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Tombstone for a pilgrim who died in 1609 on the famous pilgrim's way to Santiago de Compostela in the north of Spain.

... GO FROM YOUR COUNTRY
AND YOUR KINDRED AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE
TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.

Gen. 12,1

The Lord said to Abram: "*Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.*" And Abram went, as the Lord had told him.

This was the beginning of the *Pilgrim People of GOD*. In this command of "go" another voice resounds: "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness*" (John 8,12). Jesus says: "*Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad*" (John 8,56). Has it ever occurred to you how amazing all this is?

There is a *deep longing* in all of us that is expressed in the pilgrim spirit. In a way, this issue of *Progressio* reflects this pilgrim's spirit calling us forward. Our Spanish CLC share their joys, hopes and challenges, as they pilgrimage towards becoming a mature apostolic community. Through Johan's testimony we participate in the life of a CLC couple as they respond to Christ's call in today's world. The report on the IFE in Rome and Father Kolvenbach's address bear witness to the continuous journey of CLC and the Jesuits as we move towards the third millennia. These witnesses are meant to encourage each of us in our own striving to follow Christ.

Does St Paul in his letter to the Philippians also speak for us when he writes: "*Not that I have already... reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own... straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil 3,12-14)?

Another *year of the Lord's favour* is drawing to a close. How could we better thank and praise God than by our availability?

SHOW US THE FATHER



In Progressio 3/95 we published part I of Fr. Juan Ochagavía's talk given at a formation course for group guides last year in Chile. While part I spoke of *the need for a growing sense of God*, part II elaborates on *the love of God the Father* as being the basis for proclaiming the Good News.

THE NEED TO LOVE GOD THE FATHER

At the root of all evangelization there is a profound and intense love for God our Father. I don't say "knowledge" but love. Nor do I simply say "love of God" but "love of God as Father," and when I say "Father" I also mean God as "Mother." Since God transcends the human differences of sex, Scripture attributes both masculine and feminine traits to him. Our modern culture has lost its father. We have lost

our sense of relationship. This causes us to wander about not knowing what is really important: where we came from and where we are going. We are not able to proclaim with conviction and joy that God is our Father, that in God we are all brothers and sisters, that we came from him and are going to him, and that Jesus Christ is the way that leads to him. Yet all these are necessary if we are to restore to the world its lost

identity, if we are to rediscover the strength we need to smile at one another and to reach out to one another. This is the Good News which rekindles the love of truth in our hearts, and permits us to distance ourselves from a consumer-god. This is the Good News which allows us to be filled with hope (Veritatis Splendor, 106-108).

Without faith and the love of God as Father, we have nothing to communicate to others. We find ourselves empty of any exciting news; at the most, our words are good publicity but not Good News.

It is in this love that Jesus begins his evangelical task. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father declares all his love for his Son and this love reaches out to all men and women (Mark 1,11). Because the word was more than just a word, Jesus was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4,14). He goes out to proclaim throughout Galilee: *"The time is at hand and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel"* (Mark 1,14-15).

Jesus speaks in beautiful terms of this Father who loves him and who loves us. For Jesus, the expression "Father in heaven" signifies God's supreme distance from

us and at the same time his maximum intimacy with us. Our Father in heaven causes *"his sun to rise on the unjust as well as on the just and sends down rain to fall on the wicked and the upright alike"* (Matt. 5,45). He cares for the poor, the gentle, those who suffer, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers (Matt. 5,1-10). He especially loves the children and those whose hearts are transparent (Luke 18, 15-17). He feeds the birds of the air and sees the indescribable beauty of the flowers of the field (Matt. 6,26-30). He is attentive to the pleas of his children on earth and fills them with good things (Matt.7,7-11).

For Jesus, the expression "Father in heaven" signifies God's supreme distance from us and at the same time his maximum intimacy with us.

The parables of Jesus are "color photos" of our Father in heaven: generous with everyone, He does not allow himself to be limited by human pettiness (cf. Matt. 20,1-16 - the workers in the vineyard). Even heaven rejoices when the lost sheep is found and when the prodigal son returns (Luke 15, 4-7; 11,32).

Jesus' intimacy with the Father is total and fills him with delight: *"All things have been handed over to me by the Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him"* (Luke 10,21-22). His food is to do the will of the Father who has sent him and to carry out his work (John 4,34). *"Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ."*

The deepest root and the explanatory key of Jesus' public ministry is a passionate love for his Father. In docile love for the Father, Jesus abandons the peace of his home in Nazareth and goes out towards the unknown. Driven by the Holy Spirit who is given him by the Father, He begins to teach and to heal the sick in Galilee (Luke 4,14-15). He calls his disciples, prepares them and sends them out.

For Jesus, the Father is all that one could hope for: a perfect and compassionate God.

It is zeal for his Father's house which moves him to fight the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and to

take up a whip to clean out the Temple. At the end, his filial love for the Father leads him to the Cross and at the hour of his greatest trial He commends his spirit into the hands of his Father. In a word, for Jesus, the Father is all that one could hope for: a perfect and compassionate God (Matt. 5,48 and Luke 6,36).

