



CVX CLC



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Publication of the World Christian Life Community



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ABOUT OUR LOGO

We did not go too far to find inspiration for the logo of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Countless books have been written about the Salvation history of CLC and its beginning in year 1563. From that came the Marian Congregations and its symbol (shown on the top right), having the “P” over the “X” (for the Greek Christus) and the inserted “M” illustrates that the Congregations were put under the patronage of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The blue curved line illustrates a movement forward to **one World Community** in 1967; hence the globe. From this new beginning came a new name: Communauté de Vie Chrétienne (CVX) in French; Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (CVX) in Spanish; Christian Life Community (CLC) in English.

Apostolic body for mission: Offering ourselves completely to God

During this time of preparation for the next World General Assembly in Nairobi, it is more and more evident that God is calling us to mature as an *Apostolic Body*. But what can this mean, for us lay Ignatian members of CLC today, to be an Apostolic Body for mission?

Over the past years, we have been defining and concretizing the Ignatian identity of our charism as a response to the call of the Lord (vocation), a response that is realized from the core of our being, embracing it in its entirety, integrating it and endowing it in the fullest sense: our offering of ourselves to the Lord in mission. The call of the Lord is a journey toward fullness: the more honest our answers and the more we allow Him to enter our lives, the more we will be able to contemplate the world as God sees it and to act as *God's hands in mission. Our availability, therefore, will be the vehicle through which "God's desires will be sensed and fully accomplished". This means availability to reorder our lives and to respond generously, confident in the One who knows our talents and our deepest desires.

This openness of heart is openness to others in whom the Lord is incarnated: it is above all to be united in communion with our companions, especially at the service of the neediest "the preferred of God". We, Ignatian laity, are called to transmit and to proclaim the Reign of God to the

poor as the foundation and heart of our apostolic development: as the first and final intention of what constitutes our being in mission.

But in the same manner that the Lord established an apostolic body of the twelve so that they went and preached the Gospel, we are now called to concretize the apostolic body of CLC, *a body constituted as an apostolic community that shares responsibility in mission and that reaches its full sense when discerning the mission, sending each member, supporting, confirming and periodically evaluating the results.*

It is in the apostolic body where the fullness of the mission is realized, where each one of us, in a spirit of discernment, finds one's place and is impelled, together with all the members of the Body, toward the full realization of the mission. We are called to live and surrender life completely, putting our abilities and all our talents in complicity with others with whom we share the same charism. In this way, we can be an apostolic body in the Church, to serve it and to serve to the world.

This is the journey that we have planned for the World General Assembly in Nairobi. We ask for God's Spirit to enlighten us on the way in order that, with the help of Grace, we may experience God's desire and bring it about fully ■



José Mª Riera Mas
President WCLC

MOVING TOWARDS NAIROBI

14th CLC GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NAIROBI, KENYA SENT BY CHRIST, MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (1 Cor 12:12)

In the intervening years since the Itaici Assembly in 1998, CLC has been invited to take a step forward. A new expression of our vocation has been moving us to consider the CLC mission as *a responsibility shared by all the members of the Community*. This call of the Lord is an expression of the CLC charism, which unfolds according to the signs of the times. As members of CLC, we are called to live in mission - discerning the Lord's will, *sharing* the responsibility of sending and being sent.

This way of life, encompassing all we are and all we do is not a call to just add another task to the list of personal activities, but an invitation to reform one's whole life according to the responsibility shared. This more radical answer to the Lord's personal call has community repercussions, at its national, regional and world levels. In Nairobi Kenya, the General Assembly will be asking to *receive and embrace the call to be an apostolic body that shares responsibility in mission and to consider and define all the consequences of living that call at all levels*.

A brief review of CLC History leading to Nairobi

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|------|--|------|---|
| 1967 | 4 th Assembly a new name and a new beginning: Christian Life Communities. | 1973 | 6 th General Assembly in Augsburg, Germany: the call to be free, <i>the liberation of all men and women</i> . |
| 1968 | On the Feast of the Annunciation, Pope Paul VI confirms the General Principles of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities. | 1976 | 7 th General Assembly in Manila, Philippines: the call to be poor, <i>poor with Christ for a better service</i> . |
| 1970 | 5 th Assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: a crisis and a challenge (the General Principles are amended and approved in 1971 by the Holy See). | 1979 | 8 th General Assembly in Rome, Italy: call towards a World Community, <i>at the service of One World</i> . |
| | | 1982 | 9 th General Assembly in Providence, USA: <i>the challenge to be one World Community on mission to "bring about justice"</i> . |
| | | 1986 | 10 th General Assembly in Loyola, Spain: <i>seeing Mary as model of our mission, being asked to do "whatever Christ tells us"</i> . |
| | | 1990 | 11 th General Assembly in Guadalajara, Mexico: <i>an international community "at the service of the Kingdom, to go out and bear fruit"</i> . |
| | | 1994 | 12 th General Assembly in Hong Kong: CLC Community in Mission <i>"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"</i> |
| | | 1998 | 13 th General Assembly in Itaici, Brazil: <i>deepening our identity as an apostolic community – clarifying our common mission "CLC a letter from Christ, written by the Spirit, sent to today's world"</i> . |
| | | 2003 | 14 th General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya: an apostolic body <i>"Sent by Christ, members of one body"</i> ■ |

REMEMBER ITAICI

The uproarious and joyful goodbyes of the delegates are shaking the moon - their assessment of the meeting. What would your first assessment be like?

Well, to me, the assembly was hugely impressive... people from everywhere, and it was such a peaceful and quiet meeting, very prayerful, one you would almost want to call a happy meeting, even if it was long. We are in a beautiful place; every one of the four great quadrangles is truly a garden. And we have a beautiful reason for being here, our life in the Spirit. The delegates deserve to feel joyous; they worked hard here and they had been preparing for this meeting for a long time.

The communities worked all last year. But take a longer view for a minute - of the past seven years. What happened during those years that would affect this assembly?

I think an awareness of being a world community... not just a scattered sprinkling of local communities... has been slowly but steadily developing, all around the world. The Jesuits had to grow that way, and even the Church, too. Members are not so absorbed with our own groups as we used to be. And this developed in the delegates to the assemblies... a feeling of being responsible for the community as a whole. No doubt this is also due to the new possibility of communication with e-mail. It has surely opened up new horizons.

Another development of these years, which is truly notable, is the number of people in the national communities who have now gone through the *Spiritual Exercises*. This is still a problem, particularly in some countries, where there is no

possibility of making them. To make *Exercises* you have to have guides, and we lack them... some countries lack anyone, Jesuit or lay or religious, to guide the *Exercises*. Connected with this is another increasing awareness... a very good and real one, I should think... the need for lay guides.

And then, another change is that the community has been growing in numbers. That was a notable development coming right up to this Assembly. Present here in the Assembly is the very promising group from Africa. We had established Kenya already in Hong Kong, and Syria and Nicaragua. Today, we established Cameroon along with Korea and Lebanon. And even with that very quick growth, there also came a growth in understanding what CLC is about.

These are probably the more important backgrounds for this World Assembly 1998, the things that influenced the delegates who came. But I could add another thing during these last seven years: more people became aware of the need to get further into what CLC is, really. Past world assemblies worked at that, especially the last few, and now these members are more aware and could build on that.

This Thirteenth General Assembly... sixty nations, every continent... delegations that surprise or just



Roswitha Cooper
Roma, Italia

World Community, World Mission CLC's General Assembly, 1998: An interview - reprinted from *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* No 98

During the ten days ending with St Ignatius's feast, nearly two hundred members from sixty nations met in the Thirteenth General Assembly of World CLC. In the splendid Jesuit retreat house and conference center outside Sao Paolo, Brazil they performed the usual periodic tasks. They elected new officers and welcomed a new Executive Secretary, Gilles Michaud of Canada and a new Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr Fernando Salas of Chile. They also performed an unusual task: They hammered out a statement of this apostolic lay community's world mission. The following interview with Roswitha Cooper reports the importance of this periodic meeting of friends in the Lord on the last evening of the assembly.

delight: Australia, Congo, Wales, Lesotho, Malta, Poland, Sri Lanka, Taiwan... amazing. What was it really about?

To put it perhaps a little too simply, it was about what, as a community, we are to do. Now we know what we are; now, what are we to do? The theme was mainly to ask ourselves what does the Lord want from us facing the third millennium as a community... as a world community, which means that everywhere around the world, somewhere, we face every one of the horrible problems that make people suffer. Every one of them. So we had to listen to each other's worries and problems. This is not so easy when you are speaking in English and French and Spanish, and many, many people have to speak in their third or fourth language. It was not so easy. It took a lot of prayer. For me, one of the very clear fruits of this assembly - I think it came out clearly even in all of the workshops... is the christocentrism of our spirituality. Of course, the topics of the four workshops...

Four... let me make sure. There were four umbrella workshops. Every delegate worked in one of the four, staying with the same multi-lingual sub-groups. And each of the four workshops was based on one, of the themes that national communities have been reflecting on.

Yes, the communities have been working on the four themes over a year, and those four themes became four workshops. I was saying that the themes and the workshops brought out a great fruit, which I think we must call an awareness of the centrality of Christ. Christ is in every one of their titles: "Christ and growth in Christian life;" "Christ and culture... and social reality... and daily life." Of course, the *Spiritual Exercises* were present in some way in all the workshops. But as we went along through the days, it became very clear through the work of Workshop One: Christ and growth in Christian life, that the *Exercises* are not only the basis for our own preparation for our mission in culture, in social concerns, and in daily life... but also, that the *Exercises* are the gift that we are called on to pass on to others. The *Exercises* are not only the instrument for our own spiritual formation, which we have been thinking all along. They are also our mission in the world and in the church. This was formulated in the final statement. We have to offer the Annotation 18 *Exercises* to as many as possible, and *Exercises* in Daily life. This is our way, CLC's special way, of proclaiming Christ.

The final statement, then. Its content began months ago all over the world. Then it went through a clearly defined process of discernment. And it ended in a nine-page document.

Yes, one we called "Our Common Mission." Since we are now aware that we are a world community, and before everything else, we are an apostolic community, then we have a common world mission. But what is that mission? How do we express it? That is what we asked ourselves in this assembly, and that is what the regions and local communities have been discussing and praying about for many months. We were trying to describe what we are going to do as a world body. But for me, let me say in an aside, what made me most happy in this assembly was the conviction, said repeatedly, that although we are active, we are also contemplatives. It really came altogether here. Our mission grows from our relationship with Christ. We are contemplatives in action. One way in which this was said... it came out very clearly... is that our vocation is to be leaven. I already liked one way to say it, and I am glad the assembly adopted it, too: "CLC, a letter from Christ written by the Spirit sent to today's world." That is the real title of our final document. It is important that we keep this in the front of our minds. We are first of all to proclaim Christ by just being in our everyday world what we really are. That is, a Christian Life Community.

As someone here said, the Jesuits are a community "ad dispersionem", a community to be dispersed; CLC is a community "ad insertionem" a community to leaven the place where it is.

Yes. I think that is true, and it was the kernel idea that Fr Francisco Ivern wanted to get across [in his homily at the closing liturgy]. But what I am talking about here is not an idea, somebody's good idea. What came out of the long discussions was a deep desire to proclaim Christ in all that we do. The final goal is proclaim, build the kingdom of Christ. I particularly liked the way this was expressed in the workshop and in the final document, about culture. We are not going to condemn things. We are going to find God everywhere in the world. We go back to our fifty or more cultures and we expect to find God there, working there. When this emerged so clear, I felt very proud of my companions.

