

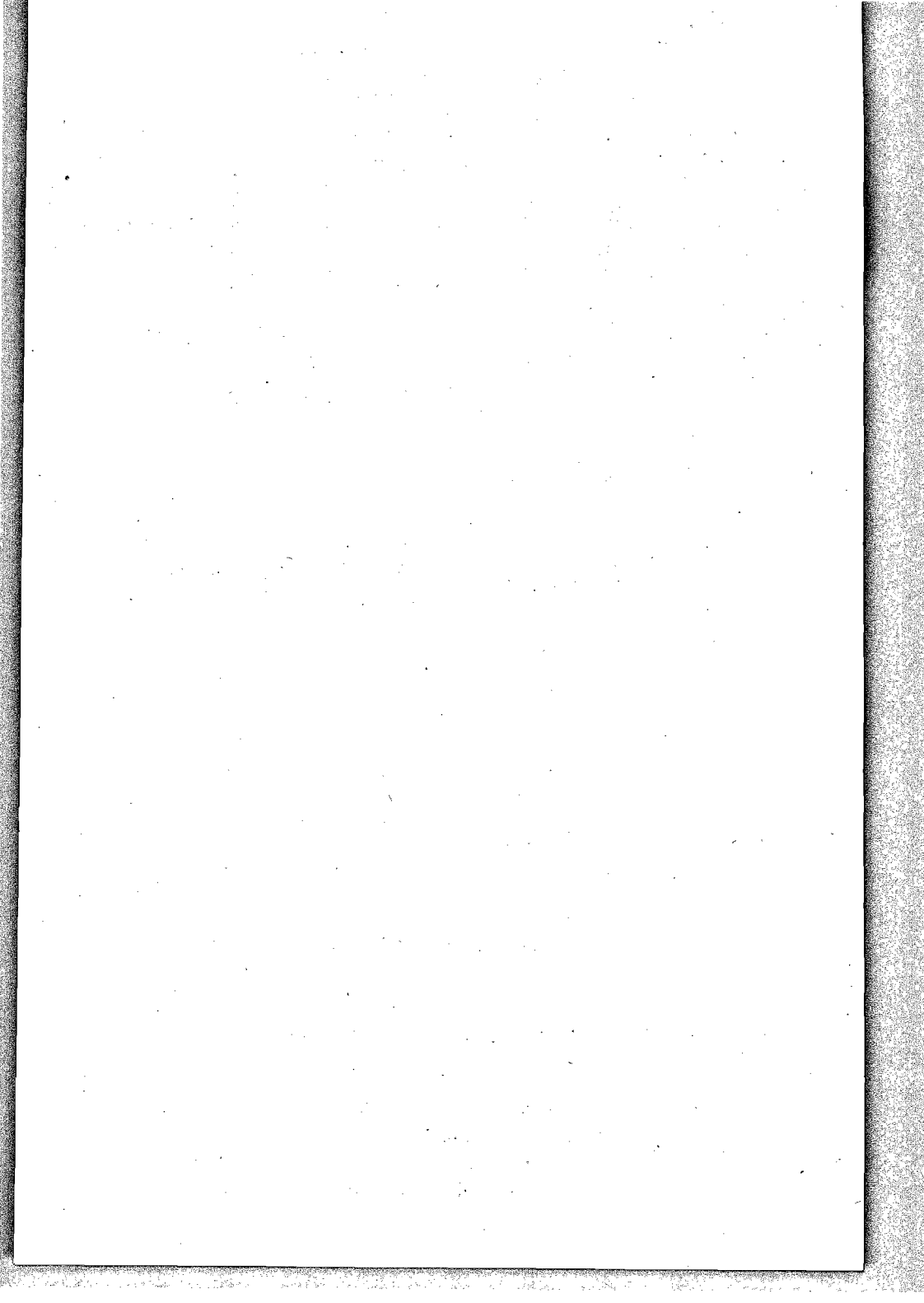


CLC Young People in Mission



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"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)

Foreword

As we end the second millennium and initiate the XXIst century, we live in the midst of great cultural changes that deeply question young people. In this issue of *PROGRESSIO*, we wish to contribute to the reflection of young women and men of our CLC who will live and shape the pluralistic and complex new cultures.

We have been invited by the Holy Father to celebrate the Year 2000 Jubilee, the anniversary of the Incarnation of God among us. By accepting this invitation, the Christian Life Community expresses the desire to let our everyday lives be touched and moved by the Son of God who is now among us. We encourage reflection on the hopes and desires His Spirit awakens in us. We accept the challenges raised by this new cultural context, where faith has become an option and is no longer included in a self-evident way in the education of the young people.

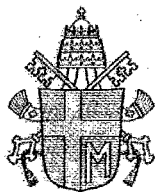
This issue offers three sections. The first is related to the next World Youth Day which Pope John Paul II invited us to celebrate in Rome during the year 2000. This World Youth Day is being prepared by means of several international meetings of which we present the first Preparatory Meeting - December 1998 - in Rome (by Jacques Borg Barthet, Malta CLC) and the Conference on Youth Ministry in Europe that took place - September 1998 - in Paderborn, Germany (by Stijn Van den Bossche, CLC Flanders). A letter from the 1974 Council of Youth provides an interesting background for the current preparations for the new millennium.

The second section is dedicated to CLC and raises the issue of our definition of "youth / young people" as well as highlighting some of the various organized experiences of young people in Australia, Chile, France and Germany.

The last section offers personal life experiences of CLC members in Malta (Sue Midolo), Taiwan (Wei-Yun Andrew Yu) and the United States of America (Sara Grace Bauermeister). Included here is the presentation of one of the youngest members of the World ExCo (Daniela Frank, Germany).

The last article, Mary and the Millennium, makes a link between the Holy Father calling attention to Mary's "yes" at the Incarnation in his message to the youth of the world and General Principle # 9 of Christian Life Community.

We are convinced that our hopes for the future must be grounded in the fact that our Lord Jesus is living today among us. This compels us to work for the future without rejecting the present.



Message of the Holy Father to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the XV World Youth Day

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and that of the Redemption he worked for all, constitute the central message of our faith. The Church proclaims this down through the centuries, walking "amidst the misunderstandings and persecutions of the world and the consolations of God"¹ and she entrusts it to her children as a precious treasure to be safeguarded and shared.

You too, dear young people, are the receivers and the trustees of this heritage: "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. And we are proud to profess it, in Jesus Christ Our Lord".² We will proclaim it together on the occasion of the next World Youth Day, in which I hope very many of you will take part. Rome is a "city-shrine" where the memory of the Apostles Peter and Paul and other martyrs remind pilgrims of the vocation of every baptized person. Before the world, in August next year, we will repeat the profession of faith made by Saint Peter the Apostle: "**Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life**" (Jn 6:68) because "**You are the Christ the Son of the Living God!**" (Mt 16:16).

Also to you boys and girls who will be adults in the next century, is entrusted the "*Book of Life*", which on Christmas Eve this year the Pope, the first to cross the threshold of the Holy Door, will show to the Church and to the world as the wellspring of life and hope for the third millennium.³

¹ S. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 18,51, 2; Pl 41, 614

² Roman Pontifical, *Rite of Confirmation*.

³ *Incarnationis Mysterium*, 8.

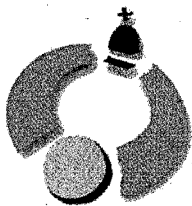
May it become your most precious treasure: in the careful study and generous acceptance of the Word of the Lord, you will find nourishment and strength for your daily life, you will find motivation for tireless commitment to the building of a civilization of love.

The Incarnation of the Word and the Redemption of humankind are closely linked with the Annunciation when God revealed to Mary his plan and found in her, a young person like yourselves, a heart totally open to the action of his love. For centuries Christian devotion has recalled every day, with the recitation of the *Angelus Domini*, God's entrance into the history of man. May this prayer become your daily meditated prayer.

Mary is the dawn which precedes the rising of the Sun of justice, Christ our Redeemer. With her "yes" at the Annunciation, as she opened herself completely to the Father's plan, she welcomed and made possible the incarnation of the Son. The first disciple, with her discreet presence she accompanied Jesus all the way to Calvary and sustained the hope of the Apostles as they waited for the Resurrection and Pentecost. In the life of the Church she continues to be mystically the one who precedes the Lord's coming. To Mary, who fulfills without interruption her ministry as Mother of the Church and of each Christian, I entrust with confidence the preparation of the 15th World Youth Day. May Most Holy Mary teach you, dear young people, how to discern the will of the heavenly Father in your life. May she obtain for you the strength and the wisdom to speak to God and to speak about God. Through her example may she encourage you to be in the new millennium announcers of hope, love and peace.

Looking forward to meeting many of you in Rome next year, ***"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace that has power to build you up and to give you your inheritance among all the sanctified" (Acts 20:32)***, while, gladly and with great affection, I bless all of you, with your families and your loved ones.

Joannes Paulus II



15th

World Youth Day

Rome 2000

Welcoming the Young Pilgrims During The Great Jubilee!

The Youth will be given a special place within the Jubilee of the Year 2000, as they are at a crucial moment of their existence, the time where decisions for life are taken and profound choices are made. We also believe that they can play a unique role during the Jubilee and that their contribution is essential to the construction of the *civilisation of love* in the new millennium. Indeed, the Holy Father, who throughout his pontificate has shown special interest and attention towards young people, emphasised this in *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*:

“The future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation, to those who, born in this century, will reach maturity in the next, the first century of the new millennium... If they succeed in following the road which He (Christ) points out to them, they will have the joy of making their own contribution to his presence in the next century and in the centuries to come, until the end of time.” (TA 58).

In August of the Year 2000, as you know, the World Youth Day will take place, which is a specific event taking place at a specific moment. But expecting a considerable flow of youths also during the rest of the year, the Central Committee for the Jubilee of the year 2000, in 1997, created the “Youth and Jubilee” work group, so as to establish a specific “youth itinerary” more closely adapted to their needs and expectations.

The activities are planned to offer those who gather the possibility to deepen their faith, meet other groups and to find places and suitable moments of “spiritual resources”.

CLC and World Youth Day 2000



Introduction:

Last December in Rocca di Papa, Italy, Filippo Cecchini from CLC Italy and I had the privilege to represent CLC at the First Preparatory Meeting for World Youth Day which will take place in Rome between the 15th and 20th of August, 2000. Our role at the meeting was primarily to gather information regarding the event and to identify how CLC can be present at what the Church regards as the central day in the week long celebrations for the Great Jubilee.

For me, personally, this meeting also provided the opportunity for a first visit to Rome. It is one that I will not forget quickly! I say this, not only as an architect in love with a chaotic vibrant city but, also more particularly, as a Christian who has seen, for the first time, the vulnerable but vital heart of the Church present, rooted in history and moving into the future.

Meeting:

The meeting was essentially structured over two days and dealt with:

- ① the background theme and pastoral programme for the event
- ② an outline of the programme and practical details.

The weekend also included a visit and prayers at the catacombs of St. Agnes and a Eucharistic Celebration with the Parish Community of San Luca al Prenestino. These two excursions helped to highlight the historical significance of Rome as the venue for the millennium Jubilee celebrations and provided a foretaste of the interaction that will take place between young pilgrims at the Jubilee and their Roman/Italian hosts.

Theme:

The central theme and the theological - pastoral background to the Jubilee are taken from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (TA): "***The Word became flesh and dwelt among us***" (Jn 1:14). This theme has a truly radical and universal importance.

Pilgrimage:

As Mons. Boccardo explained in his opening address that, as with Christ with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, the pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2000 is a journey that the Church is living with young people as they (and I add - not only they) are: *full of perplexing questions, disoriented but searching*. It is the same journey that we, as CLCers, have opted to support at Itaici.

There are three particularly relevant aspects of the narrative of the Road to Emmaus:

- The explanation of the scriptures
- The return of the two disciples to the Church (the apostles and the other disciples) to tell the Good News
- Christ making Himself recognised through a sign

World Youth Day is an embodiment of these three aspects; it allows youth the opportunity to understand the scriptures and to take their experience back with them to their communities. It can be a sign, not only for the young people who experience it, but also through them, for others everywhere. It is a celebration on the streets, an announcement to the world! Hence, young people are called to take part in the consignment and re-consignment of the faith.

