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FOREWORD

March - April 1987, Lent time. On Palm Sunday, Jesus will be acclaimed especially by the young people, by those who have known God's love and are confident in it. The Pope has invited all of us to celebrate "the World Day of Youth", and he himself will preside over this event from Buenos Aires, Argentina. We must see in this convocation a new and multiple call.

Among the many challenges that this call contains, we invite you to consider the appeal to believe in young people. To believe in them means to value them positively, to invite them to great things, for they are capable of undertaking very demanding challenges. It means to share seriously with them, to offer them the best we are, to receive the best that they can offer us. A community which doesn't believe in its young people is a community which doesn't believe in itself, or in other words, a community which, little by little, is losing its ability and confidence to communicate and pass on its spirit.

In this issue of Progressio you will find experiences and reflections of young people, within the framework of the message that the Holy Father has addressed to them in preparation for the world day. You will not find these experiences in green pages, so that all of us, and not only the young people, may share a concern which belongs to all of us. All the pages are offered to all the people.

In a community like ours, we are all responsible for the whole. The Executive Council has not coopted a young member just to allow him to participate in discussions which only or more especially concern the youth. Instead, a young member has been coopted so that he can participate fully, offering all the richness of his particular view on all the topics which concern the World Community.

Speaking of the Ex-Co - when you receive this issue of Progressio, its members will be converging on Rome for their 1st. meeting since the elections. Do remember them in your prayers.

MESSAGE TO ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE WORLD
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY OF YOUTH
Palm Sunday 1987

Dear young people, my friends,

"We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love towards ourselves" (1 Jn.4:16).

1. On 8th June this year I had the immense joy of announcing that the next World Day of Youth will be celebrated at Buenos Aires on Palm Sunday 1987. This will be the momento in which, with the help of God, I shall culminate my apostolic visit to the countries of the cone of South America: Uruguay, Chile and Argentina.

At Buenos Aires I shall have the great joy of meeting not only the young people of Argentina, but also many other young people coming from the whole of the Latin-American continent and other countries in the world. In this much-awaited meeting, we shall all feel in communion of prayer, friendship and brotherhood, responsibility and commitment, with the other young people who, gathered round their Pastors, shall celebrate this Day in local Churches throughout the world. We shall also feel in union with all those who are seeking God with a sincere heart and who wish to dedicate their youthful energies to the construction of a more just and more fraternal society.

It is significant that the World Day of Youth should this time have the centre of its celebration in Latin-America, the majority of whose population consists of young people, who are the animators and future protagonists of what has been called the "continent of hope". The Church of Latin-America, which proclaimed its "preferential option for the young" at Puebla (Mexico), is preparing itself for a "new evangelization" to rediscover its roots and rejuvenate the Christian tradition and culture of its peoples on the threshold of the "half millennium" of its first evangelization. Yet if our attention is fixed on it, it is also extended to the four corners of the earth, and our words are intended as an appeal to young people every

where, from the North and the South, from the East and the West, to join together, for it is they who will be the men and women of the year 2000 and whom the Church recognises and welcomes with hope.

2. The theme of this World Day places before our eyes the witness of the apostle St. John, when he exclaims: "We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love towards ourselves" (1 Jn.4:16).

In this regard, I would like to remind you of a thought I expressed in my first Encyclical: "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it" (Redemptor hominis, 10). And how much more this reality holds good for the life of the young, during this phase of special responsibility and hope, development of the person, definition of the meaning and the great ideals and projects of life, and aspiration to truth and to the attainment of genuine happiness! It is in this period of our life that we most have a need to feel ourselves recognised, supported, listened to and loved. You know very well, in the depths of your heart, that the satisfactions afforded by a superficial hedonism are ephemeral and leave nothing but emptiness in our soul; that it is illusory to enclose ourselves in the shell of our own egoism; that all indifference and scepticism contradict the noble aspirations of a love that knows no frontiers; and that the temptation of violence and of ideologies which deny God can only lead to a dead end.

Since man can neither live nor understand himself without love, I want to appeal to you to grow in humanity, to give absolute priority to the values of the spirit, and to transform yourselves into "new men" and "new women" by increasingly recognising and accepting the presence of God in your life: the presence of a God who is Love; of a Father who loves each one of us for the whole of eternity, who created us by love and who loved us so much that he gave up his Only Son to forgive us our sins, to reconcile us to

Him, and to enable us to live with Him in a communion of love which will never end. The World Day of Youth should therefore prepare us all to accept this gift of the love of God by which we are transformed and by which we are saved. The world anxiously awaits our witness of love, a witness born from a deep personal conviction and a sincere act of love and faith in the Risen Christ. This is what is meant by experiencing love and believing in it.