There were some remarkably sane and carefully crafted exchanges about neoliberalism and globalization, a kind of mature world citizenship.

Yes. And even more, there was a mature spirituality. People came not only to be given some kind of spiritual input. They came to be responsible for the world community, to take their responsibility. They were carriers of the charism. The elections were a sign of this. They were marvelous. They were a consolation. The voting was so responsible, and resulted in the very wise choice of a diversity of talents and even of regions. We do not elect representatives by region or to represent specific areas; but the body collaborated maturely to elect people from various regions, respecting different cultures and accommodating the diversity in members.

As the by-laws ask, about a third of the delegates here were Jesuits. They were reminded about GC34, Document 13. Where is collaboration now?

Well, there is a history, of course. It has been interesting to see the threads of how the Spirit led us to where we are today, sometimes collaborating more closely with the Jesuits and sometimes not collaborating much at all. And at the end of these seven years, I can also see a difference in the Jesuit presence. In CLC... well, the partnership that GC34 talked about is already functioning in some parts of the world. I found the Jesuits who were here more ready for partnership with lay people, to build the Kingdom, more ready than ever before. This is mutual: our CLC members have become more ready to work along with Jesuits, too. This awareness on both sides is more developed now than even at Hong Kong, and we saw the fruit of it in this assembly. Now we will see how collaboration works out in the mission.

Yes: the mission. You know this enormously diverse community well. What would you expect to happen when these delegates get back to their fifty or sixty very different nations?

Some things in our life now are common... unhappy, but common. The principal realization is that in a world where relations are decaying, and family is under undue strains, and it is hard to keep clear the common good for all the people... in this real, everyday world of ours where all these things affect all of us... to build a Christian Community *is*, itself, a mission. And when you see that this special community, CLC, is itself an apostolic community, you understand what we meant in the assembly by "our common mission". Of course, this common mission has to be implemented according to where

the communities are. So the statement is rather long; some said it was very long. It's nine pages. It is so long because a common mission for a world community cannot be put into one sentence. The real heading for this document is to bring Christ into today's world. This is only spelt out in different ways for where Christ is most needed. I was so grateful that something came out that does not say that we are to go into an "anti-AIDS campaign" or something like that, something too specific and specialized. In the end, it's just to bring Christ. And when they received it, people said I am going home with fire in my heart.

Certainly, as the representative of each national delegation came to acknowledge the document, the impression grew overwhelming that the assembly had achieved something that it had hoped for.

It was received as well as I would have hoped. People could have said that it was not what they had hoped for. Or they could have just been nice and said thanks. But what they said was that the document calls for more work, it's an interim document. And I think, of course, that that is right. And as I said, they're going home with fire in their hearts. That's the best reception we could have hoped for.

When a world assembly ends, a lot of ordinary projects have to keep going on. What would be CLC's list?

In the community, itself, we need better formation for lay spiritual guides, especially for the Exercises. And we need formation for group guides, because they have such a big influence on how a community can grow and be apostolic. Formation is one of the biggest things. But that is inside, and also, I think, I hope that on the outside that our global responsibility will continue strong at the UN. We could hear from the reports by Fr Dan Fitzpatrick from New York and Fr Henry Volken from Geneva how important it is for World CLC to be registered as an NGO... that is consummately important. Those are two projects, inside and outside. Also, I would add another ongoing project: collaborating more closely with the Company. It was very good that Fr Bernard Lestienne represented the Social Secretariat, and Fr Jesus

Our Common Mission

First, we want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.

Second, we want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.

Third, we want to live Christ so as to bring him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.

These three areas of mission were enlightened by the spiritual source which nourishes and empowers us for mission: the Spiritual Exercises which help us to grow in Christian life. In addition, we must attend to our own formation for mission, so that our community may ever become a more effective instrument of service.

Montero Tirado represented Education, and that the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality was here for the whole meeting. We do a lot of collaborating already in all those areas. When we heard the overview of the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality, it was so clear that CLC should cooperate more with the Jesuits, but also it was clear that CLC is already doing that, a lot.

The joyous noise has not lessened and you will want to tell people goodbye.

This has been such a revelation, this assembly. We are always talking about the negative side of

globalization. But this proved that globalization is not only a negative, but that it has a creative and positive side. People from everywhere came to sit here in peace and love. I do not want to overstate this. But we all gave a big hug for peace at the Mass, African and Afrikaner, Indonesian and Australian, everyone. Croatia has chosen Slovenia as its accompanying community, to get ready for membership. And Korea and Japan can sit here together and there is nothing but peace.

Of course this is not everyday life, but the Lord gives us grace to be in the kingdom of God. We get enough energy to continue in a torn world, where Christ is already, in each of us and in our community ■

WELCOME TO KENYA

7

The 2003 world CLC General Assembly will be held in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. Kenya is situated in Eastern part of Africa. It has a population of about 30 million, with 60% being under 18 years of age. Nairobi is said to have a population of 3 million people. There are about 44 tribes in the country, which largely have co-existed peacefully.

Before colonization, the Masai, a nomadic tribe, used to graze their cattle on the Nyorobi plains. This simply means marshy ground. However, the colonizers called it Nairobi, as it is known today, because they could not pronounce "Nyorobi". The southeast of Nairobi is still land occupied by the Masai. There are a few satellite towns around Nairobi, as many people who work in the city centre live in the outskirts. The central business district houses many business premises, with most industries being found in the nearby Industrial area. There are very many middle class estates on the outskirts of the city, a matatu ride away from the city centre.

Matatu? That is the popular mode of transportation here. Most are eighteen seat vans or twenty-eight seat mini buses. The conductors who collect the fare do not sit if the matatu is full but squeeze into any available space. Most have tape players with large, ear-piercing speakers placed under the seats. Peak hours can be a nightmare for those with no matatu experience, as one literally has to struggle to board the matatu, which will more often than not be filled beyond capacity. Matatus are known to stop literally anywhere, not just at bus stops. This practice obviously creates obstruction leading to traffic jams. You will get a pleasant ride most times, unless the music is too loud. Do not however expect a receipt for your fare, but you will always get correct change, and not be asked to pay twice.

Kenya has two other cities, Mombasa and Kisumu. Kisumu is in the West on Lake Victoria. Mombasa is much better known as a popular tourist attraction, being on the eastern coast of Kenya on the Indian Ocean. Colonized by the Portuguese, this coastal town has a lot of Arabic influence. The



Nairobi, Kenya

Arabs had settled here before the Portuguese, influencing the culture, language and architecture of the coastal tribes. The influence of the Portuguese and the Arabs can be seen in what is referred to as the old town, where the buildings still stand. Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese, is a marvelous site as well. Not far from Mombasa is Lamu, a truly 18th century Kenyan coastal town where the Arabic presence is still apparent. The town has not been modernized to keep its history. As most streets are too narrow for motor vehicles, one can get a donkey ride, the mode of transport long ago. There are also various marine parks one can visit by boat or enjoy the swimming along the beach.

Most of Kenya has two rainy seasons: the long rains between March and May and the short rains in October and November. The period after the short rains is known to be hot and dry, with the period after the long rains generally being cold with July being the coldest month. It does tend to drizzle as well in this period, with high temperatures in Nairobi going only to 16C, which by Kenyan standards is cold. For those who are from warmer climates, it would be advisable to have something warm during this season.

Kenya's main sources of foreign exchange are tourism, tea and coffee. Hard currencies are easily convertible to Kenya shillings, the local currency. Thanks to the liberalized foreign currency market,

official foreign currency dealers offer competitive exchange rates in Nairobi. However, you are likely to get a better rate of exchange on US dollars, the Euro and the Sterling Pound.

The staple crop is maize (corn) for much of the country. The maize is ground into a meal and cooked in boiling water until it reaches a firm consistency. The result is called *ugali* that is served with a sauce or a stew. Of course, many vegetables and tropical fruits abound.



Catherine Waiyaki
President of CLC Kenya

On 27 December 2002, we had elections with our first change of government in 24 years. We outdid ourselves because we managed to have elections that were generally non-violent, free and fair. Much prayer and hard work went into the process because we wanted peaceful change from the old government that had progressively contributed to the

deteriorated of the country. The faith led initiatives and the civil society have done a commendable job for the past ten years. The new government now has an onerous task to re-build the country.

Today, Kenyans are upbeat and full of hope. Free basic education is to be provided, security to be improved, corruption to be gotten rid of, provision of basic health care, rebuilding of the infrastructure - the list is endless. There is, however, tremendous good will toward the government; and, as long as they continue on the track of rebuilding, the support will continue. A case in point is a scenario where a corrupt traffic policeman demanded a bribe from a matatu conductor and was arrested by the members of the public, who took all the money he had extorted illegally during the day and gave it to charity. Such collective responsibility was previously unheard of.

We still experience breakdowns in our electricity supply, and they seem to occur without rhyme or reason. The telephone system is government operated. There are many telephone booths spread over the country where one can place calls with

either local currency, or calling cards. There are two network providers for cell phones, one of which has provided public telephone booths as well. The telephone system is quite reliable overall. There are Internet cafes where one can pay to access the Internet.

The local currency, the Kenyan shilling is available in coins of 1/=, 5/=, 10/= and 20/=, and notes of 50/=, 100/=, 200/=, 500/= and 1,000/=. It is, of course, convertible with major currencies at a rate in the vicinity of 80 Shillings to 1 USD or 1 Euro.

There are many religions present in Kenya. Christianity is, however, the largest with the Catholic Church being very widespread. Recent figures indicate 66 % of the population is Christian, with 28% of these being Roman Catholic, 26% African Traditional Religion, 7% Muslim, and 1% other (many of these being Hindu). There are many lay movements registered under the Catholic Church, CLC Kenya being one of them. We have started taking part in activities being promoted to bring the lay movements together.

CLC was introduced to Kenya in 1989, and became a member of the world Community in 1994. At the moment, CLC Kenya has about 300 members, with about 65% of the membership being students or non-working members. The majority of members are in Nairobi, with others in the western part of the country: Kisii, Eldoret, Egerton, Kitale and Mombasa the coastal city.

Our main challenges are the lack of availability of group guides and retreat directors, especially outside Nairobi, along with finances and regular attendance at meetings. There is, however, hope as we continue to come up with innovative solutions for the problems. We begin to focus more on mission with our major corporate mission being the Zaidi Centre for Ignatian Spirituality, which presents a wide variety of programmes, mostly for laity. We look forward to hosting the 14th world CLC General Assembly from which we expect to grow even more through the experience we will share with other members of the world Community, *karibuni* (welcome)! ■

Our Second Reading concluded: “*The whole creation is eagerly awaiting God to reveal His children.*” I believe God has revealed one of His children in Isaac Momanyi Oigo. Isaac is one who let himself be moved by the Spirit of God, one who trusted in God and called upon God as “*Abba, Father*”; one who has shared in Christ’s sufferings and now shares in His Glory. What is God’s glory? It is the will of God realized and accomplished, and certainly this is true in Isaac. I want to speak about the Isaac Oigo whom I have known as God’s child revealed, as the glory of God, the will of God accomplished in our midst.

I first knew Isaac at the time of his confirmation in the Catholic Church in 1991. I knew him to be a person of such high desires - as we heard in that favourite poem of his, “*The Heart of the Matter*”. Isaac spoke of desiring to be holy, to be a saint, to be a mystic. Last night, I learned from Isaac’s mother that, at one period during primary school, his classmates nicknamed him, “*Saintly*”. We must never think that Isaac’s desires for God began as a young adult. These desires had their foundation in the Christian family in which Isaac was raised.

