



Servants of Christ's Mission



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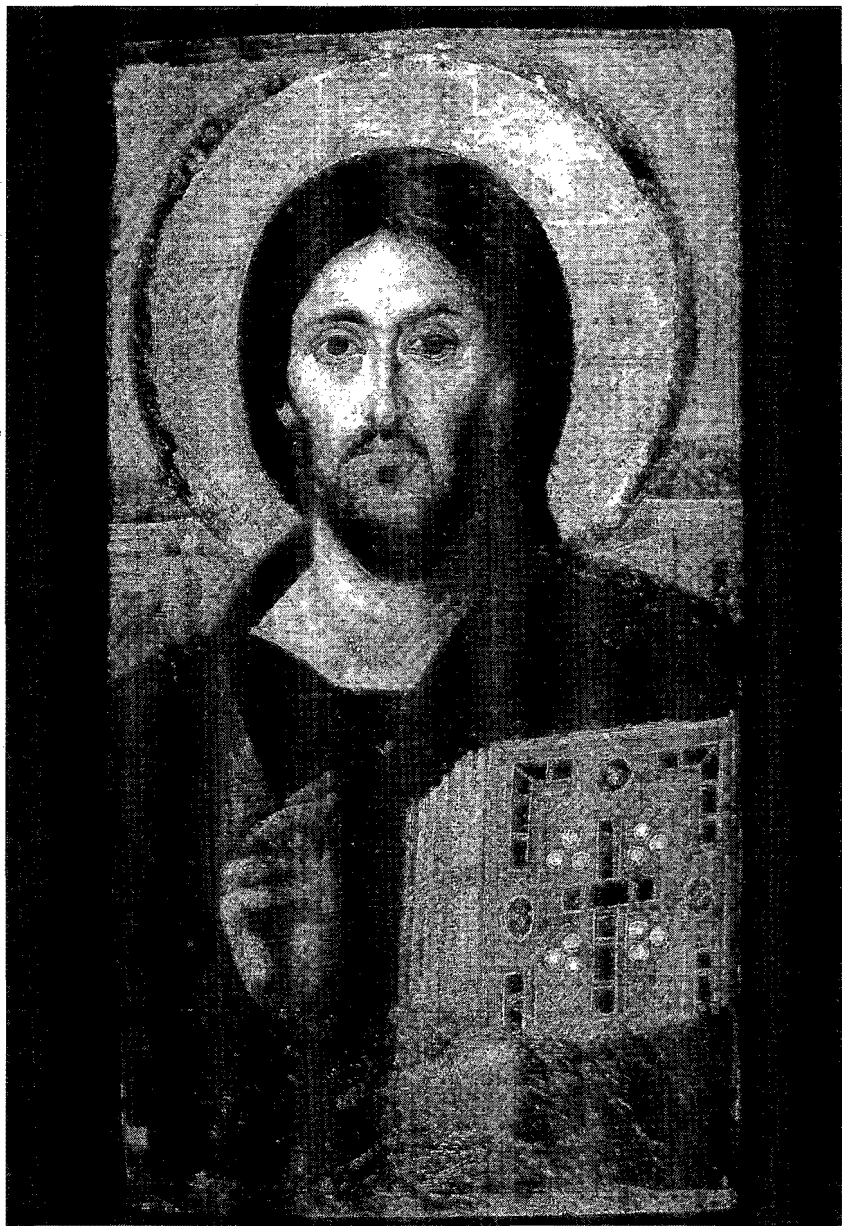
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Ikön, Christ blessing, 7th cent., Monastery St Catherine, Mount Sinai.

Servants of Christ's Mission



Our Community is made up of Christians
of all social conditions who want
to follow Jesus Christ more closely
and work with him for the building of the Kingdom.

We aim to become committed Christians
in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values
within the Church and society which
affect the dignity of the person,
the welfare of the family
and the integrity of creation.

We are particularly aware of the pressing need
to work for justice through a
preferential option for the poor
and a simple life style which expresses
our freedom and solidarity with them.

We assemble people in community
who feel a more urgent need
to unite their human life in all its dimensions
with the fullness of their Christian faith
according to our charism.

We seek to achieve this unity of life
in response to
the call of Christ
from within the world in which we live.

The spirituality of our Community
is centred on Christ
and on participation
in the Paschal Mystery.

From the General Principles

Editorial

Servants of Christ's Mission is the title of a document from the last General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. It is also the title Maria Clara Lucchetti Binghamer has given her report on the Ignatian Apostolic Network. And we, too, are using it as the theme for this double issue of *Progressio*, because it expresses well what CLC is all about. This theme is reflected throughout the articles of this issue.

It will be thirty years this October that the World Federation of the Marian Congregations unanimously approved their first General Principles and decided to change their name to mark the return of the movement to its original, authentic Ignatian source. Basically it has been the rediscovery of the **Spiritual Exercises as our way to live out the Gospel**. It became clear again that the Spiritual Exercises are not only a retreat but that they lead into a process that should inspire all our activities as individuals and as community, and so transform our lives.

This is brought out in the first article '*The Pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises in the Development of CLC*'. The experience of the International Formation Encounter in South Africa deepens the subject and tries to link the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises to the growth process of the individual member and the community. Through the article '*A New Name*' the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises are confirmed, and the impact that the renewal had on a national community and their approach towards formation is clarified. The personal testimony of CLC members, the planned activity of CLC France, and the report on last year's Latin-American meeting complete the picture. Fr Terry Charlton in his article calls CLC the 'discerning people'. With the last article of this issue the Chilean CLC invites us to join them in prayer in their apostolic discernment that is meant to make them better servants of Christ's Mission.

What began thirty years ago will not come to an end because it is like the Spiritual Exercises - once started they are a life process. The Lord's Spirit wants to lead us on so that we may become more and more

Servants of Christ's Mission.

The Creator teaches the Creature

The Pedagogy of Spiritual Exercises In The Development Of CLC



When asked to describe CLC, there is no single definition which will satisfy everybody. For my part, I like to say that it is a community of lay people, "friends in the Lord", who take the life and experience of Ignatius of Loyola as a model for shaping their friendship.

Does this mean that Ignatius lived his relationship with the Lord, and the consequences of that relationship, in a different way from other saints? Indeed it does. Each saint in history is a miracle created by the Spirit of God. Each one is marked by God with a special seal and taught with a different kind of pedagogy. God introduces each individual to His mysteries by a unique method which enables them to bear fruit on behalf of others.

Thus it was with Ignatius of Loyola. A born teacher, he was deeply grateful

to God because He had taught him so many beautiful and fundamental things, that he decided to write everything down in a small book which could provide direction for those who were willing to make a journey similar to his.

This small book - the Spiritual Exercises - is far from being a novel that one reads easily and quickly. But, as many know one way or another, it deals with the steps of a pedagogy that can help us, limited creatures, to fully experience the Creator of our lives and of the world we live in, turning us into new creatures and, with our co-operation, establishing a new creation in the world.

CLCs are communities of people who have been, or who wish to go through this pedagogy, i.e. Ignatius' experience, believing that their lives can undergo radical change.

Sharing this wish and hope creates a new and indestructible friendship between these people turning them into companions of Jesus and of each other. This is the cement of their community life and their apostolic mission in society and in the Church.

The Spiritual Exercises - the experiences by which God Himself taught Ignatius to love Him, and to seek and find His will - are a central and indispensable part of this community experience.

They turn a CLC community into something unique and original, different from other groups in the Church; different from a prayer group or a mission team.

This pedagogy, this process, penetrates the lives of CLCers and, through them the community, and makes CLC what it is as it journeys towards what it must be. The paradigm which is going to give direction to this journey will always be the process lived by Ignatius himself.

The Spiritual Exercises: a personal and community pedagogy

If we can say one thing about the Spiritual Exercises it is that they are a personal pedagogy. It was so from the start with Ignatius of Loyola. In his Autobiography, dictated at the end of his life to Fr Luís Gonçalves de Câmara, Ignatius declares that God Himself taught him "*like a school*

teacher teaches a child" (Autobiography n° 27).

For Ignatius - and for all those who, emulating him, follow in his footsteps - the Exercises were a unique, personal experience which each individual must live through; one that will be different each time.

The one initial requirement is to "let oneself be taught", to let oneself be willing to receive a teaching that comes not from flesh nor blood, but from the Creator who lovingly "teaches" His creatures the most profound mysteries of His loving action and of his being.

It is also true that Ignatius later perceived that he could not keep this divine "teaching" to himself, but that he had to offer it to others. "To help souls" - this is the inner command which Ignatius experienced at the same time as he assimilated the divine teaching. To pass on the same teaching that was so graciously granted to him is what he perceives as the most urgent "help" to be given to souls. It is to initiate in these souls an experience of God, teaching them to do "some spiritual exercises" that will allow them to open themselves to God and to start perceiving God's wishes for them..

To me, this "initiating" function of the Exercises - initiation to spiritual life - refines the sensitivities placing them in harmony with the Holy Spirit. A training for the world of prayer and the motions of the Spirit, they are the heart of the CLC Pre-community stage.

When a group of people meets to learn a special pedagogy and a specific way, they must know the rules and signs to be looked for along the way.

This is how a pre-CLC receives the map of the first steps for going into the Ignatian way of praying, being, and acting. Being still a child, it must learn to let itself be taught by the only One who really knows how to lead us towards unity and mission.

Throughout this pedagogy there are steps into which Pre-CLC groups are initiated that mark their way and that will become part of daily life:

A) Daily prayer:

members of a CLC Pre-community probably come from many different walks of life and many different social backgrounds. They will have different personal histories and different experiences of prayer.

It is now time for them to find the way and the means to make daily prayer, Ignatian prayer a reality in their lives.

Ignatius went through a specific structure for praying which he transmits through his Exercises. This structure has to be taught to a CLCer, at the same time filling it with the diverse ways of praying that can be found in the book of Exercises, plus all those that enrich the Christian tradition. The fundamental structure is as follows:

- Prayer is the way to enter a deeper and more intense dialogue with the Lord. To reach this, one has to **be prepared**. One cannot start by chance; it must be clear that a break is being introduced in the daily routine.

- Prayer is not to repeat a series of words but **to listen**. After careful preparation and entering into prayer, one must listen to what the Lord wants to say, either with the help of a biblical passage, by contemplating the words of a traditional prayer, or by the repetition of a short prayer, the words of which are repeated with the rhythm of breathing.

Listening to the Lord who speaks and communicates may seem obvious, but, on the contrary, it is a tricky apprenticeship. Each CLCer must enter humbly into this difficult training if he or she wants to progress on this way that has been revealed and freely chosen.

- Finally, the prayer must be **examined**. During the time of prayer a lot has happened between the Creator and his creature: consolations, desolations, desires, harmony, rejection.

All this is significant and has a meaning and must be carefully examined. Why? What is the meaning of each of the stirrings of the heart which have been experienced? What does the Lord mean by this? Where does he want to lead me/us?

Repeated every day, all this will start to show up main themes in my life

which, shared with the community, will give both to me and to us as a group, the shape of a community that is learning to pray in the Ignatian way, willing to be taught like a child by his or her school teacher.

B) The examen of conscience

is another important element to learn on this Ignatian journey during the pre-community stage. At the end of the day, we must carefully examine everything that happens during prayer or during times that are not specifically prayer times, but during which we feel God talks to us and moves our hearts.

It is not the classical examination of conscience that some of our generation thought of as simply "looking at our sins". It means, rather, to "see" in God's light how this same God is acting within me.

How did He solicit me during this day? How did I respond to Him? Or did I not respond to Him? What are the aspects that in my view I need to work on and improve in the future?

C) Spiritual counseling

is added to this pedagogic network that starts with daily prayer and daily examen of conscience. Saint Ignatius knows that we are social beings and that human exchange is an indispensable help to seeing more clearly the necessary steps we must take.

At a certain level, this part is played by the community : the faces of our companions reflect the veracity of what has been experienced without illusion or self-deceit.

But there are things we do not incline to nor have the courage to talk about during meetings. There are points that need a "tête à tête" with somebody who is more experienced, an older brother/sister, so that we can open our hearts freely.

Regular spiritual direction should be an important part of this pedagogy which is unquestionably communitarian even when it is strictly personal and intimate.

D) The first experience of the Spiritual Exercises

finds favourable ground in a pre-community thus prepared and trained.

After the first year's journey in daily prayer and examen of conscience, helped by community meetings and frequent spiritual direction, it is time to plan the undertaking of a few short exercises, on weekends, during which pre-CLCers can enjoy silence and longer times for prayer, experience the grace of "being here" just for the Lord, listen to Him, feel His stirrings of the heart, suffer His delays, praise and thank Him .

This time must be the basis on which the community will progress towards deeper and longer experiences of the Spiritual Exercises.

Those who have really taken this time seriously and have had an Ignatian spiritual experience will find the feeling of "wanting more" remaining in them.

