



NOVEMBER 1985
54th Year
N.6

towards
Loyola '86

SUMMARY

- FOREWORD 2
- A NEW FINDING OF THE CROSS
 (Brother Andrew) 6
- THE KINGDOM
 (Patrick O'Sullivan S.J.) 11
- PRAYING WITH MARY
 (Josefina Errazuriz) 15
- VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAITY
 IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD
 (Brendan McLoughlin) 24
- REGIONAL CONVENING
 CONTINUES COMMON CONCERNS
 (Dominic Totaro S.J.) 29
- 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.N. 31

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE
COMMUNITIES * C.P. 6139 * Borgo S. Spirito 5 * 00195 ROME *
ITALY * ENGLISH-SPANISH-FRENCH EDITIONS. EDITOR: José GSELL

FOREWORD

From August 21 to 31, 1986, delegates of national CLC's will meet at Loyola for their tenth Assembly of the General Council. The theme proposed and accepted by the different countries is:

**MARY, MODEL OF OUR MISSION
IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH
"Do whatever He tells you"**

An anniversary

Loyola '86 will be the tenth of a series of General Assemblies that have marked the renewal of the Christian Life Communities for the past thirty years. Recalling the characteristics of these assemblies will allow us to see what has already been accomplished: Rome '54 - Point of Departure towards a universal renewal; Newark '59 - first steps towards the General Principles; Bombay '64 - Waiting for the end of Vatican Council II; Rome '67 - "Almost a new foundation"; Santo Domingo '73 - Challenge for the future; Augsburg '73 - Our service: liberation of the whole man and of all men; Manila '76 - Poor with Christ for a better service; Rome '79 - Towards a World Community at the service of one world; Providence '82 - YES to the call towards a World Community. A long way towards rediscovering its original identity: its Ignatian roots, its nature as a way of life, its service in the gift of self.

A place

Loyola, at the heart of the Basque country, is the birthplace of St. Ignatius, as everyone knows. Why has it been chosen for our tenth assembly? A world CLC meeting at the same place where God willed the author of the Spiritual Exercises to be born seems to be an affirmation of our vocation: "to serve in the Church according to the spirit of Ignatius, living it and bringing it to the world". It is the fruit of a journey taken in successive steps which has made us discover the grace of the Spiritual Exercises, that enabled us to understand and love Saint Ignatius.

It is therefore a positive response to God who has called us to this specific way of life; a sign of fidelity to the grace of His call; also, a humble request to live and serve Him and accomplish His will.

A synthesis

The theme of our meeting points to the aim of our groups in underlining two essential characteristics: love for the Virgin Mary and our participation in Christ's mission in the world today. The delegates at Providence '82 will remember with what emphasis the role of Mary and the sense of the Church emerged towards the end of the Assembly. They emerged because of what they are: two essential characteristics of our way of life. The theme proposed summarises these characteristics so that we may be able to deepen what is and what should become more and more our apostolic life.

The spirit of the preparation

A CLC world assembly is an event which involves all the CLC members - and their friends! For this reason we have decided to dedicate - starting from this number and for the four following issues - the content of *Progressio* to the preparation of the Assembly. You will find points for reflexion and evaluation, experiences from different parts of the world, suggestions for group sharing, also news... all centred around the theme of the assembly. We hope to offer to all the CLC's - and to our readers - a concrete way of moving on the road towards Loyola.

In practice, our preparation will center on three points:

prayer: from now on may Loyola '86 become a permanent intention in our personal and community prayer. May the Lord bless our efforts and orient them according to His will. May He become more and more the Center of our Community.

life: may our personal and community life express, on all occasions, the love and freedom of those who have committed themselves to follow Christ.

effort to enter into the preparation of Loyola '86, using the material which will be provided. We have a lot to learn from one another. This preparation gives us the opportunity to listen to one another, to journey together and to open ourselves to the work of His Spirit in us and around us.

Progressio

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO and the PREPARATION OF THE ASSEMBLY LOYOLA '86

You will notice that in this first issue of *Progressio* dedicated to the preparation of the assembly Loyola '86, the 'green pages' have disappeared. This was decided for the benefit of preparing together - adults and youth - an event of great importance for our world community. The fundamental attitudes required, such as listening, reflexion and discernment, concern all of us and they will be more meaningful if preparation is done in common.

Obviously, this does not mean that the contributions of young people will no longer be published. In consistency with what has been mentioned above, in the next issues we will find personal and community experiences of adults as well as young people from different parts of the world. They will challenge us and make us question our lives, so that we may be able to consciously and deeply prepare for the meeting of Loyola. In this way, not only the delegates, but all the members of the world community will be present in the meeting.

We therefore request the readers of these pages to be sensitive to what is being shared and to be open to reflect on them and accept them.

Insisting on this appeal for a preparation shared by everyone, we would like to propose - particularly for youth groups - some means to help facilitate the work. No doubt with your creativity you may be able to find other means; nevertheless we are suggesting the following:

- pray at the personal and community level for a fruitful development of the assembly and for accepting all the challenges that may come our way through reading the "signs of the times".
- be informed of the process and aim of Loyola '86 and the recent history of our World Community. This information will help us better understand the reason for this meeting and enable us to discover new dimensions to make our local communities participate more concretely in the life of the whole CLC movement.
- read and listen attentively to the mission and service experiences we may come across through conversations and publications such as *Progressio* or other national magazines.
- include the theme of mission and service in our meetings, evaluate our activities, discern on others to discover what God is asking of us here and now, for ourselves and our world community.
- give spiritual and material support to the delegates of Loyola '86.

