



# PROGRESSIO

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## THE DOCTOR AND LIFE

Most people think that the great principle of respect for life, which has become a fundamental characteristic of the medical profession, was born in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. That is not correct.

In Greece, as long ago as the fifth century before the Christian era (between 460 and 380 B.C.) HIPPOCRATES underlined this primordial duty of the doctor. HIPPOCRATES required his disciples to commit themselves on oath to respect life in all circumstances.

Since that far-off epoch doctors of most countries have continued the practice of taking the 'Hippocratic oath', the text of which has sometimes suffered modifications which have limited its range a little.

Christian thought has merely widened the attention brought to respect for the sick, to respect for life. For the christian, the poor person, the one who suffers, the one who is defenceless is Christ, the Christ of the Nativity who escapes from the executioners of the Holy Innocents or the Christ who suffers the Passion. Every christian doctor tries to make his own the attitude thus proposed.

In most countries, even those which do not belong to the christian tradition, and for most doctors, including those who are not religious, respect for the sick person and for his or her life is a fundamental attitude. That sometimes entails what is called 'therapeutic stubbornness'. We shall return to this point but it already permits us to underline the general constant application of doctors to the conservation of life.

This almost universal attitude leads us to ask ourselves about the meaning of life, of which doctors are in some way privileged witnesses. One thought that comes to mind is that life is promise and future and one never knows what wonders it will bring later on.

A pediatrician such as I am is constantly confronted by dramatic situations involving very small children, fragile beings who are at death's door and one can ask oneself if it is worthwhile putting up a fight for them.

How often has it happened, however, that after so much danger there has been a recovery : and later you are moved when you meet up again with a child, an adolescent, a happy adult wreathed in smiles, bearers of a new joy and a new hope.

At the other extreme of life it happens that you no longer have any hope of prolonging a life. A few days, a few weeks you can still give to an old person, delaying the end of an illness that you know to be inexorably fatal, often permitting a way towards peace, peace with his or her relations and friends, peace with God.

This 'mystery of life' easily leads us to think about the tiny sick newly-born baby who will become a great writer (like GOETHE), about the prematurely old man, the hemiplegic, who will go on with his great work as a musician (like HANDEL), but we do not put a value merely on the great physical or intellectual successes or those from the world of sport. Marvels can be accomplished among people whose present appearance seems to us miserable and close to death. We also think about the inestimable value of the lives we call 'ordinary'.

This premature little girl will simply become a mother who, in turn, will give life and will surround her children with her love. When he is cured, this badly wounded man will again take up his tasks in the City and in his family. This old lady suffering from cancer has still a lot to teach her grand children, and this old man, through his courage and dignity, will give to those around him some irreplaceable lessons, even if they will be understood only later.

These few examples help us to understand better why we must respect life: we do not know the future that will come out of it and we must do nothing that will impede the realization of that unique destiny.

Moreover, we must do everything so that the problems will be resolved and this life can get back on course. This requires effective treatment adapted to each case: competence is the principal quality expected in a doctor. The complexity of many aspects of modern medicine is such that it is often difficult when attending to someone not to put the sickness before the patient. Even when that happens one should not reproach the doctor too much because his main task is to cure.

But a doctor must not allow himself to become a mere technician and must not forget that he is attending to a human being, his suffering brother. The interest paid to psychological problems particularly where advanced techniques and long visits are involved, is fortunately facilitating a better understanding of the attitude towards the sick person and his or her family.

These general notions only give an incomplete account of the complexity of the problems and their diversity:

- The incredible progress in medical techniques has made possible the treatment of certain illnesses which were previously fatal; but these treatments are sometimes unreliable, painful for the sick person; in some cases they lead to a precarious survival, and one may wonder if it is worth having such treatment.
- These complex techniques are more and more expensive and the increase in health budgets that is more rapid than the increase in income (GNP) in most countries, poses difficult problems. Worse still are the problems in developing countries in which general poverty tragically limits the portion available for health.
- The interference of questions of finance permits us to understand that ways of thinking and socio-political theories subtly affect behaviour with regard to the question of life. For a state with a materialistic philosophy, which puts into practice a very rigid limitation of births, abortion will be forcibly included in the obligatory measures. If one's interest in men is limited to their capacity to produce, one arrives rather quickly at euthanasia of old people, even though fewer steps have been made in this direction than in that of abortion.
- Another problem which is regularly stirred up by public opinion is that of the euthanasia of sick people suffering from incurable and painful ailments, most often cancer. It is true that the use of pain killers is perfectly legitimate even if very large and indeed toxic doses are needed. The intention is to soothe, not to kill.

At the present time some new methods of treatment for pain lead us to hope that the last days of these sick people can be made more peaceful without having to be cut short or lived in a semi coma. In addition, an effort is being made in various countries to accompany dying people and not to leave them alone when they are faced with suffering and death, as too often happens in the modern world. It is interesting to note that in this way we are rediscovering ways of behaving which are much closer to those of societies which preceded the industrial era.

Finally, doctors are, on the other hand, reproached for 'therapeutic stubbornness' : doing too much for a sick person who has no hope of recovery. What we have said above shows that it is difficult not to be accused of that at some time or other, and that in exceptional cases 'not doing all one can do' is an agonising decision which is not to be taken without mature consideration and is a matter of conscience.

These ideas which we have just presented are a little

general and theoretical because, in practice, the doctor could find himself in different situations in which the decisions will not necessarily be the same.

- Compare the situation of a well-equipped hospital in a big town with that of a bush hospital in which elementary resources are lacking.
- Imagine the sick, isolated refugee, abandoned by everybody, and the person who is surrounded by a family, which is loving, demanding or influential.
- And let us not forget the cost: in medicines, in time, in the money spent on such and such a sick person which, in certain cases, will perhaps hinder the care given to others less affected and more numerous.
- Let us also understand that there is a world of difference between not applying a treatment which is capable of prolonging life and performing an act which radically suppresses life, that is, an act that kills.

Neither must we forget that, whatever be the reasons and the methods used, an abortion does away with a living being who, in the absence of this act, would have an entire life ahead of him or her.