The Spiritual Exercises: a pedagogy for those who wish for more

The CLC process is not the same for every community, be it because of the time involved, the length of the stages, the speed of individual progress, etc. This is the experience of us all, both with regard to our own community, and more especially when we are given the grace and the occasion to guide another community.

Then we see clearly that there is no model or shape that fits universally; one must learn to be flexible. Every good pedagogy is about waiting for others, not putting the cart before the horse, letting time (and the Lord of time) do its work. Often this means following a rhythm that we do not understand, with which we are not in tune, and which sometimes makes us impatient.

The meaning of all this is to illustrate just how difficult it is to know precisely when a community is ready to leave the pre-CLC stage to become fully-fledged CLC.

The moment comes when its members are sufficiently prepared to take the step to truly commit themselves to a demanding spirituality and a style of life that will require a series of changes which may

often go against the current of what the world offers.

I dare say that the best indicator of this is desire. Saint Ignatius was very clear that his proposals (first, the Spiritual Exercises, and, later on, the Society of Jesus) were for people able to feel desire. They could be sinners, have their defects, their unfaithfulness and their difficulties. But if they had desire, if they were generous in their desire, they could bear fruit by being taught with this pedagogy.

Thus, a community is ready to go a step further in the pedagogic process of the Spiritual Exercises when its desire for 'more' begins to show itself more clearly and explicitly. How does this manifest itself?

First, the community feels the desire to go deeper in its experience of prayer. The fifteen minutes of daily prayer that were so difficult to find in the beginning, are now insufficient for the majority of members. The stirrings of the heart need to be discerned more often, and the spiritual guide is consulted more regularly. The content of what is worked on is more tangible. The moment of sharing during community meetings becomes more and more a time of the sharing of these stirrings of the heart, and less and less a recitation of unrelated stories.

Furthermore, the relationship with Jesus Christ goes through a new process. Loving Him and desiring to follow Him are becoming more and

more distanced from the first moments of admiration and from a not very clear knowledge of Him. They are transformed into a real disposition to follow the path He walked, following in His footsteps and planning a project that only makes sense within his greater Project for the Kingdom of God.

We feel a new emotion within us: the conviction that the Holy Spirit is shaping us to be like Jesus Christ, whom we love so much and who gives us the strength to follow him with passion. The stirrings of the heart are now starting to be discerned against this new background and there is an increasing desire to have a deeper and longer experience of the Spiritual Exercises, where one can live with and contemplate Jesus in all the moments of His life, His death and His resurrection.

For a community desiring to take the next step in following the Lord, and to assume all the consequences that such a decision implies, this is the time to propose the eight-day Exercises, or even the Exercises in daily life.

At this stage the community might find itself confronted with several difficulties: perhaps not all the members are prepared for such an experience. Some typical difficulties of lay life could appear, such as how to take eight days leave and how to leave the children for such a long time? Or how to meet regularly with a guide to do the Exercises in daily life

when I have such an irregular life that I already find it difficult to find a daily hour to pray and do the Exercises?

Experience shows that although all these difficulties are very real in the lives of lay people, a pedagogy truly filled with Ignatian wisdom will be able to deal with all of them in a patient and satisfactory way. What it will be unable to do, is to make concessions in what is essential, and to call things by false names.

What am I trying to say with all this? It seems to me that an assistant to a community which is at this stage must be firm and clear as well as understanding.

To have had various week-end experiences of the Spiritual Exercises is not the same thing as to have a longer experience of eight days. The one cannot replace the other. St Ignatius is very realistic as far as time is concerned. Even if God is eternal, he acts within time.

Adequate time must be allowed so that the stirrings of the heart can make their way and do their work. It is necessary to wait and suffer, without hearing anything, in order to experience the consolation of enlightenment which comes later; it is necessary to pass through these different moments.

Those who never find a way to do the eight-day Exercises or to undertake seriously the Exercises in daily life,

even if fully justified, will remain at the initiation phase. They will not be able to take that next qualitative step and go further on the way of involvement, of opening up to an apostolic life of activity and service.

A community that does not take this step, which never feels that this moment has arrived, risks always remaining a pre-community. It can never assimilate what the heart of CLC spirituality is about, an assimilation which can only be achieved through truthful and honest experience.

The Spiritual Exercises: a pedagogy for apostles

The maturity of a CLC community is directly proportional to the intensity and seriousness with which its members are living Ignatian spirituality, which comes from the experience of the Exercises. Ignatius' pedagogy does not exempt any individual from this experience. Hence, a CLC community which wants to walk in harmony with its founder cannot be spared it either.

It is true that Ignatian spirituality cannot be assimilated rapidly and easily. After undertaking an eight-day retreat or the Exercises in daily life, an individual or a group of people are not necessarily ready to be permanently involved in CLC or ready to be sent out on apostolic work without having to learn anything more.

The process of settling, of penetration, takes time. Moreover, what really takes time is the leap of quality that occurs when the experience of the Exercises and of living the spirituality transforms the one who from the start was praying to find harmony with the Lord. The baptized person who rediscovers union with Christ in terms of passionate love, rediscovers one self as an apostle, as one sent. He or she discovers that this is their deepest identity as well as that of their community.

Although one is able to see clearly at the beginning, this is going to introduce profound changes in a process that now take on a much clearer shape. Even prayer changes, becoming mainly apostolic prayer.

This does not imply that it had not always been so. But what was before an explicitly contemplative experience of Jesus - feeling His presence through the senses, learning His gestures, letting all subjectivity be shaped by the Holy Spirit - takes on a new dimension of undeniable reality, of an urgent desire to serve, of hearing the urgent cries of every situation and asking oneself, "Lord, what shall I do in this situation? What do you want me/us to do? How can we respond giving Your answer and not our own to these urgent calls that reach our ears and our hearts?"

More and more the community starts to share the apostolic stirrings of the heart that it feels. More and more its desire to serve, and its prayer

become an indissolubly linked to real service to others, the transformation of situations, the growth of the Church, and the mission of the Church itself.

If the experience of love for Jesus Christ, which marks this stage of CLC pedagogy, is the deep desire to follow the poor and humble Christ, the *Christ of the Two Banners*, of the *Three degrees of humility*, it is also a love for Christ that cannot be separated from a new, loving and passionate feeling for the Church that He loves and for which He gave His life.

We feel all the contradictions of this Church, and love her in spite of and because of them. We take on her options and her difficulties, learning when to speak and when not to speak, when it is important for the good of the Church.

We understand the CLC community as being part of a bigger body, of a world community which aims at being an organized body of lay people serving the Church's mission.

All these things shape and seal the life of the mature CLC that is growing steadily towards becoming a community of apostolic discernment. A community that prays as Ignatius did and which lives the mystery of the discernment of Movement of Spirits in the objectivity of the world, of society and of the Church. One that by community sharing and spiritual direction searches diligently in order not to be deaf to the call of the Lord.

It becomes a community that works and offers itself to go with him and to work with him, going through all types of poverty and humiliations which were the mark of His life. A community, which commits itself ever more definitively and deeply but is never satisfied with this commitment and desires more and more, is a community whose members have all the conditions necessary to make the 30-day Exercises. These Exercises are the sign of a pedagogical process which, although a life-long process, has arrived at a moment of special importance.

Let us not be afraid to say that the moment of addressing this question and the concrete possibility of making the experience of the 30-day Spiritual Exercises must arrive for all CLC members and communities. It is unnecessary to ask what St. Ignatius thought of this experience. It is enough to mention the letter he wrote to Fr Manuel Miona, in which he says that the Spiritual Exercises are: "... the best that I could think, feel and understand in this life..." (Epp1, 111-113).

The real difficulties existing for the laity also to make them are evident. However, I learned a long time ago that when we desire something, there is creativity, will power and the capacity to arrange things so that our desire becomes possible. The fact that many lay persons - young and old, married or not, around the world have already had this experience confirms what I have just said. We must

overcome our fears and our prejudices, which take on various connotations and aspects: it is too strong an experience for a lay person. A lay person cannot take so much time away from home and work. A lay person is too busy and, in any case, this experience is not meant for him or her. For whom then if St. Ignatius, a lay person, lived it as taught by the Lord? Were not the first people he gave it to lay persons?

We must not allow the barrier of impossibility - which states that the most exigent experiences of the Church are not for the laity - get into our minds and hearts. There is a whole conception of Church that is behind this which divides this same Church into a contraposition between clergy versus laity. I believe that the successful experiences that brought forth much fruit for so many lay persons who throughout the world have made the 30-day Spiritual Exercises, tell us that there is another way of looking at the Church: considering it a community of baptized persons, whose unique charisms and ministries continue to be raised up and distributed by the Spirit who, thanks be to God, is not limited by Canon Law.

A pedagogy, for CLC communities that want to be sincerely faithful to the spirit of their Founder and adequate for our times, cannot fear being bold and fearless in what it proposes as pedagogical steps. The experience of the 30-day Exercises

surely cannot be lacking in this pedagogical process.

Thus we can continue to form a true world community that is in agreement with the heart of Ignatius and, above all, with Jesus Christ. Thus one will go ahead with a pedagogy that in its turn forms educators: spiritual teachers and shapers of apostles willing to surrender entirely to a mission that is not theirs but that of the Lord and His Church, ready to be multipliers and to form more and more persons who are ready to take the same journey.

This will be a community which does not remain in the mediocrity of small desires but takes the risk of launching out into the deep sea of the experience of union with God in the mission of bringing to all the Good News of His Kingdom.

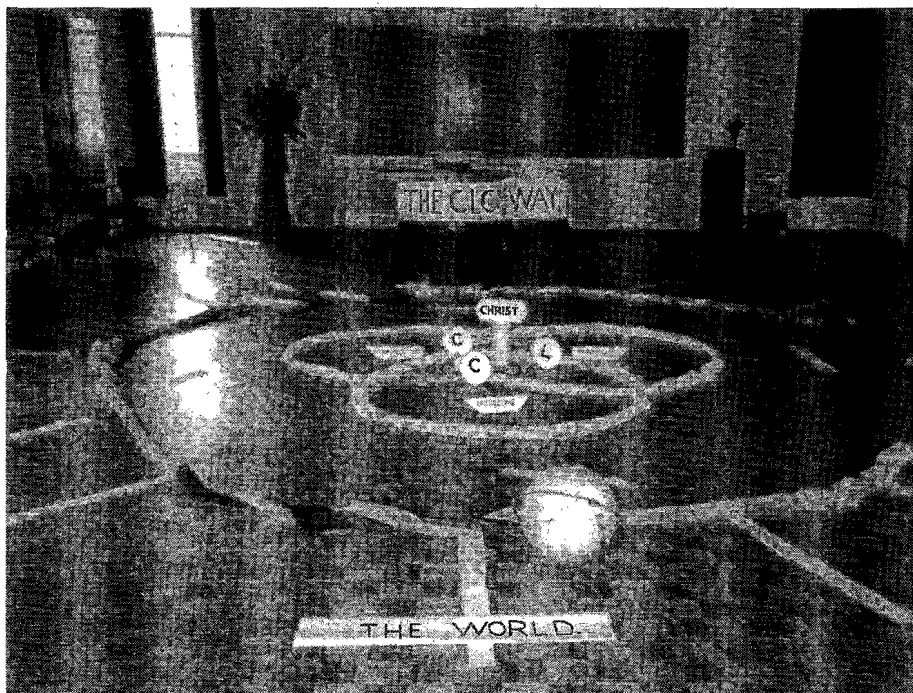


For sharing in the local CLC group:

- ① How do I feel that this pedagogical process bears or is bearing fruit in the progress of my community? At what point of the process is my community?
- ② Is the experience of the 30-days Exercises already a reality in our community? What significant experiences do we have of it? If not, do we believe it is important that we move forward and make it? What can we do about this?

Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2nd International Formation Encounter, 1997 for English speaking CLC in Africa



The symbol in the above photo helped the participants of the IFE to visualize what CLC is called to be : a community in the Church - drawing life and strength from its centre, CHRIST; living the three dimensions of Community, Spirituality and Mission.

Called to bear fruit in the Church and through the Church in the world.

The rays leading from the Church to the world remind us to be **light on the billtop** the **Salt of the Earth**

CLC Mission in Africa

Living our Ignatian Identity

The theme and method of the 2nd International Formation Encounter for English Speaking Africa held 4 - 14 April, 1997, in Johannesburg, South Africa was chosen by the ESA (English Speaking Africa) team as an answer to the most urgent needs of the National Communities in the region.

A number of the African CLCers have had no or little opportunity to make Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Thus the guiding team was confronted with the challenge of making clear, to those who have not yet had the practical experience of the Spiritual Exercises, the dynamics of these Exercises and their intrinsic connection with the CLC growth process. An impossible venture — so it seemed — but the evaluation showed that the Lord's Spirit had made it happen.

