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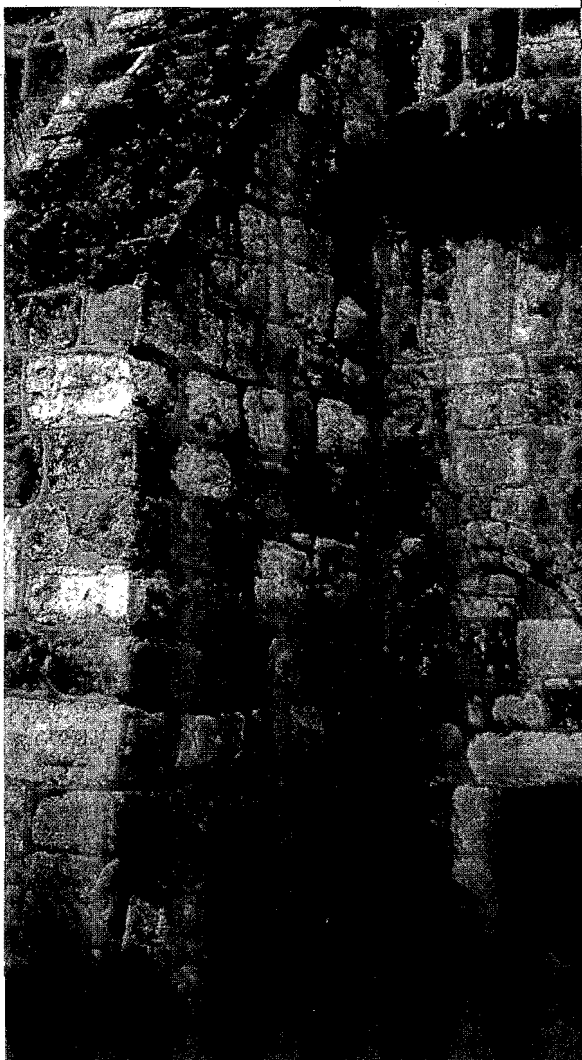
HIS STATE WAS DIVINE,
YET HE DID NOT CLING
TO HIS EQUALITY WITH
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BUT EMPTIED HIMSELF
TO ASSUME THE
CONDITION
OF A SLAVE

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TO THE POINT OF DEATH -
EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS.

BUT GOD RAISED HIM
HIGH
AND GAVE HIM THE NAME
WHICH IS ABOVE ALL
OTHER NAMES
SO THAT ALL BEINGS
IN THE HEAVENS,
ON EARTH AND UNDER
THE EARTH,
SHOULD BEND THE KNEE
AT THE NAME OF JESUS
AND THAT EVERY TONGUE
SHOULD ACCLAIM

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD,
TO THE GLORY OF
GOD THE FATHER.

Phil.2.6-11



Entrance to the birthplace of Jesus Christ in Bethle

EDITORIAL

Children can enter the nativity chapel in Bethlehem without difficulty. Adults, however, need to make themselves small if they want to enter. There is a strong symbolism in this picture. It reminds us of Jesus' words: *... whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it* (Mk 10,15) and *... I thank you father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants ...* (Lk 10,21)

Our Lord and Saviour "...humbled himself and became obedient"
Do we — who are called and sent to finish Christ's mission — fully understand the force and implication of these words ?

Halfway between the last World Assembly in 1994 in Hong Kong and the forthcoming one in 1998 in Brazil, this year's last *Progressio* issue invites you to reflect — personally and in the small, local community — on the above thoughts and our involvement as the Lord's disciples. We hope that this issue will help and encourage you.

Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, reminds us in a concise and profound way of our sources, and challenges us through examples of the Society of Jesus' way to answer the most urgent needs of our time. The short article on page six may help to clarify still existing misunderstandings concerning mission. With the articles of the Hong Kong and French CLCs we have excellent examples of communal discernment and mission. A CLC couple, Bebs and Jody Sim, give us a beautiful witness. Father Henry Volken, SJ, reports on his work for the World CLC in Geneva, and Jose Maria Riera appeals to all of us in the World Community to open our hearts and minds to the suffering people of Africa. Finally, the last word is given to the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, reminding us of the jubilee year 2000 and our mission to proclaim Christ and His saving and healing power.

Let us end this year and begin the new year with an acclamation of our faith through words and through the witness of our deeds:

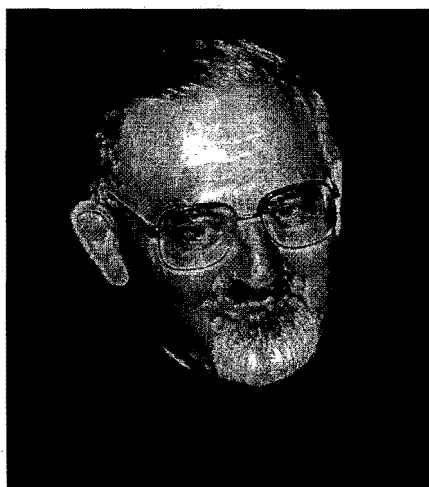
**JESUS CHRIST IS LORD
TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.**

A Word from the World CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant

Almost everywhere in the world we Jesuits are in the process of newly translating and perceiving our Constitutions, drawn up by St Ignatius himself as the rule of life for the Society of Jesus.

St Ignatius had not wanted to produce a merely legislative document, but to set out a path to God to accompany the route of the apostolic body of the Society. Thus, St Ignatius describes how to enter and leave the Society, how to become more fully a member, how to pray together, and how to live and work together.

The Constitutions set out the Jesuit way of proceeding: our way of going forward together in the footsteps of the Lord, and helping all those whom we find on the way to encounter the Creator and Saviour. This spiritual text was written in the sixteenth century,



Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ

since when many things have changed, both in the Church and in the world.

After long years of preparation, the recent General Congregation took up the complex and delicate task of bringing the Constitutions up-to-date whilst at the same time retaining their essential spirit.

