



SUMMARY

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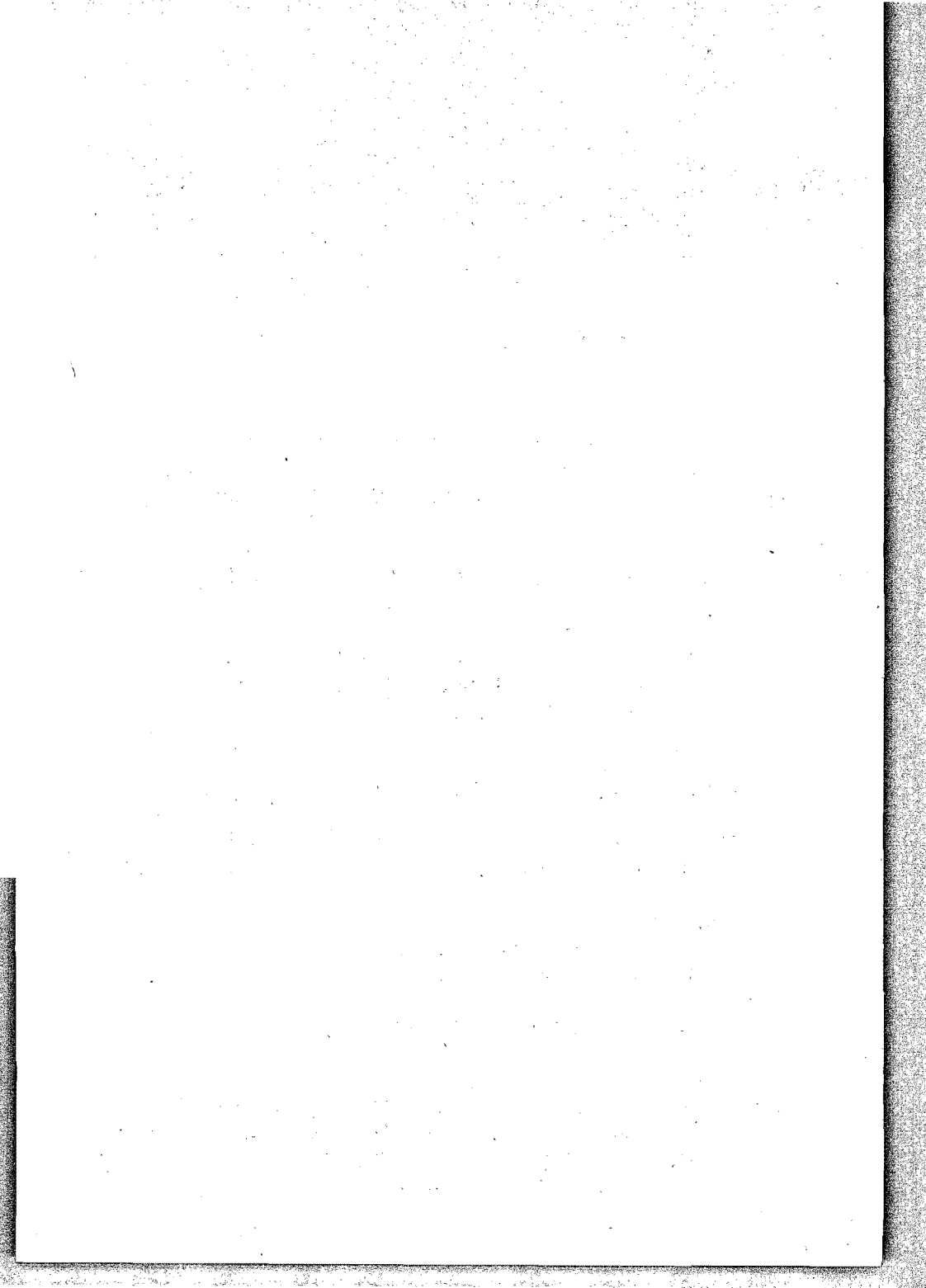
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SOME NOTES ON THE AWARENESS EXAMEN

1. The "Theology" of the awareness examen is that the Father is drawing us to Himself, through every moment of our life, and every fibre of our being. So - we try to become more aware of what is going on inside us, so that we may become more truly and freely ourselves, and respond to His invitations which touch us at the deepest level of our reality.
2. Some people find the awareness examen somewhat confusing, as the word "feelings" is used in so many different ways - which is why it can be helpful to distinguish the different "levels" of our make-up.
3. There is the "body-level", where we experience physical sensations, like hunger, thirst, heat, cold. These sensations happen to us - they are not something we actually do. Nevertheless, "the body is a poor liar"; if our bodies are over-indulged, or under-appreciated, this always shows.
4. There is the level of our emotions, like joy or anger. Again, emotions happen to us - we can't automatically switch them off or on. They are the consequence of some self-investment: e.g. I'm disappointed if my foot-ball team loses. We can "control" our emotions to the extent that we can invest ourselves in other areas of our life.
5. There is the level of our moods, which are a more pervasive experience. If they are basically biological (i.e. rooted in the "body-level"), then that is the level to deal with them. But if a mood is not biological, then it is a mixture of something happening to us, and something we're doing; and we can (usually) discover why. For example, depression is anger turned inwards; and so it is a combination of something happening to me (being angry), and something I'm doing (repressing my anger).