The input was simple and based on the personal experience of the person who gave it. After the input, time was given for personal prayer followed by sharing in small groups. Thus the participants learnt from each others experiences, gained a better

understanding of the CLC way of life, the significance of a small group and a new understanding of CLC as an apostolic community. It became clear how **Action** and **Service** are there from the beginning in a group that chooses to grow and how a personal relationship with Christ inevitably leads to **Mission**.



Jill McKay from Cape Town gives us the following report of how she experienced the encounter:

Unique, rich sounds and rhythms of Africa. A gathering of people from different cultures, different languages, united by Christ's love and the CLC way of life. This was the experience of the International Formation Encounter for English-speaking Africa, held at the Mazenod Centre outside Johannesburg, with delegates from Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa. Most of the members were lay people, but there were also a sister from Lesotho, a sister and a South American priest working in

Botswana, a Jesuit novice and three Jesuits, one of whom was a visitor from Ireland.

On the first evening, Bishop Patrick Mvemve, opened our Encounter, expressing his excitement at this gathering of the laity and praying that the effects would be felt throughout Africa.

The guiding team of Roswitha Cooper from Rome, Victor Kachaka from Zambia, Fr. Terry Charlton SJ from Kenya and Veronica Miller from South Africa welcomed us, reminding us that we were part of the World Community.

Roswitha prayed for the opening of our hearts to spread the Good News in Africa, blessed with so much beauty and so many resources, yet stricken by poverty and war. Together we voiced our hopes and fears for the Encounter, praying for the Spirit to be with us. Significantly, the Feast of the Annunciation so central to CLC history, was celebrated during the Encounter. Our Lady watched over us.

For 10 days we prayed, worked, played and praised God together, becoming deeply bonded by our experience. The celebration of the Eucharist each day was wonderful, filled with hymns and dances from different parts of Africa. Spontaneous song and dance became part of our time together.

During this Encounter, there was a particular emphasis on the Spiritual Exercises and their integration into every aspect of our way of life at all stages. Each day, after Prayer and Presence prepared by different countries, we had morning and afternoon sessions of input/orientation, time for silent reflection, time for sharing in small groups and time for evaluation.

There were voluntary evening workshops facilitated by Nellie Zeilinga and Fr. Tom Valiquette SJ, of Johannesburg, as well as two Keynote addresses.

One was a fiery plea, by Dr. Marake of Lesotho, for effective mission in Africa, which is crying out for redemption. The other was by Fr. Terry Charlton SJ, whose talk concluded that CLCers were the "Discernment People". He opened with the story of his father's butcher and the poultry delivery van labeled "McFarland Poultry, the chicken people". With a note of hilarity, we took up the call, "CLC: we are the chicken people"!

Throughout the days to follow, muffled squawks and mutual clucking could be heard. Lesotho CLCers, wrapped in their colorful blankets, as freezing weather descended for a few days, provided further amusement with "we are the Blanket People".

So we spent our days, reflecting on God's love for us in the gladness and sadness of our lives, sharing deeply with one another in small groups. The courage of the people in their unique situations facing suffering and oppression, and the quality of the sharing was significant. The groups stayed constant right until the last days, a mix of people from different countries. They became small communities in themselves, forging bonds of friendship and family.

James Ndere from Zimbabwe presented CLC, a cell of the Church, as the meeting point of three circles: Community, Ignatian Spirituality and Mission.

We received input from different members of the team on these aspects and on commitment to our CLC way of life. We reflected further on Community: a mystery and a gift, part of God's dream for healing the human heart. We experienced the movement through the weeks of the Spiritual Exercises: an ever-deepening spiral of God's love in our lives. We came to understand Mission as part of our way of life, integrated at each stage of our journey by the dynamics of the Exercises.

Our "free" day was very significant, as some visited Soweto, guided by Millicent Madlala, who lives there. We were moved to

tears in the Regina Mundi church, historic place of prayer and protest during the apartheid struggle and at the Hector Pietersen Memorial. Back at the conference, joined by other Johannesburg CLC members, we danced, played games, had a braai and an impromptu concert. Our Johannesburg hosts excelled themselves.

The next day, Bishop Reginald Orsmond from Johannesburg came to say Mass and have lunch with us, encouraging us to respond to Mandela's call to the churches to be the conscience of our government, and continuing with his words the input of the morning session on the Third week of the Spiritual Exercises.

After reflecting on commitment to CLC and on Plans for the 1998 World Assembly, we ended our time together in groups from our own countries to set goals for giving back what we had received.

I write as a delegate to the Encounter, filled with gratitude for God's mysterious love, working with our guiding team and amongst the delegates, gifting us with this special experience of CLC, particularly African, yet international. Please join us in praying that this Encounter will bear fruit in abundance.

Jill McKay, Cape Town

CLCers

what kind of people

The following is the keynote address of Father Terry Charlton, S.J., Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Christian Life Community in Kenya, given at the International Formation Encounter of English-speaking African CLC, in Johannesburg, South Africa in April 1997.

My father was a butcher, and he started his own business selling all kinds of meat and other food. Of course, he had to be supplied with the various items he sold, and I remember that one of his business associates who sold my dad chickens was named McFarland. Actually, it was a family business with several brothers involved. Their delivery truck was dark green with yellow lettering which read, "McFarland Poultry: the Chicken People". I haven't thought of the McFarlands, the Chicken People, for years until I was planning this Keynote. I realized that what I wanted to do was to discover and describe us CLCers: What kind of People are we?

Nearly a year ago, in preparation for this keynote, I began thinking and reading about what characterizes us most fundamentally and perhaps uniquely in CLC. I thought of the

obvious elements that make up our way of life: first, our relationship to God in Jesus and our spirituality; second, our commitment of mission; and, third, our emphasis on living as community. I came up with too many descriptions. We are the Jesus People - nothing too original there - or the Ignatian People, CLC, the Community People or the Mission People. I was stuck regarding what really grounds us.

Then, a thought occurred to me. Our theme for this International Formation Encounter for English-Speaking Africa is "CLC Mission in Africa: Living Our Ignatian Identity," and we wanted to focus on our identity as discovered through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I realized that we have an excellent resource in Kenya for discovering our identity, for recognizing what kind of people we are. There are some 20 CLCers

in Kenya who have made the full Spiritual Exercises, or are making them, mostly in daily life. Why not ask them? I sent each a letter with some questions about each one's experience of the Spiritual Exercises as connected with spirituality, community and mission and also an "any other comments" question.

When I began to read the responses, what kind of people we are just seemed to jump off the pages; the word itself wasn't used so frequently, but the reality of who we are as formed by the Exercises was manifest. Can you guess what I found? CLC: we are the Discernment People.

What I would like to do during the next few minutes is reflect on responses which I received from these Kenyan CLCers and share some reflections on what I think they are saying to us about our identity: CLC, the Discernment People.

As we listen, I ask that we do not listen passively but listen attentively: not just attentive to my words but attentive to what is being said about your own personal experience of the Exercises and your personal and national experience of CLC. Let us listen with minds and with hearts and see if we discover something of our CLC identity.

I said that the word, *discernment*, was not used so frequently by my respondents; but one member, in summarizing what the Exercises did for her, said, "*The Exercises helped me to make decisions in life*". The word here is discernment. She said that she learned to stay with the process, to give it time and to seek the Lord's will, whatever the outcome. I am going to quote another Exercitant quite at length on his central purpose for making the Exercises and what he discovered:

The Spiritual Exercises have been described as "an infallible way of knowing God's will for a person". That is what initially attracted me to them. "Aha!" I thought, "An automatic, certain way of knowing what God wants me to do. How convenient!" And I have found that it is an "infallible way of knowing God's will for me". But not in the way I expected. On retreat in 1993 and in the years since then, I have grown in realizing that God's will is that I realize how much I am loved by God and then that I respond, freely and generously to this love. In responding, I have grown in seeing how God loves us all and all creation and works in it and through it to bring it to fulfillment. My response to God's love invites me also to work (and prepare myself to work more effectively) in my specific life situation so that God's glory may be seen and magnified.

The Spiritual Exercises were a powerful means for me to grow in knowing and loving Christ. They were also a strong invitation to show this love through serving God and my fellow humans in the specific circumstances of my daily life and social situation. But the growth started then did not end with the 30th day of the retreat. Even now 4 years later, I continue to deepen what I experienced then. Each new day, I continue to be invited to know Christ better, to love Christ more, to serve more faithfully.

The Exercises have been a doorway, opening me to an ever-greater experience of God and of invitation to response through service.

In this reflection we hear from someone who wanted to make the Exercises "to discover God's will infallibly". And he discovered that to do so was not principally in making one concrete choice which would determine the whole course of his life. Rather, the infallibility was in discovering God's love for him and a relationship with Jesus and in experiencing the call to make a return in living for the greater glory of God. It is this vision that he is to continue to apply with discernment in the way he responds in the concrete, developing situations in which he finds himself.

Created and Redeemed in Love

Like this man just quoted, so many CLCers spoke of how foundational the realization of God's love was for their life vision. One woman spoke about how there came to her "an image of God the Father with a little child being tossed in the air and the child laughing and looking so satisfied with itself and with the Father. "Deep in me I recognize that is what my relationship with the Father should be, so simple, so loving and so trusting!"

Many tied their deep realization of God's love with how God treats them as sinners. This same woman also said, "The Exercises enable me to know that I am known, loved and accepted by God. I need not ever have a defense lawyer! For he is no prosecutor! He understands, he accepts, he forgives and he loves!"

Another says, "The Spiritual Exercises underscore the unconditional love of God for me. The realization that God continues to love me even in my state of sin makes it easier for me to reciprocate the same love and continue to commune with him even at the moment I feel unworthy of his love."

A third says, "The relationship between me and God is all out of God's love for us. God has chosen

us to be one with him, to be part of his great work of art in all of creation. Christ is living evidence of the Father's will to keep this relationship even after we have broken it with our sins and weakness.... [Christ] loved us so much despite our poor response, even to that extent of dying painfully on the cross."

These dynamics of the Principle and Foundation and the First Week provide several important perspectives for the vision out of which we discern.

First, as we recognize God's love for us in the context of God's plan for creation, we realize that God gives us a part to play, and we want to take up that part. An Exercitant remarks, *"My relationship with him continues to be one where I am a pot in the potter's hand; every minute becomes a graced moment to be fashioned and transformed into that which he can use, and he also does this to keep reminding me I am special and loved! He fashions me for a purpose that I am yet to discover!"*

As a person loved and with a purpose, each of us wants to be open to discerning always the way which God is calling each to take in order to realize this purpose.

Secondly, because of God's unconditional love of us, even in

our darkest, most sinful parts, we gradually come to open up every aspect of ourselves to God. One CLC'er states, *"The Exercises involve opening myself up to God and going to explore places within my heart that under other circumstances I would comfortably ignore. In this process, I tread paths of deep hurt that have been carefully wrapped and put away. I invite God to heal me."* Thus, the dynamics of the early part of the Exercises enable us to have the confidence to look at our whole selves and all our experiences as places to become more free and to grow and to learn more of God's will; our whole selves are opened up and made available to God for the sake of discernment.

Finally, as we recognize that God's love is most profoundly manifested in Jesus Christ and that we are saved in him, the way is prepared for the latter part of the Exercises where we are bound more deeply to living in conformity with the way of Christ.

Following Christ on Mission

Let us turn now to these dynamics of the latter parts of the Exercises in order to see how they contribute to our becoming discerning persons. Experiencing Christ is so central to the Exercises. I quote at

length one Exercitant who captures this well:

Through the experience of the Exercises, I have come to experience Christ, not anymore as a person written about and spoken of by others, but as someone who is real and concerned and present in my everyday life. Someone to pray to but also someone to share a very personal joke with. Someone who challenges me to the discomfort of going beyond my perceived limits, but someone who is always present and supporting me. Because of the experiences of the Exercises, following Christ is no longer a matter of imitating only Christ's external actions but of seeking to grow in having the heart and mind and love of Christ, from which his actions sprang. By growing in [this way], I am (and will be!) better able to respond to the situations of my life and act in a more Christian, Christ-like way.

In a fundamental way, Christ is the principle of discernment by which we decide how to live our lives. Another CLC'er reiterates the same point: "I am able to recognize that, by being a Christian, I claim to be a follower of Christ, to share his opinions, values, orientations, etc, which means that all my life's actions should be geared towards the love of God and my neighbour."

CLC members recognize that their following of Christ is about living according to his values and not the values of the world, the values of Satan. One Exercitant puts it succinctly:

"The difference the Exercises make in my life is that I stop measuring my performance (i.e., how I live my life) against others or against outside references and begin measuring my performance according to my inner self and what I truly believe and value." Another speaks more at length:

"I realize my mission is to be like Jesus: humble, to choose everything according to the will of our Father, to be poor, mocked, and to opt for the poor, to speak openly and honestly, to help the social outcast and imprisoned, to heal and clothe [those in need], and above all to love as Jesus did. My mission is not one where I should seek riches, esteem, power but simply service for the betterment of those around me. This is what counts."

