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LOVE THE CHURCH BECAUSE CHRIST LOVES HER

In the Book of the Exercises the "Rules for Thinking ('feeling') with the Church" are found towards the end (S.E. 352-370).

Through studies made by Fr. Pedro Leturia and other specialists, we know that these rules have their origin in the tremendous graces Ignatius received at Manresa, but that their composition dates back only to the period in Paris, towards 1534, with some additions made later on, towards 1541, in Rome.

Nevertheless, the fact of their late composition does not explain why they are located towards the end of the Book. The reason behind this is a question of developing a spiritual disposition; the rules are the result of a process of a growing identification with Christ and with all that He loves.

The Exercises develop a spiritual pedagogy that seeks to make a person grow in "...intimate knowledge of the Lord, who has become man for me that I may love Him more deeply and follow Him more closely" (S.E. 104). This is the goal towards which the meditations of the mysteries of Christ's life are directed.

This intimate knowledge of the Lord has two poles which are linked to each other through the unifying bond of love. It has the tremendous power of producing a reciprocal presence in the sense of establishing communion between two persons.

The first pole is directed towards Jesus Christ. The desire to know Him urges the retreatant to become interested in all that is His. Friendship is nourished and grows through direct and close contact. Through its own dynamic it seeks to know the events, the words and the feelings of Jesus, the persons accompanying Him, His projects with their possible successes or failures. It is not content with what is vague but descends into details.

However, this does not stop our friendship, lest it become dissipated in trivial matters, from making an effort to move ever more deeply into the intimate knowledge of the Lord, of His designs and more profound feelings towards His Father and His brethren. In this way, the grace asked for, a more intimate knowledge of the Lord, will lead us to the point, the source, where His desires, thoughts, feelings and actions are laid bare; it is what the Bible designates with the primitive word (Urwort) "heart".

The second pole of this petition is that the knowledge of the Lord may be internalised in the retreatant. That he or she may pass from the level of abstract or scholarly knowledge (S.E. 2, "knowing much") to the more personal level where things are cherished and relished more intimately (S.E. 2), where God can communicate Himself and work immediately so that the retreatant may be filled and be "inflamed with His love and praise" (S.E. 15).

The meditations of the mysteries of Christ's life, with their repetitions, colloquies and application of senses, are a very special method of prayer to foster this intimate knowledge leading to greater love and closer following of Jesus.

The process of the Exercises leads the retreatant to a growing identification with the Lord and therefore with the Church.

The Kingdom meditation leads the retreatant to understand in their heart, the two great loves of Jesus Christ our Lord: the Father and His glorification, and men/women (including His enemies) and His loving design to bring them to the Father.

The meditations of the Third Week introduce the retreatant to the mystery that "there is no greater love than to lay one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15,13), while those of the Fourth Week enable a person to become familiar with the glorified love of the Father for His Son and for each one of us, because through destroying our sin and death it brings us to life in Christ.

The same may be said of the meditations of the Second Week, especially those more explicitly referring to the Church - for example the vocation of the apostles (S.E. 275), their being sent out to preach (S.E. 281) and the institution of the Eucharist (S.E. 289).

Without giving us a systematic theology about the Church, the Exercises make us accompany the Lord as He builds up His Church through persons and concrete actions. Because of this, a growing identification with Christ brings with it a corresponding growth in our identification with the Church; it leads us to develop, in our hearts, a "true sense" of the Church, which is not only something we know but a kind of natural instinct flowing out of love and a hindred feeling.

Cardinal Newman develops the theme of how concrete love of a friend can lead us to love the friends of our friend. This is how, then, at the human level, love becomes universal.

This fact, so simple and at times so far reaching, is the foundation of all the Ignatian rules for thinking (feeling) with the Church: love those whom Christ loves.

How does Christ love the Church? How should we love her?

Of the many images of the Church found in Sacred Scripture and in tradition, Ignatius retains two which most aptly express this intimate, powerful and fruitful love: the Church, spouse and mother (S.E. 353,363,365).

The retreatant, full of love and desire to serve the Lord, will turn with equal love towards Her who is the spouse of Christ, and Mary, who is both His mother and ours. Here lies the fundamental force of these rules. They are the natural outcome of love.

We know the rich biblical roots of the relationship between Bride and Bridegroom and how the New Testament brings this to a climax in the Book of Revelation where the purified Church, the new Jerusalem, "comes down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband" (Rv 21,2).

However, in these rules, Ignatius is not thinking of the Church of the final Kingdom, but of the Church militant (S.E. 352). That is to say, he is referring to the pilgrim Church, caked with dirt and dust as she moves through history. The hierarchical Church, made up of men who are weak and sinful, like Peter. The Church criticised and persecuted at all times by those who consider her either too materialistic (S.E. 354: confession, sacraments; 358: relics, indulgences, candles; 360: images, adornment) or too spiritual (S.E. 355,356,357). The Church of popular devotions so described in these rules, provoking the rejection and contempt of rationalists and individualists of all ages. The Church of the poor who are those who have developed sufficient human sensitivity to cherish these practices.