Jesus Christ is the tangible countenance of the Father. *"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14,9). To see the Father we must see Jesus Christ; we must look at the Father through the eyes, the words and the heart of Jesus Christ. If we do not, we will continue to fabricate distorted or monstrous images of God: "God the good neighbor," "God the good-natured old man," "God the implacable one who penalizes us and metes out punishment," the "magician-God," or the "distant God, guardian of the neo-liberal system."

All this signifies that the proclamation of the Father must be carried out as it is carried out in the Spiritual Exercises — together with and by means of the proclamation and following of Christ in his life and in his relationship with the Father: "to ask for interior knowledge of the Lord, Who for me has become man, that I

may more love and follow him" (Sp. Ex. 104). However, we cannot know Christ or love him without the Holy Spirit, who conforms us to Christ so that we may reach the Father. In other words, evangelization must be Trinitarian or it is not evangelization.

Without developing the point further, it is nonetheless necessary to emphasize that the proclamation of the Father is done in, with and through the Church.

At the end of the 20th century we are called to announce the Good News to people who have put to death God the Father, reducing him to a good-natured old man with a beard who puts his stamp of approval on all our blunders and whims. This old man, whom we ourselves have created, neither convinces us nor satisfies us. We end up by thinking of him only a couple of times a year.

Here we have the first evangelical task: "to recuperate the Father!" It is a matter of living more deeply the first petition of the "Our Father": hallowed be thy name, that is, that God be recognized as the Father of Jesus Christ and as our Father.

If we want to bring this message to others, we must begin by being

converted to the love of the Father. To fall in love with the Father signifies above all to receive his love for us. This comes first and counts more than all our desires and our efforts to love him.

**To fall in love with the
Father signifies above all
to receive his love for us.**

Father Hurtado was in love with the Father, his Lord and Lord of all the other "little lords." He always felt that he was in contact with him. This is how he describes his confidence in God:

"In God I am filled with an almost infinite hope. My anxieties disappear. They are left behind. I abandon myself totally into his hands. I belong to him and he takes care of everything, even of me. My soul finally becomes tranquil and serene once more... all gives way to tranquillity in God, ineffably possessed in the most spiritual part of my being. God, the immovable rock against which all the waves break in vain. God, the perfect brightness that no blemish can soil. God the ultimate conqueror is within me. I reach him in fullness at the end of my love. All my soul is in Him... I am bathed in his light. His

strength penetrates me. He loves me." (A. Lavin, vol. VI 2a. ed., pp. 165-166).

The Exercises show us a thousand ways to cultivate this love by confiding in God as Father. The three colloquies are made "as one friend speaks to another" (Sp.Ex. 54). They always end with a loving conversation with God our Father (Sp.Ex. 63). The "Our Father" always concludes each contemplation (Sp.Ex. 63, 126, 147) and is the favorite theme of the Second Method of prayer (Sp.Ex. 252). The Contemplation to gain love familiarizes us with this Father who showers us with gifts, is always present, and works actively and affectionately in our favour (Sp.Ex. 234-236).

The Exercises tell us that "love ought to be put more in deeds than in words" (Sp.Ex. 230). It is useless to speak much of God the Father if our behavior refutes our words. It is useless to profess that we believe in one sole God and Father, and that we are all brothers and sisters, if we then devour one another in cruel competition.

The paternity of God must impregnate all the actions of our existence, all the threads that make up the social fabric of a humanity

called by God to be an extension of the mystical body of his Son, who died and rose again for our salvation; that is, to lead us to the Father and to fill us with God.

God is also father of the material cosmos, of the earth and the rivers, the birds and the seas, which are his home because he lives in them through his children. Do not forget that the word "ecology" comes from *oikos* meaning "house." All this creation, so beautiful yet treated so badly by us, hopes to be liberated from so much slavery and so much squalor by serving as a worthy dwelling place now and forever, for God with his children (Rom. 8,19-25). I believe that the CLC has no more urgent task than this: to announce God as the Father of Jesus Christ, our Father, the Father of all and of each one. The Father also of the material cosmos, in which our heavenly kingdom is growing and is prefigured.

Conclusion: For our own human, spiritual and apostolic growth, and for that of our community throughout the world it is essential that Jesus Christ's vision of the Father grow in us more and more each day. A community which lives the Good News of the Father radiates life and energy, and consequently will be led to mission.

JESUITS

AND

CLC



THE INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTER IN ROME

The first International Encounter "Jesuits and CLC" took place in Rome from the 11th to the 17th of August, 1995. The 76 participants: 33 Jesuits, 3 diocesan priests, 6 religious sisters, and 34 CLCers, came from 28 different nations. Anni Rickenbacher from our Swiss community shares with us her impression of the event. Our Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ joined us for the opening and presided over the closing Eucharist. The talk he gave on the first day is printed at the end of this report.

The Encounter was an event filled with hope and joy. Isn't it a sign of hope that the Ecclesiastical Assistants, who were at the CLC World Assembly in Hong Kong last year, had asked for such a course? And isn't it a cause for joy that this

English-language encounter in Rome in 1995 will be followed by similar encounters in Egypt (French language) and in Peru (Spanish language) in 1996?