In his desire to be a saint, Isaac wanted to undergo the deep conversion experience of making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the 30-day retreat, and he set himself about preparing himself for this experience.

Isaac embraced the Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises and made it his own. ***He committed himself to choosing in his life according to God’s will and not according to any lesser concern.*** When Isaac was first confronted years ago with the fragility of his health, I remember in our devastation challenging him, “Can you accept that God might be inviting you to do His will in accepting a shorter life rather than a longer one?” Not without struggle, Isaac embraced this reality, and perhaps it made him even more passionate in following his desires, indeed God’s desires for him.

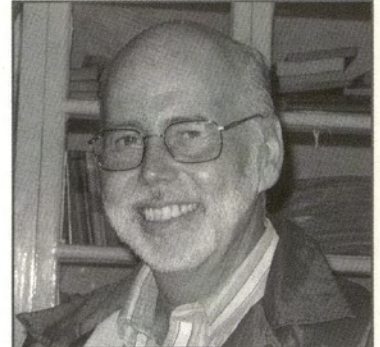
As Isaac began to consider God’s precise call to him to love and *be* for others, he began to think of

his career. Isaac would say with his typical humour, “I am responsible for landing the jets at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. An exaggeration, perhaps, but he had responsibility for the radar there; and without functioning radar, the planes would not land. Isaac had a prestigious career as an engineer. He made good money. It was a career people understood, a career in which people looked up to him. But Isaac would not cling to this career. His question became not, “What is the best career?”... *but*... “What is the best way I can serve God and others? How is Christ inviting me to join Him in building the Reign of God in our midst?” Isaac considered other career possibilities. In the end, he left his job to pursue pre-requisites and a Master’s Degree in Counseling Psychology at United States International University and has been working at the Amani Counseling Centre.

In 1998, Isaac went through a health crisis; he spent six weeks in the hospital and some three months more recovering. Such a crisis could easily make a person more cautious; make one limit self to the secure. The result for Isaac is that he moved into greater freedom. He loved life even more, but he did not cling to it; rather, he embraced life. He lived life more fully as God’s gift.

From this time, Isaac began living much more the communion of today’s Gospel reading; “*Jesus says, ‘Remain in my love’.*” In the original Greek of the New Testament, the word for “remain” and for “dwell” is the same. Jesus invited Isaac to “*Dwell in my love,*” to live more deeply in the love of the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which overflowed into the active love of service toward his fellow human beings.

Those of us who know Isaac well recognize that he has always been brilliant; he could quote by heart



Terry Charlton S.J.

**Funeral Homily
for Isaac Momanyi Oigo
(President of CLC Kenya)
given by Terry Charlton
S.J., Ecclesiastical
Assistant of CLC Kenya
on 17 October 2002**

First Reading:
The Principle and
Foundation
Second Reading:
Romans 8: 14 - 19
Gospel: John 15: 9 - 17

from Christian contemplatives, Suffi mystics, and Buddhist gurus that I had never even heard of. Isaac never lost this gift, but he journeyed from his head to his heart and in these last years. Isaac grew in living from his heart.

Isaac became more passionate for justice in Africa and in Kenya, and he worked to achieve this in a



Opening of the Zaidi Centre.

Christian, value-laden manner by embracing the way of active non-violence and by furthering this approach through his interactions with those working in this area and by the programmes which he gave.

During these last years, Isaac became more active in leadership of CLC. In 1999, Isaac was elected Consulter for the National Executive Council. In 2000, Isaac was selected as the founding Assistant Director of the Zaidi Centre for Ignatian Spirituality. When it was time to choose some one for this position, no one but Isaac was even considered since he was seen to have such unique gifts for this work. Isaac once confided that he became a counselor because, as a young lay person, he did not see how he could become a

spiritual director. In the end he was both; by his training, skills and the growing sensitivity of living from his heart, he touched so many. Many a person has sent an e-mail message or has spoken in person about how Isaac made himself available at a time, or difficulty, or in an ongoing way. He was there for each - a sensitive manner that recognized the person's uniqueness and helped the person appreciate his or her situation from the perspective of faith.

Isaac also made trips to Nigeria and to Zimbabwe to foster CLC and to train effective leaders there. He participated in a consultation on Ignatian Spirituality in Rome in February 2002. This Easter, his effective leadership was confirmed by his election as National President of CLC Kenya.

Isaac's last illness served as an example to all who were with him. He had someone post the words, "YES, GOD", on the wall opposite his hospital bed. "YES, GOD" became his new name during the last weeks of Isaac's life. He was an example of faith and trust. He was available at once to God and also to us, concerned for us, interested in us. He left us with the deep peace of one who has entrusted himself into God's hands.

Truly, Isaac has been one of God's children revealed; we keep the revelation and make it our own. We remember the revelation by imitating him according to our own way and circumstances. What might this mean? In God's love, we become persons of deep desires; we become persons who do not cling, but embrace; we become persons who center ourselves in our heart's love; we become persons passionate for justice in the Christian value-laden way of active non-violence; we become persons who dwell in Christ's love ■

The experience I have been asked to share is not an exceptional happening. I am relating it because I have always felt that it doesn't belong only to me. It seems that sharing what the Lord has done in my life with you, the Community to which I belong, in some way is a giving back of all that has been given me by Him. In these things, there is always the risk of flattering oneself and promoting oneself: our narcissistic tendencies can win out. What I want to focus on is the work of the Lord through, in spite of, or perhaps because of my fragility, my limitations and my infidelities.

Looking back, I found the "starting point," which began with a choice made in 1988 during my first Spiritual Exercises (a vocational retreat). For me the turning point was, above all, that blank sheet with my signature at the bottom of the page offered to the Lord so that He write what He wanted for me. At the time, I felt that what I would specifically do was not important. Perhaps that was the beginning of a process of relativism. In other words, maybe I was given a bit of the *Spirit of a Pilgrim*: perhaps there I had received the seeds of the knowledge that all that we are and do has the Lord as its supreme and ultimate end: our encounter with Him.

Initially, I was also worried because I had already left my studies, and a fiancé; I had just calmed down once more. To the joy of my family, I had started another course of studies, a more technical one. My fear was that the Lord would call me to something too "dangerous," in other words that He could have some little "surprise" in store for me. Later, in prayer, I understood that I could go forward tranquilly giving the Lord my total trust.

While taking the course of studies, I had the good fortune to find work that gave me excellent experience and the possibility of having a house and a family. I was product manager in a leading agency in the detergent and cosmetics market but after 5 years I chose to leave this work in order to dedicate myself to another project with which I had fallen in love...a reality discovered during the CLC Congress: a consolidated Fair Trade. At first I dedicated myself to Fair Trade on a part-time basis;

for the rest of the time I was a consultant in a small company. Then in 1998, I started to work only in Fair Trade earning less than half of what I was making before - but I found my reward on a different level... I would say a hundredfold.

It seemed to me that the Lord used all the preceding "pieces" to bring me to this choice, a bit like the vase in the book of Jeremiah. The vase assumed

another form; it was made over by the Potter, by the Lord, with the same clay. Nothing in my life was "thrown away" but rather given value, transformed. I repeat, none of this was a heroic act, nor was it done with some spirit of abnegation, because at a certain point I simply felt out of place where I was before. The decision came forth from a strong and powerful desire that I had to clarify with my Community of that time, during prayer, during the Spiritual Exercises. This desire was to dedicate my time and energies to what I felt were most urgent for the Reign of God: to work more directly for justice. I was aware that my choice was not perfectly "pure" and free of other motivations. I was concerned and sorry about this, but the others helped me to be at peace with it and to live the choice even in my poverty, i.e. my imperfections.

These other motivations could have been the need to heal a narcissistic wound, a need for radicalism in order to escape from the "ordinary", the desire to be special and to make special choices that went against the current - all flavoured with a bit of guilt which comes exquisitely from being a "good Catholic". I had to bring these things with me in the choice I had made but I always felt a deep faith that I was on the right road and, with the help of my guide and during the prayer of the Spiritual Exercises, I continued to work them out.

I think I was very fortunate because the Lord was quite explicit with me giving me signs, which were clear indications of His presence and of His will.



Antonella Albanese
Manresa CLC Rome, Italy

This gave me strength because, in any case, I was preparing to take a big risk and I was certain to find myself facing the misgivings of many - especially my family - that I was crazy, unstable, and unbalanced. My husband, Salvatore, respected and accepted my choice and naturally this was the determining factor even for the economic questions.

On the spiritual level, I lived the experience of changing from an employer with whom I had worked every day - in fact it was a woman - to another "Employer" who took care of me along the way and helped me constantly along the whole journey. This impressed me deeply because I found myself doing things I had never imagined wanting to do or above all being able to do.

What did I find in the experience of dedicating myself to consolidated Fair Trade? First of all, the answer to a question that had been in my heart for some time: Why me Lord and not others? To discover that injustice is deeply and directly linked to each of us as individuals upset me, but it caused me to become more responsible and even gave me hope against the inevitable. Each of us can do something for change in small ways at least by not participating in the mechanics, which sustain and augment injustice in the world: death, hunger and poverty. My specific task seemed therefore to water this seed that the Lord had placed in me above all through the CLC. *A different world is possible!* The Reign of God is possible starting with little simple things, ordinary gestures that we, not others, make. As I mentioned before, I had found the hundredfold reward - much more than I had expected. In spite of my incompetence at times, of my limitations, my lack of experience, I saw doors open before me. I had requests from many more people than it was possible for me to handle.

Today, I don't know how and if I have responded adequately to this call, in particular in my work

within the Church, within religious communities, sensitizing and proposing an awareness of what each one can bring about in a situation of grave iniquity in the world and how we can choose not to do it. This was not and will not be easy. Perhaps it is the most difficult thing and I am concentrating on this.

I also found a much different working world: one made up of non-profit groups, of little international shops, of volunteering (but not only this), in which I work together with people who have different ideas from mine, for example regarding faith or political motivations. Yet we work together, making mistakes, struggling, but committing ourselves, recognizing how precious and how amazing human beings and the Earth are (attention: working much more than I could have imagined!) and trying to safeguard them.

My interest is the common good: committing oneself to a reality that asks nothing for oneself but good for the whole community. Here's what I have found. I always question the fact that I work with people who perhaps have not received, "special calls." I wonder: "Where is the difference? Where the testimony? What am I called to do?"

I have discovered that all this has begun to transform even me, not only for concern such as the reduction of consumerism (I still have much to do in this area!), which is a determining factor for the unjust distribution of the world's resources, but also regarding my vision of reality: the unjust disposition of many things that at first seemed fundamental and today does not.

The effort that I try to make each day is to remember always that this is not my Project, but one to which I have been sent to and adhere to...but I must not take possession of it, always giving away the fruits that I see, which increase every day ■

Beginning - God's invitation

On October 9, 2001, a very tragic incident happened. At that time, my community was on the course of communal discernment to decide a common apostolic activity as a part of CLC formation process. Through personal prayer and discernment, each member chose a possible common activity and shared in the community meeting. One of four community members shared this news and it was the start of the process that, in the end, led to the establishment of the center for migrant workers under CLC Korea. The report was not just about some inhumane crews and some unlucky foreigners. It clearly showed the reality of the world we are living in now. So many workers from poor countries risking their lives leave their country to earn more money and to provide a better life for their family members. In the meeting, we talked about factors leading to such a tragic incident and the reality of the world.

