



PROGRESSIO

JANUARY 1986
55th Year
N.1

towards
Loyola '86

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The issue of last November began the formal preparations for Loyola '86. As an introduction, its articles touched on the principal aspects of the theme of the meeting: the call, the present world, mission, Mary's vocation, model for every Christian vocation.

Two months have passed. A brief evaluation is called for:

- How have I used these resources? (reading, reflection, prayer, exchange in groups...?)
- Did I start alone or with members of my CLC?
- Where, in what, how did we feel concerned?

This issue helps us to continue our preparations:

- * The meditation on the two Standards introduces us to an understanding of the following of Christ and what it implies.
- * Some CLC members from different parts of the world share their reflections and experiences about what they live and see around them. Reading their testimony can serve us as a springboard for reading our own situation, in the light of what they tell us, and for evaluating our way of responding to our situation.
- * It is by entering more deeply into what was Mary's response to God's call that we come to understand the attitude of discernment of Her who listens, meditates in her heart and prefers God's will to her own.
- * Reports of activities - this time especially about CLC young people - emphasise the formation needed to help us become true CLCs.

To each and every one of our readers, in these first days of January, our sincere best wishes, the assurance of our prayers and a profound wish that we help one another in our journey together throughout this new year.

The editorial team

ON MISSION AND THE TWO STANDARDS...

We have heard Christ's call. We have resolved to follow it by offering ourselves totally to him. Our availability and our generosity are real and we have no reason to distrust them. In our own way, we have come out of our sinful ruts, we have left our nets and decided to forge ahead. "I will follow you wherever you go," we have said to him.

Just like Peter we have surprised ourselves by affirming: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16,16), words which come to us from the heavenly Father and which found our commitment. Assured of Peter's profession of faith, Jesus then states precisely the road that he must take: "going to Jerusalem, suffering very much there... being killed and rising on the third day". Peter takes him aside and begins rebuking him, saying: "May God preserve you, Lord! No, this will never happen to you" (Mt 16,21-22).

In other words: Follow you, Lord, yes! Bear your good news, yes! but, he seems to say, leave to me the choice of the means that do not correspond to your ideas.

Here underlined by Christ is a split between men's thoughts and God's thought: "Get behind me, Satan. You are an obstacle to me". A moment ago Peter was guided by the heavenly Father. Now he is guided by Satan himself; the ambivalence of Peter's attitudes, the ambivalence of our own attitudes. It is astonishing that in the space of two verses Peter shows such a reversal in his behaviour! Speaking with the spirit of the Father, and a moment later talking like Satan! How is that possible? How can one explain the fact that a man so determined to live the mission that Jesus gives him can be subject to such variations?

Commitment to the service of the Kingdom is not just a matter of generosity. It is not enough to give one's heart in theory for everything to be settled. The mission

itself - Peter's like ours - is a battleground between darkness and light. Nobody is spared in this fight, not even Jesus, since he himself was tempted in the desert at the beginning of his apostolic life. Evil puts its illusions to work in a subtle way at the very moment in which we have decided to follow Christ.

On the threshold of making a decisive choice, Saint Ignatius introduces into the Exercises the great meditation on the Two Standards. It is the most decisive meditation of the Exercises, it seems, since not only is the retreatant to take it up four times in the same day, but, through the constant use of the Triple Colloquy, he prolongs the effect of this meditation until the end of the contemplations of the Second Week.

It is a matter of seeing the present world and my own life - in the light of the Gospel - as battlegrounds between Christ and the enemy of human nature. As this is not easily seen (so mixed up together are the darnel and the good grain), we are invited, while continuing to contemplate the life of Christ, to ask earnestly for the grace of discernment which will give us "knowledge of the deceptions of the rebel chief and help to guard myself against them; and also to ask for a knowledge of the true life exemplified in the sovereign and true Commander, and the grace to imitate Him" (S.E.139). God, who has sworn fidelity to man, gives him power to attack darkness and to dispel it through his Word of light.

In one part, St. Ignatius describes the chain of evil, which tries to insinuate itself into the heart of the disciple: it takes root in the desire to Have, progresses into Appearances and ends up in the pride of Power. In a second part, he presents its opposite, namely the dynamics of the Kingdom of God which flow from Poverty and Humility.

The chain of evil

In a generous life temptation presents itself under beautiful guise. If it were ugly it would be spontaneously repulsed. We have resolved to serve God, but, if we are not on guard, our relationship to things and people almost

imperceptibly becomes warped. While in the "Foundation" we had acknowledged the fact that we should "use things in the measure in which they are a help" for the end that we propose to ourselves - serving God; evil falsifies this "measure" and little by little we let ourselves be guided by the exclusive concern for effectiveness. We become more tense, more nervous, we become identified with things, we fall into their power. Instead of dominating creation we let ourselves be possessed by it. Time, money, human gifts, relationships, etc. are no longer at the service of the Lord, but at our service. Carried away by covetousness for riches we always try to have more to be more.

This concern about Having then makes us subject to the norms of worldly prestige. Fascinated only by signs of human success, we begin to compare ourselves with others: "we are braver than that person, less intelligent than that one", and we worry about not being able to be equal to the best. Little by little we become the sole centre of our preoccupations. What is essential from now on is appearances: because of that we are ready to bow down before the idols of the world of today. We no longer receive ourselves from an Other or from others but try above all to make ourselves worth something in the eyes of men, and if we do not succeed, we become bitterly sad, or spiteful. It has been rightly said that, in this sense, it is deadly to make comparisons: it is the sign that we are making ourselves the centre of everything.