This International Encounter turned out to be an experience of

the World CLC fully alive, and an example of collaboration among members of the Ignatian Family. Ecclesiastical Assistants, who have worked for years with CLC, reflected together with CLCers about their aims, work and experiences. The strengths and weaknesses of CLC in different countries were shared in an atmosphere of listening and led into a search for the MAGIS in today's world. I wish that many more could have received this gift of mutual seeking: all those Jesuits who "somehow" have contact with CLC but never have an opportunity to experience what CLC is really all about, and all those who have worked for years in or with CLC but have little occasion to reflect on their service in the context of the World Community.

Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus and the World Ecclesiastical Assistant for CLC, clearly expressed the emphasis he places on CLC both when he spoke to us on the first morning of the Encounter and when he joined us for the evaluations and the closing Eucharist. Together, he and José Maria Riera, President of the World CLC, answered our questions. Many saw their shar-

ing the podium as a prophetic sign of mutual collaboration.

Jesuits and CLCers expressed the need for collaboration as partners; this does not deny the specific charism of either. In some countries, not only are CLCers invited to participate in Jesuit projects but Jesuits are also invited to participate in CLC work and this is a good experience.

The working paper of the Encounter was entitled: *Criteria for CLC's Way of Life and Mission - An Ignatian Pedagogy for Lay-people*. In this paper, instruments were developed which helped us to look at the reality and experiences in our own countries, focusing on some aspects of the CLC way of life. The participants appreciated the emphasis given to CLC as a vocation to live Ignatian spirituality as lay people. The working groups were divided into two workshops: workshop I dealt with the role of the community in vocational discernment (more for young people beginning with CLC) and workshop II with the role of the community in apostolic discernment (for people already committed to CLC).

During the Encounter, the central role of the Spiritual Exercises

was confirmed. Commitment and mission are rooted in the growing desire of the heart that has experienced God's unconditional love and fidelity in Christ. This deep desire leads us to answer Christ's call and to follow him.

The participants asked explicitly for a more pastoral approach and language in the instruments. There is the need to emphasize the invitation to the process of growth offered by the Spiritual Exercises which leads to a more personal relationship with Christ, while opening us at the same time to the needs of today's world.

Some participants expressed the need for long-term working groups (perhaps in specific fields of service), which unite formation (including the Spiritual Exercises) and mission. The document *Criteria and Instruments* will be revised by an international working group. Next February, the World ExCo will study it, later sending it on to the national communities for experimentation and feedback. It will be important that our CLCers worldwide get involved in reflecting on these working papers so that the next World Assembly '98, can

decide on a final document for the World Community.

In this Encounter we listened to the different needs and hopes of the various countries. The World CLC is journeying on the same path as the Society of Jesus. We share the same vocation of being men and women for others.

Our being rooted in God and constantly receiving abundant life from him found its expression in the Eucharist, each day celebrated in a different cultural context. What an experience of the richness of the universal Church!

CLCers are fully alive! They open themselves to receive Christ's promise of life in abundance and justice for all as it shines forth from the Magnificat. CLCers are invited to become familiar with the CLC way of life in all its fullness, to become more and more a discerning apostolic community. Together with the Society of Jesus, we in the Christian Life Community have reason to thank the Lord for all the graces received and for the continuous challenge of working together, following Christ and serving the Kingdom.

FATHER PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH'S ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ENCOUNTER:

Our way of proceeding as Jesuits is being renewed. Vatican II already introduced new options and orientations. However, it was necessary to bring them to a coherent unity and to integrate them with the Constitutions. This involved many years of work and, in spite of our diversity, there was unanimous agreement that the Ignatian Constitutions should be updated. In this process we saw more clearly the difference between Ignatian spirituality and one of its forms: the Jesuits.

According to the final document of the 34th General Congregation, our way of proceeding as Jesuits includes the following characteristics:

- The spirit of the Spiritual Exercises: a deep personal love for Christ expressed in the question that is always pertinent: "What must I do for Christ, as a servant of Christ's mission?" Not just any response to the needs of men and women of today will do. The initiative must come from the Lord, labouring in people and events,

here and now. So we need an apostolic discernment that reaches out to embrace the larger community of all those with whom we share mission.

- A clear feature of Ignatian Spirituality is the mission to bring the counter-cultural gift of Christ to a world marked by self-centred human fulfilment, marked by the absence of Christ, his message and his values. A group, centred on exclusive sharing and praying without having some type of a missionary outreach, cannot claim to be Ignatian in its spirituality.

- Another feature essential to Ignatian spirituality is solidarity with those most in need. This is in no way an ideological or political feature of our times; from the very beginning, Ignatius' work with groups of lay people embodied a clear and very concrete option for the poor, the marginalized and the voiceless.

- At the very least, CLC shares these features with the Jesuits and with other people and

groups belonging to a — for the moment — quite invisible Ignatian apostolic network.

- Jesuits are an apostolic body of priests in the Church, linked to the Holy Father by a special mission, organized in a specific way, and with a specific way of sharing in everything — material means, for example.

- Another specific feature of Jesuits is their mobility and constant availability for new missions. This presupposes a type of freedom with regard to family and to finances which a committed lay person cannot and should not offer.

