we pull on its branches to make it grow more quickly, it risks being torn to pieces and withering away.

Fortunately, the Gardener has his eye on everything. He sees his loved ones' difficulties and warms them with his love. After the cold of winter the sap rises again under the heat of a new sun and the bushes come to life again, the ties are reformed and, reinforced by being tried, friendship is reborn... and nobody can foresee how far they will grow.

Some remain shrubs, weaving stronger and more numerous ties between the hearts. Others, firmly planted in two hearts, become trees of love.

Be the transformation slow or accelerated, each tree, like each seed, is unique and different. At last, as a perfect witness of the Gardener's Love for his plants, the tree pulls the flowers that surround it towards the sky and, with its branches extended, protects them from the storms. This tree, this sign of joy and hope, this tree which bears fruit is the Gardener's greatest joy: he gives it new seeds to sow!

Martine Bouillet
Aïn Karim
(Namur)

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH

APPEAL BY THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS

Among young people throughout the world there are millions who are closely associated, in one way or another, with International Catholic Organisations.

They want to build a more just and more fraternal world, to respond to the calls of the Gospel as witnesses of Jesus

Christ. They want to live in solidarity with men and women of every extraction, culture and belief, and especially with the poor and the most deprived.

As bearers of their experience, we leaders of the ICOs confirm that a deep crisis is in different ways cutting across all societies. A crisis which hits many young people in a particularly hard way, as has been shown in the recent studies effected by the United Nations, UNESCO, ILO, and in other research (1).

In this context, the decision by the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 1985 'International Year of Youth' challenges us.

Aware of the responsibilities, limits, and contradictions of such an initiative, we hope, however, that 1985 can be a special time for the expression of the values and aspirations of young people, and for a responsible confrontation with the problems they experience.

In speaking of young people, we refuse to consider youth as a uniform mass in which the 'ruptures' and tensions of society are absent.

The theme of the International Year of Youth, 'Participation, Development, Peace', brings together the priorities and experiences of many young people.

We also want to underline the interdependence of these three dimensions : participation, that of youth included, is a pressing condition for a true development, without which peace is not possible.

For us, *participation* implies fostering the forms of associations and organisations already existing; it requires the creation of conditions which allow young people to assume their responsibilities, both individually and collectively, and that without any manipulation.

We believe that a true *development* must be centred on the human person. It must respond to the basic needs of persons and of peoples; it must be founded on the balanced use of natural resources, and be realised within the frame

(1) Draft declaration on the rights and responsibilities of youth (United Nations). 'Youth in the 80's (UNESCO), report 1982, ILO.

work of new international solidarity. Fundamentally, the question of the kind of development wanted must be posed, today.

Peace is not only menaced by war, the arms race and militarisation, but by all forms of violence found in society. For us, peace is built in the search for justice and new relations among persons and peoples.

It is in this perspective that our organisations will contribute to the IYY. Starting with everyday work and concrete occupations, we want to enable young people, particularly those 'without voice' to speak up, take initiatives, assume their responsibilities.

We address ourselves first of all to the members of our organisations and to the active members of our movements, so that we might become more involved.

And we are making an appeal:

To young people: let us make the IYY ours, use it to give further expression to our problems, aspirations and alternatives, thus participating in the construction of a better world.

To christians: let us, in hope and trust, welcome young people with their cultural and spiritual values into our communities, let us support them in their undertakings and searches for the meaning of life.

To the leaders of the Churches, to the leaders at all levels of cultural, social, economic and political life, so that they might recognise in young people the rights of the Universal Charter of the Rights of Man, especially the right to lead a dignified life, the right to self-determination, to education, to work and to a family; so that they might encourage a fruitful dialogue between young people and the other generations; so that they might create conditions which will permit the active participation of young people in all sectors of life.

Paris, February, 1984

Text elaborated by the work group 'Youth' mandated by the last General Assembly of the Conference of the ICOs, held in Vienna in June, 1983.