But the "infernal" logic of evil does not stop at Appearances, at the search for worldly honour. It leads us to the arrogant desire for Power to make myself the only person worth something.

If Jesus himself met with this temptation (cf. Lc 4, 5-8), it is right that it should be a menace even for the person who wants to be a faithful disciple of Christ. It can disguise itself under different appearances: cultural, financial, intellectual and perhaps spiritual ones. Who among us has not at one time or another felt the temptation to let someone else feel the weight of power that has been given to us (limited though it be) to play at being important? We offer others our competence or our money on

condition that they bow down before us and honour us. We thus subtly attribute to ourselves a power that we have from Another. Having reached the pride of Satan, notes St. Ignatius, "he leads us on to all the other vices".

Even at the heart of the mission which has been entrusted to us, holy though it might be, the attractions of Having, of Appearances and of arrogant Power menace us. However, our motivation at the beginning was pure and we really wanted to serve the Lord, like Peter, but the "Prince of this world", to use the gospel expression, spares no person, no situation, no state of life. It may well be, as Bernanos wrote, that his supreme illusion is "letting us believe that he does not exist"... or else - this is another way of falsifying reality - we are led to identify him with a particular person, a particular country, a particular political party: no, evil is neither in Moscow nor Washington. It slyly lurks in the heart of each one of us and is ready to corrupt the best in each of us, since the Son of God himself had to face this on the threshold of his public life.

* * *

"Forewarned is forearmed", says the wisdom of the nations: knowing the illusions to which we can be exposed, we will be more ready to fight alongside the apostles, if we at least make the effort to enter into the dynamics of the Kingdom of God and to take up what St. Paul calls "the arms of salvation". The Lord has sworn fidelity to man and attacks the darkness with the power of his Word. It is also essential that when we act we try to know His intentions and His way of proceeding in order to acquire a mind formed by the Gospel.

The evangelical invitation

Far from deceiving through false appearances, from trapping the personal and social fantasies of each one of us through the senses and intelligence, Jesus relies on reality. He does not fascinate. He attracts while respecting each one's freedom. He does not enlist, he invites. "Come and see" (Jn 1,39).

Whom do we see? The poor Christ who attracts his apostles: Jesus, born poor in Bethlehem, lives "without knowing where to lay his head" and dies naked on the Cross. This fundamental attitude also seems characteristic of the way the apostles went about things in the Acts. To the lame man at the Beautiful gate who asks him for alms Peter replied: "I have neither gold nor silver, but what I have I give you: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3,6).

In the meditations on the Two Standards, St. Ignatius invites us to consider the discourse that Christ... gives to all his friends... He recommends them to try to help all men by drawing them firstly to supreme spiritual poverty and, no less, to actual poverty (S.E.146). Perhaps in order to enter into Christ's design it is necessary to remember that in the Bible the poor person is not defined negatively as having nothing but as someone capable of receiving everything. He is not complaisant about the misery that he tries to fight, but Jesus is poor in the sense that everything that he is and everything he has, he receives from the Father. He attributes nothing to himself. He possesses nobody, not even his disciples. He will say of them that it is the Father who has given them to him. In the same way, he will say that he does nothing of himself, but that he does what he sees the Father doing. Before every important act Jesus goes into the desert or up the mountain alone to pray. He finds the whole meaning of his life only in his relationship with the Father. There is a close connection between prayer and poverty. Day after day we have to beg our existence from Him who is its source. Being poor of heart is recognising that we are only what it is given to us to be by the Father. "What have you got that you have not received", acknowledges St. Paul. Inversely, the problem with the rich person is that, in not experiencing his dependence, he receives neither from the others nor from God, but from himself, and thus kills the life within him: "Woe to you, rich people, because you have your consolation" (Lk 6,24). For a jealously guarded "having" for oneself, Jesus substitutes spiritual poverty which is only real if it becomes actual somehow or other in our existence. To the sufficiency of the "Father

of lies" Jesus opposes the simplicity of those who have nothing.

The experience of spiritual poverty leads us to evangelical simplicity and humility through experiencing contradictions and suffering humiliations. To be convinced of this, it is enough to look again at the figure of Peter. Before the Passion, he affirms before Jesus: "Even if all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" (Mt 26, 33). He had to live the painful humiliation of denying in order to say without bragging, after Jesus had forgiven him: "Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you". He then hears Christ confirm him in his mission: "You, follow me" (Jn 21,17). From being disciple, Peter has become really apostle! Now he can begin to follow the Lord who "took the last place in such a way that nobody could take it from him", as Fr. Huvelin said to Charles de Foucauld. To the disciples who were discussing among themselves in order to know who was the greatest, Jesus had already said: "If someone wants to be the first, let him be the last of all and the servant of all" (Mk 9,35). Having reached the last place now, Peter can begin to serve like Christ.

In the same way, none of us, relying on his own strength, can pretend to desire to live poverty and humility other than in his imagination. At the end of his meditation on the Two Standards, St. Ignatius also makes us ask at length from Mary, the Son and the Father the grace to be received one day under His Standard in order to receive from God the mission that he wants to entrust to us.