When we continue in this way to make clear distinctions between what is typically Ignatian and what are the specific characteristics of the Jesuit way of proceeding, we see that the nature of the link between CLC and the Society of Jesus is slightly modified. We work from a well-defined and clear identity of CLC on the one hand, and a recognized typical Jesuit pattern of behaviour on the other. CLC and the Society of Jesus respect one another in their originality, and yet share a common Ignatian spirituality. Each one has to discover, to foster, and

to deepen this spirituality; and each must learn from the other.

The specific responsibility of a CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant should always be seen within this perspective. He is not called to be an Assistant because he is a representative of the Jesuit order, but rather because of his understanding of Ignatian spirituality; he is asked to make this understanding available to CLC. For a Jesuit, therefore, the link with CLC is something natural; it is in no sense something legal, and it is never one-sided. He must give and he must receive and, above all, he must respect what the Lord is doing for the Church and for the world through His CLC.

It follows, then, that it is never true to say — or even to think! — that CLC is a means by which the Society of Jesus can enter the lay apostolate. CLC is not a tool which will enable the Jesuits to introduce the Society of Jesus into the lay world. Decree 13 of General Congregation 34, in §17, speaks about CLC very clearly: “We pledge ourselves to share Ignatian spirituality with them and to accompany them in their mission.” Therefore the Society commits itself to contribute to the Christian formation of lay

people in Ignatian spirituality and to partnership in a common mission. I am sure that this is a point that you will be discussing during the coming days.

The General Congregation did not simply update Jesuit legislation. It also tried to evaluate our apostolic projects and to discern how we can contribute to the new evangelization as we look toward the third millennium. This was done by means of a genuine discernment carried out in the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises. At the beginning the General Congregation was convinced it should not write new decrees or new documents. The key word was implementation: we have all we need in the field of documents, what we are lacking is to put all this into practice. Yet GC34 produced more than a hundred pages! The reason for this lies in the examen of consciousness which we did at the beginning of the discernment. Looking at the present state of the Society, it was clear that we have some problems which need solutions, that we live with some ambiguities which need clear answers, that we have to be urged to take more seriously certain treasures of the Second Vatican Council: one of these is coopera-

tion with the laity. And yet thirty years ago GC31 spoke about implementing all that was stated in the Vatican Council and urged the promotion of the laity!

In the examen of conscience of at least one Jesuit Province we find this type of confession: *We are suspicious of lay people, we are afraid to lose our control, we have not trained lay people to share our work.* Decree 13 on Cooperation with the Laity in Mission finds its origin in this confession. Even if the decree does not say very much that is new, it was found necessary to urge once again a genuine conversion of heart, because the document describing Jesuit characteristics states: "Partnership and cooperation with others in ministry is not a pragmatic strategy resulting from diminished manpower; it is an essential dimension of the contemporary Jesuit way of proceeding."

To the extent that we develop a wide-ranging network of respectful and productive relationships, we fulfil Christ's priestly prayer "that they may all be one." This cooperation is with lay women and men in the Church, as well as with religious, priests and bishops of the local Church in which they serve, and also with members of

other religions and with all men and women of good will.

SOME COMMENTARY

As it reads the signs of the times, GC34 is grateful to see the promotion of the laity in the Church assume dimensions that may seem unexpected: it believes that the Church in the third millennium will be called "the Church of the laity." Jesuits are urged to consider this as a grace of our day, not only on the world level but also within the Society. Growing cooperation with lay people has enriched what we do in our apostolic works; partnership with others has transformed the ways in which we carry them out. The future of many works started by Jesuits and called "Jesuit" will depend largely on an expansion within them of lay apostolic leadership.

GC34 urges Jesuits to pledge themselves actively to assist this development, not simply to support it with a greater or lesser amount of good or bad humour. It is good to be a man for others. But now a Jesuit is being asked to be a man for others in the sense that he commits himself to be a man *with* others in a Church which, in spite of all its failures and weaknesses, is itself called to

be a communion in the Holy Spirit. In a world that is so divided, to live out our eucharistic communion must mean an attitude and a readiness to cooperate, to listen and to learn from others, to share our spiritual and apostolic inheritance.

The Society of Jesus places itself at the service of the specific mission of the laity by offering what we are and have received: our spiritual and apostolic inheritance, our educational resources and our friendship. We join with the laity in companionship: serving together, learning from each other and responding to each other's concerns and initiatives, dialoguing with one another on apostolic objectives.

GC34 stresses that this cooperation requires the formation and renewal of all Jesuits. Even if the decree speaks about cooperation, avoiding the word "collaboration" and, for linguistic reasons, "partnership," it gives strong emphasis to co-responsibility in Jesuit works, to commitment in discernment and participation in common decision-making.

Reading the signs of the times, GC34 foresaw the growth of various movements in the Church such as charismatic and neo-cate-

chumenal groups, Focolari and San Egidio, as well as the thousands and thousands of other communities and movements that in different parts of the world today are expressions of the vitality of the Church, where the faithful feel that they are Church in a concrete way, that they form a communion in the Spirit.