Our lives of response, then, are about mission. To follow Christ is to be on mission. So our discernment is always directed toward being on mission. One CLC'er says, "The challenge in Christian life is in mission, and the Exercises bring this home by making me focus totally and, as companion, on Christ whose life

was all mission, thereby making it easy, almost automatic, to keep saying yes to his call." Another suggests what all this means concretely:

As a working lay Christian, I am able to understand what mission means and to work towards living that out. In all my daily undertakings, I am to put Christ first and to relate to his values and make a conscious effort to act as I should as a Christian. This I understand as my first mission; if I am a parent, I should be a responsible parent. In my work, as I supervise those below me, I should see the image of Christ Jesus in them and treat them so. As a Christian, I am called to be of service to others. In this way I am following Christ's words of how he came to set captives free and to give sight to the blind. I am to seek and find what service God is calling me to do.

We can summarize by saying that our discerning lives are founded in our following of Jesus Christ whose values and way of life serve as a basis for our discernment. As we grow, our discernment concentrates more and more on our living lives of mission, which implies that we become discerning with regard to every aspect of our lives in order to become more effective in our service.

Lived in Community

As the Discernment People, we CLCers need to emphasize the community dimension of our lives. One Exercitant says, *"In the Exercises, I am able to meditate on the life of Christ Jesus while here on earth, his relationships and community with the disciples as well as personal friends like Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. This emphasizes to me the importance of those who help me in my journey of faith. My community is there to share my joys and sorrows with, to give a listening ear and to understand what I want to communicate."*

In our CLC community, we find people who share the same Ignatian vision which founds our discerning lives. We find others who inspire us by living out the vision to which we aspire; we realize, as one says, "that as people who live and believe in the same way, [we] can make a difference in society today." We find a home with Christians who support us in trying to live our vision; another speaks of how her CLC experience "creates in me a desire for closeness and sharing with other people sharing common values". The give and take of our CLC communities provides the environment which energizes us to keep discerning in order to live our CLC vision more completely.

Living a Charism

Through the reflections of CLC members, I have described some aspects of how I believe we as CLC are challenged to be the Discernment People. This is true in our vision, received through the experience of the Exercises, whereby we become grounded in God's unconditional love which enables us progressively to become more and more free so that we may follow Christ in mission with the support of our CLC community.

My own discernment about CLC as the Discernment People has led me to begin considering discernment as our special CLC charism. It is a gift of God by which we live our lives and give ourselves to mission. Yet it is something broader. If discernment is truly our charism, it is meant to be a gift of service for the wider Church.

In addition to the ways, about which I have already spoken, that we use our gift of discernment in our mission way of life, I am now suggesting that we are being called to make ourselves available to serve as a leaven in the Church, to help the Church, at various levels where we have input, become more discerning as it is called upon to make decisions in our challenging times. Whether it be in our small Christian Communities,

on a parish council, on some diocesan committee, or in just giving support to another Christian living through a difficult period, we are called to see how we can bring our charism of discernment to bear. Perhaps, it will be to recognize a group dynamic which is interfering with a group's making a free decision. Perhaps, in a discussion, it will be to raise an important Christian value to which the group has not been attending. Perhaps, it will be to call for a few minutes of prayer where there is danger of a hasty decision. Let us be sensitive about how the Discernment People is called to exercise its charism in the wider Church.

As I bring my words to a close, I call us to keep before us during these ten days the question of what it means to our CLC identity to be the Discernment People. Let us stay sensitive to how for ourselves and for all the CLCers in our various countries, we can deepen and expand our CLC vision so that we become more committed to living discerning lives. Let us better discover how we can allow God's grace more effectively to set us free. Let us see how we can give ourselves to implementing our mission more completely. Let us pray for enlightenment concerning how we can be CLC: the Discernment People.

The Stages of Growth in CLC



What turns a group of individuals into a community and what turns a group into a CLC group?

The following article was used as input and working material at the International Formation Encounter in Johannesburg. The participants found the material very helpful for their reflection and understanding of the CLC way of life and growth process. We, therefore, publish it here.

The way people are introduced to CLC differs from place to place. However, the stages of developing from a group of individuals into a group with a common goal, and of a faith group into a CLC community, follows a certain dynamic which is the same everywhere.

For those who want to guide a group or help as coordinators it is important to have some knowledge of the phases a group has to go through in its development. Each phase has its own challenges and problems. It is, therefore, important to recognize the stage in which a group finds itself, in order to handle the situation adequately and help the group to grow.

Those who feel called to be group guides are advised to find

adequate formation for this important service in CLC. The following is a brief outline of the phases a group has to go through in its development to become a community at the service of others. This just gives a general idea and cannot replace proper formation for group guides.

I. Stages of Group Development

① *The Orientation - or Pre-confidence phase*

In this stage there is a readiness to have great confidence in the other members before even knowing them well. There are great differences regarding the background of experiences of each

member and there is little common experience. The group participation might not be regular.

The facilitator is the unifying power and centre of the group. Often a member with strong leadership qualities unconsciously takes over the internal leadership of the group. Conflicts will not be allowed to be worked through.

The relationship among the group members is polite and everyone only shows his/her "good sides". Relationships are still insecure. Disappointment or tensions will be suppressed. The apparent harmony and unity of the group is enjoyed and can prevent members from taking the next step.

② The Crisis- or power-struggle phase

Now the suppressed conflicts appear. In this stage the group can break up if it does not get help. If the group avoids this painful phase it will not grow. Good group guidance will help the group to live through this phase and to understand its importance.

The actual difficulty in this stage is to bring to light and to accept the diversity of the members, their limitations, weaknesses, different attitudes and behaviour. The group members may get on each others nerves. An experienced group guide can help a group to

become aware of the situation and to face the challenge.

At this point there is a chance for all the group members to accept and support each other and to see the richness of their diversity. At this stage it can happen that a member leaves the group.

③ The intimacy phase

The members have reached the point where they have really developed into a group. They feel closely united and everybody contributes to the group. There is the danger that the group could become an end in itself, separated from the outside, enjoying a sense of well-being with each other, refusing to continue the journey into the next stage.

④ The differentiation phase

The friendship and closeness of the members makes this step possible. Familiarity with one another and mutual trust allows changes within the group. At this stage the different inclinations, needs, capabilities, etc., can be seen and be accepted by the members. Each member has found his/her place in the group and will be strengthened by the group in her/his individuality and specific talent. The members have been helped by the group in their human and spiritual growth. They

feel free to let each other go in different directions if an individual chooses to go another way. Whether this group continues becomes a question at this stage.

⑤ *The final [concluding] phase*

At this point, the group faces a new beginning. Now it is faced with the task of deciding whether they want to continue their way towards a common goal, e.g. to become fully a CLC group. If the group decides to continue, it is necessary to define a new goal which is accepted by all members.

Note: In the beginning of a group, the different phases are usually not clearly marked, they rather blend into each other. The initial insecurity yields to a first harmony and atmosphere of confidence which will slowly be disturbed again and again by symptoms of tensions and dissatisfactions bringing up conflicts. If the group faces these conflicts and continues, a new confidence and assurance will grow till it allows the individual and the whole group to discern whether a common future is possible.

As the journey of the group continues, the phases are still lived through but are not as clearly visible as in the beginning stage. It can happen that a group falls back to an earlier stage of development

if it does not accept the challenge to make the necessary step towards a new phase. Therefore, the help of a group guide is essential for the growth of a group.

Only a group who has lived through these phases of group development is ready to become fully a CLC group, which is a community for MISSION.

A CLC group comes fully into existence when all the group members in one way or the other understand that a community is not simply made up of common interests but of each member's giving of self to the other members. CLC forms *men and women for others*.

II. The Process of Growth in CLC

A CLC group is determined by the common desire to

- continue sharing together and deepening the experience of a life in faith;
- to open oneself to be transformed by the grace of the Lord;
- to become more acquainted with the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises.
- to become sensitive to the call to action or service.

Growth in the CLC way of life can be linked to the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises:

**1. Welcoming to CLC
and a period of introduction to
the CLC way of life**

This first period corresponds to the **Principle and Foundation** of the Spiritual Exercises. It is an invitation towards greater inner freedom. It is important in this stage to be open and attentive to all aspects of life, to become more and more aware of the reality within and surrounding me with the help of the group. In order to reach this alertness and openness, the daily practice of a time of silence and meditation, especially meditating the Scripture and the daily **Prayer of Awareness** [Examen], is important.

It is essential for the group to share and evaluate these experiences in an atmosphere of listening to each other. The end of this stage is indicated when:

- the individual and the group as such have gained a positive attitude towards life and creation;
- they have discovered the unique love of Jesus Christ, '*Lord and Creator of all things*'
- there is an increasing desire to respond in love, and greater interior freedom can be noticed;

- social and personal limitations are discovered and difficulties in overcoming them are experienced.

- thus, all feel encouraged in hope and trust [...I know the one in whom I have put my trust., 2Tim-1.12] With the help of the group and the group guide, the members have to decide now whether they want to continue in CLC or if they want to leave because CLC is not for them.

2. Taking roots

The first part of this stage corresponds to the spirit of the **First Week** of the Spiritual Exercises. Encouraged by the positive experience of the Principal and Foundation, the members are now confronted with the reality of **personal and social sin**.

At the same time they experience what it means to be redeemed by Jesus Christ. This step is crucial in the preparation for the **discernment of spirits** which is a central issue in Ignatian spirituality.

Of course, individual and community growth do not run completely parallel. It is, therefore, important that the individual seeks spiritual guidance when he reaches the point where

- the reality of social evil / structural sin in its different dimensions becomes obvious;

- the connection between social evil and one's own involvement in it and the incapacity to love and grow in freedom is understood;

- one's own fears, defence mechanisms, sinful tendencies and incapability to change oneself are discovered.

It is a difficult time for the group but also a time of grace when the members experience this, as well as their limitations in relationships. A liberating and healing experience of reconciliation can take place when the group members can verbalize and admit these limitations.

This part of the way is marked by the **presence of the crucified Lord**.

Looking at Him, individuals become aware of their own evil which leads to the rejection of life and love. They recognize their incapacity to free themselves; this arouses the desire for freedom. The person finds his/her way to the mystery of love which means personal redemption, healing and liberation.

A deep longing to respond fully is awakened. In gratitude to the redeeming and liberating love of God, we align ourselves with the struggle against sinful structures -

in solidarity with the victims, the poor....

The second part of this stage corresponds with the **Second Week** of the Spiritual Exercises, beginning with *the Call of the King*. Out of gratitude and love, the desire for a closer relationship with Christ grows.

The relationship among the group members becomes more intense, and a new level of unity among those who have experienced themselves weak and as "loved sinners" comes to life. The group experiences itself as a community of faith on a journey where the members help each other to fulfill the will of God. The **discernment of spirits** becomes more and more a determining factor for the whole group.

This new life of the group and its members is marked by:

- A growing intimacy with Jesus, encountering Him through daily meditation of Scripture, the daily *Prayer of Awareness*, the holy Eucharist and the Spiritual Exercises;

- directing all aspects of one's life towards Jesus. This conversion [Mk1:15] takes hold of our whole life [in our family, working place, life style, relationships...];

- orientating one's attitudes and life style towards the life of Jesus,

especially in his relationship with the poor and marginalized;

- meditating on Mary's role in the life of Jesus and in the Spiritual Exercises;

- building a growing sense of the Church as a community of believers;

- experiencing the CLC charism and learning from the life of St Ignatius; knowing Ignatian Spirituality and its role in the service of the Church.

Through an increasing identification with Jesus Christ: "*no longer I, but Christ lives in me*" (Gal 2:20); and through the ongoing conversion, which determines one's activities and ministries, the person's self-centeredness diminishes.

A new readiness to be sent wherever and however the Lord wants emerges. What was service before, now becomes **participation in Christ's Mission**. Jesus entrusted His mission to the Church and, therefore, the mission of each CLC member as well as that of the whole community is incorporated into the mission of the Church.

Now communal discernment and decision-making in community will be practised. Here the identification with CLC as one World Community will take

deeper roots. Formation and meetings on regional and international levels will be very fruitful at this stage.

3. Deepening

This stage also corresponds to the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercise, because it, too, is centred on the personal relationship with Christ. The discernment of a member's vocation for CLC will continue and eventually be concluded. In the preceding phase the members became deeply rooted in the CLC way of life. What was experienced as a personal response to the call of Christ is now confirmed.

New contents and methods for group meetings are no longer of prime importance. What is important now is to deepen what has been practised so far - particularly "discernment" in all situations of life in order to **live** the CLC way of life, personally and in community and in apostolic service.