It is not enough to have a great desire to follow Christ in order to accomplish the Church's mission. We need the spiritual understanding given by the Holy Spirit so as to distinguish in the daily combat what comes from God and what comes from the Enemy.

*"I prayed, and understanding was given to me;
I entreated and the spirit of Wisdom came to me"*
(Book of Wisdom 7,7).

Odilon de Varine S.J.

FAMILY MINISTRY OF EVANGELIZATION

The family is described in Familiaris Consortio as a "community of persons". It begins when two persons, a man and a woman, fall in love with each other, get married and bear children -- creating a new community. The family is given life by the parents and the children through developing their family relationship and offering their unique contribution as a family for the growth of the society. By making Christ the center of family life, they become a "family for others" -- aware that marriage and the family are gifts of love to celebrate life, faith and service in Christ.

Attitudes on Marriage and Family Life

For many getting married is a natural pattern of life. A person is expected, firstly, to get married; if not, then the priesthood or the religious life is considered. And if neither of these is chosen, the single life is taken. In marriage, the husband and the wife are like two pillars, both of which have to be properly formed and strong enough to support a structure. The married couple, therefore, must be whole persons, deeply founded in their value formation so as to be able to properly raise and support a family.

Although every marriage is a response to a call -- vocation and consecration to God -- sacrament, the awareness of marriage as a sacrament and a vocation may come later in married life. One couple discovered their vocation as they began to share their life experiences in their talks on love, courtship and marriage to young people and to those about to get married. To the wife, her conversion to Christ put her marriage in the proper perspective. Another couple believed that, to make a marriage work, the spouses have to work at it constantly -- to love one's spouse even at the time he or she is most unlovable. "Love is a decision." This is true for all relationships, most especially for a marriage relationship.

Having children and educating them with christian values, making them "whole" persons, also contribute to

the formation of the couple. From children's words and actions we learn to do the things we have forgotten to do ourselves. Caring for the growth of one another helps create a "community of persons" -- a family for others with the mission to serve those in need and to mold a society that is christian in its values.

Situation of Marriage and Family Life

On the societal level, there is a growing danger of accepting broken families as a normal situation. Infidelity, separation, and extra-marital affairs are depicted by media as a very common, normal and, in fact, prevalent situation in Filipino families. This threatens marriage and family life as children also begin to accept this value as inevitable, acceptable and, in many instances, glamorous.

Human relationships, especially the husband/wife relationship and parent/children relationship, suffer so much because of the values perpetuated by modern technology. Human relationships can be influenced by modern technology, the hallmark of which is the computer, as one priest said. According to him, there are three major features of a computer which have a very startling parallelism to the destruction of human relationships in modern times. First, a computer is intolerant of errors. It can not make mistakes. Garbage in, garbage out. In human relationships people become impatient with other people who commit errors and they are not willing to forgive those who erred. However, human relationships grow to understand human failures through forgiveness and humility. Second, a computer is intolerant of time. Answers to problems and data that are needed can be gotten from a computer in just a few seconds. In human relationships we now have instant marriage, instant sex, just like instant coffee or tea. But to have a truly human relationship, time is needed for the development of friendship and love for one another. Third, and last, a computer is intolerant of pain because it is a machine. It has no feelings. It will tell you your mistakes and errors, surely and precisely. It does not care how you feel. When a person has problems, he takes

drugs -- aspirin for pain -- for temporary relief. But to have a meaningful relationship one has to accept the pain of growth and learning, of failures and disappointments, of being human.

The family is also being threatened because of economic problems. Unemployment is so high in the country that the husband, or sometimes the wife, is forced to look for greener pastures in the faraway lands of the Middle East, Europe or America. To earn a living, the husband and father leaves his wife and children for some years. What happens to the family life? How can relationships grow and strengthen when one is not present? Usually, the father or the mother is away at the most critical formation years of the family.

On the brighter side, there are some families that really try to make the family a community of persons. However, because they are not exciting and intriguing, good marriages are not usually trumpeted or talked about. Its importance is made known only through such movements as the Christian Family Movement or Marriage Encounter, the Church's Family Life Apostolate, or simply through individual families' efforts. There are families that practise family decision-making through regular family meetings during which each family member has the chance to share feelings and ideas. Family prayer is also a regular part of the meeting.

Future generations depend on the families of today -- how the present youngsters are being reared by their parents. The responsibility of teaching the children the gospel values should not be relegated simply to the schools because the parents are the prime examples of their lessons in life. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to teach values which the parents have not yet really internalized.

Needs and Hopes

Marriage and family life oftentimes are in conflict with the prevailing values of the society. This calls for the formation of groups of families to act as a support

for one another as they swim against the stream. A family gets the strength to live the values and principles the members believe in if they see that there are other families who believe in the same thing. The family also needs to be able to talk to other families especially when they need help, confident that the family with which they are sharing have the same values as they have.

There is a need, too, to propagate this idea to other families -- to make them aware of the importance of making Christ the center of family life in order to strengthen this "little church" that is slowly being destroyed.

There is a need to create more ways and means of preparing couples for marriage such as an encounter program for engaged couples or an intensive pre-Cana program in the parishes.