GC34 does not speak explicitly about collaboration with all these movements. It treats the question more in general, pointing out that our cooperation with works and organizations not sponsored by the Society can express solidarity with others while learning from them in ways which enrich the Society and the Church. It further stresses the importance of an explicit mission to them by the Society, with clear apostolic objectives. The Congregation does not speak about competition and the tendency toward exclusivity of some movements, elements which do not favour communion in the Church. Nor does it point out that the existence of so many movements will mean that a given movement without a strong identity will not survive.

GC34 concentrates instead on the movements or associations of

Ignatian inspiration. Without meaning to exclude other communities or movements with which the Society has very privileged and fruitful links in various countries, the Congregation mentions only CLC, Jesuit Volunteer Programmes, Jesuit Associations of Past Students, and the Apostleship of Prayer. Among these, only CLC is a movement in the strict sense. The Apostleship of Prayer easily reaches forty million people throughout the world, but, rather than a movement, it is a service entrusted to the Society by the Holy Father so that people pray for his intentions. Neither the Past Students nor the Volunteers can be considered to be ecclesial movements.

Therefore, CLC is in an exceptional position. In the name of the whole Society, GC34 sees its growth as something positive, and it encourages Jesuits to study CLC, to come to know it through personal contact and to develop a genuine interest in it. The Congregation speaks of a supportive Jesuit role as the lay association becomes more responsible. This is how the Eccl. Assistant is called to live out more fully our Jesuit identity as men for and with others.



Closing Eucharist: Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ concelebrates with Fr Julian Elizalde SJ and Fr Shane Martin SJ.

CONCLUSION

The Society is aware of its vocation and mission to empower the Church of the laity, shifting the focus of our attention from the exercise of our own direct ministry to the strengthening of lay people in their mission. We can still speak about our apostolates, but "our" will signify a genuine Ignatian partnership of lay people

with Jesuits, each acting according to their own vocation. The existence of so many Ignatian inspired people testifies to the continuing vitality of the Exercises and their power for apostolic animation. We should strengthen the bonds among all these people and groups to develop an Ignatian apostolic network.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY IN SPAIN



- CLC Communities
- ... SJ Provinces

PRESENTATION

Our recent history is filled with intense experiences and calls from God. An extensive field of mission, whose perimeters we cannot envision, opens before us. God's goodness to us makes us optimistic and permits us to face the future with the joy of feeling that He is protecting us. To enable you to share in our experiences and endeavors, we want to relate a bit of our history: the history that is written in books (part 1) and the history that the Spirit has written in our hearts in these preceding years (part 2), to share the future challenges that we foresee (part 3) and a sense of our identity and organization (parts 4,5 and 6). This report was put together by the Executive Council: Alvaro Díaz, Javier San Román, Victor Sanchez, Josep Baquer, M^a Jesús Aguinagalde, and Tomás Gómez, who were elected in our last assembly.

1. OUR HISTORY

The official birth of what was then called the Federation of the Christian Life Communities of Spain took place in the summer of 1983, when the Constituent Assembly was held in Madrid. The first Executive Council was

elected, presided over by José María Riera, now president of the World Community. This birth was preceded by eight years of hard labor during which numerous encounters and formation courses were held. The diversity of each community caused difficulties that were at times heightened by the tensions of the Spanish political situation (1st national meeting, El Escorial 1975). In these difficult years, the World Community gave us much help and support, sending people to teach us the key methodological points of the CLC process.

The World Assembly in Loyola '86 gave the final boost to CLC-Spain. As a result of this and of the Executive Council's work, the Federation experienced a new growth: during the Spanish Assembly held in Avila in 1987, ten new communities joined the Federation. This assembly clarified our CLC identity thus permitting us a more homogenous line of conduct.

The fourth national assembly took place in Loyola in 1991. Our two central themes — mission and commitment — clearly showed the degree of growth and maturation of the CLC-Spain. At that time, we also took the step

of moving from a Federation of Communities into one sole Spanish community. Between 1991 and 1995 our growth continued and we now have 40 communities. CLC-Spain owes a lot to those who dedicated their time and energy to make the community what it is today, but we are grateful above all for the grace of God because it is God who makes us grow.

2. A COMMUNITY GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

In preparation for our last national assembly (Malaga, 1995) our CLC members had prepared a document "*The Mission of CLC-Spain, going where the Spirit leads us*" which then was approved. It reflects the growth of the past years, and shows where we must go in the future. In this growing awareness of the Spirit's guidance, it is important for us to pay particular attention to the fruits of the World Assembly, Hong Kong '94, such as:

◆ In all apostolic discernment, be it personal or communal, the situation of the poor should be the basic guideline for our decisions and evaluations.

◆ Universality and a sense of world community must be the

guidelines on all levels and in all aspects of community life.

◆ We are called to get to the root of the problems that affect our world in order to bring about changes, not merely to give aid.

◆ We want to carry out this work as a well-organized Apostolic community in cooperation with other associations, institutions, and movements.

Looking back over our recent history, we recognize the work of the Spirit in the following areas:

A. Community for Mission

Our role as a community of discernment for mission has been definitively clarified. Our members are becoming more and more aware of their belonging to a world community and of the need to assume responsibilities at all levels (local, national, regional and world).

Our cultural and historical ties to Latin America give us a greater sense of universality, challenge us to move towards concrete actions, and enable us to be a bridge to other European communities.