6. And then there is the deeper level of our reality - the level where the head and the heart meet, and where the Spirit is at work. Here we touch our Truth, the level of our integrity. When the head, heart and Spirit are all "in line", moving us to the Father, we experience an "ease", a "rightness" in what we are doing - we are in touch with the level of our truth, and are living out of it. On the other hand, if either the heart or head are "out of line", or not in line with the Spirit, we experience a "dis-ease"; then we are not living out of our truth, and so life is being stifled. The awareness examen helps us get in touch with this level of our reality - it helps us pick up the "vibes" which tell us whether or not we are living out of our truth.

7. There are different questions we can ask ourselves which help us get in touch with the deeper level of our reality. For example:

Do I feel driven, or do I feel drawn?

What does it feel like to be driven?

- a. I am fearful, anxious to please, frightened of other's disapproval
- b. I have an oppressive sense of duty (not just a sense of duty: rather "duty" is always a burden); I have the feeling - "I'll be so glad when this is over"; and when it is over, there is a feeling of relief, as though a burden has been shed.
- c. In many situations, our heart is usually somewhere else, so that we experience our daily life as a series of demands and interruptions.
- d. We experience many situations as difficult or distasteful, and when they are over, they never become a part of us - we are never grateful for the experience (only glad that it is over).

What does it feel like to be drawn?

- a. There is a pervasive feeling of freedom, peace, "rightness", perhaps courage.
 - b. What we do becomes a part of us, integrated into our lives. Even if it has been painful, we are grateful for the experience.
 - c. Life is a series of invitations (rather than interruptions and demands).
8. Another question: is it life-giving for myself and others?

If it is life-giving for myself and others, I will experience a certain freedom, a sense of coming home to myself or being at home with myself, hopefulness, openness, a sense that others are "warmed" by me and encouraged. If what I am doing is not life-giving, then I will have a feeling of being trapped or manipulated; my heart will feel divided; I will feel some sort of block between myself and others, and a desire to put them down.

When we have made a "good" decision, it can be helpful to go back to the moment when we made the decision, and get in touch with what was going on in us at the time; we will usually discover some underlying experience of "rightness", and freedom and conviction. In the future, we can look for these kinds of "vibes", which tell us that our heart, head and the Spirit are all in line, and that our decision is a good one. And it is also helpful to go back over a "bad" decision, and get in touch with what was going on inside us at the moment of decision; we will usually find that, at the moment of decision, we compromised our freedom in some way, and that there was some underlying "niggle", some "dis-ease", telling us that something was out of line. In the future, we can pay attention to these kinds of niggles that tell us that there is no life to be found in the direction in which we're moving.

9. In terms of our interactions with other people, it can be very helpful to pay attention to our "reactions" to what they tell us. (Needless to say, this is a very delicate area; and if we find ourselves looking for "ammunition" to fire at someone, then it is best to keep out of this area.) Sometimes, when a person is talking to us, telling us about themselves and what they have been doing, it can leave us feeling empty, uneasy. We should pay attention to this experience, because there is always a reason. And sometimes the reason is because their conversation, their concerns, are lifeless; and so the Spirit in us is registering the lifelessness we're experiencing in them. For us, it is not a question of being judgmental, but rather of being aware of our reactions to what we're taking in. We should not ignore our reactions - but neither should we regard them as the ultimate truth. If possible, it can be very helpful to check them out with the other person.

10. A further question to ask: does this (decision, way of acting) lead me to unite my humanity with Jesus' humanity? So - what does it feel like when my humanity is united with Jesus' ?

- a. There is a sense of respecting and accepting myself, of respecting and accepting others.
- b. There is a sense of mystery, i.e., an openness to "something more", rather than a "closing-down" feeling of - "that's all there is" (especially in relation to another person).
- c. We feel tolerant, compassionate and a sense of solidarity with others.
- d. There is a "touch" of warmth, light and lightness - which does not always happen, but when it does, we are full of hope and believe that all things are possible. What does it feel like when what I do by-passes or obscures the humanity of Jesus?

I experience hopelessness, distrust, disenchantment, a lack of the sense of my own worth, alienation,

rigidity in relationships; in short, I become extremely judgmental, and readily classify people into the "Wimps" and the "Goodies" - quite oblivious of the fact that, in His time, and in His society, Jesus' humanity led Him to be classified a "Wimp" by the "Goodies". (As an aside, it is interesting to note that Jesus scandalised both His followers and His critics. He scandalised His followers by His continual call to conversion - the movement to intimacy through accepting our own vulnerability; and He scandalised His critics through His continual association with (in their eyes) the "unconverted".)

11. A final question to ask ourselves: does what I am doing lead me to want to do something for the Kingdom? And what does this feel like? I feel some sense of "mission"; I really want the world to be a better place, and am prepared to do something. Or sometimes this takes the form of a sense of outrage, at some injustice I see. Or it can simply be the realisation that I want my life-style to reflect the fact that there are poor and marginalised people in my society, who are my brothers and sisters.

The opposite to this is a feeling of apathy - "What can I do?"; a fear of getting involved; a feeling of resentment towards anything that could disrupt or disturb my settled life.