It is this Church we are called to love and defend; never to attack: "Finally, we must praise all the commandments of the Church, and be on the alert to find reasons to defend them and by no means in order to criticise them" (S.E. 361).

As we see, Ignatius does not side-step the Church of the present neither by idealising the Church of the first christians nor by anticipating the heavenly Jerusalem. His counsel is praise, praise, praise. The ultimate reason for this is that Christ loves the Church militant as she is, holy and, at the same time, sinful.

This motive is based on faith: "For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and in His spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord who gave the Ten Commandments that our holy Mother Church is ruled and governed" (S.E. 365).

Only faith in the Church, as the mystery of the presence of the Father's and the Risen Christ's divinising spirit, can lead a person to such docility to the Church. Herein lies the power of this "believing" which Ignatius uses.

Behind the words "rule" and "govern" lies the myste-

ry of the Spirit living within us, which enables us to savour the "Contemplation to obtain love": "...thus He makes a temple of me, since I am created in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty" (S.E. 235).

The same idea is expressed in the letter Ignatius wrote to Negus Claudius of Ethiopia: "...it is a special privilege to be united to the mystical body of the Catholic Church which is vivified and ruled by the Holy Spirit..." (Letter dated February 23, 1555).

Let us conclude this reflexion on the root and foundation of "feeling with the Church". The reasons Ignatius adduces for us to be always disposed to defend and follow the Church's directives, follow her legitimate traditions and customs, and respect her practices, are not based merely on human convenience nor on the purely juridical and institutional level.

The predisposition in favor of following what the hierarchical Church teaches, does or recommends is not founded on cold juridical norms, but on the tender, constructive, fruitful and active love of the Bridegroom for his Bride.

If we look at the matter from our situation as God's children, fidelity and active love towards the Church - a love which enables us to subordinate our point of view and desires to hers - are based on the solid fact of our belief that she is "our mother". Love for our Mother the Church is the foundation of our obedience, loyalty and service because what we do to her, we do to Christ (cf. Mt 25,40).

* * * * *

"Thinking (feeling) with the Church" is one of the characteristics of the Christian Life Communities: "Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ is here and now continuing His mission of salvation" (G.P.5).

This sense of the Church is not just something of the level of orthodox doctrine nor is it a vague, ineffective affection. It is in no way identified with a mere passive disposition to obey what we are ordered to do. It is doubt

less something of all this, but much more: "This sense of the Church provokes concrete personal collaboration in the work of building up the Kingdom of God" (G.P. 5).

Our sense of the Church should inspire us to know, live and put into practice the spirit and the directives of the Second Vatican Council. This is the great challenge, the central issue for those who are called to be active and militant in the Church today.

The orientations given after the Council, by the Popes or local bishops, should not distract us from this central objective, but should reinforce it for us. "To make the Council" is a task, not only for twenty years, but for many generations. This seed of grace the Lord gifted to His Church through Pope John XXIII - each CLC member is called to take up and to foster its growth. However, to make it fruitful, it is necessary to strengthen ever more our sense of the Church, our Mother, by trying to make ourselves open to receive the great gift of the Father: a growing knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

Juan OCHAGAVIA, S.J.

LIFE STYLE

Becoming more aware and evaluating in a CLC group

"Creating a new awareness and a new way of acting is important and fundamental. That, however, should never allow us to forget our responsibilities regarding prevailing political opinions and government policies, particularly of our government and public opinion. Catholic scientists and politicians, our associations and academies (centres of adult formation) have the duty of working together, to make a significant contribution in this whole area.

The leaders in the Church and all the faithful should be sensitized. The Church can and must make an important contribution because the problems are at the level of the hierarchy of human values and the standards of society. We must therefore make the effort needed to rethink and reformulate our own position" ('Zur Zukunft der Menschheit', Cardinal Döpfner, Secretariate of the German Episcopal Conference, Bonn).

Texts which, like this one, are concerned with a 'new life style', have raised serious questions for several groups in our diocese since 1975. The impulse to do something came to us from various sides: first of all from the CLC itself through its world Assembly at Manila in 1976, from the Assembly of the German Federation, from the German bishops, from 'Action 365', from the 'Ecumenical Initiative for one world' (two ecumenical movements which have been working in this way for several years, and with whom we are in contact), and from many other sources. Then through meetings of leaders of our diocesan community further incentives continually built up to approach this theme as a group, through an exchange of material and experiences. I would now like to tell you how my group has proceeded.

Our group, which is made up of five young married women, had been meeting for several years when the question of life style arose for us. We faced it for several years until the group broke up. But its members, who are now in other groups, are still marked and feel the repercussions. During those years we constantly were confronted by the challenge of the Sermon on the Mount, in particular 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'. Visits by CLC friends from various parts of the world, as well as CLC bulletins and magazines, helped us considerably.

Our Way of Proceeding

The starting point for questions on our life style was provided by four exercises done together during a series of meetings.

1st exercise

- I write down all the details of my day, to-day.
- Reflection: which ones were reflected on consciously, which were lived automatically? What must I, can I, do I want to change? When do I ask what is it that God wants to do through me?
- Listening group (exchange of our personal reflections)
- Follow-up in daily life: living the day in a more conscious way!

