



progressio

Publication of the World Christian Life Community



PHOTOS FRONT COVER

from up-left to right:

- René Alceu Corsi Lufti and Br. Claudinei de Lima SJ (Brazil)
- Participants of CLC Brazil National Assembly in a Presentation game
- Young members of CLC Chihuahua (Mexico)
- Chris Hogan (President CLC Australia)
- Kay Hooper, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ and Fr. Mark Raper SJ (Provincial of Australia)
- Tuyet, Le Thanh Liem (Pres) and Quang, Vietnamese Companions of Christ, presenting their logo during their incorporation into CLC USA
- Fr. Alberto Brito SJ (World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant), Daniela Frank (World President), Leah Michaud (World ExCo Secretary), Lois Campbell (ExCo) and the National ExCo of CLC USA.
- Edward Warrington (Malta)

PHOTOS BACK COVER

from up-left to right:

- Ulrich Treipl (Austria), Kristina Mederal, Ivana Vujevic (Croatia), Charles Bokor (Belgium W.), Fr. Michael Gallagher SJ (EA Ireland), Urska Baloh (Slovenia), Fr. Herminio Rico SJ (EA Portugal), Klaus Detlef-Seiter (Germany) and Ann Sieuw (Belgium Fl.)
- Igor Bahovec (Slovenia)
- Lynne Slocombe (Australia National ExCo), Rosemary Shepherd (South Australian State ExCo), Caroline Berger (Australian National ExCo).
- Fred Leone and a member of CLC USA
- Fadi Chidiaq SJ (Lebanon), Br. Michel Daoud SJ (Syria) and Fr. Michel Breninkmeyer SJ (EA Syria)
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- The ExCo of CLC Portugal: Miguel Freitas, M. Helena Aguiar, Fr. Herminio Rico SJ (EA), Tintao and Antonio Mendes (Pres)
- Ignace Rukeribuga (Rwanda)
- Aloysius Shin and Jinhui Kim (Korea)

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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.

Dear friends in the Lord,

In accordance with our tradition, the present issue of our magazine presents itself as a bouquet of flowers picked from our communal garden. Certainly, the testimonies and reflections are rooted in their particular contexts, but they reveal the unity of our charism and of our pilgrimage in the footsteps of our Lord and Master. It is in Him that these experiences are rooted. It is also He, who gives them their sense and purpose, who opens our eyes so that we may appreciate the harmony sublimated from the variety of colours and smells of these flowers.

Echoing the voice of the Holy Father, who has recently commenced the new Eucharistic Year, our Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant invites us to rediscover and deepen the mystery of the Eucharist and its place in our CLC life. Christ becomes present – in this sacrament – at the heart of our lives and human condition, so as to sustain our desire and to fortify our intention to follow Him more closely and to labour with Him for the coming of His Kingdom.

Characteristic means and instrument of our charism, the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius equip us for our mission. It is the sense of a rather personal sharing of the spiritual exercises made in Brazil, in Itaici, a town which reminds us of a memorable climax in the life of our community: the World Assembly of 1998. Following Itaici, the stage of Nairobi is the most recent beacon on our way as a world community. It is good to relive the intuitions and the vision of this assembly, particularly when this vision shows the traits of consolation and challenges.

Among the challenges we engaged ourselves to take up in Nairobi, the challenge to become an Ignatian apostolic body figures prominently. In such a body, the responsibility for mission is shared by all and everyone.

Sometimes, this challenge conjures up objections tainted by anxieties and misgivings: should we change our apostolic activities radically? should we add to our crowded calendars yet more activities? ought we to consider as apostolic CLC activities merely those activities in which all our members participate? and, if so, how to reconcile

“personal/individual” activities and common mission?

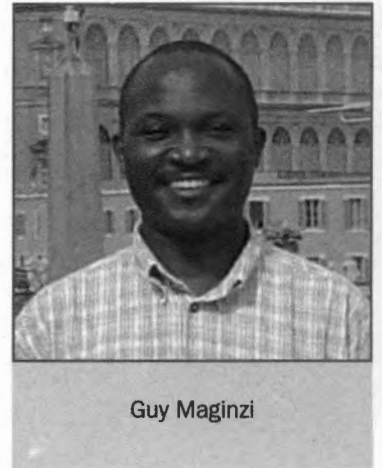
When reviewing our Charism or other texts published on our CLC mission, these anxieties fade soon. In fact, they will disappear completely when we review what the Lord inspires us and gives us to live as an apostolate. The shared responsibility is far from being a totally new practice, as the student houses run by CLC French speaking Belgium show. The same holds true for the experience of the volunteers of SIGVOL in Ecuador. Among many other merits, the project SIGVOL also testifies to a successful co-operation between CLC and the Society of Jesus.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for this co-operation, which has also manifested itself in our relations with Fathers Daniel Fitzpatrick and Henri Volken. The former in New York and the latter in Geneva have enabled CLC to play for many years its part as a non-governmental organisation recognised by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Today, this presence at the United Nations receives a renewed impetus, one aspect of which we are told about from New York. Like an echo to project 127, published last October and available on our web-site, this article invites us to grow as an apostolic community.

The growth of our community is also ensured by the sharing of resources for formation. The formation session held in Lebanon for CLC Middle East, by a team from France, is a shining example of this sharing of resources, which enriches both guides and participants. From the house of our heavenly Father, to which he has preceded us, Father Paul Roger Dalbert, refounder of CLC in France, certainly shares our joy about this. We pay him homage for his dedication to CLC.

After Rita El Ramy, it is now the turn of Mari Carmen Mora de Pena as a member of the World Executive Council to present herself in our magazine.

All together, at the service of the Risen Christ!■



Guy Maginzi

Guy Maginzi
CLC Executive Secretary

THE EUCHARIST



Alberto Brito, SJ

We unworthily eat this bread and unworthily drink this wine if we approach this table without hunger and without thirst. Since we receive the Eucharist at least every Sunday, it is easy to think that we already know the gestures and words because we have seen and heard them so often.

The same happens before the crucifix. Since we see it every day — most of us have it at the entrance of our homes or even in our bedroom — it is easy to lose our capacity to marvel and to think that things could only have happened this way.

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, says “Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to my house.” Mary is perturbed by the words of the Angel because she finds that the solemn announcement given to her is not fitting. The Roman centurion pronounces the words that we repeat today every time that the Eucharist is given to us “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter into my house!”

Eucharistic unworthiness is that of the Pharisee who says “I thank you, Lord, because I am not like others, because I am good, I deserve your bread and I have nothing to forgive anyone!”

Judging oneself worthy of the Eucharist opens the door to a self sufficiency that makes the Eucharist ineffective. We stop seeing it as the only gift before which the adoration of a grateful heart is possible. For this reason, our sin is not in our weakness but in our lack of gratitude.

It is necessary that a sword “*pierce our heart,*” making room for us to listen to the Lord and to receive everything from him. This is the strength Paul speaks of to the Philippians, the knowledge that goes beyond our learning (Phil 3:8), the opening to the future and to everything good that God desires to give those willing to receive.

Because we receive, we place ourselves within

the journey of the Church! Certainly the heart grateful for this immense gift will not sit with eyes permanently fixed on the tabernacle nor search only in books for solutions to important questions. Rather from this source there will shine forth an inexhaustible force, a dynamism that leads us to journey with others: the community, the Church. It certainly won’t leave us alone in our small group.

For us, as the Christian Life Community, receiving this gift spurs us on and moves us beyond our small group or local community. It leads us to what Nairobi calls an “Apostolic Community.” We must travel this communal journey humbly and be committed entirely to the whole body.

The Eucharist is not exhausted in each mass, in each communion, in each visit to a Church. The Lord continues to offer us the broken body and the spilled blood, i.e., the given life. The Lord continues saying the word “*take and eat all of this*” for the good of the world. The expressions of God are eternal!

It is up to us to celebrate what we have received and lived in the words and gestures of the mass. In the same way that Jesus’ words and gestures during the last supper summarized what He himself lived all his life, so also for us today the Eucharist will never be a private affair. It is the whole life of the world and of the people (therefore, mine/ours also!) who see in the Eucharist the formative strength of a Church, of a culture and of a civilization.