In a series of notes the General Congregation pointed out those things which are no longer applicable today and those which have to be approached in a different way. For example, the beautiful chapter which St Ignatius devoted to schools and colleges had become impracticable, because Ignatius was writing at a time when the Jesuits could not only provide free education but also decide what would be taught.

It is not enough, however, for us simply to change the existing text. Since the time of St Ignatius, the Society has received new calls and missions. These vital issues and challenges, particularly those of post-conciliar times, have been added to the Constitutions as norms. These new norms are the fruits of creative faithfulness to the Spirit. In these norms can be found dialogue with the great religions and ecumenism, the care for inculturation of the gospel, the promotion of justice, the demands of living, generously and without ambiguity, a celibate life for the Kingdom. Here also is evidence of the intensifying partnership with lay people in the same mission and inspired by the same Spirit.

All that the Spirit asks of us through the Second Vatican Council, and all that Pope John-Paul II hopes for in a renewal of evangelisation, can be read in these additional norms to the Constitutions. They also echo the apostolic priorities of the last four General Congregations and their decrees.

All this work is neither more nor less than the fruit of an election based on the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises. For it is well known that the Spiritual Exercises prepare us for a personal relationship with the Lord in order to receive our vocation and mission - priestly, lay or religious, - from Him. The response to the call of the Eternal King is not just a word - says St Ignatius, - to be genuine it must be an actual life choice. The path set out by St Ignatius in the Constitutions is one among others, just like the choices made by the CLC as community and by individual members.

It is the Master of the Exercises himself who prompts the CLC and the Society of Jesus to make definitive choices, inspired by contemplation of the choices the Lord made in 'the mysteries of His life.'

MISSION . . .

IS TO DISCERN AND FULFIL THE LORD'S WILL

THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD
WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH
AND RISE UP ON WINGS,
LIKE EAGLES.

Few subjects are so successful in generating passion at a CLC gathering as mission. Mention it and immediately one is aware of a mixture of enthusiasm, threat, guilt and weariness in the assembly. It has something to do with balancing our hallmarks, our charism of Community, Spirituality and Mission. Community seems fairly straightforward but there appears to be a tension about how much weight we give to the other two.

Is it, I wonder, about an image of a God who is constantly making demands which we can not meet? Is it that, in spite of all assurances to the contrary, we still feel that we need to earn God's love? Do we believe that, in order to justify our existence, we should be rushing around doing great deeds for God? May be there is a sense that, if we actually enjoy those mini-

stries in which we *are* engaged, we ought to be looking for some which we find less palatable!

What can we learn from looking at Jesus? He, more than any other human being, must have known that God was calling him to mission. On earth for about 33 years, he was content to spend 30 of these developing his relationship with His Father. Had I been Jesus I would probably have said that I was doing nothing. Yet we know that even in those years He was saving the world. I, too, when John the Baptist began his work, would have become restless and even jealous. Jesus knew about waiting for God's time. Even when His time did come and He left home to be baptised, he did not rush into His public ministry but spent a further 40 days in intensive prayer in order to discern His Father's will. The mission of Jesus was effective

because He took time to listen to God instead of trying to control His own life.

The pattern continues when Jesus chooses His disciples. He says "Follow me"; "Come with me". He invites them to be His companions. No lengthy job description is given. Even his cryptic "I will make you fishers of people" is suitably vague, and the emphasis is on what He will do for them rather than what He is asking them to do.

Our spirituality is Ignatian and is, therefore, apostolic. We are called to work to establish the reign of God in our world, to follow Jesus in striving to relieve suffering, to bring freedom to those who are downtrodden and to lighten the burden of those who are oppressed.

The 1967 World Assembly committed us to work for the most disadvantaged people in society. We can not follow the Ignatian way without being moved to compassion, as Jesus was, for those who are weak and needy.

So we ask again, why the tension between spirituality and mission? Are not the two indistinguishably intertwined? Our mission, as sta-

ted above, is given to us in broad brush strokes. It is for each of us to supply the details, to flesh out our commissioning.

We need to take time to reflect upon and to recognise where mission is in our lives. It *is* there at the heart of the life of every one of us if we would but name it.

We need to be patient with ourselves and with our Community, first, in the seeming insignificance of what we are doing, and second, in waiting in trust that if God has plans for us, they will be revealed in God's good time.

It was not only Jesus who had to wait for the time to be right. Read the lives of those who founded religious congregations. It is amazing how many of them did not discover until quite late in life what God wanted them to do and for many the period of intense ministry was short. May we in CLC take to heart the words of Isaiah 40:

Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength and rise up on wings, like eagles.

FOCUS, Newsletter of England and Wales CLC, September 1996.



Jeanie and Mark Chuang with their baby Linus

Those of our readers who participated in the big event in Hong Kong two years ago will perhaps remember the smiling faces of Jeanie and Mark. Their son Linus, born nine months after the Assembly (how did they find the time...?!) is a living reminder of the fruitfulness of our Assembly. This gives rise to more general reflection.

We are now halfway between that World Assembly in Hong Kong in 1994 and the appoa-

ching one in Brazil in 1998. Progressio took this as an opportunity to question the Hong Kong CLC about the impact that the common mission of hosting the big event two years ago had on them as a community. First, Ivy Chan, one of the Hong Kong CLC members, shares her reflections with us. Then Father Seán ó Cearbhalláin S.J., the Ecclesiastical Assistant of Hong Kong CLC, gives us a report that speaks for itself.

Here we are Lord

We have heard you calling

As CLCers, we are called to live an apostolic life, always at the service of the Kingdom of God. In Hong Kong, during the annual general assemblies or other gatherings, very often members ask how we as a community can serve people better and spread the good news to others.

A lot of members have been serving in parishes and social services organizations in their personal capacities. For many years, the community has also been providing formation programmes to members so as to assist them to have a better understanding of Ignatian spirituality and to know and actually live out the CLC way of life. Through sharing and meetings, members came to feel that it was time for the CLCers as a community to reach out to people in need.