Our cultural and geographical situation fosters a special sensi-

tivity towards those marginalized by racism, xenophobia and social exclusion. We feel called to socio-political involvement thus it is important to develop greater economic responsibility. To encourage mission, the different areas have to be coordinated so that already existing structures can be utilized, and new structures created where necessary.

B. The Ignatian Charism

We have become more aware of the Ignatian charism as a gift received for serving the Church and the world. It makes us understand more clearly our identity: a personal vocation to be lived in community. Our CLC formation process is based on a deep awareness of this charism. The experience of the exercises of Saint Ignatius leads us to understand the Paschal Mystery: the presence of the *Risen One* in the pain and suffering of our world. We are called to bring this paschal faith into the world so transforming it from within.

For many years a majority of our community was made up of young people who had to find their vocation in life; now as we mature, we have to orient our discernment towards mission.

C. Apostolic Collaboration with the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus and CLC share a common spirituality and therefore, through our specific charism we seek new ways of collaboration and mutual help. After several meetings between the two, we felt called to collaborate in working with youth.

D. Influence the world around us

We feel called to:

- ◆ Fight the causes of poverty and marginalization.
- ◆ Live our mission in our work and study, proclaiming the good news through our lives.
- ◆ Participate more in socio-political life.
- ◆ Live "mission" in the family, the cradle of our faith and of society. We are also called to work for other families, paying attention to all that touches them (preparation courses for marriage, marriage counseling, school for parents, etc.)

E. Sense of the Church

As members of the Church, we want to deepen our commitment to the local churches, and to oth-

er movements and associations, by collaborating and sharing our specific charism as an apostolic lay community.

F. Evangelical Poverty

The need to live a simple lifestyle has led to various initiatives such as solidarity funds which open the way for a community of goods both internally (contributing to the needs of community members) or externally (helping the poorest and the marginalized). We recognize this chosen poverty as an authentic way of transforming inequality and social injustice.

3. FUTURE CHALLENGES

As we said earlier, in these past years we have seen a significant growth both in the number of local communities and of the members of these communities making up CLC-Spain. This development challenges us to a greater commitment in using all our talents to build the Kingdom.

Of course, we cannot judge growth solely by the number of members in CLC but by the quality of our presence as men and women working to reform the structures of society (G.P. 8). As already mentioned, in our last

assembly we emphasized the need to intervene at the level of decision-making. That is where injustice, poverty and marginalization begin. In other words, we have to be present and to commit ourselves more and more in all socio-political areas. We are aware of the risk of this involvement but it is a fact that most Christians, not only members of CLC, spend too much time giving assistance which resolves immediate problems but does not change their causes. We must address the cause of these problems without neglecting to give assistance where needed.

The professional qualifications of many community members can be a particularly useful instrument for this mission. But because of specific difficulties and risks, these must be united to a solid formation as well as to strong support from the communities that commit themselves to these areas.

Since many of us work in different fields of education we have a unique possibility to reach others. To influence the causes of the problems in today's world we should not only educate our own children and the younger members of our community to soli-

clarity and justice but also all those with whom we come in contact.

Another challenge is to open our communities to persons "from all social conditions" (G.P.4). Statistics show that at present our membership includes more persons from the middle or middle-high classes with university or high school studies, highly qualified persons who have all the necessary material resources. We must reach other socio-economic levels, so that we may learn from their experience of faith lived in difficult situations including social marginalization. In the future our evangelical authenticity will be defined by the plurality of our membership. This will probably mean diversifying the background from which our communities come, making our language more understandable and, above all, following Jesus in a more radical way. He was poor and humble, friend of the simple people; his words were understandable and the multitude felt at home with him. We must do this with a profound ecclesial sense, avoiding the temptation to build a parallel Church. We feel deeply called to place our Ignatian charism at the service of the Church, not as a dividing factor causing

separation but as a unifying one. Collaboration with the diocesan Church must grow and we must journey with her, ready to serve where we are called.

The Spanish community has to keep in mind the challenge of acting as a bridge for the rest of the World Community. Our particular sensitivity towards the Latin American countries with whom we share cultural and historic ties has brought about concrete experiences of collaboration as the already mentioned network of solidarity. But we also feel called to proclaim to our wealthy nations, the responsibilities that are ours as so many of our brothers and sisters live in subhuman conditions. We face the challenge of finding an adequate means of collaboration so that working together we can construct a more just society, a Europe more open to the needs of the rest of the planet, and a world more ready to share. This is the principal challenge that leads beyond our frontiers; it promotes in us a strong sense of being members of a World Community. We face these challenges aware of our limitations, but we are united with many other men and women who have discovered their CLC vocation. We have

confidence in the Lord's help and believe that He will use our littleness to show the strength of his Spirit.

4. SOME STATISTICS

As a result of our last Assembly, we are carrying out an ambitious project to gain a better understanding of the situation of our community. An inquiry is being made among all the CLC members, all the communities and all the groups.

In Spain, communities are usually made up of about a hundred people who come together in a pastoral center of the Society of Jesus or in a parish. To live the CLC dynamic, these communities are organized into groups of ten or twelve persons each.