Church documents like *Familiaris Consortio* must be made available to the people and must be explained in layman's terms. In this way, couples will have a practical guide and will have a better understanding of the role of marriage and family in the mission of the Church.

Questions for reflections:

1. What are my thoughts and attitudes toward marriage as a sacrament and vocation?

If married, have I shared this openly with my spouse?

2. As a family, how do we live a Christ-centered life?

Do we share this Christ-centered life with others?

Ma. Belen Sim

CLC AND HUMAN RIGHTS

in India

Christians in India are hardly 2% of the entire population of 800 millions. In such a situation, it would certainly seem legitimate for the Church to defend its minority interests and we have been doing this effectively in recent years. For example, a few State Governments have been trying to enforce pernicious education bills which aim at curbing the rights of Christian educational institutions, the right to religious freedom and to totally secularize education. The entire Church, the Bishops and lay Christians (including CLC members) have successfully fought these bills in court as unconstitutional.

The Church's mission is to defend human rights. To work for human rights means to work at the most basic level towards a society without unjust structures - "to work for the reform of the structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor within the Church" (GP.7). Human rights are as basic to the Gospel as the command to love our neighbour as ourselves. The Catholic bishops of India have therefore pledged: "We resolve to uphold and promote the realization of human rights and defend them wherever, whenever and by whomever they are violated".

Human rights can be classified into civil, political, economic, socio/religious and cultural rights. A few examples:

Civil rights: e.g., freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, right to the rule of law and equality before the law. In some parts of India, even today, there exists the machinery of bonded labour. A person pledges his person or a member of his family to a creditor against an advance. Till the loan (taken at an exorbitant

interest rate) is repaid, the person is in bondage. He does not have the freedom to seek other employment. He forfeits the right to move freely anywhere in the country. He is 'slave' to his 'master', somewhat like the blacks in pre-Lincoln U.S.A.

Political rights: e.g., the right to vote, the right to participate in the functioning of the state, the right to a corruption-free government. In several sectors of the public ministry in our country of India, bribery and corruption are still rampant and it is amazing what a "tinkle of a coin" can achieve. It is said that poverty is the root cause! Others say it is a lack of character!

Economic rights: e.g., the right to gainful employment, right to fair wages, right to equal pay for equal work (particularly between men and women). In the stone quarries in some parts of India the men are paid Rs.10/- per day (less than 1 U.S. dollar) and the women Rs.5/- per day for doing the same kind of work.

Socio-religious rights: e.g., rights against social oppression arising sometimes from harmful traditions - untouchability, caste hierarchy, inferior status of women, the dowry system, oppression of religious minorities. Despite social reforms, the sinister 'dowry' system persists in parts of India. The parents of the bridegroom demand money, goods and gold from the parents of the bride, and this demand must be met if the bride wants to get and remain happily married. Not meeting the demands in their entirety has sometimes met with scant respect for human life, e.g., cases of bride burning herself or committing suicide, since life is intolerable at home.

Cultural rights: e.g., the right to education and the freedom to practice and propagate one's belief. India is a poor and under-developed country with a large village base yet most of our christian schools are in the cities and cater to the middle and upper strata of society.

Against this background what are some of our CLC's doing or what do they need to do? What does it concretely

mean to work for social justice in India today? What can practically be done to ensure the human rights of all, especially the poorest? Nobody can give an exhaustive answer to these questions. But we can discern the Lord's will through individual or community discernment in each situation.

One way is to participate in human rights action groups, in people's movements. "If our goal is the social transformation of our country, then our major work and faith should be in the field, educating, helping the people to organize themselves to fight for their political, social, legal and economic rights" (B.C.Moses). To this goal we can contribute by providing them with social, political and legal education. These movements fight the economic injustice, mainly of landlords, industrial tycoons, domestic employers and merchants; the social injustice, mainly of caste oppression and women's discrimination; and the political power - structure which supports and maintains both. What the poor and hungry need, whether we like it or not, is power, the power to secure their share of what is available. The meek cannot inherit the earth without the ruthless being deprived of their power. It is important however that people's movements, social activists and groups should have a moral conscience and a discerned approach with regard to human questions. In the deeply pluralistic and explosive context of India, human rights' activists and movements must always remain sensitive to the rights of other communities and to the exigencies of the common good.

What can we individual CLC's all over the world do to promote human rights?

One must first develop a proper understanding of human rights' issues. Once aware of such issues, a person can help others become aware within his/her own profession and in society at large. Another step consists in occasional gestures of support for human rights: preparing a newspaper article, writing letters against specific abuses, being a resource person at a legal aid session, taking part in a protest march, etc. A further step consists in

becoming members of a human rights' organization, social action group, a citizen's committee. The apostolic work of our own CLC community may, with discernment, take this line.

I would like to end with a quotation from the U.N. Charter.

"We the People of the U.N. are determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

Anthony Martyris

PRAYING WITH MARY

Guidelines for Meetings

MARY'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

Second meeting

1. Sharing lived experiences

Have you succeeded in keeping an attitude of listening to the Lord in your life?

Have you opened yourself to God's call, to God's will for you?

2. Spiritual Reflection

Today we shall meditate on Mary's response to God's call throughout her life as the prototype of every positive human response to the call that is made to us to build the Kingdom of the Father in our world.

