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**XIVth CLC General Assembly
Nairobi 2003**

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Chronicle and Documents of the
XIVth General Assembly
of the World CLC

“Sent by Christ, Members of One Body”

Nairobi, Kenya
30 July – 8 August 2003

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A Chronicle of the XIVth CLC General Assembly

Those who participated, in this XIV General Assembly of the World Christian Life Community celebrated in Nairobi, Kenya, would like to transmit to everyone the richness of their experience. However, we are faced with the limitations characteristic of the written language: so poor in narrating such a strong spiritual, ecclesial and apostolic experience filled with the gifts of the Spirit.

The participants arrived July 28-29, 2003, immediately experiencing the warm and efficient welcome of CLC Kenya. We began to get to know one another on the wide and beautiful campus of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa with its three comfortable and simple residences. The more than 170 people that were there began to experience the world community in its diversity of languages, cultures and races; and, at the same time in its deep unity and communion of ideals, expectations and motivations. This manifested experience of community accompanied us like the grace of God throughout the whole Assembly, making us feel like "*members of one body*". The text of St. Paul (1 Cor 12), which summoned us, gave us an invigorating and palpable sense of being the World Christian Life Community, gathered so as to be sent out as an apostolic body. The preparatory documents (*Projects* from N° 120 to 123) had already moved us to the disposition of praying for this grace of maturing as an apostolic body, which would continue to be clarified during the process.

Within this framework, the Assembly began on July 30, 2003, with Archbishop Ndingi of Nairobi presiding at the Eucharistic celebration. His words were fiery and passionate, directed to an expectant community desirous of being Church and of participating in her mission.

The liturgy was a central element during our Assembly. Day by day, it helped us to focus on the Paschal mystery and to experience the action of the Spirit in the Church. This first celebration was carried out African style, a style we would later learn to enter into more deeply, to appreciate and to desire its solemn vivacity and its wealth of gestures and expressions. On other days, the Mass was led by the Asian group with their reverential application of the senses before the sacred mysteries. Mass following the Coptic Rite placed us before the secular and valiant Church of the Middle East, unshakable and persevering, different from our Western customs but

united in a harmonious sacramental oneness. Some days, it was helpful to have Mass in linguistic groups (English, French, Spanish) with the extensive expression of the participants.

After the Eucharist, and following the wisdom of our Ignatian pedagogy, we dedicated ourselves to getting to know and understanding one another. Listening to the creative and brief presentations of the national communities helped us reach a context that would enable us to move toward the grace we wanted as a community. This was during "**Block A**" called "*Current state of the body of CLC*". The presentations were supported by illustrations and by an exhibition of data and written materials that were on display during the whole Assembly. We verified that the Assembly was rightly constituted, with delegations coming from 53 national communities, 5 of which needed to be ratified as new members, which happened the following day. We also verified the absence of 5 National communities that, for a variety of reasons, were not able to participate. (Cf. p. 13)

In order to complete the context, we listened to the reports offered by the World President, by the Executive Secretary - including the economic report - and by the Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant. In the evening, we met in linguistic groups, quite heterogeneous, in order to exchange our impressions and movements freely, having as a basis the **call to be an apostolic body in order to share better the responsibility of the mission**. (Cf. pp. 14, 25, 29, and 31)

The second day, after prayer, a plenary session was held in order to listen to delegates who desired to express their questions or movements regarding the process that we were living (related to the topic that summoned us). This type of plenary session (of listening) was also lived later in other moments. Although tiring, this was necessary in order to sense the spiritual and affective tone of the community, as well as to clarify our understanding of what it means to move toward becoming *an apostolic body*.

In another plenary session, immediately afterwards, the new national communities approved by the ExCo were presented for the ratification of the Assembly. With joy, we received the reports, and formally welcomed the communities from the Ivory Coast, Croatia, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. This was followed by a brief account of the main characteristics of the new member communities elaborating on the presentation made by the members of the ExCo.

Later, we celebrated the Eucharist of the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, grateful for this spiritual inheritance that gives our world community its particular expression. Thus, we completed "**Block A**", of putting things in context and of thanksgiving.

In the afternoon of this second day, we began "**Block B**", where we opened up to the experiences and reflections on *the grace of receiving and responding to the call to be an Apostolic Body*. In linguistic groups, we shared our ideas and movements about the grace we were seeking. Without delay, we were given the opportunity to listen to real experiences from several national communities, going from one to another in a kind of "market of hope". Fifteen national communities presented their lived histories; some of these will be published in the next numbers of *PROGRESSIO*. The objective here was to make contact with our real experiences, in order to make use of them, to offer them, to make them grow and to circulate them from one community to another. That evening before dinner, we had time for personal prayer based on 1Cor 12: 12, the verse that was the inspiration for our General Assembly.

The following day, Day 3, Father Paul Vaz S.J., in his function as Process Guide, helped us to bring together the experiences we had lived, and to situate ourselves spiritually in the process that we were living. On numerous occasions during the process of the Assembly, Father Paul intervened in order to help us refocus the process, recognizing our movements and the graces that we were receiving. (Cf. p. 36)

Wanting to illuminate the experience with a theological reflection, the Assembly listened to the intervention of Father Tony Mifsud S.J., which showed us the rich relationship between spirituality and ethics, between being and making, between being with Jesus and being sent by Him. (Cf. p. 38)

This conference was much appreciated by the delegates, who took the necessary time for personal reflection to assimilate it, followed by a sharing in language groups.

At midday, we had another plenary session, with questions and answers on our process and on our topic. Later, we carried out an interesting exercise that allowed us to feel the tone and the pulse of our community. Each delegate attached an adhesive label to a panel of colors, closer or further from *the call to be an apostolic body* according to the sentiments in his or her heart. The result

showed a great variability of states, and although nobody was located at the end furthest from *the call*, some indicated their distance or their doubt. A good number were located very near the main premise. This gave us a very graphic indication of the position of the Assembly in relation to the topic that had been proposed for deliberation: *Do we feel called to be an apostolic body?* At this point, it was still an intuitive and cordial answer coming from our shared experience, without too much meditation on the rational intervention and reflection that would progressively denote the most precise meanings of this call. (Cf. p. 87)

In the afternoon, we moved into "Block C" under the enunciated "*Call to be an outreaching Apostolic Body*". First, we looked at our history in a well-prepared synthesis by the members of ExCo. It was an analysis that we only summarize here with the titles of the diverse world general assemblies from 1967 until the present. (Cf. p. 69)

However, besides our history and from it, we wanted to look at the real world that has always been the place of living our spirituality. First, with the help of Professor Kivukha Kibwana, we looked at African reality, in particular that of Kenya. He spoke about the situation of civil society in Kenya, giving personal testimony of the struggles and hopes shared by the Kenyan people. Next, we heard a moving story from Joseph, a member of the CLC of Kenya, telling about his work. Using slides, he presented real cases of boys and girls, youth and adults, victims of the great drama of AIDS. His words aroused compassion and spiritual concern in us. Father Michael Czerny S.J., in a masterly way, told of the Jesuits' service in this area, informing us of the astonishingly figures that reflect the devastating African reality. He urged us not to lose sight of the people and of the individual cases presented by Joseph; yet, at the same time, he opened us to the wider magnitude of problems, evidenced in the figures and data of the whole.

The evening Eucharist, this time in linguistic groups, was a time of offering all the pain so that God could transform it; it was a time to gather together the elements of a day that was lived so intensely.

Thus, we arrived at Day 4, in which we continued our exposure to Kenyan reality. We divided into nine groups, going out to visit nine places where concrete answers are given to the serious problems of AIDS, education, marginalization, abandoned or starving children, the handicapped, elderly people, the mentally disabled, and others. It was a very special morning. For

some, it was marked by the dynamics of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, with sin and its fateful consequences crudely visible. Other delegates, on the other hand, imagined the Jesus of the Second Week going for a walk: healing, consoling and welcoming. They felt the call to the apostles amid the hard reality. Some lived the experience of the Third Week, accompanying the suffering Christ in His passion that was being lived by so many of our brothers and sisters right before our eyes. Finally, there were those who felt moved by the reality but were not able to integrate this experience into the whole of the process, feeling lost or in some way too driven.

In order to get in touch with these feelings, we had a time of personal prayer after the lunch. Later in our linguistic groups, we shared, from the reality experienced, our awareness of how the call of the Lord was leading us to organize ourselves as a body in order to be better prepared to give an apostolic response. This was followed by regional meetings, to see how each one was experiencing the process and the call to be an apostolic body in the particular circumstances of his own region. The day's work closed with Mass.

Sunday, August 3rd was Day 5 of our process. The Assembly welcomed visitors from CLC Kenya and CLC members from Uganda and Sudan. At 11:00, we celebrated Mass presided over by the Jesuit Provincial of East Africa, Fr. Fratern Masawe S.J. It was an extraordinary liturgy with songs, dances, drums, colors and eye-catching offerings, in an atmosphere always solemn and sacred. It was a new contact with the African people, which continued later in the dances and songs of the 43 tribes that form the nation called Kenya. In a pastoral setting, the delegates and visitors congregated and visited with each other until late afternoon. (Cf. p. 70)

As evening fell, the Assembly met in a plenary session, returning once again to gathering the fruits of the day. The Ecclesiastical Assistant of the World Community, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., arrived at the Assembly and met with all the Ecclesiastical Assistants and the ExCo. As an introduction to that meeting, Father Fernando Salas S.J. read a synthesis of how the World Community had come to meet in Nairobi with the desire to take steps to becoming an apostolic body. That synthesis was used the following day to situate the Assembly in its process. After dinner, a time of silence was proposed in order to pray and discover the voice of God within us, taking some points from **"The call of the Risen Christ"**. (Cf. p. 73)

Day 6 was marked by the presence of our Ecclesiastical Assistant and by his personal contribution, which would complete "**Block C.**" Fr. Kolvenbach's address to the Assembly was entitled "*St. Ignatius and his 'sentire cum Ecclesia'*", which was preceded and followed by personal prayer. (Cf. p. 77)

Later, the national delegations met to identify where they were in the process and, in particular, in relation to the call to be an apostolic body. Challenged with the question, "*Did we receive and did we embrace the call to be an apostolic body which shares responsibility for mission?*", each national community had to situate itself more closely or further away, as was done before on the individual level. One by one, they moved forward to indicate, on the panel, their position relative to the question. The resulting picture showed great unification, because even those furthest away were not really so separate or distant. **The grace prayed for was received**, thus in the Assembly there was an atmosphere of much peace. We celebrated all this in the Eucharist that followed, presided over by Father Kolvenbach.