Thus, the inquiry was answered by almost 1,300 persons, 180 groups and 37 of the 40 communities that are presently affiliated, making these results highly dependable. Our basic objective is to come to a greater knowledge of our situation, one that will lead to better apostolic discernment for the future.

As we assess the Spanish CLC, we can say that we are a commu-

nity of relatively young members. One third (32.3%) of our community members fall in the 25 to 29 age group. The comparison men/women reflects the same proportion as in our society (we have a few more women) and, given the average age of our members, 56% are single.

In regard to social class, we are not distributed homogeneously throughout Spanish society. Accepting this is the first step towards a better understanding of what is being asked of us today. We see that 34% of our members are in the upper class, 16% in the middle-upper class, 30% in the middle class, 7% in the lower-middle class and 13% in the lower class.

This gives an accurate indication of our professional occupations. Thus 70% of our workers have a university education. If we compare this to the available data regarding Spanish society, the percentage of skilled workers and executives is much higher among members of CLC than in the rest of society (for example, 16% of our members are in managing while only 2.5% of Spanish workers are in this category). Again we come face to face with our position in society, an impor-

tant factor in our apostolic discernment.

Regarding participation in CLC activities, we discover the importance of the regional coordinating teams which we will speak of later. About 500 persons (40%) have participated in activities promoted by the coordinating teams. But the most important occurrence that has resulted from communication among the various communities is the inter-communitarian Easter celebrations. Almost 700 persons (54%) have participated in each Easter celebration during these past years.

As for the type of mission developing in our communities, the most important quantitatively are those concerned with solidarity. Almost 40% of the members of CLC-Spain have developed some type of mission in the so-called area of solidarity. Nevertheless, our involvement in the socio-political field is still quite small in spite of the type of work and formation that we have in our Spanish society. Only 5% of the members of CLC-Spain are involved in an activity within the socio-political field.

As we mentioned at the beginning, our communities are made

up of many groups that normally come together in a large pastoral center or a parish (usually belonging to the Society of Jesus - 43%). The result is that most of our community members have been prepared by the Society of Jesus (57%). From this we can conceive the importance of CLC's efforts to work with young people and to collaborate with the youth work of the Society of Jesus. As a result, about 25% of our CLC members have dedicated themselves to working as guides or as youth animators.

As is understandable, in spite of the small numbers, the presentation of these results are opening deep areas of reflection, for example, regarding the need to extend CLC to all social levels and making it more accessible to the simple people or referring to the need of fostering our socio-political commitment, or working more in collaboration with the Society of Jesus in areas of youth work, etc.

5. THE RELATIONSHIP CLC-S IN SPAIN

One important aspect in the development of our community has been the structure of our relationship with the Society of

Jesus. The Society has created a secretariat for the CLC in each Jesuit Province as a means of coordinating the Jesuits working as assistants or as guides for CLC communities. It also helps companions who are in communities close to CLC.

To function better, we believe that the head of the secretariat in each Jesuit province should be the same as the assistant of the regional coordinating team. Thus, coordination, effective communication and a common mission are guaranteed in all those aspects which can affect the Jesuit province.

In fact, the assistant of each CLC regional community is also the head of the Jesuit secretariat for CLC in each province. On the other hand, all have been coordinated under the direction of the national assistant, and meet about three times a year, normally in the presence of the Spanish Provincial of the Society of Jesus and the President of CLC.

A formation meeting, attended by the majority of the CLC assistants and guides, is held once a year. The creation of this structure has clearly helped the development of CLC in Spain and is

bringing forth mature fruit from this collaboration between the Society of Jesus and CLC in areas such as the nomination of assistants or collaboration in youth work.

6. THE STRUCTURE OF REGIONAL COORDINATING TEAMS

In these past years, CLC-Spain has seen the need to organize into regional coordinating teams which group together different communities. At the beginning, these groups corresponded geographically to the five Jesuit Provinces. The first originated more than 10 years ago, and just recently another was constituted thus making six in all: **Aragón** (Aragón, Valencia and Baleares), **Bética** (Andalusia and Canarias), **Castilla** which has divided into two: Castilla-Léon and Galicia-Asturias, **Loyola** (Pais Vasco and Navarra), **Tarraconense** (Cataluña) and **Toledo** (Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, Madrid and Murcia).

In the last assembly of CLC-Spain, which we already mentioned, the future of the coordinating teams was considered. We recognized the need for development, and agreed on the importance of increasing contacts be-

tween coordinators and the executive committee.

In general, the coordinating teams have helped members of the different communities to know one another through various meetings, intercommunitarian Easter celebrations, and formation courses. This has enabled certain communities to break out of their self-centeredness, and to acquire a better sense of the universality which is proper to CLC. They have also improved collaboration with the Society of Jesus by agreeing to be valid spokespersons for CLC in those works carried out jointly in each province, or in the nomination of assistants.

The coordinating team organizes

follow-ups and a more direct and closer accompaniment of the communities acting at times as mediator with the Executive Council. In addition it helps them to reflect on and to ponder subjects of interest, favoring collaboration among the different communities.