12. The Awareness Examen presupposes an experience of prayer, and so there are some further questions we can ask ourselves about our prayer - especially when we find ourselves wondering - "Am I just talking to myself?" The following "signs", over a period of time, can tell us whether or not we are experiencing the "Otherness" of God in our prayer.

a. There is gradual experience of conversion - not only do my beliefs change (or become more alive), but the way I hold my beliefs changes; I become more open, and my horizons widen. A good example is St. Paul's conversion; not only did his beliefs change, but also the way he held them. When he was a Jew, he hated the Christians; but when he became a Christian, he loved

the Jews. A counter-example would be someone who despises Catholics, but eventually is "converted" to Catholicism; but once a Catholic, proceeds to despise "non-Catholics". This latter is more a shift in prejudice than a real experience of conversion.

- b. As I reflect on various incidents in my life, their meaning gradually unfolds - in retrospect I discover a meaning that I was not aware of at the time. A good example of this is the disciples on the way to Emmaus - as Jesus spoke to them, the meaning of His Passion gradually came home to them. The opposite of this is a lack of awareness of the meaning of significant events that have occurred in my life; or the other extreme of arbitrarily plonking a meaning immediately on some incident that occurs - e.g. instead of going to Mass, I drive to the beach, and get a flat tyre, and take this as a sign that God is angry with me.
- c. Sometimes I experience a certain "resistance" - maybe even a moment of "panic" - in my prayer; there is a fleeting fear (maybe not so fleeting) that He may ask something of me. We can close off this experience of the "Otherness" of God if we start to bargain with Him.
- d. Love imperceptibly grows, and we begin to seek to know what the Other desires.

FORMATION COURSE FOR CLC GUIDES IN INDIA

At our annual CLC Assembly at Calcutta in Oct. 1984, the urgent need of training guides was felt. This need was also expressed at the International Level in Loyola. Accordingly, the National Vice Ecclesiastic Assistant was entrusted with the task of organizing such a course for guides. With his Secretariat team he drew up a programme to last 17 days which would cover the different aspects of the CLC way of life. This course was held in May, 1987. The 29 participants from all over India came with an expectation of gaining a clear vision of the CLC way of life.

We began the evening of May 17th by introducing ourselves and voicing our expectations and fears. The co-ordinator Fr. Alwyn Fernandes s.j. then gave a brief outline of the course and its 3 phases but stressed that this course was not a package deal, but just one step in the on-going process of formation. We began in earnest with some group dynamic exercises to come to know each other a little better so that we could live and work together as a community. These sessions were conducted by Ms. Lydia D'souza.

Pointing out very clearly from the general principles that the mission of CLC was for committed men and women in the world today, Fr. Paul Vaz and his team put us through three days of intensive exposure to some social problems and challenges we face in our country today. Greater social awareness, social survey and analysis and criteria for discernment provided us with an approach to face situations of poverty and injustice in our country. We realise that the poor are not there because they need us but because we need them. Further we are not there to change the poor but to allow them to change us. We need to change our values and beliefs and to change the socio-economic structures of society that oppress men and women. This experience was going to be an excellent back drop for

the retreat which was to follow. Our approach in this whole course for guides was not theoretical but always began from sharing our experiences.

We were opened up to the word of Ignatius by Fr. Manolo Tasso as we had earlier been opened to glimpses of our own world. This would help us to understand Ignatius and his spirituality. The characteristic feature of his spirituality and a most important experience of growth for the CLC'ers is the Spiritual Exercises. This was Ignatius' own experience that he has passed on to us so that we too could have a similar experience. God had worked in his life so he would work in ours providing we had the necessary dispositions. Our President Daphne Stockman gave us her experience of Loyola 1986 and how God worked in the lives of the delegates. Then there was half a day in silence to dispose us for the Spiritual exercises which soon followed.

The directed retreat was followed by the second phase of the programme which was led by the Secretariat Team. We were reminded to keep very much in mind the background of the social realities which we had experienced and relate them to CLC responsibilities and commitment. After the retreat, we spent some time reverting to our own experiences in the light of CLC and asked ourselves how this would effect our way of life. We then shared our experiences of discernment and learnt how it was an important instrument for decision making. We also had some practical work and learned different skills for facilitating our group. The characteristics of the guide and Assistant came out very clearly. Each day began with a prayer exercise, which disposed us for the day ahead and culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist - the very centre of all that happened.

Alwyn Fernandes s.j.

MESSAGE TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD ON THE OCCASION OF THE 4th WORLD YOUTH DAY 1989

This year, the World Youth Day will take place at two different occasions: on Palm Sunday in local churches around the world and on the 19th and 20th of August in Santiago de Compostela (Spain) at an international meeting. The theme proposed by the Pope is "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

PROGRESSIO publishes here the Holy Father's Message with the hope our young CLC members will take the opportunity of preparing themselves for this important world day.

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"

(Jn 14:6)

Dear young people!

I am happy to be with you once again in order to announce the celebration of the 4th World Youth Day. In my dialogue with you, this Day has, indeed, a privileged place. It affords me the welcome opportunity of speaking to the young people, not only of one country but of the whole world; of saying to each and every one of you that the Pope looks towards you with so much love and so much hope, that he listens to you with great attention and wishes to respond to your deepest aspirations.

World Youth Day 1989 will be centred on Jesus Christ, as our Way, our Truth and our Life (cfr. Jn 14:6). For all of you it must therefore become the Day of a new, a more mature and deeper discovery of Christ in your life.

