

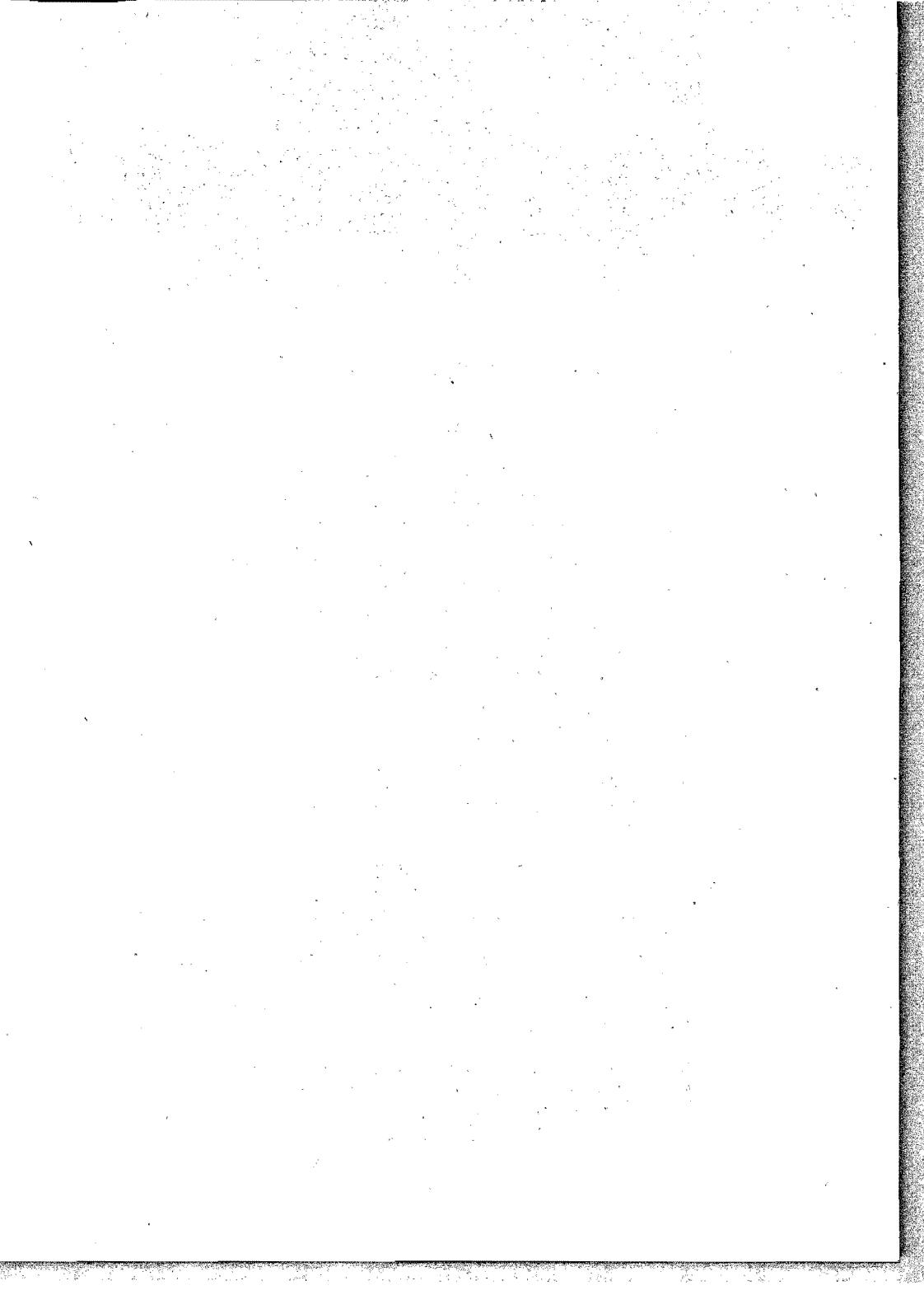


SUMMARY

1990
N.2

- ELECTED, DESTINED AND SENT
TO BEAR FRUIT
(Maria Clara Lucchetti B.) 3
- WHERE THERE IS LOVE THERE IS SIGHT
The Exercises, school of beholding
(Xavier Quinzá s.j., Spain) 7
- THE BEATIFICATION OF PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI
(Pontifical Council for the Laity) 12
- TOWARDS GUADALAJRA '90
WITH MARY OF GUADALUPE - II part 17
- MALTA: CLC ANNUAL SEMINAR '89
THE PROCESS, THE CHALLENGE, THE HOPE
(Joseanne Peregin) 22
- CLC MISSION AND SOCIAL REALITY:
 - 1. "Our whole life is a service"
(CLC of San Salvador, El Salvador) 26
 - 2. "It is in giving that we receive"
(A CLC experience from Australia) 27
- ECHOES... ECHOES... ECHOES
(Paraguay, Nicaragua) 30

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ELECTED, DESTINED AND SENT TO BEAR FRUIT

The theme of our World Assembly is "CLC at the Service of the Kingdom". In order to stimulate our preparation for it, the ExCo has made us a gift of the Word of God which should help us as a motto and a synthesis of the objectives which we are invited to put before ourselves while we are heading towards Guadalajara '90.

"I chose you and I commissioned you to go and to bear fruit, fruit that will last" (Jn 15:16).

In accordance with the second method of prayer which St Ignatius proposes in the Spiritual Exercises 249-255 let us pray in the presence of this short text and let us contemplate on the meaning of each word contained in it. Perhaps this can help us to decipher its content and to understand it better, as well as to relish what the Lord wishes to say in this time of grace and preparation for the moment of our World Assembly.