The Eucharist is not an isolated event but the whole life of a people travelling on the journey toward becoming an Apostolic Community!

I am happy that my first message to CLC as the World Vice-Assistant coincides with the beginning of the Year of the Eucharist.

May it be a good year for the Community, for each and every small community, for each family and person! ■

Alberto Brito, SJ

SIGVOL: CLC and Jesuits shared mission

The Jewel of the Sachas, a town in Ecuador in the Amazon, 1998: a group of families of that sector talked about their problems, shared their experiences and asked mutual pardon for their lack of love. We were witnesses to that encounter.

Practically speaking, another dream of unified service in the community began, fruit of the discernment of members of CLC Ecuador. That workshop of "school for families" would be the pilot project of what would later be called Ignatian Voluntary Service: Sigvol.

Our work is to accompany volunteers so that they can live an experience of social contact that leaves its mark on the decisions of their lives. For us, volunteering means not only offering a few hours to carry out a work, but rather going in search of persons and, through this, learning to accept ourselves as persons: this is what it means to be a volunteer.

service as a result of that promotion, the selection of volunteers, their human training and necessary techniques (according to the type of project and necessary profile of the volunteer: literacy, accompaniment for the elderly, children's camps, the construction of housing, community development, health, pedagogic support, missions, shops, etc.). Then living the experience (in which we also tried to form them and accompany them on the Ignatian way), finally completing this process after their service with activities including forums, meetings and an approach to the Spiritual Exercises if they desired it.



Volunteers at work

The birth of Sigvol was marked by learning to read the "signs of the times" in the realities of our country. It is the structural way in which we want to respond to them with an apostolic work of CLC whose community discerns, sends, accompanies and evaluates the process. Using Ignatian attitudes of seeking the greatest good and the most fruit, and going to places and circumstances where others have not yet arrived, are a priority for us, as well as working as a network and, since Nairobi, strengthening the community as a body in mission. Continuing along these lines for more than three years, we have been among the volunteers serving with the Ecuadorian province of the Society of Jesus. This is an important sign of collaboration between the laity, CLC members who started Sigvol (now a foundation) and the Jesuits with whom they regularly collaborate and with whom they work with the volunteers in some



Building house

To do this we used a process that passed through various stages: the promotion of projects (previously classified by us), information to candidates as they considered the volunteer

of their works, not only overseeing that the work of the volunteers is efficient but, mainly and with the help of God, fruitful.

In Sigvol, a Jesuit shares in the life of the team since he has become chaplain. He is the link with the hierarchy and with other Jesuits, especially directors of social and educational works, and gives advice on decisions made by the board of directors. Thus we were able to speed up the work, guide personal and institutional relationships and enhance the sense of family in Sigvol, not only with CLC and the Society of Jesus but with other Church groups and groups of the Society. This also permits the Jesuit to carry out other occupations since he doesn't have to dedicate all his time to the office.

The Society of Jesus finances the basic maintenance of the office for the team work which is carried out in the house belonging to CLC. The necessary money for the whole logistics of the projects (feeding the volunteers, transportation, materials, etc.) is financed partly by companies, through various donations, by the works we support and also by the volunteers themselves. Certainly the money on hand is

never in excess. We hope soon to be self-sustaining.

At this point the results are still modest: nearly 1500 volunteers have participated in 30 projects, the majority works of the Society of Jesus. At least 3 formal institutions have arisen through volunteers who worked with us, 1700 families benefited directly and another 1800 indirectly in 6 cities of the country. For each dollar invested in the maintenance of the office 94 cents are reinvested directly in the poorer, marginal communities by the work of the volunteers.

Beyond the numbers, what is most important is the experience that transforms the whole person (and his/her social group whether it be family, friends, classmates) when they share with others who live in different social situations. Both groups should benefit from the encounter. The result — the true generosity of the people — can only be assessed from this viewpoint which really cannot be quantified.

Thus voluntary work is like an integrating alternative where all the participants obtain tangible benefits for the community which accompanies them through its various social works, as well as the volunteers who discover sharing themselves with others, and the works which we support. The Society of Jesus, the CLC apostolates and others (as well as society as a whole) count on qualified and motivated people, as well as society as a whole which little by little changes paradigms through the silent but fruitful work of the grassroots.

We propose to the national communities that they also be integrated into this experience of service as a body in mission. This can be done by travelling to Ecuador and participating as volunteers in their projects, learning the reality of the place and supporting the administration of resources through contributions or through apostolic "twinning" in order to permit us a better integration, exchange of volunteers and economic support.



CLC-Sigvol headquarters

If they decide to come and participate here in Ecuador they will not only enter into contact with the social reality of the work in which they participate but they will also know the social dimension from which it originates. They will share our culture and live another reality. They will maintain the link with the community through one of our local groups where the dynamic of the CLC is lived. We are certain that to live this experience of contact will mark the present and future life not only of the person but of the community where each participates. From these realities our promotional material takes its motto: "Discover yourself in others: Be a volunteer!"

We hope also, that they visit our website: "www.sigvol.org" and they share their dreams and contact us through the e-mail: voluntariado@sigvol.org in order to continue carrying out combined plans that lead us to be more "a body in mission"



Sigvol volunteers

We are always happy to share proposals and receive news of all!

"Desiring to wake up every day praying for humanity, for its pain, its fragility, its strength, its hopes... their humanity; our humanity." ■

*Ignatian service of Volunteers, SIGVOL
CLC Ecuador*

CVX BELGIUM: STUDENT HOUSES

For the last ten years, the accompaniment/supervision of two community houses has given a dozen young people per year the opportunity to confront their way of life, their vision of the world and their faith to those of others.



Charles Bokor

Presentation of the project

The project of "CLC STUDENT HOUSES" or "Kots CVX" ("Kot", meaning digs in Belgian French, is a room let to a student for one academic year) was born approximately ten years ago. It originated in the intuition of some Jesuits and student members of CLC, that CLC needed to be more visible and open. The response to this need was the creation of two

student houses.

CLC wishes to give some students the opportunity to make the experience of an enriching and constructive life, based on three axes:

- community life
- spiritual life, based on Ignatian Spirituality
- social engagement, limited, but nevertheless real.

The houses are also shining testimony to Christian values and a place where a clearly defined spiritual life is led.

More concretely: the houses are situated on the campuses of the Universities of Louvain-la-Neuve and Namur. The student house of Louvain-la-Neuve has 7 bedrooms, shared facilities and common rooms. The house in Namur has 8 bedrooms, shared facilities on each floor plus common rooms. On the ground floor, there is the secretariat of CLC, a conference room and a library.

Both houses are "accompanied" by a team of two people, members of CLC, or friends of CLC (Jesuits, Sisters of St Andrews): usually one of them is younger and the other a so-called "reference" adult (house parent). Yet another

person is in charge of the administration (contracts, rent) and the maintenance of the houses.

How is the idea of shared responsibility put into practice?



Community Life

The whole of our CLC community and each of its members is called to support this project and to send those who ensure its everyday functioning.