Jubilee:

The Jubilee horizon is proposed specifically to the world of youth. The pilgrimage has already begun and, for the Church, these months are a time of preparation for the Jubilee celebrations which are, in themselves, a

manifestation of a living faith. In the Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (TA), Pope John Paul II outlines the significance which must pervade the whole of young people's Jubilee journey: ***"The future of the world belongs to the younger generation"***. This is why the Pope entrusts them with a specific mission: ***"following the road which He (Christ) points out to them...making their own contribution to His (Christ's) presence in the next century and in the centuries to come, until the end of time"*** (TA, 58).

The Jubilee is also seen, specifically, as an extraordinary religious time of gratitude for the gifts received from God and, furthermore, through God's mercy, a time for regaining what has been lost through sin and evil and hence a time of jubilation, of joy.

The Pope's Letter also appeals for the joyous acceptance of Christ as a total "gift", only possible through sincere conversion of heart and, pertaining to the very nature of the Jubilee, calls for the re-establishment of social justice, reconciliation between opponents, for brother and sisterhood, for the Church's preferential option for the poor and outcast.

Who do you say that I am?

The challenge of today's world calls us repeatedly to face Christ's fundamental question. The central theme of the Jubilee is one that is central for all of us as Christians and as CLCers. Furthermore, the Pope's Letter and many of the aspects of this pilgrimage relate very clearly to the continuing journey that CLC has discerned at Itaici.

At the end, World Youth Day will also pose another question. We must ask ourselves why those who have not come, have not responded to this invitation. What can we do so that the Word of the Gospel, with the horizons it opens, may enter into dialogue with the other visions which attract today's young people and may enlighten them with its truth? This time of preparation ahead of the millennium provides us with an excellent opportunity to reflect further on the central theme of the Jubilee (and indeed of our Christian faith), on our pilgrimage and our mission as young (and older) CLCers in our various communities.

Further work:

Filippo and I have been entrusted to continue working on CLC's participation at World Youth Day. Admittedly, this article has been a long time coming and I must apologise for not having been able to present this brief introduction to all of you before. Nevertheless, we still intend to find a way to organise a group of young CLC pilgrims for the Jubilee. I would welcome responses, ideas and any questions as soon as possible as time is very short. It is extremely important for us to be able to understand the interests of our respective communities so that we might make preparations for a group of people for the Jubilee. I would particularly appreciate getting into contact with CLCers who were present at the last World Youth Meeting in Paris as I was not there myself and have little information of how attendance for Paris was organised from a CLC point of view.

The 2nd Preparatory Meeting for World Youth Day 2000 will be held in Rome in January of the year 2000 and I will be able to pass on further information as soon as possible afterwards.

Jacques Borg Barthet
CLC Malta



Youth Ministry in Europe

Faith Initiation: the Major Challenge



In September 1998, Stijn Van den Bossche, along with Sue Midolo, attended a conference on youth ministry in Europe organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Paderborn, Germany. Both delegates of World CLC work in the domain of theology. Stijn is also involved in the Youth ministry field and shares his reflections on the conference.

Theme:

"What Christians for the year 2000? A project of life for the young"⁴.

Background:

The conference on Youth Ministry in Paderborn included Cardinal Stafford, Prefect of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, Secretary of the Council Msgr. Rylko and Msgr. Renato Boccardo, responsible for the Council's youth section. 32 European bishops' conferences (plus or minus 10 sent a "youth bishop") and 28 movements were represented. As well, youth movements with a Christian background or Christian movements with a youth department were present. Among those, Sue Midolo, a young person from the Maltese Christian Life Community, and I,

⁴ See CONSEIL PONTIFICAL POUR LES LAÏCS (ed.), *Ensemble sur les routes de l'Europe. Actes de la IIIème Rencontre Européenne de Pastorale des Jeunes - Paderborn, 21-24 septembre 1998* (Collection Jeunes - 1), Cité du Vatican, 1999, pp. 227.

as one who is involved in youth ministry (inside and outside the movement), represented the World CLC⁵.

The conference consisted of inputs, workshops and informal communications. In this contribution, I will attempt to report my interpretation and personal evaluation of the extraordinary week we lived there. It is very schematic and needs nuances but the intention is to point to some highlights of the conference.

Faith initiation:

The main problem of youth pastoral work in Europe appears to be initiation in the faith. Everywhere, the same story is heard: the European Church is at risk in building for the future because of its lack of initiation (even in spite of different regional circumstances). After the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the big difference in ecclesial Europe was between east and west. This difference seems to be decreasing slightly, giving place to the older and, perhaps, more fundamental difference between the more secularized north, where the Church finds itself in a diaspora situation, and the south of Europe, where cultural Christianity seems to be more alive, but in the modus of the "still": still more people attending Mass, still more Christian presuppositions in society, although also on the decline. So, generally speaking, Europe shares the same cultural context: ongoing secularization.

Two small experiences led me to the conjecture that this problem is, in fact, a worldwide one.

⁵ I have worked with the Flemish Youth CLC for several years and had full-time responsibility for youth ministry in my Diocese of Gent (Belgium) for four years. At the CLC World Assembly in Itaci, I had the extraordinary opportunity to be the facilitator of the workshop "Christ in daily life", in which "youth" was a major area of concern. I wrote a reflective essay on youth ministry in English in which my CLC experience served as background: *Youth, Liturgy and Postmodernity*, in *Questions Liturgiques* 79 (1998/1-2), 122-151. To those interested and who have no access to this review, I am willing to send the text. Please contact me at: stijn.vandenbossche@theo.kuleuven.ac.be, or Stationsstraat 120, B-9850 Nevele. I am also interested in your comments on this report.

First:

In Itaici (see footnote 2) I was astonished with what people from all over the world said with respect to this topic of initiating the young into the Christian faith (a topic to be distinguished quite clearly from the important commitment of educating young people to become good adults). When people shared about the difficulties in helping the young in encountering Christ and entering the Church, it sounded to me as if they were all speaking about Western-European young people! Yet, they came from the five continents.

A second experience:

In the summer of 1998, the presidents of diocesan priest seminaries from all over the world gathered in Leuven, Belgium to discuss the current problem of the lack of vocations to the priesthood. One of their observations was that whenever a country "modernizes" by questioning the "traditional" cultural foundations, as well as by evolving in such a direction, becoming a priest was no longer an important social promotion, there is a very significant decrease of priesthood vocations. This cannot be reduced to having only to do with the specific conditions for catholic ministry (male sex and celibacy). In other words, in a modernizing culture the real problem, then, is not only priestly vocations, but it is faith itself which is no longer continually handed on from generation to generation.

These two extensions of what was at stake in Paderborn, even if very anecdotal, make me believe that faith initiation is one of the very major challenges the Church faces for the future and, therefore, I am very happy that our CLC World Community opted for this service as a major area of commitment in the Itaici document "Our Common Mission".

Two classical ways of initiation coming to a dead end:

Unfortunately, the Paderborn conference did not sufficiently deal with the philosophical exploration of this cultural context of secularization and the theological answer to it. It was a pity that there was no attempt made at the recontextualization of Christ. The question about how we arrive at truth in a postmodern context of relativism where seemingly "anything goes" or, sometimes even, "anything must go" was not dealt with deeply enough

(this was only touched on briefly by Cardinal Stafford in his introductory lecture). We, too readily, availed ourselves of the data from sociology, psychology and pedagogy. These are the sciences that deal with how things do (do not) function, but do not sufficiently answer the "what"- which contextualized faith identity, must function where, which truth or ontological context.

From there, we moved on to methodology where the approaches, again, did not sufficiently take into account the postmodern context. Therefore, two ways for youth ministry were mainly offered that could not come up with a "solution".

The first way:

The approach "from above", was that we have to tell the young people "again" about "the truth" of life, happiness and values in education.

This is a "premodern" approach hiding a causal metaphysics in a rather "conservative" way. It risks becoming what Saint Paul calls "justification by the law". For what is "the truth" of life? The problem here is, on the one hand, an approach that is not too Christian. This conservatism is probably more modernist than it considers itself, defining the mystery of God far too easily in reality and making conscience, as the ultimate tool for discerning, rather superfluous because the "true" and the "good" are known in advance. But who knows the truth about Christian life?

When the "big truth" is applied in the field of education, are we going to agree on which literature should be taught in Christian language courses? Are we going to agree on the Christian vision for economy, history, and religion courses? This is not only a question of cultural plurality. Even Christian teachers do not agree on all these matters. Furthermore, we should not agree! We must recognize that, as Christians, we do not know... and are left with our personal conscience.

Classically worded: *every authority or support from the Church is subsidiary to the conscience* (Cardinal Newman is quoted on this matter in the Roman Catechism), *even if this conscience has to build itself constantly, using these subsidiary means*. So this approach "from above" raises problems about

our identity, about which there have always been differing opinions in the Church.

On the other hand, this solution starts by bypassing the context with precisely its suspicion of "big truths". So, we risk speaking nice words to very few listeners.

Rather, young people today ask that we help them to encounter Christ and that we have confidence in that they will follow Him using their own conscience (see e.g. Sue's article in this issue).

A second way:

The approach "from below" was even more present. In a modern perspective, we must raise the young to "the human" and God's presence is found there. Christ is found in the deepest self and God in real life.

Clearly present here is transcendental metaphysics or "progressivism" which risks becoming, what Saint Paul calls, "self-justification". This "way" always reminds me of the joke about the teacher in a religion course asking the children what "something brown jumping in the trees and gathering nuts for winter" was. A sceptical boy, in the back of the class, said to his neighbour, "Logically speaking, this must really be a squirrel but I'll bet that, for this teacher, it will again be Jesus Christ".

The problems are the same here as in the first way. On the one hand, this way is not very Christian. I was astonished to hear a professor from a Roman university say that it is more important how the young live as humans rather than whether they go to church. As a human being, I could, perhaps, agree with that. As a Christian, I wonder why we needed this conference if we start giving in to such a distinction. If being Christian is less important than being human, then let us go for the more important and devote our time to humanity without bothering about all the God "stuff".

But can we separate both? Do we not receive our true humanity, also (even: ultimately), sacramentally from the communion with the one Human, the ultimate Adam as Saint Paul calls Him, who shares himself with us in Eucharist? On the other hand, facing the context again, can we

finally recognize that even our best and most holy and loving efforts in this way really have not, very importantly, produced the results hoped for in today's context?

To quite a large extent, what we did in the last thirty years in Flanders was to guide young people to live a good, human, real life - and hoped that this would suffice in order for them to become Christians. But, the fact that we raised many, many, good people in this way (which is in itself- very good) must not hide the fact that this approach did not work so well towards initiation into the Christian faith.

In the current developing cultural phase, we observe that a different perspective of looking at God (or not) results in a different view of humankind. In Christianity, the person is, and is called to be, more specifically the image of (the biblical) God. So, we cannot overlook the encounter with Christ in youth ministry.

Throughout the discussions, this game of "truth identity" versus "human universality", "tradition" versus "aggiornamento", "conservatism" versus "progressivism" was omnipresent as a mental framework: the ebb and flow of anti-modern and modern metaphysics. I believe that we really have to step out of the ontotheological-metaphysical thinking patterns which are underneath it. This means that, respectively, the "truth concept" and the "human concept" function as an idol or a false god to which we surrender and on which we build life. We do this rather than trusting ourselves to God's mystery (Saint Paul calls this "justification in faith") as revealed in the bible, especially in the encounter with Christ, and lived in the Church community.

Yet, there was a deep experience of a Church community searching to listen to the Spirit. Believe it or not, "the Vatican" did not have its own solution: not even in the end, let alone in advance. I had some early concerns of the organising Magisterium "forcing" a conservative approach and having to tell them that this will no longer work in our regions. In fact, the floor was opened to very different opinions. If the analysis came, rather, from the north and the responses offered, rather, from the south, the answers remained very divergent.