All these problems are complex. The answer is not always obvious. The doctor can only approach them with serious consideration, as competently as possible, whilst respecting and loving the other person and remembering that all life is a gift of God for his greater service.

*Dr. Lucien MICHON*

## **A PRIEST ON THE PROBLEM OF ABORTION**

These notes which I am writing for PROGRESSIO on the pastoral activity of people involved in the drama of abortion, are nothing more than an attempt at a personal synthesis of an experience which, I must confess, has no characteristics beyond those of a normal priestly experience. It is not an "expert" who is writing: in spite of this limitation, I hope these lines will be useful to someone.

I also leave aside the objective moral evaluation, having nothing to add to the position always held by the Church: life must be respected and defended always and everywhere, otherwise we run the risk of never being able to defend it. These reflections, therefore, regard only some strictly pastoral aspects of the problem.

\* \* \*

The interruption of pregnancy has become such a frequent occurrence today, even in sectors commonly defined as christian and practising, as to be regarded as one of the most delicate and urgent problems in the pastoral work of announcing the christian message and reconciliation.

In many western countries today, in spite of restrictions, legislation permits easy recourse to abortion, and in most cases it is the State itself that assumes the economic burdens of this procedure, as if it were a matter of normal medical treatment. The pros and cons of this fact, that is, the regularising of the phenomenon of abortion on the part of the State, finds public opinion very much divided, and certainly not only on account of reasons of religion and catholic morality.

But this very fact, which is evident to all, enables us to see that in an epoch like our own which boasts of being committed in the area of the rights of man, and which wears its commitment to the side of the weakest and most defenceless of human beings like a flower in its button hole - in reality man has never been so inconsiderate and human life has never been so despised and endangered at every level. There is no point in giving examples. The facts are before everyone's eyes.

This fact summons up another one : today it is basic that the announcement of the good news of the love of God for man and of reconciliation rises on the solid work of pre-evangelisation, which has the acceptance, respect and love of life as one of its fundamental supports. Before reconciling himself with God, man today must be reconciled with himself and with life. It is appalling to see how the number of people who do not accept themselves and love neither themselves nor life is becoming a multitude. Indeed I think that many tragic phenomena of our time are rooted in this fact of not being reconciled with life.

For this reason I am firmly convinced that the problem of the interruption of pregnancy must be seen in the perspective of the vaster problem of respect for the quality of life in general, which contains indispensable chapters on the conditions of human life, housing, the place of work, social justice, respect for the person and all that he/she is. The person who does not respect life as it is developing will easily not respect it even after birth.

Returning to the more specific pastoral problem concerning people who have decided to interrupt a life that is just beginning, it must be said straight away that the priest cannot simply refer to 'experience', understood as a conve

nient filing cabinet into which the different cases which present themselves maybe filed. That is perhaps possible in other fields, but not here. And that is because the drama involved is something totally within the person and therefore takes on unrepeatable characteristics of that person, even though we can talk about causes, conditionings and impulses which, in a general way, we attribute to education, environment, human sensitivity, spiritual formation, and that complex of external causes which grow out of the material of interpersonal relations. I shall have a chance to return to this point further on.

Another element to be borne in mind is that the priest commonly finds himself dealing with this problem exclusively with the woman, who is frequently compelled to bear the burden of a situation that is often the result of extremely negative attitudes towards her. It is sad to see this, but the priest who approaches these cases cannot fail to take into account the fact that behind the face of the person he is talking to there are other faces hidden in the murkiness of a lack of responsibility and therefore of humanity. If one has the chance of speaking to a woman who has not yet had the abortion, then, in my opinion, it is right and proper to involve those other people too. But when that does not happen the woman's loneliness seems to me to be utterly tragic.

These reflections tell us, therefore, that the problem does not have only a moral dimension. It also has a psychological and a sociological dimension, and is affected by a society's customs. And, to my way of seeing things, that is one of the fundamental reasons why the interruption of a life is always perceived, even by non-believing women, as something grave and devastating, which therefore frequently leaves a deep imprint in the person's psyche and consequently in her relationships with others.

\* \* \*

For believers, as well as the human motives, there are also those which have a more strictly religious and christian moral character, experienced more intensely or less intensely, more clearly or less clearly, depending on the formation that the person has received.

We can say that the priest often finds himself having to reckon with very strong guilt feelings which are sometimes persistent, very often reemerging. It is not always easy to get the person to pass from a situation of this kind to a more serene vision which integrates the right evaluation of one's own act with the offer of forgiveness that comes from

God. There is often a very strong desire for reconciliation but, at the same time, a radical closing in on oneself whilst considering one's own misery, and this leads to a feeling of being unworthy of reconciliation. Sometimes you get the feeling that this kind of reaction contains an element of self punishment.

Here great patience is required on the priest's part, as well as a lucidity of approach to the person not just to educate her conscience, but also to get her to perceive deeply God's tenderness.

Along with this more strictly spiritual exchange goes that complex work of mending interpersonal relationships, which, as I mentioned before, are often compromised by an event which is so traumatic for the woman.

The influence of the surrounding environment upon the woman's decision to have recourse to abortion is often decisive, above all where young people are concerned, whether it is a matter of the family or the male partner, who may or may not be bound to the woman in a stable relationship. But this does not happen without damage to interpersonal relationships.

The public structures which should be instruments to help in the growth of responsibility are sometimes transformed into ways of undermining responsibility. The opinion of people who are regarded as "experts" often has a determining influence.

In conclusion: recourse to the interruption of a life just begun is often had in the hope of safeguarding the emotional stability of the single woman and other interpersonal relationships; instead the very stability that it was hoped would be saved is compromised, sometimes irreparably.

On the personal level, then, absorbing this experience, which is always traumatic, into a process of faith that leads the person to live the love of God in a new way is not something easy which happens in a short time.

Into my mind comes the remark of a woman, who, when she was told of the depth of God's love, who reveals his justice in forgiving, said: "I know God forgives me: I'm the one who will never be able to forgive myself".

Francesco BOTTA s.j.



## THE EXERCISES IN THE CLC TODAY OR THE EXERCISES AS PEDAGOGY

(Article published in "Cahiers de Spiritualité ignatienne",  
Québec, vol. VII, n.28, october-december 1983).