Offering to host the 94 World General Assembly was the first step taken by us. Before going out to those in need, God first asked us to serve our CLC brothers and sisters from other countries.

During discussion as to whether we should take up the responsibility, naturally different opinions came up. Some were concerned whether the Hong Kong community was capable of hosting the Assembly. The community was small. Most of the members were young and we did not have the experience of organizing a conference.

Earlier World Assemblies were held in seminaries or retreat houses. Probably this made it easier to make the necessary arrangements. This was not the case in Hong Kong. There is no retreat house that could accommodate such a large number of delegates. So we had to look for other possible venues and at the same time we had to keep the budget in mind.

We could foresee that there were a lot of obstacles waiting for us if we accepted the responsibility. After sharing, discussion, and praying, it was felt that this was a call from God and the Hong Kong community should take up the task.

At the preparation stage, there were

times when members differed in opinion. These were tests that we were faced with so that we could be open and respect our brothers and sisters.

There were occasions when there seemed to be problems that could not be solved. We found that we must trust in and rely on God. We always found that when a door was closed, God had already opened another door for us.

With the arrival of the delegates, the climax finally came. I was and still am impressed by the commitment of the members and their generosity. Members worked hard for the World Assembly. Even those members who in the early stages might have had reservations about offering to host the Assembly accepted the community's decision and worked wholeheartedly towards our common goal.

In addition to vigorously preparing for the function, some took leave from work during the Assembly period so as to help in the office. Others who were unable to take leave showed up after work or during the weekend. The student members also played an important part and did whatever they could.

Some delegates said that they found that the Hong Kong CLCers were always smiling. Yes, we smiled

because we were united in the name of God and were grateful for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We were thankful to the Lord that we had a chance to meet so many members from other countries.

The assembly showed us what a world community really meant. Although we did not speak the same language, we could still feel the sense of community and we knew that we were striving for the same goal, to serve God better and to bring Jesus to others in our daily lives.

As I said earlier, hosting the World Assembly was only the first step that God had called us to take.

Soon after the World Assembly the Hong Kong community faced another challenge. Given the small size of the community and the fact that not many people have heard of CLC, it was a big surprise and also something of a shock at first, when we were invited to assume the role of the sponsoring body for a secondary and a primary school. What a great responsibility and a long term commitment for a small community like ours! The work of God, however, is always beyond our imagination, and when we are called and sent into Mission, we grow above our human abilities.

Fr Seán Ó Cearbhalláin SJ, the Hong Kong Ecclesiastical Assistant,

has written the following report on this challenge and how we proceeded:

Scarcely more than three months after the closing of the World Assembly Hong Kong '94, there were the first intimations of a proposal to the CLC in Hong Kong to undertake a new ministry.

Among the many very good Catholic Schools in Hong Kong, two were sponsored by an Irish missionary congregation of sisters, the Missionary Sisters of St Columban, or the Columban Sisters as they are more popularly called. Was there any possibility that the Christian Life Community in Hong Kong would consider accepting responsibility for the sponsorship of a school? The question was first asked informally, and it was more than a year later before a formal proposal was made.

Compelled by reduced numbers of Sisters and by burgeoning opportunities for service in other work, notably with AIDS patients and with the Hospice movement, as well as in the People's Republic of China, the Columban Sisters were rationalizing their commitment to education in their two Secondary Schools in Hong Kong.

In 1994, they had begun to arrange with the Diocese of Hong Kong to take over sponsorship of one of the

schools. On 6 December 1995, the formal request came to the CLC through me, rather in question form: Would it be possible for the CLC to accept responsibility for the ministry of service in sponsoring the second school?

Acceptance of the proposal meant that the CLC in Hong Kong would become the Government approved Sponsoring Body of the schools and hence the legal owners of Marymount Secondary School [MSS]. In both Schools taken together there are almost three thousand children.

The Sisters stressed the need for total confidentiality in the matter. That confidentiality had not been respected in the case of the first school, leading to great unhappiness and displeasure on the part of the teaching staff. The Sisters desired as far as possible to avoid any repetition of such a breach of confidentiality. I promised to do everything possible to make sure the CLC honoured the request for confidentiality.

There were various constraints modifying the proposal.

1. The decision to accept such an innovative and major responsibility would have to be made by a General Assembly of the CLC in Hong Kong. Once the matter went as far as a General Assembly, it would be

more difficult to maintain confidentiality.

2. The time of the formal request was much too close to the General Assembly in January 1996 for the matter to be prepared and discussed there.

3. The current Executive Council would be out of office at the General Assembly 1996, and a new Executive Council would be elected and would need some time to start functioning. In either case it was not immediately feasible to bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Council.

4. The School was founded in 1927 by the Maryknoll Sisters, an American missionary congregation, but, about 18 years ago, the Maryknoll Sisters had been forced by circumstance to transfer responsibility for the school to the Columban sisters. It was feared that a second transfer could have traumatic effects on the school population.

Within these constraints, there began a long process of community discernment on the proposal.

I consulted Eadaoin HUI, who lectures in the Department of Education in the University of Hong Kong and has much CLC experience, and we decided that the best procedure was to get a Preparatory Reflection

Group together to consider the proposal. If this Preparatory Reflection Group felt that the responsibility of sponsorship was beyond the capabilities of the CLC, the matter would rest there.

If this preparatory Reflection Group felt that the CLC could seriously consider accepting this responsibility, and that the Proposal should be brought to the General Assembly of the CLC, then the process to do this would begin.

The members of this Preparatory Reflection Group, drawn from the more senior and experienced local communities, are now known to the delegates to Hong Kong '94: Amy CHAN, Lawyer and Delegate to HK '94, Jennie CHOR, a past Student of MSS, now an Assistant Commissioner of Labour with the Hong Kong Government and Delegate to Loyola '86; Amy LIM, John TAN, and Aloysius TO, three of them teachers and highly involved in the promotion of Ignatian pedagogy or other aspects of education; Eadaoin HUI. As it turned out, almost all have been president or vice-President of the CLC in Hong Kong.

