



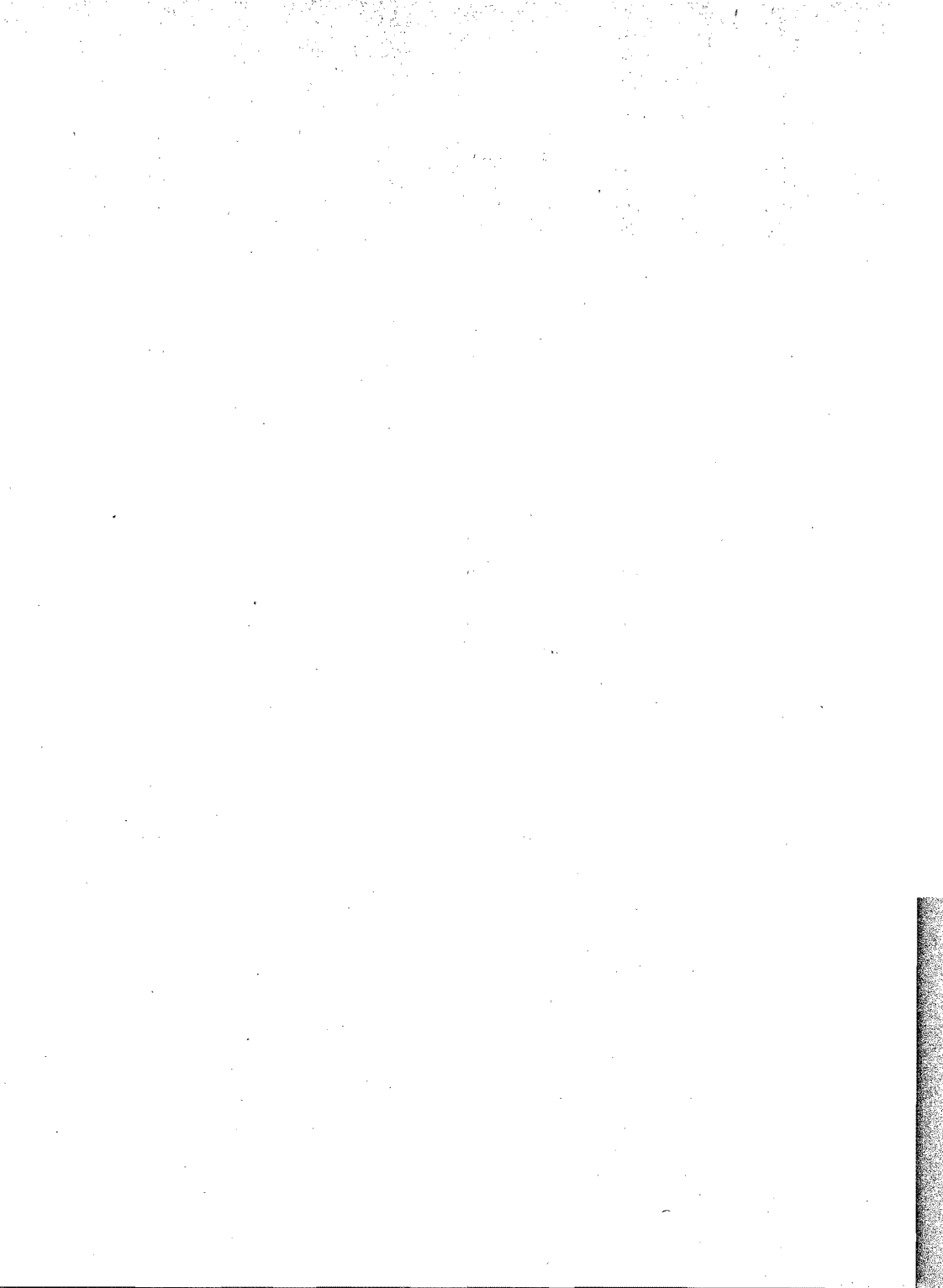
# PROGRESSIO

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**THE JOURNEY OF SAINT IGNATIUS  
AND THE CHARISM OF CLC**

Talk of Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach s.j.  
to the 11th General Assembly  
of the Christian Life Community

I have much joy in being with you in this World Assembly of the Christian Life Community and to greet again many of you who were present at Loyola and during my visits to your countries. I note with satisfaction the increase in the number of participants and the nations which are represented. In this great variety of nations there blows the strong wind of Pentecost: from my heart I congratulate you!

From the regular conversations which I hold with your President and members of the Ex-Co, from my visits to your countries and from the reports that comes to me from the Society, I see that in many parts, the World Community not only grows numerically but is consolidating its organisation and diversifying itself according to the age of its members and is undertaking apostolic service with great perseverance and fruit. I say all this without speaking of formation, which with reason you have always given a very special place, considering it as an indispensable condition so that life in the Spirit will produce lasting fruits.

During the World Assembly at Loyola I spoke to you of the mission of CLC in the light of the mystery of Our Lady's Visitation. As Mary did, so the CLC has made the choice and gone out to serve Christ Who is born, grows, suffers and triumphs in the lives, sufferings and achievements of the men and women of our time.

In the changes to the General Principles and the General Norms, which you will discuss during these days, I discover the same desire of intensifying your apostolic life and creating structures for the same purpose.

The new evangelization, to which the Church has committed itself since the Council and to which the Pope calls us repeatedly, requires your total collaboration. It is no longer possible - as it may have been in other times - that such a challenge is only for bishops and monks. The new evangelization concerns everybody, it is also the responsibility of lay people who "have the vocation and mission of announcing the Gospel" (CL 33).

The imminence of the Ignatian Anniversaries invites us to contemplate Ignatius and his historical journey as the providential way which was at the origin of the Christian Life Community. Guided by his way of contemplation, let us walk and look at his journey in stages. Let us make three stops: his call to serve God by helping others; the new style of religious life which he creates for this purpose; and the formation of lay communities which are decidedly apostolic. We can be sure that through this means God will want to tell us many things that will move us to "reflect and gain fruit".

#### LIFE FOR OTHERS

When the mature Ignatius was reflecting over his whole life in order to dictate it to Fr. Gonçalves da Câmara, he recognized that the desire to help his neighbour had been within him since his reading during the time of his convalescence at Loyola (Aut. 11). At Manresa and in the midst of a great variety of interior states, he ("the pilgrim") never stopped "helping those people who came seeking guidance from him in spiritual matters" (Aut. 26). When he understood that God did not want him in Jerusalem, he decided to study seriously "in order to be able to help others" (Aut. 50). From that time on and in a way which was more and more explicit, "helping others" - in all the dimensions of their lives - would be the source, the strong impulse for all his desires, projects and accomplishments.