3. Our celebrations will also have a clearly community dimension. This is an inescapable need of the love of God and the communion of those who feel themselves to be sons and daughters the same Father, brothers sisters in Jesus Christ and united by the power of the Spirit. By forming part of the great family of the redeemed and by being living members of the Church, you will experience, during this World Day, the enthusiasm and joy of the love of God by which you are called to unity and solidarity. This is a call that excludes no one. On the contrary, it is one that transcends frontiers and is addressed to all young people without distinction. It is a call that strengthens and renews the bonds by which young people are united. In these conditions, it is essential that the bonds that unite them be particularly strong and operative with the young who are suffering from unemployment, who are living in poverty or solitude, who feel themselves marginalized or who bear the heavy cross of sickness. It is essential, too, that this message of friendship also reach those who do not accept religious faith. Charity does not compromise with error, but it goes out towards everyone to open up the paths to conversion. How splendid and luminous are the words addressed to us in this respect by St. Paul in his hymn to charity! (cf. 1 Cor 13). May they be for you a programme of conduct and resolute commitment for your present and future life!

The love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 5:5) must deepen our awareness of the blatant threats posed by hunger and war, the scandalous disparities between opulent minorities and poor peoples, the violations of human rights and fundamental human liberties, including man's rights to religious freedom, and

actual or potential manipulations of his dignity. I deeply and strongly felt the presence and prayer of young people on the occasion of the World Day of prayer for peace held at Assisi on 27 October, in which the representatives of the various Christian confessions and religions of the world participated.

More than ever, it is vitally important that the enormous scientific and technological advances of our time be directed, with moral wisdom, at the well-being of the whole of man and all men and women. The gravity, urgency and complexity of current problems and challenges demand of the new generations the necessary capacity and competence in the various fields but the integral well-being of man, created in the image of God and called to an eternal destiny, must be placed above partial interests and viewpoints. It is in Christ that the love of God and the sublime dignity of man and women has been fully revealed to us. May Jesus be the "cornerstone" (cf. Eph.2:20) of your life and of the new civilization you are called to build in a spirit of generous solidarity and sharing. No authentic human growth in peace and justice, in truth and freedom, can be achieved without the presence of Christ and his salvific power.

The building of a civilization of love requires strong and persevering characters, ready for self-sacrifice and anxious to open up new paths of human coexistence by over-coming divisions and the various forms of materialism. This is a responsibility of the young people of today who will be the men and women of tomorrow, at the dawn of the third Christian millennium.

4. In joyful anticipation of our meeting, I urge you all to undergo a deep and meditated spiritual preparation which may increase the ecclesial impetus of this World Day. Start out on the road! May your journey be marked by prayer, study, dialogue and the desire for conversion and a better life. Go forward united with each other in your parishes and Christian communities, in your associations and apostolic movements. May yours be an attitude of acceptance and hope, in harmony with the period of Advent

we are beginning! The liturgy of this first Sunday reminds us, in the words of St. Paul, that "the time has come" and exhorts us to "give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark" and to "arm ourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. Rom.13:11-14).

I send my affectionate and cordial greetings to all the young people of the world. I do so quite particularly to the young people of Argentina. I have followed with great interest your annual pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Luján and the National Meeting held in Córdoba last year, as well as the "youth option" on which the overall pastoral ministry of the Argentine Episcopate has for years been concentrated. Since my first visit to your country in 1982, so marked by suffering and hope, I have been familiar with your commitment to the building of peace in justice and truth. And through all this, I know that you are contributing with enthusiasm to the preparation of the World Day in Buenos Aires; that you will be present with the Pope at this meeting; and that you will be able to welcome with generous hospitality and shared friendship those young people from other countries who wish to participate in this celebration by pledging themselves to Christ, to the Church and to the new civilization of truth and love.

I urge all young men and women throughout the world to celebrate the next World Day of Youth on Palm Sunday 1987 with particular intensity and hope. And I entrust its preparation and its fruits to Mary, the young Virgin of Nazareth, the humble servant of the Lord who believed in the love of the Father and gave us Christ, "our Peace" (cf. Eph.2:14).

Dear young people, my friends: be witness to the love of God, sowers of hope and builders of peace.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I bless you with all my affection.

From the Vatican, 30 November 1986

The First Sunday of Advent

JOANNES PAULUS II

AN IGNATIAN APPROACH FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

Do you know how it feels when you find something with has been written just for you and for your purposes? Two articles in Progressio have been, I think, especially for me -the first exciting one was by Stefan Vanistendael, "Religious Education of Children and CLC" (1) and the second was by Nestor Jaen, S.J. "The Spiritual Exercises through Questions" (2).

Stefan suggests ways in which Ignatian approaches may be highly suitable for the religious education of young people today. My own experience during the last few years of applying Ignatian pedagogy with senior students has convinced me of the wisdom of Stefan's insights.

Initial questions to students eliciting areas of vital concern to them, and further deepening questions about universal longings, open up various stages of the course described here. The method used by Nestor Jaen S.J. of actually initiating various exercises through "Questions" came as a natural sequel. He hoped his "Questions" would be of some use to some people. He will be interested to know that his "1st Week Questions" provided these students with a really significant experience.

A PEDAGOGY BASED ON THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

The course outlined here is a full year's one, used in 1985 for 102 senior High School students aged 16, 17 years. It is based on the framework, pedagogy and process of the Spiritual Exercises taking into account the flexibility and adaptations allowed for by St. Ignatius (Sp.Ex.18). There were four classes each with approximately 26 students, with three 50 minute sessions each week.

