



PROGRESSIO

CONTENTS

1995 Nº 3	Editorial	3
	Show Us the Father Juan Ochagavía, S.J.	4
	Progressio Asks Father General	9
	My Ignatian Pearl Veronica Villegas	14
	Towards Beijing and Beyond Daniel Fitzpatrick, S.J.	20
	CLC, My Way of Life Victor Kachaka	23
	Echoes... Echoes... Echoes...	26

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14th century fresco of the Blessed Trinity in a Romanic village church, Bavaria (Germany)

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER
AND OF THE SON
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN

+

EDITORIAL

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. How often do we say these words merely out of habit? We know that Saint Ignatius had *great devotion to the Most Holy Trinity... One day while saying the Office of Our Lady ... his understanding began to be elevated so that he saw the Most Holy Trinity in the form of three musical keys. This brought on so many tears and so much sobbing that he could not control himself* (Autobiography 28). This mystical experience had an impact throughout his life, it made him *a contemplative person even while in the midst of action* (as Fr Nadal calls him).

We in CLC begin our General Principles with this mystery of the Trinity — a mystery of love. At the root of our CLC vocation are the Annunciation and the Incarnation, which are a fruit of this divine love. *The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains* (G.P.1).

The more we are open to this mystery of love the more we will be led to conversion of heart with a growing desire to give ourselves to others. And what better instrument is there for us than the Spiritual Exercises? *"This school of discernment that must lead to the personal and communitarian apostolic commitment of all CLC members"* (cf. Interview with Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.).

In Fr. Ochagavia's article, we read that what is missing most in today's world is the *REAL SENSE OF GOD*. It is through our lives that the presence of the Eternal Father should be made visible

for the greater Glory of
THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
AMEN.



SHOW US THE FATHER



Last October in Chile, at a formation course for group guides, Fr. Juan Ochagavía, S.J. gave a talk on the Guides' vocation to proclaim the good news. We are publishing it in two parts. Part I speaks about the need for a growing sense of God and part II elaborates on knowing the Father.

THE NEED FOR A GROWING SENSE OF GOD

In Mark 1,32-34 we read that Jesus "healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons."

There are diseases and demons in today's world, too, but with a difference. Except when dealing with the Scribes and Pharisees who lived in a socio-religious structure of sin, Jesus was con-

cerned with the individual person afflicted by diseases and demons. We, on the other hand, are called upon to heal not only individuals, but the sinful structures that imprison them and prevent them from turning back to God.

This is what the world expects from those of us who have chosen to live as Christians: the good news of hope and visible signs of

healing. This is the meaning of evangelization: proclaiming a message of joy and hope to the world, and witnessing to this message by our lives.

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In this context I wish to develop the theme of the guide's vocation to *Proclaim the Good News*. It is meant to be an answer to the demands the world makes on us. It also hopes to respond to the pressing invitation of the Church calling all Christians to dedicate themselves to a new evangelization (*Veritatis Splendor*, 108).

Why am I centering the theme of evangelization on proclaiming ***God the Father***? Simply because I believe that this is what is most lacking in today's world. Certainly it is not the only thing lacking! Our consciousness of and our Christian formation in Scriptures, the liturgy, the Church, the sacraments, morals, and eschatology are inadequate.

The new Catechism contains a

wealth of doctrine, but how many of us have done more than skim through it? And have we really reflected on the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* which deals with morals?

However, in spite of these inadequacies, our greatest need remains a REAL SENSE OF GOD. Not that society completely ignores God: in our present culture we use him as a catch-all that we can place anywhere, even in shopping centers or in other temples of consumerism. We have made him a god with a small "g." We have put him in a cage and domesticated him. He is a god made to our own measure.

Where among us is the prophet's zeal for God? The prophets thundered against idolatry. We need a new infusion of psalm 104 so that, along with the psalmist, we can marvel at the splendors that God has poured forth in his creation (psalm 104), or be enraptured by God's nearness and presence that embraces all: "O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away; you watch when I walk or lie down; you are acquainted with all my ways" (Psalm 139).

If we turn towards the saving action of God the Father in Jesus Christ, we will recognize how far we are from "kneeling before the Father" in wonder and praise (Eph. 3,14). This *"God who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved) raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus"* (Eph. 2,4-5).

For I am convinced that neither life nor death... nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Or, when we feel overwhelmed by difficulties, we will have to admit that we are far from hoping against all hope and accepting what we cannot understand. Can we say with Paul: *"What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish or distress or persecution...? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life... nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God*

in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rm 8, 35-39).

If we see God through his universe, a universe that has grown and spread — 15,000 million years have passed since the initial "big bang;" there are a hundred thousand galaxies of stars; it takes 3,000 million years to form a galaxy; the sun of our galaxy took 100 million years to be born — we will be able to give up the idea of a "watchmaker God" or a "magician-God." More and more the new cosmology sees the human person as an integral part of this gigantic cosmos in evolution, the center and goal of it.

The universe has grown and developed but our sense and idea of God have not changed drastically. We feel that He is like a garment that is too small ... and a bit ridiculous.

How countless are your works, Yahweh, all of them made so wisely! The earth is full of your creatures.

What Father Hurtado said over 40 years ago is still valid today:

Many continue to pronounce the name of God: they cannot forget what they learned from their parents as children. But they have become accustomed to the sound of the word GOD; it has become commonplace and they are content with this. They have no concept of God. Or else they are satisfied with a concept emptied of all reality or at least all the reality that can be measured by what is immense and awesome, tremendous and enrapturing, the reality: God.