VENEZUELA - OPTION FOR YOUTH APOSTOLATE

The last quarter of 1983 saw our CLC groups making the Spiritual Exercises together at Cubiro and taking a day off for Planning. As a result of these 2 experiences (where the apostolic mission the CLC's will be carrying out individually and as a group was reflected on), a much awaited dream was finally crystallized: the creation of a Team for the Youth Apostolate made up of one member from each of the communities. The next move was to structure a program for work and service in this field, which we had just opted for. There was need for a team that would be able to attain, in terms of quality and quantity, a high level of effectiveness with regard to working with people, especially young people. What we want is to be conscious and faithful followers of Christ. We see no other perspective; other motivations are just strategies to achieve greater effectiveness and commitment in the light of the apostolic work. This Pastoral Team is the personnel needed to take care of the life and functioning of the recently established Pastoral Center for the Youth Apostolate.

This Center will be, to the city and to Venezuela, an instrument for conscientizing, motivating and organizing young people in such a way as to fight all forms of selfishness which is an obstacle to the creation of New Men/Women and the building of a Kingdom of Justice. The Center has already been functioning for four months in the following fields:

- Working with the Poor
- the FRAGUA Movement (fragua = a forge)
- Publications and Communication
- Theological Reflexion

Each of these sections has its own dynamics and program; however, their orientations and common plans are laid out in the general meeting of the Pastoral Center every 2 weeks.

What has all this meant to the communities? Truly, a big step!

First of all, it is a real and urgent need in our country to establish centers which are directed and dedicated to work for young people.

Secondly, the witness and presence we give through our programs - seminars, courses, publications, etc.

- could be a driving force in the formation of authentic christians.

Thirdly, (certainly the most idealistic) the CLC's have to be linked themselves to a set-up which can develop their potential and strengthen their christian commitment to the people. The Center sums these all up.

Two important events sponsored by the Pastoral Center for Youth Apostolate

The Center launched its opening to the city by means of a concert which took place at a theater in Barquisimeto in November 1983. The concert was given by Miguel Matos s.j. (national assistant of the CLC's in Venezuela) with his own compositions. The title of the concert was "Canción por un Hombre Nuevo" ("Song for the New Man"). The review "Nosotros" has this to say of that religious and musical experience: "We discovered the reason to sing for a New Man. It is to ask for and believe in that wonderful possibility to be different, creatively new. Not to watch from a distance, but to get closer, to surrender ourself, to be free and human. Thus, we are emotionally touched in recognising how faith and love surround us. Miguel Matos entrusted to us his life, his prayer, his profound feeling of being loved by Jesus. And we share his experience in seeing ourselves as a real part of the celebration."

We can affirm that "Song for the New Man", besides satisfying the expectations of the public, of the city, of the organizers and the musicians, opens up new avenues in the struggle of the people who believe in a more just world, who want their life gradually improved in all aspects, people who rely on music as a gift which brings joy to life."

The second event sponsored by the Center was the First Course on Youth Apostolate which took place in Barquisimeto in February 1984. This has as its aim to furnish people working with youth (lay, youth leaders, priests and religious) information, general criteria, formation ideas and a methodology for a more effective and sensitive apostolate. It also provides opportunities for sharing the different experiences each one has in one's work in this field. The content of the course includes:- Christology, Liturgy for Young people, the Church and the situation in Latin America, Religious Profile of the young Venezuelan, Psychology and Group Organization.

Pedro Zarraga

„GOD WINKS AT US.“

A WITNESS

Marie-Christine (1)

How did the idea come to you to drop everything for a year and travel to the other end of the world?

I believe that comes from afar. From time to time we hear a call. Well I started studying to be a nurse when I was thirty-two because it seemed to me that I had to make a change. More recently, in 1975, during the Holy Year, I heard Paul VI deliver a talk on "the mystery of the cross" in St. Peter's Square in Rome. A mystery which I, a nurse in the service of cancer victims, always have a tendency to want to avoid, to go around. I should also say something about that pilgrimage to the Holy Land with my parish. At Nazareth, in the synagogue, our guide asked me to read that text of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor..." And that in the very place where Christ had done it! It's silly maybe, but I told myself that it was a grace, like a telephone call. But, concretely, what does bringing the Good News to the poor mean? That was what I asked myself on the way back. I should also say something about John Paul II's visit to France. The first question he posed on his arrival at Notre Dame in Paris was: "Do you love?" . That made me reflect.