During the last meeting we saw how the 'YES' of the Incarnation changes the life of the world: thanks to a human 'yes', God himself penetrates human history and divinizes it. First he penetrates the reality and the human history of Mary, then, starting from her, he penetrates the reality and the history of the world. Throughout her life, her 'yes' at the time of the Incarnation led her to other situations to which she had to respond and in which, day after day, she brought into play the unconditional gift of herself to the will of God and her participation in the building up of the Kingdom of the Father.

Each human response to God's call in Christ has the effect of bringing that same Kingdom nearer or of holding it at bay. And this in the most routine as well as in the most extraordinary situations of life. And it is not just a personal affair: if I allow God to be God for me, he will work through me in the world. If I say 'no' to his call, I make an obstacle to the planting of the Kingdom of God in me and in the whole world. Day after day there is something transcendent in each of us which is working for us, for the world, for God.

The fruit of numerous years of life with Jesus, who filled her heart with love and joy, and who also shattered ordinary plans (the loss of the child in the Temple, Jesus' leaving to go preaching without being a teacher of the Law) is what prepared her to pronounce this sentence which has passed down through the centuries: "Do whatever he tells you". She knows that, basically, doing what Jesus says gives life in abundance and transforms everything, even if it is painful and we do not understand it. Water is changed into wine that delights the heart of man...; through doing what he says, our life will become joyful, capable and efficacious in transforming the world.

"Do whatever he tells you". That is what Mary says to us today, to each of us personally and to all of us as a CLC community who want to work and be of service to the Kingdom of the Father. "Do whatever he tells you!" Doing what he tells us will at the same time lead us on to a joyful road, that of "being with him", "working with him", and on to a road of suffering, "suffering with him" the lack of understanding and the attacks that he himself suffers. In this way we arrive at the fulness of the Resurrection.

That attitude of Mary, that attitude of attentive listening, of her who keeps the things of Jesus in her heart, that attitude of fidelity in every concrete moment of life is the attitude that God wants us to imitate. Today in CLC we call for that kind of attitude: "an attitude of discernment", of finding and following the will of God. Mary is our teacher of discernment because:

- she can teach us to "listen" so as to be able to know the call and the will of God;
- she can teach us how to "meditate" on that will "in our hearts", even if it sometimes seems difficult and absurd;
- she can teach us to "prefer" God's will to our own, so that God becomes truly LORD for us in everything: in our affections, in our occupations, in our plans on how to live and in a style of life that is closer to Jesus.

It is for that reason that Christ gives her to us as example: when an admirer said to him: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breast that nursed you", he replied: "Blessed rather are those who listen to the Word of God and keep it" (Lk 11,27-28). Jesus had discovered how alive were this listening and responding to the will of God in his mother, and not only in the Scriptures, but also in the events of the daily life they shared together. And he rated this attitude of his mother more important than her biological maternity.

In order to discover in depth what are the attitudes and the responses of Mary to life and to God, let us in prayer run through some of the episodes of her life that are recounted for us in the Gospels.

3. PRAYER EXPERIENCE

a) Introduction:

- relaxing and becoming disposed to accompany Mary;
- putting oneself in the presence of God;
- asking what we want: the grace to accompany Mary with all our heart, so as to let ourselves admire the trusting gift that she makes of herself into the hands of God, and letting ourselves be led to doing the same as she does.

b) Prayer of accompaniment:

Just like us, in responding to God's call, Mary had to face numerous situations of different kinds: joyful and fulfilling, difficult and unexpected ones.

Let us follow her in silence, trying to imagine and to make the situations our own so as to understand her feelings and the quality of her total gift to God. We will allow a few minutes of silence between one consideration and another, to accompany Mary with our hearts and to let her narrate to us her experiences of life.

* The Nativity (Lk 2,1-20; Mt 1,18-25)

As in the birth of every baby, there must have been in the concrete life of Mary, at the moment in which she gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, many different aspects and certain very surprising moments. Let us imagine just a few of them so as to better accompany her in her real life:

- tiredness after a journey of more than 100 kms; pains that announce the birth; the indifference of people to her state. She ends up finding herself in a place of refuge for animals, a crib, where she gives birth to her son. In her deprivation she feels protected by the Father in the person of Joseph. She trusts and accepts without complaint the inconveniences and the disappointments that accumulate at such a critical, vital moment when calm and peace are so necessary.
- her heart overflows with wonder and astonishment. Every birth is an extraordinary event, but here is so

much more... it is breath-taking! This new life that is arriving in the world, her son, is the 'novelty' that changes the history of the world. She who is so cut off from the world has God in her arms, the God-with-us becomes a defenceless child. He whom the world does not contain is crying in this crib at Bethlehem; the master of the universe "appears" under the most humble and hidden form that one can think of; and the first ones to whom the Father makes the gift of "recognising" him and coming to him are the humble shepherds, marginalised people. Let us keep company with Mary in this very important moment of her life and let us marvel as she does at the ways of God where his predilection for the poor is clearly shown at the same time as the refusal and the indifference of men appear.

(A few minutes of silence.)

* The Name of Jesus (Lk 2,21)

"When the eighth day came and he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

The name of someone is a very important thing at this time in Israel. In a certain way, the name says who the person is. It is not Mary who has chosen the name of Jesus. It is the name that the Father gave him, as a gift, before his conception and from all eternity. And Jesus means: "God saves". This name will give Mary the chance to meditate in her heart the unfathomable ways of God: from the moment she first feels the child forming in her womb, then, seeing this defenceless child sleeping in her arms. In her son, God saves!