(1) Progressio, July, 1982

(2) Progressio, May, Julio, 1985

At weekly meetings the teachers discern

- What exercises might be used to meet the students in their present situations
- What exercises would maintain the organic thread of the First Principle and Foundation (Sp. Ex.23), (Feb. to May), the 1st Week of the Spiritual Exercises, (June to August) and of the Kingdom and 2nd Week (Sept. to Nov.)
- What exercises would produce the desired fruit - a vital Ignatian element (cf.Sp.Ex,48).

In the Course outline you may detect Ignatian strategies such as:

- a pause at the beginning of lessons, to foster attunement to God (Sp. Ex.46)
- consciously begging God's grace for the gift we want (Sp.Ex.46,49)
- teaching by contraries (Sp.Ex. 23,58,59,136,241,244)
- learning through self-discovery - going over things and pondering on them oneself produces greater spiritual relish (cf. Sp. Ex.2)
- at times inviting "a lot of thinking and reasoning things out... at other times far more a response of the heart". (cf.Sp. Ex. 3, D.L.Fleming s.j. trans.)
- a few minutes allowed towards the end of each session for private journal keeping by students - to foster reflection on experience.

STAGES OF THE EXERCISES

FOUNDATION God's plan for my happiness: God created me in love and invites my free responses.I must be free before all that has been created -

free to care and love (Sp. Ex. 23) (1)

1st WEEK - These exercises invite me to look into what is in me -the dark areas of my sinfulness- and where I find forgiveness, in Christ. I seek for the grace of a deeper understanding of disorder at the personal, social and cosmic level. A sinner, but healed by Jesus' death on the cross, I pray for the openness to

- know him more clearly
- love him more dearly
- and follow him more nearly (Sp.Ex.104)

KINGDOM - I ask for the grace that I might be able to hear Jesus' call - a call addressed to everyone -to help build his "Kingdom of truth and life, justice, love and peace" and that I might be ready and willing to do what he wants. (Sp.Ex.91) (2)

2nd WEEK - I share his love at the manger in Bethlehem and learn his way in the beatitudes lived out during life on earth.

3rd WEEK - I ask for the grace to go Christ's way through his suffering and death.

4th WEEK - ...and then to find Christ's way to new life, for...
"every single person, if he/she is to be redeemed, must in his/her own way pass through the mystery of Jesus". (3)

(1) This Principle and Foundation text (Sp.Ex.23) offer a germinal point for departure and a point for continual return cf. p. 38 Jean Laplace, "An Experience of Life in the Spirit" trans.R. Mooney S.J. Shand Pub. 1978.

(2) p. 65 D.L. Fleming,S.J., op. cit.

(3) cf. p. 9 H.Alphonso,S.J. The Process of the Exercises. Talks on the Spiritual Exercises. Rome,Sept./Oct.1979.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING MATERIAL

The guiding factors determining teaching materials are:

- the stage of the process of the Exercises we are now involved in
- what attitude (grace) we are asking for.

Any material known to be suitable at the appropriate level may then be chosen. The organic thread of the course is developed through using the "goal, framework and the needed tools" (1) of the Spiritual Exercises. Much flexibility is allowed both at varying levels and from year to year within each level (cf. Sp. Ex. 18).

To illustrate this flexible approach, in Term III 1984, with our three Year 11 classes (72 students aged 16-17) we developed the Two Standards concepts. Through group activities on the antonyms and synonyms of the Beatitudes, the Ignatian Two Standards (Sp.Ex.136 ff) came into clear perspective. Social justice issues such as vandalism, migrants, racism, uranium use, street kids and social pressures on youth, were viewed from a new awareness of two opposing forces at work in the world and in ourselves today.

In contrast, in Term III 1985, with our four Year 11 classes (102 students aged 16,17) we developed kingdom concepts much more fully, as the Term III outline will later illustrate.

With each group we need to be open to possibilities which present themselves in tune with the attitude or grace to be asked for (Sp.Ex.4,48) and the stage of the journey of the Exercises.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER

"Much has been written about the close parity that is to be found between the director and retreatant

(1) p. 78 D.F. Fitzpatrick S.J., Confusion, Call, Commitment. Alba House, New York, 1976.

relationship of the Exercises and the teacher-student relationship in a Jesuit school." (1)

Keeping this parallel in mind, Sp.Ex. 2 may be seen to offer a wealth of advice to the religious educator:

- Don't clutter the student with a barrage of words or with the cramming of "much knowledge".
- Offer the solid foundation of facts with accuracy and brevity. (Frequently this "solid foundation" is the Word of God in Scripture). "The Exercises...bring Scripture to life". (2)
- Allow space for the student to come to a better and clearer understanding of the truth through reasoning things out.
- Provide reflective exercises which may lead to "intimate understanding and relish of the truth".

Sp. Ex. 7 suggests a Christ-like touch: When a student is troubled, don't be severe and harsh, but gentle and kind.