For Ignatius there existed an equivalence between the "glory of God" and "helping others". The Exercises in various formulations express the purpose of our human life, i.e. our salvation, as the glory of God. The glory

of God consists in the salvation of our human life. Helping others to attain this is giving glory to God. By overcoming the whole world and all the enemies we enter "into the glory of the Father"; by working and suffering with Christ we come to follow him in glory" (Sp.Ex. 95).

With reason, Ignatius of Loyola was identified with the theme "AMDG". But this theme is not generic, imprecise, or abstract. Neither ought it echo to grandiose plans, high-sounding words, and sublime spiritualities. The "greater glory of God" is a much greater thing and at the same time very simple. It is to insert ourselves actively in the great apostolic plan of the Holy Trinity: "Let us redeem the whole human race" (Ex.Sp. 107).

Ignatius hopes that we will place ourselves under the flag of Christ our King and our Lord and that we will go throughout the whole world, spreading his sacred doctrine in all the states and conditions of persons... wanting to help everybody (Ex. Sp. 145-6).

We are called to look at the world with the apostolic eyes of God, of the three Divine Persons who look at what is happening in the whole world and continue to send the Son so that he might carry on his incarnation for the healing of men and women (Ex. Sp. 102).

There is no limit to helping people. It seeks the salvation of each person and all people. It is not just the rescue of individuals from desperate situations, but it also desires the union of the whole human family in the "glory of the Father". It includes the entire creation - "... heavens, sun, moon, stars and elements, fruits, birds, fish and animals..." (Ex. Sp. 60) - which hopes to be set free from the vanity of the enemies of God who have subjected it (Ex. Sp. 63).

The Ignatian contemplation of the Incarnation links us to the central desire of the heart of God: to act on behalf of all men and women, teaching, healing, uniting them in friendship, and in all that is good (Sp. Ex. 91). To collaborate as a faithful and strong instrument with this action of God is the grace and vocation of Ignatius.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY FERMENT OF IGNATIUS

In the history of Christian spirituality this focus has been a revolutionary ferment. Spirituality in the time of Ignatius was predominantly monastic, marked by the flight from the world behind the walls of the monastery. Because Saint Ignatius received his vocation and mission while still a lay person, what dominates it above all is its apostolic character: "Our style of life is not monastic, but like the apostles".

This signifies above all, remaining in the world as it is: the world which God has loved and loves and the one which we neglect, we build and we destroy. Basic to his desire of being always and in everything a pilgrim, was hidden the desire of never returning to his own home and of considering the entire world as his home.

This world for Ignatius is the whole human race, and in particular the people who need help. The apostle is sent to the heart of these people so as to continue there the saving work of the Lord, to help them become fully human in the Lord. It is especially important to care for those with urgent and greater necessities since nobody else is concerned for them. Ignatius draws you to participate in the love of Christ for those who are in the world, a love which is endless.

No doubt Ignatius started this journey alone. But as he pondered this God who seeks to be "God with us", and as he contemplated Christ in the midst of his apostles, there grew in him the desire to breathe and aspire together with others this love for the world. In this way he came to recognize that there exists as great a diversity of characteristics and gifts as there are apostles. For a spirituality which seeks God in all things, the renunciation of the Office in Choir was a radical expression of the desire not to flee the world but to bring it actively to Christ. Personally, Ignatius liked the liturgy, the psalms, the Office and the music of the Church. But his vocation and mission of helping people moved him to dedicate his time and energy to them, and to keep open the main part of his life for them.

Ignatius was convinced that God is not absent from this world and that his active presence is always working and filling the whole universe. However we can only discover this by means of a vision of faith and with eyes of love towards everything. In all things God makes himself known but it is necessary to be sensitive to his presence. It is possible that we look at everything and see nothing. To be contemplative is precisely to have this capacity to see all things in the light of faith, all that exists and happens in the world.

This vision refers to a God who is working in everything. Therefore he invites us to collaborate, to carry on his work in our activities and our projects. To seek the face of God in the heart of people is to discover in our lives and in our world the answer to our prayer: "God, what do you want me to do?". Ignatian prayer does not consist of the Office in Choir nor the liturgy of Hours, but in acting with God in the world. This apostolic prayer seeks neither rest nor quiet, neither an illumination nor a moment of beauty. It integrates our joys and sorrows, our hopes and anxieties into a vision of faith so that afterwards, we might be able to speak a word of life in the name of the Lord and to make present the gestures of Christ towards those who suffer.

In order that prayer be genuine and not illusory in the midst of the world's activity, some strong moments of prayer, according to Saint Ignatius, are required so that we become familiar with the mystery of Christ, with his ways of thinking and working, and so that we can listen sensitively to his desires. From this comes the Ignatian preference for the consciousness examen, not to accuse oneself without end, but to discern, within the actions and deeds of every day, the living presence of the Spirit of the Lord at work. Within this very full context, Ignatius' defence of short but intense prayer is understandable.

Once he was on this spiritual journey, Ignatius wanted to oppose the extraordinary things of the "spiritual" life and trust the ordinariness of daily life.

While monastic spirituality tended more to build a special world, Ignatius wanted to remain in the ordinary things of life. He likes to compare Saint John the Baptist, very unique in his way of being, with the Lord and the apostles who lived an ordinary way of life. Also today, Ignatian spirituality asks us to reconcile to Christ all that constitutes the real life of the people. The very name of Christian Life Community seems to suggest this enhancement of daily life.

In short, Ignatius renounces the stability and uniformity of monastic life in favour of an option for dynamic change. To be in a constant state of renewal is a dimension inherent in Ignatian spirituality. But this demands a constant evaluation of projects and activities in order to know whether they are really the will of God for the "good of souls". It also entails adapting to changes of time and place so that our response may be guided by the "Magis", i.e. the greater good. All this is in a perspective which reaches beyond the local or regional levels, and takes on the care of all the churches. It is obvious that for Ignatius this presupposes great availability of heart and real mobility in our manner of acting.

Let us now see how the revolutionary ferment of Ignatius began to take shape and to inspire numerous communities of lay people from whom the Christian Life Community is drawn.

### THE GRACE OF FORMING SOCIETIES

Ever since the desire for study welled up in Ignatius with a view to helping his neighbour, he began to look for companions to share in this work. He passed through various stages and trials before he succeeded in gathering together that first little group of seven "friends in the Lord" into a new religious order. This year the Society of Jesus gratefully recalls that long process from which it took its origin. But this is not something which concerns only Jesuits; for the Ignatian grace of forming societies is much wider and more ample than that. History recounts innumerable examples, of which



you yourselves are evidence, of people who continued the Marian Congregations and the "societies" of lay people which sprang up due to the initiative of Ignatius and his companions. The new paragraph which you propose to introduce into the preamble of your General Principles touches on this. Let us reflect a little more deeply on it, asking ourselves about the source of this grace for forming societies and the meaning it can have for us today.