In the evening of this day, we began "**Block D**" dedicated to "*Collaboration with the Society of Jesus*". In the plenary session, three members of CLC and three Jesuits presented their experiences of apostolic collaboration in the field of education, volunteer work, spirituality and administration of retreat houses. Those stories inspired the Assembly and may be published in future issues of *PROGRESSIO*.

After exchanging questions and reflections, the plenary was adjourned in order to allow for meetings of delegates in language groups in order to deepen the topic of collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus. The task was to identify factors that promote it, factors that hinder it and reciprocal expectations.

The topic continued during Day 7, with a small crisis that started with the fact that we were not able to adequately gather the feelings of the Assembly in such a short time. Thus, there was the risk of arriving at an inconsistency between the very positive experience lived in the Assembly and the somewhat negative tone of the synthesis that some members of the ExCo prepared under pressure of time from the contributions of the groups and the national communities. The Assembly took its time in a plenary session to reorient the topic. As a sign of maturation, the Assembly named some of its members to a commission, which re-elaborated a document

incorporating all that had been said as well as the affective and predominantly spiritual tone of the Assembly. That whole day, we alternated between plenary sessions and small groups; the work of the Commission finally produced a document that was received with considerable consensus. The Eucharist solemnly crowned the day. The document agreed upon was slightly altered at the end of the Assembly; other nuances that arose in the successive days were added. On the last day of the Assembly, the document "**CLC - Society of Jesus Collaboration**" received unanimous approval making it one of the more encouraging fruits of the Assembly. (Cf. p. 97)

With Day 8 began "**Block E**," named "*Structures and Processes for CLC as an Apostolic Community*". Using as a basis a document suggested by the ExCo, the Assembly met again successively in plenary sessions, linguistic groups and national delegations to give shape to the desire for reorganization and adaptation with a view to becoming an apostolic body. Times of personal and community prayer, as well as the Eucharist, continued to sustain the spiritual process that the World Community was living. The suggested document was modified and enriched until it no longer resembled its original form. The commission, composed of 6 delegates, worked intensely even until the early hours of the morning in order to present a new draft the next day (Day 9) that would again be enriched by the diverse work groups and the whole Assembly. The national delegations and the regional groups met several times in order to clarify meanings and challenges. Fatigue was already being experienced, but the Assembly, in its diverse manifestations, slowly resolved the implications of being an apostolic body on the world, regional and local levels. Upon beginning the tenth and last day, the Assembly approved a document that will mark the coming years; one that should give us a renewed and strong apostolic strength. (Cf. p. 91)

There still remained decisions to be made on our General Norms. Without much difficulty, the Assembly approved two amendments and rejected another. One of the approved amendments concerned the position of treasurer; this will merit attention in the coming years. Functioning without such a position has been in effect since the last Assembly. In passing, the economic report that the ExCo had presented in the first days was approved. Another of the amended norms referred to the elimination of the Jesuit Secretariat for CLC. This was a result of a decision made by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, for reasons of good governance of the Curia, opening the way for a more personal responsibility of a "Secretary of the Society of Jesus for CLC." The Assembly modified the General Norm in

order to be aligned with this change, calm and hopeful for the step that had been taken with the document on "*Collaboration with the Society of Jesus*," which undoubtedly creates a possibility of strengthening those relationships. (Cf. p. 100)

Thus, we arrived at the evening of **Day 10**. All that remained was "**Block F**", the object of which was to choose the Executive Council (ExCo) for the next 5 years. In a climate of much peace and recollection, the Assembly successively elected the new Council. (Cf. p. 104)

The XIV General Assembly of the World CLC concluded. At the closing Eucharist, the Assembly "sent" the new Executive Council. Hugs, smiles, pictures and songs brought to a close this remarkable spiritual and ecclesial experience, in a tone of obvious community consolation. On a previous day, the reading of the gospel of the Transfiguration of the Lord had resonated in us. After experiencing a transfigured World CLC, we prepared to come down from the mountain to meet our limitations and our inadequacies, and to carry out the daily work of progressing toward the realization of the great desires that God has put in our hearts. It was a wonderful Assembly in which the CLC experienced its greatness and its limits, learning humility and growing in hope.

On the level of the process, we made use of four magic words that will mark the apostolic life of our community: **Discerning - sending - supporting - evaluating**. On the level of relationships, it will stimulate in us the desire for an ever-more fruitful, as well as humble, relationship with the Society of Jesus. We recognize the Society being an inspiration for CLC as well as a providing support. On the level of structures, we made proposals for the local, national, regional and world levels, including a style of proactive leadership that we want to learn and to foster.

Jose Reyes
Vice-president of World CLC
(2003 -)

**Nairobi Assembly
Information
Input
Reports**

XIVth General Assembly of the World CLC

Participating National Communities

Argentina	Germany	Peru
Australia	India	Philippines
Austria	Indonesia	Poland
Belgium Fl	Ireland	Portugal
Belgium Wa	Italia	R.D.Congo
Bolivia	Japan	Slovenia
Brazil	Kenya	South Africa
Cameroon	Korea	Spain
Canada Eng	Lebanon	Switzerland
Canada Fr.	Lesotho	Syria
Chile	Luxemburg	Taiwan
China-Hong Kong	Madagascar	Uruguay
Ecuador	Malta	USA
Egypt	Mexico	Venezuela
England & W.	Nicaragua	Zambia
France	Paraguay	Zimbabwe

Absent Member Communities

ACU	El Salvador	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Netherlands	

Incorporated Communities

Croatia	Ivory Coast	Puerto Rico
Dominican Republic	Nigeria	

Observers

Rwanda	Tanzania
Sudan	Chad

Report of the President of World CLC

Nairobi 2003

INTRODUCTION

A Summary of a Five Years' Journey...

It is with great happiness that I welcome you to this Assembly. You are the living, present face of our beloved world community.

These days, we are going to live this Assembly intensely with the desire to guide it according to God's desire for us. We ask Mary, in whose intercession we trust for carrying out His will, to remain in our midst and to accompany us as she did the apostles in the cenacle.

With great hope and generosity, we want to prepare ourselves to live these days, above all, with great hope in the Spirit who invites and encourages us to respond to the Lord. Generosity in surrender and a tendency to do always more are the essential elements of our spirituality. They conform to the responses of that one pilgrim who continues to inspire us today: Ignatius of Loyola.

If I look back on these five years of the journey travelled, I feel deep gratitude for the process that we have lived and for how we have lived it; it inspires me to praise God.

I will make this presentation from the double perspective of the experience lived in the ExCo as a community of service to the world community, and from the process that was carried out: the steps that led us to propose the content and subsequent organization of this General Assembly.

The World Council's experience of service

In Itaici, we were chosen by the World community and sent by it, in the final ceremony. This call to service took place through the Assembly's mediation but, in fact, it was the Lord Himself who was calling us to service. ("You have not chosen me but rather it is I who chose you...go and bear fruit, fruit that will last..." Jn 15:16)

We received a “sending out” that has been, and is, a Gift of the Lord, a gift received from him, therefore one that necessitates *Grace* in order to be completed. This being “sent” for service cannot be considered as “volunteer work” that we added to our lives, a mere activity that takes a part of my time.

For Ignatius of Loyola, the natural condition of the one who is created is to serve his or her Creator: service in love to the Person who is served for love. Whether this received gift spreads to others or not will depend on our response. From this perspective, to reorganize our realities and circumstances will allow us to give appropriate responses whether apostolically effective or not.

This introduction serves to consider our journey throughout these past 5 years and to do so in a paschal key. Indeed, like that of most committees, formed throughout the world, our service is a paschal experience, an experience of death and resurrection. This is because the mission is always beyond us; it is always too big because we are never prepared enough. Our human, family and cultural limitations make it difficult to understand from the human point of view how so limited a group (the ExCo) could respond to the call to lead and coordinate the world community. (The same could be said on the other levels: regional, national.)

We, in the current ExCo, have lived the tremendous health problems of Mary's family that have impeded her even being present here today. Also, we have shared the illness of Daniela's mother and the serious accident of Ana Maria's husband, the illness of Ronnie... the list over these five years is long as were issues of employment, circumstances and change. In this council, the earlier member Victor Kachaka, who worked as a State lawyer, moved on to defending peasants and workers. This forced him to move around constantly thus making it impossible for him to participate regularly in the sharing and work of the ExCo. Because of this, it was necessary to choose a substitute. Levi Matshese, who is with us today, was invited to join us.

However, it is in perceiving and assuming our limitations and our concrete family reality, labor etc. that we arrive at a progressive “place it

all at the feet of the Lord” attitude so that it is He who acts through us. It is in that progressive abandonment to the Lord in which we perceive with the “clarity of His vision” how we are supposed to reorganize our lives, how we are supposed to reorient our daily existence. It is in skipping over superficial subjects that too often limit our lay lives and determine our own existential reality (I refer to security in the workplace, the needs of the family or the readiness to carry out changes that question established parameters etc.) that we are faithful to the call the Lord gives us, being aware that He is the one who calls us and that it is up to us to do everything necessary to respond with absolute freedom and availability.

This journey to discover the will of the Lord and of living service as a paschal experience have been lived in the ExCo throughout our five-year mandate.

We began after Itaici with the hope and energy that we had experienced there, defining in our first meeting how we perceived our task in order to guide the work plan for the next years in the light of the recommendations made by the national communities. We continued to move forward in the journey with the national communities and their experience with the development of *Our Common Mission* (OCM). In the second meeting of the ExCo, we detected a great need to work especially in the field of youth and of the family. Those were moments of consolation, of communion with the communities and at the same time also of the search for what it meant and implied for OCM.

Like you, we have lived moments of difficulties, of darkness, of desolation. In our 3° meeting, with the questionnaires that we had requested in hand, we asked ourselves without finding answers what common mission meant.

Little by little, throughout these years, by means of sharing, praying and reflecting together in numerous encounters that different members of the ExCo attended with the national communities, singly or gathered in regions, we began to clarify the process that all you know. That was developed in *Projects* 120, 121 and 122 that came out of successive meetings of the ExCo. Although not being a reality clearly perceived by each and every one of us unanimously, in those moments,

they gave us the deep certainty that we were on the road to which the Lord called CLC.

The lived process and the consequences that led us to give the Assembly the orientations you will find today in your portfolios is what we will present to you next. We will ask you then to pray and meditate so that Nairobi can be the end of the discernment journey that began almost two years ago.

THE LIVED PROCESS

We are recognizing our reality, situating it in the current context of the whole CLC. First we listened to the national communities, then to the regional and now, through the ExCo, we want to examine a summary of these past five years from Itaiici until Nairobi.