Encourage and strengthen each one to face the ups and downs of life, both temptations and consolations. This introduces the student to discernment, which Mary Ward learnt as a child. (3)

(1) p. 11 James D. Sauv , "A World view of Jesuit Education as related to Ignatian Spirituality". Jesuit Education. CIS Vol.XII 1981: 3

(2) p.69 Gerald Wilkens. Using Scripture in the Exercises. "The Word of God in the Spiritual Exercises" CIS 1979.

(3) p.xxii James Walsh, S.J., Till God Will. "She had judgement, she says, to discern at the age of four" ed. M. Emmanuel Orchard I.B.V.M., Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1985. The painted Life, Augsburg, Nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, show Mary Ward developing in discernment.

In general, the religious educator asks for the grace of an attitude of respect and great sensitivity to the situation of the individual.(1) (cf. Sp.Ex. 7,15,18).

"I want to stress this point. The work of education is the work of God. The teacher is to lead his or her students through a preparation for life in the same (or in an analogous) way, that God led the pilgrim Ignatius". (2)

APPROACHES WITH STUDENTS

Each student keeps a journal. If at any stage she wishes to share her journal entry with her teacher or class, this may happen; otherwise journals are regarded as private (cf. Sp.Ex.15 concerning respect for God and each person).

Journal reflections are written during the last five minutes of each session, e.g.

Reflection/response

What have you learnt? discussed? heard? shared?

What came up that you would like to think more about?

(This invites reflection on experience, a key Ignatian technique).

Progressively lesson sheets are pasted into the journal so that course development can be traced and reflected upon.

There is a mutual understanding that when oral sharing of any type is involved, each person has the right

(1) p. 55 Stefan Vanistendael, op. cit.
and cf.p.47-51 Mary Wright I.B.V.M. "The Ignatian Tradition" in Educating for Uncertainty a discussion paper, Sydney, Australia, 1981.

(2) p. 12 James W. Sauvé, S.J., op.cit.

to pass.

An essential feature is the pause and quieting down period at the beginning of each session (cf. Sp. Ex.75).

After this pause -for breathing exercises, relaxing, listening we beg God's present and help (grace) as St. Ignatius recommends. He really does mean us to BEG! (Sp. Ex. 46).

An initial class discussion on the advantages of Ignatian attitudes (which CLC groups will be familiar with) helps to clarify procedure. These are:

respect, openness, honesty, listening (cf. Sp. Ex. 22), generosity, i.e. readiness to be involved (Sp. Ex. 5) a vital interest in the world around and beyond us.

EVALUATING STUDENT COMMENTS

It is evident to me that the Ignatian charism, when passed on to young people, is a very special gift we have to offer them.

Some comments from the evaluations sheets of the students at the end of the first term (Feb. to May) 1985, may help to illustrate this. (This segment of the course centers around First Principle and Foundation concepts (Sp. Ex. 23) which stand outside the actual Exercises themselves).

1.- The Spiritual Exercises invite that "intimate understanding and savouring of things" (Sp. Ex. 2):

"What I have found valuable... is that some of the things we have discussed remain deeply inside me".

- 2.- The Principle and Foundation (Sp.Ex.23) invites a free response in love:

"Before this year I have never really come to grips with God and how much I depend on him, but I've really come to grips with God - and I love him so much".

- 3.- The Spiritual Exercises involve the whole person -intelligence, heart, will, body - in prayer. Stefan Vanistendael notes this aspect as very "modern" and possibly appealing to youth. (1)

"I am surprised that... I've really seriously enjoyed religion Religion. Last year I had a negative outlook on our classes but this year my view has changed. Religion now, is the only class where I can come to total terms with myself. I now look forward to our classes".

- 4.- What St. Ignatius provides in the Principle and Foundation (Sp. Ex.23) is what each person desires to know:

"I am learning and understanding the religion course as it is fulfilling the thoughts that I have wanted to know about God and others".

- 5.- In the following example, as so very often, it is evident that the dynamics of the Exercises provide their own momentum. Here, there is a movement from a positive reponse of love (Principle and Foundation) to an awareness of inner darkness and sin which prevents this love from flowing freely (First Week). (To a great extent the course evolves in this way along an

(1) p. 55 Stefan Vanistendael, op. cit.

organic thread. There comes a readiness to move on):

"I am surprised that... I do have so much love to give out and that that love comes from God. I am surprised that I still bottle some of his love inside me".

Sr. Thérèse Daly I.B.V.M.

YOUTH CLC, DEAD-END OR OBSTACLES IN THE WAY?

In trying to answer this question: What is the CLC?, our first explanation will refer to the name itself. We can define CLC as a way of growing in communion with others within small groups, a process of becoming christians in the Church. Thus we define the aim of our groups as a way of "forming men and women, adults and young people, in the service of the Church and of the world, at any level of life: familiar, professional, civic, ecclesial, etc" (General Principles N.6). So the CLC entails three important features: there is a process of formation for service, and a universality since it is an option open to all those who feel called to it.

In these few lines I would like to contribute, in a modest way, towards an explanation of the contents of this process for young people, placing special emphasis on the fact that it is not -as such- confined to a particular stage of life, but is projected and accompanies us throughout life.