Other than this, one member was attracted to the issue of youth formation within the Church while another member was concerned about environmental problems. One member was strongly interested in helping the women in the sex industry and their children. After one-month preparation, we had a meeting with the larger community where members showed keen interest in our preparation and shared their ideas. Another novitiate community had been already carrying out a common apostolic activity related to environmental issues. The national formation team had a plan for youth formation. Based on our common understanding about the dire situation of migrant workers and the option for the poor and the oppressed, we discerned the activity for migrant workers as our common apostolic activity.

At that time, three of us were seniors at university majoring in psychology, social work and biochemistry and one was a social worker working for women. No one had prior experience working for migrant workers so no one had a clear idea of what or how. So, we decided to have a one-month internship course at existing centers for migrant

workers. Since one member had a job, we chose three representative organizations with different visions and structures. One month was not enough but we could understand the general situations of migrant workers in Korea, their difficulties, current supports and their limitation, and get the picture about what kind of center we should develop in the future. We also discerned that the issue was too big to be carried out by only one Christian Life Community with four members. We discerned it should be a common apostolic activity of CLC Korea so this was brought to the National Assembly.

In February 2002, we presented our communal discernment process to the national community at the Assembly sharing the situation of migrant workers in Korea, the reason why it should be a common national apostolic activity, and the vision of the center. The National Assembly unanimously endorsed the establishment of the center as a national apostolic activity. That was the moment that CLC Korea responded to God's invitation through one novitiate community.

Twenty-five Chinese of the 60 Korean Chinese and ethnic Chinese who had attempted to be smuggled into Korea through the sea off the southern coast were smothered to death in a small storage room in the ship and thrown overboard. During the eight days they spent on the sea, the illegal immigrants each reportedly had nothing but two buns with mold on them and a bowl of rice. Those put into an adjacent room with better ventilation said they had heard the ill-fated Chinese call for rescue but the sailors did not open the hatch.



Community meeting

Process

While searching for a possible candidate for the center, we discerned who the people sent to work in the center would be. Two members from my community and one member from another community were chosen and sent. Juyong and I were sent as full time workers and had another internship in the center, which had a similar vision and structure that we dreamed of. We believed that the center would not only provide support in dealing



The Beginning

with human rights violation, overdue payment or industrial accidents but also to make those migrant workers who are completely alienated and neglected in the new society realize how precious their lives were and how to live as true neighbors. We also thought that the center should provide supports to create communities where people from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds could get together. On April 22, after about two months



Celebrating together

preparation, we rented a house in Youngin considering its accessibility and necessity.

The first counseling started in May when several Indonesian workers visited to get their passport and overdue salary that they were "forced to save". They didn't even know the account number since the company never gave it to them. When we contacted the company, their passports were sent to Indonesia and the company rejected giving them their money because the workers had left their workplace without permission. After several visits to the bank, the Korean immigration office, and the Indonesian embassy, we were successful in getting the workers money back though failed to get them new identification cards due to the embassy's lack of cooperation. With this direct experience, we could learn many things.

The process of establishing a center was shared with other local communities through small meetings. We were invited to each community meeting, shared our process and asked for the necessary support. The operating committee, composed of committed members, and the advisory committee, composed of independent specialists, were established. Local communities donated office equipments and help in the cleaning. Finally on June 29, the center had its opening ceremony.

Full moon festival and Korean class

As time went by, some migrant workers came to the center on Sundays to meet people. Volunteer workers came regularly. Migrant workers' nationality became diversified as they appeared from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, Mongol, Nepal, China, etc. We needed to have an occasion where people with different background could enjoy being together. The first occasion was "Chuseok", Korean Thanksgiving Day. To Koreans, Chuseok is an occasion to visit their hometown and share traditional foods together but to foreign workers, it is an occasion to feel homesick, isolation or alienation. Usually factories have a holiday during this time but these workers don't have any place to go. So we planned to celebrate it together.

On September 22, migrant workers, volunteer workers and CLC members gathered to make Korea's traditional food together and to play traditional team games. We felt closer to each other

though our languages were different. It was all the more thankful because we could see their smiling and joyful faces - quite different from the concerned ones they usually show to us during counseling sessions.

To help them adjust to the new environment, the center opened a Korean Language class in October. At first, there were about forty workers in two classes with nine volunteer teachers. Two months later, the number of students has decreased to about

20 due to their busy work, its transitory nature, but we noticed some important changes. The number of workers who visit the center with happy faces is growing, events are planned together and they call each other "friends".

The first Korean class will end in January 2003. Three months are too short for the students to master Korean or fully understand the Korean culture. It is not an easy process to help them open their minds, accept others, and create a new community. The difficulties they face are not easily

rooted out. Nevertheless, we continue our work in our own homes because we believe the activity, to protect human rights of migrant workers and change the world, is not only on the shoulders of two "sent" full time workers.

The Christian Life Community that communally discerns and reflects, people of good will, a God who is always with us in all things... that's why I'm continuously dreaming of establishing a community in

which everyone builds together overcoming barriers in a world where all people can be happy ■

Kim Soryeong (Martha Kim)

Secretary for Migrant Worker's Centre



Language class

When an apostolic activity begins, a CLC group can ask for financial support from the CLC Korea Apostolic Fund for a period of one year. During that time, the apostolic project should become financially independent so that the Fund can be used to support other activities. Currently, the Centre for Migrant Workers relies financially on the Fund.

On average, the monthly budget is about \$3,500 USD.

RESPONDING TO THE SPIRITUAL HUNGER IN POPULAR CULTURE

Popular culture is the air young people breathe. Polluted air but life-giving nonetheless. Popular culture is as shapeless as an amoeba and as intrusive as the tentacles of an octopus. It is the clothes young people wear, the shopping centres in which they purchase, the DVDs they watch... pervading it all is the music to which they listen.

Young people are spiritual beings, often more generous and idealistic than their elders. Popular culture, despite all its ambiguities and dead ends, does embody a quest for a meaning, which goes beyond the visible. The short-story writer Flannery O'Connor once said something to the effect that the Southern United States may not have been present to Christ, but they were certainly haunted by Him. Her insight is peculiarly apt for the world of pop culture. Faced with the dizzying spectrum of this mainstream culture, we can be tempted to stay at the level of exasperation which Paul experienced after arriving in Athens (Acts 17) and witnessing this city full of idols. Or we can find our judgements more positive and nuanced as were Paul's by the end of his encounter with the Greeks at the Areopagus. Discernment invites us into this generous space. What we can discern in the pop culture of youth is a desire for the spiritual and for God, which does not go far enough.

From the *smorgasbord* of pop culture, I would like to sample just two items: one of the most popular TV series in the world - *Friends*, and the globe's most ubiquitous music channel - *MTV*, in order to show this hunger for God and see what we can learn from it. Finally I will ask whether the challenge of pop culture could help us imagine new possibilities for parish ministry.

Television

David Schwimmer, who plays Ross in *Friends*,

when asked why the show connected so powerfully with its audience, replied that 'it's a fantasy family at a time when family unfortunately is so dysfunctional for this generation'. The family in question comprises a close-knit and charming sextet of good-looking twenty something white New Yorkers. There is something heavenly about this fantasy world where everything is still possible, with its thrill of discovery, the desire for and fear of commitment, and above all the caring group of friends that provides a secure environment in which to negotiate it all. It is what any teenager would look forward to and what any adult would wish they had had.

Teenagers find *Friends* so compelling because it presents an alternative adult world, where growing up does not mean becoming like the adults they see around them. Of course there are aspects of this alternative world, which flee reality. Its world is too attractive and too white. 'I'd like y'all to get a black friend,' said Oprah Winfrey when the stars of this sitcom appeared on her show. Its world is too cushioned. Despite their struggling careers all the characters can afford the Manhattan rent. Monica and Rachel's spacious apartment, in which much of each episode unfolds, has all the trappings of upper middle-class comfort.

The most contagious feature of *Friends* is its sheer joy. Not just the witty quips and one-liners and the fact that everyone laughs a lot. Not only the invigorating sense of the openness and possibilities of life where nobody has made a definitive choice and all are at the exciting time which precedes such fateful decisions. Most of all this joy is tangible in the sheer fun and marvellous rapport between these characters who seem in many ways so like us: Monica, the gorgeous assistant chef and fussy homemaker who is the voice of reason but has boy trouble too; Rachel, the pretty doll who has moved from the cocoon of comfortable suburbia and has never had to worry before; Phoebe, the bohemian and New Age folk singer who is too spacey to be a

babe; Joey the hunky actor, sweet and dim; Chandler, the wisecracking office-worker who hides his emotional side under a dry wit; Ross, the palaeontologist with the hang-dog looks and neurotically funny take on life.

In comparison with this richly human and familial world, Christianity can come across to young people as distinctly sad and decidedly disincarnate, lacking the spontaneous joy of true community. Do any young people realize that God is the source of all joy, that He is exploding with life and energy, like a giant star whose life is never spent? All too rarely do they pick up this message from the mainline churches. It could be so different: 'If you knew the gift of God . . .' (Jn 4:10)

The joy of *Friends* is winning - and limited. Young fans of this sitcom might think that this is the summit of joy. They have never come across the extravagant descriptions of joy in the writings of the mystics, who saw that the closer we came to God the more unbearably sweet our experience of happiness could be. Who will open to them the way of the mystics? Of course this is not to suggest that life is one long peak experience (how unfortunate!). But apart from the highs of mystical experiences, there is an abiding happiness in living a life of self-giving love. Too many Christians do not experience this happiness, a fact which throws doubt on what they are committed to; too many others do not believe that joy awaits them in living for others, so they do not try out altruism.

Pop music

There is an enormous range of pop music to which young people listen. I will be necessarily selective, and look briefly at MTV, which airs pop music worldwide.

The world of young people is unstable. Their moods fluctuate rapidly. They try out different personas. Describing young people of his generation in an interview, Kurt Cobain, the brilliant and tormented leader of Nirvana who killed himself in 1994, said: 'They're sarcastic one minute, caring the next'. Nirvana's greatest hit, 'Smells like teen spirit', expresses this well: 'I found it hard, it was hard to find/Oh well, whatever, never mind'.

It is not surprising, then, that the narrative of MTV, the music channel, reflects this fragmentation at a musical and visual level: it deliberately includes annoying features such as grainy footage, distorted

images and incidental acoustic racket. Indeed such features have now become an established trademark of youth-style programmes on mainstream TV.

Andrew Goodwin has pointed out that there are in fact two MTVs: 'One MTV discourse is the nihilistic, pastiche-making, essentially pointless playfulness that is invoked in postmodernist accounts of MTV. The other is responsible, socially conscious, satire and parody based, vaguely liberal.'¹

Does MTV adopt an anti-establishment stance in order to gain young viewers for advertisers? I doubt if its motives could be so cynical, though I am sure that those who run MTV are glad that youth-oriented companies do choose to invest substantially in advertising on their channel.² But what is worth stressing is that although MTV gives a lot of airtime to junk programmes with demeaning images of human sexuality, it is also consonant with the justice-component of authentic Christian faith in promoting human rights, animals, the environment, anti-war issues and so on.

Dialoguing with pop-culture at the parish level

Were a parish to try to appeal to young people immersed in pop culture, what would it look like? This is a difficult question to answer. I will offer a few pointers, not a comprehensive blueprint. In doing so, I do not want to suggest that a parish should *only* try to attract young people. While experimenting with a plurality of approaches, it obviously needs to cherish the cumulative wisdom of tradition. Let me also state that I am not going to focus on the mass and liturgical life of the parish. Of course, these are of central importance and there are some wonderful youth liturgies that are practised in different parts of the world. But what I want to highlight is an area that does not normally receive much attention: how parish life can provide a civic and cultural heart for young people who are spiritually malnourished in a fragmented and secularized culture. I believe that parishes can

¹ Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the distraction factory: music, television and popular culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p 150.