"Societies" are a medieval institution which grouped lay people into confraternities or professional corporations for the purpose of helping the growth of Christian living and of performing works of charity. They were to be found in almost every parish and were the expression of lay initiative and the spirit of solidarity at that time. They were also called brotherhoods, congregations, sodalities.

Ignatius and his companions were anxious to renew those already existing and to create new ones. This is how the "Society of the Name of Jesus" came into being in 1539 in Parma, as a result of the missions of Fathers Faber and Lainez; the "Society of Orphans" in 1541; the "Society of Grace" in 1543, and the "Archconfraternity of the XII Apostles" in 1547: these last three were founded in Rome through the initiative of St. Ignatius. The "Society for the Help of Shy Beggars and the Imprisoned" came into being in 1549 in Messina through the efforts of Fr. Nadal. The idea spread throughout all Italy: Palermo, Naples, Perugia, Florence; Ferrara, Venice, Padua and Genoa. The same happened in other countries of Europe, and in places which were at that time so very far distant as Goa, Ethiopia, Lima and Mexico City.

In all cases the characteristics are the same and are based on the oldest society of all, that initiated in Parma by Blessed Peter Faber who left behind a way of life for them in writing. The purpose is "to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of one's neighbour". The primacy of God above all else impels us to "work for the souls of our neighbours, whether inside or outside the home" as the most important thing to be done. All our

intentions and affections must be ordained towards that end. The Eucharist is the essential sustenance, that which is at the centre and indicates the rhythm of the day. The examen of conscience - with its twin moments of thanksgiving and repentance, - is the most typical form of prayer, being directed towards sacramental confession and the Eucharist. At the beginning of the day a short prayer of offering and a petition for protection "for oneself and for everybody else" is recommended. And if there is still time, "listening to a word or thinking upon some action of Christ... desiring to live better... with hunger and thirst for justice". The works of mercy and helping one's neighbour are just as much part of this manner of living as are the sacraments and prayer. The "Society of the Name of Jesus" of Parma was called the "mother of many good works in the city". The members applied themselves to teaching Christian doctrine, to helping the poor, helping those condemned to die to meet death in a holy manner, and numerous other works (Mon Faber, 39-43).

There is no doubt that the revolutionary ferment of Ignatius has had a powerful influence on the secular societies which sprang up under his aegis. They lived in the world; they abandoned neither the ports nor the hospitals of the poor, neither the market place nor the royal court. Wherever a need occurred they were present. They came together "without ceremony or ostentation" and moved on from one place to another (Salmerón Letters 1, 141, on a society in Naples). Their chant and divine office consisted of narrating what they had done for others during a given week and the distribution of tasks for the next one (Padua, 1558; Perugia, 1559). Their scale of values gave priority to the announcing and assimilation of the faith, relying on the Ignatian teaching of the Exercises. However, they never cease to repeat the actions of Christ in helping the poor, visiting the sick and imprisoned, establishing peace between people at enmity, introducing morality into business and coming to the support of family life. It is said about the societies of Naples that they reproduced the manner of living of the communities in Acts (of the Apostles) and about those Siena that "they are bringing Christ to the whole city".

What was it which induced the founding Fathers of the Society of Jesus to found other societies? Above all else there was the experience of common life, of long years of friendship, mutual assistance, human and Christian development. The sharing of ideals, study, work and prayer had been very fruitful for them. It led them to have a "common purpose", a "common way of proceeding", a "unity in one body" for the "greater benefit of souls". In the deliberations which led them to the formation of the Society of Jesus they discussed whether they should "unite in one body" or "dissolve their union and let each one choose his own way". On both sides they saw advantages and disadvantages. At length the idea of uniting in one body won acceptance because they felt that God was moving them in that direction. They perceived that "the same virtue, when united, has greater vigour and strength for undertaking any kind of arduous task"; and in this way they could hold on and persevere for a long time" (Delib. 3,7).

The societies formed by the first companions cannot be understood without taking into account the force of attraction of the personality of Ignatius. In Paris he was called a "seducer of students" on account of the influence that he wielded in the university atmosphere. This (was so) not only among the students but also among graduates and masters, drawing them towards God and towards a very radical change in their lives. Blessed Peter Faber has left us pages full of admiration for the man whom he regarded as father, master and friend. Speaking of Ignatius as an old man, Fr. Gonçalves da Câmara would (later) say: "He appears to be all love... he is universally loved by all".

The deepest secret of the influence of Ignatius is that in giving himself in friendship he sought not himself but Jesus Christ. The thought of Jesus gathering disciples around him and sending them forth to announce the Kingdom (Sp.Ex. 275 and 281) had touched him deeply and moved him to look for companions. He used to cultivate in those who sought guidance from him the spirit of the following of Christ present in the meditation of the Kingdom: enthusiasm for the fascinating figure of the

Eternal King, docility to listen to His call and generosity in giving oneself completely to work. It is not surprising that in order to be better and to work with Christ, many chose to join Ignatius and to work with him. First of all, there were those who joined to form a society which he never permitted to be called "of Ignatius" but "of Jesus". But there were also many others - men and women - who felt inspired and encouraged to serve the Kingdom in different ways. The thick volumes of letters by Ignatius are proof of how varied were those who corresponded with him and how vast were his interests.

Ignatius knew how to inculcate in his first companions that style of apostolic work which stirs up collaborators. Fathers Faber and Lainez put it into practice with such effect among the lay members of the "Society of Jesus" of Parma that they produced among them a chain reaction of Spiritual Exercises: "... these they give to others, some to ten, others to fourteen persons. Scarcely has one brood matured when another is begun. In such a way that we see the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation" (Lainez, Mon. 1, Ep. 2 June 1540, p.4). Several members of this community of Parma enthused by that kind of experience, later entered the Society of Jesus and spread everywhere the method they had learned. This was so in the case of Fr. Antonio Criminale, Jerónimo Domenech, Benedetto Palmio and Paulo d'Achille. These last three, together with Diego Lainez, Jerónimo Nadal and Pedro Canisius introduced the system of Parma into the colleges of Sicily from where it spread to all parts, especially in the germanic countries, thanks to the work of St Peter Canisius.