In an earlier article (Progressio, September 1984) I tried to show the close links that exist between the Ignatian Exercises and the Christian Life Community (CLC). I presented the latter as the heir to the groups formed by the 'friends in the Lord'. We know that these groups gathered together around Ignatius and the first Jesuits, people who, after having done the Exercises, wanted to go on living in accordance with their spirit. Now I would like to show that it is with good reason that the CLC claimed and still claims this heritage.

### Since its Origins

In a work published as a supplement to PROGRESSIO (no.14, June 1979) and entitled: "God works like that", Fr. Louis Paulussen has shown how, throughout the four centuries of its existence, the Marian Congregation - as it was called for a long time - or the CLC - as it is called today - has always kept its Ignatian character. The same author returned to the subject in an article "Faithful to our sources", which appeared in Progressio (July-September 1982). He shows very well that the CLC is not making innovations today by presenting itself as fundamentally Ignatian: it always has been. Certainly it may have been accentuated differently in the various epochs. Certain traits may have seemed for a time to have been toned down, especially after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, as I mentioned in my previous article; but those traits have never been erased, and you can find them in the documents of every epoch. The fact that here and there Congregation directors may have 'forgotten' to emphasise them and may have practically reduced their group to a mere pious association is another matter.

### The 1968 'General Principles'

The creation of the World Federation in 1953 had made even more evident the need, which had been felt for a long time, to bring up to date the Common Rules, which had remained unchanged since 1910. So the work was begun, but, as the job had been entrusted to a team of experts, it was thought that enquiries might be made about life at the grass roots level. It was noticed that numerous groups, an

ticipating, so to speak, the conclusions of the Council, had been involved, for some years, in a veritable return to the sources. Under the guidance of men like Hugo and Karl Rahner, Maurice Giuliani and others, they rediscovered the point at which the Exercises are the 'foundation of the spirituality of the Marian Congregation' (Giuliani). And it was starting from their experience that the drawing up of the new Common Rules (called 'General Principles') was undertaken and completed. Presented to Paul VI in 1967, they were first approved ad experimentum for three years in 1968, and then definitively in 1971.

Now the 'General Principles' affirm it without reserve: "We regard the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius as a specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality" (no.4).

### The 'Survey'

I suppose that it is now admitted without too much difficulty that the CLC has been Ignatian since its origins and that this Ignatian character is explicitly affirmed in the 1968 'General Principles'. But what about the concrete life of the members and the groups? Because, in the end, that is what matters.

Well, in 1981 the central Secretariat published the second edition of a cyclostyled book entitled: 'Survey on the formation process in the Christian Life Communities'. It is the result of an inquiry into the methods used by the CLC groups around the world to form their members. It has not been published to serve as a norm, but simply as a reservoir of suggestions from which all may draw as they deem fit. However, this survey is a witness (there can be no better) to what the CLC groups in different countries live. Now, as we shall see, this life is totally imbued with the spirit of the Exercises, which are revealed in it not merely as an ideal, an inspiration, but also as a pedagogy. Or, to take up again the words of the 'General Principles' quoted above: the Exercises appear there, at the same time as both 'source' and 'instrument'.

### A Glance at the Survey

The compilers believed that they discerned in the formation process used by most groups the equivalent of five stages, which they describe thus:

1. A *pre-community* stage, which can last from three months to a year and even longer, during the course of which the community is built as such.

2. A stage of *initiation*, lasting one or two years, during which the group as such and each of the members becomes acquainted with the fundamental values and is initiated into the CLC way of life.
3. A stage called *redemption*. After the euphoria at the beginning, a certain lassitude begins to be felt. Some members leave the group. Squabbles, rivalries and frustrations appear on the scene and nobody knows much about how to avoid them. The group discovers the point at which it is fragile, and each member, knowing himself better, discovers his own limits and his part in the responsibility for the general malaise. This painful experience constitutes a first phase. After a personal and community discernment, the ordeal terminates in the radical giving of oneself to Christ, who is seen to be the only one capable of transforming our limits into salvific values. This gift of self is at the same time a commitment to pursue the ideal proposed by the CLC.
4. A stage of *deepening* permits the carrying over into concrete life the gift of self made in the previous stage. He who has given himself to Christ wants to imitate him, notably by participating in his mission. Mission and the choices it involves are the main points of this stage which normally crowns the commitment to life in the CLC.
5. A stage of *continuous growth*, which, as a rule, only ends when life ends, permits one to push one's belonging to Christ and participation in his Paschal mystery to their final consequences.

For each of the stages the Survey mentions a certain number of key aspects or guidelines to explore in connection with the concrete practice of CLC life. Without being recipes, these suggestions show how the five stage process can be moulded into the meetings, days of recollection, and the apostolic projects of a group. It is obviously impossible to enter into details here.

But what is essential to our purpose is to underline, as the authors of the Survey have done, the strict correspondence between the five stages and the course of the Exercises.

The Survey does not give any reference for the first stage, but I believe we can point out its similarity to the famous "Presupposition" (Exercises no. 22) which gives the conditions for fruitful exchange between human beings. The second stage corresponds to the Principle and Foundation. The third to the First Week (Phase I) and to the Meditation on the Kingdom (Phase II). The fourth makes the process of the Second Week live in the course of daily life. The fifth does the same with the Third and Fourth Weeks.

To repeat, the approach here has not been theoretical, and this process, even though it is widespread in the CLC world, has neither been imposed nor even proposed. The fact that it is general, however, is a witness to two things: on the one hand, growth in Christ according to the Ignatian way and the temporal process of the Exercises go hand in hand, the first following, so to speak, spontaneously, naturally, the lines of the second; and on the other hand, the profoundly Ignatian character of the CLC, since the Exercises serve it, not just as an inspiration, but as a pedagogy.

A Jesuit of former times, a rival of Dewey, conceived a method of classifying notes, based on the Exercises. It is a little like that here: in the CLC not only do the Exercises constitute the ideal that we want to attain, they are at the same time the way by which we want to arrive.