² As Levi's European marketing director put it, "MTV Europe represents a youth lifestyle and Levi-Strauss produces the clothing for that lifestyle". Simon Frith, 'Youth/Music/Television' (p 75) in Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Sound and vision: the music video reader* (London and New York, 1993), pp 67-83.

achieve this by using pop culture as one way of nurturing young people's desire for transcendence.

Obviously, a parish that stands out as radically different from pop culture can have great credibility value. However, if the parish veers in the opposite direction, it can lose its integrity. For instance, if the parish church is so immersed in pop culture that it loses its prophetic edge, then it is like salt that has lost its taste and is good for nothing except to be trodden underfoot. So it is vital that parishes stand for something rather than falling for everything. Such a clear witness will attract the innate idealism and generosity of young people. However, if the local church seems so different as to have little or no meaningful relationship with pop culture, this could be a major turn off. For a constructive dialogue to occur, some sort of relationship is necessary. This relationship demands a respect for the people we are trying to talk to. It also requires us to speak a shared language and to find some common ground. I would like to suggest a couple of ways that local congregations could approach pop culture, not in order to lose their own distinctive shape and identity, but in order ultimately to give deeper answers to the questions generated by pop culture.

We know from the famous description of the life of the first Christians in Chapter Two of the Acts of the Apostles that the church provided a support system. People could share their joys and find help to carry their burdens. Together they found fellowship. We know that pop culture is disjointed and fragmented, echoing the dislocation people experience in their lives. The former social supports that facilitated people to become and remain Christians are no longer there. Young people no longer feel the depth of social belonging that their parents experienced. Large families have not just been reduced to nuclear families; they have disintegrated into atomised families. In this new social context, the challenge to the church is to nourish young people with new life-giving networks of community. The local church needs to become a pivotal place not only for religious faith, but also for the human experience of community. Young people need to feel welcomed and accepted in their local parish; it needs to provide them with community and with opportunities for growth. The challenge is not simply to offer good liturgies but to provide a platform for sharing values and for bonding socially at the level of "profane" interests such as music, sport, film and so on. I've looked at how young people experience intimations of spirituality in television and music. These central human activities and others need to become part of

the menu they find when they go to the church for nourishment. It is not as though the notion of a "supermarket" full of choices is altogether new. For instance, in the years before Vatican 2, parishioners could select from an array of options during the mass itself: Those who understood Latin were able to follow the mass, others simply allowed the mysterious incantations to seep in, inhaled the incense, recited the rosary, walked around the church praying the stations of the cross, knelt in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary, lit a candle at a side altar to the Sacred Heart, and so on.

Today the local parish needs to enter the world of youth, and to accompany young people in the many questions that preoccupy them on their journey. Concretely, what is needed is a whole range of facilities based in and around the parish as building and as community. For instance, as part of the parish church complex there could be a café for socializing, a rehearsal space where people could train for plays and rock concerts, a giant television screen where soccer fans could watch their favourite teams together after church services, etc. A whole series of small groups with common interests could be set up: beyond obvious and fundamental activities like mass, prayer and Bible reading, they could also watch their favourite soaps or films together and discuss them afterwards. Weekend pop culture brunches could be held where a pop singer or athlete would be invited to share on his or her values and vision of life. Through small participative groups people could get to know each other better, acquire greater self-confidence, become more reflective, and awaken to greater sensitivity to God's presence in daily life. Pop culture is already generating questions in young people as well as suggesting answers. It is telling them who they are, what they are here for, and what to do with their lives. What I am suggesting is that the parish joins this dialogue from the inside as it were, that it undertakes the difficult task of inserting itself into their culture in such a manner as to transform it. It is a matter of making a bridge between two realms that are often regarded as mutually exclusive – faith and popular culture. This can help young people to imagine the culture they inhabit differently: as an arena where they can undertake the difficult and invigorating task of becoming Christian.

Of course, as I have mentioned, there is always the danger that a parish oriented towards pop culture could lose its distinctiveness and identity. But if it has clarity about its purpose and vision, it will strive to give people not only what they want but also what they did not know they were seeking. If a parish

community could succeed in this, it could help people in an important way by paying attention to things that are sometimes dismissed as trivial – sport, music, film, etc.

The Catholic imagination has always been blessed with sacraments and symbols, with rituals and rich images. This has traditionally enabled us to see the “grace-full” quality of the arts and high culture. Perhaps it could also help us to see that even pop culture is not as totally resistant to the sacred as we might think – it too has rumours of angels.

Conclusion

I have looked at two places in which pop culture is life giving and intersects with Christian spirituality:

the joy of *Friends* and the interest in justice-related issues on MTV. Then I looked at how parishes might speak to pop culture more effectively. There are certainly major shortcomings in pop culture. But in this article I have chosen not to dwell on them. Instead I have tried to see that even the limits of pop culture are possibilities that can bring young people along the road to depth. Fighting the images and values pop culture presents is one way of responding to this culture. The alternative response that I am suggesting is to enlarge and deepen these images and values as Paul did at the Areopagus: “As I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an unknown God’. What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:23) ■

Thomas Casey S.J.

“CHRIST IN CULTURE”

My name is Josephine Mulumba, second of six children: a boy and five girls. I completed my studies up to the first cycle of secondary education in Lubumbashi where my parents lived for over sixty years. Then, I pursued my academic formation at the National Institute of Pedagogy in Kinshasa where I obtained a diploma in pedagogy for the teaching of French. After that, I worked as an assistant in the same institute. Currently, I am in Germany preparing my thesis for a doctorate in Congolese literature.

Four years after the General Assembly of Itaiçi, I was asked to write something on culture, which is the third statement of the document “Our Mission”. I will begin with actual events and my experiences with various people.

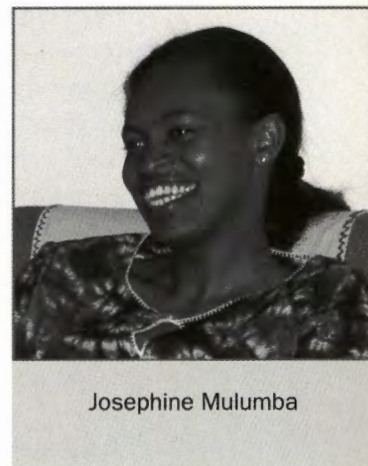
I come from the Congo, which is a cultural mosaic. Therefore I am the product of my parents’ culture and the milieu in which I was educated: Lubumbashi and Kinshasa are sprawling cities in which I lived for sixteen years. Throughout my journey through this multiplicity, I experienced Christ.

I was asked: “How does CLC fight the culture of destruction to bring a culture of hope to the world, the Church, the people, the family, at work and in the social environment?”

In order to answer the question, I will be satisfied to focus my response on the Congolese context and within this context on a minute portion of this society.

For some ten years a latent violence has exploded here and is lived openly and permanently. War exists. No portion of society is exempt. In this context, how can we understand that: “exterior things are created for the person, to help in the pursuit of the end for which he/she was created”, especially when we know the fabulous wealth possessed by this beautiful country so disfigured today.

In this context, when the State instituted the regime of violence, my small CLC group in Kinshasa asked: what can we do for those who are more wounded than we are? Various ways were suggested. I will speak of the experience I lived at the penitentiary and rehabilitation center of Kinshasa in the mining area. The majority of this population is made up of children soldiers. Violence and destruction touched what is most precious in a society: its youth. Helplessly, I found myself face to face with this system. It punished persons who sometimes didn’t know how to make



Josephine Mulumba

the distinction between good and bad. It starved them, kept them in jail without a trial for long months sometimes for long years. These persons remained there often without any family ties. Sunday after Sunday I experienced my impotence. It happened that for a whole month I was unable to go back to the jail. In a reproachful tone, I was asked: "Why haven't you come, don't you care about us?" It was there that I understood what these children wanted from me. They wanted my presence and my love for them in this area of violence where each suffered in different degrees.

The social violence also showed up in the growth of the religious sector. A multiplicity of sects proliferated in the city of Kinshasa. Sometimes, on a street of twenty houses there were three "churches" which sent out their messages through bullhorns and shouting. It is a message that attacked the supporters of traditional Christian Churches who, these pastors say, have failed their mission. It is a message that divides families. The pastors of these "churches of revival" give their own interpretation of the social situation begotten by political indifference. They tell their supporters that the person responsible for their misfortunes is their neighbour who does not adhere to the same faith as they do. It is the child who is in a household where the mother has left. Finally, this innocent child will be thrown out on the street becoming a potential candidate for jail because he or she is called to make a living alone on the streets. These sects shut off dialogue and sometimes nurture discord between parents, opening them to a climate of violence. It is in this atmosphere that we live not only as Catholics but also as CLC members with a different, quiet manner of praying, which makes us suspect in the eyes of those who express their prayers to God in loud voices.

The experience of my fragility

For over a year now I have lived in another culture. I had the opportunity of living with a community: members of the world CLC. First of all, I will speak of what I lived in Germany then what I lived in Belgium this last month.

When I arrived last October the stores were already "selling Christmas". When Christmas arrived I had the impression that the feast was past. Remembering what I had learned from history, and from some books I read, I recalled that Christmas was originally a pagan feast. The present European culture has returned to these sources.

After five month of life in Germany, I made my first contact with the CLC in Augsburg, the seat of the Secretariat for this country. Seeing the buildings and the administration reminded me of German organization. But beyond all this, here was a place where CLC members could come every evening to draw strength from the Eucharist, which is celebrated at the end of each day.

Some month later, at the meeting of the German CLC delegates in Hoffeim, I found myself in communion with a worldwide community, which considered its past and established its future in the light of the Spiritual Exercises. It was a time of grace and of fortifying my CLC vocation.

I needed to experience teams where one could encounter a particular way of living CLC life based on the Spiritual Exercises. Individual members anchored in the spirituality seeking a way to grow as a group in order to be open to the common mission.

Groups, where listening and being opened to one another, resulted in a final word formulated by each, which appeared as a thread unwinding from meeting to meeting, weaving community ties within an individualistic society. The ways of sharing in meetings where several groups come together by means of different media such as pictures, biblical verses, and one's own project backed up by pictorial illustrations led to a sharing between two people. A way of reflecting on some events of one's life also contributed to building community ties. By means of these experiences lived through various facets of the worldwide community, my CLC vocation was strengthened ■

"I CALLED YOU BY YOUR NAME"

Until I was 24, I bore the name "BISSOHONG" which is on all my official documents of identification. It had no emotional resonance in me since I had never given it a place in the history of my life, for example I was never interested in the circumstances in which it was given me or even to its significance in my language of origin: basa'a. It was at the end of a six-day retreat organized by the Ignatian group of Yaoundé in July 1989 that I felt, so to speak, called to question this name. The experience of prayer reminded me of another name "NOUCK" by which my family had always called me, although I paid little attention to it.

The fruit of my first face-to-face with the Word of God, made in silence with the aid of a guide who was a Jesuit priest, at first seemed out of place and surprising. As a student at the Faculty and a Sunday Christian at the Catholic Academic Center, I signed up for the retreat in question which was for "people anxious to learn to make choices according to the will of God," to help me choose a subject between the two imposed on me by the University for my master's degree. Instead of enlightenment on this academic topic, I found myself rather with the painful awareness of an ambiguous identity. I was deeply divided: was I BISSOHONG or NOUCK? The Lord, that I had personally encountered through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, invited me to study the mystery of a vocation to discover: "I have called you by name". (Is. 43:1)

My first response to this call was expressed in the form of a mute revolt, radical and suspicious regarding the family setting in the milieu in which I had been brought up and which had never taken the initiative to enlighten me on my double name. I had never asked anyone, but it seemed to me in my revolt that my parents should have informed me of the essential aspects of my life. For me, it appeared that this was a right I shouldn't have to negotiate. In any case, I felt frustrated. Were they hiding something?