1. To be young is already in itself a special and specific treasure for every young man and young woman (cfr. Letter to the Youth of the World, n.3). This treasure consists, among other things, in the fact that yours is an age of many important discoveries. Each one of you

discovers him or herself, his or her personality, the meaning for him or for her of existence, the reality of good and evil. You also discover the whole world around you - the human world and the world of nature. Now, among these many discoveries there must not be lacking one that is of fundamental importance for every human being: the personal discovery of Jesus Christ. Discovering Christ, always again and always more fully, is the most wonderful adventure of our life. That is why, on the occasion of the forthcoming Youth Day, I want to ask each one of you some very important questions, and to suggest the answers.

- Have you already discovered Christ, who is the Way?

Yes, Jesus is for us a way that leads to the Father - the only Way. Whoever wants to reach salvation must set out along this way. You young people very often find yourselves at a crossroads, not knowing which path to choose, which way to go; there are so many wrong paths, so many facile proposals, so many ambiguities. In moments like this, do not forget that Christ, with his Gospel, his example, his commandments, is always and alone the safest way, the way which leads to full and lasting happiness.

- Have you already discovered Christ, who is the Truth?

Truth is the deepest need of the human spirit. Young people especially are hungry for the Truth about God and man, about life and the world. In my first Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* I wrote: "The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly - and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being - must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ" (n.10). Christ is the Word of truth, uttered by God himself, in response to all the questioning of the human heart. He is the One who reveals fully to us the mystery of man and

woman and of the world.

- Have you already discovered Christ, who is the Life?

Each one of you is so anxious to live life in its fullness. You live with great hopes, with so many fine plans for the future. But do not forget that the true fullness of life is to be found only in Christ, who died and rose again for us. Christ alone is able to fill in depth the space of the human heart. He alone gives the strength and joy of living, in spite of any limit or external impediment.

Yes, discovering Christ is the finest adventure of your life. But it is not enough to discover Him just once. Discovering Him becomes every time an invitation to seek Him always more, to come to know Him still better through prayer, participating in the sacraments, meditating on his Word, through catechesis and listening to the teachings of the Church. This is our most important task, as St Paul had well understood when he wrote: "For me, indeed, to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21).

2. The new discovery of Christ - when it is authentic - always directly results in the desire to bring Him to others, that is, in a commitment to the apostolate. This, precisely, is the second guideline for the next Youth Day.

To the whole Church is addressed Christ's command: "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:15). The whole Church, therefore, is missionary and evangelizing; she lives constantly in a state of mission (cfr. Decree Ad Gentes, n.2). To be Christians means to be missionaries, to be apostles (cfr. Decrees Apostolicam Actuositatem, n.2). It is not enough to discover Christ - you must bring Him to others!

The world of today is one great mission land, even in countries of long-standing Christian tradition. Everywhere today neopaganism and the process of secularization present a great challenge to the message of the Gospel. But, at the same time, there are new openings in our day for the proclamation of the Good News. We see, for example, a growing nostalgia for the sacred, for genuine values, for prayer. And so, today's world needs many apostles - especially apostles who are young and courageous. You young people have in a special way the task of witnessing today to the faith; the commitment to bring the Gospel of Christ - the Way, the Truth and the Life - into the third Christian Millennium, to build a new civilization - a civilization of love, of justice and of peace.

Each new generation needs new apostles. This means a special mission for you. You young people are the first apostles and evangelizers of the world of youth, assailed today by so many challenges and so much that is threatening (cfr. Decree Apostolicam Actuositatem, n. 12). Above all, you can be evangelizers, and no one can take your place, where you study, and in your work and your free time. So many of those of your own age do not know Christ, or do not know Him well enough. So you cannot remain in silent and indifferent! You must have the courage to speak about Christ, to bear witness to your faith through a life-style inspired by the Gospel. St Paul wrote: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16). The harvest is great indeed for evangelization and so many workers are needed. Christ trusts you and counts on your collaboration. On the occasion of the forthcoming Youth Day, I invite you, therefore, to renew your apostolic commitment. Christ needs you! Respond to his call with courage and with the enthusiasm that belongs to your age.

3. The famous Sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, will be a very important point of reference for the celebration of this Day 1989. As I have already told you, after the ordinary celebration of your feast - Palm Sunday - in the particular Churches, I give you a rendez-vous at

the Sanctuary; I will go there, a pilgrim like yourselves, for the 19th and 20th August 1989. I am sure you will not fail to respond to my invitation, as you did not fail for the unforgettable meeting in Buenos Aires, in 1987.

The appointment at Santiago will in any case be a moment of participation for the whole of the Universal Church; a moment of spiritual communion even for those among you who will not be able to be physically present. At Santiago the young people will indeed represent the particular Churches of the whole world; you will be heirs to the "Santiago Trail" with the urge to proclaim the Good News.

Santiago de Compostela is a place that has played a very important role in the history of Christianity; and so, its spiritual message is in itself very eloquent. Throughout the centuries the place has been a "point of attraction and convergence for Europe and for the whole of Christendom... all Europe gathered around the 'memory' of James during the very centuries when it was building itself into a homogeneous and spiritually united continent" (cfr. "European Act" at Santiago de Compostela, 9 November 1982, in Insegnamenti V/3, 1982, pp. 1257-1258).

At the tomb of St James we want to learn that our faith has historical foundations; it is not something vague and transient. In the world of today, marked by a serious relativism and great confusion in values, we must always remember that, as Christians, we are truly built up on the stable foundations of the Apostles, with Christ Himself as the corner-stone (cfr. Eph 2:20).