More than a historical relation of the community's life, this summary seeks to be an evaluation that allows us to continue the journey of this General Assembly, a journey that began more than a year ago when the World ExCo convoked it. We know that during this time many of you have been working, praying and meditating on the agenda proposed by the Preparation Teams, which started in national communities. Therefore, all of you, members of the World Community are more than delegates of their NCs: you are the very body of CLC which discerns and which, summoned here by the Spirit today, continues the work carried out at home, to see what mission the Father is giving for the coming years.

At the conclusion of the Assembly of Itaiici, CLC received its common mission: it was a moment of Grace that perceptibly strengthened the whole community, helping to deepen in the process the awareness of CLC as a World community with a new perception expressed through concrete actions and inspiring new ways of working.

Subsequently, at the end of 2000 and of 2001, the ExCo sent two questionnaires to the whole community in order to assess the process they were living. The impressive response (42 communities) illustrated the World Community's sense of belonging and experience. The answers received bore some common tendencies:

- most of the national communities underlined the importance that the Itaici Assembly had for CLC;
- it verified an awareness of a renewed identity and a shared feeling that CLC was living in a time of important change;
- it made clear the necessity of a deeper defining of the meaning of our common mission.

Working in a spirit of discernment, the ExCo gave steps for clarifying the meaning of “common mission” and to see how to strengthen the processes for the communities in formation.

The first great step was to define the sense of the common mission. Many national communities were questioned. In most cases, the local groups are authentic communities of apostles, whose members regularly and generously dedicate part of their time to personal apostolate in the spirit of the CLC GP (GP 8a). They understand their life as essentially apostolic in an integrated way, committing all the aspects of their life - family, work, social activities etc. These men and women have discerned personally how to convert their lives into concrete responses to the Lord’s call. But these responses, although shared in groups, don’t constitute a common mission.

The difficulty perceived was how the application of a National CM could in fact be converted into a common mission. What were the implications on all levels (personal, group, national, world) and would these implications also have consequences in regard to processes and structures?

We were conscious that clarifying how we should live this apostolate in community would help to clarify-define our identity so that we might be more faithful to our charism and respond to the vocation that we received as a community and as members of this community in the context of the realities of our world and the Church.

It appeared clear in the questionnaires that we also were conscious of our weakness on the structural level: the national committees, the shortage of formation teams, the still nascent regional coordination and the world ExCo. They are structures with still very marked nuances of

volunteer service. Therefore we were limited on the level of understanding the "being sent for service" as referred to in the beginning, and of responsibility and co-responsibility in the mission.

After multiple meetings in many countries, CLC members began to realize that to have a common mission means basically sharing the responsibility for that mission. *A mission is common when the group or the community share responsibility for it.*

The question that arose then was how to do it. A growing consensus began to appear in those same meetings: to share responsibilities, it was necessary to discern together, to send and be sent, to support one another in the mission and finally, to evaluate the service given. When a community lives this process, it also shares the responsibility for those missions that it commends to its members.

At the same time, we began to meditate on whether the structures supporting our community were the most fitting to enable us to grow in shared responsibility, to grow toward the common mission or whether we needed to go a step further and reformulate or reorient them towards that goal.

This led us to conclude that the community, of which we are speaking, take a step from being a *community of apostles* to being ***an apostolic community***. From this perspective, we perceived that the Spirit was calling us to initiate this step. Consequently, we convoked this Assembly under the title "***Sent by Christ, members of one Body***" that could have a sub-title: from a community of apostles to an apostolic community.

For more than two years, the ExCo has been making an effort to involve each national and local community in this process. The *Projects* that they have been sending, especially the last three 120, 121 and 122, proposed and presented points of reflection to follow in order to arrive here in Nairobi, with the possibility of reuniting them like the body of CLC which discerns in order to accept the proposed challenges and the consequences deriving from them. Also, we asked that each CLC member ask in his/her prayer how to share more deeply the responsibility for the mission that the Lord has commended to each one.

Our starting point at the CLC Assembly is the awareness of being called to move forward from a community of apostles to being an apostolic community, in which the responsibility for mission is shared. We have suggested four means for giving this step forward (discerning, sending, supporting, evaluating), expecting that the increasing participation of all members in the process will, in due course, change the lifestyle of each person and his/her way of relating with the rest of the community. As all groups move ahead in this new way of mutual commitment, we look forward to seeing the whole CLC live as an apostolic community that shares responsibility for mission.

In the journey, we wish to make a special effort to avoid the isolation of the small groups from the rest of the apostolic body. We have to emphasize that the complete body of CLC in the Church is the context in which we discern, send, support and evaluate. For living this out, we see the need of incorporating the orientations presented by the head of the body in our local and national discernments. There is no doubt this strengthens CLC as a part of the apostolic body of the Church. The head of our community, lay men and women together with Jesuit assistants, can then guarantee the Ecclesial dimension and the Ignatian character of our discernment.

As a concrete fruit of the Nairobi Assembly, we wish to give steps forward so that the whole CLC can respond to the call to be an apostolic body, and be clearly perceived as such in each of our countries.

1. National level

The national executive councils are requested to act more clearly as the head of the national community so that we can grow in awareness of being an apostolic body. It is clear that this presupposes certain personal qualifications in each of its members, plus his/her decision to offer quality time to the community. We are also aware that this will lead them to reflect on how to re-order all the dimensions of their lives (Sp. Ex. # 21), during the years of service in the council. We consider this call to serve as a gift received, to which we wish to respond in a spirit of love and "distinguish (ourselves) in total service to (our) eternal King and universal Lord". (Sp. Ex. # 97)

We suggest that, after the Assembly, one of the first tasks of each national executive council ought to be giving steps so that each and all CLC members, and their small groups, can live as belonging to an apostolic body.

Most probably this will mean reorienting the meetings of the local groups and revisit the personal discernments with Ecclesial and Ignatian criteria. We wish that the groups are enabled to share the responsibility and consequences of each discernment. This may move us to reconsider our standard procedures for the meeting of the small group. During those meetings we need, at least, to set the bases for discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating, as members of an apostolic body in the Church.

For achieving this, it may be necessary to offer all members a formation that empowers them for a better participation in such meetings. Each national executive council can facilitate this process by preparing a formation plan adapted to their reality. Such a plan can be a fruitful instrument for every local group guide.

The national executive council may frequently receive an important support for its mission from the regional coordinating team and from the communities in neighboring countries. Normally, it can be very helpful to have frequent contacts with them, for collaborating in service projects, and in the preparation of the formation plans mentioned above. Experience shows us how uncommon it is to find the charisma for government and for formation present in one individual. This is why we see great wisdom in having a formation team that the national executive council can rely on.

It is beneficial for each national community to have a frequent contact with the world CLC Secretariat, so as to increase the links between the different members of the apostolic body.

The apostolic collaboration with the Society of Jesus is an important part of our way of life, because we want to be partners in Ignatian spirituality. As a means for growing in this partnership requires, we suggest having, among other things, a more frequent contact of the national CLC council with the Jesuit Provincial and his team.

Additionally, we wish to recall that financial co-responsibility is a sign of mature commitment of the community and with the community, which, basically, can only offer what its members have financed. We suggest that this topic is regularly included in the discernment of the small groups.

2. Regional level

We consider the regional coordinating teams as crucial for the development of the apostolic body of CLC. They are meant for empowering the national executive councils in their mission, supporting their mutual relations and their contact with the world CLC council. As a means for this empowerment we suggest that the regional teams propose different service projects and promote the formation processes that are required by national communities.

The participation of a member of the world executive council in each regional team – as a link with the ExCo – will facilitate communications and express the desire of the apostolic body of CLC to share the responsibility in mission. With these same two purposes, we hope that each regional team incorporates a Jesuit assistant, preferably one of the national CLC assistants in the region. The regional team can make a request for his appointment to the competent Jesuit superior, with whom we suggest having regular contact.

We recommend that each regional team prepare its own statutes, indicating their ways of proceeding for attaining the objectives. It seems convenient that they are approved in a regional CLC assembly, with delegates of each national community and summoned by the regional team.

3. World level

The world executive council (ExCo) must proceed more openly as the head of the apostolic body of CLC, between one general assembly and the next. It is important that the ExCo has frequent contact with the national communities, offering them greater support and inspiration in their discernments, according to the decisions of the

Assembly. In order to better lead the whole community, we believe the ExCo not only has to be more present to CLC, but also has to promote more frequent contacts with the Hierarchy and with other members of the Church. The relationship with the Society of Jesus is especially important to achieve an active apostolic collaboration, in the works of the Jesuits and in ours.

The General Principles of CLC mandate the assembly to elect seven members of the ExCo and they differentiate their services within the ExCo, for a better fulfillment of their mission (GP n. 13a, 20 and 21). As we requested for the members of each national executive council, the personal qualifications of the candidates to the world ExCo should be carefully examined. The greater presence mentioned above requires dedicating more quality time to CLC. We suggest that they consider their own capacity for re-ordering their life (Sp. Ex. n 21), so as to offer a better service to the apostolic body of CLC. Besides this, for facilitating a greater contact with the national communities, we suggest that each of the elected members serves as link with a region (ExCo link), ideally with the one he/she lives in.

The CLC Secretariat renders an important service to the whole community. When considering the greater presence asked of the elected ExCo members, we also see the need of reformulating the responsibilities of the executive secretary (GN 25 and 26).

Finally, we suggest that our vice-ecclesiastical assistant, according to his role in the world ExCo, forms a working team with the Jesuit assistants of the regional coordinating teams. We would like to see them meet regularly and offer all CLC assistants the greater support and encouragement they have requested.

For reflecting on the whole of the proposal, we have divided the working days in five big blocks.

The first, in which we are now (**Block A**) and the two following, are a continuation of the present state of CLC, which we have shared today. We are invited to ask for the grace of responding to the call to be an apostolic body (**Block B**). For helping us to respond, we will share the

seeds that we perceive around us and enrich them with the conference offered by Fr. Tony Mifsud SJ. The next step will help us to grow in awareness of the social reality that surrounds us, since we are “called to be an outreaching apostolic body” (**Block C**). We will have a deeper contact with the Kenyan reality and with the wider African community. With the reflection of our Assistant, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., we will finally make our decision about accepting the call we are receiving.

In **Block D** we will deepen into the meaning of being an apostolic community called to have a special relationship with the Society of Jesus. Finally, in **Block E**, we must express the consequences of our decision in terms of structures. Which of them should we re-orient, possibly change, in order to respond to the call and be efficient in mission.