At meeting on 27 December 1995, I put the proposal to this Reflection Group and they shared their reactions, first reflections, and initial questions. They decided the proposal was worth considering further.

They would take three weeks to pray over and reflect on the proposal. They would pay particular attention to the questions that must be raised and answered.

Three weeks later, on 15 January 1996, they met again, and shared their further reflections. It was agreed to set up a meeting with the Columban Sisters, which duly took place on 29 January 1996. A number of questions had been summarized under eight separate headings, and, after informal exchanges, the meeting dealt with these questions.

The feeling on both sides was very positive. The Preparatory Reflection Group felt we should proceed. Practical steps were now taken to bring the proposal to the whole Community through the Executive Council, and to begin the process of conducting the community through a communal discernment.

Each local Community was then briefed on the proposal and its background by members of the Preparatory Reflection Group. They also instructed the communities in the process of making a community discernment.

Through a series of plenary meetings of the CLC in Hong Kong, the matter was discerned, and when further information was needed to forward the process this was done. Just as

there were "heated arguments" at the Fathers' discernment on the founding of the Society, so too in our process there was tension, fear, and doubt. There were late night meetings, long telephone conversations, tears and frustration. The final meeting was on Sunday, 5 May 1996, beginning at 10.00 a.m. and concluding with the Eucharist at 7.00 p.m. In an extraordinary atmosphere of prayer and peace, attention and openness, the Community decided to accept responsibility for the ministry.

The proceedings of all these meetings have been recorded, and we have humorously suggested that no community discernment has been so well documented since that of the first Fathers under Ignatius!

Then there began another series of meetings, with the Government Education Department, the Past Students' Association of the School, and the teachers in both the Primary and the Secondary School, concluding this past week with a Forum for parents interested in learning more about the transfer of responsibility and about the new sponsoring body, the Christian Life Community.

Present at the meeting were the Executive Council and the new Education Committee set up to advance the ministry.

At all these meetings there were, of course, questions from the Government officials, teachers, alumnae, and parents. But in general the atmosphere was always extraordinarily peaceful and reverential on all sides.

The CLC demonstrated its sense of responsibility by maintaining a perfect confidentiality, strongly confirming for the Columban Sisters that they had made a correct choice and decision to approach this community with the proposal.

Formal transfer of responsibility will, we expect, take place around Christmas, before the 70th Anniversary of the School early in 1997.

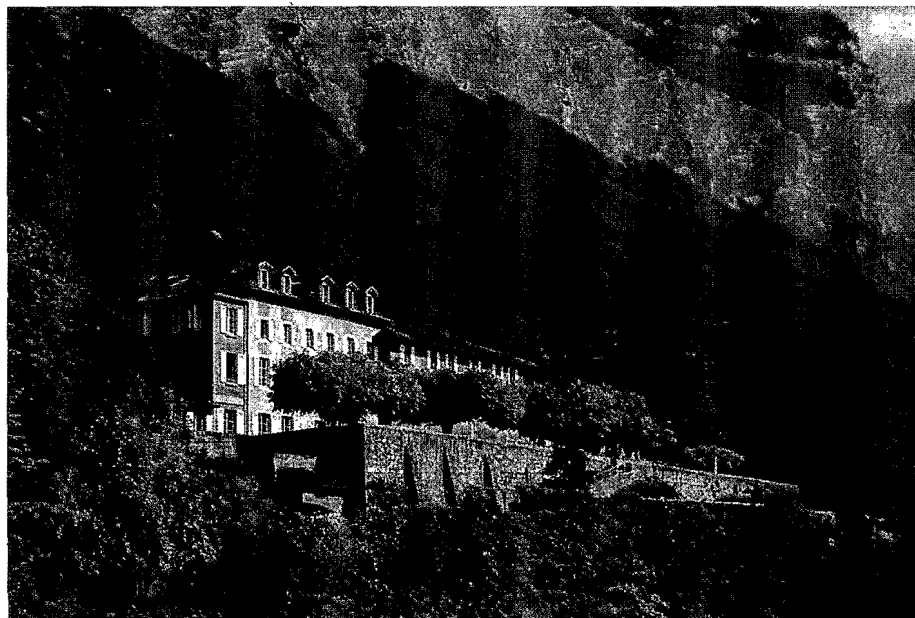
How will the ministry be performed? A major principle is that of reverence: reverence for the traditions of the School, and for the sacrifices and spirituality of the Sisters which have gone into making the School such a fine institution. Unnecessary changes will not be imposed on the School, and changes that come will occur through natural growth, and a fostering of Ignatian pedagogy, which is already a strong element in the School's ethos.

We are convinced that acceptance of this new ministry is a major step forward in the history of the CLC in Hong Kong, and a highly experiential sign of the Lord's favour and grace. It is, in many ways a direct fruit of HK '94, where concern for young people and for formation for mission were so much to the fore.

At the same time, we are convinced that it will offer a prophetic sign for the Church in Hong Kong. Where religious are no longer capable maintaining their works, a committed and formed laity is already in place to accept greater responsibility of the Church. In accepting this ministry, the CLC in Hong Kong, in its own way is making Vatican II come of age. We commend this new ministry and the CLC in Hong Kong to the prayers and love of the World Community.

Christian Life Community
4-L, Wise Mansion
52, Robinson Road
Hong Kong
Fax: 852 2530 1964

CLC France responds to a call



THE SPIRITUAL CENTRE SAINT-HUGUES IN BIVIERS

On 6 May 1996, the National Committee of the French CLC unanimously confirmed a decision, taken three years previously, to assume responsibility for the spiritual centre St-Hugues de Biviers. It was an important stage in the development of something which had

been considered by the French CLC since Pentecost 1990. A review of this period is a welcome opportunity to offer thanks for the genuine spirituality of the proceedings, into which both individuals and groups were involved, for the fruits received, and for the opportunities which are now open to us.