These people do not deny God. They speak of him; they invoke him, but they are not aware of his grandeur and the happiness that they could find in him. For them, God is someone inoffensive who does not disturb them. The existence of God has no effect on their lives. He is gigantic and inaccessible like a mountain. He remains on the horizon like a volcano that is far enough away so that they don't have to fear it but close enough to make them aware of its existence.

Often God is no more than a comfortable mental refuge. All that is incomprehensible in the world or in one's life is blamed on God: God did it! It is God's will!

At times, God is a comfortable neighbor to whom they can go for

help in getting out of a predicament or when they are in need. When they cannot escape a difficulty they pray, that is, they ask their good Neighbor to get rid of the danger. But when all goes well again, they forget him once more. They do not move towards the presence, towards the overwhelming nearness of God.

**O Lord, you have searched me
and known me. You know when I
sit down and when I rise up.**

People have no time to think about God. They have so many other things to do: eat, drink, work and enjoy themselves. They decide to put off thinking about God until they can do it with calm. But the time for calm does not come... It never comes.

Because of breathing this atmosphere, even Christians are impregnated with materialism, a practical materialism. We proclaim God with our lips but our daily lives are far from him. We get absorbed in a thousand occupations, in the home, in affairs, in social life. Our daily life is pagan. There is no prayer, no study of dogma, nor time to practice charity or to defend justice.

Do we not often find our lives empty? Do we not read the same books, see the same shows, make the same judgements about life and events, about divorce, about birth control and about annulling a marriage as do atheists?

We ignore and even denigrate all that is proper to the Christian: conscience, religious faith, spirit of sacrifice, apostolate. All these seem superfluous. The majority live a purely materialistic life in which death is the final end. How many baptized persons stand before a tomb and weep like those who have no hope!

The immense bitterness of contemporary souls, their pessimism, their solitude...the neurosis and even madness that we so often see in our century - are these not the fruit of a world that has lost God?

St. Augustine said it well: "You have created us O Lord and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" ("Búsqueda de Dios", Lavín, p. 16-17).

After this description of the con-

temporary world's abandonment of God, Father Hurtado speaks of the anxiety of God:

Fortunately, human beings cannot live without God. They spontaneously seek him, like the sunflower seeks the sun, even though it be in ways objectively unacceptable (Ibid, 18). Then when they find him, their lives rest on an unshakable rock and their spirits rest in the divine Paternity, like a child in the arms of its mother" (Ibid, 19).

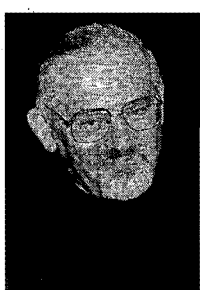
You have created us O Lord and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.

Conclusion: Thus, as we are speaking of the mission of the guide to proclaim the good news, I invite you to concentrate your attention on our SENSE OF GOD. Let us focus on the first person of the Blessed Trinity — the Father — because He is the prime origin of everything and the ultimate goal towards which Christ leads us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

***Progressio:***

Father General, the 34th General Congregation has come to an end. With their prayers and concern the CLC throughout the world has accompanied this important event. Our readers are, of course, interested in the outcome. That's why *Progressio* would like to ask you, as Ecclesiastical Assistant of the World Community, what you see as the challenges concerning the CLC and how we can respond to them. May we ask you a few specific questions on this subject?

♦ **How was the 34th General Congregation important for the Society of Jesus? What was its most important message?**



Since the CLC has often worked on its statutes, members will understand the importance of a general congregation whose aim was to update the "statutes" of the Society of Jesus.

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council, the Society renewed its way of praying, of living, and of working together.

A little later it updated and revitalized its apostolic mission, but we realized that the time had come to gather all this material, to evaluate it in the light of experience and to confirm it definitively. It took hundreds of emendations to retain the "statutes" that will guide the Society of Jesus, enabling it to meet the apostolic challenges of new evangelization as we arrive at the threshold of the third millennia.

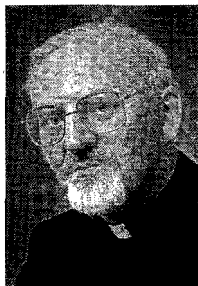
At the beginning of the general congregation, His Holiness, John Paul II himself, gave a direction to the work. Guided by his instructions, we are better able to know how to be more ardent and faithful servants for the mission of Christ in the world today and in the future.

Progressio:

- ◆ **How has co-operation with the laity been defined by the General Congregation?**
- ◆ **Are there new aspects to this cooperation? If so, what are they?**

The ideas that came from the congregation regarding cooperation with the laity are not new. The general congregation simply embraced the orientations given by the council and the synods. But there is a newness in the call that was given loud and clear to translate the words of the Church into acts and attitudes.

Thus all Jesuits are encouraged to place themselves at the service of the full reorganization of the laity's apostolic ministry in the world, in order to bring about the kingdom of God.



It is a matter of a conversion of heart: abandoning the "direction" of the laity in exchange for accompanying them on their specific mission, fully respecting their way of being in and for the Church. Those who understood the role of the director in the Marian Congregations (Sodalities) and of the assistant in the CLC will find here a rather radical change. Not a change in dedication and in competency, but in the way of placing oneself honestly at the service of the laity, offering them what we are and what we have received from Ignatius.

There is a new insistence on an authentic Ignatian partnership between the laity and Jesuits. As the General Congregation explained it: "When we speak of 'our apostolates,' the 'our' has a different meaning because of the greater role given to the laity in these works."

This partnership is no longer seen as a lesser evil accepted to save "our works" when we lack Jesuit personnel, but it is desired, because this fulfillment of the mission of the laity gives more emphasis to the specific grace of our mission as Jesuits.