We began by saying that we are aware of the Lord calling us to move forward from a community of apostles to being an apostolic community, in which the responsibility for mission is shared. We suggest that during these days in Nairobi we reflect, discuss and pray about this proposal and evaluation we are presenting. Considering the work you have done at home, with the Preparation Team, and now moved by the Spirit of the Lord, we will reach a consensus and greater clarity about our future steps.

José María Riera
President of the World CLC
(1994 – 2003)

Report of the Executive Secretary of the World CLC

Nairobi 2003

LOOKING AT OUR CLC *GRACED HISTORY* plays a rather dominant role in the daily life at the world Secretariat in Rome. In the first year or two of our mandate as Executive Secretary of CLC, it seemed that we were constantly reading the minutes and reports of past years, searching through dusty files for information as to what happened, how things were done and what were the priorities. Looking back also allowed for a rather excellent vantage point, of seeing the whole complexity of the CLC landscape, the organizational structures, the disused, the disarray, the limitations as well as the well - ordered, the places of energy, the possibilities and the signs of hope. Furthermore, the co-responsibility with the nine other members of the world Executive Council afforded even more clarity in differentiating the areas of strength and areas of weakness.

LOOKING BACK AT OUR world community's *GRACED HISTORY* allowed seeing and reflecting on the fruit of both times of shadow and times of light. Although it was light that was most desired, it was often the times of shadow that precipitated and accelerated the desire to move forward to attain the grace of illumination. It was this interplay of light and shadow that propelled the movement from a Federation of Marian Congregations to one world community over a span of some 400 years. It is this sense of movement and change over time that is reflected in the new world CLC logo (prominently displayed in this Assembly).

The rich graced history of CLC was the fertile ground that produced the new fruit called "Our Common Mission" 5 years ago at our General Assembly in Itaici. That same fertile ground has not been depleted but yielding even more. It is the task at hand, of this Assembly, to weed and prune that which impedes growth - to use all our senses... to listen, to see, to feel, to taste, to smell... to do all those things necessary as an apostolic community to discern, to send, to support and to evaluate that which will best facilitate joining Jesus in the great enterprise of building the reign of God in our world.

The *Light* experienced at the Secretariat, emanating from National Communities since Itaici, has come from the faithfulness of doing the little

things: attentive to communications, prompt responses, respectful of set timelines, generosity in sharing. Light has shone in the expressed desires to be more available to the needs of national Communities, to careful listening, to thoughtful critique, to an openness to assume responsibilities, in the aspirations to live the vocation of CLC as a way of life. In fact, many Nationals gladden the heart with their maturity in facing new challenges – in listening, discerning, sharing, responding, acting and evaluating.

Consolation is experienced in that the deepening understanding of the “greater good” has led to the development of regional coordinating teams in 7 regions of our CLC world. These communal activities are means to more effective action in addressing the most urgent needs in our various localities.

The *Shadows* since Itaici primarily are from lukewarm desires and understanding of who and what CLC is and what we are called to be; an apathy towards awareness of our General Principles and Norms, an indifference about mission, indifference towards leadership, tolerance for mediocrity, and a reluctance to consider and embrace the entire consequences of being a member of a world community.

To be a world community is problematic and challenging. Nevertheless, we are called to a sense of unity in spite of a multiplicity of cultures, oneness in spite of diversity of languages, unity of purpose in spite of local array of issues, distinctiveness in a way of life though dissimilar in life experiences... to be one though many, to be one for others, to be church, to be contemplatives in the marketplace. Where to begin?

Distinctly, the foundational platform for CLC is a common language, sense of purpose and world-view that comes from our being rooted in the Spiritual Exercises. Guidance is provided in the CLC General Principles and General Norms and a way of life marked by the CLC charism lived out in mission. All these distinguish who we are as CLC. It is important to be clear and firm about this standard.

In consideration of the shadows and light, the ExCo, at the beginning of their mandate, recognized the need to be more in contact with the world community and placed a high priority on communication. A web site was set up to facilitate access to CLC Documents, history and

events making it easier to know about CLC. As well, after a number of years of listening to the objective criticism of subscribers, and with the assistance of a good number of advisors and our long time publisher, a new but more costly look was developed for our publication *PROGRESSIO*. The stories and pictures collected from the world community and printed in this CLC publication reflect the diversity of a world community at the individual, group, national, regional and world levels. Through this one particular medium, we can know the faces of CLC in the world. Sadly, this publication is still unknown and unsupported by most CLC members.

One enormous advantage in these past five years has been the fact that all National Communities can now be linked through email with the possibility of daily communications. Of course, the consequence means relative ease in interactions but also confines some personnel at the Secretariat to spend 8-9 hours a day sitting before a computer monitor.

The face-to-face meetings are by far the preferred choice of knowing each other whether at formation courses or at national/regional assemblies. Although, we (as well as other ExCo members) have been privileged to meet some of you in your own lands, the restrictions in both, Secretariat and National Community financial resources, had a limiting effect on this means of contact. A recent quote, "Nothing much good or bad happens without money" highlights the ongoing need to be more responsible in our financial affairs.

In Itaici, the Assembly agreed to a one time temporary change in the GN, and voted for four consultants instead of three plus a treasurer. Learning from the past, a new way of dealing with finances was recommended and a Financial Team was set into place with a mandate to complete a long overdue renewal of the method of calculating National Dues. On the last day of the Assembly, you will be asked to approve the continuation of such a team of financial experts in lieu of a Treasurer. Prior to that, you will receive a five-year Financial Statement and accounting of the economic condition of CLC

Another sign of change that will be made evident at this Assembly will be the structural modifications taking place in our endeavors to be a

more effective and far-reaching NGO. Members of CLC have formed working groups in both New York and Geneva. This has been another area of importance emphasized by the present ExCo but it is the world community that will determine the future. You will have an opportunity to hear from some members of the Working Group later on in the Assembly.

LOOKING BACK AT OUR GRACED HISTORY affords the possibility of **moving forward** with the **gift of the past**, the **experience of the present** and **hopeful seeds of the future**. The challenge is how to best move forward. What is needed to do so? What needs changing? What needs reinforcing? For instance, we have not as yet found an effective system by which the wisdom of those who served the world community in the past can contribute to constructing the way forward. The opportunities to nurture a growing visibility of young people in CLC are still before us. Sharing resources and formation, particularly expertise in guiding the Spiritual Exercises, remains inconsistent at national and world levels. A long way has been traveled but it is essential that this journey continue.

We are a lay world community responsible for our own organization and well being meaning that we have only what we ourselves contribute whether in time, resources or money. There is no pot of gold, no bottomless purse, mysterious rich benefactors or a faceless bureaucracy who are forever entrenched in a job. It is you and I - we - called by God to be engaged in mission with the Son. For this we need time, resources, money and structures that will sustain that mission.

CONCLUSION

In the past five years, on a personal basis and as the Executive Secretary, there have been times of darkness and times of brilliant light. Most often, though, it has been a time of promise, of being a part of the unfolding of the Lord's story in CLC as well as in our own lives. Who could ask for anything more?

Gilles and Leah Michaud
Executive Secretary of World CLC
(1998 – 2003)

Report of the Financial Team

Financial Recommendations

Submitted Dec. 2001 by the members of Financial Team: John Clifford (England), Cora Sim (Rome/Philippines), Sylvie Rouffiat (France), Thomas Bausch (USA), Gilles Michaud (ExSec/ExCo) Levi Matseshe (Consultant/ExCo).

Approved by ExCo at February 2002 meeting.

Being that financial awareness and its responsibilities are an integral part of the CLC vocation and that all members are to support the financial obligations of the CLC mission (GN 33):

We recommend:

1. That a new principle for formula be adapted for the calculation of CLC annual dues contributions and sent to all National CLCs for final approval.
2. That the new formula makes annual dues proportional to the number of adult paying members of national CLCs and the Gross National Product/Income per capita.

We recommend:

1. That a survey of member numbers be conducted every three years.
2. That the dues for all national CLCs be recalculated every three years after the survey

We recommend:

1. That all newly joined national CLCs may choose to pay a fixed minimum amount of dues for the first three years, instead of the amount calculated by the standard formula.
2. That the same minimum figure will be used as part of the formula applicable to all national CLCs and that this should be \$100. (this may vary with fluctuating exchange rate)

We recommend:

1. That the best measure for CLC's purpose is the Gross National Product/Income per capita and the number of members in the national CLC.
2. That the latest available GNP figures (provided by the UN) be used whenever the dues are recalculated
3. That all national CLCs, and especially those who have paid high dues in the past, be invited to give donations in addition to their calculated dues and that these extra donations should be used to fund specific projects/mission rather than the routine expenditure of the world CLC Secretariat
4. That for any country whose new dues are more than 20% higher than previously, there should be a six year 'smoothing' period over which the dues would gradually increase to the new level.
5. That the same smoothing should apply to those countries whose dues will decrease by over 0%, in the interests of equity and to provide some buffer against the reduction in income to CLC caused by the smoothing for higher dues.

Notes:

If a national CLC has not reported its number of members, dues will be the same as the previous period, unless negotiated otherwise, but no national CLC should pay the minimum amount for more than three years.

A computer spreadsheet has been provided and is to be sent to all national CLCs with smoothing adjustments. The target figure of calculated dues will change during the six-year period.

*Presented by Gilles Michaud
Executive Secretary*

The Report of the Vice-Assistant to the World CLC

Nairobi 2003

With great pleasure I share this Assembly with you all. We meet because we wish to know the Lord's desires for us, so as to offer a better service in the Church.

After listening to Jose Maria, Gilles and Leah, I would like to inform you about these five years as Vice Assistant after the Itaici Assembly. During them, the Lord has met me at every turn, surprising me, in the Society of Jesus and in CLC.

As a starting point I will offer some historical clarifications. As you well know CLC was born out of the Marian Congregations. At the beginning of the XX century there were more than 50.000 Marian Congregations in the whole world, but only a small part of them was directed by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, through the Jesuit Central Secretariat in Rome.

The majority of those Congregations met in 1967, in the fourth World Assembly of the Marian Congregations. Most of the participating delegates, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, and influenced by the richness of Vatican II Council and by the rediscovery of Ignatian sources, decided to renew their Sodalities. Out of them was born the Christian Life Community - CLC. The Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, handed over the leadership of the new community to its lay members. In a letter addressed to the Jesuits he requested them to drop as much as possible that directive role they had held and that they act more as a source of inspiration and animators of the Community, without giving up the specific task of representing the Hierarchy of the Church (AR Vol. XVI, 1968, p. 71).

In that way CLC was entrusted to its lay leaders and the Holy See appointed a diocesan bishop as ecclesiastical assistant. The Jesuit Central Secretariat, then presided over by Fr. Louis Paulussen SJ, was changed into a center for Ignatian inspiration, for supporting CLC in its fidelity to the charism of Ignatius and of the Spiritual Exercises.