Let us accompany Mary in this meditation on the name of Jesus = God saves!

(A few minutes of silence.)

* The Presentation in the Temple (Lk 2,22-38)

The life of Jesus, as a member of the people of Israel, begins with his consecration to God in the Temple at

Jerusalem, a few kilometres from Bethlehem. There he is "recognised" as the universal saviour, first by the "poor of the Lord" represented by Simeon and Anna. And Mary hears from the lips of Simeon that this universal salvation which her Son is bringing will not be painless, that he will be a sign of contradiction in the midst of his people. She also hears that in her own life she will share in the painful destiny of her people. With her Son, she will find herself at the centre of this contradiction, which will be like a sword that will pierce her heart.

Let us accompany Mary in this decisive moment in which the prophecy opens her eyes to a future of conflict. Saint Luke tells us that she and Joseph marvelled at what was said about the child. Mary did not take fright. She marvelled at the ways of God and entrusted herself to Him through them.

(A few minutes of silence.)

The Flight into Egypt (Mt 2,13-18)

Let us accompany her on this painful and enforced exile which exposed her to everything that all the exiles of human history are exposed to: being far from her family, from her village, from her friends, in a country with a different language and customs; and all that without knowing for how long..., and Mary goes, entrusting herself into the hands of the Father, so open to living out the concrete and unsuspected ways of His love.

(Some minutes of silence.)

* Life in Nazareth (Lk 2,39-40.51-52)

Let us imagine her life during the years in Nazareth. There, day after day, she lived the life of a home and the life of affection proper to family relationships. But there was also the unspectacular routine of daily life, her fidelity to God was shown in her fidelity to concrete life, to the concrete relationships that she lived in her house and in her village. The Kingdom of

God will be realised through our gift to others, through the love which links us to others, first in the home, then in studies or work; and also through our involvement in the transformation of society according to the directives of the Church. And it was thus that Mary understood and lived the coming of the Kingdom during those years in which she taught and loved her Son, Saint Joseph, her friends and her neighbours, during those years in which she initiated him into Scripture, in which she oriented him towards the love of God the Father and fidelity to him.

Let us ask Mary to invite us to dwell on those years of tenderness and deep happiness, on those years dedicated to the service of others: doing the cooking, the washing, the sewing and many other things, keeping all these things in her heart.

(Some minutes of silence.)

- c) We can spend 5 minutes praying to Mary, aloud... words of affection, words of praise.

End by reciting together the "Ave Maria".

4. Evaluation of the experience

- What feelings and attitudes of Mary have touched me most deeply?
- Have they shed any light on God's will for me in my ordinary daily living?

5. Suggestions for personal prayer

- In order to deepen the experience, pray about the gospel texts that can help me to know Our Lady better and to love her more:

* Lk 1,39-35: The Visitation

- * Lk 1,46-56: The awareness Mary has of herself - the Magnificat
 - * Lk 2, 1-20; Mt 1,18-25: The Birth of Jesus
 - * Lk 2,21-28: The Name of Jesus and the Presentation in the Temple
 - * Lk 2,41-50: The loss of the child
 - * Lk 2,39-40; 51-52: The hidden life
 - * Jn 2, 1-11: The Wedding at Cana
 - * Mk 3,31-35: Jesus' relatives.
- Look for signs in these texts of the Father's love for Jesus, for Mary and for the whole of humanity.

Josefina Errazuriz

LIFE-STYLE

The 'questionnaire-guide' here below was prepared by the working-group 'Continuing Theological Reflection'. Once prepared, it was tested, with a certain amount of success by a CLC group. We now propose it to our readers, particularly to those in charge, leaders and assistants of CLC groups.

Its aim is to lead CLC members to an awareness of the 'consumer' ideology of our societies (even certain poor countries have made it their objective...), to examine the consequences of this, to discern the call of Christ therein and to let oneself be transformed through a free decision.

The question posed is the following:

HOW CAN I GROW IN CHRIST, BY VIRTUE OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY, IN THE CONSUMER SOCIETY IN WHICH I AM IMMERSED AND OF WHICH I AM A PART?

The groups should devote a certain number of successive meetings to the question (at least five) because it is a matter of a work of reflection and sharing in prayer (avoid getting involved in 'discussions', even if the subject seems to lend itself to that) over a period of several weeks.

If one of the meetings leaves the group with a feeling of something 'unfinished' with regard to the questionnaire, that is, if it seems that, because of insufficient time, it has not produced all the fruits that one would have expected, one may decide (during the evaluation at the end of the meeting) to have a 'repetition' of it at the next meeting. At any rate, that is foreseen for the third meeting dedicated to the contemplation of Christ living the Beatitudes.

FIRST MEETING

It will have as its objective making us aware of the problems posed by the consumer society in which we are immersed.

It can unfold in the following way:

First Part : shared prayer starting with the text of Isaiah 5,8-12.

Second Part: sharing, mutual listening, starting with the following question:

To give an orientation to one's life, what weight should one give in general to the values 'family, work, neighbour, etc...' in comparison with the values 'money, quality and quantity of what one buys, success relative to others, etc...'??