We, young people, are convinced that we have a role to play in the common mission of the World Community. It will be wonderful if this dimension, through this participation, could be shared in the meeting of Loyola through the witnesses of different communities represented by youth delegates. From now on, we invite you to join us in this preparation.

Paco Sanz

A NEW FINDING OF THE CROSS

Brother Andrew

Many of our readers will be familiar with Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Perhaps not so many will know of Br. Andrew who is in charge of the 'male branch' of the Missionaries of Charity. The Brothers are not so numerous as the Sisters, but their work is growing rapidly - 35 houses in the last 36 months have been founded around the world. Every year, Br. Andrew (who originally was an Australian Jesuit) writes a circular letter to his friends. But this year he wrote an extra letter over Easter - for reasons that are obvious as one reads what he has written. (Editor's note)

This Letter comes a little out of the season of our usual exchange at Christmas. I write it because I feel moved to share a thought that has been growing in me for a long time.

I have recently completed a huge trip around the world visiting the communities of Brothers working in many places with the poor in love and worship with God the Father of all. It took me through Africa, Europe, Latin America, the U.S. and the Far East including the Philippines.

As the journey went on I became aware that it was for me a pilgrimage as well - a journey made in faith to a new revelation of God and a more intimate union with Him.

I went through a number of African countries in the grip of their fearful drought and famine, Europe with its economic, social, moral, spiritual and mental breakdown, its terrorism. Latin America with its enormous debt crisis, its political upheaval and cruel civil wars. The U.S. with the misery of so many homeless on the streets, many of them physically and mentally very sick people, the mean and nasty confrontation of the more educated fighting bitterly for their narrow sectarian causes, the children poisoned as they grow with the destructive values fed so effectively and ceaselessly by the ever-present media: greed, violence, every kind of sexual perversity and

tyranny, drugs, alcohol, self-worship... The Far East as it soars in economic and technological mastery, is infected with the same viruses of misery and meaninglessness.

Across the continents as the word 'breakdown' comes more and more to mind, opportunists eager for their chance try to ride power with smart words, baseless promises and a brilliant use of the media - false prophets whose final contribution is only to have added to the chaos and despair.

Then there is the picture of the churches to a large extent fascinated by and entangled in the fads and fashions of the power-seeking and professionals who daily prove the ineffectiveness of mere secular sciences and humanism to provide any real solution.

But one does not have to make my enormous pilgrimage around the world to know all this. It is close to all of us. One only has to shake oneself a little free from the fashionable commentators and enter the unspoken and unspeakable areas of objective truth and genuine personal freedom to recognise it.

But the world leadership, fashion and the powerful media are weighted against any move by us the small and powerless ones to take our affairs into our own hands.

In Marxist regimes, there is all the weight of the KGB's and totally controlled media. In our so-called free democracies, like Europe, the U.S., Japan, Australia, the mind-controlling power of the media and the powers-that-be is not much less.

We will not be delivered into freedom and truth by these organised powers of the world. And so there is only one place to start and that is in our own hearts, the hearts of the small and powerless ones of the world.

Here Russia, Eastern Europe, China offer much hope in the resistance and growing number of little people who have maintained their faith and their own minds in the face of long and ruthless suppression.

They have suffered. And this may be the key. They have suffered greatly, and finally they have preserved

their integrity and dignity more than the pitiful surrender that we in the West present with our easy, 'lucky' lives.

In the early Church there was a feast celebrated every year called the Finding of the Cross. The tradition was that the true Cross was found again in the 4th century under the patronage of St. Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine. Maybe today we need again the Finding of the Cross, which offers the small and powerless people a life-giving role in the renewal of the world.

It was through His Cross and suffering that Christ redeemed the world. It was not through some brilliant and spectacular manifestation or movement of power. He made the offering of His suffering and crucifixion as a sacrifice to reunite fallen, alienated and helpless men to the dignity of children of His Father.

As I went around the world this time, I saw everywhere the terrible suffering and death of people on all continents - be it through famine, disease, drugs, alcohol, suicide, war, abortion, speed. Everywhere and everyone of us without exception is passing through our own suffering and death. We try to relieve the pain a little and delay the death, but all are inevitably caught up in this passage.

What I am saying now does not mean that we stop doing what we can to relieve the pain and remove its causes wherever we can. But we have to do our bit with the awareness that it is essentially inadequate. It is only the Grace of God that can change human hearts and take away suffering in any final way. What we do is to combine with His grace after this awareness of our own total powerlessness.

Across the whole world is spread this enormous expanse of suffering and death. If it is all lost and wasted, then that is a tragic waste.

If it can be channelled and transformed into a redeeming and life-giving power, then the whole picture changes. Christ did not take away from us suffering and death, but He gives to them a supernatural value and power.

That is why I am moved to write this letter to you my friends who have shared so much. I believe that there is need of a new Finding of the Cross in our day - an urgent need. It is to prevent so much suffering and death from being wasted uselessly like precious water poured into the desert sands.

The leaders and powers and skilled professionals of the world are not living up to their claims. They are not bringing peace, brotherhood and human dignity. And they show no sign of succeeding to do so.

I believe there is a wonderful role for us little powerless people to bring new life to broken tormented millions across the world.