At the tomb of the Apostles, we also want to receive again Christ's mandate: "You shall be my witnesses... Right to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). St James was the first to seal his witness of faith with his own blood. For all of us he is an example and an excellent teacher.

Santiago de Compostela is not only a Sanctuary. It is also a route: a closely-woven network of pilgrimage roads. The "Santiago Trail" was for centuries a pathway to conversion and an extraordinary witness to faith. Along this way arose visible monuments to the pilgrims' faith: churches and hospices.

Pilgrimage has a very deep spiritual significance; it can represent in itself an important form of catechesis. The Church - as the Second Vatican Council reminded us - is, indeed, a people of God on the march, "in search of a future and permanent city" (cfr. Lumen Gentium, n.9). In the world today there is a revival of the practice of going on pilgrimage, especially among the youth. Today, you are among those more inclined to experience a pilgrimage as a "way" to interior renewal, to a deepening of faith, a strengthening of the sense of communion and solidarity with your brothers and sisters and as a help in discovering your personal vocation. I feel sure that, thanks to your youthful enthusiasm, this year will see a new and rich development of the "Santiago Trail".

4. The programme of this Day is very demanding. To gather its fruit you will therefore need a specific spiritual preparation, under the guidance of your Pastors, in your dioceses, parishes, associations and movements. This will be necessary both for Palm Sunday and for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in August 1989. At the beginning of this preparatory phase, I address to each and every one of you the words of the Apostle Paul: "Walk in love...; walk as children of light" (Eph 5:2,8). Enter upon this period of preparation with these dispositions.

Be on your way, then, I say to all of you, young pilgrims of the "Santiago Trail". During the pilgrimage days, try to recapture the spirit of the pilgrims of old, courageous witnesses to the Christian faith. As you journey on, learn to discover Jesus, who is our Way, Truth and Life.

Finally, I want to address a special word of encouragement to the young people of Spain. This time it will be for you to offer hospitality to your brothers and sisters from all over the world. It is my wish for you that this meeting at Santiago may leave deep traces in your life and may be for all of you a powerful leaven of spiritual renewal.

Dear young people, this Message of mine ends with an embrace of peace which I want to extend to all of you, wherever you may be. I entrust the ongoing preparation and the celebration of the World Youth Day 1989 to the special protection of Mary, Queen of Apostles, and of St James who, throughout the centuries, has been venerated at the ancient Sanctuary of Compostela. May my Apostolic Blessing - as a sign of encouragement and good wishes - accompany you all along your route.

From the Vatican, 27 November 1988.

Joannes Paulus pp II

CALLED TO MISSION

"Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said - 'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'" (Mt. 28:16-20).

Different spiritualities arise within the Church from the variety of ways in which people hear the gospel and respond to what they hear. The same gospel is proclaimed to all, but heard in different ways. There is always a certain selectivity, not in the sense of excluding any part of the Good News, but rather a selectivity of emphasis, leading to multiple ways of assessing priorities. We discover these emphases, these priorities, not by some rational process of judging and weighing (that comes later), but by noticing our affective responses, in other words our feelings, when the gospel is presented to us: what attracts us, enthuses us, makes us angry, disturbs us, delights us. When this happens to an individual he/she then knows what his/her personal charism is, goes on to adopt a pattern of attitudes in harmony with that charism, and evolves a personal life style, which will express as well as nurture that charism. Similarly when a number of people come to realise that they are all hearing the gospel in the same way, share common feelings when the Good News is proclaimed, they will join together, both in adopting an appropriate set of attitudes, and in evolving a life style which will preserve and activate what they recognise as being a corporate charism. This is how movements evolve in the Church, whether among the clergy, religious, or the laity. CLC therefore is composed of men and women who hear the gospel in a particular way, and recognise that their experience is part of the Ignatian tradition in general, but lived specifically in the lay state.

But even before the word is proclaimed, the Ignatian tradition contains an essential presupposition, i.e. a lively and even detailed awareness of the context of realities to which the word is addressed. Those of the Ignatian tradition do not prepare themselves to hear the good news as individuals isolated from one another, seeking a private relationship with their God. Their starting-point is rather a sense of their oneness with the whole of humanity, their sharing in the joy and sorrow, elation and pain of all men and women. They are conscious that the word is addressed primarily to the human race as such, and secondarily, to the individual person insofar as he/she is wholeheartedly identified with the race, the human family. And so, a document such as *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, VATICAN COUNCIL II) has a major role to play in enriching Ignatian spirituality today. This is illustrated by the following quotation from that document:

"Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources, and economic power. Yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens is still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before today have people been so keenly aware of freedom, yet at the same time, new form of social and psychological slavery make their appearance. Although the world of to-day has a very vivid sense of its unity and of how one person depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces. For political, social, economic, racial, and ideological disputes still continue bitterly, and with them the peril of war, which would reduce everything to ashes. True, there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems. Finally, people painstakingly searches for a better world, without working with equal zeal for the betterment of their spirit."

These documents speak in language of straightforward descriptive narrative and draw certain conclusions. But there is another way of communicating which can appeal through our imagination to our feelings - the parable. William Clark's parable of the bad neighbours:

"Two families moved into a semi-detached house with a rather thin dividing wall, which permitted them to hear, but not to understand, everything that went on in the other's abode. Both families became convinced that the other was attempting to break through the wall and murder them in their beds. So they each built up a battery of alarm signals, and more and more sophisticated booby traps and explosive devices, which would enable them utterly to destroy the neighbours if they ever attempted to break through.