This rapid incursion into the history of the first generation of Jesuits shows that the formation of lay communities moulded by the Exercises - the societies - is not a fortuitous occurrence but rather a well-designed pastoral policy. That which they found to be good and advantageous for themselves, was considered to be so for others. St Ignatius followed with great concern and interest everything related to the creation and development of these societies. And nobody who is aware that the Constitutions were written on the basis of the living

experience of the companions, wonders at the fact that they contain directives concerning those societies. The seventh part makes reference to them two or three times under the name of "more durable pious works", "foundations for the help of our neighbours" and "Congregation". Careful that the good should be more universal and durable, Ignatius recommends that preference be given to devoting time to such foundations as help a greater number of people and for a longer time. Because of their vow of obedience Jesuits cannot be members of them but they are to promote them among lay people for the help of the sick, the poor, the imprisoned and those in greatest need (650: "... ensuring that others would do it"; 651).

The Christian Life Community, as a continuation of the Marian Congregations, is a product of that subsoil and, in their history of 450 years constitute, as a whole, one of the better models of what has been achieved in the history of the lay apostolate.

#### A PRESENT-DAY REFLECTION TO PROFIT FROM THIS HISTORY

History does not repeat itself but from history we can learn to re-read with a more accurate perspective the challenges of today and tomorrow. The Christian Life Community can learn much from that past. Against that background I wish to refer briefly to a few aspects of the larger theme of the mutual relationships between the Society of Jesus and the Christian Life Community. I believe it is an important theme for a more effective apostolic service on the part of all of us who, in one way or another, take our inspiration from St. Ignatius.

In the General Norms which you have proposed for approbation by this Assembly it is stated that there must be "good collaboration with the Society of Jesus and with other persons, communities and institutions that share in the Ignatian tradition" (14). Our Jesuit legislation contains similar recommendations with regard to you (GC 31, 32 and 33). It is worth observing that in both cases there is question of a norm which only appeared after Vatican Council II, which emphasises the autonomy and responsibility proper to the laity and their associations.

The theme of the mutual relationship between religious and laity, who share a particular spirituality, is now a matter of intense debate. Today nobody is content with postures which are self-defending, separatist or self-vindicating, from whatever source they may come. People prefer to forego the drawing of too precise lines of demarcation between temporal activities proper to laypeople and those proper to religious. The same occurs with regard to the role of lay people in explicit evangelization. The current attitude adopts the language of integration and of the mutual complementarity of religious and laity.

Until quite recently some people looked with suspicion and even annoyance at the participation of lay people in the particular charism of a religious institute. They looked upon it as a threat to the intimacy of religious life, a violation of something which belonged to them exclusively. And from the lay point of view, this was considered as an unjustified attack on the fundamental vocation of lay people, a betrayal of their position in the world. Such distrust is not the prerogative of just one side: it is found equally in religious and lay people. It masks some very tenacious elements of clericalism and anti-clericalism of the old nineteenth century brand.

Whoever understands that charisms are at the service of the whole Church will never deny to lay people their right to avail of a particular charism given for a christian way of life. When living such a charism, lay people do not lose their identity but are empowered to become more fully lay people in the Church. Neither is such a person a "semi-religious" but, rather, a christian who shares with a religious family in the pluriformity of one charism. This vision of things keeps lay people and religious from feeling autonomous and self-sufficient, without any reference to each other. It also avoids every exclusive attitude in the interpretation and realization of the charism. Here, as in everything which is said of the people of God, the trinitarian principle holds true that identity must be lived in relationship.

The Christian Life Community shares relationally with the Society of Jesus and other persons, communities and institutes, the charism of St Ignatius. From the point of view of the Society the same is true: this increases the possibility for all of "helping souls"; and that assuredly is what counts. We are aware with what tenacity Ignatius fought so that the Society would not find itself obliged to take charge of anything - parishes, ecclesiastical offices or a women's branch of the jesuit order - which would reduce its missionary mobility. With the same courage he saw to it that the lay societies promoted by him and his companions should enjoy the greatest autonomy of management, with their own leaders and their own regulations. To this end he writes to Eleonor Osorio, wife of the Viceroy Juan de Vega and one of his great collaborators, first in Rome and after in Sicily: "... a society of generous women has been formed to serve in this work (the House of Saint Martha for taking in prostitutes), and so to three of them we have given all the three keys..." (Mon. Epist.1,564). Those three keys to the house, which was important for Ignatius, possess a symbolic meaning which still enlightens us today!

#### "THE DIVINE SERVICE AND THE GLORY TO WHICH WE ALL ASPIRE"

As we read the correspondence of St Ignatius we are impressed by his detachment with regard to the Society of Jesus. Again and again he says that the Society does not belong to itself so much, but to those who help it to realize itself in the service of the Lord our God (Mon. Epp. 3, 401-412; 8, 535-536 et passim). The really important thing for him is that "God our Lord should give His perfect grace to all of us, so that we would always be aware of his most holy will, and fulfil it entirely". And this without distinction as to whether the channel of God's will be ecclesiastical, lay or religious. Such radical availability is not explained by the hierarchical conception which Ignatius had of the society of his time. Over and above everything else there is his passion for "divine service and the glory to which we all aspire". I think that here we possess a brilliant light by which to govern the relation between the Christian Life Communities and the Society of Jesus.

I conclude by taking up again the theme of a new evangelization, a theme much discussed and meditated upon with lively interest in this continent which is preparing to celebrate the fifth centenary of the arrival of "the sword and the Cross". It is not only countries of ancient evangelization which need to be re-evangelized; the whole world is full of idols, old and new; everywhere wounded men and women are lying by the roadside waiting for the passage of the good samaritan who may come to help them. How should we begin such a work in that world? At what point should we launch forth on our evangelizing mission? I am convinced that this is the great question that all of you are asking yourselves.

The Christian Life Community aspires to set up a visible thread of communities in which there is no break but a unity between faith and life, between the Gospel and society. This is your great challenge and your contribution to re-evangelization of peoples. Now as always it is living faith which speaks to and moves people to embrace Christ with renewed and renewing force. The spiritual inheritance of St Ignatius of Loyola prepares you and sends you forth on that mission. But let us never forget that there is no fourth week of the Exercises without the third. Nothing gives the assurance - neither the Gospel nor the age-old experience of the Church - that our endeavour to evangelize the modern world will transform it into a Christian society from which all the demons and false idols have been forever exorcised. The very failure of Jesus and his words tells us that we must be prepared to embrace the Cross, which is present today in the cross of the poor and the afflicted, and in our own crosses.

Without the Cross there is no true evangelization. Your presence in the world should be a sign of this characteristic of walking in the Passover of the Lord. There is no more convincing sign than giving our lives for those whom we love.