I am moved to write this letter and to presume to invite you to take hold of the Cross in your life, your sufferings and pain, whatever form they take - bodily pain, mental suffering or depression, separation and neglect by loved ones, loneliness, fears, insecurity, poverty, helplessness, or hopelessness. To take hold of your Cross in a new precious Finding of the Cross. And then to offer it to the Father in your own way for the life of the world.

If you are truly small and powerless, this is something you can do. It can transform your own life and the lives of so many other innocent and ignorant victims, because it gets caught up in the infinite power of God Himself.

It would be wonderful if we can help other suffering people to take up their Cross and offer it to the Father for the life of the world in union with His Son Jesus - a powerful new Finding of the Cross that saves the world from death. It would be good if some of you can share this letter with a suffering friend, make a few copies of it, translate it for other small, powerless, suffering ones, so that they too may share in this new Finding of the Cross.

Another way is simply to sit for a few minutes and silently offer to God one's own suffering and that of the many suffering ones who do not find the meaning and hope

hidden in their suffering that comes from the Cross. And this is by far the most important response to this letter.

The Cross has always been a scandal to the wise and the mighty. St. Paul wrote that it is a scandal to those who look for scholarship and to those who look for quick results. It is a scandal today where we see the Cross with the broken figure of Christ replaced by some innocuous sign or word.

At times in the past maybe there wasn't enough stress on the Resurrection. Today there is the danger that we have lost the Cross again and try to plunge immediately into the Resurrection without first passing through the suffering and death of the Cross - and so we lose everything.

This simple letter is a call for the consecration of the suffering already present in our lives, the offering of that suffering, big or small, as a painful gift to God for the life of my suffering brothers and sisters across the world - in the poor countries and also in the materially rich countries which are tormented even more terribly in many ways.

For our children too, this offering of suffering accepted for and with others, for and with God, will be a far better education than constant indulgence in useless luxuries.

The Cross of my suffering offered:

- for the hungry and homeless who sit amid the refuse;
- for the despairing and broken who sit in the affluence of soulless cultures and gods who have failed;
- for those robbed of spiritual light and guidance in the Marxist and aggressively atheistic world;
- for the terrible suffering in the abortion culture: the tormented and desperate mothers of abortion, the irresponsible and thoughtless fathers, the millions of little ones crushed and broken in the womb.

Man's progress and 'enlightenment' are a mask hiding indescribable horror and death.

I believe the only way left is a new Finding of the Cross, that has the faith and the courage to face the stark reality of suffering not in anger, not in despair, but in hope, joyful hope even, so that we may be brought through His Passion and Cross to the glory of the Resurrection, a new Easter, the new life of a new spring for all.

This letter is a plea for the offering of the suffering of all, beginning here and now with you and me, as the gift and sacrifice of the poor and powerless little ones that we are for the redemption and new life of all.

THE KINGDOM

Patrick O'Sullivan S.J.

The meditation on the Kingdom is a key point in the Spiritual Exercises, as it brings home to us that we are loved, trusted and called by the Father to carry on Christ's Mission in the world.

"Loved and called by the Father"

The Father calls each one of us by name. Sometimes we may be tempted to feel that the Father is not so much

aware of individuals but rather He sees everyone together, 'en masse'. Many years ago, when I was a newly ordained priest, I visited the convent where my mother went to school, accompanied by members of my family, including my 4 year old niece. It turned out that the Sisters were having their annual retreat - about two hundred of them; and before I knew what was happening, they were all lined up in the chapel, to get a blessing. As the Nuns filed past, they greeted members of my family, and when they came to my niece, each gave her a kiss. On the way home, as we were talking about the Nuns, I said to my little niece - "Wasn't it nice the way they all gave you a kiss?", and she said, very sweetly, as only a 4 year old can - "I hope you don't mind my mentioning it, but they all tasted the same". The Father's experience of us is completely different; He calls us by name, cherishes us and is completely captivated by all we are. No matter how seriously we may take ourselves, the Father takes us even more seriously - and He never gets bored!

"The Father trusts us"

The Father really trusts us; that is a frightening thought. A number of years ago there appeared a best-seller called - "The French Lieutenant's Woman". The novel was written in a rather unusual style as every so often the author would stand back from the story and comment on the characters. At one stage he asks the question about what is going to happen to one of the people in the story, and then answers his own question by saying that he does not know - 'Once you create a character, they work out their own destiny...' And then he continues, 'In some ways, the author is rather like God, who lets people work out their own destiny. In fact,' he concludes, 'there is only one good definition of God - the Freedom that allows other freedoms to exist'. The Father trusts us and His fidelity is unfailing: *"We may be unfaithful, but He is always faithful, because He cannot disown His own self"* (2 Tm 2,13).

"To carry on Christ's Mission..."

We carry on Christ's mission by being signs of His presence in the world. This means that, like Christ, our whole life is a 'declaration' that we have a loving Father and that we are all His children - brothers and sisters. 'Mission' is not so much what we do but rather the quality of our presence to - how we are present in - our world.