1. Gratuitously chosen by Jesus

The context in which these words were pronounced is one of love and friendship. Jesus expresses the basis and the characteristics of his love for his disciples, a love which is likewise the condition of the love of those same disciples for Jesus.

If all love, all friendship supposes a free choice by one party and the other, John, nevertheless, emphasises the fact of the absolute priority of the choice made by Jesus. In this way he resorts to an important theme of the Old Testament: the absolutely free and gratuitous choice of an ungrateful people by Jahweh, their God. Consequently, in the fourth Gospel and in the text which we have before our eyes, the choice of Jesus concerns the disciples particularly and is the expression of the choice of the Father himself.

An eternal and absolute choice, expressed in the vocation to which we respond by faith - is what the Lord is saying to us today with respect to our World Community. We are above all a community of sinners, but of sinners who have been chosen, who have been called together. And that which elects and calls us is simply and solely the mercy, the grace and the love of the Lord for us.

In conformity with the method of St Ignatius, the only grace to be asked for in the presence of this election and this calling must be that of "not being deaf to his call but being alert and disposed to obey and follow him with our whole soul" (Sp.Ex. 91). The one who so chooses and calls us is the "Eternal King and Lord of the universe" as Saint Ignatius calls him in the entrance to the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises. And as He calls us, He has before Himself "the whole expanse of the universe" while His sole preoccupation is "the Glory of the Father" (Sp.Ex.95). Let us, then, seek very humbly to have the ear of a disciple to hear what it is He calls us and for what purpose He chooses and calls us.

2. Destined to follow the Lord and to work with Him

Not only have we been chosen: we have been destined (*). The word of the original Greek text, *tihenai*, has the sense of placing someone in a function or work and assuring him the means of exercising it efficaciously. The group of disciples, then is invested with, destined for the burden of a mission which is nothing other than his own mission.

Let us dare to feel that the same happens in our World Community. We have entered a plan of CLC living by obeying a choice and a call. But that call implies a commitment and an assignment, the assignment of Him who has called us.

(*) Note of the translator: For the requirements of the translation we will follow the Spanish translation of the Jerusalem Bible which translates the word "*tihenai*" by "destined" ("commissioned" in the English edition).

From the moment we accepted to undertake the adventure of becoming disciples of the spirituality and life-style of CLC, we likewise accepted the destiny of being inevitably brought into conformity with the person of Jesus. No longer are we masters of our movements and our lives; rather our life is to follow Him and to share His difficult pathway and be full of joy (cf. Sp.Ex. 116) in His mission assigned by the Father.

All that we desire is to be with Him, to walk with Him and so to obey the law that "whoever wishes to come after me must labour with me so that, following me in suffering, he may also follow me in glory" (Sp.Ex.95). To him we offer "with deliberate determination" our lives, with "his favour and help", and that is the unique cause of our joy because it is all that "we wish and desire" (Sp.Ex. 98). Nevertheless, our communion with Him and his destiny sends us forth. It is "so that you may go", as He went, in obedience to the will of the Father. Where have we been sent today, as a World Community chosen and designated?

3. Sent to bear fruit that remains

We have not been called and designated for sterility, but for fruitfulness, for life. If our vocation is for love, if our destiny is for communion, then our mission can only be productive of life, of more life, of life of abundance, of that life which does not die and which Jesus alone can offer to men and women, since He is that same life in person.

Our World Community will have no *raison d'être* if our horizon begins and ends with ourselves. So then we are and wish to be ever more an organized body of lay people at the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church. That mission has its ultimate purpose of bearing fruit, the fruit of life, fruit which remains.

Service is the means which the Lord proposes for the growth of this fruit. Our vocation is one of apostolic service in a world scourged by divisions, injustices and oppressions of all kinds. We are sent into that world to

announce the Good News of the liberation which has already come in the person of Jesus but which still needs to be built, cultivated and brought to increase.

In this time of preparation for our Assembly, therefore, we are warmly invited to look at our current situation at national and continental levels with a look that is contemplative and loving, like that of the Most Holy Trinity in the contemplation of the Incarnation (Sp.Ex. 101-109). Where do we locate the vital and urgent necessities of our country and continent? What constitutes the greatest good of our brothers and sisters today? What is the most urgent task so that Jesus Christ may become known and loved among us?

This profoundly contemplative look will prepare us to arrive at the Assembly of Guadalajara with a clearer view as a contribution to the discernment of the whole World Community concerning what should be the outlines of our service to the Church and the modern world.

So let us absorb this short text of the Gospel of John which has been proposed as the theme of our Assembly, let us keep it constantly before our eyes, let us allow the Spirit to write it on the tablets of flesh which are our bodies and our hearts, let us repeat it again and again with our lips and within our inner being. Impregnated with it in this way let us direct our gaze at the world which awaits our reply of love and service. That will prepare us to arrive at Guadalajara with attentive ears and burning desire, with receptivity and docility to the inspirations which the Lord shall give to the whole World Community.

At the conclusion of Guadalajara '90 may our continental latin-american community be able to enjoy that blessed cry of the servants who find all their happiness in proclaiming: "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty" (Lk 17:10).

Maria Clara Lucchetti B.

WHERE THERE IS LOVE THERE IS SIGHT The Exercises, school of beholding

1. To learn to see things with the eyes of God

The Exercises of St Ignatius are a particular way of seeing and beholding reality. In the records of experience we come to perceive that to meditate and to contemplate can be activities of the "visible" order (Sp.Ex.47) and we are urged to do so "while seeing the place" (ibid), being interested in "seeing with the eye of the imagination" (ibid) both the physical places and the persons we are contemplating. Seeing and beholding constitute an interior manner of considering reality, a method of allowing the senses to be affected by what is meditated or contemplated.