Therefore, I want to stress how very gratifying this "Catholic Church experience" was. It presented quite a different picture of "the Vatican" from what the press usually offers us - even if it was only this one secretariat. This was not the Magisterium over and against the laity, as in the clerical model. Here, no-one had the right answer in advance and, from the cardinal to the youngest present, all searched together. All symbolic (sacramental) positions in the Church came to life. In one way, the distinction between laity (my perspective) and hierarchy was not present because the discussion was so open. In another way, it was present because it gave some insight on the symbolic position of where each stands. In short, we were one Church in search of God's will, even if we did not agree on everything.

Reality instructing theory: the spiritual movements including CLC:

A new, "postmodern" model of youth ministry was not very present, conceptually. It was, however, present in the Church life represented.

What does not yet exist, fully, as a theoretical model (even if some sketch can be given), seems to grow in practice. Those who initiate in the Church and, therefore, probably show the picture of the Church of tomorrow, are the (often new) spiritual movements. When I compare how I experienced them in Paderborn with my (not too positive) memories from the preparation of the World Youth Days in Paris, I think that they are, step by step, opening up (some more than others) to the universal Church as well as to the personal conscience. Hence, they are overcoming the particularism which, sometimes in the past, situated them in a ghetto as well as in a conservative position. In these movements, God's alterity seems to be installed from within. It is impressive what they do, even if the numbers must not be exaggerated. They are in a position to give evidence to the fact that to become a Christian in Europe takes a long and profound initiation. They are, largely, building the Church of tomorrow in Europe.

As these movements integrate further into the Church, I expect that a number of them will discover that they do not own a particular charism within the Church (although some clearly do), but that they just accent different ways of initiation in faith. It is there, I believe, that they discover the new position of the Church in culture. Our "truth" is not the old,

cultural "big truth" any longer. It is not "the human" in the pluralist culture developing its own critical consciousness loose from ultimate foundations. It is, ultimately, a religious "truth" which the Church receives sacramentologically and pneumatologically, even if we have to communicate about it among ourselves and with culture, as rationally as possible.

Here is where I am proud of CLC and especially of my friend, Sue, who was asked to witness as a young person before the assembly. Her intervention made quite an impression on the audience. People appreciated that she spoke, both, very "progressively" and from a "high" Christian identity placing the personal encounter between creature and Creator at the heart of youth ministry. Especially interesting was that even the critiques that were made were very "Ignatian". Sue was reproached for the risk of being too subjective (thus St. Ignatius' assumed illuminism).

If in most European countries, CLC is not as "successful" as the new movements, it is probably partly due to being older and linked more, sometimes too much, to traditional Church structures, including a certain way of being linked to the Society of Jesus. In this context, I would like to quote Father Kolvenbach's answer in Itaici to a European participant asking if the new evolutions in the Church (place of women, responsible lay people, minorisation) do not ask also for transitions in structures in the Church and in the Society of Jesus.

Father Kolvenbach replied, "My first temptation would be to answer: in the Church, yes, in the Society of Jesus, no".

*Those who think that, in spite of some difficulties we face with initiation, things can go on as they have always been....have no future. What has been most clearly absent is the "traditional" Church.

Church renewal urgently requested:

Increasingly, youth and faith initiation is a major and growing concern. As present as the movements in the new arising picture of Church are, as absent is traditional youth pastoral ministry;

- ① be it territorial (the parish does not initiate)
- ② be it categorial (catholic schools and traditional youth movements do not initiate - the movements initiating are spiritual movements with a youth section rather than youth movements with a spiritual dimension)
- ③ be it the traditional sacramental pastoring, guiding people through their lifetime (e.g. confirmation catechesis does not initiate)

This is not a matter of programs but of a reality itself. The parish and pastoral ministry of sacraments, the Catholic youth movements and Catholic schools are, currently, the major tools of the Church used to reach the young. Although these institutions render an extraordinary service to society, whenever the topic is initiation in faith, they remain "de facto" largely out of the picture.

Things do not work as they used to before, in the handing on of faith from generation to generation. We can regret this very much, and I personally do. On the other hand, we must accept new challenges from the Spirit in a new context, where (and this is what is behind this drama) faith has become an option and is no longer included in a self-evident way in the education of the young which, of course, remains, in itself, an extremely important service to humankind. This means, practically speaking and a bit naughtily, that if you feel called as a CLC'er to commit yourself in the areas of faith initiation, it is by no means evident that the real need of the Church is what it will first ask you to do. You will, immediately, find a lot of work to do for the parish, the Catholic school or in sacramental pastoral care in the traditional way. But, is this what God asks you to do if He wants you to initiate people in His Mystery?

I prefer not to give examples, since I recognize that local situations can be so different. I only want to stress that we think, too readily, that we are initiating young people in to the Christian faith even when the witness of (God's) love remains by far the most important component in youth ministry. But, in a way, the most important challenge in our new context is *how words can follow acts*, instead of the way we use to say, *how acts will follow the words*.

From these three traditional ways of proceeding, only the parish-diocesan youth pastoral model presents a new way in the pastoral picture insofar as its activities focus on explicit initiation (e.g. with holiday initiatives). Any kind of initiation leads to parish and sacramental life, but not the other way around, so it seems. Human education (schools and youth movements) is apart from religious education, if not in the theoretical input, then in real Church life. This raises enormous questions as to our pastoral structures in countries, such as ours, where there is a lack of initiation, as well as in countries, such as France, where territorial pastoring seems to be forgotten, somewhat, in the renewal which is more advanced there. On the one hand, how far are all of our traditional structures, especially the small parish, linked to the era of Christianity as a cultural religion in Europe? On the other hand, what does the territorial, not only methodological, picture of the Church in coming times look like?

The terms of renewed youth initiation in faith: the World Youth Days and the family:

This "initiation Church" moves on several "waves" of more hidden and daily initiation and on more exceptional and universal experiences. I wish to comment on the two terms.

The most universal "wave" is the World Youth Days. Here, the universal Church opts for a straight forward way of initiation as a compliment to the delivery of service in the traditional pastoral model. This seems, to me, to be held as having the utmost importance in these days. In my past involvement, I was often bothered about the use of these expensive enterprises, even when I knew how positive they were for the young attending them. My resolution may be to see that this is the largest scale on which the universal Church takes a hand in a new way of initiation. This means that these days are not only important for those who attend them, but also for the many more at home. This means that they not only have value as a moment but as a wave, with preparation and follow up, as a breathing of the Church initiating new generations.

We saw in Paderborn how many countries, especially those with a less developed "traditional youth pastoral ministry" as described above, were

still working with Paris '97 while in two months time the preparations for Rome 2000 were to begin.

The most daily, yet most important "wave" of the new initiation type of Church is, surprisingly enough, marriage and the domestic Church. I was pleased that Cardinal Stafford, in his interventions, kept referring to this. He stated, at the same time, that the core of faith is a nuptial mystery, that the sacrament of marriage is the first sacrament and the most important sacrament in the renewal of the Church that we face. The body of man and woman represent, bodily and sacramentally, this nuptial mystery. It could not have been better said by the Cardinal Prefect of the Council for the Laity!

I think, it is indeed very important, that we, married people, become a little more aware of our own sacramental status. Do we realize that the story of God with humankind started with the love of Adam and Eve, and shall end with the love of the Ultimate Adam embracing his Bride, the Church, as the New Eve? The whole history of salvation is thus calibrated from this metaphor of the love of man and woman, the place, par excellence, where God becomes sacramentally present.

I remember a very nice committed woman in Itaici, who was participating in the workshop on the young, telling me that she was worried because she did not make God present among the young in her daily life. Yet, it appeared that she had four teenagers at home for whom, I am sure, she was a splendid mother. She had not realized, so far, as to what an important sacramental commitment among the young this was!

But, to this witness of love in the family today, "words" must be added. If, in these times, faith has become an option in secularized society, the Christian family is, perhaps, the last "pre-optional" narrative community or place where initiation in faith goes together with education. The level where the option for faith is made is in the project of the spouses (I leave aside for the moment the very realistic possibility that spouses have different faith convictions, so that the option has to be made within the family itself). The spouses have the responsibility of the explicit religious education of their children.

At home, we like to tell our younger children bible stories before they go to bed and they react in various ways, as only children will do. My son prefers identifying with David killing numerous Goliaths every night, whereas, my daughters wanted, as in any fairy tale, to condemn the nine healed lepers who did not come back to thank Jesus, to an even worse illness. In the story of the good Samaritan, the three children were ready to go and beat up on those bandits attacking the poor man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. So then, mum or dad has to add a short homily.

Only if children get a religious education at home, will they have a serious chance in current society to opt for faith or, in our Christian understanding, to discover the call of the Lord in their lives. I have quite some confidence that my children will become good people when they are grown up, but I am very aware that the option for faith will not be as evident. It will not help them if we, as parents, insist that Christianity has the only truth and is the only way of being a good person, nor if we equalize any humanism to being Christian. All we can do is to try to lead them to the Mystery as well as we can and hope and pray that they may encounter this Mystery in their lives. Above all, though, we must not underestimate what it means to live in a pluralized and secularized culture.

How I became a Chorufaios:

Those of you who know me, will say that I am not just transmitting the message of this conference, as we were asked to, but that I am also reading my own themes into this conference. Apart from replying that this is what most of us do with most of the things we hear, I grant this. I tried to offer some reflections, including the data, with my subjective interpretation and evaluation of the conference. I cannot help that I heard so much that I recognized, documented with facts on the level of inputs, in workshops and in the formal and informal sharing of experiences.

On the other hand, all of this good experience does not mean that the future is easy and the direction for initiation clear. Especially in the liturgies, it became apparent that a lot of work needs to be done. Most of the (western?) young people present were not happy with these liturgies, judging them to be too rigid. Reflecting on their comments, I think that they were not asking for adaptations of the liturgies but for more

authenticity and, in this domain, less clericalism. This includes more time for reflection during liturgy and more attention to chants. The question was raised as to why most of the priests were "concelebrating", meaning that they sat in liturgical dress in the first ranks. Using less Latin, inviting intercessory prayers from the Assembly and welcoming all to gather around the altar for the table service could have been an experience of the community celebrating with the sacramental presider, instead of the clergy saying mass and the laity attending it. These are points to consider, possibly, in a next conference.

In this context, your servant tried, not without minimal results, to make the flock (and the shepherds) sing as well as possible, especially, the polyphone chants from Taizé (for lack of other texts). Cardinal Stafford gave me the title of "Chorufaiof of the Assembly". On this modest remark I end, with cordial regards to all of you.

Stijn Van den Bossche
CLC Flanders



The Call of Christ



The text of this letter written 25 years ago at the opening of the Council of Youth in Taizé, France continues to be relevant today. We, who were younger then, hear the echoes in the document "Our Common Mission" which was the fruit of the World CLC Assembly in Itaici, Brazil in August 1998. The theme of the Assembly was "CLC - A Letter from Christ, Written by the Spirit, and Sent to Today's World".

Letter to the People of God:

Today we have a certitude: the risen Lord prepares his people to become at one and the same time a contemplative people, thirsting for God; a people of justice living the struggle of humanity and of the exploited; a people of communion where even the non-believers finds a place to fulfill themselves.

We belong to this people. For this reason we address this letter to them to share with them the concerns within us and the expectations which devour us. Numerous churches in the Northern Hemisphere are under surveillance, subjected to torment and persecution. Some of them give proof that even without being linked with political power, without the means of power, without riches, the Church can still experience a new birth, become a liberating force for humanity and a radiation of God.

Another section of the people of God in the Northern Hemisphere as well as in the Southern Hemisphere compromises with inequality. Christians individually and many institutions of the Church have capital goods, amassed wealth in money, land and other properties, in stocks in the banks. Taking from their superfluity they give large sums for development but do not as much as reform their own structures. Church institutions give themselves the most efficient means to accomplish their mission, to animate their activities, to meet their commissions. But little by little in the life they lead, they prove that they remain institutions functioning only for

themselves. The churches are more and more abandoned by people of our time. Their words lose their credibility.

The early Christians put everything in common. They met everyday for prayer. They lived in joy and in simplicity. With this they were recognized.

During the last years of preparations for the Council of Youth and in the extreme diversity of the expressed suggestions, the following are the intuitions which came out before all the rest and we will concentrate the first period of the Council of Youth to them:

Church, what are you saying about your future?

Will you renounce the means of power, the compromises with political or financial power?