Let's begin at the beginning. Although at the outset everything seems unfamiliar to young people joining a CLC group, nevertheless key elements are available to them. These key elements will guide their process and are, in turn, the main motivations to attract their interest

in, and arouse their enthusiasm for the CLC.

But what are these key elements at this initial stage? It can be said that people who become members of CLC necessarily bring with them at the start of the process:

- an attitude of searching manifested by a profound desire to give greater meaning to their lives;
- a need for others, for relationships of friendship, and for developing an intra- and inter-personal consciousness.
- a concern or desire to discover or put into practice a personal faith, a more frequent and intense relationship with God; and
- a desire to transform the context in which they live and which they intuit as unjust.

This is the beginning. These are fundamental attitudes which undoubtedly can be identified from within our own experiences and which are reminiscent of the First Chapter of the Gospel of John, when the disciples asked Jesus: "Where do you live?" and he replied: "Come and see".

Throughout the experiences of life, these attitudes are deepened in the groups and, in certain moments, rejuvenated. Thus the attitude of searching for greater meaning in life, impels us towards the achievement of greater maturity and the acceptance of our own identity as men and women in the context of our everyday life, in our family, our friendships, etc.

The search for a relationship with God through silence, prayer and above all a first approximation to some form of the Spiritual Exercises, generates a continuous relationship of love and fidelity, and a consciousness of our own personal vocation, thus initiating appropriate responses in every circumstance of life.

The group is forged by bonds of solid friendship. Our commitment, action and service become progressively more mature thanks to a process of discernment which makes us seek reasons for and responses to every fact or problem of life.

This implies that we are entering into the logic of God, so different from the logic of the world. In it we are constantly discovering so many things, so many riches that seemed hidden, and a maturing in our sense of belonging to the Church as People of God. This is a direct result of our experiences in the little church which every community represents.

We could continue in this way to list the fruits of this process - fruits that will be born in the various moments that the group and its members must traverse. Instead, I would like to say something now about a fundamental and particularly problematic moment. It is an inflection point of great importance.

I am referring to the moment when the young attain adulthood: a time for making decisions which have a fundamental influence on their life, such as those of profession, marriage, the transition from economic dependence on the family, and so on. There is, at this point, a certain period of crisis. There are frequent cases of people dropping out, the dissolution of groups or the paralysis of their action. Even though as individuals they continue to support younger groups or other activities. Sometimes one has the impression that the experience gained was wonderful and valid, but difficult to continue. I believe this is a fairly common situation among the CLC of young people, and hence it is difficult at times to find groups that have lived up to their commitment without suffering fractures during this period of transition. Perhaps with time it is possible to return to an authentic experience, but only with this parenthesis in between.

Even recognising these difficulties, I believe, however, that possibilities for tackling and solving the problem do exist. From my own point of view, the decisive

question is whether the CLC is a way of life for each of its members and whether they want to respond in a life-style which will accompany them right through life. It's a question of clarifying what is God's call for each person, and discovering His will by means of the discernment which enables me to embody in my life the attitudes I have discovered in the group. I won't go on belonging to the group by mere inertia, but because I realize that the place where I can develop this way of life - of listening and responding to the continual calls of God - is right here in the group.

Once again I insist that this is a difficult moment for the group. Not everyone will feel called to follow the same way of life, but, whatever the case, it will be wonderful that each person has discovered what it is that attracts him or her most, both inside and outside the CLC, without stifling any hope. It is fundamental, at this point, to return to the specific basis of our spirituality, i.e. to the Spiritual Exercises, as an experience of liberation and source of continual renewal, and also to the integration of its particular methodology and pedagogy in personal or group life. Discernment would seem to be the key factor for this stage.

At this same moment, moreover, we find ourselves invited to be creative, imaginative and, of course, generous. We become dissatisfied with the modes and values of conduct that predominate in society, e.g. situations of injustice, violence, intolerance, materialism and some modes of civic, familial and ecclesial life. As a result, we want to propose challenges which aim at producing alternative and renovative responses. Far from being ideological, these responses express personal and community options. Lastly, we want a life-style compatible with all the gospel values that we have discovered and which will enable us to put into practice the reflections made on our experiences and the desires that we have formulated.

It is therefore a moment of service, which may be expressed through various forms of commitment at the socio-political, professional, familial, ecclesial or other

levels. We want to participate without vanity (but also without inhibition) towards the building of the Kingdom, in a way that is adapted to the particular context of each culture and each nation. A definite contribution can thus be made here by the CLC of young people both to the world and to the Church.

And having reached this point, I would stress again that this is not the end. Life continues, and so too does our deepening in the faith and in our response to the Lord's call, in all the situations of our existence. The CLC is thus characterized, as we said at the beginning, as a process that continues throughout life.

Paco Sans
CVX "Caná"
Madrid

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

What is it to be a young person in the Church today? People tell us different things. We know that it's more than Sunday morning, more than the sign of the Cross, perhaps more than we can ever say. Often, however, we don't know how to fit it into our lives, and the very heart of the matter is that we feel something deep is missing. Can the Church fill the void? How? What will it involve?