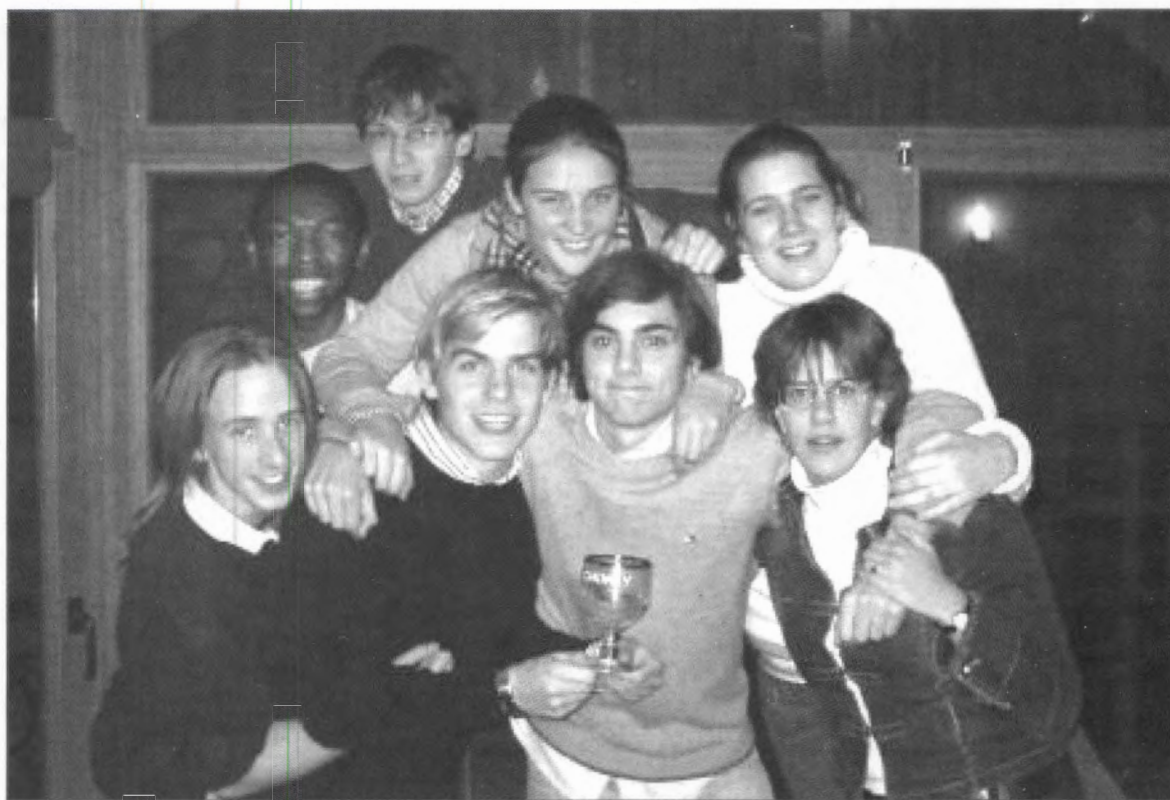
- At regular intervals, the project is evaluated and it is important that the national General Assembly (AG) confirms that CLC will continue to support the project, on the level of "staff" or human resources (accompaniment, maintenance) and, from time to time, on the financial level (in general, the houses support themselves financially, but exceptional situations can occur).

- All the members must promote the project, especially in the period between two academic years, so that all the rooms can be let.

- Some members may be called to accompany either of the two houses.
- Those who have less time, but are practically gifted, may be asked to help maintain the buildings.
- Everybody is asked to support the project by their prayer.

Of course, our CLC community is far from having achieved its ideal of shared responsibility. It is not always easy to respond to the multiple calls to serve, in this project as well as in the rest of our CLC life. Yet, confiding in the help of the Lord, we are building His Kingdom step by step. ■

*Charles Bokor
CLC Belgium W.*



The hosts of one of CLC Houses

REMAINING FAITHFUL IN A CHANGING WORLD

Impulse for a Regional Encounter



Bernd Franke SJ

Introduction

I have the impression that it is good and necessary to take a bit of time to meditate on this topic. In any event, I personally need this time. How do we understand “remaining faithful...,” especially if we keep in mind the second part of the topic which is transformation (change)? Here many anxieties could arise simultaneously! Is it not first and

mind, our first step must be to get the point of what we mean when we referred to “a changing world.” Today is it something that goes beyond us. Undoubtedly, it is important that we face this reality. In this sense, it could be a topic for the groups: What has really changed in our world? What are the abrupt changes that we face? What are the facts? Were we really conscious of those facts and of their consequences previous to our reflection and how did we react?

As has already been alluded to, before dedicating ourselves to the “spiritual component,” it is worthwhile to remember that it is not a question of being spiritually abstract, which would be totally opposed to the spirituality of Ignatius presented in the Exercises. Showing how “mission arises through the Exercises,” gives us an important guide to approaching the topic of the CLC World Day of Prayer: joined to FIDELITY there is a second essential point within our visualization, one that speaks of our relationship to the world: MISSION.

Until July 31, 2004 Provincial of the Upper German Province of the Society of Jesus. From next Easter onwards he will be in charge of the Jesuit Church in the Centre of Munich. Among others, his tasks in the Society of Jesus have included, during the last 30 years, Socius to the Novice Master, University Pastoral work and being head of a consultancy centre of the Jesuits. For many years, he has been very close and supportive to CLC. He holds a Masters in Theology and a Licentiate in Psychology.

foremost a challenge - a quite serious challenge? Does it not insinuate that it is a question of maintaining something important and valuable that we do not want to lose? Doesn't it also raise another question, maybe a question that makes us a little fearful: what is fidelity? To what do I commit myself? In what situations? What will it require of me? Do I feel able to live it? I think it is good to put our own feelings out in the open and allow them to have their effect on the topic!

But it would be good also to read the complementary explanation of the subtitle of this program. What do we actually mean when we speak of “impulse”? It isn't possible to enter into this topic in all its implications; therefore we will restrict and emphasize the mission as shown to us by the Spiritual Exercises. With this objective in

It is a question then of understanding these two points and of their mutual relationship starting from the experience of the Exercises. I hope the presentation of the following thoughts offers an orientation on how to meet a changing world, an orientation that is not fearful but rather advances dynamically towards the future. How in turn can we arrive at an encounter with the world and with others who believe in the future and who, because they do, can also help shape it.

Mission and fidelity starting with the experience of the Exercises

What is mission?

First of all it is not an imposition and doesn't have anything to do with a “military order” that is

given without mediation, simply from the outside. Although it comes to me from *Another*, the mission does not come from someone else's decision, a mission that I myself have not



discovered and in this sense is in fact given to me.

The mission has to be seen with the encounter; it arises from the process of the first week of the Exercises from an encounter with God... with Jesus with whom I have a relationship.

Through the Exercises, Ignatius facilitates that encounter and consequently the experience of feeling valued, of recognizing myself as a concrete person (with my lights and shadows), loved and cherished from the beginning. It is in this experience, accompanied by the recognition that I have done nothing to deserve it (in spite of being sinful) that I am transformed as Ignatius was transformed.

We find this point again in Congregation 32 of the Society of Jesus, which says: "What does it mean to be a Jesuit? Recognizing that one is a sinner and, nevertheless, being called to be companion of Jesus." From this experience one can speak of having carried out the Exercises in order to "be Jesuit" as well as to "be CLC."

From this experience there arises the yearning to be with the One who speaks to me and who is with me; to be with Jesus who in this way comes out to meet me. From here the impulse is born to follow in his footsteps and the desire to follow him

bearing my own possibilities of good and bad. It is the impulse that begins with an encounter and leads to an encounter. The one who experiences it cannot do anything else than be devoted to the world and to humankind, always moving forward as Jesus did. The desire with which He dedicated himself to others becomes my own desire.

What is fidelity?

Fidelity cannot be considered a moral imposition which imprisons us. Be faithful! Rather, fidelity is rooted in the aforementioned experience and it cannot be understood without that attitude of gratitude that makes me understand from

whence I come, what it is I do here, and what is my source. One could say that fidelity proves whether or not the anchor is correctly placed, whether or not the orientation continues being correct. It facilitates remaining aware of what is given me and how to recover the original life experience (in prayer, sharing, and an attentive life).

It is clear then that fidelity and mission maintain a mutual reference. In principle it is not possible to really understand mission if it doesn't have a relationship with fidelity, which gives me security and which calls me nonetheless to action in the world! It makes me return to my roots so that I don't get lost in the diversity of the world, allowing it to overcome me.

Starting with the Exercises, fidelity and mission are made visible and comprehensible like two poles that are in tension. From them arises energy and life. They are not in competition neither are they in conflict with one another, because fidelity doesn't impede active participation in the world, and mission — going out to the world — doesn't deny its roots. This is an attitude that has enormous consequences for our actions, an attitude that also has to shake up the Church if it wants to carry out the responsibility of its mission.

Through the Exercises, a totally new relationship is achieved with life and consequently with the one who changes, because without transformation life is weakened. We have thus arrived at the next concept of the topic that emerges in connection with the world: **transformation!**

The fascination of the way of the Exercises is exactly that it moves toward a tension, the tension of fidelity and mission, of outer vision and the inward glance, of active and passive abandonment, of conserving and transforming. We must understand transformation as something essential to life, something therefore that I should not fear but on the contrary I should favor, while maintaining in all fidelity what I



have discovered as a decisive constant: the absolutely reliable and permanent promise of the "Yes" of God to my life!