Our whole life is a 'declaration', a statement, a message. The basis for this goes back to what we see in the Old Testament, especially in the lives of the prophets. Sometimes the prophet's whole life was the message he was called to give. There was the prophet Hosea; Yahweh said to him: *"Go, marry a whore, and get children with a whore, for the country itself has become nothing but a whore by abandoning Yahweh"* (Hosea 1,2). This does not necessarily mean that when Hosea married his wife, he knew her to be what eventually she became - A faithless wife. But rather, through the tragedy of his own life, and his fidelity in the face of such infidelity, he bore the message of Yahweh's undying love for His people, and His readiness always to take them back and forgive. And then there was the prophet Ezekiel; he was called by Yahweh to tell the people of the great calamity - the Babylonian Captivity - that was about to befall them, and his own life mirrored this deep sense of loss: *"The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of Man, I am about to deprive you suddenly of the delight of your eyes. But you are not to lament, not to weep, not to let your tears run down...' I told this to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening, and the next morning I did as I had been ordered"* (Ez 24,15-18). Not so dramatically, but just as truly, we are called, not only to bear the Good News, but to be the Good News of the Father for His people.

The quality of our presence

The basic and fundamental truth of our lives is that we are all brothers and sisters - children of the Father. Unless we live this truth, our lives are unbelieving and

unreal - we are denying the basic reality of our existence. In other words, faith, justice and truth are inseparable. This is a hard saying, especially when we see so much senseless violence and tragedy around us. But the Spirit is abroad and His call to 'brotherhood' is heard in the most unusual and unexpected circumstances. During the recent tragedy in Brussels, a young Englishman found himself near a young Italian girl, just as she was knocked unconscious. She was badly hurt and in danger of being trampled to death, so the young man fought his way to her, picked her up, protected her and brought her back to consciousness. Then they were separated in the crowd and he never saw her again. He wondered what had happened to her, and then the media picked up the story, traced the girl back to Italy, and arranged a meeting between the two young people. It was a very moving moment when the young man walked into the T.V. studio and suddenly found himself in front of the girl he had saved. A caring response had completely changed the quality of their relationship, their presence to each other.

A final thought

One of the 'fruits' of our meditation on the Kingdom should be that we become people of great dreams and desires. Ignatius knew very well that there never was and there never could be an earthly king chosen by "God our Lord to conquer all the lands of the infidel". It was a dream he had, to tap and deepen our own idealism in the following of Christ - to awaken our desires and to foster our dreams of doing great things for Christ our Lord, and His people. Whether or not our dreams come true is in the Lord's hands; the important thing for us is never to surrender to disillusionment or a feeling of hopelessness. Jesus is the Lord of History and the victory has been won. What keeps our dreams alive and our hope deeply rooted is fidelity to the Lord in prayer - a prayer that integrates our life and faith. And a very vital form of prayer is the Triple Colloquy which always brings us into the presence of Mary, Jesus and the Father.

PRAYING WITH MARY

Guidelines for Meetings

Introduction

Josefina Errazuriz

Following one of the recommendations given by the World Assembly, Providence '82, the Executive Council (Ex-Co) of the CLC's formed a working group to reflect on the theme "Mary, Model of Our Mission". This group, composed of the National Communities of Australia and Chile, was entrusted with the mandate "to gather and share experiences and reflections on Mary as revealed through the Spiritual Exercises, with a view to promoting the role of Mary as model for mission".

To start implementing this mandate, in Chile as well as in Australia, surveys were made among the CLC communities. In Chile, a result of these surveys, in general, was that people do desire to know Mary better and love her more, but, important as it is in our spirituality, this is not sufficiently being taken into account in the communities.

In our communities in Chile, with some exceptions, love for and devotion to Mary have not grown among those who have been in the communities for many years. The figure of Mary has been weak and of little relevance to living our faith as adults committed to the mission of the Church in the world.

To make up for this insufficiency and to meet the request of many of those interviewed, these prayer sessions were elaborated. We hope that they may be of help in enabling people to have a knowledge of Our Mother that is closer to the Gospel, deeper and more loving. These sessions have already been tried, with great profit for many CLC groups in Chile. We are making them available to the World Community for they can be used as a preparation for the next World Assembly at Loyola where the theme precisely is "Mary, model of our mission in the Church and in the world".

For those who would like to use these sessions, the following explanations regarding their methodology may be of help:

- * In general, each session takes approximately one hour and a half.
- * It is recommended that a member of the community prepare the session in advance, with the help of the guidelines given. It is advisable that each session be assigned to a different member.
- * The material to be distributed is as follows:
 - guidelines for each meeting
 - annexes.
- * Each session has 5 parts, the most important of which is the third: **PRAYER EXPERIENCE**. The other parts, although also prayer moments, either point to this experience or spring from it.
- * The guidelines for the flow of the meetings explain the parts or stages of each prayer session. These guidelines are to be given to the members only at the end of the session so that they do not distract the members during the meeting. The members can make good use of them during the days in-between meetings: to refresh their memory on what they have lived and to nourish their personal prayer life. The ideal is for each person to have a copy.
- * Explanation of the different parts of the guidelines
 1. **Sharing lived experiences:** in an atmosphere of prayer and much freedom. Some questions are given to help orient this community sharing.
Duration: about 10 minutes.
 2. **Spiritual reflexion:** This is the moment when the guide explains and clarifies briefly, from a theological perspective, the prayer experience the members are about to make. It is important that this spiritual reflexion be given by the guide in his/her own way and in a form very much related to life. What is handed out in writing has been thought of as a help to the person preparing the session and, after the

session, to help the members remember what they have already lived. Experience has shown that to distribute the guidelines during the session is distracting. It will also be good to give a brief explanation of the steps to be taken and the prayer moments, to explain the modality and give the needed indications. Approximate duration: no more than 15 minutes.