If we think about this last question, we may imagine saints and martyrs, priests and bishops, all leading their strange lives. We may think of our grandparents and teachers, or missionaries in Asia and Africa. If the people are the Church, then the Church are those people. Our place is never too clear. We feel that there are gaps and distances between us and them. Even if they do not float three feet off the ground, such people are still beyond us. Even if they wait for us patiently, we have a long way to go.

There is some truth to this; we do have a long way to go. We at least know that much as Christians, and that God gives us what we need --our faith. Even so, we go sour with such an understanding. We still feel the distance, and something in us insists that that is the only problem. The lifeblood is gone from the Church when we think only of the future. We are like withered vines if we think only of the distances. How are we brothers and sisters of Christ now? The Eucharist is only a flat, dry morsel, and we aren't sure what it means to be in the Church in this day and age.

The Eucharist - once mentioned, we ought to reflect on it. After all, it makes all the difference that Christ is present to us in that way. It should make our heads spin that we have missed the point entirely: There is no distance, God is all around us! He comes face to face and enters into our lives. He doesn't wait as we straggle along. He doesn't play hide and seek, expecting us to check behind doors and under beds. He jumps in front of us constantly, all day long. Perhaps he is so common to us we

miss him for his familiarity, or perhaps we can only stand so much reality at a time, so we ignore him. Either way, he starts with us, here and now, wherever we are.

So where are we? That is always part of our confusion; it's never completely clear. The task these days is "to get in touch with": emotions, weaknesses, strengths, tendencies, patterns in our lives -also so that we might know "where we are". In the end, however, that leads nowhere. The real "getting in touch" is with God, not just ourselves. Is there a connection? Can we see God in ourselves, in our going to school and to work, in our homes and in whatever we do?

St. Ignatius Loyola knew that the connection was bound up in the answer to the question: "What do I want?" Nothing sounds more selfish at first glance. "What I want isn't important", we say. Ignatius, however, knew that desires are very important, they are gifts from God, like everything else. It seldom occurs to us that desires are gifts, especially when we think of some of the shameful things that cross our minds and hearts. Aren't those desires? And what of the desires that make us angry at God: the desires for things we can't have, for things that will never be --are those gifts?

Ignatius was anything but naive. He knew that if desires were important, then they would be the most difficult things to understand and clarify, that the devil would be meddling and muddling there more than anywhere else, especially for young people, desires become an unexpected source of pain. For the first time in our lives, we find ourselves faced with decisions that have lasting effects. The desires take on added weight as our responsibility grows, but we can seldom say what it is we really want. On the other hand, here in the United States, in the 80's we seem to know what we want: it's easy -just take it down from the shelf and pay for it at the counter. If the choices are confusing, don't worry -take your time and you will surely find exactly what you want. Once we see through the gaudy mask of consumerism, however, we are still lost. In our confusion, we despair of any clarity. We are bored; we decide

we don't want anything.

Often when we turn towards God, we feel peaceful and close to him. Other times we turn and find ourselves dry and distant, perhaps sore at heart. Naturally, we prefer the former to the latter, but Ignatius learned to do otherwise. He was a careful saint; he took the peacefulness and the soreness in each hand and cherished them both as gifts. He knew that each could guide him to God, and that that was the whole point. He saw that he had been mixed up about his desires, that he didn't merely want to let go of the soreness so as to hold on to the peacefulness with both hands, as had seemed reasonable for so long. The closer Ignatius came to his true desires, the more singular they became. Finally it was one desire, the only desire he had even had: to know and to love God.

The truth became even clearer to Ignatius as he reflected on everything in his life. He became an "artist of desires": standing back from the canvas of his life, he would savor his effects. He would try to discern the good, the beautiful in whatever his desires led him. At first, recognizing the beauty of God was strange and uncomfortable. Ignatius recognized right away that his palette of desires produced much disharmony, imbalance, and ugliness, there were only hints of the beauty he worked to achieve. Humbled, he kept on, savoring his effects with an artist's impassioned indifference. Where did he find Christ? Which desires led him closer to Christ? How might this or that desire be helping him to bring Christ's love to others? Those became the desires that he learned to let guide him.

Ignatius saw too, that he was being guided by lasting things, and that he was developing a new way of life for himself based on this practice of finding God in all things. He made it a habit every day to reflect on the events of recent hours, wondering how Christ had been there and how he might have made Christ more present, more recognizable - he was obsessed. As a hunter would stalk his game, so he would stalk Christ. He became partners with Christ, planning out the details of what needed to be done with relish. Nothing was left unattended.

Ignatius -the man who came to live the CLC way of life- wanted only to be with Christ in everything, even his suffering, if it be the Father's will. He grew slowly but steadily, moment by moment, one day at a time, all his life. As youth, we are mere apprentices. We see much disharmony and imbalance in our own lives. Our palettes are full of desire, but our canvasses are mostly vacant, with only bare outlines.