That same year 1967, as demanded by the General Principles and Norms that had been approved, the CLC Executive Council initiated its own Secretariat "for carrying out its policies and decisions" (GN 25). The first Executive Secretary of CLC was Ms. Joséé Gsell.

In 1983 Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach was elected Superior General of the Society of Jesus. The following year, at the request of CLC, the Holy See appointed him as the Ecclesiastical Assistant. A few months later he addresses the Jesuits saying that his responsibility in CLC has two dimensions. One is to be the official representative of the Church hierarchy in the Community, and the other is to support CLC in its growth faithful to its Ignatian charism (letter to Jesuits in AR Vol. XIX, 1984, p. 116). With this appointment, one of the tasks of the Jesuit Central Secretariat – support CLC in its fidelity to Ignatian charism – was then linked with the Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

I wished to share with you this historical data because we have perceived their effects during these last years.

One of them is a small change in the role definition of the Assistant and the Vice-Assistant of CLC. Both are members of the Executive Council of CLC, but the mission of the Assistant is more centered in Rome. The Vice-Assistant's mission is to promote CLC and to support directly the world CLC and the Jesuits who work with the Community. This explains why now we do not have a Jesuit Central Secretariat, and in its place there is a Jesuit who is the "Secretary of the Society for CLC", and is accepted by the world Christian Life Community as its Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant. He performs his mission in direct contact with the Executive Council of CLC and with the Assistant, who is the Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

These clarifications had not been made in 1998. That is why in the beginning I repeatedly asked what does a CLC Vice-Assistant do. My predecessor, Fr. Julian Elizalde SJ, organized many successful international formation encounters, each one of them preceded by a more or less lengthy preparation time. Was this what CLC needed after receiving its common mission at the Itaici Assembly? And, was it for the Vice Assistant to organize them?

For answering these and other questions I considered it necessary to be better acquainted with the national CLC communities. This would enable me to discuss with others about the meaning of the common mission received at Itaici.

Since November 1998 I have visited 42 of the national communities that are part of the world CLC, plus 3 others which will be part of CLC by the end of this Assembly, if you incorporate them. For many of these visits I took the initiative, requesting the community to receive me, for sharing a few days and getting to know them better. I am sorry to say that only in a few cases did the community take that initiative.

The visits were varied. Normally it was the national assistant who received me in his Jesuit Community. That gave us opportunities for longer conversations. Wherever it was possible I met with the national executive council, and in the majority of the visits I also participated in wider meetings, sometimes in assemblies or in gatherings. In some countries after meeting with the CLC leadership team, together with one of its members we visited nearby local CLC groups.

For example, here in Kenya I will never forget the trip we made by night with Levi Matseshe. During a rainstorm in an open pick-up truck, we went to meet a CLC group in Kebirigo, near Kisii. I must add that Levi was outside and I was inside the truck... Or that visit to a community in Arusha, with Isaac Oigo we traveled from Nairobi in a recklessly driven criminal vehicle called a "matatu". Both meetings were very good and stimulating. I mention Levi and Isaac now because it was here that I enjoyed meeting them, and both are with us now, Levi serving generously as a member of the world ExCo, and Isaac remembering and praying for us next to God our Father.

The main theme of each visit changed, according to the reality of each national community and to the stage we were in this CLC journey after Itaici. The consideration of the journey seemed important because we had realized that some national communities have a low participation, or none at all, in the process that the world CLC was living.

The starting point for each visit was recalling the importance of our personal encounter with the Lord our God, by means of the Spiritual

Exercises, and the apostolate that our General Principles request of each CLC member. The previous conversations and meetings with the world ExCo had a great influence in the way of dealing with these basic subjects.

During the first two and a half years the main subject during these visits was the meaning and consequences of the common mission. We slowly understood, through personal discussions, group meetings and assemblies, that an apostolic service will be common mission if we share the responsibility for that service. We agreed that for sharing responsibility we had to discern together, send and be sent, support one another while in mission and finally evaluate it. As I said before, the discussions with ExCo members helped us all to grow in awareness of what the common mission meant and of its consequences.

During the last two years we began to deal with the communal repercussions of sharing the responsibility in mission. We started asking ourselves how we should reformulate the processes we lived in the Community and even its structures. My mission as Vice-Assistant began to taste differently when I realized that my agenda should also be a responsibility shared by the ExCo. We have made an effort to share the decisions about what ought to be done in each CLC region. We decided that each ExCo member would support his or her regional coordinating team; so now we refer to the "ExCo link". As Vice-Assistant I have been able to perform better in a region when we have shared the decisions with the corresponding ExCo link. It hasn't been easy, but we have moved forward.

When looking back I realize that the most fruitful moments have been the discussions about a document or when preparing an issue of "*Projects*". Sometimes we worked in small groups, other times all together. Even the moments of greater tension were eventually a manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord.

During these last months we have commented about the importance of making some changes in the normal proceedings of small group meetings, especially for those who have greater experience in the Community. If we really want all CLC members to begin sharing the

responsibility for mission, the changes have to take place also at the small group level. We cannot remain satisfied only with a new understanding of the commitment of all executive council members.

I have witnessed the action of the Spirit of the Lord in this journey we are making together. The conversations in the ExCo have improved as the relation with national communities improved. And together we have perceived how the ExCo can help the world CLC community to grow in awareness of the way. Now we need to fortify and consolidate the steps forward we have taken. The Lord is calling the whole Community to live as an apostolic body in the Church.

Fernando Salas S.J.

Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant of World CLC

(1998 -)

Process Guide Input

Beginning of Block C:

Block A, was a growing in **awareness** of what the Lord is doing in our World CLC Body.

Block B: Started with telling us about the CALL, addressed to each member of the Assembly, the call to be an Apostolic Body. There were fears, doubts and questions on the part of some of us here.

But perceiving the seeds already present in our national countries and listening to the experiences in the workshops, clarified, strengthened and deepened the hopes of many present here. It is possible! And the heart felt the movements of openness, strong faith, hope and consolation. But for some it was a struggle, an uneasiness, a disposition. There were a lot of intellectual objections, doubts and agitation.

But at 12.00 noon today, we were confronted with the Moment of Truth, the Moment of Honesty of where we are; the moment to stay where my heart is!

Our disposition can be seen in the rainbow on the wall - from less intensity to a large section of this Assembly moving towards an apostolic body. This "YES" to the grace towards CLC was celebrated by singing the Psalm in Latin.

This "Desired grace" will now move us to make the full response to the "Call of the King" after "**Block C**".

The disposition is there, but what does it mean to be called?
To be an outreaching apostolic body?
Called to what?
Called where?
Called how?

The response of our heart will take us right into the Reality around Kenya and the global situation in which we live:

insertion/incarnation. As we see and experience this reality as an outreaching apostolic body, we will be faced with the colloquy of the Spiritual Exercises # 97/98 to make our final response.

“Those who wish to give greater proof of their love.... and make offerings of greater value and of more importance will say: ‘Eternal Lord of all things... this is the offering of myself which I make with your favour and help... in the presence of your glorious mother... I protest that is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice.... Should Your Most Holy Majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a way of life’.”

The call to an apostolic body

Yesterday, I mentioned that our process of spiritual growth of **Block A** developed our gift of *awareness*.

Today at the end of **Block B**, we are gifted with the *sensitivity*. The process developed our sixth sense, listening to the heart, to be alert to the call and to perceive the hopes and risks to be taken.

With this gift of sensitivity, let us move forward like the apostles to feel the **FORCE** of Jesus' invitation in Matt. 26:45-46; “The hour is on us.... Get up! Let us be on our way!”

Paul Vaz, S.J.
Assembly Process Guide

Ethical Focus of Ignatian Spirituality

Ignatian spirituality invites us to a *mystique of action*. The dynamism of a *doing* born of a *being with*¹, inspired in the *community* of apostles that becomes an *apostolic* community, implies an evident ethical focus.

This reflection intends to explain the ethical dimension of Ignatian spirituality in three steps. Once the meaning of the terms *spirituality* and *ethics* are clarified and their *necessary* complementary relationship established, this study will propose some ethical notes that are particular to Ignatian spirituality.

1. Conceptual clarification

The terms *spirituality* and *ethics* form part of our daily language. However, sometimes, their meaning is not too clear because they are no longer used solely in a religious context and, moreover, the presence of *pluralism* in modern thought makes the convergent understanding more difficult due to the different referents.

1.1. Spirituality

In our times, *consumerism* as a measure of anthropological value (that is, to *have* something in order to *be* someone recognized and accepted in society), and a lifestyle that is increasingly more *accelerated* and *hedonist*² have meant a growing longing of a *search for meaning*, originating a universal interest for spirituality. This phenomenon has brought a multiplication of publications, workshops, seminars and movements that seek to offer an answer. However, in this supermarket of offers there also exist distortions, caricatures and endless confusion.

¹ Jesus "then went up the mountain and summoned the men He himself had decided on, who came and joined Him. He named twelve as His *companions* whom He would send to *preach* the good news" (Mk 3, 13 - 14).

² By *hedonism* is understood the philosophical theory sustaining that pleasure and pain become ethical criteria for good and evil, in such a way that pleasure becomes the supreme good and the ultimate norm of life (epicureism). Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I - II, qq. 34.

In a generic sense, the word spirituality designates a reference that goes beyond the visible, the tangible and the material. The **Christian** concept of spirituality does not imply a negation of - or an opposition to - the material (the spiritual versus the material), but is directly related to the **Spirit**, to the Person of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Son and the Father. Spirituality is *life according to the Spirit*.

Jesus, *returning* to the Father, *remains* present in human history through the sending of the Spirit. In Luke's evangelic narration, Jesus imparts the last instructions to His apostles, assuring them: "I send down upon you the promise of my Father" (Lk 24,49).³ Also, in John's evangelic narration, Jesus repeats to His disciples the arrival of the Spirit, the Paraclete, whom "the Father will send in my name" in order to teach them everything and remind them of all that He had told them (Cf. Jn 14,26). It is the Spirit who enables Jesus of Nazareth to *be recognized* as the Christ, because "no one can say *Jesus is Lord*, except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12, 3).

Therefore, the existence of the disciple of Jesus Christ is a *new* life born, oriented and nurtured by the Spirit. This original experience consists in being *dwelled upon* by the same Spirit who dwelled in Jesus of Nazareth, since "God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of his Son which cries out *Abba!* (Father!)" (Gal 4, 6).⁴

In *St. Paul's* words, "the Spirit of God dwells in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. (...) All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You did not receive a spirit of slavery leading you back into fear, but a spirit of adoption through which we cry out *Abba!* (that is, *Father*). The Spirit gives witness with our spirit that we are children of God. But if we are children, we are heirs as well: heirs of God, heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with Him so as to be glorified with Him" (Rom 8: 9-17).