### Postscript

My article is finished. I have the feeling that I have said all I wanted to say. However, my soul is not at peace. In spite of the fact that I have been precise, I still fear that some readers may consider the Survey, which I have described only in outline, as a kind of framework or programme which each group should follow. No. The Survey is a report on what is being done. By reporting what takes place, moreover, it predisposes each group for what will normally happen to it. It seems that people who have decided to live their faith according to the spirit of St. Ignatius cannot gather together without the Exercises having a profound influence upon their way of working together. It is good to know that, so that this tendency will not be opposed, but rather promoted, since it can only be a movement of the Spirit. So, the Survey is like a weather forecast: it does not make the weather, it predicts what it probably will be so that we can make the best of it. And let us remember that the process can appear under a thousand different forms. It is by starting with the needs of the present time that a group must determine its activities. But, most often the process of needs will correspond to that of the four Weeks with the emphasis on one or another or on such and such an aspect of one or another - for example, the integration of different values, discernment, mission... It would be unthinkable that the flexibility and the careful adaptation that one finds on every page of the Exercises should produce a pedagogy in which those qualities were missing.

Remi POTVIN s.j.

# YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

## ON READING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES N. 11 (4)

### Simplicity in all aspects of life

It has not been easy for me to write about the simplicity of life which is spoken of towards the end of article 11 of the General Principles, because it is something urgent which I feel deep within me, but have never achieved, never completely understood, greatly desired and pondered over with amazement.

It is as if one possessed within oneself the key to be a follower of Christ in the world, as if one might express all the mystery and scandal of it.

The aspect of simplicity of life which first struck me was poverty, the need to be with the poorest and the weakest, not to have abundant means at one's disposal, not to be an affront to those who are in need... to contemplate the mystery of God made man among the poor.

Little by little, when the concreteness of being poor became a choice, often difficult to make, never comfortable, I learned to grasp the freedom that goes with poverty, to understand the tension of living what is essential, of trying to be like Christ, free in relationships, fraternal in conflicts, a friend in joy and in pain, never a slave of power, never strong, rich or oppressive.

In the daily temptation to have and to possess, and also in the temptation to do things, of exaggerated activism, widespread even among believers, something is forgotten of the freedom of God, how He looks on the world and on people.

Simplicity of life is what calls into play our own possibility of being credible in the eyes of the world.

We should meditate on the choice God made to become man

in the midst of the poor, rejecting earthly power and domination of the world, and dying insulted and rejected.

Simplicity becomes a vital element in the life of the community; it guides the relationships among its members and marks its way of living the faith. To be simple today means to go against the current, to know how to unveil the snare of a false well-being, the myths of many artificial "happineses", to break through the "logic" of power, not to have guarantees, protection or security. To be vulnerable and to allow oneself to be affected. And to learn, in all this, to love, not to be bitter. To grasp, in this, freedom; to enjoy making a 'break-through'; to be a "scandal". To be always open, never withdrawn, never closed, never slaves.

Simplicity of life can do much for the Church, a Church which today is striving to reconcile different orientations, movements and tendencies. Rather than being rigid in defending certitudes, we should be open to being vulnerable. Rather than being worried about furnishing truth, we should be capable of involving ourselves in the world and reading in it the voice of God.

To be simple, today, as a church, demands from each one of us, from our communities, from the whole Church, the capacity to be a sign of poverty, of weakness, of powerlessness, of freedom.

It is an immense, and difficult task to the extent that it is arduous to welcome the possibility of being like this, to the extent that one thinks about it but does not live it, understands it but does not feel it.

It becomes a gift, a grace of God in our lives and in the ecclesial community when it is experienced and desired, pursued and embraced.

It would be of little use if our groups and communities do not educate themselves in this; if they do not strive to be a mystery with Christ and a scandal together with Him.

*Giovanna Chirri*



## CHRISTMAS 1984: COLLOQUIUM ON YOUTH AND CLC

During their last meeting in Canada, the World Executive Council decided to hold a meeting (Colloquium) to take place over the Christmas holidays this year. Through these pages of *Progressio* I would like to inform you about its scope and development and at the same time to invite you to follow it through and to put its conclusions into practice.

How did the idea of holding such a meeting come about? It was a kind of "perception" or feeling shared by all the members of the Ex-Co as they became aware that although much is being done for the youth CLC, a lot more remains to be done. Let me explain what I mean: undoubtedly there are many efforts being made by the World Federation and by the national communities for the youth. We can cite, for example, the group "Youth and Mission and Service" which has been working already for more than a year, the participation of youth members in other working groups, the publication of *Forpyl* (Formation Program for Youth Leaders) for the purpose of helping the youth groups, and so on.

Nevertheless, we believe that there are many things still to be developed and needs to be met. There is the need to know, "first hand", what is the reality of our youth CLC groups, what are the problems they are faced with in their growth process, considering in particular the aspects of formation, exercises, guides... On the other hand, one can not ignore the important dimension of the interaction of youth CLC groups with the world that surrounds them. It is also necessary to clarify or explain what we all think: that CLC is not just a passing moment, more or less enriching but provisory, in the life of a young person, but that it is a way of life one can assimilate and follow throughout one's life. These are some examples which come to my mind; there are surely many others...

With these ideas in our minds we, the guiding team composed of José Gsell, Chicco Botta s.j., Patrick O'Sullivan s.j. and myself, met in Rome during the first half of July. Our work during these days was to give these ideas some shape on the practical level. I am going to inform you, but only briefly, about how the meeting has been planned.

The meeting will be made up of 5 parts which aim to cover numerous points that need to be clarified. To start with is a set of questions on the theme: "Our World of Young People" whose key objective is to get to know the reality which surrounds each of us in our country, sharing our convergences and differences, and trying to have a christian understanding of our common problems. The second part, entitled "Our CLC Youth Groups" will deal with the reality of our groups by sharing statistical and other data, like what we do in the groups, what helps us, how our CLC group helps us in the situation where we are, what is the relationship between the youth communities and the national and world communities. In answering this set of questions a contrast will most likely appear between the ideal and practice of CLC, and the reality around us; the title will speak sufficiently for itself: "Our CLC Identity, a way of being present in the world?" The fourth part, "Integration", has for objective simply to reflect on how this integration between following Christ and daily life actually takes shape - reflecting with the help of written texts and personal witness es. Finally, the fifth part will be to find out what is the message we can bring to the rest of the World Community and how to do this.