Will you abandon the privileges, renounce capitalization? Will you finally become a "universal community of sharing", community finally reconciled, a place of communion and friendship for the whole humanity?

Locally and on the whole face of the earth, will you become the seed of a society without classes and without privileges, without domination of one person by another, or of one people by another?

Church, what are you saying about your future?

Will you become the "people of the Beatitudes" without any security other than Christ, poor people, contemplative, creator of peace, bearer of joy and of a liberating feast for all even if it entails being persecuted for justice sake?

If we are taking part, we know that we cannot demand anything exacting without risking ourselves and staking everything. What have we to fear? Isn't Christ saying to us: ***I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!*** We will dare to commit ourselves together, without holding back, so that we can live the un hoped for, shoot forth the spirit of the Beatitudes in the people of God, be ferments of a society without classes and without privileges.

We address this first letter to the people of God, written in our hearts, to share what burns within us.

OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF YOUTH
Taizé September 1st, 1974

Australia: Youth and CLC



In this International Year of Older Persons, we are being alerted to how the word "old" skews our perceptions. "Youth" and "young people" are also dangerous terms. When we use them, we risk sounding as though we consider the "young" a homogeneous group—sharing a culture, a language and a common place in the Church and the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. The "young" are as individual and varied as any other age group. Indeed, it is not clear by what criteria and for what purpose we call people "young".

When I first worked in Pakistan, I was startled to find the leaders of a particular "parish youth group" were in their thirties and forties! They were "youth" only because there was a generation above them who held onto authority in the extended clan structure. In Jesuit circles, people are sometimes called "young" at the age of 45! It can be a way of disenfranchising people,

taking away their voice. Just as calling people "old" can imply they are "past it", so calling them "young" can suggest we are not yet ready to accept them as equals.

We too easily speak of the "young churches" of Asia and Africa in order to discount their insights and to impose on them a European theology and church structure. Wasn't the whole church still "young" when it first proclaimed the Risen Lord, when it produced the scriptures and developed its own structures?

Perhaps, lying behind our use of the term "young" in the Church today is the recognition of how substantial a shift has taken place in the culture of the Church throughout the world in the last three decades. Those we call the "young" did not grow up in a Catholic culture that was secure and complete in itself. They have not been the recipients of a carefully packaged, self-confident

and internally coherent religious education. Do we older Catholics perhaps secretly fear that, with the passing of the last pre-Vatican II generation, the Church we love will start to disintegrate? Do we find ourselves wondering whether the "young" will be able to carry on the tradition of CLC?

Such questions have to be recognised as the temptations they surely are. They arise from a fear lest the Gospel might no longer prove powerful enough, or the Spirit active enough, or Jesus attractive enough, or his love persuasive enough to recreate the Christian community anew in our own age. Fear like that is not the work of the good spirit.

At the heart of Ignatian spirituality is a readiness to trust that God deals with the individual and that each person's experience of the Spirit at work is an important datum for communal discernment. Ignatius' criteria for a person's readiness for the Spiritual Exercises had nothing to do with age. It might be suggested that, because he was principally interested in helping those who were facing a life-choice, his main focus nowadays would be on those we call the "young". Indeed that is where our movement began-among

the students of the Roman College-so the "young" could be said to be not a special case in CLC, but its primary members.

In an increasing number of contemporary cultures, of course, many people are faced with several life-choices over the course of their lifetimes. The majority of us no longer spend the whole of our lives in work situations and vocational choices opted for in our younger days; we face life-changing decisions again and again, so the repeated use of the Exercises has a renewed relevance beyond "spiritual growth". It is as a kind of continuous, communal experience of the Exercises that CLC has been most attractive to the younger members of our Australian communities. It is the affirmation of the value of their individual experience, along with the opportunity to explore that experience with others in a Christian context, that seems to be the attraction CLC holds for younger Australians.

We are a very secularised culture and there is not a strong identification with the Church among younger Australians, or indeed Australians of any age. However, it has been our experience that the processes of

discernment and decision-making in common have an applicability and hold an attraction for a wide variety of younger people. They feel the lack of any support in their idealism and find it difficult to navigate their way through the process of arriving at decisions about life and work that will reflect the values they hold. Not all of these would think of themselves as believers or would want to commit to a community, but they benefit from the association with other searchers. Some discover, for the first time, a connection with the latent "God life" within them, in the context of conversation that is open to the spiritual. This is one of the most valuable services our groups can offer.

For many of our younger members, CLC is the main experience they have of being Church and this sometimes leads to a certain struggle among us. We can perhaps discern a certain generation gap though the lines are not clearly drawn and do not always follow age profiles. On the one hand, there are those who grew up in (and may still belong to) a strongly Catholic sub-culture that emphasised the

external aspects of religion and for whom CLC has served as the only place where their experience of the interior life could safely be shared, fostered and explored.

On the other, there are those who have never felt themselves very much a part of the visible Church and for whom CLC will embrace not only the "spiritual" and "interior" aspects of the Christian life but the "apostolic" and "exterior" as well. For them it is not a controlled environment or a safe space, but involves all the engagement with one another, the challenge and the struggle which should characterise any Christian community on mission. The option of the 13th World Assembly to enunciate a common sense of mission has sharpened this issue for us. We have been quite struck by its affirmation, borne out in our experience of younger communities, that one of the most valuable gifts we have to offer is the process of discernment and those listening and dialogue skills that we learn in our community.

Dan Madigan SJ,
CLC Australia

Chile: Youth CLC



Susana has been a member of CLC since 1993. From 1994-1996 she studied theology at the Catholic University of Chile. After experiencing 8-day retreats, in 1998 she made the full exercises of Saint Ignatius in daily life. In April 1999, she received a degree in Clinical Psychology. Since then she has been involved in an institution that deals with those who have suffered domestic violence and who have lapsed into drug addiction due to poverty. She is interested in Clinical Psychology, as this can be applied within areas of poverty, and she seeks to organise and empower the community from within the community itself.

Young Ignatian lay people who are putting their mission into action.

In 1996 we began, as the CLC of Chile, to make our way along a route full of changes, actively seeking out challenges which would lead us to discover our Lord alive, present and active in our midst. As a result of this, in December of that year, the National Council called for apostolic discernment in order to answer the following questions: Where do we see the most urgent need? Where is the Lord calling us? What is our mission as a Community?

Many have made their way along the above-mentioned route and there have been many different ways of journeying along it; each person has travelled according to his/her own weaknesses, resources and personal challenges. It would be too lengthy to recount every little path that was taken

and each step along the way. For this reason, I have chosen only one traveller along this route, namely the Santiago Youth CLC. Challenged by its past history and of the apostolic discernment which was being carried out, this CLC began its own process of discernment seeking to reform its own internal structure so as to focus itself on apostolic service and to the greatest possible efficiency of that mission.

As a fruit of this discernment, a new structure arose, formed principally by work groups, dedicated to the organisation and the implementation of the apostolic service of the Youth CLC. Their greatest challenge was the coordination of the many apostolic activities which are carried out within the community. Since this structure was implemented in 1996, it was modified

in several ways, as the Holy Spirit moved. Because of this, our present structure brings us closer to a greater fidelity to our Lord, allowing us to experience a greater coordination and integration among the members of our community and the various services which are carried out within it. In addition, we are trying to achieve a better balance between apostolic service and spiritual formation.

The fruit of the apostolic discernment process was the recognition of six apostolic priorities to which the National Assembly of 1997 called us to commit ourselves to. Two of these priorities which have made a major impact on the route of the CLC are:

- ① To seek to spread the Word within our culture, being witnesses of Christ in the world and cultivating a style of life which is characterised by its openness, simplicity, compassion, justice, solidarity and honesty.
- ② To seek out the poorest and the marginalised, recognising that they call us to a simpler personal and community life and to a greater participation in the socio-political and economic structures in order to reduce the gulf which divides our society. We commit our talents, studies, work, professions, experiences and capabilities to this.

Starting from these priorities and taking into account the history of each place and the people who work there, the Youth Community chooses

one of these apostolic places with which it identifies and in which "as a Community, it recognises that it has been sent on mission". As a sign of this, in 1998, the Youth CLC established the need for "Temporary Commitment" for its members. Each person commits him/herself to serve in an apostolic place for one year, according to the style and way of service proposed by the community.

The Mission, which we receive and to which we have made our commitment, is expressed and becomes an authentic and everyday reality in places where the youth CLC of Santiago is serving today. These places are:

The township of Parinacota:

For the past five years Sacred Heart Sisters and young people from Santiago CLC have been working together in the township of Parinacota of Quilicura. This is a township consisting of very basic dwellings in which 1680 families of a low socio-economic level live. The project here is to prepare children, young people and adults of the township to receive the sacraments and at the same time to organise a Catholic community so that the local inhabitants can, themselves, take responsibility for evangelisation. The work of each year culminates in summer camps which take place in the township itself. About 300 children take part in them.

At present 12 people work here, 6 belonging to Youth CLC and 6 to secondary school CLCs.

La Storta:

Two years ago, the CLC and the Hogar de Cristo (a social support foundation) began to carry out a project together resulting in the establishment of the house of La Storta. University students, primarily, live there for a one month period. More or less, 120 people have passed through this house, 80 of whom are CLC members. All of them have had their lives touched in some way by this encounter with Christ in the everyday, in contact with others, especially with the poor.

The house is situated in the vicinity of the main railway station of Santiago where people of a very low socio-economic level live (some are close to extreme poverty). The house, a few meters from Hogar de Cristo, is where the homeless of the city find welcoming shelter. The fundamental purpose of the project is to try to give Youth CLC new perspectives in order to direct their lives and their personal projects, in the light of what our Lord may be asking of them. In order to achieve this, the scheme is based on three fundamental pillars:

- *"Living in real and daily contact with the poor"* in the various sections of the Hogar de Cristo, whether this be with the sick and dying; in the shelter for the homeless; in the Women's House, a place which takes in women and their children who can no longer live in their homes; in the three

homes for boys and girls from ages 2 to 16; in the once a week collection of fruit and vegetables from a Santiago market.

- *"Community life"* with others whom, perhaps, one does not know beforehand, but who all desire to come closer to the Lord by following a similar route. Each group arriving at La Storta consists of a maximum of eight persons, four men and four women. One who has experienced this kind of communal living before, takes on the role of coordinator and remains with the group during the entire month. Thus, La Storta becomes their home, where they form an apostolic community, experience daily life together, accompanying each other during this experience.
- *"An experience of daily personal and community prayer"* which allows one to discover gradually and clearly what our Lord is saying in one's daily life. The Spiritual Exercises are adapted so that prayer during the month in La Storta progresses through the four weeks proposed by Ignatius.

Street Children's Shelter of the Hogar de Cristo:

At the beginning of 1998 the Hogar de Cristo asked the Santiago Youth CLC to take charge of a new shelter. This is the only shelter, belonging to the Hogar de Cristo, which practically depends entirely on the work of

volunteers. The CLC takes charge of recruiting and training of volunteers.

At present, of the 40 volunteers who work in the shelter, 20 are Youth CLC members. All are University students, including the coordination team who is, also, in charge of the administration. The volunteers commit one night a week for a period of one year.

The mission of the shelter is to receive boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 16 who, otherwise, sleep in the streets providing the basic necessities of accommodation, food, hygiene, recreation and affection. These young people are, also, encouraged to attend other places during the day which might offer a more permanent solution to their problems. The shelter is able to accommodate 24 children and, on average, between 15-20 youngsters are received every day.

Francisco de Borja Echeverria School:

This school belongs to the educational foundation created three years ago by the Jesuits, the CLC and alumni of Jesuit schools. It is also located in the neighbourhood of the main railway station of Santiago, in the township of Nogales. The majority of the children who attend this school come from very disturbed family backgrounds where there has been sexual abuse and domestic violence. For some years, members of the Santiago CLC, (adults, young people

and even secondary school pupils) have participated in this project which unites and which invites us to an even greater union as a regional community. At the present time, 20 Youth CLC members offer their services in this school where they give reinforcement and additional classes to children with learning difficulties and they create teaching materials to support and promote their work.