It is paradoxical madness: in the Exercises I am transformed while remaining the same, remaining myself. Said in another way...the

more I am me, the more I go more deeply into myself, the more of myself emerges. I choose and abandon myself to that to which I am called. We could express it yet another way as St. Ignatius did in the Exercises: he doesn't hold back the one making the exercises, he sends him/her out! He doesn't transmit his own experience, but through the Spiritual Exercises he opens up the possibility for others to have the same experience. He is convinced that if we allow ourselves to be led by Jesus, our personal experience will be unmistakable, so that the sense and the foundation of our lives will be in conformity with one another. Being sent means also allowing oneself to be confronted by new impressions that it will be necessary to discern starting from the foundation (the roots) to which one will be faithful.

The Exercises lead me to a new relationship with myself and with the world, to a new relationship with what remains and with what is transformed. They allow me to live more authentically what I am and they open me more toward the future. They make me available to the most diverse and new events of my daily life. They give me, in the strict sense of the word, the "ability" of living within the existing diversity in the world. At this moment what comes to mind is the passage from Scripture, in which the people say: Look at Jesus of Nazareth, He doesn't teach like the Scribes and Pharisees, but like somebody that has authority!

Surely, these words show that the people experienced that Jesus was genuinely himself, that He didn't avoid encounters, that He showed himself and related to others just as He was. He was genuinely the same, faithful in the sense previously mentioned, because He absolutely knew himself.

If is this so, what does it mean for us? Applications to our daily lives

Fidelity to my mission doesn't mean to maintain and determine my approaches and opinions, but

rather opens me repeatedly with an attitude of trust:

Question: Are there things that bind me, that trap me because I don't let go of them?

- I am faithful when I develop what is in me, when I use thankfully what has been given me and I don't bury it like a talent. "Walk in my presence and be upright" (Gen. 17, 1) is a motto that enables me, with my possibilities and limitations, to discover the place of my mission, one that is unchangeably mine.

Question: Am I on the road to being "upright," or do I want to be "perfect"?

- Mission as understood in the Exercises occurs in "creative fidelity" (Fr. Kolvenbach SJ) and it is with this fullness of trust that one dares to go toward "new lands."

Question: What are my/our yearnings for security - what is it that we want to conserve at any cost and why? What is the limit between fidelity to one's roots and this fearful yearning for security?

- Fidelity is related to desire and therefore moves forward it doesn't continue to look back. For Ignatius this is the attitude of the "magis": the "something more" in the "service of our Lord." Here we have to be careful that we do not have a wrong understanding: it is not a question of permanent pressure because we are not good enough or because we give too little! It is rather the dynamics of a desire that goes beyond our own limits and therefore, recognizes that it doesn't depend totally on us.

Question: What does my desire rely on? Do I think that everything depends on me?

- Fidelity doesn't shut itself in but rather takes risks. That's where there is the opportunity for mission, where without fear we go to meet the restlessness of the modern world and take each

human person seriously. It is thus we encounter the fundamental and decisive sense of our lives. We can lead others to this experience, provided we take them seriously as God have done with us, amid all the difficulties and transformations that they and we live.

Question: Why is there within us the fear of failing if we take risks?

- Fidelity calls us to move forward and is not static - it implies mission, which in turn means that it becomes reality through concrete steps, not through theories. Reflection and discernment on what was experienced in those concrete steps open new roads and allow us to know the will of God.



Question: Are there situations in which we continued to ponder without arriving at a decision to take concrete steps?

- If the impulse of the mission has its roots in fidelity to a personal call, it will awaken curiosity and interest for life and for others.

This means that we will be on the right road if we are able to face the fear of change or of the unknown (this doesn't mean that at times we may not find ourselves in a critical situation).

Question: How can I awaken my curiosity - and what things should I avoid?

- If fidelity means remembering what has been given me, the progress of my mission will be mainly and fundamentally marked by the question of what is good - no matter what it costs me to discover it.

Question: What difficulties do I find here and now in believing in good?

Fidelity in the sense of the Exercises cannot be lived if I want to conserve everything for myself; fidelity lives in sharing and going out. Fidelity is about being sent to gather together all human beings and to try to bring about authentic dialogue.

Question: Do I experience limits in that sharing - why?

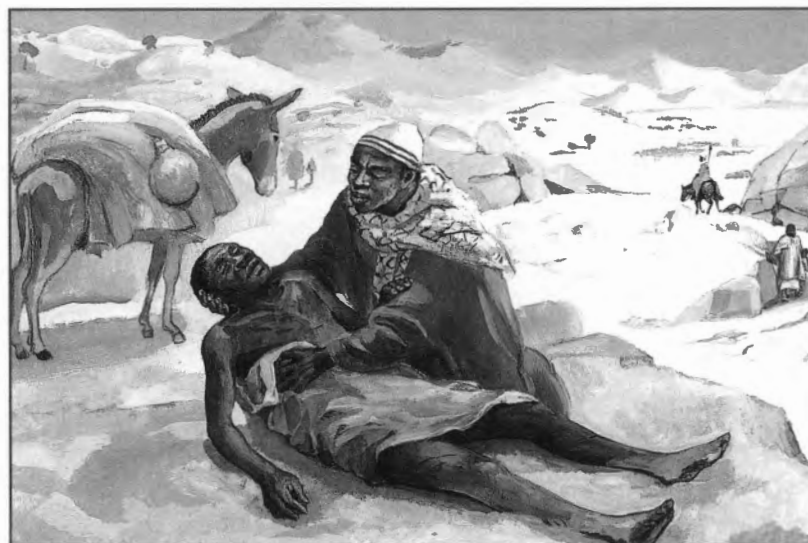
- The World Assembly of Nairobi has characterized the life of CLC as a discerning community with four key words: discern – send – support evaluate.

Question: What do these words mean from the perspective of the coordinates: fidelity mission transformation?

I will conclude with some words of Fr. Nadal on Ignatius which summarize why our fidelity could be fruitful in a changing world:

I don't want to end without remembering the grace that Ignatius received in all situations, in his work or in conversations – namely the sense of the presence of God in the present moment and in contemplation of spiritual things, i.e., being contemplative amid his daily activities. That is what he called "finding God in all the things." ■

Bernd Franke, S.J.



CLC AT THE UN

An interesting revelation was made to me after I joined CLC fifteen years ago when Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick S.J. mentioned at one of our meetings that CLC has an accreditation to the United Nations (UN) as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. It was big news which reinforced in me that CLC truly had global presence and concern for the larger world. Born in the Philippines and having lived in Korea, Pakistan, Egypt, Italy and Canada prior to coming to the US, the thought was very happy and reassuring.

Last year, therefore, when I was asked if I was interested in becoming a CLC NGO Representative at the UN, I was quick to accept even without knowing exactly what it entailed. Fortunately, the experience has been most rewarding in terms of acquiring a deeper understanding of our world's economic, social and political problems which are being addressed at the United Nations through the cooperation of member states and civil society.

I am pleased to share some observations and thoughts following a three-day Conference on September 8-10, 2004, entitled "*Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action*". Some 2,700 representatives from more than 700 NGOs worldwide gathered together at the UN Headquarters in New York with the aim to support worldwide efforts to mobilize civil society towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The World Christian Life Community participated as one of the NGOs and was represented by Joan Woods, Sylvia Schmitt, Mars Custodio and myself.

The Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs, adopted by 189 countries at the Millennium Summit in 2000, are eight specific goals for tackling hunger and poverty, improved education, health, the status of women and the

environment in virtually all parts of the world. These are minimal goals and to be achieved by year 2015. Failure to achieve these goals will be failure of humanity to hundreds of millions of people living below \$1 a day in their struggle for survival, human rights and security.

Unlike the bold unmet pledges of the past, the MDGs are different; the goals are measurable with target dates and regular review dates every step of the way. Moreover, with the unprecedented political support by all developed and developing UN Member States along with



José Lim



Mars Custodio, Joan Woods, Sylvia Schmitt and José Lim at the Conference

the NGOs and civil society demanding and putting pressure on governments to deliver on their commitments, real change in people's lives are achievable.