Rather new, also, was the desire expressed to form an Ignatian apostolic network. In the Ignatian spirit of gratuity and of respect for the liberty of the other, the Society does not have a history of forming associations that were exclusively "Jesuit."

There was neither a third order, nor a copyright for the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises. Non-Jesuits were directors in the congregations and in the Apostolate of Prayer, as well as assistants for the CLC. Nevertheless, many religious families and lay movements live the Ignatian spirituality.

At a time when the Spirit propels us towards unity as the Church of the Lord, is it not necessary to go beyond an exaggerated respect for the vocation of the other, encouraging better personal and spiritual support among persons and groups who share a common spirituality and a common apostolic motivation?

It is not the spirit of Ignatius to assemble millions of people, formed by education or by the spirituality of St. Ignatius, into a Jesuit multinational. His spirit is rather to favor unity and sharing in an Ignatian apostolic network to bring about better apostolic communications and better spiritual support.

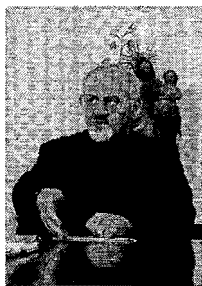
Progressio:

♦ **What message does the G.C. have specifically for the CLC, as a lay association sharing the same spirituality?**

The CLC has a privileged place in the decree on co-operation with the laity. The passage emphasizes that the source of this privileged place is the Spiritual Exercises.

In his message of April 8th, the Holy Father, mentioning his appreciation for the work of the General Congregation, underlined the importance of the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises. This school of discernment must lead to the personal and communitarian apostolic commitment of all CLC members.

It also is meant to be "the servant of the mission of Christ" as we reach the end of a millennia; therefore, it is called to discover its specific mission, its personal and communitarian contribution to the apostolic



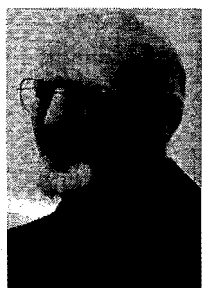
challenges that John Paul II traced out in preparation for the year 2000. What part should we take in announcing Christ who is the life of the world, and in denouncing the Anti-Christ who seeds death?

How do we come to the assistance of the newly poor and miserable far and near? Or how can we reconcile our separated brothers and sisters in Christ who want to meet believers from many other religions so that the second millennia of vast divisions and of wars will be followed by a third millennia of peace and union in Christ.

Here are some apostolic challenges from the general congregation that can animate the CLC as it journeys towards the jubilee year.

Progressio:

- ◆ **What should the CLC contribute to help implement the resolutions of the G.C. in these areas?**



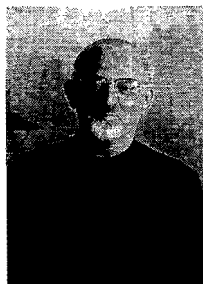
I am sure that the members of CLC will ask their assistants to communicate and share the documents that seek to bring new depths to the Society's mission both now and in the future. This is the best service to render both to CLC and to the Jesuits, as we work for the implementation of the decisions and orientations of the G.C.

Progressio:

- ◆ **In your opinion, what is the main issue in the document concerning women? What will be the practical implications for the Society of Jesus and for the Church as a whole?**

It is rather significant that a certain section of the press reduced the sum of the G.C.'s work to the single subject of woman in the world and in the Church.

The congregation said nothing sensational about the subject, but only expressed the apostolic concern emphasized by John Paul II since the beginning of



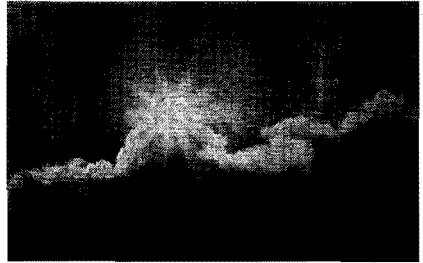
this year of the woman, a concern renewed in his letter to all priests in the world on the role of women in relation to their priestly life.

It is true that the general congregation put the accent on the social dimension of the problem. Bearing witness to the situation of women just about everywhere in the world, the members of the general congregation were less moved by a form of feminism than touched by the socio-political condition of misery and injustice in which women find themselves in many areas.

Also, the Society wanted to use John Paul II's document for the World Day of Peace (January 1, 1995) in its apostolic mission. The practical application is different from one country to another but the common aim is to end discrimination and to fight for the recognition of woman according to the original plan of the Creator and Savior through a relationship of love and respect, of sharing and of complementarity.

We must recognize that there are also Jesuits who have the tendency to ignore the problem. Thus we ask pardon and pray for the grace of conversion. Practical implications graft themselves onto this spiritual attitude, concretized in the pastoral and social needs of the different world cultures.

My Ignatian Pearl



Veronica Villegas, member of the CLC Philippines since 1967, has been Executive Secretary of their National Community for several years. She is now involved full-time in formation. She has taken part in several international CLC gatherings and lived with CLC members in Germany for three years. We are grateful for her very personal testimony and thank the CENTER FOR IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY in the Philippines for allowing us to reprint this article, first published in their magazine *IGTING* no. 7/1994.

A high-paying job, an executive for a husband, a four-bedroom house, a car, two or three children - these were the minimum requirements of the good life I envisioned for myself when I was in third year college. I was bent on chasing that dream and I set my 23rd birthday as the wedding deadline. But during my senior year at St. Scholastica's College, CLC invaded my world and derailed my plans.