It was with this interior disposition that, in September 1991, I discovered at Douala a

Christian Life Community. I found myself living in this village with a childhood friend; I went regularly to the Center for Spiritual Encounters. The Jesuit priests offered me an ideal setting for the research I needed for my presentation at the University. One afternoon, I was invited by the director of the Center to participate for the first time in a CLC meeting "of young Christians who desired to go further in following Christ, helped by Ignatian Spirituality".

The dynamics of listening and sharing, which took place and was lived within the local group in formation, enabled me to progressively free the *Word* within me then send me back to my family. As I was unable to celebrate reconciliation with my parents, I was at least disposed interiorly to search for my family identity by collecting information from one or other of my relatives. Traveling from one city to another, from one village to another, listening and questioning, I was able to reconstruct important parts of my history, and that of my duplicate name, thus learning who I am.

In the absence of my father, BISSOHONG Gregory, who was at the bedside of my mother, NOUCK Odile, deceased February 27 1965 at the Central Hospital of Yaoundé right after giving birth to my twin brother and I, it was two paternal uncles who had given us our names. The physician who had to deliver the death certificate of our mother required that we receive a name beforehand. My brother, who died five weeks later on April 8, 1965, was thus named YOGO, the name of our paternal grandfather. I was named BISSOHONG, the name of our father. Thus the two names given by our uncles came from the paternal side.

After returning from his wife's funeral and concerned about justice and posthumous honour, my father wanted one of his two children to have the same name as his father-in-law, our maternal grandfather. That is how I received from him publicly the name of NOUCK. My father explained that some time later, he presented me at the town hall of Yaoundé in order to normalize my name. At the town hall, they posed conditions that were

beyond his capabilities to fulfill. Therefore he let it go considering that time would adjust everything.

My father liked to recite the following proverb, expressing the concern for justice, which inspired the distribution of the twins' names between the paternal and maternal families: "*Manga maa ma nééga bée likap*" which means, "*The sharing of two taros between two people is easy*". The wisdom of the proverb probably hadn't foreseen the death, five weeks after our birth, of one of the children, my brother Yogo. Thus, at the moment where the Spiritual Exercises and the CLC opened my eyes to my past, I became increasingly aware of a burdensome conflict of belonging which went beyond me and which was far from quieting my heart.

Mentalities of the milieu

The only living child of my mother who had not had others, all took place within and around me as if I had to establish the sense of my life either on the exclusive grounds of paternal lineage as demanded by custom, modern civil rights and the name BISSOHONG, or on the maternal lineage called for by the name NOUCK. In either case, I would stir up a large human community, which extended from living members to our ancestors and to the spirits of the invisible world. My crisis of identity was going to be lived, expressed and handled on this canvas of a cultural basis, with the contradiction and/or support of my family circle (Christian or not). I divided the people of this family circle into several interconnected tendencies.

The sceptics: they don't believe at all in the "problem of a name". They found it a "false problem" and scolded me for "complicating my life" by attaching myself to "useless details".

The fatalists: they sympathize sincerely with the interior division caused by my double name, but are of opinion "that there is nothing to do", because "it is destiny". They willingly take up the exclamation of resignation, which is popular throughout the country: "what can you do?"

The cautious: they are more or less conscious of my fight for the unity of my personality. Their attitudes suggest that I count on "time", "Providence", "the future" and "the one who knows; himself adjusts all things".

The conformists: they are of two minds. The first accept: an openness to the culture of others without

discernment: "it is normal to have two names, one for the white school, the other for the village". For the second, more opportunists, it is necessary for me to accept and assume the name that here and now gives me a certain social prestige, the one that is registered on all my diplomas.

Son of the Cameroon society, my complicity with the spirit of immobility and diversion, which runs through all the above-mentioned ways of thinking and acting, is incontestable. After the time of mute revolt, there was a long period where I became tired of containing and transforming the cries of the spirit, which continued to challenge me on the subject of my name. I attempted to drown them - be it by intellectual work or in an impetuous quest for a love-relationship. However, the Word of God lived in me like a devouring fire, but the fear of seeming bizarre and ridiculous in the eyes of those around me paralysed my desire to obey faithfully and radically the motions of this *Word*. In the middle of my interior struggle there sprang forth, soothing and irresistible, the thought of having a Mass of Thanksgiving said on the tombs of my brother and my mother. This prayer, in which my personal guide and two members of my group took part, was celebrated on May 22 1994, the day of Pentecost.

The narrow door

Thanks be to God, my fidelity to CLC enabled me to discover a favourable milieu for seeking a balance between, on the one hand, my faith in Christ whereby I felt in my heart the proposition to save myself from an uncomfortable existential situation and, on the other, the need that I also felt to collaborate in this initiative by my commitment. From the beginning, as we shared our lives during the meetings, the others listened with attention and respect to my history. The reactions of different members widened my own perception of what I was living and focused my discernment on "looking for and finding the will of God". After listening to me, one of the participants in a group meeting said to me: "Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene the day of His resurrection and called this woman by name. It is the intimate sign through which she recognized her living Lord (Jn 20:11-18). A name can be the source of a decisive meeting with life." I tried to profit from this light. Depending on the help of the Virgin Mary, I also endeavoured to remember and to appreciate the lights that the Lord Himself gave me during my annual retreats.

The touching sharings of other CLC members, fed by personal meditation on the Word of God and by the review of the day according to Ignatian pedagogy, also helped me to put into perspective the problem of my name: or rather to consider it as an impetus for a holy history in which I must be more and more implicated as an adult and believing actor.

A freer and more sincere openness to the exigencies of personal guidance also helped me. In fact, after I left my paternal family and, in the face of my enthusiasm and inclination to attach myself rather to my maternal family whom I had not yet really met except at the moment of entering into professional life, I considered a question asked by my faithful guide. This progressively clarified things for me and enabled me to take a big step towards liberation. Father Alain Renard asked me: "Is it normal for God to call someone to leave a human family in order to join another family just as human?" For a long time the question remained the backdrop for my meditations and my review of the day, and I allowed myself to be touched by certain Words of Scripture, which I appreciated and which always resounded in me, opening the doors of eternity for me:

- "Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country that I will show you" (Gn 12:1);
- "I appointed you a prophet to the nations..." (Jr 1:5 c);
- "... what does it matter to you? You, are to follow me" (Jn 21:22);
- "Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50);
- "Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15).

It seemed that compared to the emotional dead-ends to which attachment to the honour of my family names led me, the universal enlightenment received from these words and from many others contributed to stabilize my heart in a certain interior liberty. It enabled me to discover my own personality and to structure it on the basis of confidence in God, in myself and in others. I felt led in the name of faith and charity to go beyond my limits. It was with these dispositions that I discovered a sign of salvation inscribed on my baptism certificate almost from the beginning, which confirmed the impetus of my challenge. One year after my birth, in the transcript of NOUCK the name wanted by my father, the Reverend Father Pierre Pascal of the Community of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate spelled it "NUG".

For me, this indicated clearly that God called me to be neither NOUCK, nor BISSOHONG, which are not represented on the aforesaid certificate, but rather by the Christian given names Thomas and Théophile respectively inherited from both families. Thus, I am a new creature who must welcome the family and social identity of his saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a fruit of this personal spiritual discernment shared with my family and the CLC, I decided to ask the competent authorities for the civil "normalization" of my name. This was finally done... not by suppression but by addition... expressing my desire thus of being deeply all to all. On my return from the world CLC General Assembly in Itaïci, I rejoiced to discover that on August 3, 1998 a decree signed by the Prime Minister of Cameroon, Peter Mafany Musonge, allowed me henceforth to call myself NUG BISSOHONG Thomas Théophile, which I translate, beginning with the given names: twin/beloved of God/ (called to)/ blossom/ (on)/ the tombs. In other words, the echo of a resurrection arranged by the Lord.

The signing and publication of the decree was the main justification for my *temporary commitment* to CLC during a national meeting in Yaoundé on December 6, 1998. Then, on February 27, 1999 in Kukum, my paternal village, we participated in a Mass of Thanksgiving co-presided by the bishop of the place, Bishop Jean Bosco NTEP, and Father José Luis Ferrer, the Ecclesiastical Assistant of CLC at that time. Finally, on March 21 1999 in Makak-Ndokoma my maternal village, we celebrated another Mass of Thanksgiving, with my guide as presider with five of his Jesuit confreres and priests, all friends or guides of CLC, which was represented in large numbers on each occasion. My classmates and my two respective families were also present.

The "normalization" of my name gave me an authentically festive joy, following the end of a long journey on a "slippery and twisting road" to come back to the words of Nestor Ymeli with whom I walked closely in CLC Cameroon and who is currently in a community in the United States. I am more and more aware, however, that the nucleus of my identity will always have to be discovered because "in the end, who will say our name, our secret name, our definitive name? Undoubtedly no man, but rather He who is more interior to ourselves



Thomas Théophile Nug Bissohong

than we are," as St. Augustine, an African who died in the first half of the fifth century, wrote.

Today, I feel within myself a kind of significant journey. The question which makes me move forward is no longer "who am I?" but "who does God want me to be?" in the midst of others. To let myself be instructed day by day by the interior Master and by CLC committing myself progressively to giving an apostolic sense to my life, which will guarantee its unity. Thus I rediscover first of all the family as a place where Christ awaits me. It is true to say that the experience of love can inspire opposite acts or attitudes, tenderness as well as severity, suppleness as well as firmness, proximity as well as distance. Yes, to love is also to know how to say no!

What I received gratuitously from Lord along the way as "power" (Ac 1: 8) I feel called also to invest especially for the building of His Church beginning with CLC. In a certain sense, this gave me the opportunity to generously assume various responsibilities that it was judged good to give me during my journey: group coordinator (1994-1996), national responsible for formation (1997-2001) national coordinator (since 2001), delegate to the Pan-African Meetings of Formation and/or to the worldwide gatherings in Cameroon (1996 and 1997), in China (1994), in the Ivory Coast (1996), in Brazil, Spain and France (1998), in Zimbabwe (2001) and in Madagascar (2003).

Such is also the sense of my involvement in the activities of spiritual guidance with the Ignatian Group of Yaoundé, animated by a Jesuit who opened it to the laity in October 1997. My local CLC group "Samuel" undertook it within the framework of training young baptized unschooled children. In this, we followed the example of the initiatives of the Collective of Catholic Christians of Douala for Civic Education. My involvement in the foundation, plus the animation of a Community of Ecclesial Living of Kotto, the district of Douala where I currently live, was undertaken with the same ardour.