The cost of this burglar proofing was so great that neither family had any cash to spare to fix up the cellar and basement. There, in damp overcrowded squalor, a large number of poor coloured tenants lived. In mid-winter the basement became so cold that the tenants used their axes to chop off bits of the joists in their ceiling to build fires to keep warm. Messages came from upstairs forbidding them to shake the building lest the alarm systems were activated and everyone blown up; but as a concession, upstairs did promise to turn up the electric heating so that some warmth could trickle downstairs. But heat does not trickle down. So the blacks quietly and carefully sawed away the wood. After a time the joists gave way, the floors sank, the dividing wall tottered and fell thus exploding all its defensive devices and killing everyone on both sides of the building."

That is the world in which we live.

One way of distinguishing the variety of charisms - the variety of spiritualities - in the Church, is to consider them in terms of their involvement with the world. No Christian can be uninvolved with the world, but there are legitimate degrees of direct involvement. One might think in terms of a spectrum, or of pegs on a clothes-lines. At one extreme there is a hermit, living alone in his cave on the mountainside or in her caravan at the bottom of the garden. This person's contact with the world is almost entirely spiritual. He/she carries the world in his/her heart, lifting it up to God in prayer and intercession. Moving along the spectrum or clothes-line one comes next to the enclosed communities of men and women who have retired from the world for the sake of the world, but who have limited contact through the visitors

they receive to their monasteries and convents. Then midway across the spectrum or clothes-line one finds a variety of men and women who, as religious or priests, are in some way set apart from the world but, at the same time, sent into the world to carry out spiritual and corporal ministries. Finally, on the other extreme of the spectrum or clothes-line one comes to the laity whose involvement in the world is total. All of these groups are full Church, all are fully apostolic, though in different ways, all are part of the mission of the Church and play a role which is not interchangeable with that of any other group. In regard to the laity, this was made very clear in Vatican II's Apostolicam Actuositatem, and more recently in Paul VI's encyclical Evangelii Nuntiandi.

"Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelisation. Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community - this is the specific role of the pastors - but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelising activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelisation, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering. The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers; which are often buried and suffocated, the more these realities will be at the service of the Kingdom of God and, therefore, of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content, but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension which is often disregarded." (E.N. 70)

The way in which Christian Life Communities can help release this energy latent, but really present, is largely through the Spiritual Exercises. The Spiritual Exercises begin with desire. Paragraph 5 of the Introduction Observations to the Spiritual Exercises says:

"It will be profitable for the one who is to go through the Exercises to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity toward his Creator and Lord, and to offer Him his entire will and liberty, that his Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all he possesses, according to His most holy will."

Desire, as well as being the starting point, is also the raw material of the Exercitant's prayer. The Exercitant discovers the attractiveness of God. Desire is, however, frustrated by the lack of freedom. Perhaps at the very beginning - the Principal and Foundation - desire is blocked on all sides by sin. The Exercises aim at an ever-increasing experience of freedom - not freedom from, but freedom for. Freedom to know, to love and to follow Christ.

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius gives us an opportunity for an imaginative insertion into the Trinity's plan for the salvation of the world. In the contemplation on the Incarnation, Ignatius paints a triptych - a painting in three parts. This triptych begins with the Trinity - the Trinity presented as a Community of love - Father, Son, Spirit. The Father begetting the Son, loving the Son into existence, the Son being begotten and accepting his Sonship, accepting that he is the one sent and responding to the Father with gratitude and love, and that mutuality of love being so powerful that it too becomes a person in the Holy Spirit. This community of love is not one that, as it were, hoards or is jealously possessive of its love. Its love overflows, and that overflowing of love, that reaching out of love beyond the persons of the Trinity, this desire to share that love, results in what we call creation and redemption. We look at the fourth point in the contemplation to attain the love of God in the Exercises, and one finds that image of the fountain - all love and all goodness and all wisdom being in God, but, like a fountain, overflowing and pouring down into us, so that when we experience human love, either given or received, that is an experience, a sharing, in God's love.

When we get some insight into the mystery of life, the mystery of God or the mystery of our own existence, that is sharing in the understanding of God, because

it has overflowed from the fountainhead, overflowed into us. This community of love, which is painted on the first panel of the tryptic, shows the three persons gazing with compassion on the earth below, seeing the men and women who have been created and who are the result of the Trinity's love, struggling in this life, struggling with the complexities of life, struggling with material needs and interpersonal relationships, and the mystery of life and death, struggling above all with evil and in need of help.