**IN THE SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM:  
THE PERSONAL DIMENSION**

Talk given by Maria da Assuncao Carvalho  
to the 11th General Assembly of  
the Christian Life Community

It is with great joy that I come to a CLC World Assembly for the first time. I hope that this brief reflection on the personal dimension in our service of the Kingdom will help us make it grow and expand; this Kingdom which is already present in our every day concrete circumstances.

This is not a theological presentation; it's just a reflection together on our service, hopefully to open up a few more insights for living out our calling to bear witness to Christ "by our words and our actions... and to give an apostolic sense even to the most humble realities of daily life" (GP 1971, n.7).

1. "YOU WILL BE MY WITNESS"

We have come here from all over the world, where we live in very different situations. Whatever our circumstances may be, we need to realize that this awareness of our mission (as individuals, as a community) comes out of the intimate, unique relationship of each one of us with Christ.

It is out of the inner experience of His love for each of us that we wish increasingly to identify ourselves with Him and with His work, that we wish to become instruments of his love in this world, that we wish to come close to every human being and to help them get close to Him. It is only an experience of love that can transform and give a new dimension to our whole life as laypersons; that makes us go out of ourselves, that makes us open up to others and to their needs; that leads us to procure,

according to our personal situations and personal characteristics, the "most urgent service: the most necessary and most universal service". This is what we often express by the very manner in which we live our "day to day" lives.

First of all, our service of the Kingdom begins with the small gestures and actions of ordinary life.

The Lord wants to be present, through us, in the house where we live, in the office where we work, in school, in our group of friends, where we do our shopping. He wants to be close to all those we meet every day. He wants to transform all of our actions, to give them a new meaning, a sense of eternity. He has decided to need us in order to transform the world where we live into a world that is more humane, and therefore, more divine.

It is this personal dimension which is basic to the service of the Kingdom, and, to which all of us Christians are called even from our baptism, by the awareness of this immense love which is calling us to share right now and forever, together with all men and women, in His intimacy.

As the II Vatican Council stated it, "The individual apostolate, flowing generously from the wellspring of a truly Christian life (cf. Jn 4:14), is the origin and condition of the whole lay apostolate, even in its organized expression, and admits of no substitute. Regardless of circumstance, all lay persons (including those who have no opportunity or possibility for collaboration in associations) are called to this type of apostolate and obliged to engage in it. Such an apostolate is useful at all times and places, but in certain circumstances it is the only one appropriate and feasible" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 16).

In this personal apostolate (according to John Paul II) "great riches are waiting to be discovered" (*Christifideles laici*, 28).

Actually "such an individual form of apostolate can contribute greatly to a more extensive spreading of the Gospel, indeed it can reach as many places as there are daily lives of individual members of the lay faithful. Furthermore, the spread of the gospel will be continual, since a person's life and faith will be one. Likewise the spread of the gospel will be particularly incisive, because in sharing fully in the unique conditions of the life, work, difficulties and hopes of their sisters and brothers, the lay faithful will be able to reach the hearts of their neighbors, friends, and colleagues, opening them to a full sense of human existence, that is, to communion with God and with all people" (Ibid).

I would like now to reflect together with you upon some aspects of this apostolic service in ordinary life, and let the starting point be the idea that our communities are geared towards the formation of "men and women, adults and youth, for service to the Church and the world in every area of life: family, professional, civic, ecclesial, etc." (G.P. 1971, n.3).

## 2. CONCRETE ASPECTS OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST IN ORDINARY LIFE

### a) In Family life

Most CLC members have in their families the first and most immediate field of apostolate. Being the cell of both society and Church, the family which abides by the law of mutual love and mutual respect is a unique and irreplaceable factor in the humanization of the individual and the society.

Aware as we are of the fact that "the future of mankind is, inseparable from that of the family" (Familiaris Consortio, 42), it is of primary importance that we turn our homes into thriving spaces where faith and love can grow, and where people can meet one another and with God.

In which way do we feel responsible for the spiritual and human growth of the members of our family?

What places do we give God and prayer in our family life? By which means and ways are we trying to grow more able to listen, to accept, to open up to one another? These are some of the questions, I suggest, that could help us to assess our witnessing to the Kingdom in our family life.

We could hardly speak of the family without taking into account the actual problems it faces today. Christian education of children and teenagers, birth control, abortion, wives working away from home, drugs, and so on and so forth. These few examples remind us of the number of areas where a committed Christian presence is needed, not only to denounce the generalized attack against the dignity and freedom of human beings, but also and above all to be able to "demand from everybody, and first of all from the authorities in each country, to respect those values that keep the family safe, thereby keeping safe society at large" (Christ. laici, 40,97).

Being a biologist myself, I have to make reference to a current problem, closely related to family, and to the very origin of life; I mean the use of artificial techniques of reproduction and embrionic development. Technological progress has been achieved so fast that an attitude like this has surfaced, 'whatever is technologically possible must be morally licit'. In the name of the so-called 'quality of life', scientists are in fact threatening the integrity and dignity of human life.

As the laity of the Church I think we have to assume our responsibility in this area, and try to the best of our ability to distinguish what really can help us as persons from what, under pretense of doing good, is in fact bound to destroy the dignity and the deepest values of human beings.

#### b) In Professional Life

The human workplace constitutes another field where the Lord is calling us to bear witness to His Kingdom. That is where we spend most of our time, where we apply our energy, and develop our productive or

administrative abilities, where most of our social relationships occur.

There are indeed certain professions and jobs that lend themselves more than others to an explicit apostolic outreach; a social worker or a nurse may have more direct opportunities for the apostolate than an administrative clerk or a housekeeper. But whatever our profession, we CLC members cannot ignore our call to work in a Christian way, as well as to carry a message to all those we work with.

There are in whatever job we may have, even in the lowest, three basic aspects we cannot dissociate from it. Firstly, work is a means for personal sanctification: a path towards God, lived through with honesty, professional competence, and moral rectitude, in other words, with Christian spirit and Christian values.

Secondly, work is an instrument for the sanctification of the world inasmuch as with our efforts we contribute to the creation of a world that is more thorough, more humane, more perfect; inasmuch as we take into account everybody's progress and well-being.

And thirdly, work is the space for the sanctification of others, through acceptance, and through the testimony of life and word.

Furthermore, human work is a "participation in God's creation", as the Council teaches us. Thus, everyone of us is invited to continue, by her or his work, the construction of the world and its history, together with God. We are called to effectively contribute, through our competence in matters of this world and through our activity, transformed from within by Christ's grace, so that all created goods become instruments of service for the whole of mankind and may be justly distributed, according to the Creator's plan and the illumination of his Word (Cf LG 36).