It was November, 1967. There was an assembly of College Sodali-

ties where Father Jose Blanco, SJ, was guest speaker. He just came back from Rome where he had attended the General Assembly of the World Federation of the Sodality of Our Lady. He spoke about the return of the Sodality to its Ignatian origins. He introduced the new name of the Sodality - Christian Life Community - and the new CLC General Principles (GP).

I guess the idealist in me swallowed the General Principles, comma, period and all. A few months before graduation, to the dismay of my

classmates and my parents, I decided not to buy the traditional college ring. I could not appease those who ferreted out the reasons for my option. But it didn't bother me. I was happy with the answers to the questions I asked myself: Why waste P60.00 on a ring I wouldn't be wearing all my life? What was a college ring in reference to eternity? What could P60.00 mean to a family subsisting on a daily wage of P12.00? Most important of all, how could spending that much money just for a disposable ring jibe with GP 12b): "Furthermore it demands also simplicity in all aspects of life, in order to follow more closely Christ in His poverty ..."

I suppose that my decision was my first, naive, simplistic attempt to align myself with the spirit of a saint I barely knew at that time - Ignatius of Loyola.

The nascent years of what was to become a lifetime commitment were nurtured by Father Ben Sim, SJ. He encouraged my attendance at CLC meetings. He stood by as I searched in confusion for God's will about something I had been sure of before — my state of life. He suggested that I further explore the CLC way of life by spending a year or two in Germa-

ny with some German CLC members living the CLC vocation as single women in resident community (known as the Leonhardsberg community because they live on Leonhardsberg Street). The idea firmed up into a decision and action. In June 1971 I quit my PAASCU job. Four months later I left for Augsburg, Germany.

My expatriation in beautiful, idyllic Bavaria turned out to be a cannonball experience. But unlike the cannonball that shattered Ignatius' legs in a second, my cannonball unleashed its force on an installment basis. Over a two-year period of sharing life with the Leonhardsberg community, a staggered process of detonation demolished my worldly dreams and reformatted the life orientation I had imbibed during the first two decades of my life.

A twelve-day retreat with Alex Lefrank, SJ, served as the initial blast. The overwhelming grace of that introductory experience of the Spiritual Exercises was the switching on of the consciousness that "God loves me!" That I am called "to praise, reverence and serve God, our Lord" was the revelation that gave impetus to the succeeding months.

As I understood it then, service was a call to CLC. It was not without vagueness but there was enough clarity for me to want to undergo a one-year course that aimed to form CLC multipliers.

The formation program, as its German originators explained, sought "to introduce its participants into so intense a mode of living the CLC way of life that they will be able to effectively transmit its dynamism in their service of groups and in their contact with others." The itinerary of the course paralleled that of the Spiritual Exercises.

Looking back I realize that the entire process had been a sort of 19th annotation retreat with its powerful dynamics gripping its six participants simultaneously as individuals and as a group journeying towards community. As far as I was concerned, the formation course triggered a series of explosions that destabilized further my tenaciously entrenched preference for health, wealth and honor.

A crucial hard hit happened after this course. During my second retreat in Rome with Father Nick Rieman, SJ, I experienced an unsettling confrontation with my sins. At one point, I found myself

envying a fellow retreatant who seemed to soar so high while I was stuck in the dumps. Nonetheless, my retreat ended with a profound sense of being forgiven. A new self-definition emerged: I am a sinner, yet forgiven and unconditionally loved.

The retreat was followed by Rome '73, a ten-day international course for group guides, and then by Augsburg '73, the 6th CLC General Assembly. Both events gifted me with my first contact with the CLC World Community, with "the various persons ...on the surface of the earth, in such variety, in dress as in actions: some white and others black..." (Sp.Ex. 106).

Brushing elbows with people from forty countries, I understood a little bit more the meaning of "how the Lord of all the world chooses so many persons — Apostles, Disciples, etc. — and sends them through all the world..." (Sp.Ex. 145). Another explosion.

A few months after Augsburg '73, I experienced the final, decisive blast in Germany: my thirty-day retreat with Alex. The contemplation of the life of Jesus, from the womb to the tomb and beyond, proved to be the powerful force that dislodged completely the "vi-

sion-mission-goals" of my college years. The amazing grace of getting to know Him, of being moved to love Him and to desire His options brought me to a moment when His choice and mine were one. In silence, in stillness, in transparent clarity, His Word came to me: "Remain single; live the vows of chastity and poverty as a lay woman." At that moment I simply felt content and whole.

Up to this time the memory of that brief shining moment has remained lucid and impervious to doubt. Even during the five-year interim when deliberate error eclipsed the God-presence in my life, the shining never dimmed.

The election made in the retreat led to a quiet, very private ceremony of sealing a covenant with God. With the vows of chastity and poverty, the promise of service to the Church through CLC was fused. It was as a woman, single and single-hearted for the Lord (or so I thought) that I returned to the Philippines in December 1973.

In January, 1974, I started working full-time in CLC. Work in the form of group guiding, CLC promotion and administrative functions in the secretariat became the all-absorbing quest. I devoted my-

self to routine functions as well as to the unpredictable demands of a movement seeking growth, stability and relevance in a country struggling under martial rule. I loved my work immensely especially because I found in it the integration of service to God, Church and country. I poured all my affective energies into it — until another form of loving disrupted the concentration.

An attraction to a man intruded. A maddening compulsion for intimacy surfaced. It seized me and eventually drove me to quit CLC. I junked the covenant "made in Germany" in favor of unholy alliances that led to self-imposed excommunication. For several years I pursued idols which inevitably showed their cracks and chinks. At the end of it all, I hit bottom where self-manuevered death offered itself as the most effective pain-reliever. But in that deep end I struck gold: the faithful, unconditional love of the God of my retreats. This God bailed me out and took me back home.