Concretely, how did you come to make your decision?

It came after a telephone call from a friend who is a nurse. She announced her departure for Thailand with "Médecins sans frontières" (Doctors without frontiers). I let

(1) Marie Christine Choquet is a nurse. She has interrupted her professional activity for a year to participate in the work of several humanitarian organisations.

myself be carried along completely by the event. And, very often, that is something we no longer know how to do, caught up as we are in materialism. That makes me think about the prophet Ezechiel : *"They have eyes and they cannot see; they have ears and they do not hear..."* Sometimes you need to take up your bag and leave. So I got in touch with 'Médecins sans frontières'. At Lyons I had preparatory training in tropical medicine, and then I left for Somalia. There I discovered radical poverty. These people, who are nomads, are 100% dependent for their food. There is no longer anything, not even the least vegetation. There are also problems regarding the supply of gasoline which make medication and feeding difficult. Somalia is a deep wound. What I saw in the hospital at Mogadiscio was equal to what Mother Teresa knew in Calcutta. It's horrible to think about it... (the emotion makes tears come to her eyes). When you have lived through that, you have to live differently. There are no dressings (for wounds), you make fifty injections with the same syringe and the same needle. With a bucket of water I washed a woman who was on the ground. I kept smiling at her all the time I was doing it. What else was there to do? It's a waste of humanity. You have to see it to believe.

Doesn't anybody do anything to improve the situation?

It's a hospital for the chronically ill, so it's abandoned. Besides, there are so many problems of survival. So in Somalia it's the Church that looks after the poorest people. There are eight Italian religious sisters whose average age is seventy. They're saints. It's doubtless because of that fact that this 70% muslim country hasn't expelled them. They do the 'dirty work'. They struggle along with the barest means. I saw a big cauldron on a camp fire: it was the sick people's food being prepared. A representative of the UN was staying in my hotel. I dragged him along to the hospital. He didn't believe his eyes. *"Everything must be burned!"* It's like Mother Teresa in Calcutta. There is no longer anyone except the Church to do anything, because only Christ teaches us that he who is eaten at by rats and mice is also our brother, created in the image of God. That's what I like about John Paul II. He doesn't cease stirring us by reminding us that man is created in the image of God. In all his writings he shows that man is the way to meet God. If we christians have nothing else to say to the world than *"the poorest, the most emaciated, the most deprived of human beings is our brother"*, well we must say it!

Have you also been to other countries?

I went to Central America to the camps for refugees from El Salvador. I went with a doctor, Luis Campinos, who founded the association 'Refugee Children of the World' (Enfants réfugiés du Monde). Then I spent two months in Thailand. At present the refugee camps are empty and Thailand is taking over the installations made by the UN. But we shouldn't just talk about me. I'm not alone. There is also an ophthalmologist from Deauville, Dr. Malo, who regularly takes a month's 'holidays' to attend to eyes of people in Cambodia or somewhere else. And a young pediatrician, Vincent David, who spent his holidays in Beirut. Nobody talks about them, and yet I ask myself if it is not they who really have the Faith. The mystery of the cross is there, planted in the center of our lives. It calls us to a deep conversion, otherwise, nothing is possible. I have some friends who have a second place of residence and don't even notice that their caretaker's child will not have any holidays. Well, I say that, as long as such people will not think of lending their keys unless somebody tells them to, then nothing in the world can change.

What is to be done to change mentalities?

For my part, I go to the schools. I give slide shows and lectures there. I try to give the youngsters 'directions' for the year 2000 in an attempt to defuse violence. I tell the youngsters that they have a choice to make: either you think about your life in terms of success, and in that case you can prepare yourself to become PDG (President and Director General) of Canigou, Ronron or something else; or else you think about life in terms of service. The slides I show them begin with three photos: the Last Supper, the Eucharist, the Washing of the Feet. That, I believe, explains the message of Christ, who made himself servant right to the end. It's necessary to accept 'the losing of one's life'. I don't invent anything. It's all in the Gospel. But how to lose it? I know nothing about that. In fact, my life is 'plugged into' the sacraments, and so, each day, it is Christ who says to me, "*go further*". He is the only one who can enable us to live as he lived. And, as a rule, when you are on God's side, things always end up "badly".