We are therefore "co-creators" of a world in constant evolution, and in a sense, responsible for its

direction. We can also place here the ecological problem of today's world, since we must reflect that future true progress, if we are not to confuse it with a blind "development", has, like all human work, a moral dimension.

Are we giving our work the meaning it has in the eyes of God?

c) In Civilian and Social Life

"The apostolate of the social milieu, that is, the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which a person lives, is so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be properly performed by others" (AA 13).

These are the Council's direct, unvarnished words. As laity, it is our responsibility to make sure that social life be oriented according to Christian parameters of love and justice (Our GPs state the same just as explicitly).

There are numberless fields of possible action:

- In the political arena: Such aspects as freedom, social participation, justice, equality, energy, environment, etc.
- At the structural level: Unions, professional associations, cultural associations, etc.
- At the level of services: Health, education, senior citizens, housing, campaign against hunger, etc.

There are many problems that others will know of better than I do and in which all, according to their own circumstances, will perceive the calling to do something about them.

There is a minimum duty for everybody: "The

procurement of the common good, preferential attention to the needier, support for those leaders who fight for more justice" (Fr Arrupe's address to CLC General Assembly, Rome 1979).

Even though we do not perform our apostolate specifically in this field, problems associated with civilian and social life cannot leave us indifferent.

We have only to open our eyes to realize the alarming conditions of injustice, exploitation and misery around us. Fear or indifference have so often paralyzed us. Meanwhile, every time we fail to act we are contributing to this generalized apathy towards the impoverishment of the earth. Then it begins to appear to us as normal that some people are annihilated by others, who, in spite of it all, are their sisters and brothers.

Let us therefore realize that our indifference only adds up to that of the world's; our sin, even of omission, adds to the sin of the world.

We can't help noticing that this Guadalajara '90 Assembly occurs when extraordinary historical changes are taking place. We are witnessing the crumbling of ideologies and social systems that, for many, leave a vacuum to be filled. It has become a priority to proclaim that the ideals of genuine solidarity and a love which is universal and open among peoples, are being made possible. It's urgent to find new "roads" for human relations. Why don't we, CLC members, commit ourselves to discovering these new paths, starting with our daily relationships?

#### d) In Ecclesial Life

Service in the Church is one of the fundamental dimensions of our apostolic calling, both because of our condition as Christian laity, and because of the characteristics of our service as expressed in our GPs.

As the Holy Father tells us, "Because they are members of the Church, the lay faithful's vocation and

mission is to proclaim the gospel. It is for this task that they are being missioned and supported through the sacraments of Christian initiation, by the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Christifideles laici, 33, 76). Which is exactly what we read in the GPs: "Union with Christ leads to union with Church, where Christ is here and now continuing His mission of salvation... This sense of the Church provokes concrete personal collaboration in the work of building up the Kingdom of God" (1971 GP 5).

It is, therefore, as member of such an apostolic community that we are missioned by Christ to "proclaim the good news", joining our efforts with those of the People of God, both faithful and shepherds. We are always searching for an answer to the needs of our times, and for the paths that can lead all peoples to God.

Since we are baptized and are CLC members, we all participate in the Church's mission to evangelize and since we are committed to it, then the specific expressions of such a commitment can take on various forms. Some may be called to service in the Church structures (parishes, diocesan councils, social assistance organizations, etc), while others may be called to a concrete service associated with the Church's priorities (of a social, political, or a humanitarian nature, for instance), and still others may be called to concentrate their efforts to reflect the presence of the Church in all walks of life.

Our tools are life testimony, the word, the knowledge of the Church's teachings and doctrine (and let us here call our attention to the need and the duty we have not only to live up to but also to know and spread these teachings).

As John Paul II said in his address to the laity in Portugal, "The Church must be present in all areas of human activity, and nothing that is human should stay alien to the Church. It is up to you, dear laity, to make the Church this universally present" (John Paul's talk to the Laity, Lisbon, 1982).



### 3. THE UNITY OF FAITH AND LIFE THROUGH CONSTANT DISCERNMENT

CLC spirituality at its core moves us towards mission as the expression of our love for Christ as a person, and it has two basic aspects which I consider to be crucial to this personal dimension of the service to the Kingdom.

#### a) The Unity of Faith and Life

In our GPs we read that "our groups are for those who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fulness of their Christian faith" (GP 3).

It is through this unity that all situations of our life -family, professional, social, etc, become a meeting place with the Lord, a searching place for his will with regard to ourselves and to the world. It is through this unity that the gospel criteria are being internalized with growing maturity, and quite naturally, being reflected in our words and gestures. It is through this unity that our service to all peoples can become service to the kingdom, and that each one of our gestures, even the smallest and least meaningful, can become signs and an actual presence of Christ in the world.

In this manner, whatever we do ceases to be "our work", and becomes the work of the Spirit who is acting in and leading us.

#### b) Discernment

When we think of our apostolic calling as CLC members, we think in terms of being "pre-determined to nothing, available for everything", since our choice of any specific activity is based on discernment.

Indeed while other movements and spiritualities within the Church are usually designed for a given kind of apostolate, CLC's only orientation to a mission is "to

discern what is most urgent and universal" for service to the People of God (GP 7). We are, therefore, being called not to perform pre-determined tasks (it is by discernment that we come to choose one), but to generally renew and sanctify social and public life, and thereby to "give an apostolic sense even to the most humble realities of daily life" (Ibid).

#### 4. MARY AS THE MODEL OF OUR SERVICE TO THE KINGDOM

May we say that our service is "Marian". Indeed, in Mary we find the perfect model of Service to the Kingdom.

Mary listens to the Lord's calling. Mary accepts and takes in the gift of God. Mary gives her Son to the world.

By making herself totally available to God, Mary accepted to become herself the 'vehicle' of incarnation. It is to her that we pray. May she help us to live out our service in an 'incarnate' manner, by trying to make the Lord Jesus present to every situation of our daily lives. And we pray to her with the Pope's words:

"Blessed Mother,  
Guide us and give us the support we need  
so that we may always live  
as genuine daughters and sons  
of the Church of your Son,  
and that we may contribute  
to establish on earth  
a civilization of truthfulness and love,  
according to God's design,  
and for his glory".

AMEN

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**IN THE SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM:  
THE COMMUNAL DIMENSION**

Talk given by Josefina Errázuriz  
to the 11th General Assembly  
of the Christian Life Community

We have reflected, yesterday and the day before about the Ignatian and personal dimensions of our mission. Today we shall look at the communal dimension of our mission which is central because of the fact that CLC is a Church Community.