• **genuine spiritual proceeding**

In June 1992, the Vice-Provincial of the Society of Jesus met with those responsible for the national CLC in France and proposed that they take over the spiritual centre St-Hugues de Biviers. Situated near Grenoble, in the Alps, at the foot of the Chartreuse massif, the centre has an exceptional site at an altitude of 550m, looking across to the great Belledonne range which rises to 3,000m. In such a place, the visitor is naturally inclined to contemplation, reflection, and hospitality. The centre can accommodate up to 100 people.

The Society's proposal came as a surprise, but was quickly taken up by the whole Community:

a) at the World level, three meetings (Loyola, Guadalajara, Hong Kong) had called on CLC communities to respond to mission by involving themselves in specific projects (cf. GP 8);

b) at the national level, the Consultative Committee of Pentecost 1990 (which brought over a hundred members to Nantes) and the National Congress at Passy-Buzenval (All Saints, 1991) had worked on the themes: 'A Community called to serve.' and 'Becoming a community on mission'. In Nantes, over 80% of the participants

had indicated that they would be in favour of a common mission for the CLC if a request was received for the CLC to take over responsibility for a retreat house or spiritual centre.

In the French CLC, the publication since 1957 of the monthly review *Vie Chrétienne*, circulated to 10,000 subscribers (90 % of whom are not members of CLC) is already a common mission for the Community, but the number of members involved is inevitably limited. In the case of St-Hugues, the implications for the Community are much greater.

For almost a year, delegates from twenty-two regions met with the National Committee in a long community discernment to decide what response to give to the proposal from the Society of Jesus.

During this time there were on-site meetings with those in positions of responsibility at the centre, volunteers and employees, Jesuits, the Bishop of Grenoble, and members of Grenoble CLC, and a detailed inventory of the financial and technical aspects and the apostolic challenges for both the local CLC and the local Church was drawn up. The discernment of the National Committee was involved with these elements: questions, consultation, exchange of points of view, reflection.

tion, prayer, evaluation, - all undertaken in their own free time in informal discussion or in meetings.

A call for candidates for the post of Director of the Centre St-Hugues sent to all CLC members produced seventeen enquiries and eleven firm applications.

Finally, in October 1993, the National Community decided that the Community would take over the Centre. Nicolas Joanne, 33 years old and father of five children, left Bordeaux for Grenoble to take up the post of Director of the Centre.

It is clear that this experience has been a **turning point** which has given rise to great hope, though not achieved without some reluctance and hesitation. The whole community needs time to thoroughly assimilate this step.

All those with responsibility for the region and the groups had important roles to play, as follows :

- to extend these **genuinely spiritual proceedings** to individual members and to groups;
- to ascertain how each region might develop links with Biviers;
- to receive suggestions and offers of help from individual members;

- to secure the necessary financial support for this common mission (members had been asked to find the equivalent of the annual subscription, spread over three years.)

Even though it was necessary to proceed quickly, it was clear to the National Committee that it was important for members not to react too quickly to a question of this importance, but, rather, to search together for the Spirit of God, who was inviting them to participate.

Great efforts were made to provide information and encourage communication. Not enough attention was paid to preventing misunderstandings, as a result of which a lot of time was wasted bringing things back on an even keel.

At the National Congress in Lille at Pentecost 1995, the 1,500 members present were able to see the faces (and the smiles) of the employees and volunteers involved in the St Hugues venture. There were almost fifty of them to tell those at the Congress of their joy and they were able to win over those members of the Community who were still hesitant about whether the decision was well-founded.

“A decision is often confirmed in its execution. It is there, effectively, that the group can ascertain that each of its members is confirmed in his or her personal vocation and confronted with action at the same time that the group itself is becoming more unified. (J.-C. Dhôtel, suppl. Vie Chrétienne, Discerner ensemble, n° 309 p. 73).

When that election or decision has been made, the person who has made it ought with great diligence to pray before God our Lord, to offer Him that election, and to beg His Divine Majesty to receive and confirm it, provided it is conducive to His greater service and praise. (Spiritual Exercises 183).

Recently, in the course of a review of the whole experience of Biviers since the first National Committee decision of three years ago, and considering what lies before CLC now and in the future, the Enlarged National Committee of 4-5 May 1996 (consisting of newly-elected members) confirmed the decision taken by the previous National Committee. Thus continuity is assured. The same process of discernment was repeated with regard to what will be, from now on, the mission to be managed. It is not a just a question of running a business; but of responding to the needs of the day.’

Discernment in six stages took place over a week-end, in the presence of Roswitha Cooper, Executive Secretary of the World CLC. The six stages were:

- ① plenary session with questions and answers, reflections, clarification of points of view from a dossier submitted to delegates and studied in the regions six weeks previously;
- ② free time for reading in the manner proposed by St Ignatius ‘for making a good and sound election’;
- ③ meeting in small groups to discuss the reasons (for and against) for continuing;
- ④ weighing-up (in groups);
- ⑤ first vote (with interpretation of the voting);
- ⑥ second vote (after the Eucharist), resulting in a unanimous YES.

What a path!

● The fruits harvested

Certainly, a certain number of obstacles have been overcome and results have been obtained:

- at the Centre: reorganisation of activities with an increase (of over 50%) in religious activities on

which the Centre is based, with easier access for a large number of people thanks to a reduction in costs, and, thus, realistic prices.

- for CLC: the implications, for a certain number of people working in the centre, of giving real witness to commitment to service on the same community mission. This new face of the community was received with enthusiasm by the congress at Lille. Equally remarkable is the financial participation of nearly 400 members, who finance this project at a sum equivalent to 50% of annual subscriptions, a new venture on this scale. Finally, we should mention the **European initiatives** of the summer of 1995: why should this not be a centre for the whole of CLC-Europe? European meetings on education and on justice (French) have been planned for August 1997.

- for the Church: the way in which this centre is run by lay people is also an important development. Those who come to the centre remark on this, and say that it is something tangible. Working with the diocese, the Jesuits, the religious and with other lay groups (MCC, MND, Neo-Catechuminate, etc.) is also hopeful: here also people tell us we have something special.