3. Prayer experience: This is the most important part, the heart of the meeting. The first two steps point to this and the rest flows from it. The ideal is to take at least 45 minutes so as to let oneself be absorbed by the mysteries contemplated. It is made up of 3 different moments: Introduction to prayer, Prayer itself, and a Moment of intimate and loving dialogue with God and Our Lady, ending with a Hymn of Praise suggested in the Annex. Do not be afraid of these moments of silence; in silence God speaks and moves in the heart of each person.
4. Evaluation of the experience: This evaluation aims to help us become aware of the Lord's movement in our hearts during prayer. This awareness is a way of taking into serious consideration the gifts we have received from the Lord and to help us grow.

This part will enrich our experience of personal prayer with the experiences of others. It may last about 10 minutes.

5. Suggestions for personal prayer: These are suggestions to help the members continue to deepen their prayer experience and encounter with Mary for the time between meetings. These suggestions, together with the rest of the guidelines, are to be distributed after the prayer session.

* Annexes: The annexes are conceived as a help for the members to recite the Hymn of Praise together, at the end of the PRAYER EXPERIENCE. Therefore, it is advisable to distribute them only at this moment.

1. Sharing lived experiences

One cannot really know a person one does not love, nor love a person one does not know... Do we know Our Lady? Do we love Mary? Does the theme of our next CLC World Assembly, "Mary, Model of our mission in the World and in the Church", tell us something?

Share reflexions on these questions.

2. Spiritual Reflexion

To understand more deeply Mary's role as model of our mission, we will start by reflecting on some traits of this simple Galilean woman who lived 2,000 years ago and who actively cooperated with God so as to bring about a radical change, without precedents, in the history of the world. To have an in-depth understanding of the importance of Mary, for us, as the model of our mission, we will reflect on the attitudes towards life of this woman, so simple and so humble, yet courageous and wise, poor in material goods but rich with God, who through her important response to God's call, helped to bring about a turning-point for the whole of humanity, such as it had never known before. By her attitude she let God Himself enter our history, making Himself one of us: God-with-us. By her response, she allowed God's eternal youth to renew, from within, our fallen humanity from its decadence and oldness. She made it possible for the Son of God to be made our brother, thus making us brothers and sisters to one another and children of God in a new way.

Precisely because one of the major emphasis in the Church's mission today is to make our world more human, where we can address one another as brothers and sisters and be brothers and sisters, it is very important to know Mary's attitudes which brought about this great world revolution. Perhaps knowing them and making them our own we might allow God to change the world radically through us.

Mary was a humble woman from Nazareth, an insignificant village of Galilee, some 2,000 years ago. As a believing Israelite she deeply feels her being a creature of God, and herein lies the most intimate truth of her being. What most characterised Mary is rooted in this profound certitude that she is a creature dependent on her Creator, who loves her and wants what is best for her (even though there are times when she does not understand): her disponibility to listen to God and do His will in everything. Mary believes that God does want and can communicate Himself and that His will is lovable and has a saving power, and therefore she listens. It is in this attitude of attentive listening that she discovers her vocation and, accepting her vocation, opens herself to her mission.

The Annunciation (Luke 1,26-38) is a central moment in Mary's life. It helps us to understand how well Mary knows herself. In St. Luke's account, Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph; she was surely in love with him and her dream was to live with him and have many children with him. Everything seemed to indicate that that was God's will and that of Joseph, of Mary and of both families. In this peaceful setting the unexpected happened. To Mary, in prayer, God announced that she will conceive a child now - not after she is married and living with Joseph. It was something she could not understand and therefore she asked how this could be possible... she is still unmarried and may not have sexual relations.

The messenger of God explains to her: the child to be born will not have an earthly father; it will be God's Spirit who will bring about the incarnation of the Son of God in her virgin womb! Imagine Mary's surprise at such a great revelation, at such an impossible thought!

Mary listens and accepts what lies beyond her understanding, even though this is going to destroy all her plans. She discovers her vocation in this invitation of God, but the answer is not going to be easy.

Let us take a look at what this may imply for her:

- on one hand, Mary is a young woman committed to do God's will in everything because she believes that is what is best for her and therefore the most important thing in her life;
- on the other hand, what is asked of her to sacrifice is tremendous: she will lose her fiancé, who will reject her, as it is to be expected on such occasions; she will lose her honor, and that of her family, in the whole village; and the severeness of the Law will be applied, which may mean death by stoning. If she tries to explain, everybody will believe she is mad. Even if Joseph will not reject her, she will have to let go of her dreams, so human, of living a normal life with him, because Mary understands that if she says 'yes', she will become the New Ark of the Covenant no man can possibly possess. She knows this will mean tht she will be a virgin forever, and that is the will of God!

Before such a difficult situation, the deep awareness of being a creature loved by a Father who can never fail her, a Father who always supports and sustains her, triumphs, and therefore she chooses His will above all her other desires. Before God's manifest will she changes her plans completely and does it in all simplicity, courageously. From her inmost being came the difficult response: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word".

Mary knows, at the depth of her heart, that she plays an important role, as everybody does, in building this world to the extent that she is open to listen and respond, with all her being, to God's call in her life. She knows that this is the only way she can fully fulfill herself, and leave behind footprints. She knows that God is a strong rock to whom everybody turns for support and that He never fails anyone. He is the principle and foundation of life. She believes that everything is possible with God... and this leads her to cry out with joy and praise God with all her strength in the **Magnificat**.