1. The communal dimension of CLC mission at the world level

The gospel tells us that Jesus called those whom he wanted, (Mk. 3, 13-15) so that they would be with Him and be sent to spread the good news.

He founded his Church as a Community of life and mission. This is central to Jesus' call which has been so strongly proclaimed in this Assembly: "I have chose you and commissioned you to go forth and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (Jn 15,16).

As a church community the CLC World Community wants to be called by Jesus to be with Him and to with Him to work for the establishment of the Father's Kingdom to the very ends of the world and to all human realities. We want to participate in and be responsible for the life and mission of the Church, carrying to everyone the gospel of Christ as a source of hope for humanity and for the renewal of society (see Christifideles laici, 29). This can be done by CLC only because it is a church community. CLC is only effective when by the divine strength of the message that it proclaims, it tries to convert at the same time both the individual and the collective consciousness of humankind. It is to this activity that CLC should commit its life (see Evangelii Nuntiandi 19).

What does this imply for CLC?

A new world is emerging and the Church calls us to help this coming to birth through the strength of the gospel. This is a missionary horizon within which the Church needs our communal mission. By living in fidelity to our long and rich Ignatian tradition, the Church invites us to be open to this emerging reality and announce Jesus, the living and always new gospel. The Pope is calling us to an evangelization that is new in the strength of its love, in its methods and its expressions (cf. John Paul II Conclusion Speech at Celam '90).

In the language of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* this implies that as a World Community present in different places and contexts in our world, we seek "to reach and transform with the strength of the gospel (which is the Risen Lord himself) the criteria used in judgements, the decisive values, the focus of interest, the way of thinking, the sources of inspiration and the models of life of humankind which are in opposition to the word of God and his plan of salvation" (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 19).

This a modern way of expressing what St. Ignatius puts in Jesus' mouth in the book of the Spiritual Exercises: "my will is to conquer the whole world and all the enemies and thus enter into my Father's glory; therefore whoever wants to follow me, must work with me..." (Sp.Ex. 95). This is the call to which the CLC World Community wants to respond today. It reinforces its consciousness of being a World Community with an important communal mission.

The church recognizes the tremendous evangelizing importance of lay movements and associations. She asserts that in a pluralistic and divided reality we face complex and difficult problems. Missionary communities are necessary in order to be better able to accomplish the evangelization of different realities: "In reality, a 'cultural' effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but by an individual as 'a social being', that is, as a member of a group, of a community, of an association, or of a movement" (C.L. 29).

As a church community, CLC wants to respond to this great mission where ever it happens to be and whatever the culture in which it must be incarnated. This defines our identity on a world level as Community of Missionary Communities. This community is invited by the Lord to bear fruit, that fruit of the incarnation which is discovered in different cultures and which becomes the source of life in the world. We perceived in Rome '79 the call of Jesus to be a lay World Community committed to the mission of the Church for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In Providence '82 we discerned and accepted this call and we received confirmation of this in the last Assembly of Loyola 86. This call of Jesus to be a World Community is the foundation of the universal dimension of our mission.

We are called to be visible. A sign which is not seen, is no longer a sign. If we are not visible, we are meaningless; we are not being good news that rejoices and transforms hearts and environments. But what sort of visibility? I would say that the visibility of our World Community which wishes to be an evangelizing force would have to express itself primarily, in a way of life. A way of life which permits us to go on living out that great missionary horizon of helping to create a new world. A way of life which is simple and which, with Mary, proclaims Jesus Christ and commits itself to the service of the Father's Kingdom. A way of life which makes the Church credible by the fruits it bears.

Today, gathered in this Assembly we are the World Community. And as a World Community we are called to listen to the contradictory realities of our times, to discern the missionary priorities to which the church calls us. This is important if we are to strengthen both the national and the small local communities of CLC between World Assemblies. We are called to seek ways of living in communities with a spirit of mission, of searching for ways to reinforce a communion among us like that which linked St. Ignatius in Rome with St. Francis Xavier ministering in the Far East. Moved by the Holy Spirit we are called to find adequate means of becoming through a life of faith, an historical force that

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incarnates the service of the Kingdom in our concrete options. These are the challenges for us, here and now.

Between assemblies the communal mission is lived in dispersion. We are sent to the farthest areas of the world with their different cultures. This mission is centered on and renewed by the Eucharist. We are united in prayer and by a way of life. This all gives testimony to the hope that comforts us, that hope which is rooted in the love that brings us together and of the common faith which we profess. The ExCo coordinates our communal mission and tries to be a community of service to the World Community in order to support this common project.

In order to provide some kind of visibility to the CLC World Community, the ExCo organizes and coordinates the tasks in various forms by its annual meetings and through the World Secretariat in Rome:

- Forming commissions and working groups at a world level that will try to promote and coordinate the experiences of the priorities recommended by the Assembly.
- Publishing "Progressio" and "Projects" and writing hundreds of letters...
- Establishing relationships with the Pontifical Council for the Laity
- Being present to the international organizations that we belong to
- Organizing different encounters and courses where needed, etc.

This has been up to now the ways in which we have organized our sacramental visibility as a Church community. This organization must always be improved. The organization for sacramental visibility has to do with giving ourselves General Principles and Statutes which adequately express our common life and vision.

## 2. The communal dimension of mission in small communities

Our belonging to our World Community and the sense of being sent on mission is concretized, for each of

us, in the experience of a small community which is united to a greater community such as a national community.

Being the coordinator at the world level of the working group "CLC Mission and Social Reality" gave me a tremendous opportunity to glimpse the actual mission and service within the CLC in at least 21 national communities. This has really enriched my way of perceiving our communal mission. It has clarified for me our main thrust towards mission, which I understand as our life witness, our proclamation of Jesus Christ and our action and service of the Kingdom.

The testimonies received show that in our small communities and with the support of other CLC members we discover and we appropriate our Ignatian spirituality and our personal sense of mission. In contact with Jesus the groups begin to grow in their desire to live a simple life style, one that allows them to hear the calling of God in persons, in events and in the reality of the world that surrounds us. This openness to listen to the problems of our times, to let ourselves be touched and shaken by what is happening, liberates and challenges us to search for the loving will of God for this world of ours. It will bring us to want to proclaim the good news that has changed our lives and to discern what is the greatest and more universal service we are able to give. And then, our loving imagination begins to work... Little by little members of CLC become involved in this dynamic of owning the needs and of discerning and giving a communal response.