The MDGs to reduce poverty and improve people's lives are:

1. *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.* Target for 2015: Halve the proportion of people living on

less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.

2. *Achieve universal primary education.* Target 2015: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.

3. *Promote gender equality and empower women.* Target for 2005 and 2015: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

4. *Reduce child mortality.* Target 2015: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

5. *Improve maternal health.* Target for 2015: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.

6. *Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases.* Target for 2015: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

7. *Ensure environmental sustainability.* Target for 2015: Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. Target for 2020: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers.

8. *Develop a global partnership for development.* Targets:

- > Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - nationally and internationally ;

- > Address the special needs of least developing countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States ;

- > Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems. Develop decent and productive work for youth ;

- > In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies- especially information and communication technologies.

The MDGs are doable. The world has the resources, technology and the coherent plans to achieve the goals. There is an unprecedented political will throughout the world to achieve the goals by the 2015 target date. We only have to look at the progress of China in recent decades to be convinced that we are capable of rapid development. For most of the last millennium, China was an economic failure until it became a great success story. To a lesser degree, the same can also be said of India which was one of the economic failures of the twentieth century. But, in the last ten years, it has made tremendous progress.

Even some African countries have achieved success on specific targets in relatively short time. For example, Mozambique had cut poverty from 70% to 55% and had double the number of children in school. In Uganda, the prevalence of HIV infection had dropped. In Rwanda, following the genocide, women's groups undertook to support orphans and rebuild society. Now, women comprised 50 per cent of the Rwandan Parliament. In Thailand, new infection rates have gone from 140,000 per year



in the early 90's to around 20,000 today. Such achievements demonstrated that rapid progress was possible, given good policies and partners' support.

However, the MDGs can be achieved only if all governments, rich and poor alike, international

institutions and civil societies are relentless in assuming ownership of the goals and **together** share responsibility of meeting them. The developed countries need to provide more financial and technological resources, remove unfair trade practices and to respond more effectively to the needs identified by less-developed countries. On the other hand, less-developed countries need to provide a large percentage of their resources to basic necessities (safe water, food, health care, education, housing, and the creation of jobs with decent salaries and working conditions), eliminate the vast internal inequalities and corruption that stands in the way of progress and poverty reduction.

At the same time, corporations and the private sector must accept responsibility for conducting business in a way that contributes to sustainability and socially equitable growth. Civil society must play a crucial role as movers for change and in monitoring the implementation of policies and the commitments in both the developed and developing countries as well as the impact of business activities. They must be vigorous in holding all the parties accountable and to be ready to apply the necessary pressure when commitments are not being kept.

There was a general consensus among the speakers at the conference that since the MDGs were launched four years ago, the progress achieved to date has been uneven and not on track in some regions. On poverty eradication, only 15% of countries are on track. In sub-Saharan Africa, there is no change and there is even negative change relative to targets on poverty, child mortality, maternal health, spread of malaria and environmental sustainability. The World Bank estimates that 46 States might be classified as weak or failing, which means that one third of a billion people are living on less than \$1 per day. At the current trends, the MDGs will not be met by 2015 target date.

Steps Required Now

However, it is not yet too late if, in the next eleven years, there is a concerted effort to scale



up action on three essential fronts. First, reform must be immediately instituted in developing countries and Africa must double its economic growth rate. Second, the delivery of basic human services key infrastructure must be accelerated now with great urgency. Third, rich developed countries must speed up implementation of its end of the global development partnership, specially in opening its markets to exports and in living up to promise to give 0.7% of its gross national product (GNP) for overseas development assistance (ODA).

For the past 30 years, and most recently again in 2002 in Monterrey, rich developed countries have pledged to commit 0.7% of their GNP to ODA. At the moment, only Denmark, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have met the target. Five other countries have committed themselves to meet the 0.7% of their GNP: Ireland by 2007, Belgium by 2010, France and Spain by 2012 and the UK by 2013.

In 2003, the total ODA by developed countries reached only \$68.5 billion which represents

0.25% of donor countries' total gross national income. This is inadequate and must be immediately addressed if the \$75 billion yearly funding needed to achieve the MDGs is to be available. The USA, for example, must do more than the \$16 billion a year it gives in ODA, an amount equivalent to less than 0.1% of its GNP. If it can commit \$450 billion a year in military spending, it certainly should be able to commit more annually for peace and development. The



war in Iraq alone has already cost \$123 billion and rising, an amount 7.5 times it provides in yearly overseas development assistance.

Rich countries must also do their part to bring about open and free trade particularly on agricultural products upon which the majority of the population of the world's poorer countries depend on for its livelihood. Agriculture was an infinitesimal proportion of the gross national product (GNP) of developed countries but for developing countries, it was as high as 90%. A World Bank study in 2002 shows that the full elimination of agricultural subsidies in rich countries would increase rural income in low and medium-income countries by \$60 billion per year. This is equivalent to almost the total worldwide aid. Therefore, with open and fair trade, there would be substantial improvement in the lives of millions of people in poor countries where agriculture is the only way of life.

Debt is a major obstacle to the provision of safe water, food, education and health care of the

heavily indebted poor as well as most middle income ones. There is a need by the rich creditor countries to exert more effort to work for the forgiveness of foreign debts of the poorest countries that are being strangled by the burden of servicing its debts. Sub-Sahara Africa pays \$10 billion every year in debt service which is four times as much as the countries in the region spend on health care and education. Each day, developing countries pay rich countries \$717 million in servicing debts. Every baby born in the developing world owes \$482 at birth, a staggering amount for people living on less than \$1 a day.

Our Role

Through individual and group mission, CLC from inception has been engaged in all aspects of the MDGs. It is embodied in our General Principles, particularly in GP8 which identifies our mission as "...his

mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind, new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour." In CLC, we have an inherent ownership in the MDGs and a full stake in their achievement.

Although most of the work around MDGs is actually taking place at the country level, there are a number of things we, as individuals, can do to help achieve these goals. First of all, let us not forget the power of prayer. The task begins with each of us and it is through prayer that we can hope to bring about the conversion and the courage to fight for social justice, which in essence are the MDGs. Let us also continue to pray for strength and enlightenment of our leaders in government, civil society and in the private sector as well as for ourselves so that there is a sustained focus and commitment on the MDGs.

Those of us living in rich countries should hold our governments accountable to their pledge to give at least 0.7% of the GNP for overseas

development assistance. MDGs #1 to #7 do not have a chance of being achieved without the developed countries meeting their end of the global partnership or MDG #8. Since it is the only goal that does not have a target date, it is very important that we, through our local government representatives, continue to apply the pressure on our government to turn promises of development aid into action. And, we must insist that this is done without political considerations other than where it is most needed.

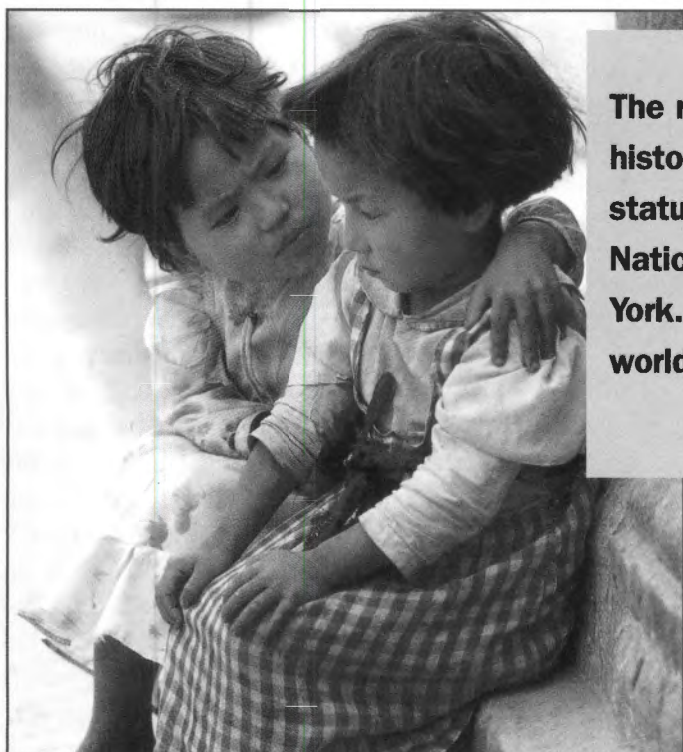
On the other hand, those of us who live in aid recipient countries must act as watchdogs against corruption and as advocates for reforms that lead to transparency and accountability in the use of foreign development assistance. Good governance is an important ingredient in achieving the goals and we must demand that of government leaders. It is the responsibility of developing countries to utilize precious limited resources in a coherent and most efficient way.