Mary's attitude at the Annunciation is one of openness; she is active, cooperative and disposed to serve God whenever and however He wills it. She makes God's will

become her own, thus fully accepting her vocation and opening herself to the mission of offering us to the Son of God.

By her life she teaches us the tremendous importance, for all humanity, of listening to God, believing in Him, allowing Him to change our plans, allowing Him to be incarnated in our lives and giving Him to others. She teaches us the tremendous power there is in seeking our own vocation and giving ourselves to mission. This commitment, this acceptance of letting our limited criteria be widened so as to make our own the universal salvific plans of God will make it possible for the Holy Spirit to break into our world today, for the Incarnation to be extended, for its power to continue to christianize the world here and now, for the Lord to make wonders in the world so that we may exult with joy and sing a hymn of praise.

3. PRAYER EXPERIENCE

a) Introduction:

- relax and have the proper disposition
- put yourself in God's presence
- ask for what we want: to discover God's love for our world and to have an in-depth understanding of Mary's attitude which made the Incarnation possible.

b) Meditation/contemplation:

To introduce us to the contemplation of the Incarnation, St. Ignatius places before us an immense picture, full of contrasts: on one hand, the world laden with sin; on the other hand the most Holy Trinity; and the room of the most Holy Virgin in Nazareth.

To let ourselves be deeply absorbed by God's immense love for man/woman and the meaning of the Annunciation, let us try "to be present" to these three points of interest proposed by St. Ignatius, that is to make ourselves be present "to see", "to listen", and "to feel" the situations, to discover the thoughts and feelings of those who are involved in them.

- * The men/women on earth with their many difficulties, cultures, races; and how these men/women destroy one another through hatred, unfaithfulness, wars and so on.
- * The Three Divine Persons, watching this picture of death and pain, react with an immense love and desire to save humanity. For this reason they decide to do what is best from the divine point of view: that the Son be incarnated and be made man in order to redeem man/woman.
- * The realisation of this extraordinary divine plan to save the whole of humanity from disaster is made concrete in an unbelievably quiet and humble way: the encounter between Mary, alone in her small house in Nazareth, and the one sent by God.

Read the text of saint Luke 1,26-38:

Let us be present to these three inter-woven realities, going from one point to the other and allowing ourselves to admire them and to learn from them. In particular, let us learn from the attitudes and feelings of Mary who made this divine plan of salvation possible. (Allow 30 minutes of silence for this contemplation.)

c) Intimate conversation:

Towards the end of the prayer period, have an intimate conversation with Mary, Jesus and the Father, thanking them for the wonder of the Incarnation from the depth of our heart.

End by reciting the **Magnificat** (cf. Annex) together.

4. Sharing of experiences

- To a certain degree, have I been able to realise God's immense love and respect for man/woman hidden behind the mystery of the Incarnation?
- Has the person of Mary been made more concrete and closer to me?
- Have I been able to grasp her feelings and fundamental attitudes towards life which made possible the Incarnation of God in the world?

5. Suggestions for personal prayer

- Continue to take up and deepen the different aspects which have emerged in the community prayer, using the same text, Luke 1, 26-38.
- Repeat this contemplation experience to let God the Father continue to help us appreciate His love for us and to let ourself be "contaminated" by Mary's attitude in our responses.
- Try to listen to God's call to us as individuals, as CLC communities and as World Community so that we may commit ourselves to the mission of extending the Incarnation to our world today.

ANNEX

THE MAGNIFICAT

Lk 1,46-56

And Mary said:

My spul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit exults in God my savior;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations
will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name,
and his mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear him.

He has shown the power of his arm,
he has routed the proud of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things,
the rich sent empty away.

He has come to the help of Israel his servant,
mindful of his mercy

- according to the promise he made to our ancestors -
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for
ever.

VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

Meeting of the Pontifical Council for the Laity
with the International Associations and Movements

Brendan McLoughlin

I am just leaving Rome as I write this short article on the attendance of Jose Gsell and myself at this meeting. The aim of the meeting was to reflect on some of the themes of the Synod with a view to helping the laity to participate in the preparations for the Synod at all levels - parochial, diocesan, national and international.

It was a wonderful experience to see Cardinal Pironio greet delegates individually and informally as we waited for the meeting to start. Following supper, the delegates representing more than sixty lay movements were given the opportunity to present their movement and themselves. While, as you can imagine, it was a long process, it was also a very well worthwhile exercise and it gave us a new insight into the whole meaning of "diversity of ministry but unity of mission".

On the following morning, the meeting was formally opened by Cardinal Pironio with an inspiring address deeply rooted in Scripture. He urged that we read and re-read the Council documents in the light of specific challenges and events of today. Also to deepen our understanding of the laity. Reminding us of the four Constitutions and two decrees which he described as the pillars of the Council, reminding us that we were chosen by Christ, members of the people of God, in Christ, in the Church and in the World.

He also stressed the need for formation, reminding us that authentic lay spirituality flows from the Word of God and has its basis in Christ. He also asked for live /active listening to the Word of God from our poverty, calling also on us to be discerning christians. He finished by asking that love be genuine and that we be constant in prayer.

Mgr. Edmond Farhat, Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, recalled for us the whole process by which the decision to have a Synod on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World was arrived at. The consultation that went on and the manner in which the whole matter was developed.

The second major talk of the morning was given by Prof. Rocco Buttiglione on the "Participation of the Laity in the Evangelisation of Culture".