San Luis Beltran School:

This primary school was set up in 1994, and is largely in charge of the members of Santiago CLC. It is situated in the township of Pudahuel, on the outskirts of Santiago, where there is a high level of poverty and need.

As well as providing an education for the children of the locality, San Luis school also attempts to offer other services to the surrounding community. For the provision of these services, it can count on the support of the Youth CLC which, at present, is in charge of three activities:

- ① a "pre-university" section for the youth of the area who would like to prepare for University entrance. (26 people work on this scheme, of which 16 are members of Youth CLC). This project has been in place since 1998, the year in which three of its pupils managed to enter University. This was a great achievement for these young people who lived in conditions of extreme poverty.

② Another group of young people take charge of providing support for pupils of the school who have learning difficulties in "school reinforcement" workshops.

③ Finally, there is a third group of eight people (5 from Youth CLC), who organise educational games and activities with the children of the area and, in particular, with those children who are in the high risk group. In order to encourage the children to join in these activities, the young people go to the children's homes to collect them and so they can, also, have contact with the families.

"Lo Castillo" Shanty Town:

This "Town", situated again within Pudahuel, is in an area of extreme poverty where families live in very basic dwellings and where many do not have drinking water or electricity.

Since 1998, the work carried out in this area is to support the organisations which exist within the shanty town, especially, the committee of families who get together and who are demanding their own dwelling. There are four of these committees in the town. The weakest two committees receive legal help as well as information on how to access government subsidies and other forms of material aid. Also, the most problematic people of the town, who do not belong to any committee, are given help so that they can try to organise themselves.

In this town, there is a public nursery provided by the Hogar de Cristo which looks after the babies so that their mothers can work. This nursery is run by some of the local women and they, in turn, are supported by young people from CLC. The latter, not only help with looking after the children, also teach the mothers and the child minders basic hygiene and ways to stimulate their children from an early age.

16 people take part in these two services, 12 of them from Youth CLC.

La Legua:

In June 1999, Youth CLC decided to take part in a new apostolic front chosen because of the extreme poverty and marginalisation present in the area. A school which offers primary education is situated in the township of la Legua, one of the poorest areas of Santiago, with the highest levels of delinquency, drug addiction, drug dealing and other psycho-social problems.

This school is on the outskirts of the area known as "The Emergency", a place which is famous for being one of the most dangerous zones in the township. The 300 students have very deficient levels of education. For example, it is possible to find children of 10 who cannot yet read due to the lack of motivation in the teaching staff.

With awareness of this reality, the Youth CLC was asked to promote

values and healthy behavioural patterns among these children through two concrete plans of action a) reinforcement of the literacy programme for 6 and 7 years old and b) participation in the workshops which the school puts on in the evenings for older children (11 to 14 years old).

As the Youth CLC service has only recently begun in this place, only three people are engaged in it which is clearly insufficient. However, the main challenge is to succeed in establishing this place as a new apostolic nucleus, where CLC is accepted and can strengthen its relationship with the school.

Saint Vincent de Paul School:

This technical school which belongs to the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, is situated in the area of the central railway station of Santiago. This is quite a new project where the CLC only made a commitment in June of 1999.

The main aim of CLC work in this place is the consolidation of a pastoral department which will provide an integral Christian education for the students. There are a great many possibilities for participation in this project. One of the most urgent of these is the preparation of students for the sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion. These students have come forward on a voluntary basis.

The groups of students, who are sent on apostolic mission, traditionally

organised during the summer, are introduced to a two fold experience of service and Christian formation.

Of the 9 people serving in this place, 7 belong to Youth CLC. Given the long term objectives which this work has, more people are needed.

The Father Fernando Vives Solar Project:

This project is directed at young people who are in the last stage of Youth CLC and who are about to begin their professional lives. They try to offer a service in an area of extreme poverty in Chile, one of which is Curanilahue, a commune which is located in the south-central area of the country. The village of Curanilahue traces its beginnings to settlement by squatters and, even though an old town, still has enormous needs incremented by high unemployment.

Professional people commit themselves to work in this area for one year, receiving a small basic remuneration while they offer their knowledge and enthusiasm to the poorest of the poor. Since the middle of 1997, professional people from Youth CLC Santiago and Concepcion have been present here. In 1999, an engineer devoted himself, full-time, to the support and the development of strategies of self-employment within the community. Two lawyers have opened a legal aid office and support the local unions. A social worker takes care of various

personal and family needs. All of them have made a commitment to serve in this place for one year, living in an apostolic community and being aware that they have been sent on a mission by the national CLC.

This project is a joint venture between the Hogar de Cristo and the CLC of Chile, the former providing the salaries and help in some matters. The CLC undertakes to recruit, select and prepare those who wish to serve in this place providing formation and spiritual guidance.



While being in such places and sharing our lives with those in greatest need, finding Christ Incarnate alive among them, the Lord has showered us with graces. Today we can say that:

We have clarity in our mission: we know that our Lord is calling us to serve the needs of the poorest.

We have discovered anew, aspects of our spirituality of:

- *how to be contemplatives in action*
- *the "magis" - which shows forth our desire to serve where there is the greatest need. (These elements are lived in our different apostolic places)*
- *In our apostolic work, we have met good and willing men and women who do not belong to CLC. They*

have enriched our lives and have called us to be more open to the world, within the framework of our work, to promote justice and dignity for the poorest.

In the transition from a Community of young people, centred on formation and looking very much inwards.... to an apostolic community which looks outwards and is centred on service, multiple challenges have appeared, some of which we list below:

- To achieve a greater spiritual community among the various apostolic places and among those who work in them.
- To put greater emphasis on formation, taking it out to places where service is being carried out and, especially, encouraging a deep prayer life which will allow us to hear the voice of God in all that we do.
- To recognise who we are, what our community identity is and to have a better sense of belonging to a "body" - both Christian and CLC - in and outside of apostolic places.

These challenges call us to keep on working, but, they also alert us to the risks which exist if we do not pay attention to them. Perhaps, the main danger today is that we forget both the spirituality and the purpose of the mission. When we centre ourselves, so much, on the apostolic work that it ends up by becoming

both effective and efficient, it is also very empty, since we have not invited our Lord to be at its very centre.

As one way of paying attention to these challenges, to remember constantly what our Mission really is and

how we should live our spirituality, the Service Team of Youth CLC sums up in the following few lines... what we are and what we are called to be in our lives:

***"Young, lay Ignatians concretising a mission,
that recognising our own poverty,
we are called to centre ourselves in service to the poor,
allowing ourselves to be converted by prayer
and by the deepening in concrete reality,
as a community which searches for a deeper communion
working with others."***



France and Ignatian Youth



The Ignatian Youth Network known as Réseau Jeunesse Ignatien, was born in 1984, on several congregations' initiative - namely the Company of Jesus together with 47 Ignatian Religious Congregations, La Communauté Vie Chretienne (CLC), l'association Pied Barret and numerous laity.

Four Pastoral aims :

- Creating links...among people, among movements, among countries.
- Offering concrete and dynamic meetings between the Gospel and youth / young people : pilgrimages, retreats, experiences abroad or in France, working sites or sessions.
- Answering the need for creative liturgies to celebrate the Alliance with God.
- Helping to live the spirit of service and thus associate oneself to the mission of the church as

regards the poor, the outcast, the homeless.

Two incentives:

- Promoting the collaboration among religious men, women and laity to serve young generations.
- Helping the young (18 to 30 years old age bracket) to discover and invest in the treasures of St. Ignatius Loyola's spirituality.

In view of the Grand Jubilee, the network "French Ignatian Youth" has launched a scheme, "Horizon 2000" with a desire to help young generations to live in the present, while thinking of the future, to invent the third millennium.

Horizon 2000 moves through three steps:

First step : *Founding*

19-24 April 1999: Retreat for reflection and a rereading of the past century.

Summer 1999: Working sites to help the poorest. (India-Morocco-Romania-France)

Second step: *Daring to speak*

Advent and Christmas 1999: First production of an itinerant band of strolling players to pass on the joys and doubts of youths about the year 2000.

Third step: *Living*

August 2000: JMJ walking pilgrimage to Rome, laying the stress on voluntary deprivation (International proposition was inspired by the "Ignatian" pilgrimage of Loyola, Spain in July 1991 involving 2000 pilgrims from 30 countries)

The celebration of the year 2000: a milestone for the future!

The year isn't an end in itself, it's a threshold to step forward. On entering the third millennium, we want to remodel our desire to live with humanity as a whole and to come to a better fulfilment of ourselves in our discovery of God.

"Modernity and Poverty", these words are a cry for help. They are directed to the young associated to

the celebration of the year 2000: they show how the word of God incarnated in Christ enables everybody to speak, be they of any society, of any language.

We are thus required to take a few steps, to move on. The opening of the third millennium can be our chance. It's an overture towards unexpected meetings, experiences and choices. It's an overture to be magnified, to follow an itinerary as a pilgrim to create and listen, to build and receive.

We want to motivate, encourage, join young people whose compelling desire is often to discover concrete social current situations and to take part in them. Those young people who are open to the humanitarian can be aware of the importance of interiority, of the art of decision making.

The pilgrimage implies a spiritual as well as social commitment. We invite the young to a social involvement leading to an alteration of the world, not only by cancelling out all sorts of ghettos but also by freeing oneself from one's ghettos. This pilgrimage urges us to stand upright, to take time to reap the fruit of those human and spiritual experiences, to grow up free, to direct one's steps along the path of

service and praise for a greater perception of the glory of God.

To think of a world without any ghettos, any poor people, without any refugees is neither utopia nor a dream - it means a world where everybody is responsible for, co-actor and co-writer of the future, marching towards another and towards the Other "Master and Friend of Life" (The Book of Wisdom 11:26).

We'd like to know if such an action is undertaken in your country. We'd be grateful if you pass on these reflections and propositions to those who, in your country, are responsible for the young between 15 and 30 years old.

Odile de Sinety
President

Would they, for example, contemplate walking with us in August 2000 (3rd step: **Living**) on Italian roads? This co-operation would allow the youth of the great Ignatian family to live in strong communion.

Contact us as soon as possible at Tel / Fax 01-45-48-04-27 Paris, France. Modern technology in communication enables us to make really effective preparations. Together, we could thus help the young to develop their love for universality, to share with the others, whether they be friends or strangers, to turn towards "Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam" for love and service.

Looking forward to hearing from you, we send our best regards.

Philippe Marxer SJ
Director

Germany: Youth CLC



Formation

The Youth CLC is an association of pupils and students from 10 to 25 years of age which mainly works in schools. In Germany, it is organized as an independent youth organization. Thus, on each management level girls and women, boys and men take over the responsibility of common leadership. Apart from these fields in which girls and boys work together, we think a specific work for men and women is important. Therefore, Youth CLC consists of two separate associations, one for girls and women (MF), and one for men and boys (JM). There are separate activities for boys and girls which gives the Youth CLC its particular character.

Our intention is that young people go part of their way together within these special CLC youth groups. Weekly group meetings in the

afternoon during which the members play, do creative work and participate in discussions are the basis of our activities. Participation is optional and anybody can at anytime take part if he or she wishes.

The three "pillars" of life and faith, education and politics are the basis of Youth CLC work.

Life and faith:

Within the Youth CLC, young people find a place where they can have a look at the questions of life, where they can ask about God, where they can reflect their own faith and doubts and where they can do all this together with their peers. We think the open-minded help of adult persons who are ready to listen, to understand and to give some ideas is important in this field. In regard to the spiritual life within Youth CLC's activities, we

have to mention the common beginning and end of each day, the services which are prepared and celebrated together with the participants, and the "early shifts" (early morning Mass with breakfast afterwards) which usually take place during special periods of the year. These elements are closely linked with the ideas of St. Ignatius. Our intention is to enable young people to live a specific spiritual life of their own on the basis of St. Ignatius.

Education:

Group leaders who are responsible for the weekly group meetings are particularly trained for this task. This training gives special attention to the fact that leaders have a great responsibility in the process of education of children. It wants to help leaders reflect on their own behaviour, to find out their own style of leadership, but it also conveys the necessary judicial knowledge.