• New perspectives

- a spiritual centre such as Biviers, which can receive 4,000 visitors per year, involves work at three levels:

- **presence** : in order to be truly welcoming and open to the world there must be a resident core community. A permanent team of five CLC members lives in the centre, and is helped by regular part-timers and by volunteers who work when required.

- **organisation of activities** (“animateurs”) : over the last three years, a reservoir of competent and innovative people who can organise sessions and meetings has been built up. The increased commitments to formation, at both national and regional levels, and meetings at the European level, come under this heading, even if, at this stage, the objectives envisaged are greater than Biviers itself.

- **inculturation** : CLC members are, and wish to be, in the world. On the basis of this, Biviers should ‘stick with the world’, with new forms of meetings and proposals which answer the needs and desires of those who should “give ear”, like Yahweh in Horeb (Exodus 3,7).

“ Taking a new path often means encountering resistance, from people and from institutions, and this

is often a test which strengthens the resolve of the group which made the decision. Such resistance does not harden members in a strong recoil, but, on the contrary, strengthens the wish to better understand and explain the motivation and the spiritual pathway which led the group to this decision ... with a new quality to their activities."

(J.-C. Dhôtel, cf. *ibid.* p. 73).

Certainly, in taking a new road, Biviers has renewed the apostolic zeal of the French CLC and its members. Since the beginning of this venture other fields for community apostolate have opened up - taking part in the activities of other centres of spirituality, reflection workshops to better discern what our activities should be in the fields of education, justice and health, relationships at work, assistance to the unemployed, the badly housed, etc.

To help young, non-CLC members, to introduce ourselves to them and direct their activities, the community has joined together with the *Reseau Jeunesse Ignatien* which coordinates numerous activities: retreats, meetings, camps, walks, discussion groups ... and even an Ignatian *soirée*, to be held in Paris on 21 August 1997 at the time of the World Youth Days, at which all young CLC members world-wide will be represented.

Elsewhere, the national team has set up a working group called the *Apostolic Commission* to serve the increasing apostolic activities of the community. This group exercises a role of vigilance, assistance and stimulation in the light of the General Principles and of Hong Kong 1994, as follows:

- by paying attention to what is happening in society and in the Church, to "signs of the times", and making proposals to the National Community;
- by supporting the network of workshops within the National Community, and encouraging exchange between them, and development coherent with other projects and Community life in general;
- by giving clear advice on the national commitments of the Community (Revue, Biviers, Sarlat, etc).

Recently, the group began to work out a project for the Community at St-Hugues de Biviers, under three headings :

① the Church of the Year 2000:

- what responsibility for the laity? what formation? what clergy/lay relationship?
- how to make the Church accessi-

ble to those on the edge of the Church;

– what place for the young?

② discernment for our time:

– a teaching method for discernment in daily life (steps to a decision, review etc.)

– a spiritual teaching method for formation and spiritual guidance;

– discerning the signs of the times (socio-political, economic etc.)

③ how to make an option for the poor a reality

– what changes in approach are called for? - language, living together.

– how to make a welcoming place for those in distress (the sick, immigrants etc.)

All this work, activity, commitment and reflection is part of taking over Biviers and is evidence of a vitality which goes far beyond the decision itself.

“ But where is the will of God sought in our discernment? To localise and materialise the will of God in a human decision would be to appropriate the will of God in a pretence ... we never end the searching,



Dominique Hiesse, President CLC France

through our decisions, disagreements, submissions, everything that leads to the enrichment of life, everything except sin...

It is in fidelity to this seeking that our human decisions are finally confirmed. (cf J.-C. Dhôtel, ibid, p. 76).

The French CLC is truly able to give thanks for this confirmation of its apostolic vocation.

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Finding God in Married Life

25 years of grace



Jody and Bebs Sim with their children Sunshine, April, Dawn and Rain

Jody Sim is President of the CLC in the Philippines and his wife Bebs is National Secretary. This year they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We are grateful for this personal testimony of their life as a CLC couple.

Flashback: a man of 23 and a woman of 22 stand before the altar saying "I do." Two words. Two seemingly simple, uncomplicated words. But for Jody and Bebs, the words meant their life commitment to each other, to God and to a way of life.

We met while attending a Sodality (now CLC) Archdiocesan Meeting for college students. For us, then, CLC meant friendships, seminars, retreats, recollections, rallies, the Impossible Dream. Then when we graduated from school, CLC began to mean apostolate, the Spiritual Exercises, a way of life, a vocation, and helping the poor. We were married in 1971 and began to have a family. The meaning grew more and more: availability, discernment, community, solidarity with the poor, simple life style, family life, mission, struggle against dictatorship.

We have been married for 25 years now and we have not stopped marvelling at God's goodness. As we look back at those years, we cannot help but see and describe them in terms of the spirit we have imbibed and continue to assimilate through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the CLC.

God gave us the sacrament of Marriage that brought us so much

joy in the knowledge that God is our loving Father and Creator. It was not love at first sight for Bebs. But Jody's simplicity, his boundless sense of humour, his deep faith in God, and his love for life, made Bebs take a second look at the man and then fall in love. For Jody, love slipped in while he was not looking. It started with liking Bebs, then wanting to be with her and, finally, not wanting to be without her. To this day we are in awe at how two individuals with completely different backgrounds and cultures, came together to share their lives with each other. Someone must have planned it. And He who planned it is great.

We are blessed with three daughters and a son. The three girls came one after another. Our only son, to our surprise, came after eleven years of caring for and enjoying our third daughter. This came as a pleasant surprise despite the fact that Jody's retirement plan had to be altered drastically and moved back some ten to fifteen years later. Today, this six year old imp of a boy brings so much joy and laughter to the family, but also to our friends. All is gift.

Our married life is not always a bed of roses. There are times when selfishness and pride get to us. A simple quarrel about who between the two of us should

make a phone call can make us unloving for the rest of the day. Sometimes, it takes so much effort on our part to make the first positive step and apologize to each other. It is not surprising then that the problems of the world are so difficult to solve for a lack of owning up to our mistakes and personal sinfulness. Yet God remains a merciful Father and continues to guide us through all these sufferings. The Call of the Kingdom beckons relentlessly. Didn't Christ say there will be trials and sufferings with him but that victory is already ours?