2nd exercise

- Each member makes a 'collage' expressing: 'Where do I feel my powerlessness? Where do I see signs of hope?'
- Each one presents his/her 'collage'
- Mutual exchange about what has been heard.

3rd exercise

- Free-flowing discussion on what we draw life from
- We classify the results in terms of spiritual and material values
- Exchange.

4th exercise (in several steps)

1. Reflection: What are the things, values, goods of importance for me, which come to my mind? (I write them down in the order in which they come to my mind). Exchange.
2. Reflection: Does the order in which I have listed these things correspond to the priority towards which I am drawn or to the one I really live? Have I forgotten something important? Why? Exchange.
3. Reflection: What do I do with my wealth/possessions? Am I happy to have so much? Am I grateful for them? Do I see them as an end in themselves? Do I use them as if the 'wealth' belonged to me? What is my relationship with people who have less (migrant workers, the unemployed, the marginalised, the handicapped...)
What are my feelings when I think about sharing?
Am I in solidarity with other people, for example, in other continents, cultures? What are the signs of this? What determines me in the use of my 'wealth' (resources)? Who or what influences my life style?

What are the repercussions of my life style on my environment (family, children, neighbourhood, service, profession,...)

Exchange.

After these four exercises we turned for a period of time to the life style of Jesus, as it appears in certain Scriptural texts, like Lk 19,1-9 (Zaccheus), Lk 12,15-24 (the rich man and his harvest), Mt 11,16-19 (Jesus' work). We questioned ourselves, first in a personal reflection, then in an exchange:

- What style of life is described here?
What words of Jesus about his own life style or about the life style of those who follow him impresses me?
What does this mean for my life style?
- I remember the 4th exercise and particularly the second step: How did Jesus use these values, these areas of life, these goods (that I have listed)?
What order of values did he establish?
What passages from the Gospel come to my mind on this subject?
- Exchange.

Consequences

In the numerous and excellent exchanges that we had, we clearly recognised the reasons for our gratitude, but we also saw what we had to change. After several years, what remains of these 'results' that is effective and tangible? I posed that question to the members of my first group, and also to members of other CLC groups in our diocese. Summarising the responses, here is what we now see.

- The groups are not on the same level, in a uniform way.
- Beyond the permanent challenge regarding our own life style, there are still the following questions:
 - * How do I feel in the presence of people who have a more expensive life style?
 - * Do I keep my distance or can I accept the fact?
 - * Am I ready to talk about it?

- It is more difficult to put into effect in daily life what one has recognised and seen, and to convince one's family about it, if only one of the spouses belongs to a CLC group. A lot of love and patience and a readiness for compromise are necessary.
- The starting point for our confrontation with our own life style came from the CLC. It allowed us to build a good foundation for all the subsequent confrontations and questions which came to us later on from different directions. We were then more alert. Our present journey is still influenced by this.
- The theme has helped us to see more clearly where poverty and wealth are to be found in the world and in myself and how I make use of these (values, goods, raw materials, things, etc.).
- Our life style has really become more simple and has wide repercussions in daily life, in meals, in buying and using cars, holidays, clothes, etc. That sometimes means a conscious renunciation, sometimes a conscious yes, a conscious joy.
- The influence on our decisions is clear: people have priority over things! How are health, strength, etc... invested in service?
- Visits of CLC members from other countries have enlarged our horizons and made the world community tangible by pointing to possibilities of realising it.

We are all grateful for these incentives and we willingly unite ourselves to Paul: "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Ph. 1,9-11).

Josephine Schuhbeck

Just out!

CLARIFYING DIFFERENT ROLES
A Supplement to the Survey

This brochure which is the result of 18 months of exchanges between six CLC leaders and assistants from different parts of the world (a working-group with a mandate from the Executive Council), answers a double question which always arises during the growth of a group as it moves towards CLC:

- What is the particular contribution of each role to the growth of a group as it develops in the direction of CLC?
- The roles in themselves do not guarantee growth if their contribution is not clarified and determined by the needs of a group at the various stages of its journey. What are these needs?

The roles of the ecclesiastical assistant, the guide and the coordinator are clarified in this way.

The needs of the group, the responses that they call for, the kind of help the role should give at a particular moment, the difficulties which must be attended to, particular points which must be watched - all these are specified and described in detail for each stage.

This booklet can be obtained by writing to:

CLC SECRETARIAT
C.P. 6139
Borgo S.Spirito 8
00195 Rome - Italy

Price: \$US 1.50 or the equivalent in other currency.

YOUTH - PROGRESSIO

INTRODUCTION

In this issue we are publishing an article on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a report on the Way of the Cross made through the key sections of the city organised by the youth of Luxembourg, and some information about the European formation course for youth leaders. We close by giving some flashes on how FORPYL (Formation Program for Youth Leaders) is being used.

The article on reconciliation deals with an important theme since it is related to a familiarity with the sacraments which should characterise the life of our groups and each one of us. It is an interesting contribution as it offers us an understanding of a sacrament which often presents difficulties to many people regarding its meaning and concrete ways of expressing it. It gives an occasion for us to reflect about it.