As far as sex-specific education is concerned, we want to draw attention to the various role models, to the individual socialization and to one's specific history. We want to help young people to find and try out various

ways of behaviour. Our intention is to encourage and to enable our members to live and act in an attitude of self-confidence and responsibility.

Politics:

Youth CLC does not want to "look after" young people but has the intention to lead them to self-determination and to represent their own interests. Therefore, political aspects are never isolated, but they are seen in connection with the spiritual basis and the work of education. This fact is reflected in the structure of the association. Democratic principles are essential in Youth CLC organization, members being able and obliged to take responsibility from an early age. Even in the leading management positions of the association, there are young people.

Being an association of pupils and students, Youth CLC strongly supports a more humane kind of school. Being part of the Church, it stands up in support of a church which takes up the challenges of the current circumstances of life and gives suitable and acceptable answers. Being part of society, it calls patriarchal structures into question

and supports partnership between girls and boys, women and men.

Against this background, Youth CLC supports important current political actions such as the campaign "Jubilee 2000".

Mission

The campaign "Jubilee 2000"

The terminus "jubilee" refers to Leviticus 25:10, ***"And so you shall bellow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberation in the land for all its inhabitants. You shall make this your year of jubilee..."***

The campaign "Jubilee 2000" has two aims:

- A. *a far-reaching remission of debts for the poorest countries of the world in the year 2000,*
- B. *a new organization of international financial relations under binding law according to the principle of a fair balance between the interests of creditors and debtors (international insolvency law).*

Above all, the campaign "Jubilee 2000" is meant to be a campaign for the shaping of political ideas within the industrialized countries

of the world confronting the general public with a topic of development which, at first sight, seems to be rather remote. At present, there are "Jubilee 2000" alliances in more than 50 countries. The number of signatures in favour of this campaign already exceeds 17 million and it is still going on.

How Youth CLC supports the campaign "Jubilee 2000":

In 1996 the association began to deal with the subject of "remission of debts" and supported a collection of signatures in favour of the poorest countries. After the Youth CLC leaders had thoroughly been informed about the campaign, its intentions, claims and objectives by the experts of BDKJ (Bund deutscher katholischer Jugend, umbrella organization of Catholic Youth Associations in Germany), Youth CLC became an "official supporter" of the campaign in order to be a sign of its engagement in this field. After that, a lot was done in order to recruit as many members as possible to carry out activities in support of the campaign.

The topic "Jubilee 2000" was thoroughly treated on all levels of the association, both in local

groups and during major conferences. It was, for instance, dealt with in services and special workshops. The association's magazine "Antenne" took up the subject and members of Youth CLC took part in the "chain of people" during the G8-summit in Cologne in June 1999.

During a small conference of the Youth CLC in autumn 1998, there was a very intensive introduction to the problem for the participants including a special service which had "remission of debts" as its motto. The participants' reactions were encouraging and some ideas of how CLC could support the campaign by actions of its own were spontaneously born.

Our annual meeting (about 150 participants from all levels of the association) in January 1999 was completely dominated by the "Jubilee 2000 - remission of debts" campaign. All services and other units referred to this subject such as workshops on "Remission of debts in Bolivia" and "Poverty and women". At the end of the conference, a poll led to the result that the vast majority wanted all levels of the association to support the campaign. The participants were extremely enthusiastic about the matter.

During a minor conference in March 1999, three workshops were held, each of them referring to the remission topic under the aspect of one of our three pillars. The "life and faith" workshop offered songs, various texts from the Bible and prepared the service. The workshop on politics dealt with the latest development of this subject within the German government. In the education workshop, the participants worked out a concept for a group meeting for 12 - 15 years old.

The climax of all these Youth CLC actions was the trip to Cologne where a demonstration in favour of the remission of debts was held during the G8-summit. For this purpose, CLC members came from all parts of the country to take part in the "chain" together with the other supporters of the campaign.

The reasons why we support this campaign:

- ① *The idea and the name of the campaign are based on the Bible. The subject can be brought to people's minds in services and impulses referring to a specific text of the Bible. The connection of the Scriptures with the current situation can sensitize people to the problem.*

② *Youth CLC has always worked for peace and justice in the world although, in recent years, there was no suitable concrete project in this field. The campaign "Jubilee 2000" seemed to offer an opportunity for an important political action of the association again. Any group of young people needs a subject to fight for together, from time to time.*

③ *In order to bring the matter home to the people (members of groups, group leaders, parents, schools) and to win other supporters, new methods had to be found and tried out. This required a lot of educational sensitivity.*

The connection between our three pillars is obvious in this campaign and shows how closely the three fields are linked.

The campaign goes on:

In the summer of the year 2000, the Economic World Summit will take place in Okinawa, Japan and the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank is due for autumn 2000. These conferences will show if the words of the G8-leaders are followed by deeds. Time is running on and we think public pressure must even grow stronger.

We, the Youth CLC in Germany will continue to support this international campaign. Being an association based on Christian values, we want to fight for a future in which persons can live, love and work under humane conditions.

Monika Bertram
Youth CLC Germany

Expectations.....



Sue Midolo was invited to the Paderborn Conference and was asked, as a young person (age 25), to share her expectations of formation from pastors. This was delivered at the 3rd meeting of the Pontifical Council for the Laity re: formation in youth pastoral.



I've been asked to share with you some thoughts about formation as seen by a young person involved in a movement. In my case, I am a member of Christian Life Community where communities are formed following Ignatian spirituality.

Allow me to note immediately some positions I uphold regarding youth:

- ◆ my conception of youth is not bound by a fixed age category, but is more a matter of speaking of individuals (in that respect, I feel slightly ill at ease with the term "type of Christians" present in the title of this Conference). I firmly believe that what is needed are indeed, good Christians, and goodness in itself is made up of a diversity.
- ◆ my experience of youth is linked to my own situation in Malta where the young are, in general, living in a "no man's" land suspended between the rationality of modernity and the meaninglessness of postmodernism and, yet, looking desperately for a place to call home.

I do not intend, here, to look at formation from the point of view only of a search for meaning in life; that, I believe, is common to all human beings. Nor, do I intend to focus on formation as a means to human self-realization. My wish is to quit the logic of proposing a model of pastoral formation wherein formation becomes a matter of a linear process with a beginning and an end and expose, instead, a first step in this ongoing process.

As such, I would like to address an open letter to you, formators, regarding what I, as a young person, deem to be fundamental to formation, i.e. the discovery and experience of a loving God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

When asked by his disciples, **"Where do you live?" (Jn 1:38-39)**, Jesus answered, **"Come and see ..."**. The question was, therefore, not followed up by a series of teachings on Jesus' part. The invitation, on the contrary, was quite another. It was a call to experience, to live out the mystery of His love. And so they did. They went and, in fact, stayed with Him for the day ... which then became a choice for life ... an option in favour of discipleship chosen in freedom.

We, young people, do not ask you to offer us an answer to the essence of God; no, God will forever be a perennial mystery to each and everyone of us. On the contrary, as formators, please do not provide us with ready-made answers. Do not transform the option of faith into a set of instructions to be followed. Do not try to answer our harassing questions, but walk with us in the deepening of our questions.

As a first step to this personal discovery of God, please respect, also, our own experience of Christian religion. Stay with that which, in us, is different from you. Do not try to insert us into your own mode of thinking, formation or faith. Indeed, have you ever thought of the many times when, instead of staying with our questions, you took the place of our conscience and answered for us? Do not be too quick, here, at dismissing this question. Many are the young who have moved away because of your moralising, because of your attempts at imposing, even if unconsciously, your way of dealing with the Christian tradition, with this spiritual heritage. Please allow us to bring in our own reality, to interpret that tradition in our own context. If you impose your way, your interpretation, there will be no personal discovery, no personal encounter, but more of the same and, believe me, we are all bored to death of this "more of the same".

What you can do in formation when this means a personal discovering of God.....let me surprise you..... on one hand, nothing, and on the other, quite a lot. Nothing, because no doing of yours will force us to opt for faith and no pastoral programme can impinge so radically and forcefully on our freedom to make us surrender to this loving encounter with our Creator. Yet, you can accompany us and you can be authentic witnesses of your own discovery of God. Do not seek to impress us with eloquent talks or proposals of attractive pastoral programmes. Instead, speak to us of your own story, of your own "nuptial communion", as Cardinal Stafford mentioned earlier this week. Be, therefore, like the servants at the wedding parable in Matthew chapter 22 who are charged with the mission of calling first the invited guests, then all those who are interested. They cannot force their coming, but act as mediators to invite to the encounter.

Speak to us, therefore, of your own discovery of this God of love, of this God who reveals himself to each and every one, who is not a God of the masses, but one of individual persons and of communities made up of persons. In an age where hopelessness reigns, speak to us of the One who loved you and loves you. It is in this feeling of your experience that the Spirit is at work. You can, therefore, introduce us to the door of an experience of faith. That much you can do but you must also be ready to trust that thereon, it is the Spirit who works in us and helps us in what will be our own experience of faith. In much the same way, you can arrange for a man and a woman to meet but you cannot force them to fall in love. For even human beings, falling in love is a spiritual mystery and no tools can provoke it.

Similarly, pastoral tools in formation are but a factor to be considered for "making" the falling in love possible and for "when" the falling in love has occurred. Allow me here, therefore, to share with you the CLC way of life as the tool I have chosen to embrace, to continue my journey after this first step of the discovery of God (which is also the first step in CLC).

In CLC, praying with the Gospel is fundamental in our journey, but it is not to be lived as separate from our reality. It is to be seen as a re-reading, a re-lecture of our whole life seen with the eyes of God. We are to participate fully in this re-reading (St. Ignatius would propose, as such, the use of all our senses to bring the texts of the Gospel to life for us). This discovery of deepening of the experience of God's love is not, however, to be seen as a private do; on the contrary, this is a journey which is shared in a community of faith. Otherwise, our reading of the Gospel texts would be but a mere projection of our inner needs. So, in small groups, we share our prayer and reflection (in this, we sometimes differ from our friends, the Jesuits!).

I would like to end this open letter by insisting on the fact that I feel formation is not a matter of tool-inventing, but a question of a coming to encounter God in a process. And it is this which endows us with a Church community, a community built on this shared experience of this encounter with the Other. So, what formation do we ask? We ask to create conditions for an experience of Church.

What I have shared with you is but the first step in CLC's way of seeing the faith experience. I have talked about this first step of the discovery of God. I have not indulged in talking about the following steps in this experience: the taking up of options regarding work, the choice of the right partner etc. This second step is the young person's response to this vocation. On the continued journey of the Exercises of St. Ignatius, one will come to the cross of Christ because the cross follows on each Christian option. Further down the road, the experience of hope will be lived in the image of the resurrected Christ. But for an experience of the latter, which I here merely outlined, I invite you all, formators and young alike, to taste the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius by making your own experience of them.

Sue Midolo
CLC Malta

He changed my life.....



I was born in the city of Tainan, south of Taiwan, on the feast day of the Assumption of Our Lady in 1964. My father, from Mainland China, had come to Taiwan where he met my mother. When I was born, they send me to the church to be baptized and, although I became a Catholic, I didn't go to Sunday school. My parents were busy when I was a child. When I entered the University in 1983, I joined the Catholic student group. I did have a wonderful time with those Catholic young friends.

After my two-year duty of service in the army in 1989, I joined CLC in Taipei, a city in northern Taiwan. It was a new group with about 20 young people in it. I had my first experience of the Spiritual Exercises in daily life (Annotation 19) during that time. When I began this "school of prayer", I didn't know what it was. I just followed scheduled material and met Fr. Jaime Valenciano, my spiritual companion, every two weeks. The material I used was for a ten month's course. I stopped at the 4th month because I decided go to the United States to do my graduate studies in July 1990. At that time, I thought my future career was more important than improving my relationship with God.

After spending three years finishing my graduate degree in computer sciences in the U.S., I returned, in July 1993, and got a job at the National

Taichung Library which is located in the middle of Taiwan. I was not quite satisfied with my job since I had to deal with many selfish persons in my work. Although I had a lot of complaints, I still continued at my current work for the sake of a salary. When I started to think about how to spend my free time after work, I recalled the group I had joined four years earlier. I began to search for a CLC group in the Taichung area. Two months later I joined a CLC small group again.