Home was the German CLC friends who never gave up on me. Home was a San Jose Seminary alumnus who helped me get rehabilitated in particular through the yearly Spiritual Exercises I made

under his guidance. Most of all, home was the Lord who in 1983, during an eight-day retreat, graced me with another brief shining moment. To my question about what to do with my botched life, His response was simply: "Go back to 1973. I haven't changed my Word." I felt content, happy, whole again and utterly unworthy....

Shortly after that retreat, I went back to the CLC community I had deserted in 1977. Without question, the April Fools welcomed me back. Thanks to them, I was able to relearn the principles and practices of the CLC way of life. Three years later, I resigned from my teaching post, declined a job offer from a German firm and returned to CLC full-time work.

Over the years, I have come to regard my job as an alternative career and "to draw profit" has become my goal. While shuttling between formation and administrative functions, I have worked to help make CLC Philippines — community and organization — always available for God's use in drawing persons into initial encounter and then continuing dialogue with Him through Ignatian spirituality. Proclaiming the good news that the Spiritual Exercises

of Ignatius of Loyola are there as a powerful tool for Christian growth, inviting lay men and women, youth and adults to come and see, walking with those who choose to stay and "draw profit" from what their senses will be graced to perceive, waiting with them for the bestowal of the desired profit — these constitute the "burning within" of my job.

I have also realized that the alternative career is a very special privilege. My "business" deals mainly with facilitating spiritual liberation on the individual and community levels. As participant in the process, I have witnessed persons being awakened, transformed and freed for service.

Using the Spiritual Exercises as a strategy for long-range community formation and as a short-term retreat experience, I have seen how value systems are purged of enslaving disorders, reformed and directed toward Christ and His Kingdom. It is awesome to witness, at fingertip proximity, how grace works and succeeds through Ignatius' singular legacy. It is dumbfounding to experience how, despite my "professional" inadequacy and blunders, the desired profit is still gained by the individuals and groups entrusted to me. It is utterly humbling to realize

that my business is actually God's business in which I — though unworthy — have been promoted to being a partner.

Where I am now is a far cry from my college dream. I possess none of what I wanted then but what I have been given is a pearl of great price — the CLC vocation and within it my own unique vocation. This vocation has various elements but I dare say that my partnership with the Lord has been recognized and owned as the integrating factor. Still, quite often my decisions and actions fail to match what has been understood and felt. But what remains is the striving "to love and follow Him more" — a striving that is indispensably sustained by the graces of community and spirituality.

For where would I be without my German CLC friends and my local community — the April Fools? They are the friends with whom I can risk being transparent. They are the co-discerners who help me find God's will and who monitor how His will gets done. They are the companions with whom I am bonded in a mutual and permanent commitment to pray together, love and serve together, grow old together the CLC way.

Another community where my CLC vocation finds nourishment is my family. As daughter, sister, solo-parent to a teenage godson, aunt to nephews and nieces, I get to understand better the nitty gritty of being lay — of being in the world, of seeking and finding a sometimes elusive God in the socio-cultural, economic (and sometimes political) affairs of family with all its demands, problems, annoyances, humdrum, thrills, delights and blessings.

Coming finally to this last paragraph, I realize how much I am indebted to Iñigo de Loyola. It is through him and his Jesuit and non-Jesuit followers that I found my pearl.

It is through his spirit(uality) that I have been changed, resuscitated and sustained on a daily basis in the "good life" I enjoy now. It is through him that I have been graced nonstop to know and understand his God, my God — "Dios, nuestro Señor" — and to labor for his greater glory. What more is there to say except that in my lowliness "He who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is His name."

Towards Beijing & Beyond

The Fourth World Conferences on Women in Beijing, China and
United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul

As we move toward the end of the 20th century, we can look back in amazement at the many areas of progress in the human community. The areas of transportation, communication and medicine stand out foremost in our minds. Despite all of the wonderful progress that has been made, however, there remains in our world the ever-recurring problem of widespread homelessness. In fact, the number of people who have no permanent shelter in our world is increasing rather than decreasing. The proportion of women and girls numbered among the homeless goes far beyond the 50% mark.

As with so many other social problems, it is the women and children who feel this burden

most acutely. For many economic, social and cultural reasons, they are the most vulnerable. These problems will be addressed at the Fourth World Conference on Women that will be held next September in Beijing, China.

Over the past twenty years the status of women throughout the world has changed for the better. However, there is still a long way to go. Nations and governments have to protect women from violence and discrimination. Too many women are still excluded from the basic, universal human rights.

The Preparatory Commission met in New York in March to fix the final agenda for the Septem-

ber meeting in Beijing. CLC was represented by Mrs. Ann Noonan, an alternate World CLC representative at the United Nations in New York. She will also be participating in the conference in Beijing along with Ms. Annie Lam, whom many of you know from our recent World Assembly. They will be our official representatives at the conference.

The Fourth World Conference on Women will be a celebration of what has been accomplished so far and a hope for the future as we move into a new century. Basic to the Judeo-Christian vision of life is the belief that all are made in the image of God, and therefore, are to be treated with dignity and respect. All are God's people; all are to be encouraged to develop themselves and their talents for the greater praise of God and service of one another. May the meeting in Beijing be a large stepping stone toward making this vision a reality.

The connections between the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and a subsequent conference on homelessness in Istanbul, Turkey in June of 1996 seem obvious. Homelessness is not an isolated problem; it is part of a larger picture of inter-

connected and mutually caused social, economic, cultural and political problems.