Christian spirituality is the *experience of God* in the life of the believer. God Father has sent His Son to the world, and His Spirit is still

³ Cf. Acts of the Apostles 1, 4; 2, 33 y 39.

⁴ 2 Tm 1, 13 - 14: "Take as a model of sound teaching what you have heard me say, in faith and love of Christ Jesus. Guard the rich deposit of faith with the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us".

communicating Himself to believers. God has self-revealed Himself totally in the Son and the Spirit is still communicating this Good News. Because of this, it is not the practices but the *irruption* of an unsuspected and transforming Presence that defines spirituality, since God makes Himself present in the persons' lives.

A life in faith requires constant *conversion* in order to accept and to follow Jesus' Project, which is ultimately the Father's Project⁵, through the gift of the Spirit⁶. This life according to the Spirit is opposed to a lifestyle closed within itself⁷, guided by plans that do not recognize the divine presence⁸. A life in the Spirit is not self-centered but accepts its condition of creature and seeks the meaning of its own existence in the horizon of a Creator who infinitely loves His creation. History becomes the creature's path towards the Creator.

Thus, a spirituality open to the Spirit's action implies the *centrality* of the Person of Jesus Christ,⁹ the construction of the *Church* as a fraternal community in mission¹⁰, in an attitude of *thanksgiving* and in the joy of the announcement of the Gospel¹¹, favouring a particular concern towards the weakest and those cast aside by society, due to their condition as privileged sacramental of the divine presence¹². This spirituality is lived in a continual process of conversion, as an answer (vocation) to the mission (the Father's Project, presented and lived by Jesus).¹³

The Christian who adopts a specific spirituality expresses concretely a *fundamental option*, one that changes the horizon of meanings and senses, because God's experience implies a *commitment* to the divine plan on human history (conversion - commitment), since

⁵ "I have come down from heaven, but to do the will of Him who sent me" (Jn 6, 38; cf.: Jn 4, 34; 5, 19.30.43; 6, 57; 10, 18.25.37; 12, 49 – 50; 14, 10.24.31; 15, 10.15; 18, 11).

⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 2, 10 – 16.

⁷ Cf. Gal 5, 16 – 25.

⁸ Cf. Rom 12, 2.

⁹ Cf. Phil 3, 7 – 11.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 12 – 14.

¹¹ Cf. Rom 1, 14 – 17.

¹² Cf. Mt 25, 31 – 46.

¹³ Cf. Marcos Buvinic, "Espiritualidad: la pregunta por el *Espíritu* que nos habita", in Cuadernos de Espiritualidad, *Espiritualidad: ¿de qué se trata?*, (Santiago: CEI, 1993), pgs. 7 – 8.

conversion to God is translated into a conversion towards the other as image and divine resemblance.

The essence of Christian spirituality is the *historic following of Christ* under the guidance of the Spirit's action. Christian spirituality is an existence that lets itself be spoken to by the divine presence and is transformed into a *lifestyle* (options, attitudes, actions). Therefore, there exist different expressions of this same spirituality since the historic road has different *contexts* defined by time and space, as well as by the accent and the *priority* that is given to one or other aspect in the response to God's call.¹⁴

1.2. Ethics

Ethics is *the human being's home*, since it proposes the universe of senses, of ideals and values that make the human condition in society possible and feasible, that is, *dwellingable* for each and all.¹⁵

The word *ethics* has its own history. The search for the origin of the meaning of a word is illuminating since it recuperates the original sense, sometimes obscured or worn down by time, in order to bring out its always vitalizing content.

"Ethimology gives us back the fundamental force, worn down by the long use, of original words, to which one has to return in order to recover their authentic sense, the *arkhé*, which is, as Zubiri would say, not the *archaic* just because it is, but by what it has of *archic*"¹⁶.

The word *ethics* comes from the Greek word *ethos* that has two meanings. The first, and oldest, denotes *residence, dwelling, place where one lives*. Gradually there is a transition from the understanding of an exterior place (country or house) to an interior place (attitude). Thus, in the Aristotelian tradition it comes to mean *disposition and character*, but not in the passive sense of temperament as psychological structure. Rather

¹⁴ Cf. S. Spinsanti, "Ecología", en AA.VV., *Nuevo Diccionario de Espiritualidad*, (Madrid: Paulinas, 1991⁴), pg. 510.

¹⁵ Cf. Marciano Vidal, *Nueva Moral Fundamental: el hogar teológico de la Ética*, (Bilbao: Desclee de Brouwer, 2000), pg. 13.

¹⁶ José Luis Aranguren, *Ética*, (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1979³), pg. 19. The starting point or the principle from which one starts is called *arkhé*. (Cf. pg. 15).

it is a disposition (active, non static) that is acquired and incorporated to one's existence. The second meaning of the word *ethos* is *habit, custom*.

In this way, the term *ethos* was used in the helenic world with two meanings: (a) with *eta* (long *e*), *êthos* refers to the concept of *character*, and (b) with *épsilon* (short *e*) *ethos* represents the concept of *custom*.¹⁷ However, in the translation from Greek to Latin one of its meanings weakened since in Latin there only exists one word to express both meanings of *ethos*: *mos* ("mores" in plural, from where the word *moral* derives), and it means *custom*.¹⁸

Moreover, in our days some people use the words *ethics* and *morals* without further distinction. Others distinguish: (a) the term *ethics* is limited to an exclusively rational reflection (philosophy) and the word *moral* is used for a religious consideration (theology); and (b) the concept of *ethics* is related to the world of principles and values, while *morals* is identified with the norms and codes of human behavior.¹⁹

The distinction between *ethics* and *morals* may be dangerous when it is understood in terms of a dichotomic and excluding division, that is, a divorce between (a) reason and faith, or (b) norms and principles. In a pluralist society it is particularly important to present the rationality that is inherent to all ethical attitudes in order to generate a dialogue among all; besides, every norm is a historical and practical translation of universal principles.

This does not mean a secularization of morals, in the sense of the disappearance of what is Christian in the ethical discourse of believers. Instead it does mean that it is not enough to declare or pronounce a

¹⁷ Cf. Marciano Vidal, *Moral de Actitudes* (I), (Madrid: Editorial PS, 1981⁵), pgs. 19 - 20.

¹⁸ Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that "*mos* may signify two things: sometimes it means custom (...); other times it means a natural or almost natural inclination to do something (...). For this double meaning in Latin there is only one word; but in Greek it has two different terms, since *ethos*, which we translate as custom, sometimes has a long first letter and is written with *eta*, and other times has a short first letter and is written with *epsilon*" (*Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 58, art. 1).

¹⁹ Cf. Marciano Vidal, *Moral de Actitudes* (I), (Madrid: Editorial PS, 1981⁵), pgs. 17 - 18.

word, but it is essential to *communicate* and *have a dialogue* with the other²⁰; it is not about imposing, nor about pronouncing phrases that not everyone understands, but of presenting a message that challenges the other from a point of view that is different to his own. In the end, it rests on the conviction that that which is Christian is, at the same time, radically new and common, because that which is authentically human is Christian.

Thus, what is *Christian* does not constitute primarily a discriminatory element between ethics (philosophy) and morals (theology), but rather shows the horizon of *sense* from where the ethical discourse is elaborated.

The recuperation of the original sense of the word *ethos* is currently being sought. "In effect, the poor moral - not so much ethics, accompanied with more 'scientific' connotations - has seen all its abundance in daily life reduced to mere duties, most of them negative, which has converted the moralist into a kind of predictor of bad omen. The moralist seems to have no other mission than to forbid, denounce, limit enjoyment - specially sexual -, impeding research, imagination and progress".

So it is urgent to "recover not only the etymological sense of morals and ethics as referred to character and to lifestyle, but also prolong a Hispanic tradition that has been thought, read and written in Spanish, that reminds us of the ordinary use of the term 'moral' in our tongue. *To be high or low of morale, have a high morale or to be demoralized* means to have or not have strength to face life with human stature, and whoever finds oneself with strength is exactly the one that does not trim, does not shrink or limit, but the one that infuses fortitude,

²⁰ José Luis Aranguren - "El *ethos* católico en la sociedad actual" in Marciano Vidal (Ed.), Conceptos Fundamentales de Ética Teológica, (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1992), pgs. 31 - 33 - explains that "*Catholic*, in its ethimological meaning, is the potentially universal, what is open to all, whichever its *ethos* may be". Therefore, by *Catholic ethos* he understands a focus or a "character open to everything and, specially, to love; tolerant, understanding, communicative, dialoguing. With whom? With all and with everything: with other religions, beliefs and unbeliefs, with philosophy and other philosophies, with science, with other characters or ways of being".

proposes objectives, creates life. Therefore, morals is a task, a chore, the forging of character that allows us to face life with human stature"²¹.

In consequence, *Christian ethics* is a proposal, based on the Gospel, of an individual and social lifestyle, that seeks the authentic fulfillment, human and humanizing, of the individual in society or of a society formed by individuals.

2. Spirituality and Ethics

The road of *renewal* initiated by moral theology in terms of the following of Christ²² and the *understanding* of spirituality in terms of the universal call to holiness (versus escaping from the world, characteristic of an elite) allow the construction of a *common space* among both. It is no longer a morals of minimum for laity and a spirituality of maximum for religious life, but a spirituality and a morals that constitute different expressions of the *same* vocation, common to all Christians.

2.1. Unity in diversity

A first impression may situate spirituality and morals in *opposed extremes*, reducing spirituality to religious life (the road of perfection based on the evangelical counsels) and understanding morals as the required minimum (the road to salvation enlightened by the Ten Commandments).

Neither would a contrary reaction that moralizes spirituality (to reduce spirituality to the ethic action) or spiritualizes morals (a faith that has no incidence on historic reality) be correct. In this case there is a *reduction and confusion* between two dimensions that belong to the same reality. Spirituality and morals are not distinct levels, but two different and necessary roads that express a same experience. The challenge consists in living these two roads to the maximum, without denying the radicality of the evangelical counsels.²³

²¹ A. Cortina, "Ética Filosófica", in Marciano Vidal (Ed.), *Conceptos Fundamentales de Ética Teológica*, (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1992), pg. 146.

²² "Moral theology (...) should show the nobility of the Christian vocation..." (II Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, N° 16).