This input was very good and contained a lot of points for reflection. It would not be possible in this short article to deal in detail with the content of the talk. It covered the areas of Laity, Culture, Evangelisation and interactions between the three. It dealt with Baptism and the Essence of Man and how we are changed by the Sacraments. He drew distinction between the Teaching Church and the Learning Church, Mystery of the human heart, how we, particularly in the West, are faced with a major challenge between faith and culture. Again, as with Cardinal Pironio stressing active listening, Prof. Buttiglione stressed active learning of faith. He drew attention to the fact that to be a member of the Body of Christ was both a gift and a task.

In the afternoon, Mrs. Genevieve Riviere gave a very comprehensive picture of the ICO, bringing attention to the diversity of ministry. Common characteristics, particularly the lack of justice in the world, a strong sensitivity to the needs of today and reading the signs of the times.

A Common Witness in living and working with mankind. Taking up their share in the mission of the Church. Being an active presence in the World.

Finally, she dealt with the response of ICO by way of reflection on their nature, style and presence in the World. Nourishing the spirituality of their members. Emphasising that our spirituality must not take refuge from the World, but be active in the World.

The last input of the day was by Paulo Fontes of JEC on "The Contribution of Young People to the Building up of a Civilization of Love and Life", an excellent paper dealing with the World of Youth, stressing the need for a Civilization of Love based on Justice, Truth and Freedom, and it is to be a manifestation of God in the World. Youth also is a time of tension and growth and a period of time in a person's development, a transition, formation for adulthood. Youth concerned and active in the areas of hunger, malnutrition, armed conflict, limitation of liberty. Questioning the Church, seeking dialogue, a force for the future, a preferential option for the poor. All in all it was a very thought provoking paper.

Workshops

All the previous talks were by way of helping to concentrate the minds of the delegates on Vatican II twenty years later. On the second day the meeting divided into eleven small groups dealing with five different topics.

In the first stage, the first two meetings dedicated their time to deepen the theological and ecclesiastical bases regarding the vocation of the laity and their commitment in the life of the Church and of society.

The second stage was devoted to the study of one of the following themes, depending on which group you were in. This concentrated on the experience of the laity in the life of the Church and of society.

The five Workshops were:

- 1) The spiritual life of the laity as a response to the universal appeal to sanctity
- 2) The formation of the laity: requirements, places, means
- 3) Participation of the movements and associations in the life and mission of the Church
- 4) The experience of the ministries entrusted to the laity within the christian communities
- 5) The christian presence in the human community.

The whole experience was very rewarding and it was good to be part of such sessions where it was very plain that the spirit of the workshops was very positive and alive with hope and challenge.

The fruits of the workshops were brought back to a general session. Following on the reports of the groups, Mgr. Cordes, vice-president of the Pontifical Council, shared his reflections on the content of the reports, acknowledging that he could not offer a systematic summary of the enormous amount of work done, but assuring all that the content of all the reports would be forwarded to the Secretariate of the Synod. He then went on to highlight the aspects which seemed to have been particularly underlined, not all of which are included below.

Dealing with the first stage he said, and I quote, "You were unanimous in recognising that during the past twenty years, the teaching of the Council, and the renewal which flows from it, helped lay people to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of the Church, Body of Christ, Temple of the Spirit and People of God (*Lumen Gentium*, 8)). A better understanding of the theological reality in which they have to live and realise their vocation has allowed them to arrive at a deepening of their identity as lay people, which means not only someone who is neither a religious nor an ordained minister, but someone who, by the sacrament of initiation, is sent forth as an apostle".

In relation to the second stage, Mgr. Cordes further concludes:

Call to holiness: "We have to ask ourselves how we can re-discover and launch once more the intrinsic bond existing between holiness and the transformation of the World, between total adhesion to Christ and the replies to be given to the needs of men and women".

Christian formation for today's world: Professional competence is becoming a more and more urgent need. Do we give the same importance to Christian Formation understood as 'formation in Christ' as to the importance attached to

new technology which is obliging people to greater specialization? An enormous amount of work remains to be done to transmit to lay people the necessary knowledge to help them find the required attitudes for an evangelising action which would be fruitful in the heart of the human family.

Plurality of Gifts and Service to the Community: In the Church there exists a great diversity of movements, associations, services and initiatives of the laity, while at the same time numerous categories of people, e.g. youth, politicians, scientists, artists, are little or badly touched by the Church. This is a big question mark for us. Where and how can the needs of people and the answers proposed by the movements meet?

Specificity of Vocations and Sharing of Tasks: The awareness of mission is born of baptism. The twenty years past, Vatican II has taught us that the understanding that priests had of their own identity was a source of crisis for many of them. On the other hand, lay people who wished to accomplish their mission were slowed down by ordained ministers who were not conscious of the biblical conception of the Mission of the Church. Experience has shown how very necessary it is that all remain faithful to their own identity and respect that of others.

The Challenge of a Christian Presence: Even in temporal activities, the Christian must remain faithful to evangelical values, even when these transcend or are in opposition to those of the World, e.g. forgiveness and hatred. Discernment arising out of prayer, contemplation and participation in the life of the Church will allow us to reply to the needs of the World. Lay people are also called to accept the Cross and the sacrifice inherent in every form of apostolate.

Mgr. Cordes concludes by reminding us that the meaning of the Church is not in herself, but in her mission to proclaim the Gospel and asking us to thank God for sending us into the World to accomplish our mission in fidelity to the Gospel and, above all, to thank Him for the freedom which allows us to do His Will more and more and to work for the spreading of His Kingdom which extends to all creation.