The UN Conference on Human Settlements will try to address the growing problem of homelessness in our world. Homelessness is a fundamental human problem. Without some place to call home, it is hard for people to be people, to be human, and to live in the unity of the family. Without some place to call home, it is almost impossible for children to grow and be nourished both physically and psychologically. Without some place where an individual and a family can find such basic needs as (physical) security from the elements, privacy, sanitation and running water, how can we expect that there be proper intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual growth? Simone Weil wrote in *The Need for Roots*: "To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul."

Home is so intimately linked to our sense of selfhood and identity that just the memory or thought of home evokes in us a strong sense of belonging. Home is a value-laden symbol for warmth, love, security and identi-

ty. For many, however, the dream of home is in reality a nightmare, a place where death and disease are constant companions, where violence and abuse are part of the daily routine.

As we move into the 21st century, the problem of homelessness has become more and more centered in large urban areas. Almost a quarter of the world's population is inadequately housed. The World Health Organization estimates that 1.2 billion people in developing countries do not have access to clean drinking water and 1.8 billion people live without access to adequate sanitation. More than 100 million people are absolutely homeless! Most of these live in developing countries. However, a walk of several blocks in any large city of the US or Europe will remind us that homelessness is not a problem particular to the Third World.

The Conference on Human Settlements gives us all an opportunity to keep a dream alive - a dream that all people on our planet will have someplace to call home. To make that dream a reality is the task of the nations of the world. It is urgent that the United Nations keep this most basic problem of homelessness

on its agenda. Certainly, despite monumental problems and difficulties, we must look to Istanbul and 1996 with a great deal of hope. Disease, drought, famine and war are the basic causes for most of the homelessness in the world. As we approach the end of the twentieth century, the importance of choosing to live in a more humane world looms larger and larger. Some choices will have to be made; priorities will have to be set by the world community. Let us hope, work and pray that this most basic need for shelter will be high on the list of the agenda. In a world where a human walking on the surface of the moon has become a reality, it is not too much to hope that everywhere on earth people would have a place that they can call "home."

Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J.
WCLC Representative
Un Headquarters, New York

Editor's Note:

The fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing is of great importance. Not only are the universal rights of women at stake but also the issues that were already dealt with at the UN Conference on Population in Cairo and at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. Let us all join in prayer for our representatives in Beijing, and that all NGOs, open to the Lord's spirit, may speak with one voice.

CLC

My Way of Life

Victor Kachaka was elected to the World Executive Council at the World Assembly in Hong Kong last year. He is 30 years old and next to his professional skills is also a musician who is well known on Zambian TV and radio. The songs he composes, plays and sings can be bought on records and tapes. For Victor, this is also a way of proclaiming the good news.



My name is Victor Chivumbu Kachaka from the Republic of Zambia, a large African country (290,000 sq. miles) bordering on Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zaire and Zimbabwe. It has a small population: 9 million people. Fifty percent of the population is Christian and twenty-two percent is Roman Catholic. For this Catholic population of about 2,000,000, only 400 priests and 670 religious sisters are available. Taking into account the vast distances and the quickly growing population, the fact that there is only one priest available for every 5,000 people (in most European countries there is one priest for about every 1,200 people, in India one priest for every 640 people and in Brazil one

priest for every 1,000 people), it makes obvious the importance of having well-formed lay people.

By training and profession I am a lawyer and a theologian. Currently I am working in collaboration with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in a rural area in the western part of Zambia in a village called Lukulu.

Lukulu has 57 "outstations" which are covered by only one priest. These outstations are small churches attended by from one hundred to five hundred members. The parish priest spends most of his time among these outstations; that means moving around a very large territory. He has given me most of the parish centre responsibilities.

My present role involves developing the "small Christian communities" (SCCs) through formation programmes and workshops. The SCCs are a pastoral priority here in Zambia and are basic communities within the larger parish. At the moment I am guiding eight of these communities, meeting with them on a weekly basis. This means at least one SCC meeting each day of the week.

Fortunately I can use a lot of my CLC experience to help the SCCs.

I am really grateful to the Philippine's CLC for sending me a copy of their CLC manual for group coordination and group guidance. This has come in very handy in my work here in Lukulu.

In addition to the work with the SCCs, I also coordinate youth activities ranging from a CLC youth group and a vocations club to sports activities such as football, netball and volleyball.

Furthermore I coordinate formation programmes for those couples about to get married and for those already married but who now want their marriages blessed by the Church. We expect the number of couples planning marriages to increase from the present seven to twenty already registered.

Finally, since April 1995, I will be presenting occasional courses and seminars on the various issues that deal with the contextualisation of Christianity in the African reality.

I am very much looking forward to this since I studied most of these courses with the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies in Nairobi, Kenya, when I was doing theological studies at Tangaza College prior to moving back to Zambia. (I was the only layman preparing

for a theological degree — a good experience!) The courses will include African Theology, African Religions, African Marriage and Family, African Cultures, the Church in Contemporary Africa and so forth.

MY CLC EXPERIENCE

The first time I heard about CLC was in 1982 when I was doing my fourth year in high school. As part of my responsibility as leader of the Catholic community in the school, I was expected to work with all the Catholic youth activities. CLC existed only on paper but I was obliged to revive it! Luckily, the then-CLC National Chaplain, Fr. Dave Norris, SJ, was also our school chaplain at the time. Very quickly, CLC became my special interest.

But it wasn't until two years later, after finishing high school, that I had a real taste of CLC. I gave most of my seven months before entering the University of Zambia to helping coordinate CLC "week-end camping retreats." This gave me a chance to meet CLC members of all ages and also to get to know the various kinds of formation programmes that they were following.