So "to look at who I am" (Sp.Ex. 58) or "to look at what the whole creation is in comparison with God" is correlative in the first stage of the Exercises with "considering who is the God against whom I have sinned" (Sp.Ex. 59). Thus, in the act of considering our sins, a relational view is suggested to us: from ourselves to God. Or, perhaps better still: our view, in order to be honest with ourselves and the memory of our past life, should have as its perspective the same depth memory of vision that God has. The loving colloquy which concludes the first of the Exercises, consists in "imagining Christ the Lord before us on the Cross" (Sp.Ex. 53), and only "by seeing him in this way" am I enabled to "look at myself" (ibid), and ask myself questions which will be decisive for my future life.

To behold and look at myself is not an exercise in isolation. It presupposes going outside of myself and becoming aware that what I see is another view of myself and of my life, precisely through looking at my heart with the eyes of faith. It is God who is looking; he is the one

who looks on us with compassion, full of love, before we even succeed in raising our eyes from the misery which impedes our vision of the true reality of our life. It is a look of sympathy which rescues us from the forgetfulness of sin and restores us to the awareness of life, to the conviction of knowing that we are happily alive and restored ever since that loving glance. As in the case of the man in the Gospel of John who was born blind, we too open our eyes to ourselves. We leave behind the blindness of our past vision in order to get a direct vision of Jesus: "You are looking at Him; it is He who is speaking to you" (Jn 9:37).

2. To behold the world with that vision

We begin to look with the eyes and end looking with the heart. The loving look of God restores our lost dignity and like sons and daughters, (newly created and loved), we direct our contemplation towards the world. Having seen how "this king speaks to all his friends" (Sp.Ex. 93), we should see Christ our Lord, Eternal King, with the whole universe before Him (Sp.Ex. 95). We do this in such a way that we can contemplate Him in the place most appropriate to Him, namely the object of His desire: "My will is to conquer the whole world..." (Sp.Ex.95). The whole of history is the object of the salvific will of Jesus Christ at the same time as it is the object of his heart as he reviews it with an amazing sympathy. The dynamic of following Him is born of the horizon of mission, of wishing and desiring that which Jesus himself wishes and desires: the integral renewal of the whole heart of humanity, since he has come "that they may have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10).

But the place where it becomes most obvious is in the contemplation of the incarnation. The starting point is "how the three divine persons gazed at all the level extent or roundness of the whole world filled with human beings" (Sp.Ex. 102), and how we are invited also to cast a look around us, to "behold the amazing capacity and roundness of the world in which there are so many different races" (Sp.Ex. 103) and "to see people, here and there (...) in such diversity" (Sp.Ex. 106). In fact, if we look

carefully at the world, we observe that some people are born healthy, smiling and at peace, while others die of sickness, weeping and at war... Such is the description of a reality which is divided and confrontational, of a world of conflicts and contrasts. God knows how to view this world just as it is, and to have compassion for it, because it is inhabited by people who do not know how to look, who do not have light in their eyes, who die "in such blindness".

However, in this scenario, in this perspective of the visual, the seeing eyes of God find a place of complete attraction in the eyes of Mary, the maiden of Nazareth. She is capable of returning to God a limpid look and reflecting His infinite tenderness and love. The look of Mary is like a reflector which enables us to avoid falling into the desperation of a look of no avail to the world. Only love is capable of discovering the good in the world, of looking with sympathy upon its human impotency and blindness.

Mary has been chosen by God because God has looked upon her with compassion, has fixed His gaze on her and "has looked upon his lowly handmaid" (Lk 1). Precisely from the grace of this look is born the happiness and joy which inundate the heart of Mary, in whom God by his power "has done such great things" (ibid).

The same canticle reflects the way in which she is accustomed to look upon the world, seeing the reality around her with the same eyes as God Himself contemplates her: with mercy that is both active and liberating: where the powerful are put down from their thrones, the rich become empty handed, the proud scattered from the scene because the hungry are filled with good things and the lowly people are raised up from the dust. Truly God has not forgotten His people; His mercy reaches out to all generations, for He is a God who fulfills the promises He has made to the poor and simple. The power of his arm has become a shield and shelter for his friends. Such is the ecclesial conviction of Mary and of anybody who has experienced in his/her life the tender look of God, which heals the frustration of our hearts and the powerlessness of evil.

Ignatius invites us in this contemplation to "speak to Our Lady and Our Mother, praying according to our feelings" (Sp.Ex. 109). The Church too suggests that we sigh for one of her glances: "Turn, then, our advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us". Grant that she may purify our vision and that like her we may see the mysterious action of God in the unforeseen events of history. But above all, grant that she may supply us with glasses which enable us to see with the heart, to look at history with a vision purified by faith, with a discernment which causes us to discover the liberation which people experience when God looks upon them. For the look of God is the salvation of our sad history.

3. To look so as to make us present to the mystery

To open our eyes to the world is to make us present to the world of our brothers and sisters, to the mystery involved in human history. Contemplation opens us up to the reality of the presence of God in Jesus, born of Mary in order to share our condition and to rescue us from sin.

To look is to make ourselves present in order to serve. It is to awaken the motive forces of desire: "desiring to know better so as the better to serve" (Sp.Ex.130). Contemplative knowledge is not an archeology of the past but a re-situation and transformation of the present. To behold and to know is to love and to follow. And if we love we behold in a distinct manner, not like passive onlookers, but as agents committed to the mystery of the presence of God in the world. It is to see Our Lady.. and the Child Jesus... (insert Sp.Ex. 114).

To contemplate is to look lovingly, to cause us to allow our hearts to be drawn and to enter the novelty of the event of the coming of Jesus into the lives of our brothers and sisters. For that it is necessary to recover the actuality of the mystery of salvation, to meditate on it in our hearts, as Mary did, so as to assimilate the novelty of what was proclaimed before it was narrated, of what was spoken before it was written.