The second panel of the tryptic - the panels are arranged in vertical order - the middle panel then is an invitation to look at our world, becoming part of it, sensing its mood, sensing its needs, the human race divided, suffering, struggling, a mixture of good and evil. Then in the third panel, the lowest part of the tryptic, you have a single human being - Mary. The person called by the Trinity to be a co-worker, to be in some sense a key figure, through whom God has decided that he will work, on whom God has decided that he will depend. God's insertion into the world is not going to be without the co-operation of the very people who are in need of salvation. So, while Mary is a unique individual, nevertheless, she is not there in an unrepresentative capacity. She is there in a representative capacity so that each of us can see himself or herself in that role, in that lowest panel of the tryptic, as called by God to become a co-worker in his plan, being missioned as Mary was, and Mary's missioning was the condition for Christ's own mission. Without it, Christ could not be made present in the world. Without you and me, Christ cannot be made present in to-day's world - we are sent into to-day's world for others. In the way our prime responsibility is not our own sanctification, it is mission. If we accept our mission, then we become sanctified. But it is almost as if we have to forget ourselves, it is a letting go of this natural tendency to be caught up in ourselves, even with the apparently good motive of sanctifying ourselves - we need to forget that and put ourselves at God's disposal so that the world can be evangelised.

That real insertion calls first of all for a life that is in itself a witness, but which then goes beyond

witness to explicit proclamation. To quote from *Evangelii Nuntiandi* again:

"Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian, or a handful of Christians, who in the midst of their own community show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all, for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live. Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelisation." (E. N. 21)

Evangelii Nuntiandi continued, however:

"Nevertheless this always remains insufficient, because even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not explained and justified - what Peter called always having 'your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have' - and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed." (E. N. 22)

Light can be thrown on this by reflecting on what Vatican II said about the interplay of deeds and words in revelation.

"This plan of revelation is realised by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man and woman is made clear to us in Christ, who is the Mediator and at the same time the fullness of all revelation." (*Dei Verbum*).

Deeds themselves, even a whole lifestyle, can be interpreted in different ways. They need words to clarify their meaning and motivation. What is implicit must be made explicit.

That need to move from witness to proclamation, from the implicit to the explicit, may well be paralleled in CLC by the need to move from community to mission. Just as CLC does not exist merely, or even primarily, for the personal sanctification of its members, neither does it exist for the sake of forming community as an end in itself. Just as an individual in the search for personal holiness can get bogged down in a kind of spiritual narcissism, so a community can get bogged down in the search for some kind of perfection in the area of interpersonal relationships and group experience, a kind of group narcissism. In the Ignatian tradition, community is a function of mission, it has no other *raison d'être*. Even further, community is the result of a shared mission. Mission comes first, and it is because we realise that mission, supported by a corporate entity, is more fruitful, more effective, more lasting than mission carried out by isolated individuals, that we form community at all. Whether or not this was not the way in which our communities came into being historically, we still have much to learn from this model, as we try to move beyond ourselves, to have our communal focus, not within our group, but out there in the world to which we are sent.

Brian O'Leary s.j.

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE SICK FOR THE CHURCH

The Marian Congregation for the sick is a community of Christians. It is the task of the MC to offer their members some help in the practice of a life based on Christian faith. Its members are sick people (chronically sick people and handicapped people) who desire to grow continually in their spiritual life, to dedicate themselves to apostolic services and therefore belong to a community where people support one another by "their common commitment, their common way of life and their filial love for Mary" (General Principles of the CLC n.6). In the 26 years of its existence the members of the MC have developed into a real family and have saved many sick people from isolation.

The MC is a Marian Community. In order to fulfil their mission in the Church the members have dedicated themselves to Mary and in union with her, supported by her help and her example to be at God's disposal in all situations of life. Bernadette Soubirous from Lourdes is also honoured as patroness of the MC.

The aim of the MC is not the apostolate of the Church for the sick but the apostolate of the sick for the Church which would be marked by a sound devotion to Mary. The members of the MC for the sick know that they have the "vocation to participate in the salvific mission of the Church" (LG). According to the rules their special task is always to support the Holy Father by offering up prayers and sufferings. The sick are the great hope of the Church. The Church needs their prayers and their redemptive suffering. Christ needs the sick.

"With him you save the world - if you want to", is the message which the Council Fathers gave to sick all over the world.

Following the call of the Church and because of their common priesthood the members of the MC for the sick want to take part in Christ's redemptive work by serving the Church through their life and their suffering.

In fulfilment of their apostolic mission the members of the MC offer up to God in atonement their prayers, their sufferings and their difficulties and thus respond to the petition in the Our Father "thy kingdom come!"

The MC for the sick was founded at the beginning of Vatican II. On October 18th, 1962, it was given the title "Mater dolorosa" in Münster, Westphalia. In 1987 it celebrated its Silver Jubilee. Now its members also come from other German dioceses and a number of other countries. It is affiliated with the world federation of the "Christian Life Communities". The founder of the MC for the sick, Prelate William Gillmann (+19.9.1980) wrote in the constitution for its members:

"When we have become tools in God's hands for the salvation of the world and when we choose to remain as such forever, then it is Christ who is working, praying and suffering in us through the Holy Spirit. That is why we can be convinced that nothing of what we are doing or suffering in this way will get lost for the kingdom of God.

And if you ask me what the members of the MC for the sick are really doing for the world and the Church I shall answer:

- THEY LOVE

which is the most important and the most decisive thing Christians can do today. There is no other means for the salvation of the world than the love flowing from the heart of Jesus."

Those who desire to follow with Mary, Christ bearing the cross and who are ready to accept their ailments, burdens and sufferings for the sake of the Church - especially for the Holy Father - and who wish to

do this in communion with like-minded people (women, men, young people, priests, members of a religious order), can ask for membership in this International Marian Congregation for the sick.