²³ Holiness "is expressed in multiple ways by those individuals who, in the walk of life, strive for the perfection of charity, and thereby help others to grow. In a particularly appropriate way

2.2. *Different expressions of the same experience*

Every Christian's vocation is a *call to holiness* in accordance with its own condition. "One and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshipping God the Father in spirit and in truth. These souls follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ, in order to be made worthy of being partakers in His glory. Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hopes and works through charity".²⁴

Spirituality consists in a life guided by the Spirit of the Son and of the Father; the ethical action is a behavior inspired by this same Spirit. In this *new* life, the spirituality becomes ethical *commitment* and morals is *motivated* by the coherence with this spiritual experience. The ethical action is precisely a life style coherent and consistent with the received life of grace.²⁵

Two movements rule human experience: *unity*, in the orientation and the objective, and *diversity*, in the means. Diversity alone leads to a dispersion that lacks a course, and unity alone would deny the particularity, confusing itself with uniformity. Unity in diversity constitutes the epistemological key to understanding the diverse dimensions of human existence. The contemplation of Christian meaning, the personal experience of its mystery, its ethical implication in the transformation of history are different expressions of a same and unique life option.²⁶

Spirituality and Christian ethics spring from the same experience of God in the road to holiness, which consists in a life of charity (love God in the other and the other in God), according to each one's particular vocation.

this holiness shines out in the practice of the counsels customarily called 'evangelical'" (II Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, N° 39).

²⁴ II Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, N° 41).

²⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, March 4, 1979, N° 18.

²⁶ Cf. Marciano Vidal, *Moral y Espiritualidad: de la separación a la convergencia*, (Madrid: Editorial PS, 1997), pg. 5.

John Paul II points out that "it is also clear that every believer is called to be a follower of Christ (cf. *Acts* 6:1). *Following Christ is thus the essential and primordial foundation of Christian morality*: just as the people of Israel followed God who led them through the desert towards the Promised Land (cf. *Ex* 13:21), so every disciple must follow Jesus, towards whom he is drawn by the Father himself (cf. *Jn* 6:44). This is not a matter only of disposing oneself to hear a teaching and obediently accepting a commandment. More radically, it involves *adhering to the very person of Jesus*, partaking of His life and His destiny, sharing in His free and loving obedience to the will of the Father".²⁷

Following Christ means *becoming conformed to him*, to let oneself be conformed by Him through the work of the Spirit.²⁸ In St. Paul's words, it is allowing Christ "to dwell in your hearts through faith" (*Eph* 3,17), to have an attitude that "must be that of Christ" (*Phil* 2,5). The *experience* (spirituality) becomes *commitment* (ethics) and the commitment (ethical) is fruit of the experience (spirituality).

2.3. *From faith to morals*

In this double expression within an "intrinsic and unbreakable bond between faith and morals"²⁹ there has been a tendency, influenced by Kantian thought (the must of the categorical imperative),³⁰ of favouring

²⁷ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N° 19.

²⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N° 21.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N° 4.

³⁰ In Emmanuel Kant's thought, in the attempt to lay the foundations of a disinterested and autonomous moral, it is the desire to fulfill the moral duty which establishes religion (from morals to religion): The Christian principle of morals is not theological (thus, heteronomy), but autonomy of pure practical reason in itself, because it doesn't make of God's knowledge and of His will the foundation of these laws, but only of the achievement of the superior good, under the condition of their observance; the same adequate motor for the observance of the last ones does not put it in the desired consequence, but only in the representation of duty, as the only thing in whose faithful observance the dignity of the acquisition of the supreme good consists. In this way, it *conducts moral law* through the concept of the supreme good, as object and purpose of the pure practical reason, *to religion*, this is, to the knowledge of all the duties as divine commandments, not as sanctions, that is, arbitrary orders and contingent in themselves of a foreign will, but as essential laws of all will, free in itself, that, nonetheless, have to be considered as mandates of the supreme being, because we cannot expect the supreme good, that moral law inflicts upon us the duty of putting ourselves as object of our efforts, more than of a morally perfect will (holy and good), and at the same time almighty,

the movement *from the morals towards faith*, in the sense of an obedience to obtain a prize, or of compliance to guarantee salvation. This perspective has frequently generated a strong sense of guiltiness (the compliance with the *must* related to religious self esteem) and of a norm-legalistic perspective (the *must* without ulterior basis). Moreover, Catholicism is generally associated with the moral dimension of Christianity. In fact, pluralist societies usually identify the Catholic Church with ethical postures, especially in the field of sexuality.

However, Christianity is not primarily morals but fundamentally a horizon of *transcendent sense* (faith) and of *celebration* (hope) that lead to a determined *life style* (charity). Precisely, the ethic action of the Christian consists in the mediation of this last sense lived in a context of deep trust in the action of the Spirit.

Christian ethics, lived and formulated, needs to recover its *theological home*, putting itself in the horizon of the sense to motivate a corresponding lifestyle in history: A moral of *sense* that gives foundation to an ethics of obligation as expression of coherence and consequence: A moral of *content* (the following of Christ's Person, guided by the action of the Spirit, in the building of the Father's Reign) as basic motivation of acting and thinking ethics from faith.

Thus, Christian ethics recovers its implication of being a *morals of grace*: An ethics that is ruled by the evangelical law and not by Mosaic Law.³¹

Saint John Chrisostomus explains that, "our life should be so pure that it had no need for any writings; the grace of the Holy Spirit should substitute books, and such as these are written with ink, so should our hearts be written with the Holy Spirit. Only since we have lost this grace have we to make use of writings. (...) Because it is the Holy Spirit the one

and, because of this, through a concordance with this will. That is why everything remains disinterested and only founded on duty, without the possibility of putting fear or hope in the base as motors because, if they become principles, they annihilate all moral value of actions". (*Crítica de la razón práctica*, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1984³, pg. 181).

³¹ Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N^os 24 and 45.

who descended from heaven when the law was passed, and the tablets that He wrote on this occasion are very superior to the first ones; the apostles did not come down from the mount, as Moses, with stone slabs in their hands, but with the Holy Spirit in their hearts, transformed through His grace in law and living books”³².

In this same line of thought, St. Thomas Aquinas underlines the superiority and the priority of the New Law. “That which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given through faith in Christ. (...) Nevertheless the New Law contains certain things that dispose us to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, and pertaining to the use of that grace: such things are of secondary importance, so to speak, in the New Law; and the faithful need to be instructed concerning them, both by word and writing, both as to what they should believe and as to what they should do. Consequently we must say that the New Law is in the first place a law that is inscribed on our hearts, but that secondarily it is a written law.”³³

Without denying the pedagogical necessity of the written law, it would be fatal to reduce Christian ethics to a legalist compliance that loses perspective of the most important: the *protagonism* of the Spirit of the Son and the Father in the life and action of the Christian. Because, “this great confidence in God is ours, through Christ. It is not that we are entitled of ourselves to take credit for anything. Our sole credit is from God, who has made us qualified ministers of a new covenant, not of a written law but of spirit. The written law kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Cor 3: 4 – 6).

Saint Paul writes: “If justice is available through the law, then Christ died to no purpose!” (Gal 2:21). Law illuminates the road, but only Christ saves, because only He is the Way, and the Truth and the Life.³⁴

The Christian’s ethical life begins with humble but trusting prayer. *Show me, O Lord, your way, and lead me on a level path*³⁵ because, for the

³² St. John Chrisostomus, *In Matth.*, Hom. 1, n. 1: PG 57, 13 – 15.

³³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I – II, q. 106, art. 1.

³⁴ Cf. Jn 14, 6.

³⁵ Cf. Psalm 27, 11.

Christian, life consists in *seeking the presence of the Lord*³⁶ in his daily existence. Only then does the horizon of ethics achieve decisive importance, in acting and thinking, as a *joyous response* to the divine calling (interpersonal context more than impersonal compliance), as a gesture of *liberty in love* (an option that is born in the confident love of God), as a simple expression of *charity* (the mediation of ethical life in terms of charity).³⁷

The fact of privileging the point of view of an ethics that emanates from faith, or of a morals from the faith, inaugurates a relation of coherence and of consequence, within the context of *gratuitousness*, that invites to the responsibility of an ethics *motivated* by the constant reference to the *Person of Jesus* of Nazareth, proclaimed as the *Christ* by God Father.³⁸

However, this perspective does not mean the moralization of the faith (reducing religion to moral compliance), nor a religious fundamentalism of morals (eliminating ethical rationality, falling into a moral fideism), neither a sectarian morals (incapable of dialoguing with other ethics). On the contrary, this point of view underlines the necessity of *a faith that expresses itself in concrete practice*³⁹, avoiding the temptation of spiritualism without commitment. Ethical action verifies (*veritas facere* – makes true) the spiritual experience. It is not about acting to deserve faith, but of the necessity of actions to express being grateful for – and coherence with – the gift of faith.

3. Ethical horizon of Ignatian spirituality

Most ethical decisions in daily life do not consist so much in making an option between a good and an evil, but in distinguishing between good and evil in a *concrete and complex situation*. Saint

³⁶ Cf. Psalm 27, 8.

³⁷ Cf. Marciano Vidal, *Nueva Moral Fundamental: el hogar teológico de la Ética*, (Bilbao: Desclee de Brouwer, 2000), pgs. 680 – 681.

³⁸ Cf. Acts 2, 22 – 36. “God has made both Lord and Messiah this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2, 36).

³⁹ “If anyone says ‘My love is fixed on God,’ yet he hates his brother, he is a liar. One who has no love for the brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen. The commandment we have from Him is this: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 Jn 4, 20 – 21). Because “the faith that does nothing in practice is thoroughly dead” (Jas 2,17).

Thomas Aquinas points out that "in practical things there is much uncertainty, since acting on singular and contingent situations, due to its own variability, implies the unknown".⁴⁰

Moreover, in the context of the deep and accelerated cultural changes, it is not always easy to find *adequate answers* to new problems and to new questions. The II Vatican Council (1962-1965) had already pointed out this great challenge in our days. "The Church guards the heritage of God's Word and draws from it religious and moral principles, *without having at hand the solution to particular problems*. She desires thereby to add the light of revealed truth to mankind's store of experience, so that the path which humanity has taken in recent times will not be a dark one."⁴¹

In the context of a return to spirituality, in the midst of a pluralist society where new questions constantly arise, *Ignatian spirituality* makes itself relevant for its *discerning* focus that helps to seek and find God's will⁴² in the uncertainty that accompanies our daily life.

3.1. Ignatian Spirituality

The privileged ground of Ignatian spirituality is the booklet of the *Spiritual Exercises* because in it we find the spiritual experience of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the pilgrim who seeks to fulfill God's will, placing himself under Christ's standard in acceptance of the gift - and commitment with the task - of cooperating in the construction of the Father's Reign.