The aim is to make Christ the centre of our lives where participation in his mission is of prime importance. In the community, personal experiences are shared, deepened and challenged.

The different forms of evaluation [daily prayer of awareness,

evaluation in community at regular intervals, spiritual guidance, monthly recollections, yearly retreats or longer retreats in daily life] are of great importance in helping members to become more and more available to the call of God in all aspects of life.

Having experienced the full Spiritual Exercises, and after discernment with the help of the community, the members gain certainty about their CLC vocation; then the question of commitment will arise.

4. Continual Growth

This long journey provides a gradual growth enabling the member to express a final YES to CLC and its way of life. This "yes" is also a yes to further growth, because life is never static and the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercise is a leading into a continuous growth process. Identification with Jesus Christ leads deeper and deeper into the Paschal mystery, the paradox of "**life through death**". This corresponds to the **Third and Fourth Week** of the Spiritual Exercises.

Characteristic of this maturity in CLC is a **Life in the Spirit**, a

*growing capability to **find God in all things***. This is the path we are led on through the Spiritual Exercises, especially through **the Contemplation to Attain love**.

To find God in all things means to recognize His will, in the Church, in events, in others, and in ourselves. The growth of the individual member and the community will continue if the CLC way of life is followed faithfully and we use the instruments of growth offered to us [cf. *General Principles*, No. 12].

A vocation to CLC is an apostolic vocation. Therefore, the purpose of community is to form members in their human and spiritual growth and to enable them to realize a deeper participation in the mission of Christ in the Church and in the world.



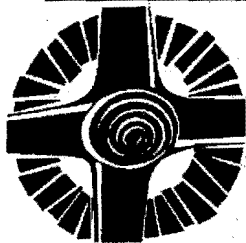
For prayer and sharing in the local CLC group:

- ① *Where do I see my group in the stages of growth in the CLC way of life?*
- ② *What is the most urgent need I have for further growth and development in CLC?*

- a new name

- a new beginning

- an integrated formation process



*Hildegard Ehrtmann was a member of the World Executive Council from 1970-1979, first as Secretary and then as Vice-President. She was Executive Secretary of the German CLC and through her rich experience was able to make an important contribution to an integrated Formation Programme in her National Community. As a CLC'er from its very beginnings, and thus a witness to the changes of 30 years ago, she wrote the following article for the German National CLC magazine **Werkheft**.*



Looking back at the development from sodality to CLC in Germany we could name important events - meetings, conventions, resolutions, changes of those involved in decision-making, important events at the local level, new groups of people interested in the movement: all expressions of loyalty to the source and signs of a new departure. It would be worthwhile to stop here and look more closely at these important events and that vital energy issuing from the new

beginning. But, right now, it is more fascinating to reflect on nothing else than the decisive change which the 'revolution' of the formation programmes brought about.

The Challenge

We could hardly imagine the impact of Pius XII's apostolic letter *Bis Saeculari* (1948) for the sodality movement. It actually determined the future with a new

profile which challenged all members and groups to call to mind their first roots, the *Spiritual Exercises* and the defining of this lay movement as authentic 'Catholic Action'.

Very soon a thorough commentary and new guidelines were available. One called upon the laity to take responsibility in today's world and set high ideals, ardently asking members not to turn a deaf ear to the call for renewal.

Except in a few larger groups, the message really was accepted. However, it was expected - this seems hardly conceivable today - that the new beginning with its call to a deeper spiritual life and new, visible, successful activity in the apostolate (politics, work, Church and world) would simply 'happen': it seemed to be just a matter of choosing the right appeal, or better the right lecture, article, challenge, reminder of the goal, and growth would come about! Of course, at the same time, seminars and study days were offered to present all the knowledge needed, not only for students and academics.

Deep in our hearts, however, most of us lived by the conviction that if I acknowledge the new way of life from the bottom of my heart, - because the ideal had already taken hold of me - then renewal

would happen. It was thought that it was just a matter of living out the ideal and passing it on through word and action. To hear the message and live it: this was the simple factor at least for a mature Christian! Of course, one has to live up to one's own decisions and commitment, and for most of us this was not mere 'activism'.

Objections

Yet the essential change did not come about. Good reasons were put forward for this: the engaged lay person cannot live such a way of life in detail in everyday circumstances because work and social responsibilities also have their claims. The laity should, rather, be encouraged simply not to lose sight of the ideal. What should be stressed is the good will, the 'good intention' and interior faithfulness to one's own commitment. If there were priests and religious who did not need the *Spiritual Exercises* every year, and who confined their prayers to the Breviary, surely it was more humble and more appropriate for a lay person to simply live each ordinary working day as a convinced Christian.

Why, after all, should ideals be translated into real life in such a radical manner? Was it not

sufficient to meet just once a month? Were more frequent meetings in smaller groups not more suitable for youth groups?

Deep longing

Perhaps it was necessary to have the example of the personal freedom and simplicity of young adults in Cleveland, USA, who were not satisfied that proclaiming the ideal, the verbal challenge, would by itself bring about change. They longed to live fully this new vocation given to the laity in *Bis saeculari*. They were looking for a way of individual and community growth, and thus for a valuable process of formation.

However, the expression *formation* was the key-word we were not allowed to use in Germany at that time (after 1957). It was simply offensive and degrading to expect mature, grown-up people to be trained once again, like children, when they were already sure of their convictions. Who at that time dared to admit to another that the 'automatic' change was not 'taking place in me'? This would have been tantamount to an admission of a lack of maturity, and insight, a lack of appreciation of the values!

Providentially, assistance came to us from the contemporary

development of modern human social sciences. New insights into ego-psychology, a growing awareness of the steps of human growth, and the development of group work, personal counseling, and spiritual direction, opened up new ways. However, at that time, the Church seemed suspicious of using current psychological jargon in relation to the spiritual life. What could be done to overcome this barrier? We simply chose the pragmatic way. We told each other how we had seen MC/CLC developing elsewhere. Slides were shown of individuals and groups, of feasts and celebrations in families and during the Spiritual Exercises. We helped others see the way in which people progressed from a humble 'yes' to a step by step growth into a way of life. We thus witnessed how in this process individuals and groups were completely changed.

- All came to realise that intensive spiritual human growth required weekly meetings in small groups.
- One experienced in depth that each individual was taken seriously by God and other 'followers of the way'.
- They encouraged each other to take the first tiny steps towards being changed in one's relationship to oneself, to God and to others, in

one's personal style of life, and in one's readiness for action.

- Thus, they were motivated to include their whole life in the process of growth body and soul - individual personal history, wounds, barriers, challenges from without and within;

- Above all, they were strengthened by the inner source of their relationship with Jesus Christ which grew more freely into Christian maturity within small groups sharing a common way of life, rather than by attending lectures or large meetings with themes and activities.

Courage to take risks

Thus already by 1959 it was possible for the CLC in Germany to start a step by step introduction into our way of life. The members of the MC/CLC in Osnabrück were ready to take the risk! The translation of the Adult Formation Programme from Cleveland, US, formed the basis. Of course, expressions taken from psychology and sociology were still avoided.

Already by 1965 nearly all the sodality groups of 'professionally employed women', many co-workers of the youth sodalities, many groups of young adults and

university students had tried the two year course *Introduction to the Sodality way of life*.

The written material provided was added, four pages at a time, to the monthly publication *Werkheft*. This material allowed small groups and individuals to venture, test and evaluate a tiny new step each month. Over a period of two years, twenty-four steps were offered as a way of formation providing a real taste of the full CLC way of life, and perhaps already introducing the act of commitment.

An integrated formation process

All this was not, however, the final solution: individual growth simply does not run parallel with that of the community! While some rejoiced from the bottom of their hearts, others were less happy because of high expectations; still others had further questions.

Besides, the eight-day Spiritual Exercises had begun to be offered to all members who thought this way of life was important. Was it not enough to desire this, and be faithful to the initial call received? We still were ignorant about the criteria needed.

Painful experience helped us to develop preliminary forms of the

Spiritual Exercises assuring the 'step by step' growth. In this, each individual is helped through new applied methods to take the next step only according to the process of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Thus, each person could be individually guided on his or her way of personal conversion and transformation into the full *gestalt* (form) of following Jesus Christ.

Instead of the two-year orientation course, new formation courses now assured a slow, continuing process of growth. There were courses like *Learning to read life*, Formation Courses I, II, and III, *Projektjahr* (the one year course for experiencing insertion in a different social milieu in preparation for mission), *Eutonie* (exercises to include the whole body), and qualifying courses in group guidance and in spiritual direction or guidance of the Spiritual Exercises.

And where do we go from here?

What has been confirmed as being really helpful? What creative beginnings are helpful today to accompany individuals and groups? How do we challenge them not to avoid progressive steps which will lead them to more love and a fuller life, to more fruitful service and mission?

Looking back over the past thirty years one recognises, often only with hindsight, how gently, carefully and affectionately the Spirit has fascinated us, how He was drawing us on, leading us in His way.

- It all began with a promise calling to life a new generosity.
- This was followed by the desire and the courage to open oneself to the process of growth and to personal conversion according to the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises.
- And so the experience of being called personally to a unique relationship with Jesus Christ shaped one's answer.

He who enables and liberates us for His mission now becomes the deepest meaning in our lives, the most precious gift.

And, amazed and grateful that it happens quite of itself, one desires to become a companion on the way, for others.

Hildegard Ehartmann, Augsburg -
Germany

I will go Lord if you lead me...



Ingeborg von Grafenstein is a member of the World CLC Executive Council since 1990. Her vocation to promote CLC on national and international levels has led her to choose a life of poverty, and obedience to the Lord's will in a freely chosen celibate life. She lives in community with five other CLC members who share the same vocation.

This year, CLC celebrates thirty years of the start of a transition from Marian Congregations to CLC. It meant much more than changing a name: it meant choosing again the original charism of Marian Congregations and adopting it anew, with all the dynamic thrust of Vatican II.

Looking back over these 30 years of renewal and growth throughout the world is like reviewing my own personal life story as it is closely

linked to the encouraging development of CLC in the World Community as well as in my own country.

Fascinated by a lived example

Born in Munich, Germany in 1943, I made my first contact with the Marian Congregations (MC) in my early high school years but felt no real attraction to join this kind of club for high school kids.

This changed when I came to know the MC "community." During my last grades and the early college years, the guide of this group was an extraordinary woman: Sr. Ingeborg Ecklstein, a Mary Ward Sister, who not only was an excellent teacher (I experienced this in 4 subjects that I studied in these four years) but at the same time what we would call today the Ecclesiastical Assistant for this MC. She was, above all, a deeply integrated person whose example taught me interiorly what — in today's terms — CLC was all about.

In the later years, when things became more explicit for me: when the General Principles of '67/'68 and then the ones of '90 spelled out more clearly what our goal and our way of life and proceeding was all about — I was filled with wonder and gratitude that the Lord had given me the opportunity to know her.

Thus, when at the age of 17, I made my "consecration of life," as it was then called, it meant not just surrendering to Mary in order to receive her protection nor simply the promise of being a good Catholic. Rather I felt that it was a surrender to God in Christ, touching all the areas and dimensions of my life, a gift of self in answer to God's gift of self as the General Principles state in the Preamble.

It was also clear to me that belonging to a MC meant being incorporated into Christ's Church — a worldwide community — and becoming the "salt of the earth." It was the example of our guide who introduced us to Ignatian prayer, taught us to work in poor areas of our city, challenged us to seek God in all things, to live out our faith at home and in school, and to face the social and political challenges surrounding us.

When I entered university for further studies at the age of 20, I felt that being a member of a MC was something fascinating, worth my time and energy. Thus, when I was elected president of this association of the high school MCs for girls in Germany, I could not refuse. I did not foresee that this was just the first step on a long, often hard and challenging road, yet one that was still fascinating as I discovered God leading me along the way.

Years of study - years of growth

Was it by hazard that just a month before starting my university studies I had the unique chance to participate in an important international event of the Marian Congregations? As I was able to speak French, in 1963 I was invited to join the German delegation at

the European Celebration of the MC's in Rome. It was much more than an occasion to see Rome: it was experiencing the World Community first-hand. It deepened my understanding of what MC (and even more CLC) was meant to be thanks to two inspiring talks: one by Fr. Maurice Giuliani, a French Jesuit who introduced us to following Christ in our day-to-day life, and the other, by Fr. Karl Rahner who explained the real meaning of "consecration" (in today's terms of commitment) as the radical "yes" of all we are in answer to the Lord's call. These marked us for life as Christ's friends and servants in the building up of God's Kingdom.

When I returned home, my involvement in MC became much more than a leisure activity. Thus, as my studies ended I found myself facing a choice among three possibilities each attractive to me: to be a teacher at the high school or college level, to have a university career, or to give myself fully to the MC.