Does that perhaps explain what some people would call the 'cowardice' of christians?

God winks at us. It's possible not to see this. I made a little test on the occasion of a collection made in a parish. The people were kind and willingly opened their purses, but, out of all of them, I saw only a dozen who felt concerned by a possible action beyond that gesture. Why them and not the others? Why did I myself feel involved by that telephone call from my friend Solange, announcing her departure? I believe that, every day, God, who has a sense of humour, places along our path people who can change our ways, our modes of living. He winks, and very often one passes by without seeing anything. For myself, I believe very much in the first beatitude : "*Happy are the poor in spirit*", that is, those who are always ready to welcome into their lives the unexpected from God, which takes us useless servants suddenly into the midst of this great mystery of love. It's not spectacular, but he needs us, as Christ needed five loaves and two fish from the child in order to feed the crowd. That's not so much and yet it's a lot. It supposes that you don't live your life in just any way. You must pray. If I didn't pray and I didn't have the daily Eucharist, I wouldn't be a woman on her feet. We have to shake each other, examine our ways of living, tell ourselves the truth. When the world is on fire christians can't be satisfied with watching.

Interview done by
Hervé Boulic
for "*La foi aujourd'hui*"
December 1982

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

A COORDINATED REGIONAL ENDEAVOUR

During a regional meeting held in Zimbabwe at the end of December 1982, those in charge of the CLC in the region decided to pool their efforts regarding the formation of group guides. This decision led them to organise three regional sessions, each of two weeks duration, which gathered together 71 leaders and assistants from six countries in the south.

in SOUTH AFRICA (Johannesburg)

On the 9th of December 1983 18 CLC people assembled at Koinonia Johannesburg to begin two week course to be trained as group guides. Amongst the majority of lay people were three married couples and an eight month old baby! We were also pleased to have two young men from Namibia with us. They had come to be trained to assist the newly formed groups in their country.

José and Patrick, who had guided a succesful initiation course in our country just ten months prior, had returned to be our facilitators.

The course began with a week of the Spiritual Exercises. Two Religious Sisters joined José and Patrick to guide the retreatants. For most this was their first experience of the Exercises. It was noticeable how slowly a real sense of community developed as we prayed and lived in silence together. It was a great privilege to witness the Lord gently moving gently amongst us-loving, healing, calling.

After the retreat we had a morning to rest. That afternoon the course itself began. We looked at the basic stages of the Spiritual Exercises by reflecting on our retreat ex

perience and what each stage had meant personally to us and then how that specific stage manifested itself in the development or life of a CLC community. As future group guides we were instructed on how to recognise each stage and how to assist a group to enter into and travel through each progressive stage.

Most of the learning was done in small groups, role-plays and in practical exercises. By the time the course had ended we had already designed numerous group-meetings to use in the formation of new communities.

Everybody found the course vital to their own personal growth into Christ - but also experienced themselves better able to assist their communities. But there was also a deep awareness that we had just begun on the road to becoming competent group guides.

Another important fruit of our time together was the creation of our first National Team (National Executive). The team was elected from amongst the people on the course and consists of two married couples and two single lay people. The team will be responsible to represent their local communities, to assist define national priorities and to work with Sr. Cecilia and myself on future projects and courses etc.

By the time the course had ended and we were preparing to leave there was a strong sense of hope amongst all. A hope, that we in a small way will contribute to the extension of Christ's Kingdom here in Southern Africa.

Gregory Lourens

* * *

in ZAMBIA (Monze)

The session held at the Kizito de Monze Centre (Zambia) from December 27th, 1983 to January 10th, 1984, brought together 29 CLC leaders and assistants, who came from Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Its report, which has no doubt been held up in the post, will appear in a later issue.

in LESOTHO (Hlotse)

If you look at a map of Southern Africa, you will see a small dot in the middle of the eastern part of the Republic of South Africa. That small dot is Lesotho - the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, the "Kingdom in the Sky". Small as it is, Lesotho is still big enough to have a CLC course and a CLC course did indeed take place this January (6th - 20th), at Hlotse, a small town in the northern district of Leribe.