Some years back, Jody was looking for a job after their consultancy firm folded up. A high-paying job was offered to him but the company, known to be exploitive and not one with a Christian conscience, belonged to a crony of the dictatorship. The temptation of wealth, power and prestige was very strong. We prayed for the grace of a discerning heart. It was not without much difficulty that Jody declined the offer. The ways of Christ are not the ways of the world. Not long after that another job opportunity came. This time the company was engaged in a business beneficial to mankind, its culture respected people, especially the family, and it provided Jody, as Personnel Director, with an opportunity to help more peo-

ple in the organization. After praying about it with the family, Jody accepted the job.

As parents, our greatest concern is how to bring up our children as good Christians who have a deep love for God and for their fellow men. We want them to find joy in life and to be aware of their responsibilities as stewards of God's gifts to us. When our daughters were younger, we made sure that they understood why we had to be away for a few hours to attend a CLC meeting, or why we would be gone the whole day to the San Pedro Relocation Area to give a Christian formation program to some couples, or why we would leave them behind for a weekend so we could help in the Discovery Weekend which is an encounter for engaged couples. Now, that they are grown-up, they often tell us that they themselves won't be home as they will be attending various services in which they are involved. When Sunshine, our eldest, told us she would like to be a Jesuit Volunteer, we could only say yes, not only to her but to our Lord who has called her. It was not a yes without tears: how would life be with her so far away from home? Today she is doing her second year of service as a Jesuit Volunteer in Virac, Catanduanes, in the Youth Apostolate of the Diocese. April, our second

daughter, is president of KAISA, an organization at the Aterneo that responds to the needs of disaster victims, like those of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption or typhoons. Dawn, our youngest daughter, is involved in organizing *Luke 18* weekends in the parish of St. Maria della Strada and is strengthening the youth-CLC at Miriam High School. Rain would sometimes come to us and tell us that he would want to share his toys with those children who have none. Perhaps this is the meaning of stewardship and detachment — to do God's will even if it means pain, discomfort and loss — a small way of suffering with Christ in his passion.

As we look back at our years of struggle against poverty in this country, injustice, and lack of freedom, we see that our life would have been meaningless if we did not have a community with which to share our joys and difficulties. We would not have been part of the EDSA (Epiphano de los Santo Avenue) Revolution because of fear and hopelessness. Instead we found . . . "deep faith in God, strength of spirit and the hope of Easter, as we joined the rallies and prayed together with our friends in the Lord.

We thank God for this small com-

munity that sustains us by being our sounding board, and has been our check and balance in almost all these past years. The richness of the graces that we have received in all of our married life we pass on to others by way of guiding young people like

CLC groups of college students and young professionals. We continue to be part of the Christian Life Community, hoping to be faithful in our participation in Christ's mission *to bring the good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, help to the down-trodden and announce the joy of His glorious Resurrection*. With gratitude in our hearts, humbly, we pray :

TAKE, LORD, AND RECEIVE
ALL MY LIBERTY, MY MEMORY, MY
UNDERSTANDING AND
MY ENTIRE WILL,

ALL I HAVE AND CALL MY OWN.
YOU HAVE GIVEN ALL TO ME.

TO YOU LORD, I RETURN IT.
EVERYTHING IS YOURS;
DO WITH IT WHAT YOU WILL.

GIVE ME ONLY YOUR LOVE
AND YOUR GRACE.
THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME.

Collaboration between CLC and JRS in Geneva

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has grown into a very dynamic worldwide movement. In one way or other a good number of CLC members are involved in JRS work in many parts of the world. I would like to give here an account of such collaboration at the international level here in Geneva.

As official representative of the World Christian Life Community (WCLC) at the UN, I am entitled to accredit other people, so that they can participate in UN sessions, for example that of the Commission for Human Rights. On two occasions this has proved to be very helpful for the JRS. Not only did it open a door for JRS persons to UN assembly halls, but it also enabled them to make written and oral interventions under the patronage of the WCLC. This is made easier by the fact that, as Swiss representa-

tive of JRS, I work closely with its international representative Elisabeth Janz.

The first occasion was linked to the JRS international campaign to ban landmines, being an integral part of a wider world-wide campaign. There was a UN Conference in Geneva that dealt with this issue. The JRS brought several victims of mines in Cambodia, in their wheelchairs, so that the official delegates could see for themselves the terrible consequences of the production and sale of this war material. Other men and women of JRS lobbied support among the delegates for a strongly written intervention, prepared jointly by NGOs from various parts of the world. All this greatly influenced the "conversion" of a steadily growing number of individual States, though the consensus and final statement of the Conference - as

stated by the UN General Secretary - was disappointing.

We had the good fortune to have most of the JRS people stay with us at St. Boniface. We spent many happy hours together. The most radiating personalities were the handicapped victims from Cambodia and those who had accompanied them. I like to remember this human face of CLC - JRS collaboration.

The second occasion came at the session of the Sub-Commission of Human Rights, in August. In the name of CLC, an English Jesuit and two Irish women were accredited to the session. All three had worked in Nepal with refugees from Bhutan, and a written statement and an oral intervention were made in their favour. The written statement had been prepared by Elisabeth Janz, who had had to leave Geneva to help in a programme for JRS workers in Kigali, Rwanda. The rest of us, joined by the representative from the Lutheran World Federation, worked together during the session. There was also time to get in touch with friends working in the UNHCR, where JRS is in high esteem.

During the same session another intervention was made. This time in the name of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, on the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. It was presented on behalf of the Special NGO Committee on Development. I happen to be the chairman of this committee, having, in fact, been voted in as representative of the WCLC, as the letterhead of the Committee testifies.