One year later, I was still not satisfied with the quality of my life. I thought that if I wanted to improve it, my life should conform to the following specifications: I needed to earn more money. I needed to have a wife. I needed to go to Church regularly. I needed to buy my own house. So, I made a plan in order to achieve those objectives.

First, I joined the stock market. I didn't spend a lot of time on it but I did earn some extra money from that "game". I was proud of my intelligence. Second, I started to court a girl. It was going very well at the beginning. Third, five months later, I decided to continue the Spiritual Exercises which I had not finished five years earlier. I thought that my spiritual life would be firmer that way. The last thing was to begin to save money to prepare to buy my own apartment.

I thought life was so easy, everything was answering my needs. However, a challenge came - the girl turned me down and left. I knew it was my problem, but I just couldn't accept that. I asked her to think of the possibility of starting our relationship anew, but she refused. My situation was just like that of a wounded soldier who cannot do anything but read and think. My life continued with sadness. Later, I succeeded in buying my new apartment and I started to receive the statement of loan every month. The more I wanted to do my own will, the worse the quality of my life became.

However, I was at peace and started paying more attention to the Spiritual Exercises every day. One day, I contemplated how the young Virgin Mary faced her new life with Joseph. I deeply realized that man and woman should listen to God when they think of living together. When I decided to put my married life into God's hands, my wounded heart was cured miraculously. From that moment, my attitude towards people also

changed. I yearned to know Him more and the way I chose to know Him was to serve people. In December 1996, I finally finished my first Spiritual Exercises in daily life. I became more courageous to face real life and its challenges.

In April 1997, I went to an International Formation Encounter in the Philippines. This was my first and very important international experience. I learned how to open my mind to those strangers I met in the Philippines. Following in their example, I learned how to treat others. I believe that God had done something in me during this grace-full encounter.

After I came back from the Philippines, I decided to make the Spiritual Exercises in daily life for the second time. I tried to put order in my life so that I could do my daily prayer without distractions. This took one whole year. My concept of human life changed after I finished the Spiritual Exercises the second time. I was not interested in the stock market any more. I began to use the money I earned to help people, since I started to believe that the money I earned belonged to God. The resources of the world should be shared with everyone in need.

During this time, I also accepted the nomination to the National Executive Council and I was elected in October 1997. Three months later, an invitation to attend the World Assembly came. For me, it was a big challenge because I was worried about my language ability. I prayed and handed in my fear and weakness to Him. Then, I got the courage and I decided to go. It was a grace to have such a good chance to attend the World Assembly in Itaici, Brazil. I met so many Ecclesiastical Assistants and CLCers from all over the world. Although I still had language problems, the Holy Spirit helped me to speak and to listen. I had never met Roswitha Cooper (from Italy), Mary Nolan (from Australia) and Agnes Rausch (from Luxembourg) before, but they were so close and so familiar to me. The greatest benefit that I got from the Assembly was the formation material. I brought back the "Spiritual Exercises for Today" compiled by Lydia de Souza from India. This book became my material to make the Spiritual Exercises in daily life for the third time.

When I returned from the World Assembly, I began to use the India version of the Spiritual Exercises. It was really helpful for my prayer. I

began to know more about sin, especially societal sin. The more I knew what sin was, the more I felt the ability to help people face their difficulties. I felt that my mission was getting closer and closer to Jesus' mission. Before, I used to complain about my work, but now I feel that there are many things waiting for me to improve in my work. I realized that the meaning of my work is to glorify His name. As a result of the effects of the Spiritual Exercises, I began to make my life more simple: to live simply, to eat simply, to dress simply, and "read" simply. I didn't use many decoration in my apartment, but I do have a room for prayer. Because I eat simply, I only produce one bag of garbage every two weeks. I don't pay attention to my dress any more. Most of my reading is His words. The Gospel became the spring of my life. I feel that the closer I come to Jesus by reading His words, the more joyful I am.

In October 1998, I started to spend time with a CLC student group which is mainly formed by students from two Universities. I meet with them every week in cooperation with the Ecclesiastical Assistant and use the CLC formation material to help them know God better. I also introduce them to the CLC way of life. I hope that one day, when they finish their studies, they will join an adult CLC group. I believe that the time I spend with them is worthwhile.

Recalling the process I have been through, it is the Spiritual Exercises that have helped me the most to further know Jesus. Knowing Him, I realized that the main purpose of human creation is to help people. I will do my best to become available to God. I observed this spirit of availability in the CLCers I met at Itaici in 1998. I am now a new man ready to enter the year 2000. What a grace has been given to me! I will say to Him now: *"Lord! Take me into your year 2000: Let me become part of your mission. Thank You for being with me all the time and for changing me! I am now your servant for all your people."*

Wei-Yun Andrew Yu
CLC Taiwan R.O.C.

Shaped by Mission....

Sara Grace Bauermeister, 28, is the newly elected Regional Representative to National CLC council in the USA. Currently working for a welfare-to-work job training program, she became a member of CLC in 1996 after returning from a volunteer experience in Argentina. As a result of the time in mission, Sara was drawn to the community and social justice aspects of CLC. She notes that CLC helps her to incorporate spirituality into daily life and in all that she does.



Today I attended my first RCIA class, the program which leads one to Catholic confirmation or, in my case, first communion and confirmation. When asked what brought me to this point, I naturally spoke of my time volunteering in Argentina with Cabrini Mission Corps. I was sent there as a missionary more than four years ago, yet it is still practically the first subject out of my mouth when meeting new people. Often, I wonder why it is that I can't seem to shake or "get over" the experience. Perhaps, it is because my year and a half spent working with the poor gave me life. Perhaps, it is because it was there that I learned to love and learned of God's unfathomable love for me. Perhaps, it is because it is there that I learned who I am and who God is calling me to be. Perhaps, it is because that experience continues to profoundly impact and shape me as I struggle to live out my mission. Perhaps.....

Looking back on the series of event that led me to Argentina, I clearly see the hand of God at work. It was my best friend Alison who introduced me to the program. She had been accepted and hoped that I, too, would participate. Not being Catholic, my first reaction was that if this were to happen it would surely be the will of God. As fate would have it, from the first phone call I felt peaceful and hopeful about it all. Despite the extensive application process and the quickening deadline, everything fell into place and I was shortly on my way to Buenos Aires. I was to be living and working with three religious sisters and two novices in an extremely

poor area on the outskirts of the capital city. The following year and a half was a truly miraculous time for me.

Having arrived at the end of the school year, I was first assigned as a teacher's aid in the preschool. It had been thought that this position would prepare me as a teacher (something I had no training in) and help ease my transition into the new culture. Regardless of any good intentions, the culture shock was so tremendous that those first few months were really the darkest period of my life. There were several compounding factors which caused me to feel this way. One was the language which I found very intimidating despite past studies. Another was the adjustment of living in a convent with women who happened to be very different from me. Most shocking was the overwhelming poverty and violence that forced me to contemplate the injustice in the world. The food, the water, the air, everything took time to get used to. The only constant in my life was my faith in God and I called upon that with every ounce of strength. That is what got me through.

Survival dictated that life slowed to a pace I had never before imagined. A simple routine became my saving grace. When I wasn't at school working, I was either in the chapel praying or in my tiny room sleeping. I spent a good 12 hours a day in my bed. Fortunately enough, I had made a few good friends who didn't allow me to hibernate entirely. The wonderful people I met and their strong sense of community were the support that enabled me to emerge from my traumatic state back into a normal frame of mind. In reflecting on those first months, I realize that I had, in a sense, undergone a second childhood. The total helplessness I experienced was harsh and humbling. Back in California, I had graduated from college, worked full-time, set up a household and, basically, become independent (as we North Americans strive to be).

Now, I had suddenly been stripped of any sense of self-sufficiency. I felt like a total burden on everyone I came in contact with. Here I was, the privileged Yankee (as they call us), volunteering in a developing country and I was totally dependent upon everyone else for survival! I felt like such a burden, such a failure. I could no longer go anywhere without asking directions. I couldn't stay out after dark. I couldn't work the hours I was used to or accomplish tasks in a timely manner. I couldn't even

communicate beyond a limited conversation! I had lost all sense of control of my world. How could I possibly impose on these wonderful, generous, kind, loving, inclusive, compassionate and impoverished people? I had been blessed with every advantage in my life, and now I was taking from people so willing to give, yet so deprived of basic material needs. What I came to understand is that God had brought me here to learn of a spiritual wealth that would forever impact on my life and the work that I do. I was to be shaped by my mission in ways beyond my comprehension.

As soon as I realized that I was not in control of what was happening to me, I was able to gratefully relinquish the guilt and unworthiness I felt. Christ was waiting for me to surrender the false notion that I have control over my world, no matter where I was living. This realization set me free....free to experience everything around me without trying to fit it into my own understanding. Free to appreciate life for its simplistic beauty, for its basic joys. Free to see others as they really are and to let them see me. Free to let others into my life and into my heart. This is the way I slowly began to allow myself to be loved and healed by God.

Argentina brought me to my core. It stripped me of the false impressions behind which I hid my pain and suffering. This is where God's loving presence healed me and brought me back to life. This time taught me a more truthful way to live and it is this way in which I continue struggling to live everyday. I contemplated extending my time there, however felt called to return to the United States.

In 1996, I began attending Saint Ignatius Parish in San Francisco, California where I read in the bulletin about CLC. I was thrilled to learn of their commitment to social justice, community and mission. I immediately signed up and was an original member of the first group at St. Ignatius. My CLC helped me to make the transition back into the North American lifestyle. I felt that my spirituality and experience had set me apart from the general population and my CLC friends helped me to see that we are all one in Christ and we all have a personal as well as a communal mission.

That group split up after about a year and I was without CLC for a while. Things just weren't the same. Then, a few other groups started at the church and a dear friend invited me back to one of the newer groups. I

joined, again, about a year ago and have since been elected the Regional Representative to the National Organization of CLC.

Cabrini Mission Corps taught me that life is a mission. CLC's emphasis on listening, discerning and acting on God's call is what we are all meant to do everyday. My formation in Argentina gave me a strong foundation to do this. Meditating upon my time there, comforts and revitalizes me to continue working in the here and now to create a better world. This brings me back to the simpler and more fulfilling lifestyle that I led there. The Latin American focus on people and relationships is contrary to the values promoted by western society. I still consult the wisdom of Argentine friends who know me well, know the person I am struggling to be.

I was able to attend the National Assembly this past July in New York and, now, am a member of the newly formed Youth and Young Adults Task Force. I take this position seriously and hope to stimulate much more participation of youth and young adults in CLC nationwide. My CLC here in San Francisco is a great little group and we are working hard to incorporate Christ into our daily lives. We really support and encourage one another, which is so necessary in this day and age. I'm grateful for their presence in my life.

All of this helps to keep me grounded. I am now taking steps to officially align myself with the Catholic Church as a result of the gratitude I feel toward those who have helped me along the way. I take this step very seriously and with much love and pride. Many wonderful Catholics, both in Argentina and the United States have listened to me, heard me, accepted and loved me. I have been so blessed through my trials and tribulations which led to a rebirth that resulted in the most glorious and fulfilling time of my life.

Deciding to leave Argentina was probably the single most difficult decision I've ever made. Someday I may return, but now I continue to feel called, as a member of CLC, to continue my mission of being a positive influence to those around me here at home.

Sara Grace Bauermeister
CLC USA

MEET THE EXCO

At home in the world.....



Some time ago, a German daily in Munich used the following slogan for an advertisement: *Born in Munich, at home in the world.* Friends afterwards told me, "This slogan also fits you!"

Well, I suppose, they are right.....!

Born in Munich in 1962, one of the larger cities in the south of Germany (in the famous province of Bavaria, well known for its beer, its castles and soccer team), I grew up in a context where the Catholic faith and the Church formed a very natural dimension and integrated element of daily life: prayers before meals or before going to bed (I remember those moments especially with my grandmother), Sunday mass, religious customs.....and churches. My father was an architect (he died nearly four years ago) and I am still touched by the fact that he also planned and constructed several churches, most of them shortly before and after the end of Vatican Council II. Now, after his death, they are special places for me to understand more deeply his personal faith, a faith which was a profound basis for his life and through which he also prepared my religious roots.