High as this little Kingdom is, it is not too high for the Holy Spirit to reach, and His presence was felt by the 25 CLC's, and one priest not from the CLC's, who came together to make the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Of the 25 CLC's, there were 6 lay people, 16 nuns from different congregations, 1 diocesan priest and 2 Oblate seminarians. The retreat guides were Fathers - Jack Gillick S.J., from Johannesburg; Hank Kenney S.J., from Cape Town; and Patrick O'Sullivan S.J., from the Rome Secretariate. Jack and Hank arrived a short time before Patrick who was safely delivered from Maseru by Sr. Winifried Schofield.

The 7th was a preparation day for the retreat, which took the form of reviewing one's life experiences in the light of the experiences of St. Peter - his call by Our Lord, his love for Christ, his denial of Christ and his being named as head of the Church. This, then, was in preparation for the Spiritual Exercises which most of us had never made before and did not know very much about. On the other hand, we were very much looking forward to this experience, and so we began the retreat, in silence, on the night of the 7th.

The main emphasis from my retreat guide was to realize, to see and to experience God's love for me. I found the first day rather tough going, but I did my best, and that helped considerably because the next day, and then the rest of the days were not nearly so difficult.

As a young lay person I wanted, during this retreat, to ask the Father to show me clearly my vocation, and, with

the help of my retreat guide, this did take place. I saw clearly my vocation to marry and to give the witness of a happy, christian family.

In more ways than one, the retreat started with the signs of God's love as the rain poured down every time we went to Mass. The singing was excellent and the atmosphere was most helpful; our eyes were opened to see the Father's love in our lives, from the time we were formed in our mother's womb up to the present moment.

José Gsell arrived on Friday 13th; we were still on retreat, so we could not give her a typical, warm Basotho greeting. The retreat ended on the morning of the 14th, and we were free all day till the morning of the 15th, when the course for CLC assistants began. This was to be taken care of by Patrick and José as Father Jack and Father Hank left us after the retreat, to return to South Africa.

The course was mainly aimed at introducing us to the different stages of growth in a CLC group. People entered the course enthusiastically; it was a very good experience, especially for those who had participated in the course at Roma in January 1983. Almost everyone I spoke to felt that our days together would bring about changes in our local groups.

The course ended with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Paul Khoarai, Bishop of Leribe; it was he who had introduced the CLC's into Lesotho. The Mass was followed by supper together and then a social gathering, which the Bishop stayed on for. At the social gathering there were songs, jokes, performances and a few speeches of thanks from the Bishop, José and Patrick. The course took place on the campus of the Leribe Agricultural College, and a number of the students and staff were invited to our gathering. Some of them remarked how astonished and impressed they were by our silence during the retreat - so much so that they felt themselves entering into a deep silence.

After early Mass and breakfast on the morning of the 20th, we packed our bags and off we went, filled with the Spirit and ready to share the Good News of the Father's love with our people.

Peter Ramalitse

WE ARE A WORLD COMMUNITY!

In this issue of Progressio we are pleased to have the opportunity to publish, "We are a World Community!", by Stephen Joseph, from "CLC Link", India. The article presents very well some important reflections on our World Community, and could profitably be used by our groups, as part of their own formation process.

Providence '82 has been described as a landmark in the history of the CLC's. The decision to be a World Community marked a new stage in their growth process. It was a moment of grace, says Fr. Juan Ochagavia, S.J., a startling display of God's power over human weakness.

Has this momentous decision of the World Assembly made any difference to us? Has it had any impact on our attitudes and our way of living the CLC charism? What is our role - as individuals and as groups - in the process of becoming a World Community?

We owe it to our CLC vocation to try first to understand the deep meaning and implications of what it is to be a World Community so that we may effectively play our role in it.

Essence of Community

Communion with God and with one another -- "as the Father and I are one" (Jn. 17:21) -- this defines the essence of Community.

Our communion with God is reflected in, and measured against, our communion with one another. "If anyone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar ... And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn. 4:20,21). Our communion

with our brothers and sisters, then, becomes the standard test that reveals our communion with God.

The word "communion" has a deeper significance than meets the eye. It corresponds to the Greek word koinonia, frequently used in CLC spirituality. Koinonia implies a close fellowship, a deep friendship, an interior relationship between persons. It is the union of people who come together for a common end, a sharing of their lives, gifts and goods in generosity and self-forgetfulness. It is the antithesis of egoism.