Then follow two articles on community experiences - one already lived and the other in the process of being prepared: the Way of the Cross in Luxembourg and the formation course in Naples. Both are occasions for young people to get together, in their search to give an authentic expression to their presence in the world. The second event is also an occasion to experience life in community and fraternity, to seek together ways and means to build an effective youth community in Europe.

The echoes about FORPYL take us outside Europe; they come from India and speak about how useful a work elaborated in Latin America has been.

These are signs of activity and constant search, of ventures, of discoveries, of the desire to be present in the world and to grow in faith. Signs of hope for our youth groups and the future adult groups.

Giovanna Chirri

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Does the sacrament of reconciliation still have a meaning? We receive it only rarely. However, often, after having hesitated, I have taken the trouble to go to the sacrament. And afterwards, without knowing why, I felt a great joy spread through me. A joy that cannot be explained.

It is true that the fruit of these few moments consecrated to the Lord is extraordinary. You just have to take a little step, that is, get up and ask forgiveness, and the Lord forgets everything. He gives us a new chance.

We must make the most of this chance, all the more so because what the Lord asks of us is not inhuman. But it is really worth-while to have a goal. "I did not do too well in this particular matter this time; that is why I am going to make an effort in this area". So, next time I will approach the Lord and I will say: "You see, these days my behaviour is still very imperfect, but I have paid attention to that matter. And the trust you gave me last time has not been useless, and today I again ask you to have confidence in me".

The sacrament of reconciliation is certainly the most difficult to understand. For my part, I would compare it to two friends. It happens that, after some misunderstanding, two friends stop seeing each other, turn their backs on each other for a few days...even weeks. But whilst their quarrel will be forgotten, their feelings of remorse at having been separated can haunt them. It is then that one of them will make a move towards the other, to ask forgiveness. Both acknowledge their wrong, their failing, and so they relieve each other of a heavy burden through becoming reconciled.

It is the same thing with the Lord. He is there waiting for us. He is always ready to forgive us. But occasionally we need a lot of time to recognise our faults, and the separation can be long. When we sincerely ask forgiveness from God, he grants it and gives us a new start.

I remember that a friend told me that one day he had fallen out with a very good friend. At the end of six months he visited him at his home. It was at that moment, when they threw themselves into each other's arms, that he really discovered the meaning of reconciliation.

For me sacramental reconciliation is a time for questioning ourselves, an occasion for taking stock in order to start out again from zero.

CLC - VERVIERS
Belgium

A FOUNDING EXPERIENCE

As preparation for the Pope's visit to our little country, our CLC group decided to offer nights of prayer for young people. In fact, we had seen in our own lives that praying, having a faith view of the world and its events was very difficult... as there are so many other ways and so many obstacles. Certain 'peak' moments have helped us grow - we wanted to offer the same possibility to other young people. Our programme: the way of the cross followed by a night of prayer. The whole group took part in the preparation: distributing leaflets, making posters, preparing the way of the cross, etc.

We wanted to have a Church procession, so we asked if we could have the cross that the Holy Father had entrusted to the young people at the end of the Holy Year. We wanted to carry that cross through the streets of our town, through the area of prostitution, past the banks and the clinics.

All the preparations were at last finished - and we were a little afraid. Would there be people to take part in our procession? Would people mock us?

On the evening we had chosen there had been a light rainfall. So we were afraid that we would be the only ones at our starting point, Luxemburg station. What an unusual

sight to see a great wooden cross erected in front of our station. Some passers-by stopped, a tramp started talking to us... and suddenly we were a good hundred young people around the cross. Singing and praying we passed through the area of prostitution: a lot of people were astonished, others embarrassed, but there were also some who became thoughtful when they saw us. We carried the heavy cross in turn. It was through having the wood weighing on my shoulders that I began to understand what the love of Jesus was, what are the pain and the fatigue of all those who bend under their crosses in the world today. We made stations in front of a school, a clinic, in front of the main building of our iron foundry and in front of a bank, as well as in the park - the favourite place for tramps. I have understood that the cross of Jesus is not a romantic dream, that it has borne the sufferings of all of us.. prostitutes, sick people, exploited people. I understood that he carried MY cross. After two hours of walking, our bishop welcomed us in front of a little church where we continued our night of prayer.

I believe that this way of the cross has changed me. I am no longer afraid to show my faith. I no longer fear that my faith is only a romantic dream. I now know that it is real, that the cross and the resurrection touch us in the most real and most intimate depths of our life.

Our way of the cross is finished, but it is only a beginning which we have started together. The evaluation in the group has shown us that God is calling us to deepen our faith and to take it to other young people.