In order to reflect on this question, we should, in preparing the meeting, look for sufficiently concrete examples at the level of economic policy in general (news-

paper articles, publicity), but also at the individual level, in what we can see around us.

At this first stage it is necessary to stay at the "becoming aware" level, of looking at these problems from outside, objectively, without getting personally involved or blaming oneself.

The meeting may be ended by praying, starting with Psalm 146 (145): "Praise Yahweh, my soul..."

SECOND MEETING

The last meeting helped us become initially aware of different areas of our life, in which our consumer society calls in question a certain number of traditional and fundamental values.

From this background, let each one look again at those more particular areas in which he or she feels personally concerned through this 'thirst to consume': money, objects, clothes, accomodation, sexuality, T.V., leisure... but also: position, success, power, consideration... And so let each person share his/her reactions, in an atmosphere of listening...

To help me to examine myself more precisely I can use the following questions (always avoiding attributing blame):

- 1) With regard to organizing my life and in terms of my attachment to certain things:
 - what am I attached to?
 - what am I afraid of losing?
- 2) With regard to my relations with others (i.e. relations consciously experienced):
 - whom am I attached to?
 - which are the relations whose loss would upset me most?

It is obviously in prayer that I must take up these questions. To help myself I can read again the story of Abraham, considering how God guides him in his relations with Isaac, and having tested his surrender in faith, makes the gift of a new order of paternity.

Limit yourself to: Gn 18,1-15; 21,1-7; 22,1-19.

THIRD MEETING

Our previous meetings have enabled us to become aware of the snares in a consumer society, and then to examine in the light of God's word the areas in which we feel more particularly concerned through this desire to consume.

The objective of this third meeting is now to turn our gaze toward Christ, so as to contemplate him living the Beatitudes, reflecting that, as he lived them, they were a source of happiness for himself and others.

The meeting will consist essentially in a sharing of the fruits of our contemplation. It will therefore only make sense to the extent that each one will have been able in his or her preparation to dedicate sufficient time to prayer.

For these times of prayer we propose that, after a short preparatory prayer asking the Lord to allow you to be chosen among his disciples, each of you should choose for the contemplation of Christ the particular one from the first four Beatitudes that interests you most (cf. Mt 5,1-10).

To help us, we can use the following guidelines:

First Beatitude: *Happy the poor...*

- one can pray starting with Mark 1,21-39, which, by presenting 24 hours of the life of Jesus to us, shows us how he was poor with regard to the time that he gave so generously;
- or else one can take the text of Matthew 15,21-28, where one can contemplate Jesus as poor in his mission with regard to the Jews.

Second Beatitude: *Happy the meek...*

- one can pray about Matthew 11,25-30, the revelation made to the simple;
- or about Matthew 18,1-7, who is the greatest...?

Third Beatitude: *Happy those who weep...*

- one can take the text of John 11,28-44 and contemplate in particular Jesus weeping over his friend Lazarus.

Fourth Beatitude: *Happy those who hunger and thirst for justice...*

- starting with Matthew 3,13-17, which presents the baptism of Jesus to us, we can contemplate a God who is reckoned among sinners.
- or else in Mark 3,1-6, we can contemplate Christ being angry with those who put the law before love (that is, man's justice before God's).

I will remind myself that the prayer of contemplation can be ended, if I feel sufficiently intimate with the Lord, with what Saint Ignatius calls a "colloquy", that is, a prayer in which I address myself directly to Christ and in which I also listen to what he wants to say to me.

FOURTH MEETING

This will consist in the "repetition" of the third meeting both with regard to what concerns the preparation and the meeting itself.

FIFTH MEETING

To prepare this last meeting we propose that each one tries to find out how, concretely, with regard to his/her personal situation and that of those around him/her, he/she can modify their style of life in order to respond to the call they have heard from Christ in the course of these last weeks of searching in prayer.

That is what we shall try to share in the Eucharist, the celebration of which will constitute the essential part of the meeting.

As preparation we can meditate on the text of John 12,24-26, or another text which corresponds to the liturgical period in which one finds oneself and about which people will have agreed at the end of the previous meeting.

Jean-Pierre Lajeat

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

MEETING OF THE LEADERS OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH CLC

As was previously announced, the meeting of young people from European CLC's was held in Naples from July 25 to August 3 in the welcoming and familiar setting of the Campano seminary.

The participants were: six Maltese, five Spaniards, four Austrians, four Italians, three Poles, two Irish, two Dutch and one representative respectively from Portugal, France, Belgium, Luxembourg. The members of the guiding team were José Gsell, Rafael Sotomayor S.J. and Francesco Botta S.J.

The first two days of the meeting, which was not meant to be a formation course, were dedicated to a description of the national realities of the individual countries, with particular attention to the problems of young people. In order to achieve this objective, work was done in national groups followed by a report from each group to all the participants, the listeners having the opportunity of asking questions for clarification. The next two days centred on a description of the situation of CLC youth groups in the different countries. This time the work was done in international groups with the opportunity of confronting the different situations. Each group, then, had its own particular theme, or deepened an aspect of the life of CLC's. Obviously, it is not possible in this article to report everything that was said and proposed, so I will limit myself to some conclusions. The description of the individual national situations showed a global crisis of values, especially among young people: drugs, unemployment, a certain sense of distrust are common problems in all the countries represented, in some more, in some less. A certain difference emerged between the Latin countries like Italy and Spain and northern ones like Holland and Austria with regard to the family and the style of life of young

people before marriage. In this regard it is interesting to note how the liberalising of everything, for example in Holland, does not automatically mean the achievement of serenity and the absence of problems. Even richer in information was the description of CLC in the various countries. Here too I will limit myself to quoting the points which emerged from the various reports.