We do not intend to approach all this in an abstract way, nor through a global outlook that does not come down to earth, but we want to start from the personal experiences of the participants enriched by an attitude of openness to their reality, and we hope to achieve this with the support of our respective communities.

The participants are a dozen young people coming from different parts of the world and are members of the working group "Youth and Mission and Service", together with some adults. The meeting will take place in Rome from December 18 to 28, at the Italian National CLC Secretariate which has generously offered to host us for this purpose.

I will end by saying that the Ex-Co regards this Colloquium as one of its priorities. We ask for your help so that everything will go well. This help can be concretely expressed through your prayer and reflection on the themes mentioned, and also through financial support, so necessary if the meeting is to take place.

Paco SANZ



## ON THE WAY TO A GREATER AUTHENTICITY

Some time ago I was asked to write an article about the German Youth-CLC. But where shall I start? How to give an idea about our life, our concerns, our discussions, in short- about us? Let us try.

Because many of our communities are connected with high schools, we often try to start our first pre-groups with the pupils from ten to thirteen years. Of course the main things in their meetings are no great themes or activities but to grow to be a community : to do things together, to exchange ideas, problems (for example with the school), to listen to one another. I think that is an important point for listening to myself and also to God later on.

After such a preparation the next step might be that each group thinks about what they want to do together. Not only the group guide but all the members are responsible in making the group more than just a "club" but a real help for everyone, which can contribute to the diocese and the national community. This development may take some time - but why not? What are the themes groups can work with? These surely change as the groups develop, but we have found the following helpful.

We often start with questions like: what are the experiences in my life, my surroundings, I am discontented with? Where can I see injustice in daily life, or in politics, that touches me? The following questions too, can become quite real: how do I see my relationship to my family, to my (boy/girl-)friend(s)? What do I feel when I think of my future? and so on. And last but not least : how can I live my Christian faith? The group experience here can be very helpful as most of us have only experienced ourselves (not others). To hear from one another, to try different kinds of prayer and meditation or above all to celebrate Mass together - these all contribute substantially to building up community.

These developments might (and we are happy if they do) motivate the members to look at more common problems. A very important point for us Germans is peace and armament. Living in the center between East and West, we are particularly challenged to find our position in relation to the threat

from both sides. So many of us are looking to change a stereotyped picture of the enemy, and to work actively for a growing peaceful situation for everybody.

Another theme some groups are working with is 'The Third World': Starting with discussion about UNCTAD V in 1979, many of us went further in informing ourselves and others, and doing something. As citizens of one of the most industrialized countries of our world, we are confronted with economic injustice in many parts of our daily life. In addition, there is our partnership with the Philippines' CLC.

A matter of concern with these questions is the danger of staying on the theoretical discussion level which is quite unconnected with actual living. During the last two years we started a process of asking how we can express our intellectual understanding in daily life. Commitment to peace and solidarity with the underdeveloped countries can not be fruitful unless we start to change ourselves. Our activities in the peace movement should be connected with the attempt to be more "non-violent" in our life. Likewise I can not appeal for more economic justice without consequences for my personal life-style. There's a long road ahead of us, but we want to go together.

In listening to our own feelings, and looking at the discrepancies we live with all day, other themes arise. Since our last general assembly in January, for example, we have raised the question of our position regarding Ecumenism, because many of our Youth-CLC members are protestants. How are we to deal with our understanding and practice of ecumenism, as far as our church is concerned? In looking for more honesty and authenticity in our own life we will learn to represent our position in dialogue with others. We want to take our ideas seriously so as to build together our future church and society. But that demands our readiness to keep moving and to be open to the signs of the times.

At the end of this article I feel, again, how difficult it is to talk about groups, which can be on very different levels. I have had to generalize and so many things have been left out. But I hope I have given you some idea of how our German Youth-CLC is moving, according to our common desire: to bring life and faith together.

*Daniela FRANK*

## YOUTH: HOPE OF THE FATHERLAND?

I have been warned that adult life isn't that easy, long before I reach that stage. But I never took it as seriously as I should and here I am now... looking back at the years I used to run on newly plowed fields and to lie on the green grass in the nearby meadow... watching the sun set below the horizon as if my future lay there. How beautiful it was then, so hopeful that tomorrow the sun would rise again, bringing with it the warmth, the light, the color of a new day.

But that was ten years ago. I was so uncaring for the world then, so naive, so innocent of things happening around me. I am nineteen now. The society in which I am a member strips away my childhood perception of the world. I am asked to wake up from long and unnerving slumber. As I open my eyes to all the illnesses my society suffers, I see the people I considered "good" turn out to be monsters responsible for the evils occurring in the country today. As a typical teenager I did not respond at first, knowing that sooner or later the situation somehow would change and everything would be alright again. But it did not... it worsened instead.

The sudden change in the prices of commodity goods infuriated me, for many in the community could not earn enough even for their basic necessities. Many lost their jobs, their only means of livelihood; others drove themselves like madmen to demand for an increase in their salary to make both ends meet. What should I, a teenager, do... watch them pile up their woes and wonder what will happen next? Should I just let my fear paralyze me for I am still too young to offer myself for their cause, the fear that I might become one of the many victims of tortures, imprisonment without due process of law? Will I merely keep silent, mind my own business and concern myself with my accounting books and limit myself to the four corners of the classroom when all these happen right under my nose?

The youth are supposed to be the hope of our beloved Fatherland. However, if we will remain as passive as we are now, -contented that we still have soft beds to lie on, delicious food to satisfy our hunger, and complacent as long as we are able to see to the needs of our families... there



is a great possibility that we will later see the downfall of the Fatherland we are supposed to defend.

It is not too late to hope for the harmony that we long to have. But it is rather late to sit pretty and do nothing. For to do nothing in this present time is to contribute to the oppression which we also suffer. It is almost a crime, but definitely a sin, to allow evil to perpetuate itself in our society, in any society.