CLC - FIELDGEN - LUXEMBURG

NAPLES '85

A European Youth CLC Meeting

At the invitation of the national community of Italy, a meeting of youth CLC leaders from European countries will take place from July 25 to August 4. This meeting will be along the lines of and in the nature of a follow-up to the Youth Colloquium. It should provide the participants with the occasion to read together, with a christian vision, a two-fold reality: the concrete situation of their country (in particular what concerns young people) and the present situation of youth groups. This is to enable them, as a consequence, and in the light of this vision, to recognise the positive experiences they can develop, and the difficulties they can remedy; and also to strengthen their links with one another so that they can face problems and challenges together. Above all, through ten days of living and working together, it should help the participants experience more deeply the CLC style of life and its communitarian expression.

The participants are presently involved in a serious preparation. Some guidelines have already been sent to them in the form of two questionnaires which have shown their usefulness in the preparation for the Youth Colloquium. We are publishing the questionnaires below. WHY?

We are convinced that these guidelines for reflexion can be useful at many levels. On the one hand, they can be useful at the national, regional or diocesan levels, for those in charge of youth CLC groups and their formation. On the other hand, many of the questions can serve as themes for meetings or points for evaluation in youth groups which have had two to three years of experience as a group. The help they offer is at the level of fostering a growing awareness of what is going on around us, which is a necessary condition for progress and development.

I - Youth around the world

1. What are the main things you would like to tell others about your country? (e.g. the political, social, cultural situation?)

2. Some facts:
 - what percentage of your population is youth? (i.e. under 25)
 - what percentage of the unemployed is young people?
 - what percentage of young people is Christian, Catholic?
3. How do the young people you know feel about family life?
 - Where would most live? What would they spend most of their time doing?
 - What do they do for leisure?
 - The young people you know - do they have jobs, or are they students, or what?
 - Would you say that young people in your country are generous and want to change things?
4. In your country, what would you say influences young people most?
 - Would you say that the values of your society affect the decisions of young people you know?
 - What are some of these values?
5. Do you think your education system (schools, university, teachers' colleges) is geared towards helping young people?
6. In your country, are young people hopeful about the future? If so, what gives them hope?
7. What are the major traps for young people in your country? (e.g. drugs? etc...)
8. What is the Church doing for young people in your country?
 - How do young people feel about the Church?

II - Youth CLC groups (Age: 18-25)

Statistics

- How many youth groups do you have in your country?
- What is the average number of members in a group?
- How long does a group stay together for? one year, two years? more?
- Where are your groups based - parishes? schools? university?

- What would be the age of the members you know? Where do the members come from - are they students, workers, or what?
- Is there an experience of service? Is this on the individual level or group level?

Means and helps used in your group

- How are members introduced into your groups?
- What sort of experience do you offer new members?
- What concrete help is given them once they are in?
- When people decide to continue, what happens? what do you do for them?
- What difficulties have you found in these stages?
- Once people have a knowledge and experience of CLC, what happens when they leave school? Do people continue? How does this happen?

Dealing with particular aspects

- As you see it, what does it mean for people to really live their Christianity?
- Does the group play a part in members' decisions regarding:
 - * The work they will do (career)
 - * Their attitude to money and society
 - * Their state of life (e.g. marriage)
 - * Peace and war...military service...etc.
- In your national community, what is done for young people - publications, formation courses, youth rallies...?
- How is the CLC youth reality present in your national community? its structures?

- How would you rate its participation?
- How do you see CLC youth reality present in the World Community? its structures?
- What does the World Community mean to your youth groups?

FIRST ECHOES RECEIVED ON THE USE OF FORPYL

It has been a year since we published FORPYL, FORMATION PROGRAM FOR YOUTH LEADERS, a program made up of eight booklets, covering seven week-ends, spread over two years. Each booklet gives a comprehensive explanation of the subject matter and offers concrete means to arrive at an integrated formation for service.

A number of requests for this program has reached us from different parts of the world, from people in charge of youth formation looking for concrete 'instruments' to use in their work of guiding youth groups. A year has passed, here are some of the echoes we have received:

"This short term has been a busy one. We had quite a number of picnics with school and college units. Then, coupled with that I conducted Part I of FORPYL for two groups: one for college youth and the other for Marathi speaking youth of the parish. The latter was in Marathi - for which I got the help of two marathi speaking brothers. The Course was a great success. For the next academic year, we have planned other courses of FORPYL." (Joe Alexander - Pune - India)

"The FORPYL is extremely useful. I have found it 'just the thing' for one of our youth groups becoming CLC. I am very grateful for the copies you sent me." (Daphne Stockman - Calcutta - India)

THE MEETING OF EUROPEAN ASSISTANTS - A SUCCESSFUL PREMIERE

The European meeting of the CLC took place in Rome at the beginning May - a unique occasion for getting together for the first time the national assistants of our ancient continent.

It is difficult to describe the atmosphere of companionship, the feeling of having been sent on the same apostolate by the same Lord. But the aim of our meeting was not to form a 'consolation group', but to pray and reflect on what it means to be a national ecclesiastical assistant in Europe today with a view to a 'something more' in the service of the Lord and our brothers. The meeting place, the general curia, and the internationality of its jesuit community reminded us of the universality of our mission: Europe is only a part of the world. The presence of José Gsell and Cora Sim and the participation of Tobie Zakia were a refreshing element at the meeting, and reminded us - if we needed to be reminded - of the lay character of the CLC. The participation of Juan Ochagavia S.J. was a sign for us of the mission received by the Society for the CLC.