It is necessary that we break through known schemas of knowing and of analysis in favour of a real participation in what we are contemplating and a genuine commitment with the world in which we find ourselves. The Incarnate Word is the servant of the world. He it is who renounces the possession of what he is ("He emptied himself" Ph.2:6), who renounces his situation ("He did not cling to his equality with God"), in order to make himself just another man and assume the common lot of mortals. For he did not come as lord and king but poor and humble.

Ignatius insists on our need to see people while "contemplating their individual circumstances and reaping some advantage from these" (Sp.Ex. 122). For Jesus has broken into our world as one entering a history marked for liberation. The liberation of a people that is real, collective, integral. Liberation from our miseries, from all that binds us, all that prevents us from discovering and drawing near to the reality of here and now. God himself comes to mobilize us, to take us out of our helplessness. That liberation helps us to have confirmation of the transforming power of the Kingdom of God, a conviction which necessarily passes by way of the heart, not without suffering. So we must "look at and consider what is happening... (insert Sp.Ex. 116).

Since Jesus is here in our world, we must behold him with great attention. Otherwise he may pass by, as he himself has warned, so that in the evening of history we may be forced to ask: "When did we see you hungry or thirsty, sick or naked, or in prison, and did not come to your help?" (Mt. 25).

The Exercises are a school of visual perception, because in them we learn to discover the strength of God in his human frailty, and to embrace and desire with all our hearts what Jesus loved and embraced. In the last analysis this school of visual perception will perhaps be the school of affection? Without a doubt, where there is love there is sight.

Xavier Quinzá

Youth - Life of the Church

THE BEATIFICATION OF PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

In this article, PROGRESSIO echoes the Pontifical Council for the Laity, by publishing, most of its document on the forthcoming beatification of Pier Giorgio Frassati, a young Italian, who died in 1925.

Soon, on 20th May 1990, in Rome, Pope John Paul II will beatify Pier Giorgio Frassati. It seems important to us to give you this news in advance because the event should have a strong echo among Catholic youth.

Today many young people seek a full and happy life. Words, however, are no longer sufficient to convince them that it is possible to attain it. They need examples of people who have lived their Christian discipleship to the full in a spirit of joy and in the circumstances of everyday life.

The Church recognises a response to this great thirst for authentic models of Christian life in the person of the future Blessed, Pier Giorgio Frassati, a young Italian student who died at the age of 24 in 1925. He was a young man committed in the Catholic Organizations and open to the social problems of his time, very sensitive to any type of poverty, always ready to help others, a sportsman who was very fond of mountain climbing and who had many friends. His youthful enthusiasm and his joy for living were the result of his simple and deep faith which he wanted to share with everybody.

During his visit to the tomb of the Servant of God in Pollone (Italy), on 16th July 1989, Pope John Paul II said: "The particular clarity of his testimony springs from his transparent fidelity to the Church, from the generosity of his missionary work. He offered to all an example which, even today, has lost nothing of its

magnetic attraction. I wish everyone, especially the young, to draw inspiration and encouragement from his short but radiant life of consistent Christian witness."

In giving you the news of this Beatification, which is a special gift of Divine Providence for today's youth, we ask you to make Pier Giorgio Frassati known so that the fascinating example of his Christian witness may become a strong spiritual ferment in the life of many young people.

On the day of Pier Giorgio's Beatification let us all unite in prayer with the Church that God, through the intercession of the new Blessed, may shed his gifts on the youth of our time.

PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in Turin on 6th April 1901. He was son of Alfredo, founder and director of the liberal newspaper "La Stampa", and of Adelaide Ametis. After attending primary school, together with his sister Luciana who was one year younger, Pier Giorgio continued his studies in a state school in Turin and then in a school run by Jesuit priests, where he graduated from high school. Here he found the right atmosphere for the development of his spiritual life. He became a member of the Marian Congregation and of the Apostleship of Prayer and received communion daily. He was particularly devoted to the Virgin Mary and made frequent visits to the Sanctuary of Oropa and to the "Consolata" of Turin.

In 1918 he joined the Society of St Vincent de Paul providing help to the most needy, to the sick and caring for orphans and demobilised servicemen. In the same years he entered the Royal Polytechnic of Turin to study mining engineering: "I will become a mining engineer" he said to a friend" and this will enable me to serve Christ better among the miners". In 1919 he became an active member of Catholic Action, of the Catholic Student Federation (FUCI) and of the Young Italian Catholics (GCI). In opposition to his family's political ideas he

joined the Popular party.

When his father was appointed ambassador to Berlin, Pier Giorgio met Karl Rahner and Karl Sonnenschein, with whom he visited and took help to the poorer areas of the city. He attended clubs where students and workmen came together. Fascinated by this experience, in 1921, during the first congress of the Pax Romana in Ravenna, he came up with the idea - although the time proved not yet ripe for this - of merging the Italian Catholic Student Federation with the Association of Young Italian Catholics.

In 1922 he entered the Dominican Third Order, choosing the name Girolamo in memory Savonarola. Pier Giorgio was always in the forefront when it came to defending human dignity. From the beginning he recognised the true face of fascism and opposed to it: "Your violence cannot overcome the strength of our faith, because Christ never dies".

He was a great lover of mountain climbing, and of sports in general. He organised outings with his friends (the "Crazy Gang") which became occasions for apostolate.

Just before getting his engineering degree, after a week of suffering, he died on 4th July, 1925 of an acute attack of polio.

His funeral, attended not only by his friends but also by an immense crowd of unknown people, revealed to his own family who Pier Giorgio really was.

The process of beatification began in 1932. The Diocesan Apostolic process was conclude in 1981 and in 1987 the Decree on his heroic virtues was published.