There is no rushing art! Nevertheless, we are taking shape, and now is the time for accompanying Christ in ways we never have before. In CLC, we mostly learn the beginning skills that Ignatius learned: how to cherish what seems good and bad -- both, only for how they show us God. Perhaps what is most difficult is how to trust our desires as gifts from God. We learn slowly, steadily, to be intimate with Christ in our daily lives, in whomever we serve, whatever we do.

It is our habit to regard our lives in pieces. The Church is over here, our family over there, our work someplace else. We learn to stretch our arms around things. We develop the endurance of the professional juggler. We are tempted to merely add CLC to the top as just another spinning plate. If we do, we still feel empty, for we have missed the point again. The CLC way of life demands that we stop merely juggling or trying to embrace our own lives. Instead, we let Christ come to us in his ways. The great joy that fills the emptiness is that he comes and stays with us, no matter what. Moreover, our lives are not in pieces after all, for Christ resides in every aspect, and all are bound together. When we see Christ in the littlest things around us, we see into the heart of the Church and the heart of CLC.

John Montag, S.J.

THE MARIAN YEAR PENTECOST 1987 TO ASSUMPTION 1988

The Holy Father has proclaimed a Marian Year. All the Church has been invited to join in appreciating and celebrating the mystery of Mary's place in the Church. Why? To learn from Mary a "renewed commitment of conformity to the will of God", (Pope John Paul II, new Year's Day 1987, L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Ed., 5th Jan., p.5). Indeed, Pope John Paul said prayerfully in the same New Year homily: "we must ever learn more from you, O Mary, how to be Church in this passing of the millenium". He invited each diocese to take its own initiatives in this matter. I suggest we take the Holy Father at his word and use our own initiatives in our local and national CLC communities for the local Church.

To guide our reflections, the Pope has promised a new apostolic letter on our Lady. This, together with Father Kolvenbach's talk given at our last World Assembly, should give us good background material for our reflections.

The document on the Church, Lumen Gentium, stated in the important paragraph n.8: "Just as the assumed nature (of Jesus) inseparably united to the divine Word, serves him as a living instrument of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit, who vivifies it by way of building up the body (Eph.4:16)". The same document of the Vatican Council says later (n.53) of Our Lady: "Indeed she is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ... since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church, the faithful, who are members of Christ their Head' (S. Augustine). Therefore she is also hailed as a pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church, and as the Church's model and excellent exemplar in faith and charity. Taught by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church honours her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother".

When the Holy Father says that we must learn continually how to be Church, he was echoing Vatican Council

II, which in its turn was remembering St. Augustine.

Turning to 1987, how can we be Church as Mary was Church? One way to do this would be to take a vital issue which affects the whole world. I take it that a most vital issue facing us today is the issue of war and peace. How can Mary show us how to be Church in the face of this crucial reality? This could be a criterion by which we could set a goal for the Marian Year and be a yard-stick to measure its effectiveness.

The Holy Father and many other religious leaders set the stage for it at Assisi when they gathered to pray for peace. The lack of peace means war or the threat of war. It is consuming a great deal of the world's resources. These resources are being taken away from so many needy people and from the research and development projects needed to help them.

Pope John Paul II pleads insistently for peace. How can we find peace? Turn to the one person who was conformed totally to Our Father in the image of Her Son. Mary, like Jesus, retains a total trust in the Spirit which animates our human family. Perhaps that gives us a clue to what it means to be Church. A people which is confident in the power of God's love: to reconcile people with one another, to inspire them with hope and deep compassion and urge them to search for peace with justice. Just as Mary responded so fully to God's love in Jesus, do I believe He invites me to be a member of the same Church?

Another way of putting it is this. Would I proclaim a Marian Year in the face of the arms race? Imagine proclaiming a Marian Year at the Geneva disarmament conferences! The participants might be polite, but we can imagine the more likely exclamations of "unreal", "what's he on about?", embarrassment.

Yet, from somewhere deep down in the soul of humanity, I hear the shout of surprise and joy which says that the Church recognizes the feminine for what it really is; much like Carl Jung lauding the Dogma of the Assump

tion. From deep within the heart of humankind I hear a voice which says that there must be another way. Unbridled competition and revenge and hatred has led us to war and the insecurity which expects the worst of people; it is a vicious cycle which does not seem to have an end. It builds up the walls of weaponry and the security of ideology. It loses confidence in the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation and the power of being vulnerable at the negotiating table. The Marian Year suggests another way.

Couldn't we shout from the housetops that Mary, the mother of Jesus is a very important expression of the power of God within the human family? She accepted "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and is a profound encouragement for us to do likewise. Couldn't we point to the power of Christ's love in the feminine? Isn't this expression of God's love so sadly lacking in the corridors of power. We can look at the sorry history of war and see what happens to the masculine when the feminine is repressed and rejected. We can see the suffering when men and women remain at enmity with one another or live and work together with a veneer of peace without justice. I suggest we see in Jesus and Mary the integration of both the masculine and feminine qualities within each of their personalities. Couldn't we point to the need for this hoped for integration among women who have been suffering injustices for so long? Couldn't we point out that men have suffered a dreadful loss during the same long time?