Each of the four working-sessions began with a conference, and each conference was followed by a time for prayer and personal reflection, sharing in small groups, and an exchange together in a plenary session. The four presentations were by Patrick O'Sullivan, S.J., Juan Ochagavia, S.J., Claude Flipo, S.J., and the president of the CLC, Tobie Zakia.

It would be very difficult to reproduce here the richness of these interventions. I will therefore limit myself to outlining some ideas that struck me.

The world and Europe are in a state of flux - our old western civilisation is undergoing profound changes - christianity was at the basis of 'our epoch' - the rights of man are a clear sign of this - but what will come of it tomorrow? That depends on our ability to know how to

read the signs of the times, to know how to discern. It depends on our involvement in such diverse sectors as the problems of peace and armament and the questions posed by genetics.

Certainly the challenges of the modern world are presented to us in an almost abstract way, but are we also struck by the call of Christ? Are we not too quickly caught up in a formation which is indeed very penetrating (aspect of the two standards) but does not rely enough on the call of Christ (aspect of the Kingdom)? Are we enthusiasts, do we let the desire for service without any limits and compromises enter deeply into our loves? Are we ready to invest all of our generosity? Are we ready to pay the price, to break new ground, to take risks? Are we ready to be 'ignatian guides'?

CLCs as communities of discernment for mission presuppose the call of the Kingdom. In the consumer society which is ours it is very difficult to hear the call of Christ. Many other things fill our ears and our hearts. We should not be frightened of promoting experiences and experiments which foster an awareness to the call of the Lord.

The conferences and the sharing highlighted the balanced approach that the national CLC assistant must have: to be a 'guide' and at the same time a companion who is full of respect and "discerning love" - knowing how to be demanding whilst remaining a 'companion', not taking over the service of the president and yet rendering fully his service as assistant. Full incorporation into the apostolic body of the Society is the necessary condition here for true service in the CLC.

If the assistant really fulfills his role as guide when it is a question of responding to a call and in the area of formation, he will help the members of the CLC to develop their sense of mission - the true criterion of authenticity.

The high point of our gathering was undoubtedly the meeting with Father General. His talk and his replies to our questions were, for me, a confirmation of and a new inspiration for my mission as a Jesuit with the CLC. I re-

member above all his insistence on the Spiritual Exercises, the backbone of the CLC.

This meagre synthesis of our meeting does not say a word about the personal contacts in-between the conferences, the evenings at the secretariate which dealt at depth with questions like the relationship between the CLC and the local Church, etc.; it does not say a word about the quality of the sharing or the genuine friendship evident among us.

Nevertheless, I hope that I express the feelings of all in saying that the meeting allowed me to rediscover the meaning of my companionship with Jesus.

Jean-Claude HOLLERICH, S.J.

"BEGIN FROM WHERE YOU ARE..."

An experience from France

In the region Rhône-Alpes some groups were experiencing difficulties to such an extent that certain people, including those most convinced about the CLC and the oldest members of the community, considered leaving their group. In 1984 the regional council (which brings together, once a year, the group leaders and guides) came to this conclusion which was confirmed on the occasion of the regional week-end (in which all the members of the community participated) and also by a long discernment in the regional team. The following facts came to light:

- * the underlying factor was diagnosed as a half-hearted use of ignatian means in the groups, which led to a certain disenchantment on the part of some and created a persistent ambiguity for others as they were not in a position to make a clear choice about CLC;
- * however, people did have a profound desire to move forward;
- * it was proposed to have a typical CLC experience, for whenever this had been possible (in certain groups, on the occasion of a regional week-end dealing with evaluation, for example), it had brought unquestionably a deep

joy, peace, light and inspiration for individuals and their communities.

On the basis of all the above, the regional team, through prayer and sharing, decided to propose to the whole region to have an experience in the form of a series of 6 meetings prepared in detail by a dozen members of the CLC.

1st meeting:

- Personal prayer from the Bible and shared prayer/or, if possible, a 'desert week-end' with one's group
- Gn 12/1-9 the call of Abraham
- Gn 13/1-18 Abraham, Lot
- Gn 18/1-15 the oak of Mamre
- A list of personal directors was sent to everyone

2nd meeting:

- How to read my life from God's point of view (examen)
- Refining the awareness of our interior movements
- Shared prayer: Lk 24/13-32 the disciples on the way to Emmaus.

3rd meeting:

- Discernment in one's small group
- Sharing in the feelings of the other
- Silent prayer from 1 Samuel 3/1-10

4th meeting:

- Challenge, the mutual support of the members
- A time during the meeting for the community sacrament of reconciliation
- Mark 2/1-12 a paralytic

5th meeting:

- Praying our 'map of life'. (Our 'map of life' takes up the text of the General Principles, with commentary)

6th meeting:

- To choose: where is God sending me and where is He waiting for me?
- Celebration of the Eucharist.

All of this is going on in most of our groups in the region. Only God will know the fruits of it...