IN HIS LETTERS HE WROTE...

"As Catholics, after our love for God, we have a love that exceeds every other and is extraordinarily beautiful, as is our religion".

(From a letter to a friend - 1925)

"You ask me if I am cheerful. How could it be the contrary as long as faith will give me the strength? I am always cheerful. Sadness should be banished from Catholics souls. Pain is not sadness which is an illness worse than any other. This illness, in fact, is practically always caused by atheism. But the reason for which we were created shows us the way, no doubt full of thorns, but not sad. It is cheerful path even through pain".

(From a letter to his sister - 1925)

IT WAS SAID ABOUT HIM...

"Pier Giorgio Frassati shows us in real life what it really means, for a young layman, to give a concrete answer to the "Come, follow me". Even a rapid glance at his life, consummated in the span of barely twentyfour years, is enough to understand what was the answer that Pier Giorgio gave to Jesus Christ. It was that of a "modern" young man, open to the problems of culture, sport (he was an expert mountaineer), to social questions, to the real values of life. At the same time it was that of a deep believer, nourished by the Gospel message, of a staunch, consistent character, passionately eager to serve his brothers and sisters and consumed by burning charity which led him to approach - giving them absolute precedence - the poor and the sick. (...) Pier Giorgio as a genuine young Christian indicates to us that what counts most in the Christian view of man is the person and his or her vocation, as it was established by God".

John Paull II,
to the youth of Turin, 13-4-1980

"From communion with God the consoler, sweet guest of soul, interior freshness, you obtained life-giving nourishment. Among your exterior work, your interior moral rectitude, and your devotion at the altar of God there is a definite connection. Maybe one day the Church will tell us it all come to you from the strength of God.

God: true secret of your youthfulness...
Christianity is an exaltation of true life.

It is because of this that constant charity emanated from the hands and heart of Pier Giorgio. Love for one's neighbour is the best reflection of God's vision of life, his universal paternity, his prodigality, his goodness, his essence. It is the best proof of the relevance of religion to life. It is practical act of faith which affirms that Christ is within one's needy brother and sister".

John Baptist Montini (Paul VI)
Turin, 3-7-1932

"The striking thing about him was his purity, his radiant joy, his piety, his freedom as a child of God for all that is beautiful in the world, his social conscience, the awareness he had of sharing the life and destiny of the Church. But the most astonishing thing was that all this seemed so natural for him and came with such a warm and manly spontaneity. His faith had no human explanation. Frassati was a Christian neither as a reaction against the liberal and anticlerical generation of his parents, nor for "cultural motives" of whatever kind. His faith was nourished by the essential substance of Christianity: God exists; prayer is the leaven of existence, the sacraments are the food of eternal life, and universal brotherhood is the law of human relationships.

It is in that, contrary to the expectations of logic, the mysterious nature of divine grace appears. In an environment where Christianity is considered a "thing of the past", behold a Christian, a Christian who exudes the joy of life, who is not at all sectarian, a Christian who lives his Christianity with an almost frightening spontaneity; one might say that he has no problems. In fact he drowned them at the price of who knows what sufferings in the grace of his faith. In short, he is a man of prayer, a man who eats the bread of life and death every day, a man consumed by love for his brothers and sisters".

Karl Rahner s.j.

TOWARDS GUADALAJARA '90

With Mary of Guadalupe - II part

MYSTERIES OF THE THIRD DAY

The readings of the third day relate how Juan Diego confided to the Virgin Mary his disappointment after his meeting with the bishop. He feels poor and of no status and thinks that he can achieve nothing. Our Lady consoles and encourages him, and sends him again to the bishop. Juan Diego acquiesces, convinced that he will receive the same reception as before.

FIRST MYSTERY: Notwithstanding the fact that Juan Diego undertook with enthusiasm the fulfillment of his mission, he comes up against difficulties which discourage him. Those with power in the world take no notice of him because he is just a poor Indian.

- * In this mystery we beseech you, Lord, that the difficulties we encounter in trying to do your will may not discourage us.
- * Our Father, Hail Marys, Gloria ... (Repeated at the end of each mystery)

SECOND MYSTERY: Juan Diego returns to Mary to inform her of the results of his efforts. He is responsible towards the one who has confided a mission to him.

- * Mary, our Mother, by your help and example may we be faithful to our baptismal commitment.

THIRD MYSTERY: Juan Diego recognises in all humility his limitations and is aware that in our society people are esteemed solely for what they possess, while the poor and simple are despised.

- * Let us ask the Lord to enable us to recognize our own weaknesses yet succeed in changing a society which ignores and despises the poor and needy

FOURTH MYSTERY: Mary causes Juan Diego to realize that the power of God is present in him to help him.

- * In this mystery let us pray that she may convince us also that in our lives we can depend on the power of God.

FIFTH MYSTERY: Our Lady explains to Juan Diego that all of us have a mission in this world, one that is irreplaceable. He perceives this and obeys.

- * Let us ask the Lord that we likewise may not fail to do our allotted task, even though we may think that there are many others who could do it, and do it better.

LITANY: (cf. PROGRESSIO n.1, 1990)

CLOSING PRAYER: Almighty God, grant us that grace which you bestowed on Juan Diego, so that our wills may be ever docile and we may serve you with a sincere heart in all that you assign us. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

MYSTERY OF THE FOURTH DAY

The readings of the fourth day recount the second visit of Juan Diego to the bishop. He asks him for a sign as proof that it is Our Lady who is sending him, and Juan Diego decides to ask her immediately. However, the people, who followed him to spy on him, lost track of him. Annoyed at this they convinced the bishop not to give him any credit but to punish him severely if he should present himself again.