The success in achieving the MDGs will depend on each of us to do our share in bringing it to the

consciousness of our family, friends and co-workers within our own communities. To do that means that it would be necessary to be able to provide a continuous flow of information about the MDGs. This can be easily obtained by going to the official UN website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>. Other helpful websites can be accessed at: Millennium Indicators - <http://millenniumindicators.un.org>; official UNDP website - www.undp.org, click on Millennium Development Goals; and the World Bank MDG website - www.worldbank.org and www.developmentgoals.org.

Achieving the MDGs is not impossible. But, it requires that every one of us claim these goals as our own and take personal responsibility that it does not become another broken promise. The cost of failure in achieving the MDGs is unimaginably high. At stake is the peace and security in our world and the opportunity of humanity to build God's kingdom on earth. ■

Jose R. Lim
CLC Representative
at the UN in New York



The recent *Projects 127* explains the history, development and current status of CLC as an NGO at the United Nations both in Geneva and in New York. You may also wish to visit the world CLC website at:

www.cvx-clc.net

COMFORT AND CHALLENGE

One is always struck by the recurrence - almost a leitmotif - of the words: "No one is vaccinated against sin" often spoken by members of the CLC Congo core group. When its initiator, Fr. Matungulu, used this phrase, he wanted to emphasize both the seriousness with which the Spiritual Exercises should be made tied into the style of life into which he was introducing them *and* the indispensable support that we receive by living sincerely integrated in community. This was an essential help to these members enabling them to take root and to evolve in fidelity to the choice that they had made.

The aim of the central theme of the Nairobi Assembly "*Sent by Christ, members of One Body*" was to open the way for changing CLC into an "apostolic body". It seems to contain the same strength of the leitmotif which will mark the way in the next five years.



Dances at the Assembly

The Nairobi Assembly, the 14th of its kind, was the 6th opportunity offered to CLC Congo to directly experience the world community. That this took place in African territory incited special enthusiasm in the heart of CLC Congo. It was a unique opportunity to take its own measure or, better, to vibrate to the pulse of the world community. The sentiment shared was that of profound gratitude for the mysterious love of God. It nourished our brothers and sisters of Kenya allowing them to carry out the material

organization of this forum thus honouring all of Africa. It also offered all the delegates this extraordinary experience of CLC coloured by the African culture while being truly international.

CLC Congo had access to the report on the sequence of events as well as the resolutions of the Nairobi meetings from two sources: first by the reconstruction of events given by the delegates, and *Projects 124* distributed by Rome. Two words summarize the sentiments shared by most and raised by these resolutions: **comfort and challenge**.

1. A message of comfort

Having had to discern the necessity of clarifying the steps of the community's change from a "community of apostles" to an "apostolic community", the preparatory work and the resolutions of the Nairobi Assembly permitted CLC Congo to reconsider its history.

Created in 1980, it was the first in Africa. Marked by the rigor of its initiator, the community was deeply committed to a personal and community understanding of the CLC identity. From the beginning a fundamental choice was made. It was a matter of facing the multiple anti-values so prevalent which weaken our society (divorce, polygamy, atrocious rites of widowhood, street children). Stability of couples appears as a medication to be given to families beginning with a very small nucleus! That is the way our community started, and continues to journey as a community essentially made of couples and members who chose to deepen and witness christian values of marriage. According to this choice, the local Church through the Bishop asked CLC to be strongly involved in the family catechesis. Thus began the first apostolate took on by the whole community because of its communal character. Through its ExCo, the Community receives reports and sends observations to the apostolate coordinating team.

Our community already contained the seed of being an apostolic body which discerns, sends, supports and evaluates both individual and group commitments. It was a great consolation to notice that our experience has been shared during the Assembly among those presented as seeds of what the World Community aims at. This experience requires obviously to be widened and deepened.

A second experience of an apostolic activity shared by the community was once again inspired by the Church within the context of its social responsibility. Our country is getting out of a deadly war and defies us to do something about irresponsibility of political leaders, corruption, bankruptcy of economy, tribalism etc. We didn't know from where to start and restore a more just and brotherly society.

Inspired by its social doctrine, the local Church decided to mobilize its committed members and get them to support a peaceful political transition leading up to elections and rule of law. This involvement started by a series of training sessions of religious and committed lay persons. Some CLCers took active part in these sessions and were asked to work in the team set up to follow up this initiative. These CLCers brought back to the community the fervor, which gives rise to the following initiatives:

- Peace Education for CLC women by those who had benefited from this same formation at the CRAIP (Research and Support Center for Initiatives of Peace). They in turn will become activists in other milieu.
- The rebirth of COCDHO - an NGO promoting and defending human rights.

The particular accent placed on formation is another aspect which gave us great cause for joy. To face the necessity of guaranteeing all members an adequate knowledge of what constitutes the specificity of CLC as a community in the Church, a monthly bulletin and four annual days of recollection were begun some time ago.

The bulletin is a modest booklet of 12 to 16 pages which is divided into two parts. The first proposes the Gospel readings of the month accompanied by a brief commentary to help in meditating on them and the second offers various themes on the life of the community or on some aspect of Ignatian Spirituality.

Our days of recollection are focused on themes generally drawn from *The CLC Charism* or its preceding edition *Our CLC Charism* which the formation committee tries to communicate to the members. Since the election of the ExCo and the preparation for the Assembly, this commission has published a sheet called "*The Ignatian Dialogue*" which develops one aspect of the CLC style of life in each edition.

In the past, our community occasionally studied the practice of the Spiritual Exercises; there was a lack of financial means and of animators. On the vigil of the Assembly, Father Provincial appointed Father Jean Paul Mukonkole S.J. to work with the Ecclesiastical Assistant Jacques Brisbois S.J. This is a positive event because it is the beginning of a real and intense collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus, in conformity both with the spirit of the last General Congregation as well as with the meeting of Nairobi. Now, with the financial assistance of CLC France, two retreats have already been programmed for 2004: one on August 1-10 and one on August 22-31. Moreover since November 2003, Fr. Jacques has been giving the Exercises in daily life to fifteen members.

In regard to administration, our community is aware of the considerable efforts that must be invested in order to lead its members to acquire those approved qualities of governing both as individuals and as groups working together. It also applauded the choice conferred on one of its members to take the responsibility of Executive Secretary on the international level. It is honored and sees, in this elevation in service to the world community, a witness confirming that in spite of multiple difficulties it has held fast to the path of its conversion.

2. A questioning

Co-responsibility in the financial domain must be seen as a sign of maturity of the commitment made in the community and by the community. This is one of the ten recommendations of the Assembly regarding the national dimension. At the same time as the discernment on the



CLC Lubumbashi

promotion of social justice by active implication in peaceful political transition, the community worked on ways and means of taking financial responsibility as a subject that worries them.

The bulletin of February 2004 dedicated to the exigencies of our vocation gave it an important place. Evoking the General Principles which declare that our vocation consists in "*following Christ more closely*" and "*contributing to the building up of the Kingdom*" the text insists on the sense of the words "*building up*". It is the act of constructing. All work of construction necessitates material and financial means. While the Kingdom is a spiritual reality, its terrestrial works are visible, palpable and material. To contribute to the building of the Kingdom therefore essentially implies, among other things, a contribution of financial resources. Our

resources are certainly very limited but the apportionment of our expenses is a sure sign of our real priorities.

This questioning is addressed to the community just as we enter the preparatory period of the resurrection of the Lord. Happy coincidence because the first recommendation of Jesus the

day we enter into Lent concerns almsgiving and sharing. We find there an invitation to make a discernment on the repartition of our personal expenses.

The culminating point of this discernment is forming a financial commission and determining a minimum level of contributions taking into account our annual contribution to the world organization, a

provision for the expenses of participation in the next General Assembly, putting out the monthly bulletin and the annual community celebration. The functioning of the local ExCo remains dependent on the extra that the members bring. In the past, the main ordinary expenses were discreetly sustained by some individuals. We are waiting to see what new measures will bring about.