Nonetheless, I am further affected by the fact that the style of life which CLC proposed to me tends to establish me in a state where I no longer seem to belong, but above all where I am aware "of surpassing a stage of division or dispersion, reaching a fullness of being with the feeling that nothing escapes me". This unifying and fulfilling experience lived through the meditation and sharing of the mystery of my name, begets a desire for an ever-more intimate communion with the missionary Christ. It translates into the free gift of myself, and a fidelity that was neither my initiative nor the measure of the apostolic effects in all areas of my life. These effects invite me constantly to be more "qualified in order to help the dialogue and to act everywhere for reconciliation", one of the cultural dimensions of the Common Mission received in Itaïci ■

THE LAST HOPE FOR PEACE

THE 17 YEARS AT THE UN

In the recent debate over the war in Iraq, the president of the USA, George W. Bush, referred to the United Nations as “merely a debating society”. Even though Mr. Bush did not mean those words as a compliment, nevertheless there is some truth in them. For those of us who have worked at the UN know that there is a place for words in our world and in those words there may be the solutions to some of the world’s worst problems. The UN is a place where the nations of the world can come together to air their differences and to hopefully work toward common solutions. The pain of the world’s suffering and the hope of the world’s people are mirrored everyday in the agenda of the UN.

I first went to the UN on the invitation of Tom Monahan. Tom was the one who acquired for World CLC our status as an NGO. Tom worked tirelessly at the UN as our first CLC representative. At times Tom would invite me to accompany him. When Tom died suddenly in 1985, the office in Rome asked me to be a “temporary replacement”. Neither of those words turned out to be true. I soon found out that no one could really “replace” Tom and all that he had done at the UN. In addition, my “temporary” status somehow remained until December of 2002!

My first memory of attending meetings at the UN was one of awe. Here in New York, under one roof, were all the nations of the world! Here, under one roof, were all the desires, the problems, the hurts and wounds, the differences, the hopes and dreams of all those nations! The agenda of any session of the General Assembly over the past 57 years covers practically every problem that exists in our world today. Somehow or other they all show up as part of the vast agenda that the UN continues to undertake.

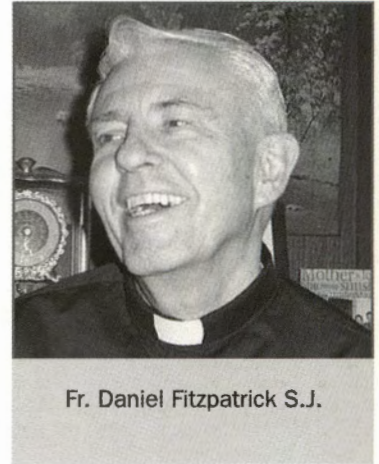
All these problems, all the agenda of the UN are under the control of the Security Council and the General Assembly. One has to keep reminding oneself that the UN is not a super-national government, which rules over all the nations of the world. Indeed, the exact opposite is true. The Secretary-General and the UN agencies only act as

a result of a vote of the sovereign nations of the world that make up the General Assembly. The Secretary-General and the UN agencies have no power to act on their own. So the importance of the debate and discussion that goes on continually at the UN. Words are important and hours are spent at the UN listening to long speeches and attending long meetings and conferences.

The importance of dialogue and debate became especially clear in the 1990s. For the UN, this was a decade of several major world conferences. The preparation for these conferences and the subsequent follow-up really dominated a lot of the work of the UN over the decade.

The decade started with the World Summit for Children in 1990. Here the UN proposed for ratification by the nations of the world “The Convention on the Rights of the Child”. At that time, CLC was working in concert with the International Catholic Child Bureau. One of their main objectives was to bring this convention to the UN for a vote and as a result to help protect the welfare and especially the health of children throughout the world. There was a special session of the General Assembly in September 1990, which was attended by many of the heads of states from across the globe and where “The Convention on the Rights of the Child” was adopted.

In June of 1992, there was the now famous world conference on Economic Development. This came to be known as “the Earth Summit”. At the conference held in Rio de Janeiro, the UN adopted a document called “Agenda 21”. It was hoped that this would be a global blueprint for sustainable development as the world moved toward the 21st century. A further conference in 1997 revisited Agenda 21 to see what progress had been made over the five intervening years. Unfortunately, though some progress had been made in certain areas, the general overall view was that the global environment was continuing to deteriorate.



Fr. Daniel Fitzpatrick S.J.

A year later in June of 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna. This conference reaffirmed the international community's commitment to all human rights first enunciated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Better mechanisms for monitoring and promoting human rights across the globe were put in place. At that conference, the UN established the UN High Commission on Human Rights and appointed the first High Commissioner. As a member of the NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief, I spent a lot of time on the question of human rights particularly in the area of religious freedom and persecution. As part of the UNCHR there was subsequently established a Special Rapporteur whose task was to monitor specific violations of human rights in the area of religion and belief.

Many of you will remember the Cairo Conference of September 1994 on Population and Development. At Cairo there arose a widely publicized debate on the reproductive health of women and family planning. There was also a strong emphasis on the education of women and girls in the developing nations of the world. You will recall that the Vatican Delegation to the UN played a significant role at this conference.

The year 1995 was a particularly busy one at the UN. 1995 marked the 50th Anniversary of the UN's existence. There were many different celebrations here in New York, in Vienna, Paris, and in many other parts of the world. For those of us who represented Catholic organizations, the visit of Pope John Paul II to the UN was a highlight. The Pope's positive words on the existence and work of the UN over the past fifty years were words of hope and encouragement for those working at the UN. It was a moment of great rejoicing to hear that the Church held the UN in high regard. Toward the end of his speech to the General Assembly, the Pope challenged the UN with these words: "The United Nations Organization needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and to become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a family of nations."

1995 was a year of two other world conference. In March the World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen. 117 heads of states came to together to pledge to "eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative". The conference also focused on the negative side

of globalization. Despite the fact of economic growth in some countries and in the private sector, the Copenhagen Conference pointed out that there was a growing gap between the rich and poor of the world, that there were shrinking safety nets to help those most in need, and that there was an increasing insecurity about jobs in both developed and developing countries. Subsequent world economic events proved that this conference was prophetic.

In September of '95, the 4th World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The conference proposed a five-year plan to enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of women across the world. Besides addressing the question of better access to better health care for women, there was a very serious and heated discussion on the promotion of the marital and sexual rights of women. Again the Vatican Delegation to the UN played a major role. CLC was represented at this conference by Ann Noonan from NY and Annie Lam from Hong Kong.

The final world conference of the 20th century was held in Istanbul in June 1996. This was the UN Conference on Human Settlements. The conference called for guidelines for living conditions in our world and asked the member states to come to a "full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing" that people across the world have.

This decade of many conference and great activity in the part of the UN ended with the turn of the century and millennium. In September 2000 here in NY, the Millennium Summit was held. There was a great hope that at this conference the developed countries of the world would announce a plan of debt reduction for the developing countries. This, unfortunately, never became a reality. The speakers from all parts of the world expressed the hopes and desires that the world of the 21st century would be a world of a new respect for all human rights, a world of tolerance for the differences among nations and peoples and a world of peace. Only a few years into the century, we all deplore the reality of how these hopes and dreams have been so swiftly shattered.

Over the course of my years as WCLC representative at the UN there were an ongoing number of agenda items that kept recurring. Among them were the Palestinian question, the growing problem of the world's refugees and displaced people, the continuing problem of land mines left after warfare, and the attempt to reign in the

proliferation of nuclear arms. In addition, the Security Council had to deal with the continuing fighting in Israel, as well as the bitter conflicts in East Timor, the former Yugoslavia, and Angola, to name but a few. The UN itself had to face the continuing problem of financial stability and the question of how to restructure many offices in the secretariat as well as the possible restructuring of the Security Council itself.

My years at the UN have taught me a lot about this great and complex world in which we live. For that I am grateful. I am also especially grateful for the existence and work of the International Catholic Organizations Center where I worked with many other Catholic NGOs at the UN. For me personally, it was a grace to be able to represent WCLC and know

that we were doing a very little part to try and work toward a better world. The reason WCLC is at the UN comes right out of our General Principle 8 where we say that "the field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the Gospel of salvation to all". I have met and worked with some wonderful people, people from all across the globe from all walks of life and from all sectors of society; people who represent a wide variety of beliefs and unbeliefs who sincerely want to see the rights of every person respected and honoured. For me to participate in that was a way to try and bring the Good News to all. It has been a privilege ■

*We make our own the voice
of the poor, the
disinherited, the suffering,
of those who long for
justice, for dignity of life,
for freedom, for well-being
and for progress. The
people of the earth turn
to the United Nations as
the last hope of peace."*

Pope Paul VI, Appeal to the
United Nations, New York,
October 4, 1965.

THANK YOU!

There have been countless individuals in CLC history who have remained unnoticed or the extent of their contribution has been largely imperceptible by the world community.

The world Executive Council of CLC wishes to acknowledge and pay tribute to one of these. Shouldering the responsibility with very little structural and financial support, Fr. Daniel Fitzpatrick S.J. has diligently and honourably carried out the mission for which he was sent.

FORCED MIGRATION

At a recent meeting of the CLC Forced Migrant Network in Zug Switzerland, the participants from 8 CLC Nationals in Europe affirmed the priority of addressing the Migration issue in all countries as a concerted work of CLC in Europe as well as the need to improve the collaborative efforts with others in this field of mission. Two members of the Network share brief looks at immigration in their respective countries.

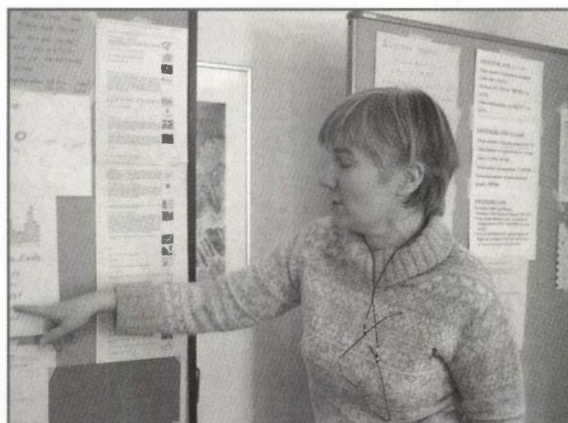
In our CLC

It was far from being evident as to how to begin, but many believed and the commission on Forced Migration now has been in existence in our National CLC for a little more than a year. The presence of new migrants is a reality, which is not new in Belgium. Our country has a vast tradition of being a land of hospitality as well as a land of diverse cultures. Don't forget that the "Latin-German" border that crosses Europe also crosses right through Belgium. Thus, we Belgians are accustomed to intercultural living, to negotiation, to making compromises. This sometimes has resulted in criticism, but also of praise. Which Belgian family cannot boast about having a little foreign "blood" in its veins? Few people would dare to defend the

idea of the purity of a Belgian race!

Since the industrial revolution, Belgium favoured immigration, as it needed a labour force to complete work for which the Belgians were not adept such as mining. In the last century, many workers came to our industrial regions from Italy, Poland, Turkey, Morocco, Spain and Portugal. Up until the seventies, our politicians supported this immigration because of local needs but, with the rise of unemployment, the doors of our country closed and the conditions for entry became increasingly restrictive. At present, the only means to enter and remain in our country, if one is not from a member country of the European Union, is to ask for the refugee status. Consequently, many of the applicants for immigration request asylum. The Foreign Office is inundated by these many requests, which are mixed in with the authentic appeals for asylum made by those who really are under threat in their countries. It follows that, on one hand, the genuine requests for asylum are treated less and less favourably as warranted by the situation of these applicants and then, on the other hand, the other applicants for immigration are obliged to use deceptive means to obtain the only status which enables them to remain here... that of a refugee.

Many members of the Belgium CLC, with knowledge of the reality of new migrants, are in our schools which welcome these newly arrived (recognized or clandestine), in places of formation towards integration, or in reception centers for SDF (those without fixed addresses) also attended by clandestine foreigners, or in reception centers for asylum seekers, or in our parishes, or are journalists. Consequently, the proposal of CLC to take this project on, as a communal priority, was met with enthusiasm by those members who were already concerned or involved.