FIRST MYSTERY: In spite of the rejection which he had suffered, Juan Diego returned again humbly to the bishop to present Mary's request.

- * Let us offer this mystery for the grace to use all possible means for realizing our mission, in spite of the rejection we may meet in our lives.

SECOND MYSTERY: In contrast to the open attitude of Juan Diego, Bishop Zumarraga doubted poor Juan Diego. He plied him with questions even to the point of asking a visible sign to enable him to believe. He failed to discover God's message in the mouth of simple people.

- * Let us ask the Lord that we be open to his word which he frequently speaks to us through simple, ignorant people.

THIRD MYSTERY: Whoever has faith knows that God always answers. Consequently Juan Diego believes that the Lady will give the sign which the bishop demands.

- * In this mystery let us ask the Lord to enable us to strive to fulfil his will, while realizing that sometimes his manner of acting does not correspond to our image of things.

FOURTH MYSTERY: The bishop leads other people to doubt. He urges them to spy on Juan Diego.

- * Lord, in this mystery we beseech your help to avoid increasing the area of distrust which enters in and divides us, impeding the growth of community.

FIFTH MYSTERY: The spies have failed in the mission entrusted to them by the bishop. Without admitting their failure they try to vent their anger and frustration on Juan Diego.

- * In this mystery let us ask that when things do not turn out as we wish, we may learn to be more humble rather than take it out on those around us.

LITANY

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, by the example of Juan Diego, help

us to be aware that you do not abandon those who put their trust in you, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

MYSTERIES OF THE FIFTH DAY

The mysteries of the fifth day portray Juan Diego informing Our Lady of the bishop's reply. She promises a sign for the following days as a reward for his efforts. Then, for two days Juan Diego chooses not to go to the meeting with the Blessed Virgin but rather to care for his uncle who is gravely ill.

FIRST MYSTERY: Mary does not abandon Juan Diego but tells him that she will give the sign which the bishop is asking for.

* In this mystery we shall give thanks to Mary, who does not abandon us either.

SECOND MYSTERY: God does not fail to reward those who devote themselves to doing his will. It is thus that the Most Holy Virgin tells Juan Diego that his labours will be rewarded.

* Let us thank the Lord for the rewards he gives when we sincerely try to fulfil his will.

THIRD MYSTERY: Juan Diego is aware of the needs and suffering of those around him. He shows compassion for his uncle, Juan Bernardino, in his illness.

* Lord, in this mystery we beseech you to grant us a heart that is aware of the needs of others, so that we may be able to serve them effectively.

FOURTH MYSTERY: Although Juan Diego could have asked for a miracle, he prefers to avail of the means at hand for solving the problem of his uncle's illness.

* Lord, in this mystery we desire to ask you to enlighten our minds to avail of the natural means which you yourself have provided us for the benefit of others.

FIFTH MYSTERY: Convinced that the most urgent affair of the moment is the care of his uncle, Juan Diego does not go for the meeting with the Most Blessed Virgin.

* Let us ask the Lord to make us understand that we can say that we love him only when we love and help our brothers and sisters, especially those nearest and most in need.

LITANY

CLOSING PRAYER: We thank you, Lord, for having revealed your secrets to the poor and lowly and we beseech you that together with them we may form part of your Kingdom, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

(IIIrd and last part in next issue)

World Community

MALTA: CLC ANNUAL SEMINAR '89

THE PROCESS, THE CHALLENGE, THE HOPE

The Maltese CLC, once again, ventured on one of its most daring activities: The Annual CLC Weekend Seminar. I describe it as 'daring' because for the past three years, we have tried to make of our seminars, a National Community Experience. We have tried, in more ways than one, to go to the heart of our communities (now about 28 in all), bringing to the forefront, the urgent and most basic dilemmas roaming about in them. Each time, the seminar preparation team proposes an experiential process to help us deal with the situation. At the same time as we create the space for God to communicate the next step for our whole community, we set guidelines for our work throughout the year.

Surely, this is no easy task and it demands great sensitivity and reflection. It requires, especially on the part of those involved in the preparation, a deep awareness of what is going on in the individual communities. The process itself, often causes the movement to enter into a crisis situation. Many questions surface about our identity and the quality of our lives. But it is a healthy crisis. A crisis that results from having been open to the Spirit, discerning and this, in spite of being so miserably poor and human inside. The crises offers us a challenge. It draws us to a deeper conversion and it never permits us to get too pleased with ourselves or our achievements (now that CLC here, is even growing in numbers). It propels us to search deeply for 'the more', even as a National Community and urges us to work together as one movement drawing strength from the same Spirit.

The Process

The theme of this year's seminar was: "CLC's Response to a changing Maltese Reality". The process guided us from:

- a) A deep awareness of what makes up this reality: Eleven presentations on Work, Relationships, Life-style, Church, Family, Politics, Environment, Education, Social Problems/Injustice, Youth, and Culture which were prepared by various communities, enabled this.
- b) We then expressed feelings of: Helplessness, discouragement, inadequacy, towards this reality.
- c) We were later presented with a talk by Fr Rene Camilleri which led us to realise that only the Gospel could guide us to the answers and possible responses to this reality.

We cannot look at these facts with human eyes alone, for this could tend to paralyze us and depress even those who are most earnest to respond. Rather, we are urged to look at this same reality but through the eyes of faith, the eyes of Jesus in the gospel. The message of the gospel does not paralyse. It is a liberating message. It permits us to be free from all egoism and to search and work within that hard reality, with these same eyes of faith. We are not to become victims of society, living a defeatist attitude and offering no hope. On the contrary, we are called 'to read the signs of the times' and seek the Christian hope that lies in all situations. Yes, if we look closely, even in the Maltese situation.