For a while I just lived with these options, not knowing where the Lord would lead me. My spiritual guide just answered: "Wait for the Lord's choice. Ask him for the grace of hearing what he tells you." Then, it became clear: God's priority for me was to serve Him

through CLC. After the first "shock" and despite the difficult consequences (such as telling my family that I would not accept a well-paid, well-esteemed teaching career), I felt a deep joy and peace which continue even today in spite of the turmoils of day-to-day involvement in CLC work.

This grace of knowing God's call was deepened by the fact that at about the same time, inspired by groups arising in Cleveland, Ohio and Montreal, Canada, some CLC members in my country felt the call to start a small service community based on the practice of the evangelical counsels. Their purpose was to sustain and foster the growth of CLC in Germany or wherever the Lord would lead.

Another decisive moment was the privilege I had of attending the 1967 World Assembly of MC in Rome; where the General Principles were adopted as was the new name confirmed by the Church some months later (March 25, 1968).

Team work - living mission in community

The following 22 years were marked by a constant listening, and answering urgent needs on the local, European and international

level. I was part of our Secretariat team, of our so-called CLC promotion team, and many times, of various formation and guidance teams.

The first years I did much editorial work for our CLC publications and, as a member of the European team of CLC did translations, wrote newsletters, and prepared Formation Encounters on the European level etc. This collaboration with people such as Fr. Louis Paulussen and Josée Gsell was never restricted to simple, practical collaboration but was lived as "friends in the Lord," living out "community in mission."

Since 1977, after a two-year formation for guides of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, I had the privilege of guiding many persons through the Spiritual Exercises or to help them grow through spiritual guidance. I also became guide of several groups as they grew and strengthened their commitment. More recently, I have worked in a team with 2 Jesuits conducting a two-year program for training people from CLC and others to effectively work with faith and Church communities.

One of the most important element of my own growth and commitment along the way was the

result of working with so many teams and so many people: CLC members, Jesuits, diocesan priests, Sisters — and often with people of other countries or mentalities.

It surely has been a special grace to have experienced the richness and tremendous treasures of CLC, not only as a national or continental group although these levels are important, but as a World Community just as the Church is meant for the whole world.

Setting sail for a new adventure — as member of the World ExCo

During the preparation for the World Assembly of Guadalajara '90, my national community asked if I would accept the nomination as a candidate for the ExCo. I was startled. The make-up of the delegation had already been chosen and I had not thought I would be privileged to experience a World Assembly once again as I had had this opportunity several times (Rome '67, Manila '76, Rome '79 and Augsburg '73 when I was part of the hosting team). I thought it was time for the younger members to take over but our national ExCo insisted I make a discernment as to whether or not I should accept. Once again I experienced the peace and joy of saying "yes" to God's will.

Now I am in my sixth year in the World Service Community, as we understand ourselves, and approaching the end of my term at the Brazil meeting in 1998. It is not yet time to give the final account as we still have much work ahead of us. But I can say that on the one hand it has been a wonderful opportunity to serve CLC worldwide and on the other it has brought me a great awareness of my and our limitations, shortcomings and poverty.

As a team we have been entrusted with a tremendous responsibility to govern WCLC for four years. Thus we recognize more than ever that it is not we who build the Kingdom but GOD, the risen Lord, perhaps, often in spite of us!

This phase of my life and my service to CLC have challenged me to trust that God will lead us — through storms and mist — in His own way. It is by joining Mary, letting His will be done in us that we really build the Kingdom and our small but dear part of it: CLC. This will hold true for the future steps of my life. So I end with the English song that I first heard in Guadalajara, which sums up what I have tried to say: "Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

Ingeborg von Grafenstein,
Augsburg - Germany



The Reyes family from the left sitting:
Gabriel, José, Cecilia, Ignace, and standing: Maria Loreto and Nicolas



José Reyes was Executive Secretary of the World CLC from 1986 to 1991. He left a career as professor of mathematics and his wife Cecilia left her career as a psychologist to serve the World Community in Rome. When they left Chile, Nicolas was 4 years old, Maria Loreto 3, and both Ignace and Gabriel were born in Rome. The CLC has formed both, José and Cecilia, and now they are continuing to form CLC. The following is a testimony of their life as a CLC family:

CLC a way to realise one's dreams

Roswitha Cooper asked us to write about two things: first, our CLC vocation, and, second, our opinion of the best structure for the World Community. We have often thought about both these things, but have never found time to write something articulate. We can appreciate, however, how it is that Roswitha speaks to us of vocation and structure as if they were one and the same thing. We can imagine her, sitting in that same chair José himself occupied for six years, concerned with the development of the CLC and making it better known in the world, and how to deepen that which we call the CLC life-style, but at the same time understanding the necessity to organise ourselves for greater service, and to create the structural framework which best suits our alliance with God and with the Church.

This dynamics tension between vocation and organisation is in a small way the story of our own CLC life. We have lived it as a call from God to come down to earth whenever our spirit raises itself in contemplation, or we are lost in

grandiose dreams, and as a call from God to fly and to dream whenever we were too preoccupied with reality and the practicalities of life. We believe that this is the dynamics of the Incarnation which, through the mediation of the CLC, is deeply rooted in our lives.

Since our return to Chile, after six years in the World Secretariat in Rome, the practice of the Spiritual Exercises, made annually whenever possible, has enabled us to deepen our vocation.

The fact of belonging to our community, Tabga (Seven Springs), sharing prayer and faith and life, is equally important. In order to pass on our vocation and to serve CLC, we organise formation workshops for the young and for group guides; we write reflections on whatever topics the CLC or other groups ask of us.

Cecilia is preparing herself to become a director of the Exercises; José, who is at present a member of the CLC National Council for

Chile, was previously a member of the Santiago Council. We are very active in the fields of formation, reflection and counselling. Our dream is that many people will be able to make their way by travelling the CLC path.

But, at the same time, we are also committed body and soul to work outside the CLC. We both do social work with programmes promoting human rights and education for the poor, Cecilia as a psychologist and José as a teacher and head of a school.

On our return to Chile, we felt that we should direct ourselves toward the social sector. We had been shocked in the past by the contrasting conditions present in our country and we felt strongly the appeal of working for equality and justice, to fight against poverty, to promote human rights, and to evangelise in areas far from the Church.

A holy and visionary man - Blessed Alberto Hurtado - conceived a framework in which he brought his dream to life: the *hogar de Cristo*. This is where Cecilia works. She adjusts the complex language of clinical and social psychology to the level at which the poor can understand it, combining psychology with Christian faith to help those who suffer, so that they open themselves to hope. She has not

been sent there on mission, she is simply an employee. But she operates within a framework which defines itself by its mission, which was born from a dream sent by God to the heart of a holy man. Without this framework it would be very difficult for Christian psychologists to work with the poor.

Within the field of education, our small community Tabga has been reflecting on the topic of inequality, and particularly on the lack of educational opportunities for the poor in Chile.

After many discussions and in a spirit of discernment, we arrived little by little at the conclusion that we could and should do something in this field, especially if we were to take seriously the call to the laity made by the Church.

We had many useful discussions with the Jesuit Provincial for Chile, which led to his suggesting to us that we assume responsibility for a school for the poor which the Jesuits had had to give up because of a lack of personnel for such a demanding project.

José was the only member of the group whose profession lay in the field of education, and so the Jesuit Provincial appointed him to be Director of the school. Other members made different contributions, but, most importantly,

set up a development committee for the school, in other words something which would transform the dream into reality.

Today, four of the six members of this committee belong to the community. We want to make our dreams come true and achieve great things: to create a school of the future which will open up the way for others. We are building; we are getting to know the people of the neighbourhood better. We offer a formation programme adapted to this work; we link up entrepreneurs and we evangelise with great vigour. Yes, we dream . . . but, very quickly we sensed the need for some sort of support structure. Today we are on the point of establishing the *Fundación Educacional Loyola*, set up by the Jesuits, the CLC and the alumni associations of two Jesuit schools. The object of the Foundation, originally formed for one particular school, is now expanded, and closer to our dreams: *the promotion and organisation of an association of lay people and Jesuits so as to foster and develop projects which arise from joint Jesuit-lay initiatives, in particular work among the poor.*

We were surprised by those who thought that setting up more formal structures destroys dreams. On the contrary, we believe that they enable

them to be made real, even though they may be tiresome. Our CLC life is a participation in divine initiatives which come to us in dreams. For us, the Spiritual Exercises allow us to contemplate the Jesus who, from His birth to His Ascension, always dealt with difficulties in the way best suited for the accomplishment of His mission, putting new life into His disciples.

We could cite many things which give testimony to this, but the truth is that we are exhausted after a year of extremely hard work. We are presently arranging to deepen our family life through a simple camping holiday, during which we will seek to deepen those precious gifts of God, marital love and the love between parents and children. Our four children have grown with us, sharing in the progress and the disappointments, and often questioning what they see. But, we believe, they always feel themselves respected and loved and they have the freedoms appropriate to their ages. It is not easy to pass on faith today, but we are happy to see that it is developing naturally in them, thanks be to God. Nicolas is already 15 years old, Maria Loreto is 14, Ignace, 11 and Gabriel, 8. We commend them to your prayers.

José and Cecilia Reyes
Santiago, Chile
February 1997

Servants of Christ's Mission

The commitment of some Brazilian lay people to the mission of the Society of Jesus

In June 1996, a group of lay persons were invited by the Jesuit Provincial of the central region of Brazil to a dialogue about mission and mutual collaboration. The majority of these lay people were from CLC but the characteristic that all held in common was the complete experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The Provincial's proposal was that, in a climate of prayer and discernment, we think about getting involved in a more visible mutual collaboration with the Society of Jesus, working above all for the formation of the laity. Being that we have a common heritage: the experience of the Exercises, why not also work together in one same mission?

On July 31, 1996, as the fruit of a long process of prayer and discernment, 23 lay persons made a commitment in the Mass

celebrated in the Church of St. Ignatius in Rio de Janeiro. The formula that we choose to express this commitment was as follows:

Before the Lord our God and this community here united, I..... commit myself to live fully my vocation and Christian mission, by the grace of God:

- through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, living faithfully and renewing it annually;
- through sharing and transmitting the Ignatian spirituality to other Christian lay people;
- through the witness of an apostolic life directed to the service of others, and of the evangelization and transformation of our society.

To do this, I desire and commit myself to participate in the

Ignatian Apostolic Network, in close union with all its members, in the common service of the one mission of Christ.

I am encouraged by the fact that the Society of Jesus commits itself not only to help me and accompany me personally in the carrying out of my mission, but places its human and institutional resources at the service of this Network.

The atmosphere we experienced was of great joy and consolation, and we all felt that this was a new milestone, an occurrence in which God was present with his Spirit to raise up marvellous new changes for his people.

During the homily of the Mass, Father Provincial accepted our commitment, clarifying its identity: Maintaining their full and autonomous lay identity, without any type of juridical, or institutional bond, ...(these lay people)... desire to dedicate a part of their lives and energies together with us, in the spiritual and religious formation of the laity, and the inculturation of the faith in our country. They are not the only ones who desire to make this commitment but they publicly expresses what others desire and perhaps already carry out in their hearts. However, while their gesture symbolizes something

that already exists, it marks in a more formal, visible and concrete way, the beginning of an apostolic network animated by the same spirituality and consecrated to the spiritual and religious formation of the laity, and to the evangelization of our society.

Thus, inspired by the words of Fr. Ivern's homily, we went on to identify ourselves, starting with this moment, as a small nucleus of laity who are especially committed to the mission of the Society of Jesus as an apostolic network. And it seems that the Lord blessed us with new adherents since, in December 1996, five other lay people made the same commitment thus giving more force to the new network.

As with all that is new, the creation of the initial nucleus of the Network did not fail to cause reactions, questions and some uneasiness. Some important questions arising between Jesuits and laity were:

What is the objective of this commitment? Don't the Ignatian laity have the CLC and their permanent commitment? What need is there of another commitment?

Why make this commitment in front of Father Provincial? Does

this imply something like religious vows, subordination, availability to the Superiors of the Society, resulting in the laity failing to be laity?

Will the Society now go on to feel that they are responsible for these laity? Will they have to give them a mission? How do we foresee the relationship between them and the Jesuits?

We, the members of the Apostolic Network, were made aware of all these questions, thinking, praying, and discerning about them together with Father Provincial and the assistance of other Jesuits. Until this moment, we do not have all the answers, being that this is something new and that we are opening a new road. Nonetheless, there are certain points that we are beginning to see more clearly in regard to the option to belong to this Apostolic Network.

① The Network helps make us visible in society and in the Church. Today we perceive that those who do not define themselves clearly and do not assume their own identity are destined to "die out," to lose themselves in anonymity. Without losing the precious conquest of the openness that we must have to the "other" to the "different" it is important for us to live this

constant tension between openness and identity, recovering the mutual enrichment that results from it.