A second problem which calls us into question is the coordination of the existing communities in various areas of the country. After Lubumbashi, CLC was implanted in Kinshasa and Kisangani. These towns are far from one another. We have a real difficulty of coordination on the national level because of the deterioration of means of communications and/or a pronounced lack of communications. The war has only aggravated

the isolation. Right now, we are functioning at the same time in two regions: Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. We are supported by the Jesuit Province and, before too long, we hope to unite the delegates of the two regional ExCos to study the possibility and the modalities for a functioning national ExCo.

Regarding the regional presence, the evaluation of the International Formation Encounter (IFE) of the Christian Life Community of French Africa held in Kinshasa August 24-31, 2000 was the occasion for pointing out, among other necessities, the



Delegates R.D.Congo at the Assembly

urgency of creating a network of CLC in French Africa and coordination to manage it. This network in fact has been created. A common electronic address immediately permits us to pass on a message to all the communities. What we have been unable to do is to carry out effective coordination.

It is good that the World Assembly recognized that the practical organization of this kind of relationship requires at least a minimum means of communication and cooperation. Obviously, a deeper study of the preliminaries for the functioning of coordination was not completed at the IFE of Kinshasa and this explains why it has not functioned. In Nairobi, Jean Paul Biruru was designated as regional Coordinator by his colleague delegates of French Africa. This is still a challenge to our community. Now that the world ExCo has closed its first meeting, we await its orientations on how to carry out the resolutions of Nairobi. Our hope is that the combined will of all the communities and the support of our ExCo-link will establish effective conditions of functioning for this regional coordination.

In conclusion, let's allow these words of Father Provincial, addressed to the CLC in Kinshasa during their Regional Assembly of November 23, 2003, penetrate us. He emphasized: *CLC is you and it will be what you, the first members, do by the seriousness of your commitment. Do much and we will do much with you; following Christ King of the Universe, we will do much together for the greater glory of God.*

I do not doubt that these words will resound for a long time and will sustain the determination of the CLC Congo members. They have this desire, this impulse, and this vital movement dear to St. Ignatius which permits us to desire, to dream, to act and to love. ■

*Jean Paul Biruru
CLC R.D. Congo*

FORMATION SESSION FOR ACCOMPANIER AND GUIDES *August 22-26, 2004*

A formation session for the companions and guides of CLC took place in the "House of the Priest" in Maad (Lebanon), August 22-26th. This session was animated by Fr. Claude CHARVET SJ, National Ecclesiastical Assistant of the CLC in France, Mrs. Martine AUDRAS and Mr.

the four words: discerning, sending, supporting and assessing.

Then, there was a presentation of the CLC project in the "guide for the companion" to illuminate the different stages lived in the dynamic journey of every community. This goes from reception until becoming a community of discernment with a view to the mission, passing through the different trials and "crises." For this to happen, meetings must be regular and prepared in advance by the director and the companion. The theme is drawn from the sharing of the previous meeting. The director and the companion each have a very important role to play and must always work together.



A lecture during the Session

François AUDRAS, a couple also from the CLC of France.

Thirty-three people participated in this session: Jesuits and laity, including two from the Community of Egypt and seven from the Community of Syria. Four encounters were held every day, either for a lecture or a workshop. There was a time for personal prayer in the morning, and a mass at noon (celebrated according to different rites: Latin, Maronite or Byzantine).

In these sessions, a reminder was first given on what was said in « Nairobi»: *CLC is a community in mission, and that every local community should be moving toward becoming an apostolic community, thus the importance of*

All the members of CLC are animated by the Gospel and Ignatian Spirituality. That's why the Spiritual Exercises have an important place in CLC: « *as the specific source and a characteristic instrument of the spirituality*» (PG5).



A Workshop

This session was very enriching on the theoretical as well as practical plan level. It was very profitable for Lebanon. In the General Assembly which was held October 3, 2004, the local communities expressed their satisfaction, saying that the formation session gave us a thrust towards the future, an inspiration to better pursue this way of life, a new spirit, a new impetus for beginning again. The support of CLC of France allowed us

to feel our worldwide adherence and gave us a feeling of contentment and of security for confidently surmounting the difficulties which hinder our journey with the Risen Christ.

A big thank you to the leaders! ■

Najat Sayegh
CLC Lebanon

TODAY, THE LORD VISITED ME!



Odilon Gonçalves de Castro

Today, the Lord visited me! Today, the Lord visited me! Wherever He passes He leaves his signs: a burning heart, a mind that has been illuminated, hands and feet which act for the construction of the Kingdom. It is difficult to describe what happened today. The visits of God always come packed with emotion. Words are lacking to describe what one has lived. The saints understood it: the Mystery is greater than our capacity to describe it.

I came to these Exercises desiring to find a deeper, more intimate experience of God. There were moments of fear, of anguish, of peace, of trust, but it wasn't clear what He wanted of me. Today I see that the various experiences lived in these latter times made sense (a new sense), they fitted together like pieces of a puzzle. I discovered that all the times in which my work seemed insipid, monotonous, tiring or even humiliating, I was experiencing God. They were moments in which my helplessness seemed empty and far from what Jesus had lived. I felt small and that drew me closer to Jesus, because He was always close to the little ones of this world.

Embracing all this and going on in peace is to embrace poverty. We, the laity, frequently used the religious life as a reference to measure the radicalism and the quality of our Christian commitment, of our adhesion to the Kingdom. That's good! But there resides in many of us a suspicion (sometimes, hidden deep within) that no matter how much we draw near to Jesus, we will never come to live the intimacy with the Lord or the evangelical radicalism that religious can live, as if our style of life had a congenital flaw, as if it were less important, less radical in the following of Jesus. Today I realize of course that it is not the style of life we live that defines the depth of a commitment but the love with which we live each experience. Love is what defines the quality of our commitment to the Kingdom. The call to poverty caused me much apprehension throughout these

Exercises. Whenever this apprehension manifested itself, God showed his compassionate face and treated me with much tenderness. Today, I see so clearly! A father of a family who works, struggles to give food and education to his children, and who doesn't know whether or not his wages will be sufficient is also opting for poverty. A professional Christian who, besides the concern for his sustenance tries to be an honest professional, living in solidarity and fraternity, fighting against the seductions of the world is also opting for poverty. I am also called to assume the depths of this way of following Jesus. Remaining in the world, I am also called to become aware that I am sent here to sanctify the temporary realities. (cf. Jn 17,11-16) Today I felt within me that the neo-liberal project is seductive and affects us all: lay and religious. Often it succeeds in penetrating the hearts of many brothers and sisters. We "bought into" an empty ideal that has the capacity for seducing us. In those moments I remember the words of Jesus: "They do not belong to the world, anymore than I belong to the world; consecrate them in the truth" (Jn 17,11-16). No matter how much continuous exposure to that seduction deviates us from following Jesus, the Word of God is stronger. It reminds us that, yes, we have our feet on the ground, but that our vocation is in heaven.

The visit of God showed me that every small or large suffering or privation draws us near to the poor — God's favorites — those who help us to look up. My father told me that in moments when I felt any anguish or in which any thing was lacking at home, I should get on my knees and thank God for all that I had received from him. I am also able to give thanks to God for all those moments of anguish or difficulty because they draw me closer to the poverty and humiliation that Jesus lived. They remind me that to live the Gospel in its positive radicalism is what can make me happy. Today, the Lord visited me! He confirmed me in my project of life as a lay person. To use the phrase of Karl Rahner: "*He has unified my past, given sense and coherence to my present and lifted the curtain of my future.*" ■

Odilon Gonçalves de Castro - CLC Brazil

IN MEMORIAM: PAUL ROGER DALBERT

Paul Roger Dalbert was a “founder” in the strictest sense of the word: the founder of “Christian Life” — “a group of laity established to serve the Church.”

We know that “Christian Life” took over from the Marian Congregations, founded at the time of St. Ignatius, which one historian will say set up a true apostolate of the laity aimed at reforming the world by adapting themselves to it. Their impact on society was impressive until the suppression of the Society at the end of the 18th century. After this the Marian Congregations were but a movement of Marian piety.