- d) Here the message went deeper and sunk into our hearts. It challenged our faith approach to life: "Do we really believe that all is saved, that the gospel is the Good News, that its message is relevant to our Maltese Reality? Are we ready to die to ourselves, to witness this message by our lives or are we going to act as postmen and postwomen merely be messengers of a message we do not know?"
- e) A focus on the life of Inigo (a slide feature on the life of St. Ignatius) helped us to see how a simple man, ordinary like us, who too lived in a conflicting society, was capable of seizing every opportunity that came his way and listened to God through each life

situation. This gave us a chance to identify ourselves within Ignatian Spirituality and draw inspiration from the life of Inigo.

The Challenge

- 1) What could possibly have been going on in the hearts of all those people throughout that day?
- 2) What would our next step be?
- 3) How could we proceed when dealing with 200 unique persons?

Only God could answer such questions. Through the prayers and sharing during the Mass at the end of the day, things started to unfold. It became clear that the Maltese CLC could not think in terms of responding as a whole unit to our Maltese Reality in one specific area (from the eleven presented above) because we were not being 'sent' to do this.

It became more and more evident that our Maltese CLC is being drawn to a deep conversion, within itself, within the heart of each and every member. It is a time for us to recognise who we are and question if we are truly CLC in our identity. We are being asked to go deeper into our Ignatian formation and remain open to the CLC options of mission: Preferential option for the poor, promotion of faith and justice, evangelization, in all that we do. It is when we experience this openness towards these options that we are then able to understand and live our CLC response to our changing reality.

Some very basic questions arise from all this.

- a) We are keen to go out and serve (we mention this often enough), but what is in fact motivating our service?
- b) Are we too keen to "move out" just to satisfy the people who deny that we DO anything, and merely for us to be seen?

- c) Are we really 'full of the person and the love of Jesus' or just full-up with our own selves, unavailable to Him and desperately empty?
- d) Could we be 'looking out towards a common project, for fear of 'looking within' where Jesus is and Jesus calls, each one?

The Hope

Although this experience may have shattered the expectations of many, it still reflects the reality of the Maltese CLC Community and that is why perhaps, we were drawn to focus (on Sunday) on a fundamental change in attitude that Christ was inviting each one to adopt. The identification of the specific attitude and the personal commitment to foster and cultivate it, was our offering to God expressed through the Mass and it will be our response towards this conversion. It will be the fruit of the seminar experience.

Of course, we could easily leave all this in the abstract and forget about the impact the seminar has had on us. It is easy to shelve the desires and promises we have made. A change in attitude is something we work on day after day. It is important that we exercise this attitude in the various concrete situations of life, especially this year. It needs to be anchored and lived out in our relationships and general approach to life. In this way we will each progress towards the final goal... that is to better serve and love God and other people. The invitation put to the community is, I believe, for a change in heart... a change in attitude to life... to be open and discerning people... Ignatian people... who choose Christ and do everything to love and serve God and His People.

Only in this way can we ever be signs of Christian hope and gospel love. Only this could guide us towards our response, as CLCers, to the concrete needs within the Maltese Reality. We must believe that nothing done in love is ever lost. Love has an eternal quality that will eventually bear fruit.

Joseanne Peregrin

CLC Mission & Social Reality

1. "OUR WHOLE LIFE IS A SERVICE"

Our mission began in outer suburb of San Salvador 9 years ago, with a group of young people who, united with Christ in prayer, gave themselves to the difficult task of evangelization. The main difficulty we experienced, in the years 1979-1980, was the increasing violence of the war through which we grew and enriched our experience. We were and still are moved by the lively and hopefilled witness of Mgr Romero.

In spite of the lack of formation material, our way of seeing, of judging and of acting was based on the Puebla document, an element of our Latin American Church teaching which is there to guide and encourage our people.

The integration of this pastoral work with our Ignatian spirituality produced radical changes and urged us not to look for personal securities. We were invited to take up the risk of Christ's cause, in a genuine evangelical poverty, abandoning the superfluous and then, and accepting ourselves just as we were. We must experience solidarity with and answer the call of the world that cries out. Before this call, our behaviour should not be that of mere spectators; we must work and fight to give back to our world its dignity. We must denounce injustice in order to build a genuine peace, beginning from our own milieu.

To live out this experience, we need to recognise the reality of our sin which leads us to know our need of the Father and the love He has for us. Once we are aware of this, we must be indifferent, that is to say ready to realize the Father's will in our life's journey. This service is a sign of our commitment to God in Christ who gives us all His love. It is a service which rises from our CLC Basic Communities which gather to reflect God's living word, a word incarnated in the reality that compels Christians to work for the Kingdom today.

In so far as we become aware that our whole life is a service, then we can choose a specific way of life that commits us to live a genuine evangelical poverty. This service helps us to make life more valuable, and to fight so that the most elementary rights are respected.

CLC of San Salvador

2. "IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE"

Ever since I was given *Les Misérables* as a birthday present when I was 13, I think that it, as well as my upbringing, helped me to be aware that not everyone was as fortunate as I was and I had a vague feeling of wanting to do something to help those who weren't as privileged as I.

However, (around about the time I joined CLC) I began to realise that good intentions weren't enough and I needed to be more sensitive to others and more accepting of them, otherwise I might inadvertently do more harm than good. Also, with so many areas of need around me, I felt nothing less than something marvellous would be enough. However since I didn't know how to achieve this, I did nothing.

A member of our parish team began a Parish Support Group: housekeeping, visiting, driving and babysitting. I became a part of it. Its motto was a saying of Mother Teresa's: "God does not ask us to do great things for Him. It's how much love we put in the little things we do, that makes our offering something pleasing to God". Slowly I began to realise the truth of this. CLC especially helped to make this more a part of me.