This leads to the desire for a common service as a community; but it is very difficult to achieve. It often happens as people, who are integrated into a small community, grow more in freedom and in their desire to be truly missionary, feel called to respond to different needs. What is important is that they discern in community those different charisms which the Lord has enriched them with and in turn has enriched the Church through them. As a Community they are called to accept these gifts as coming from God. They should support their different commitments through a life of prayer and through a revision of

life. In this way the rich diversity of services can be integrated, in a harmonious way, within the communal mission. This is our deep concern. This is what we pray for. We do not seek uniformity in our service, otherwise we would lose the richness that the Lord himself gives us.

The small communities are not "task teams". We don't have to involve ourselves in the same works; this isn't the way to understand the communal mission. As lay people in small communities we seek to live our mission expressed in the various dimensions of our lives: in the family, at work, in the socio-politico-economic environment. In the search for special services there may be a member who feels called to respond to the basic needs of the poor and the helpless; others may work to create fraternity and affection in the inhuman world of ours; another may be engaged in politics in order to collaborate in the building of a more human society; another may share the Ignatian spirituality by accompanying others in the Spiritual Exercises. This diversity enriches the Community even though there is no uniform task within the Community. This diversity contributes to a more vital community with a wider mission, bearing fruits of unity in the Spirit.

In the small groups, mission is expressed by a way of life open to mission priorities and to a diversity of services. But this is not enough. It is necessary that CLC's evangelical and missionary visibility as a Church community, be expressed in forms that make it more visible as a body. This is necessary so that the fruits may open horizons of fraternity and contribute to penetrating the cultures where we are inserted. That is our purpose: to transform with the strength of the living Christ cultures, environments and all the criteria used in judgement.

### 3. Possible ways of reinforcing the communal dimension of mission in the national communities

In the answers received by the world working group "CLC Mission and Social Reality", it is evident that there is a desire to improve our common missionary spirit. We need to improve, vitalise, deepen and broaden in an



efficient way the missionary services which the Lord inspires us to. They are a gift to the church. In many parts of the world because of our desire to be faithful to our Lord there emerges a wish to find a communal missionary project that encompasses all the richness that the Lord inspires in us and which is also capable of giving it more strength.

A national or a state CLC community responds to the call in a different way to that of a small group. This calls to a greater and better service, transforms with the strength of the gospel, the criteria of judgement, the determinating values, the points of interest, the trends of thought, the sources of inspiration, the worldly values which surrounds them. It is necessary that the National Communities organize themselves adequately in order to safeguard their spiritual charism and to sustain a communal project in the World Community that encompasses the priorities given by the Church.

I will give some examples of those aspects that need to be better articulated:

- response to the most urgent needs: misery, drugs, unemployment, housing, AIDS, etc.
- relationship with the local hierarchy which takes account of the Church missionary priorities as well as our own particular concerns; propose services after dialogue.
- contact with the Council for the Laity both at a national and a diocesan level and if they do not exist to help create them.
- a more fluid relationship with lay movements and communities to discuss concerns and to support initiatives that require a more significant backing.
- to formulate programs and statutes that reflect and promote a missionary and a corporative spirit.
- to offer services related to our charism, e.g. the Spiritual Exercises in diverse forms, workshops on prayer and discernment, etc., to small CLC communities as well as to other persons, parishes, and lay movements in the Church,

- offer courses on social analysis and social teachings of the Church to enlighten and deepen our discernments  
- to search for forms that will articulate the concerns and initiatives of those persons that feel themselves called to render services in different walks of life. They could be "apostolic teams" that gather persons from different small communities who would like to commit themselves to special service. The "apostolic teams" could exist at different levels: a local center, a city, a region or a country. They could give services in many ways within a particular reality: culture, mass media, legislation, ecology, politics, alternative technologies, family catechesis, works of mercy, social promotion, and popular organization. (G.P. 1971, 8a, b. G.N. 10, 11).

I could continue to enumerate the many concerns that are emerging from various parts of the world... We perceive the increasing importance of discovering ways, in both national and small CLC, in which we are called to be the visible presence of our God who, through us shoulders both the sufferings and the hopes of salvation of peoples and cultures. The small community continues to be for each of its CLC member the place of encounter, of discernment and of receiving the necessary strength to live out that mission which the Lord gives them. In the implementation of that service to which the Church has sent us, it seems necessary to have other sorts of structures to strengthen our communal mission. These structures need to be very flexible. On the one hand they need to provide adequate support for those who feel called to incarnate the diverse aspects of missionary service. On the other hand these structures have to help us to appreciate as "ours" all the different services that are the fruits of CLC.

Such structures would not be new in our long history. They could take their inspiration, in great freedom, from "Apostolic Teams", "Sections" and "Academies" of our past as Sodalities of Our Lady. During the time of great evangelical impetus those "Apostolic Teams", "Sections" and "Academies" contributed greatly both to the Missionary efficacy of the Sodalities and to

their influence in their particular situations. (see Emile Villaret, s.j., "Manuel de Directeurs"). If we allow ourselves to be enlightened by our past in a creative way this could be one way to revitalise the communal mission through which we can be both a sign and an instrument of change and salvation in our world. We need to implement structures that strengthen our way of life by better articulating our vision and our missionary service. These flexible structures would need to foster the missionary concerns of small CLC communities:

- facilitate communication and prayer in the community,
- open our eyes and ears to both the local and the world perspectives,
- help us to be better rooted and incarnated in our particular situations in a discerning way,
- reveal new ways and means to implement the common missionary project of the community.

During this World Assembly we are living as a World Community in a privileged way. Here we find it easy to feel we are a family, children of the same Father, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, linked to Our Lady, living in the same Spirit that gives us life and sends us to proclaim good news to the world and to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

We are gathered to thank God for our journey, to acknowledge what we have been living and to seek together, with a discerning spirit, the new priorities which the Lord invites us to accept for the coming years.

We are here to revise our General Principles and Norms according to what the Lord has given us and still wants to give us through Vatican Council II and the intense living in the years following the Council. We want to reform our General Principles and Statutes in the form most adequate for what we feel called to be, especially through our recent history marked as it is by very significant World Assemblies. We believe that it is important that these General Principles and Norms which identify us in the Church, be also an adequate help for growing in a missionary spirit as a World Community.

Since we are a Community of missionary communities, our usual way of life is in dispersion, that of the disciples who are sent to the extremities of the earth to enter into and evangelize all cultures and human realities.

Therefore, after receiving what God will want to offer us, in this privileged experience, we will go home to our own situations and bring back the riches that we will have received here. We will bring the message that we are a World Community on mission, a living cell which is called to bring good news to the whole Church and wants to be at the service of the world. We are called to transform all situations and cultures from within with the strength of the suffering and Risen Lord. In this we will all have the opportunity of recognizing ourselves as one family in God our Father.

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