In 1948 Pius XII wanted to bring them back to life by making them “a special and particular form of Catholic Action” asking that they recreate their earlier ideal based on the Ignatian character which had inspired them in the past and giving absolute priority to the Spiritual Exercises.

In the beginning of the 1950s, the Society in France underwent a crisis which necessitated Father General’s sending a “Visitor” whose action was vigorously disputed by the Jesuits of that province. It was he who nominated Paul Roger Dalbert “promoter” of the Marian Congregations in France giving him the mission to renew them. This mission often caused him to be misunderstood by his companions.

After he finished his studies, Paul Roger Dalbert worked at the college of St. Stephen. There the director, Father Pierre Lyonnet, along with his Jesuit brothers had organized a council of administration in which he had lay persons take part in the functioning of the school. Paul willingly tells how these years where he lived a fruitful collaboration with the laity prepared him for a new mission.

The mission given him by the Visitor consisted in developing the Congregations in the colleges and among the students but even in the beginning Paul had a larger vision. He thought that where there were Jesuits, there were also

adult lay people who desired to unite prayer and life. He launched two branches, groups of adults and groups of young people, which were both successful beyond his wildest hopes.

This was not an easy task because many of his companions feared that these new Marian Congregations would cause a division with Catholic Action — at its prime in this period — with which many Jesuits worked. In fact, there were few who helped him. But he had the gift of drawing others and interesting them. Many Jesuits stopped in to see him in his office in the building which at that time was on Sèvres St. This contributed to making known the work of the group of young Jesuits whom he had formed with Frs. Duvoisin, Dhôtel and Cordonnier, a team of which Josée Gsell was fully a part.

The first lay persons who assembled in teams, as well as those he knew how to attract in large numbers, were immediately struck by his availability, by his warm welcome, by the joy which glowed on his face and in his words, by his dynamism, his thoughts and his projects which corresponded so well with what he was living and seeking.

From this, the strong points of what would become Christian Life rapidly became evident. The groups would be given a clear orientation founded on their baptismal consecration, exercised according to the Church’s orientations. The Spiritual Exercises would obviously structure the life of these groups.

Finding a new name became a necessity. Certainly they were inspired by the tradition of the Marian Congregations but it was necessary to emphasize that it was a matter of re-creation, adapted to the modern day world. Father Giuliani, the counsellor of choice of Paul Roger Dalbert, suggested the name “Christian Life”.

At the same time, in 1957, under this name, he launched a magazine whose aim was to sustain the members of the groups. The most important

rubrics, which still exist today, were the "indications for prayer," "Ignatian Spirituality" and "Christians in the world."



Since June 1958 it has known great success among members of CLC but also among many other Christians. There were six thousand subscriptions in 1961 which grew to thirteen thousand in 1965.

Year by year the "Christian Life groups" evolved and were defined. In 1965, Paul Roger Dalbert drafted a note in behalf of his superiors emphasizing five points which were new for groups of laity.

To enter into the Christian life is to learn or become aware once more that the Lord Jesus is He who gives unity to prayer and life, but it is also to discover that this implies a journey towards a particular commitment for men and women inserted into society "a life consecrated through human tasks.

The Spiritual Exercises are the axis of this journey. They must assure a dynamic character. "What must I do for Christ" must be the guideline for members of these groups.

The spiritual formation sketched out calls for a type of new regrouping in regard to other classic groups of the period (Catholic Action groups, family teams, biblical circles). The Christian Life groups are little fraternities. It was not until some years later that grouped in Associations, they constituted a community from where we get the name Christian Life Community...CLC.

The "chaplains" who accompanied these groups were no longer there to instruct and "lord it over them" but to help members find God in their lives and in the modern world and to achieve spiritual freedom in their actions.

Finally Paul Roger Dalbert writes: *It seems that the dialogue priests/laity will be one of the components of the modern apostolate. Our experience with CLC shows us that the laity, who are both deeply integrated in the world and ambitious for sanctity can help us, Jesuits, to have a more complete awareness of our own vocation...*

Such considerations show in what an extraordinarily modern spirit Paul Roger Dalbert led Christian Life in a pre-conciliar Church. To such a degree that the novelty of his thought would influence and guide the evolution of the World Christian Life Community. At the end of the 1960s, Christian Life Community would be flourishing in France and in the world.

Fully conscious of having carried out his mission and having succeeded in spite of many obstacles, Paul Roger Dalbert decided to step aside. He became "poor with the poor Christ" as a nurse's aide far from Paris. Later he became ill and retired to Pau where he would welcome his Parisian visitors with a smile and the joy that were always a part of him, so happy when we would speak to him of the CLC's evolution in which he so rejoiced. ■

Emmanuel Lecaron
CLC France

CLC A JOURNEY OF GRACE

Towards the end of last year, the new World Executive Council proposed that I join them as co-opted consultant. I willingly accepted this service that the Lord asked of me and I attended the meeting held at the end of February of this year.

At this meeting it was asked that the two "co-opted" members make ourselves known to you. That's why I write this brief article, simply to make known how the Lord has shown his grace to me through this CLC journey which decisively influenced my life and led me to accept tasks of ever greater responsibility.

I am Ecuadorian, married, mother of three children, and a professional translator. It has been many years since I stopped working professionally in order to dedicate more time to the education of my children. I give classes of Flamenco dance, an art that I have cultivated with much pleasure since I was a child.

In regard to my CLC process I should point out that, although it is a personal vocation, my husband (Francisco) and I have lived it as a "married option," because we have traveled side-by-side on this journey and try to live discernment in our daily lives as a couple.

After a few years of being married, my husband and I were moved by the desire to draw nearer to God and to deepen our relationship with him. We went to CLC to consult with a Jesuit friend of ours. Our aspiration was to find a journey of faith that would help us to give a deeper sense to our lives. Previously consulting with the members of an already formed community, we immediately started our community journey and felt completely at home. We began to experience the process of formation within Ignatian Spirituality and to be involved in the catechesis that our community gave in a poor neighbourhood. After a period of preparation, we took part in our first retreat of 3 days. With the passing of the years, we have taken part in 5 to 8 day retreat and the complete Spiritual

Exercises in daily life. As time passed, each of us was led toward a specific apostolic activity, but we were jointly accompanied in this way of discernment in relation to our personal and family options. The two of us made our permanent commitment together as a life option. My husband dedicated himself to the work of the development of social projects and I to the formation of CLC members.

The desire to be better educated kept growing so I took courses in theology at the Catholic University of Ecuador. In 1994 I attended the Encounter of Jesuits, religious and laity, which took place in Lima, Peru. In 1997 the CLC of Ecuador invited me to participate in the Program of Formation, Magis I Formation Program, in Latin America. The Latin American and World Community were becoming more known to me through the different meetings of the Intensive Phases. The community experience and the journey through the Extensive Phases of the Magis Program continued to clarify for me the Lord's call to respond to the challenges of today's society: to contribute to the formation of others by being a guide of a CLC community and giving three-day retreat and guidance in the Pedro Arrupe Ignatian Center. From 1998 to 2000 I was National President of CLC Ecuador, a mission that vastly enriched me by the experience of serving God through leadership in the Community.

At the beginning of the Magis II Program in Latin America, CLC Ecuador asked me to coordinate the formation program on the national level, a task that I continue to carry out with the Coordinator of Formation of the National Community. As a delegate of CLC Ecuador I have had the opportunity to participate in two World Assemblies (Itaici and Nairobi), experiences that have marked me and have enlarged the horizons of my service more and more.



Mari Carmen Mora de Peña

Through this whole CLC process, I have found the presence of the Lord questioning me, helping me to grow as a person and to conquer my fears, encouraging me and calling me to serve more

and more. I give thanks for this and I ask him always to give me his Light to go forward. ■

Mari Carmen Mora de Peña



Mari Carmen at the Magis II Program

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We thank the Lord that in countries affected by the *Tsunami*, CLC is working with others to assist the victims and survivors of this disaster. We encourage National Communities, wishing to make donations, to do so through the Jesuit Refugee Service, as we share the same vision and inspiration.

Please also note the new phone and fax numbers of the World CLC Secretariat:

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