Yes, it was indeed a wonderful place to live in and it can be. Now that I have wiped the cobwebs from my eyes, I am able to see what lies beyond the newspapers front pages. The lies that I used to believe in have been uncovered and have revealed that what I thought was really good was but sugar coated bitter nuts.

So long as we remain in our individual cages... as prisoners of our own self-centered attitude, of the fear to carry our own cross to the present Golgotha, we cannot rest assured that we can preserve human rights and most of all, our beloved Fatherland.

Violence is never the Christian response to the present situation we are in, for violence begets violence. But we must campaign for justice through non-violent means; for peace without compromise. Our revolution must be a peaceful revolution of Christ - redeeming people from death to life (quoted from the Philippine Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Sacredness of Human Life).

Now that I have learned to keep watch on the events which are happening in the country, there is no more reason for me to sleep again, to daydream on trips around the world of fairytales... And I will no longer be a mere spectator who wonders what happened and lets everything go by the drain, but a worker, an agent of change for peace and justice through faith, and believe that with the rise of consciousness and involvement in our present situation, the youth will wake up to the realization that they are called to restore order in this chaotic nation.

*Ethel COVARRUBIAS*  
(Philippines)

## WORKING-GROUPS: A FIRST EVALUATION

Our readers will no doubt recall the creation of 12 working groups by the Executive Council of our world Community which we described here in July 1983 (cf. PROGRESSIO, 1983, no:4, "Our New Working Groups"). The aim in setting up these groups was to deal with the important points and aspects raised during the meeting of PROVIDENCE '82, to follow them up, and deepen them by making sure they were given the consideration and attention they deserve.

The Executive Council preferred the more flexible structure of working groups to maintaining permanent Commissions. Their advantages, it was thought, consisted in:

- directing the efforts of a group to one precise task, and so avoiding getting lost in the intricacies of a mandate that might be too broad and sometimes too complicated;
- limiting the time for the realisation of an objective, whilst being ready to reconsider it, if need be;
- maintaining a constant attention to the work in hand by periodical evaluations;
- associating a great number of members from different regions of the world with the work, thus sharing, in fact, the responsibility which is common to all with regard to the progress and growth of our Community in the service of one world.

The work would be done by correspondence, as meetings were excluded for obvious reasons of finance. But one question remained: were we really ready to work together in this very demanding way - sharing through the written word? For lack of an alternative and in order to safeguard the international character of our Community, the decision was made, although we were aware of the risk involved.

\* \* \*

After 18 months of work it is possible to draw up a first evaluation. Most groups have produced solid and very valuable work. Their results will be published in 1985 and at the beginning of 1986. Several observations are important in considering the functioning of these groups:

- Very often the members of the groups have shared the work entrusted to them with other CLC members, and sometimes with a whole group from their own country. In certain cases, the study and deepening mandate led to the creation of a national working group, where members studied and shared, and passed on to the international group a contribution of much greater value.
- We were to discover that sharing and communicating in writing is a demanding business, but everyone got down to it with a good heart and overcome the natural resistance that such demands make. Once we accepted that, we were to experience that sharing in writing is often much richer than sharing by word of mouth. Putting a reflection down on paper supposes, in effect, that it has been sufficiently thought about so that it is ready to be shared. There is a gain in quality.
- Because the groups are international, the question of language has been a difficulty. This seems to have been resolved by the freedom which members have to express their thought in one of three official languages and by their ability (personal and/or helped by others) to understand the syntheses prepared by their coordinator.
- Participation in a working group seems to have been for everybody a chance to reflect upon his or her own experience, to study some subjects and documents linked to the theme of the mandate and to share their ideas with the CLC members of other countries. Without the challenge of this invitation we would doubtlessly not have found the time needed to share, reflect and progress in our experience.

The following extract from a letter summarises one experience among others: *"The work we have been doing together over the past months has been a rich experience of sharing for me, on both a practical level and an ideal level. I liked the openness of accepting to deliberate together through a circular letter which at least for me has not been easy. The last sharing has definitely helped my own thinking about our work. I had many questions before - many have been answered. This work has also pulled me beyond my own experience in order to reflect further. And so the work becomes more difficult but more challenging. I have certainly grown in my*

perception of the subject that has been entrusted to us. It has been difficult because I have had to reflect deeply on my vision of CLC. As work goes on I become more ready to take time to reflect and write, perhaps because I slowly realize the importance and necessity of such work. Our varied backgrounds and cultural experiences have helped me appreciate more and more the complexity of a World Community. But at the same time I have had insight into the unity that our shared way of life brings across cultures."

\* \* \*

What can be expected from this work at the level of initial, concrete results? Here below we present a list of publications which are being prepared and which constitute the fruit of the work of the different groups. To these publications should be added the organisation of the Youth Colloquium and the preparation of an international formation session.

To be published:

- a work document on the Sense of ("thinking with") the Church, in three parts : 1) an introduction on the Sense of ("thinking with") the Church today; 2) some guidelines for meetings which can help members to grow in this area; 3) some pedagogical means for the use of communities;
- a brochure on "Twinning", to serve as a 'guide' for a loving and respectful encounter between people, their cultures, histories, situations,...
- for use of groups : a questionnaire, elaborated in three stages (1. becoming aware; 2. discerning a life-style; 3. decision) in response to the question: "How should we behave and witness to our faith, in the light of Ignatian spirituality, in the consumer society in which we are immersed and of which we are part?"
- some witnesses on the role of Our Lady in our life, to be published in the preparatory documents for the next World Assembly;
- a series of articles in Progressio on family life, going deeply into different aspects;
- the work of the 'Youth and Mission' group has been a preliminary stage leading up to the holding of the Youth Colloquium in Rome from 18th to the 28th December 1984;

- a proposal for desirable changes in the statutes;
- a work document (a supplement to the existing "Survey") which clarifies the roles of the ecclesiastical assistant, the group guide, the leader or coordinator. This publication will be completed with the proposal of an international session which will probably take place in conjunction with the next assembly;
- a Supplement to Progressio (April 1986) on Preparation for the Spiritual Exercises, with various preparatory forms;
- a Supplement to Progressio (April 1985) on the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life, giving present day experiences ("witnesses"), helping guides with advice and practical suggestions, and developing a clear vision of the Ignatian Exercises given in this form;
- the first of six Bulletins on the documents of the Church has just been published. It has been sent to the national CLC leaders, who should have them circulated to the groups. These bulletins introduce a document and give a simplified version of it followed by some guidelines for work. An important tool for assimilating the teaching of the Church.