In the short term, a Marian Year might sound fanciful to an international disarmament conference. But if we ponder the deeper realities we can regain the basic confidence to call for a just peace. Jesus came to save men and save women and did so by drawing them together within their own hearts and in relationship to each other in community. As the Holy Father suggests, we can ponder these realities in our hearts, in the way Mary did, and learn to be Church for the world.

Tim Quinlan s.j.

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

*MEXICO: How do we wish to live?

Many features of our mode of life have already been described before. But we would still like to emphasise some points about the life-style we follow.

What, then, is our life-style? Or, to put the matter more simply, how do we wish to live?

Simplicity of life:

This, in a word, is what epitomises it all: we wish our life-style to be that of simple people. What do we mean by this, and why do we wish it to be so?

Christian simplicity:

We wish our life to conform to the life-style of Christ himself; a simple man of the people, who was wholly free, but who gave of himself in the service of others. Our love for him and the requirements of our mission and our spirituality make us choose this mode of life in preference to any other.

Simplicity in Solidarity :

In the society where we live, in which we discover that we are both exploited and exploiting, oppressed and oppressing, we opt for solidarity with the weakest, which we believe is the option of God in history. We want to express this not only in our mode of conduct towards them, but also in our willingness to share their fate in the closest possible way.

For this reason we consider it a special blessing of God for us when the Lord calls our oppressed brothers and sisters to unite themselves with us, and with our community, and we welcome them, convinced that they bring us the joy that the Lord Jesus promised them in his Sermon

on the Mount. If they don't feel at ease among us, it's not because there is something necessarily wrong with them, but because we ourselves have still a long way to go to be close to Jesus.

Prophetic simplicity:

We see that the dynamic which sustains our unjust social structures is especially that of the mundane desire to gain an ascendancy over others, both in power and possessions: a desire which our consumer society foments in us in so many ways. As far as possible we wish to rid ourselves of this desire.

We also believe that by peacefully denouncing injustice and absurdity, by our own lives, we can at the same time, invite others to seek first the Kingdom of the Father and His justice, confident that He will grant all the rest.

Simplicity in spiritual growth:

To be simple doesn't mean that we give up the struggle of dealing with our own selfishness. We don't want to put ourselves above other people. We want to continue this struggle against our selfishness, both as a community and as individuals, in all the aspects of our human personality. Yet we don't want to let ourselves be deceived in this process by the cunning of the enemy. Rather, we want to judge with the judgement of Christ, and be attentive to the inspiration of the Spirit. It is only in our following of our crucified Lord that we wish to be excellent.

Ordinary simplicity:

Our life-style does not try to be eccentric. Neither do we live in such a way that the world rejects us. We simply wish to live a simple life of daily service, as close as possible to the life of Jesus and also that of the poor. And we help ourselves to be concrete in this by a process of spiritual discernment and mutual support and

comparison within the community of which we form part.

Discreet simplicity:

In living normally in the context of the family, the work place and the school, we cannot formulate our principles of christian living without taking account of those who live and work with us most closely every day.

Our challenge is to live at the same time our personal freedom in responding to the Lord's invitations, and our respect for the freedom of those who surround us, for whom we must be at once a support and an invitation, an encouragement and a means of fraternal correction. As we grow in this discreet charity, which is a gift from the Lord, we help each other by our Ignatian prayer and by our honest communication within our communities.

(Taken from "The Christian Life Community - a brief presentation", booklet of the Mexican CLC).

*ZAIRE: The point that we have reached.

Knowing Africa, you are aware of how difficult it is to gather together a group of men and women coming from different tribes and regions, so that they may become one family. It has been only the grace of God that has made this miracle of intimate communion possible, which we have been living for more than six years.

At the level of the local Church, as far as possible, we try to collaborate with the pastors and to share in their concerns about the problems and the progress of our people, and to provide a personal collaboration in establishing the Kingdom of God. Each one of us takes care of some activity within the parish, according to his/her gifts and skills and the circumstances, e.g. members of a choir, leaders of the basic communities, members of the parish council, etc.

We hope to intensify our meetings with the Vicar General and the Archbishop of our diocese, and to present our way of life to them.

At the professional level, we don't forget that our duty is not only to live our work in a christian way, but to communicate a message to those who surround us through our actions.

Concretely, we try to make our own this following statement: "...We condemn energetically the corruption, the Tribalism, the regionalism, the monopolization of commerce, the unjust interest on payments, the "laissez-faire" attitude towards work, the institutionalized polygamy ..." (Pastoral letter of the Bishops of Zaire, "Tous solidaires et responsables", Juin 1977, N.32).

At the social level, we make an effort to imbue with a christian spirit the thoughts and the habits, the laws and the structures of the community where we live. This effort becomes concrete in our involvement within the trade union movement, in our attitude of non-violent struggle against everything which is offensive to human dignity, e.g.inhuman conditions of life.

We always keep before us the following passage: "Let him desire and seek nothing except the greater praise and glory of God our Lord as the aim of all he does. For everyone must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interest". (Sp.Ex., No.189, trans. Louis Puhl, s.j.)

(Taken from a letter of Tasinda Pagu, Nov.15th.,1986)