Almost all, practically, underlined the need for more formation courses and more community meetings at the national level, above all with the aim of forming people who are committed and responsible. In this regard it should be said that it was pointed out that there was a certain lack of lay guides in the groups and, consequently, a need to increase their number. Then, we cannot ignore the problem of service and mission. Regarding this it was clarified that service is an integral part of our spirituality, and therefore cannot be missing from an authentic CLC. In this regard, it can be helpful if all the members of a group perform the same service, though it is not indispensable.

The second part of the course was also subdivided into two sections: the first dedicated to formation and the second to more practical matters. The second objective of the course, in fact, was to give the individual participants a precise notion of what an authentic CLC is and how it can be formed. Two days were therefore taken up for the most part with talks by José Gsell, followed by moments of reflection and sharing in international groups. These talks touched on all the fundamental points of CLC spirituality, highlighting above all the fact that choosing to be part of a community means responding to a call from Christ.

Discernment and Spiritual Exercises are the basic points for such a way of life. We dwelt particularly on the delicate point of passing from precommunities to communities, an important moment but too often not fully understood.

During the last two days we passed on to a more practical part of the course: a visit to the poor areas of Naples, listening to a Neapolitan couple who were deeply involved in one of the poorest districts of the city, and a morning dedicated almost entirely to prayer.

I would like to end with the final objective of the course, which was that of living a real community experience for ten days. The moments of sharing were those of meditation in the morning, Mass in the evening and the final evaluation of the day before going to sleep. To these, however, should be added the moments when we were together in national and international work groups, as I said above. Nevertheless, the most beautiful things to remember for me as a participant were the richness and depth of the human relationships: there was in everyone a sincere desire to listen and to speak, to give and to receive. Different languages were spoken, and yet, in a certain sense, we spoke the same language; the interpersonal communication in accordance with the authentic style of the CLC was one of the most beautiful and encouraging signs of the whole course. At the moment of saying goodbye we carried with us the sadness of having to separate but also the joy of knowing that in other countries many young people like us are trying to travel the same road as we are.

Francesco Cirillo

CLC PARENTS' DAY
(Zamboanga, Philippines)

Ben Sim S.J.

One of the common problems encountered by the young CLC members is the tension between the demands of CLC formation and apostolate on the one hand, and the demands of the family on the other. The college CLC of Ateneo de Zamboanga tried to face this problem by organizing the "Parents' Day" - a day of sharing with parents. The first "Parents' Day" was held last year (1984). The outcome was very positive both for the CLC members and their parents. There was a significant improvement in the trust and understanding between parents and children. This year, the "Parents' Day" was held on September 1st (1985).

The idea of the "Parents' Day" was to show affection and appreciation for the sacrifices and love the parents have given to their children. The second objective was to have a parents-children dialogue to develop greater communication and understanding. The day was supposed to be a day to honor the parents, so the CLC members were not supposed to ask their parents for money for the occasion, but to sacrifice part of their allowances for the necessary expenses.

The program consisted of two parts. The morning which started at 8:30 was the more serious part of sharing and dialogue. The first part of the program began with the CLC members one by one introducing themselves and their parents to the whole assembly. The parents were applauded by the whole assembly as they were introduced. After the introduction some CLC members shared with the whole assembly their experiences with the CLC and how the CLC has transformed them.

For the second part of the morning the parents met together in groups of six to share on two points: 1) My joys and consolations with regard to my children, and 2) My fears and concerns with regard to my children. The children on their part shared among themselves their joys

and consolations with their parents, as well as the problems they found with parents. After about an hour in small groups a report was made to the whole assembly.

The common points that stood out among the parents were their fears and concerns for the safety of their children when they are out, especially the girls, what kind of company they are with, and where they are, especially when they are late in coming home. The children often found problems in communicating with their parents because of the difference in culture. They feel the need for better understanding on both sides. To wind up the morning sessions, the Guides explained the demands of the formation and apostolate of the CLC program.

Lunch was prepared and served by the children to their parents. After lunch a touching moment took place when the children pinned a corsage of orchids on their parents while singing "Hindi Kita Malilimutan" ("I will never forget you") from Isaiah 49.

The afternoon was taken up by a two-hour variety show presented by the CLC members. There were songs, dances and comedy skits. The whole day's activities culminated with a Family Eucharistic Celebration.

There were about fifty CLC members and about twenty-five parents who took part in this year's "Parents' Day" celebration. In the afternoon, two other Campus Ministry Organizations, the Ateneo Catechetical Instruction League (ACIL) and the Liturgical Society (LS), which held separate dialogues with their parents in the morning, joined in for the common program.

The response of the parents was very positive. Some suggested that the CLC also give an orientation program to the parents at the beginning of the school year to help them understand the involvement of their children better. Some suggested that parents be invited to the CLC formation program of their children; still others wanted to have some formation sessions for parents also.

As a whole the parents were proud that their children were members of the CLC.