By the time I got to the University, I had "cooked" enough of CLC to be co-opted on to the National Executive Council. I served as Formation Animator for more than four years.

Now CLC has become more than a community for me. It is a way of life. After finishing my theological degree in Nairobi, I made the full Thirty Days of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. This experience remains the high point of my life.

MY ROLE IN EXCO

As in other developing areas of the world, the greatest need in Africa is for the basic necessities of life and the education and formation of the people. Africa has many problems but also a great potential for growth. CLC should play an important role in this growth. Thus, I hope to bring the African experience to the Executive Council and to the World Community.

Being a member of ExCo is very challenging for me. I am still young and afraid but God makes use of my weakness and gives me strength. With the help of God and of my companions in CLC, I am ready to grow.

EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY IN MALTA

On May 25th, our Maltese CLC and the Jesuits of Mount St. Joseph Retreat House warmly welcomed the delegates to the European Assembly, organized by the Euroteam. For the first time in European CLC history all sixteen established European CLC communities participated; Hungary was also present as an observer. Each national community was represented by their President, their Ecclesiastical Assistant and their Euro-link (a CLC member chosen by the national community to be the contact person between European CLCers).

Another first at this meeting was the strong presence of the World ExCo: Jose Maria Riera, Johan Vlogaert, Alberto Gossweiler, Fr Julian Elizalde, S.J. and Roswitha Cooper all participated. Nagati Hani, a young CLC member from Cairo/Egypt, accepted the invitation to take part and added the world dimension to this meeting. The presence of Fr Philip Harnett, S.J., President of the Conference of European Provincials of the Society of Jesus, and Fr Bernard Lestienne S.J., from OCIFE (Catholic European Study and Information Centre) underlined the importance that the Society of Jesus gives to collaboration with the CLC.

The European Assembly gathers every four years, always taking place one year after the World Assembly. Its main purpose is to implement world issues on the continental level and to elect the four members of the Euroteam.

A Eucharistic celebration of the Ascension opened the Assembly; this was followed by a social evening where each National Community shared a specialty of their country. Day two was dedicated to the activity report of the Euroteam and the reports of the National Communities, based on the questions: *"What is the importance of the European CLC in our National Community, now and during the last four years. What was our contribution to the European Community?"* In the afternoon, after a brief input given by Roswitha Cooper, the work was continued in workshops with the questions: *"What are the needs of CLC in Europe in order that it become more dynamic, more visible and more missionary? What guidelines do you propose?"*

Day three began with a talk by Fr Philip Harnett, S.J., who challenged CLC to live their charism as formulated in our General Principle 4

... to respond to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live. Fr Lestienne then gave an introduction to OCIPE asking how OCIPE and CLC can help one another.

In the afternoon the workshops continued, followed by a meeting of the national delegations who were asked to formulate a mandate for the Euroteam that was then elected. The election process and the attempt to formulate a common mandate made it clear that the European CLC Community has been growing in the past four years and now requires more structures. The new Euroteam is Johan Vlogaert, Belgium — link to the World ExCo; Patricia Schweier, Germany — coordinator; Paolo Contu, Italy; Raffaello Müller, Switzerland.

The day ended with a marvellous barbecue prepared by the Maltese CLC members in the garden of the retreat house. The delicious Maltese food plus the songs and dances from the different corners of Europe made us feel once again what a gift it is to share such diversified cultures. Some of us who were old enough to remember the horrors of World War II felt a happy gratefulness that a united Europe is visible and, at the same time, a twinge of pain thinking of the suffering going on in Bosnia and other parts of Europe.

Sunday, the day of departure, was highlighted by the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Frs Harnett and Lestienne. In a few but forcible words, that were at the same time an impressive testimony of his own faith, Fr Harnett summed up what is most important for us in CLC worldwide: "If you simply do what today's Gospel asks - *'that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us,'* - then you will be visible and have an impact in today's world."

FRANCE

On Friday afternoon, June 3rd, more than 350 delegates of CLC France, gathered at the Sacred Heart Church for the National Assembly. The National Chairman, Christian Vandermeeren, declared the Assembly open and the National Secretary, Brigitte Minier, read the report of the last four years. They have been years of growth: over 1000 new members have joined CLC. (There are presently over 4,000 members in the National Community.)

The members of CLC in France are involved in a great variety of apostolic endeavors: they are responsible for the magazine *Vie Chretienne*, for a formation program and, since 1993, for the "Centre St Hugues" in Biviers.

In the evening, a crowd of 1,600 CLCers arrived at the Rameau Palace for the Convention where they were heartily welcomed and given the personal folder with all the information they would need for the weekend. The opening ceremony took place the next morning. The theme of the Convention was *"Sent everywhere, united in the Spirit."* The program included plenary sessions, more than 150 workshop groups (each group having 10 to 12 participants) and around twenty forums (each made up of from 100 to 150 participants). Father Claude Viard, S.J. talked about the Spirit becoming visible in today's world. Other talks described the personal, national and world dimensions of this incarnation of Jesus. Jean-Claude Saily gave an inspiring talk on the laity today.

The liturgical celebrations were an essential part of the Convention. During the celebration on the vigil of Pentecost, more than twenty members made their permanent commitment in the presence of the Bishop, the President of the World CLC, and the World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant. This ceremony was particularly significant: the first part consisted in a common response to the bishop's questions while the second was the promise made by each individual in terms that described their own life situation, making the commitment deeply personal.