Here, then, is a first evaluation of the work carried out. Let us not forget that the publications, the 'concrete things' are only a visible sign of a deeper work. Thus over these past months we have been able to see develop genuine CLC networks, with profound and extensive ramifications, which enrich the life of, and bring a new vigour to the whole body. Experience and education on the world level, where each one gives and receives for the greater good of all.

*José GSELL*



## THE NEW MEMBER DILEMMA

The new member dilemma. How do you bring a new person fully into an already established community? When are they "really members"? How do you bring them to where the community is without losing some or all of the community's forward momentum? How do you answer all their questions and concerns without taking up meeting time? When is a person committed to the community?

About three years ago the "Providence of God" CLC went through a very intense time of discerning exactly who we were as a community. We needed to define for ourselves what we believed, what we asked of ourselves, and what we were called to. The outcome of this was a written statement of our beliefs and a Mass of commitment where each member of the community ceremonially assented to the ideals.

It was a beautiful, growing and strengthening experience for us, but it opened up a new avenue of problems. What about new members? How do we get them to a point where they can make the same commitment we did? How do we help people grow from just attending a meeting to wanting to make a commitment to a community without affecting the growth of the community?

After much thought we devised an initiation process. New people are usually told of the existence and purpose of the process by the community member who got them interested. After they have attended a few meetings and decide they wish to know more they ask to begin the process. They agree to come one hour early to nine meetings. Different members of the community take responsibility for these sessions. This delegation of responsibility allows for more personal sharing between the new person (or persons) and community members.

The topics for the sessions were chosen by the community from what we perceived as important for a new person to understand about us and the CLC way of life. What we did is briefly outlined below.

1. Introduction: A more detailed explanation of why and how this process came about is given in this session. Its goal of giving more data to help one discern if the community will meet their needs is discussed. A brief outline of the topics is given and the person's expectations are shared.
2. What is CLC? A standard introduction of what CLC is, its history, the General Principles, etc. is presented.
3. History of THIS Community: Every community has a special uniqueness. Much of what makes us who we are comes from how we evolved from a college CLC to an adult CLC. Different growth stages and other changes are shared.
4. Bonds of Community : Here the importance and purpose of community is discussed. Community expectations and responsibilities are shared as well as the place they hold to us and to the new person.
5. Interpersonal Relationships: The community is built of many small primary communities such as married people, engaged people, and people living together. These relationships have an effect on the large community. Such things as conflict and dealing with personal problems are discussed in this session.
6. Spirituality: As CLC people, our spirituality is Ignatian. The new person may need a better understanding of that as well as the spirituality of our own particular community. The desire to grow and the importance of praying together is shared.
7. Apostolate: As a community we have done apostolic works and have acted as a support community for each individual member's apostolic ministry. The process of communal growth to spiritual growth to apostolic thrusts is explained and the new person(s) share their own desires and reflections.
8. Discernment : At this session the Ignatian process of discernment is discussed. Explanation is given on how and why our community uses communal discernment to choose its direction and to make major decisions.

9. Evaluation : Here the written beliefs of the community are shared. The new person evaluates their experience with the process. The person responsible for this session shares personal and communal feelings about the new person and together they work at discerning if the new person wants to make a commitment to the community, wait to experience and learn more, or wishes to leave the community. When the decision is reached it is shared with the whole community.

If the new person decides to make a commitment to the group, a special prayer service (or Mass) of commitment is prepared to celebrate the decision and to strengthen all members' commitment.

The "Providence of God" CLC has used this process three times in the past and has found it very good for both new and existing members. It is my desire to share what we have done in the hope of providing some ideas for other communities who share the same dilemma.

*Sandy SPLAINE*  
(U.S.A.)

## A COMMUNITY CALLED - JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

*There is a very old legend that Joseph of Arimathea, at the time when the first disciples set out to spread the Good News, found his way to England, taking with him the "Grail" - the cup Our Lord used at the Last Supper. The Grail subsequently disappeared and has never been found, but the quest for the Grail has become symbolic of the Christians' search to find the Lord - and His life-giving Presence, His Real Presence - in their lives.*

*We present here the experience of a group of five married couples in Chile (in their thirties, with children) who first came together in 1982, in their symbolic "quest for the Grail". In May 1984, they decided that the CIC's were their way of life to encounter the Lord in their daily concerns. They have placed themselves under the patronage of Joseph of Arimathea, for reasons which they explain as their story unfolds.*

In order to become a member of the Federation of Christian Life Communities, it has been necessary for us to choose a name for our community. We have decided to call it

### "JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA"

We have chosen this name because we feel identified with Joseph. He is a secondary figure in the Gospel; about him there are certainly not going to be written many books or theses.

One thing is sure, though; he was a disciple of Jesus, and he surely must have loved Him. But he did not belong to the group of the "heroic" disciples like Peter, John or Paul. He was a disciple in secret, for fear of the Jews. An ordinary disciple, like us.

But from being mediocre Joseph was able to overcome his fear and took a step which must have surely been costly to him. He did not remain there. He was ready to take a risk to be faithful to his vocation. He asked Pilate for the authorisation to remove the body of Christ. And Pilate consented. Joseph, in overcoming his fear, responded to the call of the Lord. Even though there was nothing spectacular or heroic in his action, he made progress and remained faithful to Him.

It is not that we think we should be content only with the example of Joseph, nor that we find full consolation in his life. Peter, Paul and others showed us a way of renunciation and heroism which we will never cease to revere. But, much as we admire their vocation, we want to start from the condition of the "Josephs" that we are. And we struggle not only to move out of our indifference, but also to grow, from day to day, by taking small yet significant steps in following Christ and being faithful to Him.