In the future we still have to mature in this territorial organization, however the development of the coordinating teams will mean a development in networks and apostolic teams with a view to mission. The type of structure will have to change according to the type of mission (be it social or political, diocesan or collaboration with the Society of Jesus) and those whom it involves.



Monique and Johan Vlogaert and their children Elisabeth, Matthijs and Helena

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN TODAY'S WORLD

My CLC history began in 1978, a very exciting year for me. Not only did I finish my law studies at the Catholic University of Leuven and start my professional career at the Brussels bar, but I also met my wife, Monique, who was

studying law and communication sciences at the same university. A friend of hers had told her about a CLC group and she joined the CLC at the university. As our relationship became more and more stable, Monique invited me to her CLC community. Since

then we have continued to be members of the same community made up of three married couples with children, a divorced man, a sister and a Jesuit priest. In 1980, we were married by our ecclesiastical assistant as a CLC choir accompanied us in song. We have been blessed with three lovely children: Elisabeth, 12; Matthijs, 11; and Helena, 9.

Our CLC community became more and more important as time went on. It seemed to grow together with our family: CLCers were present when we married and when our three children were baptized. A teacher from our CLC community took care of our children each day when school was out. Often we spent summer holidays with other members of the community. In fact, the support of CLC members was present in every important choice we had to make either about our family or our professional lives.

Monique started to work for a political party; since 1985 she has been the official spokeswoman of the actual Belgian Prime Minister. After ten years at the bar, I decided to apply to be a judge at the Brussels Court. In 1987, by a Royal Decree which was recon-

firmed in 1988, I was nominated as an investigating magistrate for criminal cases.

Monique and I regularly face important issues and come up against both human suffering and success. Our community, our experience of the Ignatian tools, and the choices we have had to make all helped us in our discerning and making decisions. At times, the community was the only place where we could speak freely about the important issues in our family or professional life, or about what was going on in society. It was a place where we all had an opportunity to share our personal problems: a sign of the deep confidence among the members.

It was also our community that motivated me to take on a responsibility in our national (Flemish) community. For six years I was vice-president and the Eurolink for the Flemish CLC. This work with Eurolink brought me in contact with the European team and many other CLC members throughout Europe. In 1991, at a regional European assembly, I was elected a member of the European team and for four years was coordinator of this team. One of the important results of our work in

those years was a growth in the awareness among the 17 national communities in Europe, that we are responsible for one another and for the World Community. In fact, we have become more and more a World Community.

In April, 1994, the World ExCo asked me to coordinate the first IFE for Europe which took place in Rome. This meeting added to the process of growth we were already fostering in the European team. But it was, for me, a wonderful introduction to the really world-wide dimension of CLC because it meant working with a planning team composed of people coming from every continent.

Later on that same year I had the good fortune to take part in the World Assembly in Hong Kong, where I was invited in function of my role as Coordinator of the European IFE. There, I was nominated by several communities to be a member of the new World ExCo. With all the formation and experiences that CLC had given me I just could not say "no." My family helped me to accept this mission, having themselves experienced how important CLC can be in everyday life. I was elected as the third counselor of the World ExCo.

During the next four years I will also be the link between the World Community and the European team. Our first ExCo meeting in March 1995 confirmed my belief that the coming years offer us an opportunity to grow more and more towards a real world community. The team is willing and able to discuss and decide different issues with an open mind. For me, this absence of *a priori's* is of the greatest importance. Hopefully, we will also make first steps towards a more visible missionary community.

I pray that in the next few years we may know how to listen to the Lord and follow Him, carrying out the projects He has in mind for us, so that we will be able to define His will for us. As for myself, I pray that I may always be able to find a good balance between my family, my profession, my involvement in CLC and my involvement in other areas of society.

There is an old maxim that says: "if there is an important job to be done, ask a busy person to do it..." I pray this will be true for all of us. I have a dream for CLC: that in the future we may define good criteria for the CLC membership. It is clear that there are

considerable differences in the development of CLC in the various national communities. The time has come to seek greater unity without neglecting to take into consideration the local situations and the differences in cultural and Church practices. But we must agree on what is the essential of our CLC way of life and implement it in all our CLC communities.

This can only happen if we are ready to look critically at our ways and methods. We have to ask whether or not the way we are organized will lead us to our objectives. The World ExCo has already started a working group on structures, reflecting on the question. This could be challenging for the whole community. It will ask each of us to have an open mind and the capacity to listen to the signs of the times.

We also have to seek new ways to finance our community life and be ready for change in this area, too. As the World CLC we have to find efficient ways to communicate with the local communities so that common growth becomes possible. CLC is blessed with

many skillful people in many different areas of society. But too often we only use them in specific, local projects. If we want to have more influence in today's society, all of us should ask how we can offer our talents to the whole of the community. It is easy to look for excuses to avoid this call but a world community can only grow if its members choose to take part in this process in a concrete way. We can only learn through experience, by taking on specific missions in society and in the Church.

We have to continue to journey together. Some of our communities have serious internal difficulties: we must listen carefully to their cries.

Finally, I hope that in the near future our communities will also be able to address the problems of families. Family life is not only the sum of its members, but rather a living community of parents, children and other relatives who can bear witness to the presence of a living Church.

I pray that we may share this dream...