In conclusion I wish to express my appreciation for the valuable support given to me these past years by a small, dynamic CLC group made up of people from Switzerland, Germany and Italy. We meet here in Geneva at regular intervals, and I envisage a time when CLC members will join me, and eventually replace me in Geneva.

Father Henry Volken SJ,
World CLC representative at the
UN
in Geneva

A letter from the World CLC President



Dear friends,

I have been moved to write this open letter to the world community by the desire to unite our voice, one of many within the Church, to those already crying out on account of the dreadful news coming from Africa. These deaths in Africa are deaths which were foreseen by those who have been following what has been going on there. It is a slow death which progressively leads to injustice and increasing violence. This is why we should not be surprised that the fighting and the explosion of tensions, often caused by outside interests in the zone, are each time more difficult to control. All this has come to a head, now, in the Great Lakes region: Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi; moreover, the conflict is capable of spreading slowly and extending to neighbouring countries, affecting the whole of central Africa.

What does this mean for us, members of the living Church and of CLC, helpless witnesses of the pain and the tragedy of the refugees, feeling desperately the deaths of men and women prepared to sacrifice their lives for being at the side of those who suffer. Faced with the Christ who suffered, and, hence, our vocation to serve on mission a world which has need of salvation, I would like to invite you to ask the Lord to let us consider these things in the light of His gaze, everyone knowing that discernment is needed. At the same time I would like to suggest the following points for reflection, which might be helpful.

First of all, there are many reasons for praying: we can pray for those who have been suffering for many years, that in the middle of their hopelessness, they will find the strength not to give up hope, hope being the essence of what it is to be human; we can pray that, despite their psychological damage, they will find enough strength to rebuild their lives; we can pray that deep within them the desire for peace is not dead, and that they aspire to make peace with those who are now their enemies. We ask the Lord to help us, when the media stops reporting what is going on in Africa, not to let us forget. To give us the gift of feeling ourselves bound up with the fate of our brothers and sisters in such a way that neither distance nor silence is a barrier.

We can pray that the governments of the developed world do not forget this continent, and do not leave it to die slowly because they are thinking only of global politics and economic and strategic benefits. We can pray that they will be touched by the suffering of millions of people whose only mistake is not to have been born in countries which they themselves govern.

We can pray that an international conference will be organised on the present situation in the region of the Great Lakes and that there will be decisions which will address the real causes of conflict in Africa, and allow the voices of other interests and refugees to be heard.

At the same time, we recognise that we cannot be the judges of the motivation behind conflicts in Africa, that we are ignorant of the real situation, and that we are often manipulated by the media.

We should show our opposition to a culture of violence and our desire to bring these conflicts to an end in what we do and what we say. We should create a culture of peace in our own lives, with our families, our friends and our colleagues.

Within our own society, we should support all action which strengthens peace and denounce the world arms trade.

We should bring moral support and positive action to all initiatives directed at understanding the real situation in the Great Lakes region, and put pressure on our governments to play a stronger role on behalf of the weakest.

We should support, personally and financially, the requests of the NGOs, understanding that it is not only what needs to be done urgently, but also the long-term development projects which need this support.

Finally, despite the hopelessness, the conflicts, the tension and the violence which dominate in many parts of the world, on the brink of the new millennium we should live our mission with hope, wanting to carry a culture of peace, of dialogue and of reconciliation to all the world.

This is my wish and my prayer.

Yours, in the Lord,
José Maria Riera

With the Church towards the Third Millennium

POPE JOHN PAUL'S ENCYCLICAL LETTER **REDEMPTORIS MISSIO** WAS PUBLISHED ON 7 DECEMBER 1990. IT MARKS THE TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VATICAN II DECREE **AD GENTES**, ON THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH. THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE DOCUMENT IS TO ENCOURAGE AN INTERIOR RENEWAL OF FAITH AND CHRISTIAN LIFE. TOGETHER WITH THE APOSTOLIC LETTER **TERTIO MILLENNIO ADVENIENTE** IT OFFERS EXCELLENT MATERIAL FOR REFLECTION AND INVITES US TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE JUBILEE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH AND THE THIRD MILLENNIUM. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DOCUMENT **REDEMPTORIS MISSIO** (RM):

The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second Millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God: *"If I proclaim the Gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!"* (1 Cor 9:16)

... The Second Vatican Council emphasized the Church's "missionary nature" basing it in a dyna-

mic way on the Trinitarian mission itself. The missionary thrust therefore belongs to the very nature of the Christian life, and is also the inspiration behind ecumenism. (RM 1)

The commitment of the laity to the work of evangelisation is changing ecclesial life, while particular Churches are more willing to meet with the members of other Christian Churches and other religions, and to enter into dialogue and cooperation with them. Above all, there is a new awareness that missionary activity is a matter for all Christians ... (RM 2)

God is opening before the Church the horizons of a huma-

nity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization ... No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty to proclaim Christ to all people (RM 3).

In the modern world there is a tendency to reduce the human being to a horizontal dimension alone. But without openness to the Absolute, what does humankind become? The answer to this question is found in the experiences of every individual, but it is also written in the history of humanity with the blood shed in the name of ideologies or by political regimes which have sought to build a 'new humanity' without God." (RM 8)

The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for the people, and of charity towards the poor, the weak and those who suffer. ... A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed towards integral human development. (RM 42)

Christians and Christian communities are very much a part of the life of their respective nations and

can be a sign of the Gospel in their fidelity to their native land, people and national culture, while always preserving the freedom brought by Christ. (RM 43)

Today, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations.

I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians respond with generosity and holiness to the call and challenges of our time. ... On the eve of the third Millennium the whole Church is invited to live more intensely the mystery of Christ by gradually cooperating in the work of salvation.

The Church does this together with Mary, and following the example of Mary, the Church's Mother and model: Mary is the model of that maternal love which should inspire all who cooperate in the Church's apostolic mission for the rebirth of humanity.

Therefore, strengthened by the presence of Christ, the Church journeys through time towards the consummation of the ages, and goes to meet the Lord who comes. (RM 92)