Chantal Crespe - Michel & Christine Sibille

CLC MISSION IN MUSLIM AND ORTHODOX COUNTRY

"As members of the People of God, we have received the mission to be by our words and actions witnesses to Christ before men... The group... prods us to work for the reform of the structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination..." (G.P. 7).

Egypt

Our country has a population of about 45,000,000. The christians are merely 5,000,000, of whom only about 130,000 are catholics. Most of the five million christians are orthodox (Copts). The other 40,000,000 are Muslims.

Egypt is a poor country, in spite of all its natural resources. There is a small number of very rich families who live in scandalous luxury, although most of the population finds it hard to make both ends meet at the end of the month. The wages of employees, especially those of the State, are miserable, while the price of food, housing and clothing is continually increasing. This pushes employees into accepting or even looking for bribes or dishonest earnings.

Our Orthodox Brethren

We cannot deny that it would be difficult here in Egypt to limit the CLC to catholics only. Besides, we are not sure that that would be desirable. Anyway, it is a fact that our members are, quite often, coptic orthodox, who, through the schools or other means have come into contact with the CLC. Relations between catholics and orthodox are not always easy, above all on the level of the institutional Church. Ecumenical dialogue is not without its problems. There is distrust and fanaticism on both sides. To give just one example, if a catholic girl wants to marry a young man who is orthodox, she must be rebaptised in the orthodox Church.

Faced with such a situation we feel that we have a mission to accomplish: that of helping our two churches to open up, to live their common faith together, and thus present a united witness to the muslim world. There are also some Greek orthodox and protestants among us. We must say, without boasting, that the union between us is experienced in a very natural way. The only point which caused problems at a certain time was that of relations with the Holy See, but after Providence '82 we saw that our particular mission was to live the union that is among us in fidelity to our different churches. From the point of view of the catholic Church in Egypt, we are now recognised by the authorities, thanks to the new Apostolic Administrator and Mgr. Ignace (formerly Fr. Eliyya Yacoub).

The Muslim

Our muslim brethren have often reminded us, especially in these last years, that Islam is "din wa dawla" (a religion and a state or power). We christians are the "ahl el zimma", tolerated people, second class citizens. That explains why christians in Egypt are very often victims of every kind of discrimination. They can never hold certain positions as employees of the State. They do not have the right to marry muslims without changing their religion. They cannot be part of the secret police, etc. Having lived for some years as a minority, the christians themselves tend to have a ghetto mentality and to seek refuge in fanaticism. Faced with fundamentalism, religious fanaticism has grown greatly, above all in the poorer milieux. And we must confess that the priests and ecclesiastical authorities do not help to overcome this attitude.

We are often criticised as christians, or at least our faith is criticised in the newspapers and on television, and we do not have the right to use these means to defend ourselves. All our activities are watched by the secret police and from time to time we are called in for interrogation. The only aim here is to inconvenience us and to discourage us.

In saying all that we do not want to suggest at all that we live in an environment of continual persecution,

or that good relations with the muslim are not possible. It is not an official, open persecution. It is only a practice of discrimination in what people do. Nobody talks about it, and officially it would even be denied, but everybody does it. In general, relations with individual muslims are excellent, but on the official level the tone changes and one meets a lot of obstacles.

What to do?

An easy question to put, but not at all easy to answer! We have chosen this question as the theme for our next national assembly: 'Living our CLC mission in a muslim milieu in Egypt'.

There is a great temptation to respond to fanaticism with fanaticism. The *lex talionis* is as old as the world! But our vocation as christians and our CLC vocation, which calls for the liberation of man, call us to something else.

We try to discover how to live love and christian forgiveness in our daily life, without at the same time abandoning the struggle for a more just order in the country. We try to orient ourselves towards the struggle for a social justice that includes everybody, christians and muslims. The number of muslims who are victims of social injustice is not small. We believe that we have a mission within our own Churches: to help them to come out of their ghetto mentality and the distrust that so often lurks there. Probably, one of the first things to do is to look for more scientific and reliable information about Islam, because our information is often the fruit of prejudices which have been passed on from one generation to the next. Fanaticism is often the fruit of ignorance.

A CLC teacher who worked in a State school was the victim of discrimination. She was disgusted by the behaviour of her head master. She was inclined to give tit for tat, or else give up completely. After having shared her experience with her community in a spirit of prayer and discernment, she decided to be more open to the muslims, while demanding her rights. Her attitude of openness struck those who worked with her, and she was thus able

to bear witness to the love and forgiveness of Christ through what she did.

Our witness can only be a silent witness because we do not have the right to speak openly about our faith to non christians. We hope that we can live our faith deeply enough so that our whole lives can speak of Him in whom we believe.

Social Corruption

The last point that we would like to mention here is social corruption. As we said above, because of the great poverty of the majority and the high cost of living, corruption is to be found at every level of the bureaucracy. You cannot get anything in the State offices, or even else where, without paying bribes. Teachers in school often do not explain the whole lesson, so that they can be sure of getting pupils for special lessons. Doctors offer their care at exorbitant prices, and the sick poor people are obliged to pay. In addition, the consumer spirit is rampant.