The CLC World Community aspires to be such a communion, koinonia. "To take a decision in favour of a World community, says Fr. Ochagavia, is to opt for a closer and more intimate community bond; for greater union, fraternity and love between the members; for communication. It means a concern that each member, each group, each National Community share with and communicate to others what each one is and possesses. It is communicating in greater joy and generosity. It is a concern for a closer collaboration in the mission of Christ to serve the Gospel. All that is koinonia".

Community in CLC Tradition

The concept of community is by no means new to the CLC's. We know from the early history of St. Ignatius and his "nine friends in the Lord" that they experienced a deep union of hearts and minds after their complete surrender to the love of Christ in the Spiritual Exercises. The Marian Congregations too encouraged and fostered mutual union and service.

The authors of the General Principles were so permeated with the idea of community that they changed the name of "Congregation" into that of "Community". We know that it was not just a question of a change of name.

The General Principles, in fact, advocate a strong community spirit within the federative movement and beyond: "Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our own group, but extends to all the federative movement, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all men of good will" (GP 6).

If, then, we have already been living the reality of community, what is the significance of the present deci-

sion to be a World Community? "The transition, says Fr. Ochagavia, from a World Federation to a World Community is not so much a transition from one organisational and so cial structure to another structure, but rather to a new spirit -- a spirit of koinonia, of mutual sharing in the perspective of the good of the whole".

Our Role in the World Community

The decision to be a World Community gives us a new spirit, a new direction which, in its turn, brings with it new challenges, new goals, a new role to play. We are called upon to play a new role in promoting a sense of community, the spirit of koinonia at the local, national and world levels.

Tony Martyris, in his talk at the All-India CLC Institute held in Bombay last May, suggested several concrete steps we could take in order to enhance the sense of community among us: remembering one another's birthdays, visiting one another especially when sick, helping one another in distress and loneliness, comforting each other in sorrow and travail, rejoicing in each other's joys and successes, actively participating in company programmes and recreational club activities, sharing information, resources, time, etc. More importantly, getting to know each other better as fellow human beings rather than only as co-workers, accepting each other fully as we are, and loving each other in the true spirit of the Gospel...

If our communion with Christ, the experience of His love, is the source of community, then we have several ways of nourishing this source. This communion grows through an "intimate understanding and relish" (Sp.Ex.2) of the Word of God. It is also nourished through our participation in the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, leading us to "a concrete experience of unity in love and action" (GP 6). Again, meeting with the Lord in prayer, as seen in the Gospel accounts of the appearances of the Risen Jesus, draws us in to a certain intimacy.

Our communion with the Lord transforms itself into mission and service of the world -- "so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:23). In CLC spirituality, prayer always leads to mission. It is a mission that is discerned individually and communally. The more we -- and our groups -- are mission-oriented, the more we reflect our communion with God.

As we have already noted, St. Ignatius and his companions experienced a deep sense of communion after their total surrender to the love of Christ through the Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises, whether as a retreat experience or as a spiritual pedagogy, are a special way of nourishing our communion in Christ. It is for this reason that Rome and Providence greatly encouraged all CLC members to frequently experience the Exercises.

To promote a sense of community at the National and World levels, Providence stressed the need for fostering in us an awareness of our world reality, an awareness that we are united in the call of participating in the mission of Christ. This should create in us a strong desire to know what is happening in other parts of the World, to help and pray for one another, to be in contact with the Executive Council, etc. Hence the importance of exchange of information publications, posters, audio-visual materials -- exchange of resource materials and formation personnel.

Finally, our aspirations for a World Community can be best fulfilled through a deeper living in union with Mary, our model, in whom, as the Latin American delegation at Providence said, *"are incarnated harmoniously and efficiently, the values we want to announce to the world: fidelity to the Father, dedication to Christ and His cause, family life, the dignity of work, quietness and simplicity of life style, love and dedication to the Church"*. Inculcating these values in our lives, the delegation adds, will help us to be *"more identified with the World Community, increasing our unity and apostolic strength"*.

Stephen Joseph