② The criteria for belonging to this Network. Defined by the Provincial Commission for the Lay Apostolic (CLA) with the approval of the Provincial, these criteria are:

- 1) to have had the complete experience of the Spiritual Exercises in one of its modalities;
- 2) to have integrated this experience into the dynamics of one's life, in terms of discernment and apostolic commitment;
- 3) to have some communitarian reference, where others can be helped and where we can be helped to live our vocation and mission, and can share ideas and experiences relating to our spiritual life and apostolic commitment. This communitarian reference may be CLC, the nucleus of the same Network, or some other type of unifying force;
- 4) to be in contact or relationship with the Society of Jesus and its members in order to deepen the Ignatian spirituality and to have a better knowledge of the apostolic charism that this implies;
- 5) to be admitted to make the commitment to Fr. Provincial or to the person he delegates, after consultation with the CLA.

③ Similarities and differences between the Apostolic Network

and CLC. The Apostolic Network is not an alternative to CLC. It is possible to belong to the two, which are distinctive but perfectly compatible: one does not exclude the other. The CLC is not a work of the Society and the Network is. Belonging to CLC, therefore, does not imply necessarily that one must maintain any kind of strict contact with the Society of Jesus which is more than a good relationship, as is mentioned in the GP no. 8. Members of the CLC may or may not belong to the Network depending on whether or not they feel called to it. The fact of doing so does not add an element of something "more" acquired in the Ignatian spiritual journey. The Network does not suppose pre-members or temporary members or anything similar. But candidates for the Network must already have a spiritual maturity which implies having had the experience of the month of Ignatian Exercises, and the availability to commit themselves to whatever apostolic activities that an attentive discernment suggests. The apostolic dimension is the essential element of the Network. For this reason and no other, laity and Jesuits will unite their forces in a common mission and in collaboration. The Network wants to demonstrate a public countenance, mobilize an ever greater number of persons, and dedicate time and energy to their

formation. In this context, the CLC can nourish the Network with new members, as is the case in its near totality in the Central-Eastern Province of Brazil. It can also nourish and provide new members for CLC.

Although these somewhat obscure points could be clearer, we must recall that we are only at the beginning of our journey. In the words of Fr. Ivern: "As we are dealing with something new, a network where the laity are the protagonists, we must avoid undue haste, or imposing things from above, which are not the fruit of a process of reflection and a common discernment".

However, it is consoling that we can deal with apostolic projects as the fruit of this same collaboration.

For example, we can cite the same Loyola Centre of faith and culture, a Centre of formation for the laity, coordinated by the laity with the collaboration of the Jesuits. Or also the project for the creation of shelters for ex-convicts, run by a group of lay persons who work in the Prison Ministry of Rio de Janeiro, for which there is a crying need in the Province. On a more remote horizon, there is the outline for another project: a centre of formation for lay persons and/or Jesuits who work with the

laity, which could even go beyond the limits of the Province.

It is necessary to note that it is a very hopeful project for all those who have committed themselves to it. For myself, personally, the maturation of this commitment and the fact of being able to live it and deepen it has been a time of grace. By the grace of God, a Catholic since birth and the cradle, I must say that my adult conversion came about thanks to my contact with the Society of Jesus, which opened the doors to a whole process of interior and apostolic growth. It was the Jesuits who introduced me to the Spiritual Exercises, and the quiet guidance of some of them through the experience of the spiritual exercises marked the whole direction of my life. It was they also who enabled me to study Christian Doctrine and theology, making feasible my vocation of theologian and professor.

Thanks to them I also discovered the CLC, where it became possible to grow as a person, in a community, discovering and discerning at each step the mission that the Lord had reserved for me. The fact of being called to serve in the CLC on various levels: local, national and now world, gave me the possibility of knowing more closely my companions in Christ, not so much as a spiritual teacher

and professor of theology but rather as a friend in the Lord, committed to the same service. At the Loyola Center, which I coordinate today, many companions have taken part, helping freely, collaborating in a disinterested manner, enriching us with their experience and wisdom. It was and is a pleasing experience working with so many in a common mission, sharing the same ideal.

Therefore, it is an immense joy for me to give to this Society of Jesus which has given me so much and to whom I owe so much. Thanks to the Society and its mediation I have been able to experience: the grace of a vigorous and profound spirituality which is fitted equally well to laity and religious in the world of today, through the Lord's gracious invitation to make a commitment in a mission which covers the width of the world, and the depth of the Transcendence of God, the unimaginable gift of sharing, and finally the deepest identity of servant of the mission of Christ. For me, to belong today to the Ignatian Apostolic Network means to be called to be servant in this unique mission, and to discover in it the greatest depths of one's own identity and the truest sense of one's personal and communitarian vocation.

Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer

World Youth Day 1997, Paris



XIIth JOURNÉES MONDIALES
DE LA JEUNESSE
PARIS 1997

The XII^e Journée Mondiale de la Jeunesse will be a gathering organized by the Church in France in response to the Pope's appeal. Young people, between the ages of 18 to 35 years of age from throughout the world, have been invited into the dioceses of France beginning August 14, 1997.

Paris will then welcome the youth from August 18 - 24, 1997. This second part in Paris will include times for gathering and discovering the heritage of Paris, for catechetics, and also for times of prayer and celebration. It will conclude with a night vigil on Saturday, August 23rd. There will be a Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Pope on the following Sunday.

The history of the World Youth Days is quite recent, but significant. They were established following meetings of young people held in Rome, on Palm Sunday of the Holy Year of 1984, and then on the occasion of the UN International Youth Year of 1985. Each year since World Youth Day has been

celebrated in every diocese on Palm Sunday. Every second year there is an international meeting organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity: Buenos Aires, Santiago de Compostella, Czestochowa, Denver, Manila, and now Paris.

In fact it was planned to hold the 1997 meeting in Africa, but it proved impossible to find a host country. France, with its close and long-term ties with Africa, was then chosen on condition that the Church in France ensure that young people from the African continent attend in significant numbers.

The event is in line with the preparation for the **Jubilee Year, 2000** and in accordance with the publication, two years ago, of the apostolic letter ***Tertio Millennio Adveniente***. Sensitive to the symbolic dimensions of events, John-Paul II invites us to meditate on time and associate it with the anniversary of Christ's birth: *In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, time becomes a dimension of God,*

who is himself eternal. (Tertio Millennio Adven. 10)

The Réseau Jeunesse Ignatien (Ignatian Youth Net)

is neither a movement nor a spiritual association. It was founded by the Society of Jesus, the female Ignatian congregations, the Christian Life Community and other lay people to offer young people, from 18 to 30 years old, help in their human and spiritual growth by means of Ignatian spirituality.

The Youth Net will participate in the Youth Festival with an "Ignatian program." The Youth Festival will be celebrated on three afternoons and evenings during the World Youth Days. Its aim is to give participants from all corners of the world some insights about France, particularly in regard to the Church as well as from a cultural point of view. The following is planned:

An event: Loyola XXI

see following article and invitation from the National President of CLC France, Dominique Hiesse.

A visit:

a tour of Paris in the footsteps of **St. Ignatius and St. Francis-Xavier** who both spent some time in France in the 16th Century.

A teaching:

The School of the Word - several meditations on Scripture using the method of Cardinal Martini.

Towards LOYOLA XXI a common mission of CLC.

It is not always easy to define precisely what is CLC's common mission. Reading the General Principles (GP 8), one might think it is the fruit of discernment which refers each person to a particular apostolate, either individually or in groups. But one could speak of this mission a long time if each of us put potential or virtual realities into the words instead of accepting to discover it by letting ourselves be confined by experiences which are necessarily limited although real and living..

Father Kolvenbach tells us that at the beginning of the 17th century, an unknown Jesuit so marvelled at this tension that he saw it as a participation in the mystery of incarnation, where He who is always the greatest goes deep into our small and mean everyday lives to educate all of us. *To be commensurate with the vastest but to keep oneself to the smallest is a divine thing.* St. Ignatius says about the sense of education.

To take over a school in Hong Kong, a spiritual centre in France or in Brazil are ordinary actions, modest and limited, which allow us to make our common CLC mission real, visible and to give full meaning to the words of their incarnation.

The WYD (World Youth Days) provide an opportunity, a call to

listen, and are themselves one of the facets of CLC's common mission, for two reasons: because of the young people and because we belong to the Universal Church.

In 1997, the WYD will take place in Paris. So, why not take this opportunity to gather together all Ignatian young people and to join in an evening of celebration and prayers, encounter and recognition?

In Paris, on August 21st, in the framework of the WYD, a big evening gathering will be organized and animated by the Ignatian youth network with CLC's collaboration. CLC-France has fully committed itself to organizing this gathering, one among 40 that will take place in Paris that evening.

① The Scenario

The scenario team has been meeting, thinking, and exchanging ideas for three months and now has proposed the final "dramatic version" of the "Loyola XXI" evening.

The story is simple: it is the itinerary of a contemporary youth named Francis-Xavier, as he crosses the five continents at the dawn of the 21st century. His quest for God, summarized in the phrase ***Ad maiorem Dei gloriam***, for the greater glory of God, will be shown in a daring production: five scenes representing the five continents, sixteen teams of young

actors (150), musicians (30 to 40), singers (100) coming from every corner of the Ignatian world, a team of a hundred young French animators in charge of welcoming 12,000 spectators, at the Grande Halle of la Villette!

One by one, the young international actors will ask their questions on the meaning of living ***for the greater glory of God***. A scenario freely inspired by four passages from the Gospel (the rich man, the adulteress forgiven and loving, the resurrection of Lazarus, and the pilgrims of Emmaus) will, in the light of situations from today's world, show the itinerary of young Francis-Xavier: doubt, prayer and action necessary to approach and love our societies.

The problems have already been identified and the proposals for the different acts of the evening submitted to the participating countries. For instance: what are Francis-Xavier's reactions to the problems of fundamentalism in the Near East? How can we struggle to abolish the form of slavery in India, in the world of the excluded untouchables? How should we react to the problem of Aids? How can a couple build a life of love? In short, what are the roles the young Christian has to play today in the complex situations of societies. This gathering aims at offering not **one** choice and **one** way of expressing it, but **choices** to live:

as many choices as there are countries, cultures and participating audiences.

You are all invited to open up perspectives to love and to invest more in this world which is offered us and entrusted to us.

② Communication:

What has been done:

- letters were sent throughout the world (through E-mail, fax, and post) for information and suggestions. The result? We received requests for information from Malta, Belgium, Thailand, Lebanon, Lithuania, and Slovenia.

- mailshots were sent to heads of Ignatian institutions and chaplaincies in France.

- monthly letter "Loyola XXI information sheet."

What is being done:

- new information is being sent to countries which failed to answer the first time;

- there has been a huge circulation of pamphlets calling youth to come and join us;

- there is now a complete introduction dossier on *Loyola XXI*;

- the text of *Loyola XXI* will be published in the Pilgrim Book of the WYD.

What remains to be done:

- media contacts;

- publication of articles (cf. sponsorship)

- *Loyola XXI* information sheets... each month!

③ Logistics: Our Needs:

- 10 to 200 actors (about 20 people for simultaneous translation);

- a choir of 100 people,

- a band of 30/40 musicians,

- a host team of 100 people.

Do not hesitate to publicize it in your area, starting now.

④ Sponsorship

The Ignatian network is taking action to finance *Loyola XXI*.

The *XXI* associations of the Jesuit's Alumni (former students) gathered in Bordeaux on February 1, 1997 for their General Assembly, and decided unanimously to send a mailing to their 15,000 members at the end of February 1997.

Information articles and an appeal will be published monthly in the publication *Vie Chrétienne* (9 000 subscribers).

Contacts are being made with the different publications of the

Society and with the Superiors of the major Ignatian institutions; A supporting appeal "the Ignatius network is taking action" will soon be available.

All ideas are welcome!...

What to do?

What do the world CLC youth need to do?

- consider taking part in the evening gathering, preparing it in connection with other teams. For this, one needs to be able to sing, act or play a musical instrument.
- come to Paris on the evening of August 21, 1997;
- join one of the communication, relay, logistics or sponsorship teams;
- help or encourage the sending of a representative;
- follow up the progress of the organisation by regular enquiry;

What do the older and long-term CLCers need to do?

- Sponsor:
- financing the gathering;
- financing the travel expenses to Paris of one young representative, coming either from your own country or another;

- follow up the organisation by regular enquiry.

For this you will all need the following address of the Secretariat:

Loyola XXI
Centre St. François-Xavier
7, rue de Poitiers
F - 75007 Paris
Tel/fax: (33) 01 45 44 90 64

- make all cheques payable to:

"Fondation de Montcheuil"

This is the foundation authorized to receive donations at the secretariat.