I remained an only child (a fact which I regretted very much), so my cousins became very important for me as well as the many friends in our neighbourhood, at school and later on in our parish. At the age of ten, when we had to choose a high school for me, I decided to go to one run by the Mary Ward Sisters. Meanwhile, I recognised this as a step towards getting to know Ignatian Spirituality.....apart from the fact that my father's best friend was a Jesuit priest. In a certain sense, one could say that Ignatius left his mark in my life right from the beginning.

In the Mary Ward High School, I got to know Youth CLC. Germany has a long tradition of youth groups in the spirit of CLC and in our school, at that time, a very active community was in existence. We met in a small group of six or eight girls and together with a Mary Ward sister, who had accepted to be our guide, shared, discussed, and organized actions within the school or with other groups in our diocese. We had the freedom to experiment in ways of celebrating our faith and rubbed shoulders with others (especially adults).....a rubbing which obviously created an atmosphere of inviting warmth. Looking back, I am very glad to have had the chance to get to know CLC this way and to experience now, how profound the foundations are which were laid down in those times, more than twenty years ago.

After graduating from high school, I started to study philosophy at the Jesuits' Faculty in Munich (originally only for two years - afterwards I wanted to study something more "useful") and in 1986 I did my Master's in Philosophy of Language and Communications. All that time, I kept in touch with Youth CLC, but also established my first contacts with the adult groups in our region through the Spiritual Exercises and through different formation programmes in Munich. Visits to Taizé were important for me in that time and I had regular contacts with a Benedictine community in our neighbourhood ... but again and again I came back to CLC. Looking for a personal spirituality appropriate and fitting for me was the one track, the internationality of CLC the other.

Within our national Youth CLC, I had taken over the responsibility of taking care of our international contacts (mainly at the European level, as well as with our twinning partner, the CLC of the Philippines). This task opened additional possibilities to learn more about CLC in Germany and, through the European meetings, to get to know many people and their different realities within our community. The window towards the world community was opened when I was sent as a delegate of Germany to the World Assembly in Loyola 1986. It was a very deep experience for me to meet so many people from about fifty countries, from a great variety of cultures and social realities, and speaking different languages. At the same time, a common identity in CLC made it so easy to get to know one another, to share and, finally, to discern together where the Lord wanted us to go as community: ***"Do whatever He tells you"***. It could be said that

the World Assmblly at Loyola was one of the decisive experiences on my way towards and in CLC, of listening to His voice and searching for Him and His will in my life.

On a professional level, I continued in the field of communications. After my MA, I worked as a freelance radio journalist until I moved to Münster, in the northern part of Germany, to start my post graduate studies in communications and politics. After three terms at the university, I was asked to take over a part-time position at the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), a consultancy office of the Church funding agencies for communication projects in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. Originally a two year job offer, I remained in this office for more than ten years. In April of this year, I was nominated its Executive Director.

Personally, the move towards the north (something very unusual for a Bavarian...) became something like my **"Leave your country ..."** (*Genesis 12*), searching for and answering to the Lord's call for me. It was a way of growing more deeply into the "spirit" and the daily life of CLC, of learning to live out what CLC could mean for me....and to experience that this way of life could be my personal vocation in our church. The two years of my temporary commitment confirmed this and confirmed my being "at home" in CLC. Part of this period was spent in Latin America as I was doing field research on the so-called "cultural radio" for my doctoral thesis. Whenever possible, I tried to be in touch with local CLC groups. I remember, very well, the profound experience of forming part of the local community wherever I chanced to be - as we are united in the one world community. Thus, in 1992 I answered with gratitude, great joy and inner peace my "Yes" to His call in a permanent commitment to CLC, to the way He wants to lead me in and with this community. A two year formation programme for Spiritual guides, offered by the German speaking Jesuits in collaboration with CLC, helped me to realize, even more, the treasures of Ignatian Spirituality. To spell this out in my daily life, surely, is a life-long invitation, allurement and challenge.

Looking back, I realize, more and more clearly, how closely linked the two tracks of my life are: my way towards and in CLC on the one hand, the development of my professional work on the other. In CLC, I got to know and to learn how to live the link between spirituality and

international relations. For me, CLC has become a concrete way to live my "international vocation" (as a Spanish Jesuit once put it). Without CLC, I wouldn't have found my way to working in the field of international communications nor to do so within the Church. I have the opportunity to see daily how the church, in all the continents, tries to give voice to the voiceless, to spread the good news, to cry out about injustices and to defend human rights. To make His voice heard is also a mission entrusted to CLC, not necessarily through mass media, but through our daily lives and in the places and tasks to which He called us.

1998, again, was a year of a long-running discernment and decision-making process. How does He want me to serve Him and His people? With the help and support of my local community, I applied for the position of executive director of CAMECO and was finally nominated for the position by our board. At about the same time, I was asked to accept the nomination as a candidate for the World ExCo. How should I be at the service of Him in CLC? I was able to offer my disponibility with the confidence that the community would decide what this answer would look like. So, last year in Itaici, I was elected as a member of the World CLC Executive Council.

"Have confidence" has become for me a very important name of our God, of my Lord Jesus Christ. He has offered me His continuous invitation *"Have confidence in ME"* as something like a key for my way to follow Him. During the last years, I experienced various difficult situation, filled with darkness, grief, pain, with expectations and demands which seemed too excessive for me, but again and again I heard His ***"I am with you, don't be afraid"***, implanting His promise in my heart. Looking at the two new responsibilities entrusted to me during these last months, forming part of the ExCo on the one hand, being the executive director of CAMECO on the other - I sometimes feel worried. There are many reasons to do so if I only trust in my own strength and capacities. But, I have accepted and try to live this mission in the confidence of His presence and His help.

Deo gratias.

Daniela Frank

MARY and the MILLENIUM



Father Walter Farrell's roots in CLC go back to the time of Sodality. As President of the Jesuit Conference (1984-90), Walter attended CLC events to foster Jesuit-Lay collaboration. He served as the USA National Ecclesiastical Assistant for two terms and, given the transition to regionalization, remained until mid 1998.

I've often thought that if I were asked to direct a movie on the life of Mary it would begin in the Temple of Jerusalem. The camera would sweep across the magnificent interior of the Temple, catch a young couple with their child, and zoom in on them as they talked with a venerable gentleman long familiar to Temple goers. The scene would be that of Luke 2:9-30 and the particular part of the scene would be the comment of Simeon to Mary and Joseph: "This child will be a sign of contradiction....and your own soul a sword shall pierce."

These words would pierce Mary's mind and heart like the sword Simeon spoke of. She would start to think differently about this whole maternal enterprise that God had invited her to engage in. As Mary pondered in her heart (a way of saying as she kept in contact with the promptings of the Spirit) she would start to think back to the

last ten or so months of her life and so the next movement in my movie would be "flash backs".

What a contrast now between what Simeon spoke of and her recollections of Bethlehem. Despite all the rough simplicity of an animal pen, the delight of Jesus' birth, of his tiny presence was unrelieved, a constant joy. Is it this infant that is to be a sign of contradiction? Is the bliss and peace of Bethlehem now to be shattered? And how different the whole Annunciation scene now seems. Gabriel had been so gentle and affirming but Gabriel had never mentioned anything like a sword of sorrow or this sign of contradiction.

I'm not quite sure how I would depict the next sequence of the movie, but perhaps the next scenes would show Mary talking things over with Joseph and praying over Simeon's remarks with him.

Gradually some light would relieve the initial darkness of the days after the Temple visit. Clearly, Simeon's words were of the Spirit and meant for Jesus and Mary. Clearly, despite the word about contradiction, the Spirit would not contradict what had been revealed to her in Nazareth. Neither was the Spirit now saying that the rapturous joy of Bethlehem was all a sham, unreal. "No," Mary would finally be saying to her God in prayer, "It is all real; it is all part of your way, Yahweh. I believe. I renew what I said before. Be it done to me according to your word".

Mary (both in Luke and in my movie) would live with this renewed commitment until the time when she and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem again when Jesus was twelve. Here, it would not be Simeon who would speak but her own son who would be speaking of being "about the Father's business". These words, again, engage Mary in reflection. She needed to adjust to the fact that, even though this young man was living in her home, he was also recognizing that there was another voice speaking in his life besides hers and Joseph's. Again, in prayerful response Mary had to, indeed wanted to say, "fiat" once again and adjust to the changes that

this whole incident implied in her life and that of her son.

In my imagined movie, I would have to, at this point, move rather quickly through some scenes in Jesus' life that would enact what was meant by the words, "be about my Father's business". His departure from Nazareth, first of all; his being missioned after his baptism; his being led by the Spirit "into the desert to be tempted" and into Galilee to preach.

It is as the itinerant preacher that we next find Mary and Jesus meeting. He is talking to some people who, after a bit, pass the word to him that his mother and relatives are waiting outside to speak with him. As Jesus turns to go to them, he remarks as though in passing, "My mother, sisters, and brothers are those who hear the word of God and keep it". For Mary, these words could initially cut like the sword that Simeon spoke of but Mary never rests with first impressions or reactions; she takes such things to prayerful reflection; she ponders in her heart. And, on reflection, how different they begin to appear. Her whole life has been characterized - at some cost and struggle - by hearing God's word and keeping it. Indeed, this from the beginning has been

her one longing and graced desire—to be attentive to God's way and the promptings of the Spirit. Somehow, in my movie, I would have to end this sequence in a rather dramatic fashion because it is necessary, at this point, to recognize and highlight Mary's new awareness. She was called to be the mother of Jesus, but now she is called to be a disciple of her own son.

On further reflection and prayer, she hears more and more of the movement of Jesus' public life. Mary now begins to see that this new sense of discipleship is tied to the words of Simeon where our movie began. She learns that Jesus has spoken more than once of the danger he faces and the "collision course" he is on with the religious authorities; he has become a "sign of contradiction". At the same time Mary begins to realize that when and where this "collision" takes place will be the time and place when the "sword of sorrow" will pierce her heart as mother and disciple. Our movie camera, then, will catch some scenes from the Via Dolorosa and finally will bring us to Calvary, "where there stood by the cross of Jesus Mary, his mother, and the disciple whom Jesus loved". I would think of dwelling on this scene, not in any

sentimental way, but in order to portray, as one can in pictures, the cost of Mary's discipleship and why she is the first disciple par excellence. The sequence would end with the picture of the pieta imprinted on the memories of all of us, the viewers.

My movie, as I envision it, would have a lightsome ending with a touch of humor. For one evening shortly before the Ascension, Jesus would appear to Mary and the others in the Upper Room and share a meal with them. Then as he is about to leave he takes his mother aside and says to her with a bit of devilment in his eye, "You know, Mother, you raised me and got me started and you have followed me as a most faithful disciple. How about taking on a new role and getting the Church started". He then leaves Mary standing alone smiling after him; her heart is alive with love and as she murmurs once more, "Be it done to me," she understands that she is called to yet another role beyond motherhood and discipleship; she is now to be Mother of the Church.

Pope John Paul II called the Church to an extended preparation for the Third Millennium, the celebration of our God becoming

incarnate and dwelling among us. Surely, we want to prepare ourselves, but as CLC people true to our charism, we know that the best preparation for us will include helping others prepare. Marian devotion is alive and well in a variety of forms in today's Church, but I have wondered if it would not be in place for CLCers, as Marian people, to help others focus more on Mary of the Gospels, to help others discover Jesus' first disciple and get her support in repeating, as

she did, "be it done to me". For Mary, these words brought redemption for all of us; for us, these words could have a similar effect on our own lives and those of others we meet. What better celebration of God's gift than to live anew (for some maybe the first time) the redemptive way Mary modeled!

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General Principles of CLC #9

*Since the spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ: she is the model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's cooperation with God begins with her "yes" in the mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation. Her effective service, as shown in her visit to Elizabeth and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her our inspiration to act for justice in the world today. Mary's cooperation in her Son's mission, continued all through her life, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary who, by accepting the designs of God, became our mother and the mother of all. Thus, we confirm our own mission of service to the world received in baptism and confirmation. We honour Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way and we rely on her intercession in **fulfilling our vocation.***