I am in my 8th year as a Catechist, and enjoy doing this in spite of the difficulties which arise and the frustration of "working in the dark", but I felt the need to get out from under the umbrella of the Church and do something which wasn't church centred. When I heard about the Wiley Park Centre for abused children and their

families and how they needed volunteers, I thought that maybe this was something I could do.

I found out about it almost by accident and went there rather tentatively, wondering if I still had the patience to cope with pre-schoolers. However, from a very hesitant beginning it has become something very precious to me. Now I have a real sense of being called, and I feel privileged to be involved in this work. It can be strenuous work too, 15-20 disturbed pre-schoolers are quite demanding, but I usually come home invigorated, though I sleep well on Friday nights!

Every Friday night, when I do my examen and ask myself where did I see God today, there are so many occasions, it's hard to remember them all. Things like noting how the more aggressive children "little by little" become more amenable and cooperative with their companions and the teachers. The joy on the children's faces when they play under the hose on a hot day and the sheer delight they take in feeling the water on their bodies. They are a great lesson in how to live fully each particular moment.

The teachers' whole attitude to the children is Christlike, though I get the impression they aren't practising Christians. They do all the physically and mentally demanding and necessary things with so much love, respect, patience and sensitivity I come away feeling very humble, and challenged to give that little bit extra.

Most of the volunteers are from the nearby Uniting Church, but whether they have church affiliations or not, I've been struck by their generosity, love and plain hard work. A few of these ladies are in their late 70's, early 80's, so this is yet another area of challenge for me.

My only difficulty is in accepting all the invitations that the Father gives me to die to self, little by little. I think that the way my view of social reality has been challenged has been that before I undertook this work I had an idealised idea of those who are in need - Les

Misérables again? I assumed that they would be easy to love, but I've found that this isn't always true.

In spite of the difficulties, this experience has confirmed, uplifted and strengthened my faith. It has confirmed for me that God works through those who don't know Him as well as those who do. It has certainly helped me be much more conscious of myself as an agent for social change.

I've found yet again the truth of Jesus' words "it is in giving that we receive". I've gained in confidence and assertiveness and found a feeling of self worth by becoming involved in a group which is bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight and which is truly setting the downtrodden free. Sadly these troubled families represent the few who are getting the help they desperately need, too many more have little or no help.

A CLC experience
Picnic Point, Australia

Echoes... Echoes... Echoes...

PARAGUAY: FIRST CLC ASSEMBLY: Last Friday, December 8, the feast of "La Virgen de Caacupe", Patroness of Paraguay, the first National Assembly of CLC was held in the "Patio de los Naranjos" of the parish of Cristo Rey. Members of the three communities took part in the Assembly: the group "Camino" (young university students), the group "En ruta" (teachers in Xavier Technical College) and the group "Nemity" (young people in the last year of secondary school). In all 25 members took part in that day. It is worth noting the enthusiasm which this first Assembly aroused among the three communities: in fact there was a 90% attendance.

The enthusiastic participation of the members of each community is praiseworthy. Without being mutually acquainted, the majority had no problem in expressing themselves, in relating their individual experiences with the community and their being enriched by these, and in listening to the lived experiences of those companions who have "covered more ground" within the CLC of Paraguay.

Fr. Antonio Betancor, Ecclesiastical Assistant of the three Communities, was responsible for the development of the "History of the CLC in Paraguay", having first given an introduction on how they came into being worldwide. The Provincial of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Ramon Juste was there as a guest of honour. He was informed of up-coming activities of the communities. Among the most notable, mention should be made of the course of formation in Ignatian spirituality to be held in Santiago, Chile, (Ex Mini Manila), next January, in which the group "Camino" will take part.

During the meeting the first President of the CLC in Paraguay was elected: Daniel Moreno V., member of the group "Camino", who has spent six years in the Christian Life Communities. Making up the Service Team with him are: Judith Grenno as Reporting Secretary and coordinator of the Formation Team; and finally Ivan Gonzalez as Secretary and Treasurer, and coordinator of the Editorial Staff.

Javier Ayala Balbuena

RURAL MISSIONS IN NICARAGUA:

Rural Missions are one of the important activities which CLC carries out in Nicaragua, with the object of realizing the principle of apostolic life and the mission of being qualified witnesses of the love of Christ among peoples, a task which has been recommended to us as a Lay Christian Group. We hold these Rural Missions during holiday time at the half-year and at the end of year in Rural Christian Communities, in settlements and territories situated in zones far removed from the Capital, such as Rio San Juan which borders on Costa Rica, Santa Rosa del Peñón and rivas, west of the Capital. Here, along with sharing our joy, we share the love of Jesus expressed in our working hand in hand with our brother farm labourers.

Prominent among the activities in which we engage are helping in the sowing of crops, assisting in the construction and maintenance of schools, health centres, recreational activity for children and youth by means of games, group dynamics and, above all, as the central axis of our mission, sharing the Gospel in light of our situation.

This is one of the ways of getting to know a new facet of our lives, of having an experience of what it is simply to love without prejudices or vacillation, of living after the manner of Jesus, of accepting joyfully and simply the limitations and poverty experienced especially in these zones cruelly scourged by the war, of offering them that moral and human support which is so necessary in these places.

Of all the CLC activity in Nicaragua these Rural Missions are one of the richest self-evangelizing experiences for all the members of our CLC. Being a sign of love, hope and faith for so many people who have suffered

greatly becomes a source of spiritual and human development for us as individuals and as a group. It incites us to be active participants in the development of our own society and to work always in an attitude of service for the establishment of justice and peace among peoples. That is how we carried out the CLC mission which our Lord Jesus asked to fulfill in the surroundings which he has chosen for each one of us.

Ruth Velia Gómez Centeno
Ena Victoria Escobar