Our effort in favour of a poor life style seems - as far as we are concerned - to respond to these evils. But that should not stop us from fighting against an unjust system. It is true that great efforts have been made to try to improve the situation. But it is only a drop in the ocean.

Undoubtedly we must help to form a social conscience and honest morality. Something which is more quickly said than done! In this we often have the feeling that we are swimming against the tide. "Everybody does it, why not me?" is a question which is often put to us, or which we put to ourselves, because we are no better than the others. But thanks to our sharing of life in community and thanks to discernment, we hope to arrive at the formation of "responsible christians" at the service of the Church and the country.

Conclusion

We have the impression that we have spoken vaguely, even though we have begun from our real situation. We must confess that we are still trying to find our way, and we are all still young in the CLC way. We hope to have something more concrete to offer you after our next assembly in August.

The National Council

ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN THE MARKETPLACE

The christian family should be a place or "environment" where christian parents can raise their children in a christian way. This environment is typified by a set of values and standards that seeks to know better and live out the Gospel message. This environment should be open to people outside of the family but outside involvements should foster growth in the family rather than be happening at the expense of the family. The christian family must always be moving towards "obviously" living out the christian ideal. As parents, our role is to give our children the skills to survive in the marketplace as well as challenge them to change what they can. Perhaps, hopefully so, they will work towards making their environment a better place, a little closer to what scripture calls us to.

The christian family must learn to truly love one another so that we might better love others. We must foster trust, peace (as opposed to violence in our interpersonal relationships). We need to continue to struggle to stand for what we say we believe in and to experience joy

in that belief; to be satisfied and confident in our beliefs (centred on Christ) so that Christ's hands may reach us when He calls. WE MUST PRAY TOGETHER. If we strive to be "free" with Christ and with one another, the environment of our family will openly welcome a friend to a place where one can meet Jesus - enter His heart, feel His love and be consoled. The marketplace is primarily here right under our roofs. Here, we must be present, aware, vibrant in order to serve and live effectively in the greater marketplace. We feel called to live in an environment that does not place consumerism number one on its list of priorities.

We need to support our children as christians in the marketplace. Before we can support our child on his/her journey we must support him/her as who they are! We must be present to them, with them, truly present, truly aware of them as who they are, what they need from us. We must show them our love so that they can be loving people. If they see our love, how much greater is their chance of knowing the Father's love. If we play with them we will have the door open to pray with them. We must ever strive to develop and foster open relationships if we truly want to know their needs, their struggles, their joys. A child's main grasp of morality is the "Thou shalt not..." or "Thou shall..." ethic. It is necessary that we lay down some rules, and set some guidelines. To support their faith journey we must be parents of strong faith and we must celebrate their faith journey and prove to them that it is important. We also must know what is happening in the marketplace so we can get involved with their struggles. We need to share our faith with them: Pray with them, become familiar with the Bible with them and celebrate the Eucharist with them.

Can CLC support?

Yes, it can. As an adult or for the adult, it can be a spawning ground for our own spiritual growth. It is hard to support your child's growth if you are not growing. CLC provides a greater family where our family can come and share a common faith experience. CLC is one of the

survival tools that help us as a family go out and meet the many challenges in the marketplace.

As families we should appear together and go to things as a unit. This will show unity and oneness to the family. It will demonstrate to others the bond that unites us. We should be helpful to one another, work together in a cooperative sense. The family supports the individual family members in their individual work, play or study. We must rely on and ask for help from other members of the family and then we may be an example to other families and help other families also. WE MUST PRAY TOGETHER.

Integrity in business must also be a part of our way of life.

Christian families have a call to be light in the darkness in our society today. Many influences are undermining the very heart and fibre of families today. Therefore we, as christians, have a great responsibility to mission to the marketplace, both individually and collectively as families. As individuals, we are all called to witness and evangelize in the "nitty gritty" of our lives. In our factories, offices, neighbourhoods, schools, we need not to preach the Gospel, but to LIVE the Gospel. This is not an easy task; it demands our prayer and awareness, so we can move "in tune" with God's call and His will. Couples need to witness fidelity and depth of commitment so others can see marriage as sacrament and God's gift and grace. As parents, we need to fight the materialistic mentality and enlighten and educate about the negative influences of the mass media, especially television. Our children need to be strong to challenge current ways of acting. This is very difficult for them and they need a lot of support from home and our CLC communities.

CLC can help by encouraging daily prayer, daily awareness; this can strengthen a marriage if done as a couple two to three times a week. The daily awareness could also be used together as a family. Decision-making within the family setting as parents and children is very important.

Providing a larger community experience in CLC can help our children so that all can see we are not alone as a family but we have a broader base.

Areas where we, in Canada, need to grow concerning youth and the family:

1. Encouraging youth to become involved in CLC;
2. Teaching parents how to educate their children in the faith, etc. so that it has relevance to their lives and life situations;
3. Forming family-based CLC's that join with one another for support, sharing, learning and mission;
4. Teaching how to use the daily Ignatian awareness examen as couples and families;
5. Teaching how to use Ignatian decision-making, not only in communities but also in the family.

Barbara Peloso