REGIONAL CONVENING CONTINUES COMMON CONCERNS

Sixteen members of Christian Life Communities, representing the four North American Federations, gathered on June 21-23, 1985 at Centre Shalom, Longueuil, Quebec, for their second meeting on common issues. These sixteen representatives want to change the world. They believe that they have in the three-fold charisms of CLC a workable response to the situation of today's world, and they want both to develop within themselves those charisms of Ignatian spirituality, community and mission, and to share them with others through CLC.

The major input for this meeting was an address by Fr. John Wickham S.J., from the Ignatian Centre, Montreal, on "Cultural Shifts in North America". He started with the premise that the church exists within cultures and that the same faith can live within different cultures. Thus, there is always an interaction between faith and culture. The impetus for this interaction can come from the secular side; in which case, the church scrambles to respond to it; for example, in the Middle Ages, the bishops were lords and princes and lived in palaces, today the bishops are like business executives. The impetus can also come from the side of faith; in which case, the world is influenced by that faith; for example, in the Second and Third Centuries, the persecuted christians felt that they would overcome Rome, which they did in the Fourth Century; also, in the Twelfth Century christians brought a spiritual and religious dimension to the arts, schooling, learning, pilgrimage, etc. Then Fr. Wickham applied his premise to six areas in North America where shifts had developed.

In four work-groups, the participants looked at the implications of these shifts for the church and especially for CLC today. With regard to Recruitment, there is a need to look for people who can respond to today's issues; thus, it would be good to invite to meetings, programs and conventions: 1) persons who have attained a background in Ignatian spirituality, either at a retreat house or through individual direction, and 2) persons who have

shown their aliveness in already established groups. But this also means a greater visibility and a wider advertizing of CLC groups so that people may "come and see".

For Formation or Origination: the structure of the "Centered Community" which emphasizes continual renewal and the guide as a reflector and the guarantor of the formation process would be more beneficial than the "Bordered Community" which emphasizes strong walls, rules and authority. Also, there is a need for Jesuits to assist CLC members in Ignatian spirituality; both the Society of Jesus and CLC look to Ignatius of Loyola for the source of their spirituality.

For Mission: the church's recent emphasis on the "preferential option for the poor" indicates that CLC members might have more involvement with the poor and might pay for the poor to make the Spiritual Exercises.

For National Structure: although each federation has a different structure, the federations are using organizational skills and technology, e.g. telephone conferences for meetings and video tapes for programming. Also, CLC could offer the discernment method of decision-making to the wider church.

Three inter-federation activities were proposed for the future: 1) that there be a specific agenda for the regional meeting during the World Assembly at Loyola, Spain, in 1986; 2) that, at that session, the participants decide if another regional meeting in 1987 will be appropriate; and 3) that there be inter-federation exchanges of materials and contacts where these would be helpful. Also, Ms. Jean Floyd willingly accepted the unanimous vote that she continue as the coordinator for inter-federation activities for an additional year.

Everyone agreed that there was little time at the week-end meeting to delve deeply into the common concerns. Yet, everyone sensed an ability to cooperate with another across cultural differences. This cooperation was accomplished primarily because of the interaction during the

initial introductions and social, the tour of Montreal, and the Masses. The effects of this cooperation may be captured from the written evaluations:

I am struck by the fragility of our efforts to forge community across so many barriers of language, culture, geography and uneven local development. But, I am convinced that we need to keep at it, refusing to succumb to the discouragement that almost certainly lies ahead. Even though our efforts are tenuous, they are the seeds of "a new heaven and a new earth".

I was also moved by the singleminded generosity of the participants. The witness of a Bertha, a Barbara, a Dominic, a Carl, and so on says to me that our Ignatian charism is well rooted in our leadership.

As far as follow-up to this meeting is concerned, I think we all have to assume the responsibility to see to it that some kind of continuity is maintained... even if they are only small gestures such as a letter or postcard to extend greetings.

At any rate, I left Montreal in consolation, as I believe most members of the group left.

Dominic Totaro S.J.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.N.

The year 1985 marks the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations. The original objective of the U.N. was to serve as a meeting-point where governments of different inspirations could come together and, in their wisdom, seek solutions to international problems and needs and act together to put these solutions at work instead of entering into conflict.

Unfortunately, the history of international relations after the world war shows that common interest to establish peace and security does not prevail until situations become critical. Until such moments, short-term national interest often outweighs common interest.

The Secretary General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, has proposed that the 40th anniversary of the U.N. be an occasion to look back over the achievements of the Organisation for the past 40 years, to encourage member States to reaffirm their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter, to arouse growing interest and support for the Organisation and to give a new push towards international cooperation at all levels of human activity.

The last Supplement of Progressio on the U.N., written by Tom Monahan, and our involvement as NGO, the building of a World Community at the service of one world and support for initiatives in favor of union among peoples are many aspects which meet the objectives of the U.N.

LOYOLA '86

An APPEAL in favor of the SOLIDARITY FUND

The actual economic situation is difficult for all, but for some it is disastrous.

If Loyola '86 is to be an assembly truly representing our World Community, an effort towards solidarity is called for.

Our inter-communitarian bonds, our unity, will find a concrete and privileged expression in the sharing of goods.

May we all be able to render this service "according to our means, and beyond our means", witnessing through it the solidarity and sincerity of our Community.

Donations may be sent to the

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