Françoise Martin

There was, consequently, a challenge to incorporate several individual apostolates juxtaposed upon a Communal apostolate proposed by our francophone National CLC. At the end of 2001, with the aid of our national president and of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Belgium, we found ourselves with several activities and implemented them:

- Commitment to publish articles regularly in the "gazette CVX" (the bulletin of the CLC French-speaking Belgium).
- Invitation to all CLC members and their friends to take part together in an interactive experience which has the participants assuming the role of an asylum seeker as a means of conscientizing them to a hard reality.
- Proposal of a motion to be made at our annual assembly to adopt the issue of new migrants as a priority.

The General Assemble approved this motion in March 2002. Action on behalf of "forced migrants" consequently became a priority for our National CLC. We continue to meet regularly and we have developed several objectives:

1. Our meetings comprise a dimension of sharing with an aim of supporting our various activities.
2. A significant time is also left for communication of various information and questions in order to engage in a common action. Currently, Belgium is preparing for the legislative elections. It is an occasion to send a letter to our members of Parliament concerning quite specific points which questions Belgian's policy for asylum seekers. We decided to denounce, with other associations, the fact that there are files of certain applicants that drag on for many years, without any possibility of work for these people; to also denounce the presence of minors detained in closed centers, which very strongly resemble prisons.
3. Regularly articles on forced migrants are published in the National CLC gazette.

4. Information meetings were proposed in several regions.

5. We are actively working on the preparation of a spiritual formation course on welcoming foreigners, "Welcoming and living with the foreigner". This session will take place in Namur in October 2003, for those who desire an invitation to a conversion of heart rather than a socio-political information session. One does not have to be a militant activist to come to this session but open to ask the question: Where I am, in my household, my office, my work... what am I called to do, vis-a-vis this new reality of injustice in our world? Wasn't this the known reality of those that knew Jesus and His family? What is the gospel saying about this today?

The participation in the European meeting in Zug, Switzerland also made it possible for our commission to be open to the European dimension of this problem. In fact, it is not possible to consider the reality of the new migrants in Belgium without looking beyond the borders of our country ■

CLC PORTUGAL'S RESPONSE

After the CLC Eurolink meeting in Poland, in October 2000, it was proposed to the national community in Portugal that a special involvement with immigrants be taken. In fact, in those years Portugal was facing a new wave of illegal immigrants coming from Eastern Europe, particularly from the Ukraine, and help was needed. In various regions, initiatives immediately appeared to help these people particularly in learning the Portuguese language, but also in other areas such as legal assistance. In recent years, the situation changed in some way since there was a major legalization process undertaken but situations of injustice and need still remain.



Madalena Maria
Castelo Branco

In the last National Assembly, in January 2003, the work with immigrants was a theme proposed for group discussion and it is one of CLC Portugal's apostolic priorities in the promotion of human dignity and the fight against social exclusion.

Our History

The migration phenomenon is not a new one in Portugal. Until recent decades, Portugal has been mostly a country of emigration. In 1975, after the April national revolution and consequent independence of our colonies in Africa, and with the 1980's fall of the Berlin wall, Portugal has become a country of immigration, with all that this means; new colours, new styles, new behaviours, new cultures and - in recent years - new languages.

With this new phenomenon - the coming of peoples from our ex-colonies and, in these most recent years, the coming of people from Eastern Europe - the situation has completely changed. It took about 10 years to duplicate the number of new immigrants, but in the last 2 years this number as re-duplicated. Actually in our country now, there

are almost 500 thousand immigrants both legal and illegal (the latter are estimated to be approximately 30 thousand), and they represent almost 5% of our resident population and 10% of our working force.

Portugal is a small country and one of the less wealthy in the European Union so this immigration boom had to be stopped. By government instructions, only those immigrants who could confirm that they had arrived in our country before November 2001 had possibilities to be legalized. About 2/3 of these immigrants are found in the Center/South of the country and the other 1/3 live in the North.

This immigration question turned out to be a big issue for the present government with the result that a new immigration law is to be released soon. The High Commissionaire for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (where I work) has a massive activities plan, which includes an improvement in the information level on this subject of immigration. Also planned is the development of a National System for Immigrants Support, where we will have a national network of support centers for immigrants all around the country.

We have countrywide solidarity actions organized primarily by church organizations (Caritas, Jesuit Refugee Service, Diocese Migration Secretariat etc), by individual parishes and by the Portuguese Red Cross. There are also some immigrant's associations that work very well on this matter. The position of the Roman Catholic in Portugal towards immigrants is to be helpful, to integrate, to accept them whether they are documented or undocumented people.

Portugal has a positive perspective on the immigration question, although we are aware that we have limited resources, space, wealth, so we must look and work in an integrated way (civil, political and church) in order to receive and integrate our newcomers. The immigrants from Northeast Europe are mostly Christians from the Orthodox Rite. Nevertheless, they have been warmly welcomed by the Catholic Church, which reflects a wonderful positive sign of ecumenism ■

HUMAN PROCESS - GROWTH IN FAITH

Introduction

For about 30 years I have been studying, as a psychologist and as a Christian, the theme of Faith in its curious relationship with the Psychology of Development. Little by little I started to organize the elements of this reflection, wrote several essays and had the opportunity of guiding some courses on the subject for CLC members. As to the present, I wish to contribute to the advancement of the Charism document and consequently for more clearness and security in the formation of our people.

I believe in the fundamental importance of this reflection whenever any statements about "community" are to be established. According to theology "Grace supposes nature and improves it". Christian Community (grace) supposes the suitable growth of the human person as an individual, as well as a group (nature). Beyond this, in the same way as every creature exists under process (consequence of being subject to the *Time* factor), we must consider the correlation among four processes: the two in the *human plan* (as individuals and groups) and similarly in the *plan of faith*. That is to say, we grow up through *stages* in all of the plans.

These ideas are confirmed in what is said in number 125 of the Charism document: "...we will briefly examine the specific process by which the community grows and matures and then, in more detail, the role it plays in the growth and maturation of its members". It seems to me that it is necessary, for those who wish to take part in CLC, to commence the building of that new life style from the beginning, without skipping over the necessary steps in the process of growth. I'll try to briefly develop this subject in the two following sections.

a. The process of Human Growth

1. *INDIVIDUAL GROWTH* runs through four distinct stages, according to the Psychology of

Development: Childhood, Adolescence, Youth/Young Adult and Adulthood (including Old Age):

1.1 *Childhood* is characterized by (*ME*) - that is to say, by identifying the world with itself.

1.2 *Adolescence* is the openness to (*YOU*) - wishing better self-understanding through friends.

1.3 *Youth/Young adult* includes more friendship (*WE*) - with the desire of having new experiences and taking risks.

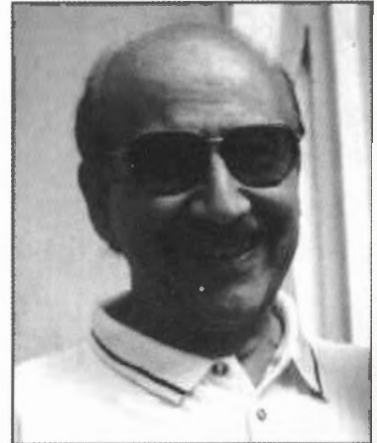
1.4 *Adulthood* means a somehow established life (job, marriage...) - by a mature interest about what is universal (*ALL*) and joined to Wisdom.

2. *THE GROUP GROWTH* runs parallel. Every human gathering, in its normal development, goes through these stages:

2.1 *The Gathering* is the child-like and immature stage of those who meet without previous knowledge, induced to be together just because all, and each one, look for the same objective (*ME*) such as: to see a film in the movies, to be carried along to the same destiny in a bus, to begin a job in the same venture (office, school...).

2.2 *The Group of Friends* is the adolescent stage where people, beyond their first (personal) interest, begin to open themselves and become interested in each other (*YOU*). This knowledge leads them to some esteem and even to a first love, according to the proverb: "One just loves what he/she knows".

2.3 *The Team* follows as a young adult stage, when friendships are confirmed and initiatives pop up, from one to another member of the group (*WE*). That is the opportunity for the development of leadership capabilities for most of them.



Milton Paulo de Lacerda
CLC Brazil

2.4 *The Psychological Community* or adult stage comes to cap (without exhausting) the process of group growth. It supposes the, more or less, long development of all previous stages. It neither happens by decree nor all of a sudden. It cannot be improvised, and it is not enough for a group to be called "community" in order to be a real one. They live the same exciting ideal, which draws all members towards the same direction. Rather than friends, they feel themselves as kin under the motto: "One for all, and all for one!"

b. The process of Growth in Faith

1. *THE INDIVIDUAL GROWTH IN FAITH*: In remarkable correlation with the previous processes, the experience of faith goes through similar stages. I would only add a prior stage of "alienation", comparable with the situation of the Hebrew people relishing the profits of Egypt had forgotten God, or that of a boy not yet interested in the love for any girl.

1.1 The childlike stage (Pre-Evangelization) matches the situation of disturbance and the feeling of neediness of *ME* (akin to the Hebrews grieved with the weight of slavery, or the turmoil of the boy in the presence of a girl). This is the stage of overcoming impediments and removing obstacles to faith. *Experience of the Sacrament of Baptism and Reconciliation*

1.2 The adolescent stage (Evangelization) rather than a "stage" is a personal encounter, an experience of the divine *YOU*, of the transcendent (such as with the Hebrews at the foot of Sinai, or like those young people at the sublime moment of falling in love). *Experience of the Sacrament of Eucharist*

1.3 The young adult (Initiation into the Mystery of Christ and of the Church, His Mystical Body) consists in learning how to live together with God (*WE*) (like the Hebrews beginning to walk with God in the desert, or like the young couple who begin courting and frequently seek each other out). It is a long journey of Prayer, Study

and Apostolic Experiences. *Experience of the Sacrament of Confirmation*

1.4 The adult stage (Consecration or commitment) reveals some sort of maturity or stability in Christian life, as well the availability for service (*ALL*, the Universal), (like the Hebrews entering the Promised Land, or the young couple announcing their Engagement). *Experience of the "Election of state of Life"* (lay, religious, or priest)

2. *GROUP GROWTH IN FAITH*: Similar to the human group growth, a Christian group runs through the same stages as a group of believers. The previous experiences of faith of each person can reduce the delay in a group's growth, because they are predisposed to mutual receptiveness and to fraternal love. But, even so, Grace will only act in proportion to the due conversion or cooperation of Nature. Therefore:

2.1 *The Gathering* brings, as seed, the desire for collaboration and the will to build together for the good of God's reign.

2.2 *The Group of Friends* can happen to the extent of each one's balance and humble acknowledgment of mutual value, certain that all are members of Christ's Body.

2.3 *The Team* will take firm hold in the absence of any spirit of competition and vanity, and by the eagerness in acknowledging Christ as the center and reason for every apostolic work. As members learn how to walk with God, the need emerges for activities that foster Spirituality, courses to deepen the truths of faith, as well as zealous initiatives for the expansion of God's Reign.

2.4 *The Christian Community* will be the mature fruit of the previous stages. All will be of one heart and one spirit for the most part, though human frailty should always be remembered and considered. Community is the *UTOPIA*, the *DREAM OF CHRIST*, never attainable but always worth to be sought after ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

14th CLC General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya july 30 - august 8, 2003

SENT BY CHRIST, MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

*"For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ." (1 Cor 12:12)*

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