CLC-France will be happy to welcome young people from all over the world, particularly young CLCers. It will be an opportunity to create a living network of friendship and exchange between members of the same World CLC Community, on a scale hardly possible under other circumstances. Let us not miss the opportunity!

In two years' time, the young people of CLC-France will be happy to go to.....? for the next WYD.

See you soon, all of you!

Dominique HIESSE
For CLC-France

Meeting of the Latin-American CLC National Leaders

Latin-American communities hold regional meeting of national leaders every second year. Our aim is to evaluate the functioning of the community and the apostolic projects taken up in each country and in common. We are looking for mutual support, exchange of experiences and formation material, to define common apostolic projects, etc. Together we try to see the pastoral lines of our Latin-American Church and support its growth from our Ignatian charism.

Although the meeting takes place every second year, we take advantage of the World Assembly, every four years, to hold one meeting then. In that way the reference meeting is held every four years in a Latin-American country.

The Fifth Latin-American Meeting was held from August 7-11, 1996, in San Miguel (Buenos Aires, Argentina). It was organized jointly by the CLC-Argentina Community and the Latin-American Service Committee (for which CLC-Uruguay is presently responsible) and it took place in the Colegio Maximo at San José. This college belongs to the Society of Jesus of the Argentinean Province. Besides hosting the Theology and Philosophy faculties, it is home to Jesuits in different stages of formation and ministry.

Most of the national communities of the region attended although we regretted that Ecuador, Venezuela,

El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala could not come. Each National Community was represented by a national lay leader (mostly the National President) and the Ecclesiastical Assistant. The following people from outside the region were also invited to enrich the fruit of this meeting:

José Maria Riera (Spain - President of the World CLC) and his wife, Aurora Camps ; Patricia Schweier (Germany - Euroteam Coordinator); Fr Julian Elizalde S.J.. (Rome - World CLC Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant).

The meeting went through two stages: the first stage was dedicated to sharing our mission experiences, basically what was implemented in each National Community since the last Hong Kong World Assembly in 1994. The second stage was dedicated to considering a long-term formation programme proposed by the World Council.

On the first day, we started with a synthesis of the World Assemblies. Our World Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant, Julian Elizalde s.j. gave us an historical background that helped us to visualize the process the World Community went through from the stages where the emphasis was put on clarifying "Our Identity" to the meaning of our 12th Hong Kong World Assembly with its "Community in Mission". His summing up of this last assembly helped us in the work that followed. It consisted in identifying the experiences that stood out in our mission field, where our energy had gone since Hong Kong and the impact it had had on the communities.

The way we looked at our reality was later enriched by two contributions. First, Fernando Salas s.j. (Chile) explained some ideas showing how Saint Ignatius of Loyola's life combined an awareness of mission, a formation orientated towards the creation of "adequate subjects" and the praxis of mission. He certainly underlined the importance of bettering and furthering our formation for a greater service to the Lord and his Church.

José Maria Riera successively gave us the World ExCo's vision on the subject of mission.

We tried to identify our strong and weak points in the field of mission. Some relevant aspects were put

forward thanks to the work of the groups:

Strong points

- work with the poor
- many individual and community apostolic experiences
- greater awareness of the value of the Spiritual Exercises for vocation and apostolic discernment

Weak points

- lack of communication
- lack of assistants
- many specific tasks but without a sense of mission
- there is much to do within CLC and the Church, but it is necessary to go more towards society
- there is a need for a more serious formation in theology and an analysis of reality

The second and third day were centred on considering a long term formation programme proposed by the World Council to the World CLC Community. We took advantage of this to discern whether we would take responsibility for this regional project whose basic objective was to upgrade the quality of our formation and mission.

Basically what is this programme all about? It will be implemented over a five- year period and will involve members of the different national communities of the region. It will consist of intensive

and extensive stages each year. During the former, participants would meet in a set place and have specific activities for the different years (Spiritual Exercises, courses, workshops, apostolic activities, etc.). In the extensive activities, already in their respective countries participants would have a formation tutor who would accompany them in the different studies and activities offered.

The discernment ended in an atmosphere of prayer, reflection, exchange, and an authentic search for God's will. Different motions were experienced and they determined the final decision that was taken. The necessity of a formation programme with these characteristics and the above mentioned objectives was confirmed. The programme duration was revised; we chose to shorten it to three years in order to evaluate it. It was decided that this programme would not include the Spiritual Exercises in the intensive stages as we felt it was used by all communities. In fact, in this region most CLC members do them regularly. It was also decided to have two of the intensive experiences at the sub-regional level and one at the regional level. The setting up of a commission was then proposed to devise an alternative plan. It will be coordinated by Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer (Vice-President of CLC World ExCo)

who will be responsible for making contacts to find suitable individuals to form the commission. A list was suggested to her to establish these contacts.

The final evaluation of the meeting clearly showed the consolation with which it ended, a clear sign we were going towards what the Lord is showing and asking us. We lived a meeting that was different from others, basically because it had a central moment of community discernment trying to find a decision on a regional project. It is worth saying that it is the first community project that we take responsibility for, as a Latin-American community. It was not a meeting limited to sharing experiences of our proper communities, but it went much further, proposing an apostolic project that surely will improve our reality and will have an impact within the pastoral of our Latin-American Church.

Finally, we wish to thank those who made it possible for such events to happen: ADVENIAT for supporting our projects and in particular the project of this meeting, CELAM for its recommendation to supporting agencies, CLC - Argentina for its work and hospitality.

Alberto Gossweiler for Mesa de Servicio Latinamericana (the Latin-American Service Committee)

The Apostolic Discernment Process of CLC in Chile



At the National Assembly held in October 1995, the Executive Council of the Chilean CLC was charged with the task of **'promoting the life and mission of the Chilean CLC.'** For this reason the whole National Community was invited to an apostolic discernment process, beginning in March 1997 and ending in September 1997, when the whole Community will meet for their National Assembly with the theme

What is the Mission entrusted to CLC Chile by God the Father ?

In December 1996 all CLCers of Chile were invited by the National Council to participate in the process with following words :

"We want to welcome Jesus Christ who, sent by the Father, wishes to reveal himself to us more fully. We meet Him in the reality surrounding us. Through this reality, Jesus speaks to us and calls us to share in His mission. That is why today, with gratitude and a sense of availability to God's will, we invite the National Community to join

with us in asking how we can participate in His mission. The discernment process we are calling for intends to address this question.

We are aware of the great richness and the wide variety of gifts and ages within the National Community. Therefore, we shall start discerning by becoming aware of the gifts we have been blessed with until today. Such a variety and richness have been granted to us so that we may serve better. It is obvious that each Regional

Community will live this discernment according to its history and its stage of growth."

Along with the letter of convocation sent to all regional communities, the following short appendix describing three levels in understanding the CLC "mission" was sent.

Mission in CLC

In order to understand better what we mean when we speak about "mission" in CLC, we must distinguish three different levels which are interlinked.

① The mission given by the Father and received by the Son¹, which Saint Ignatius refers to in the contemplation of the Incarnation (SpEx 101-107).

The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity lovingly contemplate the surface of the earth, this very world, and in it the whole of humankind, so diverse and divided by problems, sins and conflicts. God experiences loving and, seeing his beloved creature(s) suffering, takes action He speaks a word: "Let us redeem the human race." This is the expression of a decision already made. These divine words spoken over man and history are translated into a real praxis: the Son's mission.

② Our mission is to participate in Jesus Christ's mission and arises from personally experiencing the Father's redeeming love in the Son.

This creates a growing desire to answer the call we have received to be an instrument of God's love and God's Kingdom in all dimensions and environments of human life. As Christians, sealed by baptism and moved by the Spirit of Jesus, we want to bear witness to the Good News even in the humblest tasks of daily life. Therefore our mission expresses itself in a lifestyle, a fundamental orientation, in options or priorities, which lead us to respond to the needs of the world and the human family by means of the Gospel of Jesus and our own charism.

③ What we wrote above becomes more specific in our mission as elections and practical tasks, carried out with evangelical motivation and style, and oriented towards real necessities².

It is through initiatives and personal apostolic services that we try to make Christ and his salvific

¹ See "CLC and centrality of mission", (the sources of our mission) in *Progressio* supplement n° 42, July 1994, p. 38

² See *CLC Pedagogy: Apostolic Mission*, in "The CLC Charism".

action present in the family, in society and in the Church. It is also by service or the works of **associated apostolate** in which we are united to others, by means of either our own or external structures, that we try to bring about a more profound and stable good that can leave a deeper mark on our society.

The first level mentioned is at the root of any mission (we are sent in the Unique One who is sent). This is given us by grace and we are moved with deep gratitude. It is a gift received by all humanity and revealed in Jesus, the Christ.

On the second level, we are called by the sacrament of Baptism. In the Spiritual Exercises it is expressed in the election of state or change of life style³. It is this second level we want to live in CLC as a newly discerned option today, to be shared by the National Community members.

The third level is the level of the practical apostolic task, the works or services of each day. They are the fruit of the global option taken in community and assumed with joy by each community member. They can be personal works or actions, or actions taken by a member in conjunction with others.

Looking at mission from the first level, we see it traversed by God's **saving decision** and **fidelity**. This leads us to go on to the second and then the third level in the reality of our lives. This way of looking at mission is marked by the trust that arises in those who receive everything through God's initiative.

On the other hand, if we look at mission from the third level, our daily life, our attitude reflects full **availability** to God's initiative. He calls us, in Jesus, to be **entrepreneurs** in the tasks of the Kingdom.

Steps of the discernment process

Step ①

Spiritual preparation and renewed awareness of our CLC charism
from March 15 to April 7, 1997.

Grace asked for: to grow in availability as a community in order to be sent on mission.

Personal and community work
according to guideline #1 sent by the Regional Council.

Step ②

Look at the reality of our CLC in Chile and in the Chilean Church
from April 7 to May 18, 1997.

Grace asked for: to be sensitive to recognizing God's call to our

³ Sp. Ex. n° 169 & 189.

community and today's call to us in Chile and in the Chilean Church.

Personal and community work according to guideline #2 sent by the Regional Council.

Step ③

Look for possible answers to God's call to the Community from May 18 to June 15, 1997.

Grace asked for: recognize God's call in the spiritual movements we experience in the face of what surrounds us and be able to answer according to the Ignatian criteria.

Personal and community work according to guideline #3 sent by the Regional Council.

Step ④

Look for community consent to the answer we wish to give to God's call from June 15 to July 6, 1997.

Grace asked for: reach community consensus in the answer we wish to give to God's call.

Personal and community work according to guideline #4 sent by the Regional Council.

Step ⑤

Look for consensus in each regional community from July 6-31, 1997.

Grace asked for: Reach a consensus in the answer we wish to give to God's calls in the regional community.

Community work directed by the Regional Council.

Step ⑥

Look for consensus in the National Community preparation of the National Assembly from August 1-31, 1997.

National Assembly from September 11-14, 1997, in Punta de Talca.

Grace asked for: reach a consensus in the answer we wish to give to God's calls in the national community and welcome this consensus as the mission the Father entrusts to us today.

Community work directed by the National Executive Council.

Step ⑦

Assuming the received mission in each regional community

from October 1, 1997, onwards.

Grace asked for: to assume the mission given by the Assembly to the National Community and to look for ways to pursue it diligently in personal or associated apostolate.

The apostolic discernment process that CLC started in Chile is new to the community and, besides trying to answer the above-mentioned central question, wants to be an opportunity to grow together in practising discernment in which the following elements are necessarily found:

personal and community prayer, the way to look at reality and renewed contact with reality, the CLC charism, the spiritual movements that arise by this contact with reality, and finally the group process.

These elements, constitutive of a common apostolic discernment, are to be found throughout the process and in each of its steps. It has been suggested that we constantly ask the Lord our God for the grace of availability.

In order to facilitate discernment, the National Council has sent rules with suggestions for group meetings. The first one is centred on knowing the CLC charism as such, marked by availability and service.

In the second one, suggestions are given for ways to open up to the national and ecclesial reality so as to find in this reality God's calls to greater service.

The CLC National Council has asked the Fr Provincial of the

Society of Jesus that during this period of time the Community be assured of the Province advice regarding CLC's mission in Chile. It sees the possibility of a collaboration between lay people and Jesuits as a stimulating challenge.

The third rule aims to recognize the spiritual reactions experienced in each group when faced with the needs seen in the Chilean reality. The last rule is a help so that each group reaches a consensus in the answer they intend to give to God's call facing reality.

Each CLC regional community wishes to arrive at the National Assembly with a proposal concerning the apostolic priorities of the Community in Chile. We hope that CLC receives its mission of service from the Assembly, as a body discerning God's will in our specific history.

The CLC Chile asks the World Community to accompany them in this important time in the life of the community with their prayers.

CVX Chile
Maria Luisa Santander 0290
Santiago - Chile
Fax: 0056 2 209 0594

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