It is true that we are not capable of taking a big leap in the dark, yet at the same time we cannot accept to let ourselves remain where we are and be limited by our own reality. We want to face this reality with love and joy. We want to live it from the Father's viewpoint, from His love of life, the Father who respects the diversity of charisms and the big and small efforts each of His children makes in answering His call.

Undoubtedly this is the way our community has been discovering, little by little, during these past years. It is a way which seems good to us and maybe for others, too. If you like, it is a real spirituality for ordinary people. Like Joseph. Like us.

Some 10 or 15 years ago, almost all of us would have liked to be heroes. Perhaps to live with our families among the poor. Certainly, to live in community, without "mine" or "yours". In poverty, in real community, with the poor and for the poor.

As the years went by we began to discover that we could not put into practice what we believed to be our vocation. Then we felt frustrated. And we were paralysed. From a young hero we became a mediocre adult, frustrated, indifferent. Every effort that we made seemed empty in comparison with the dream of the great mission we hoped to accomplish.

In our community we began to discover that what we really lacked was a more authentic spirit of poverty: to

recognise our limitations objectively, to accept them honestly, with love and joy, to be detached from our dreams of greatness and heroism. We are looking for a different way that will not constrict us, one which is possible and realistic for us, one which will help us begin, and keep us going.

The Father did not ask the Jews of ancient times to love their enemies. First He gave them the law of "an eye for an eye". It was only after they had grown spiritually that He gave them the law of love.

For example, today no one of us is able to live entirely at the service of the poor. It is simply not possible for us to dedicate all our work to them. But we will never let this fact immobilise us. We have sought to share with them, even though it is only a small portion of our income. Not all. Not even half. Just a small percentage. And we have learned to do this. We have also sought to share with them part of our time and our persons, and we have already been able to take the initial steps.

These are very small signs of self-giving. But honestly, they have been a source of great joy to us. We feel we could keep on going along this way, where we have reached a point of no return, which demands from us ever increasing commitment. Actually, we do not know up to what point the Lord will lead us. We sense, however, that we have discovered the beginning of our way. In all aspects of our life we want to forget the heroes that we are not and let grow the ordinary persons that we are. We want to accept our limitations, face our sinfulness and move ahead. With joy and hope.

Maybe one day, with the help of others, we will become like Joseph of Arimathea and, overcoming our fears, also dare to ask Pilate for the authorisation to remove Christ's body. Or maybe, and why not?, if the Lord wishes, we might be able to reach the degree of love and fidelity of the disciples closest to Him.

Finally, we are full of enthusiasm for the way of spiritual growth St. Ignatius offers us. We feel the same way about belonging to a federation of communities, from whose lives and experience we hope to be nourished, and whose objective we aspire to serve. So be it!

**EXTRACT FROM THE PRAYER  
AND FAREWELL MESSAGE OF PIERRE MARIE HOOG**

Lord, I thank you for these seven years in the CLC at the service of the Church and people. Thank you for the trust given me, the affection shown to me, the friendships I found there. Thank you for the fairness, the understanding, and the patience, too, with which demands were made of me.

Thank you, Lord, for this opportunity, over a period of seven years, of being invited to deepen and orient more stringently my attachment to the Ignatian way, of having thus received from lay people in the CLC a new confirmation of my vocation as a Jesuit.

...

Anyway, thank you, Lord, for letting me witness during these years the growth of our Community in France: a growth in numbers, a growth in spiritual maturity, almost measurable, if I may dare to say so, against the landmarks of the three Congresses: Antony 77, Stan 80, Chatenay 83, and PROVIDENCE 82. There has been notable progress on three points:

- The more and more explicit, reflected on and acknowledged adherence of the CLC to the spirituality received from the Ignatian tradition, through the growing practice of the Spiritual Exercises.
- The consolidation of the apostolic identity of the CLC which has no other reason for its existence than to forge instruments which are more and more united to God for mission. A missionary community, that is the vision, the vocation proper to the CLC which today is becoming more and more obvious to all.
- The renewal of relations with the Society of Jesus, re-activated both by us and by the Society. The new sensitivity to the CLC of Father Henri Madelin, which echoes the General Congregation, is one development for which I want to give thanks.

There is obviously still a lot to do on these three points... but the 'magis', progress, is written in large letters on the Ignatian banner.

For that, thank you, Lord!

Thank you for sending me to the CLC: those I met there gave me much, taught me a lot through the truth and the seriousness of their desire to serve you. I say this "en bloc" for all of them. It should be said for each one whom I met in particular.

...

The time has come for me to hand over. I have spent seven marvelously happy years labouring in a field - the CLC and review "Vie Chrétienne" -, where do say the least, I liked to push my own plough. The strange thing is the way in which it is ending.

In 1977 I arrived at the CLC fit and well. Through the will of an unforeseeable Providence and the whim of my vertebrae I am leaving it, probably half paralysed for life, in any case lame - I hardly dare to say, like Jacob! After seven years of bravery with a not very onerous burden, here I am invited on a new journey to the world of the handicapped. The novelty of this adventure is first of all in the daily discovery, through a thousand and one unavoidable details, that a handicap is handicapping!

There is also a question: not so much the silly question 'why?', or 'why me?', but the question: "it is given to me, to do what?" I don't yet know the answer..., and perhaps I won't know for a long time' I am still at the stage of astonishment and of discovering about it, not to mention the moments when I am terrified by what may be awaiting me in the years to come. I just tell myself that I was too rich in my riches and hampered by them, too well equipped, like David with Saul's helmet and sword. Today the game of playing victors is over! Apart from accepting, every day, the condition of my body, it remains for me to learn to surrender myself just as much, but in a different way, on new fronts, without either arms or armour.

And to learn at once to praise, whatever happens to me. I thought I had made an inventory of my weaknesses. That, of course, was not true! The person who thinks that does not realise that he stops, at the same time, counting the Lord's mercies.

There are definitely no other arms than faith and hope. What I am asked to learn, what I still have to learn, like Nathanael, is that one is only reborn completely naked, dressed only in the love of the Lord, of which you, the CLC, have been for me the outstanding messengers.

Thank you again for everything. And pray for me.

Pierre Marie HOOG s.j.  
(France)