Our address:

Kranken - MC,
Neubrückenstrasse 58,
D - 4400 MUNSTER

Tel. 0251/42443

P.S. Detailed information about the life and the development of the MC for the sick - as well as information about the life of the founder Prelate William Gillmann - can be found in the three volumes of "Unsere Berufung - helps for the spiritual life" (about 1200 pages, at the cost of 40 DM).

This book can be obtained only through the above mentioned address.

Sr Maria Erharde

**REGIONAL EXCOS AND COMMUNITIES
IN LARGE COUNTRIES**

Question:

Our country, as you know, has a vast geography which makes communication and organization of common efforts quite difficult. I think it is the case of many other countries, some of them having also different languages and cultures. In our efforts to build CLC community and to ensure authentic CLC formation, we have been encouraging Regional set-ups. I would like to have your views about accepting Regional ExCos and communities... We would not like a "political stance" to emerge.

Answer:

Regarding your question about the convenience of having regional ExCos and regional communities, I think that they may be very helpful given the reality of your country. It is necessary, however, to ensure a common direction, which will always be the task of the national ExCo.

The French model may be of help. They are divided into regions and have a National ExCo of 23 members plus the National Assistant. 17 out of these 23 members are elected by the regions (1 per region), and the other 6 are coopted. This body of 23 members meets every 4 months, and elects a continuity committee which meets once a month; (which is comprised of an elected president, vice-president, treasurer and some consultants and the ecclesiastical assistant who is ex officio). In this way, the whole ExCo (23) is responsible at the National level, even if their members are elected by the regions. This model seems to ensure both the necessary diversification according to regions and the existence of only one national community.

What should be avoided by all means is that the existence of regional communities and ExCos become a sort of federative model, which would be against the orientations of Providence and Loyola. There should be only one National Community, one National ExCo. Regional coordinators may be part of the National ExCo but they are responsible for the growth of the whole National community. This topic is quite similar to the tension existing between local realities and the fact of being one World Community. It may be helpful for you to read again the Supplement of Fr. Ochagavía s.j. - "The CLC World Community - Origin and meaning of Providence '82" (November 1982 - April 1983), as well as the brief article of Fr. Potvin s.j. - "From Federation to Community" - in PROGRESSIO of January 1987. It may be helpful as well to recommend these readings to the delegates for your next National Assembly.

ECHOES . . . ECHOES . . . ECHOES

ECUADOR - EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION OF A CRISIS

In July 1987, the Centro Universitario of Quito in Ecuador, was closed down. For 45 years the Centro had provided space for all the activities of the Marian Congregations and later of the Christian Life Communities and their National Secretariat. Now, as we entered a new stage in our development (*) after five years of existence, we faced a major crisis - the need to find a new home for our Communities. For a year, we had accepted no new members, for it was felt that they could not be properly received; fewer retreats were given, the CLC Session was cancelled because of financial and logistical difficulties, and of course our newsletter ceased publication.

It is not easy to explain what happened. It may well be that some things escaped our understanding and that we shall never be able to analyse them adequately. One thing is clear to us, however: it was God who willed this change. Our inertia would have probably made it impossible for us to ever initiate the structural changes which we have now experienced. The Lord gave them to us in making them, however painful it may have been.

What were our reactions? We remember the night when the news was first announced. The John the Baptist Community was holding a meeting. One of the members, a student, suggested that we pray on a reading from the Book of Job: "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the Lord." Another Community asked insistently "But why? Why?". It was hard to accept. However... wasn't this precisely what we had wanted to live out, in the General Principles, in the Exercises: "simplicity of life", "following Christ in his poverty"? Gradually, objections and impatience died away. In several communities, the eyes of some began to brighten: they had long wished for

*) The CLC of Ecuador joined the World Community in 1986, at the Loyola Assembly. The crisis described in this article took place shortly thereafter.

something of this sort to happen to us. At times, anxieties, doubts appeared: would all survive the trial? Would some members leave? A constant effort was made to preserve inner gentleness, leaving no room for the least bit of resentment. Some Communities made tremendous progress. All that had been accomplished up till then was now entirely in their hands, and the future was up to them.

In moving from a "stable" and "secure" situation to one of total surrender to God's will, we encountered both generosity and selfishness as some doors were shut in the face of need. Such an experience is indeed a gift from God: to surrender all things into His hands knowing that "If this is of You, it shall endure". And we prayed much.

There was another side to this experience. We all felt ourselves to be one body, one community. Until then, the groups had led fairly separate lives. Now, we began to work together, to get to know each other better, and to love one another as members of one single family. We tried to collaborate around the most amazing undertakings in order to further our common endeavor: we sold jams and "shish kebabs", collected old newspapers, took part in TV quiz shows, set up stalls in "flea markets", and organised a meeting of old members of the Centro.

The changes also allowed us to shed the cumbersome institutional structure of the Centro Universitario. Much of our time and energy had been wasted on administrative matters, problems concerning staff, taxes, maintenance of a huge building. And on the effort to maintain some balance between bureaucratic matters and what is vital to a Christian community. A simpler life gave us a new sense of freedom. We are now entering a new stage. We are all here. We now have a new building, given by the Lord with no explanation. There is far less space than we had at the Centro, but it is a beautiful place, full of light. It is a welcoming place, and family life - the life of our CLC family - will be greatly enriched as a result. We still have many problems to resolve, but we are happy. And that is why we want to end our story with a verse from the Psalms: "The Lord has been good to us, and therefore we rejoice".