The young CLC members made an important contribution to the Convention. The committee "Youth Ile de France" is an essential part of the National Community. They have their own teams of guides, and formation and activity programs. At the Convention, their most creative and significant activity was an artistic presentation of Ignatius in today's world, staged by the youth from various regions of France. Each group put on a sketch in which Ignatius talked with the young people in today's words (even in slang!) in very inspiring spiritual dialogues. The world dimension of CLC-France was made visible by the active presence of José Maria Riera, President of World-CLC, by Patricia Schweier, coordinator of the Euro-Team, of Patrice Prouls, S.J. next Assistant of CLC Canada, of Jean Charlier, S.J. Assistant of CLC Belgium-Walloon, by a young CLC couple from Chile and by Julian Elizalde, S.J., World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant. The leaders of the Convention made a point of emphasizing the world dimension of CLC in important moments.

If the preparation of the Convention and its implementation were a visible proof of the spirit of collaboration, the cleaning of Rameau Convention Hall on Monday was not less impressive. Two hours of working together were enough to transform the huge hall, making it ready for the academic

exam that was to take place there the following day. With the strength of the Spirit that unites us and with the efforts of all concerned, CLC France will make an important contribution to the transformation of this world.

JAPAN

Teiichi Tatsumi, one of our CLC members living in the area of the terrible earthquake that occurred in Kobe and Osaka in January of this year, gave us the comforting news that all our CLC members in the area survived. A CLC member in Kobe, Yasuhiko Hashimoto, is a lay representative of his parish and is now helping to rebuild the church. On the 19th of March a mourning ceremony was held in Ashiya by Bishop Yasuda and many diocesan priests for the victims who died in the earthquake.

KENYA

The newly established national community of Kenya recently held their First National Assembly which went exceedingly well. Their first Executive Council of nine members was elected. The new chairperson is Levi Mateshe whom many of you know from the world assemblies in Guadalajara and Hong Kong. In a letter received by the World Secretariat it was stated: "In addition to setting our direction for the next two years, this assembly enabled members to experience the maturity of many of the members and of the group as a whole in Ignatian spirituality. Most found our way of proceeding by listening, openness and discernment strikingly different from any group they had encountered before. We experienced the sense of identity arising from our three days together as an empowering as we go forth. This has already been manifest in at least two different initiatives in mission." The community has 130 members and is experiencing a steady and healthy growth.

MEXICO

The president of the Mexican community, Carmen Mendiola de Suárez, asks the World Community for their support in prayer. Carmen writes; "Our dear Don Samuel Ruiz has been terribly slandered, accused of causing violence. We see our brothers and sisters with sad faces and so worried. Please encourage us through your support so that we do not feel alone."

VENEZUELA

At the end of May the following good news reached us from Venezuela, telling us that they feel united with CLC throughout the world and that the World Assembly in Hong Kong strengthened their national community. The celebration of the World CLC Day and the anniversary of the death of Bishop Oscar Romero were two moments when they felt particularly united to us in prayer. The following is a summary of their Third National Assembly.

Fifty-one CLC members coming from Barquisimeto, Caracas, Merida and Zulita met for their Third National Assembly in Maracaibo. The general objective of this meeting was to follow-up the World Assembly in Hong Kong and to establish a pastoral, juridical and administrative organization by improving the means of communication among the various CLC groups in the country.

As input for the sharing and for the workshops, different groups gave a presentation which was followed by listening to testimonies of Latin-american and European CLC members which had been recorded in Hong Kong. Rene Cortazar's talk on "World Trends," given in Hong Kong, was read and discussed and used as an orientation in the workshops. The delegates to Hong Kong explained the more important aspects of their participation in the World Assembly.

In a spirit of discernment the assembly drew up some guidelines on the national level, such as to foster the personal and communal involvement of the CLCers in society through pastoral projects with an emphasize on the option for the poor. A formation plan was proposed for a family pastoral, the training of group guides and guides for the Spiritual Exercises as well as theological and socio-political formation. All agreed that more space has to be given to prayer and that a spirit of discernment and prayer is essential in all undertakings.

During the assembly the companions from Huellas Doradas of the Central University of Caracas after their request were fully admitted to the National CLC.

The Assembly ended with the election of a new Executive Council. At the final Eucharist all gratefully recognized that the CLC of Venezuela, which had been divided for so long, is being united into one family by the Lord's Spirit to proclaim the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ.

ZAIRE

The CLC of Zaire feels that a deep commitment is required from them to respond to the call of Christ. On their second *Ignatian Day* which took place last March at Lumumbashi the following resolutions were made.

Besides the apostolate of the family, priority should be given to an apostolic involvement of CLC members in society.

- ◆ To assist prisoners in manifold ways
- ◆ To educate CLC members on basic concepts of human rights and of democracy and to form leaders in CLC who will then be able to teach others.
- ◆ Preparation for the oncoming elections and the organization of prayer vigils.
- ◆ The denunciation of violations against human rights is a courageous objective. A monthly bulletin will be needed to carry out the proposal. Eventually there we also hope to have a radio broadcast for this purpose as well as to carry out the objective by word of mouth.
- ◆ Socio-educative commitment: farming. The farmers suffer from a degrading material and moral situation. Some CLC members, who had worked with some farmers, are proposing to promote the rights and hopes of the farmers to establish a farm as a center of rural development which would include a dispensary and a school. Help is asked from all members whether it be physical or financial aid.

The World Community is asked to support the efforts of our Zairean community with their prayers. Zaire is isolated from the rest of the world because travelling is so difficult and also because of the recent epidemic of Ebola which has prevented many from travelling to the country and put them into even greater isolation.

ZAMBIA

Zambia, too, held their national convention and elected a new president: Mwape Sichilongo, a long-time CLC member and also the executive director of the Wildlife Conservation society of Zambia. Among the national council members is also World ExCo member Victor Kachaka.