In the context of the current times, the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola may be summarized in terms of some fundamental and foundational statements of a deeply religious and markedly ethical lifestyle⁴³.

⁴⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I – II, q. 14, art. 1. "in rebus autem agendis multa incertitudo invenitur: quia actiones sunt circa singularia contingentia, quae propter sui variabilitatem incerta sunt".

⁴¹ II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, (December 7, 1965), N° 33.

⁴² St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 1.

⁴³ I follow the authorized presentation of the current General Superior of the Society of Jesus, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, in the Letter (September 27, 1991) that he addressed to the friends of the Society of Jesus on occasion of the anniversary (450 years) of the pontifical

Life is meaningful because it has a clear purpose: a God who loves him has created the human being. The individual is not an aimless being but, on the contrary, is called to build the Reign of God through knowledge, love and service of God and of the others and, in this way, to own eternal life. In consequence, the priorities and the fundamental commitments emanate from this finality and determine the difference between a happy life and a frustrated history.

The ***world is full of God's Spirit*** because the Resurrected has conquered the world that was hostile to God. The task consists in searching and discovering this divine presence. If the darkness of night is observed carefully, the dawn is exposed as a light that reveals God working on the human being as Creator and Redeemer. Therefore, the importance of ***discernment*** is highlighted in order to distinguish light from darkness, to discover God's goodness even in the midst of human evilness.

God ***calls each and all to participate in a great enterprise***. In this commitment with God's plan nobody is excluded: old and young, laity and religious, men and women. The only necessary condition is to recognize the call and respond with the fidelity of one's own life. This means building one's own biographical account centered in the Person of Jesus Christ. It is not about an idea or a theory, but of a Person whom one searches for, one loves and follows in the deep conversion of the heart and in the attentive listening of His word.

The acceptance of the call of Jesus includes a ***style*** that marks the way in which the gifts that God has granted are used. Jesus used all of what the Father gave Him for the service of the others, and, because of that, the received gifts are ***for the service***. This means the recognition that every gift comes from God, so, by taking possession of it, there is growth in the measure that it is shared with others, so that the gift returns to God through praise and thanksgiving. The gift is not an instrument of personal power but a tool of service.

approval of the Congregation. Also cf. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, "La espiritualidad ignaciana", in Cuadernos de Espiritualidad, Espiritualidad: ¿de qué se trata?, (Santiago: CEI, 1993), 9 – 19.

The Christ of Ignatian spirituality is a *Christ in action*, the Christ that preached in synagogues, villages and castles.⁴⁴ This is the Christ who sends to the whirlwind of the world and invites to search for God working for the well being of persons and of the society. Thus, along with the contemplative mystic, there arises a *mystique of action*. It is not a mystique of escapism but a mystique of insertion.

Therefore, *faith has practical consequences* in everyday life. It is a faith that calls to promote justice and to work for peace, worrying for the countless poor outcasts from current society, a commitment for justice that emanates from love, which at the same time constitutes a divine project and a human responsibility.

In this historical commitment, *the use of human means* turns out to be necessary and important, as long as the basic confidence is not put in them, since trust has to be placed in God. Ignatius insists in scientific, doctrinal and spiritual competence, because all created reality has God as the first origin and final ending. In this way, the danger of an imprecise thought or of an ineffective action is avoided.

In Ignatius' vision, *mediocrity has no place*. Radicality is demanded in the following of Christ in order to always seek God's greater glory, because human history needs competent people that give themselves generously to others.

True love is not found in words but in *concrete deeds*. Love implies sacrifice. Because of this, what is actually done is the final test of what is declared with words or purposes. In this way, there is the permanent question (past, present and future): What have I *done* for Christ? What am I *doing* for Christ? What shall I *do* for Christ?

In his wish to "help souls", the solitary pilgrim of Loyola found himself companions, which finally ended in the foundation of the Society of Jesus. But he also encouraged many men and women to *associate in order to live and serve better*. The experience of God, of His saving power, and the intimacy with Jesus Christ lead in a natural way to their

⁴⁴ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 353.

expression in real life and the desire to share them with others. This community aspect is a visible sign of communion with Christ and of the missionary vitality of the Church.

Lastly, Ignatius of Loyola was before and above all a *man of the Church*. During his life he had problems with the Inquisition and also suffered misunderstandings with ecclesiastics, but he always urged for loyalty, in words and actions, to the “true spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother the Church Hierarchical”⁴⁵, since the One that governs and rules is the Spirit Himself sent by Christ.

In Ignatius’ mind, faith becomes an existential experience, generated by the Spirit of the Lord, a personal discovery of the love of God, revealed in Jesus, that founds a commitment of love and service. A *solid experience* of God is translated into a *radical commitment* with justice, which transforms charity into a mystique of action.⁴⁶

3.2. Ignatian Ethical Notes

Ignatian spirituality has an evident *ethical focus*, because “love ought to be put more in deeds than in words”⁴⁷. It is a faith that seeks to translate itself into concrete action. It is Ignatius’ triple question: What have I done? What am I doing? What am I going to do?

But, in the first place, it is about a *moral of divine protagonism*. It is Jesus Christ (in the image of the worldly king) who calls and invites us to work *with* Him and *like* Him.⁴⁸ The Person of Jesus Christ establishes Himself as goal and path, ideal and life style, for those who wish to be His disciples. It is Ignatius’ prayer when recognizing that “all is Thine” and, because of this “Thou gavest it to me: to Thee, Lord, I return it!” It is then that the disciple really gives up his life through the prayer: “dispose of it according to all Thy will”, because “Give me Thy love and grace, for this is enough for me.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 353.

⁴⁶ Cf. the Decree “Our Mission and Justice” of the General Congregation XXXIV of the Society of Jesus (January 5th to March 22nd of 1995).

⁴⁷ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 230.

⁴⁸ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N°s 91 – 100.

⁴⁹ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 234.

Thus, it is not only about following Christ, but a *poor* Christ. When he puts himself under the banner of Christ, Ignatius asks for a colloquy with "Our Lady, that she may get me the grace from her Son and Lord that I may be received under His banner; and first in the highest spiritual poverty, and - if His Divine Majesty would be served and would want to choose me and receive me- not less in actual poverty; in suffering contumely and injuries, to imitate Him more in them, if only I can suffer them without the sin of any person, or displeasure of His Divine Majesty".⁵⁰ The third manner of humility proposed by Ignatius is born from the deep desire to imitate and be more like Christ the Lord: thus, this wish is translated into "I want and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than riches"⁵¹.

In this *radical commitment*⁵², according to Jesus' style, we are presented with *a morals starting from other*, the divine Other and the human other. In the Principle and Foundation, Ignatius understands "saving his soul" starting from "serving God our Lord".⁵³ It is the service for the "profit of the souls", that includes "the pacification of quarreled, the help to prisoners in jails and to sick persons in hospitals, and the exercise of the other mercy deeds, as they seem convenient for the glory of God and the common good".⁵⁴

Ignatian spirituality does not consist in escaping the world to seek one's own salvation but, on the contrary, in giving oneself to the service of others to find the road to one's own salvation. "The aim of this Society is not only to pay attention to the salvation and perfection of our own souls with the divine grace, but to try to help in the salvation and perfection of fellowmen".⁵⁵

⁵⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 147. "The poor are so great in the divine presence, that Jesus Christ was sent mainly for them in the Earth" and, so, "friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King" (Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of Padova, August 7, 1547).

⁵¹ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 167.

⁵² Cf. the meditations of the Two Banners (N°s 136 – 148), the Three Paths (N°s 149 – 157) and the Three Degrees of Humility (N°s 164 – 168) of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the context of choice.

⁵³ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 23.

⁵⁴ Formula of the Institute approved by Julio III, N° 1

⁵⁵ Chapter 1 of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (N° 3).

This concern for one's fellowmen demands a *morals of better service* that seeks the *magis* constantly (the most)⁵⁶, because it does not consist in any service, but in the best possible service, as an expression of radical delivery of one's own life and of authentic love towards the other in the path of the following of Christ. The Ignatian *magis* is not a self-referring model of perfection, but a criteria of authentic service to the other; it is not so much a giving more but a total giving of oneself; it is not so much to donate more but to donate oneself totally.

Ignatian spirituality offers a *demanding ethics, but brimming with mercy*. The proposal of evangelical radicality does not fail to recognize the merciful look towards downfalls so as to encourage in the path to rising, as well as to know how to distinguish between different concrete situations. St. Ignatius of Loyola, on drawing up the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, insisted in taking into account, in each circumstance, the corresponding persons, place and time.

This cannot mean the proposal of human frailty as an ideal, because it would fail to recognize an essential element inherent to ethics: its critical dimension in search of the authentic fulfillment (conversion). The understanding of human weakness "never means to commit and forge the measure of good and evil to adapt it to circumstances", because it could be an "unacceptable attitude from whom makes of his own weakness a criteria of truth over good".⁵⁷

A traditional moral principle assumes the importance of concrete situations without denying the universal validity of a norm. The *epikeia* supposes a subject who is mature, with righteous intention and formed conscience, capable of interpreting the spirit of the law over its literal meaning, in order to be faithful to the lawmaker's intention. In a situation of conflict of values, when contexts that had not been foreseen or thought

⁵⁶ Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 23.

⁵⁷ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N° 104. Also consult the clarification on the meaning of the law of graduality in John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, (November 22, 1981), N° 34: "the so called *graduality law* or gradual road cannot be identified with the graduality of the law, as if there were various degrees or types of precept in divine law for different men and situations".

about by the lawmaker appear, the ethical subject seeks the fulfillment of the possible good according to the most important value⁵⁸

Lastly, Ignatian spirituality implies *a morals of fidelity to the Church Magisterium* of the Church.⁵⁹ This fidelity is based on, and constitutes an expression of, *faith* in the active presence of the Spirit of Christ, because “between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, there is the same spirit which governs and directs us for the salvation of our souls. Because by the same Spirit and Our Lord who gave the Ten Commandments, our holy mother the Church is directed and governed”.⁶⁰

In Ignatian language, the disciple is invited to have a *feeling with the Church*,⁶¹ that is, a felt knowledge, a knowledge-love, a knowledge

⁵⁸ Cf. S. Privitera, “Principios morales tradicionales”, in AA.VV., Nuevo Diccionario de Teología Moral, (Madrid: Paulinas, 1992), pg. 1481. St. Thomas Aquinas explains that “when we were treating of laws, since human actions, with which laws are concerned, are composed of contingent singulars and are innumerable in their diversity, it was not possible to lay down rules of law that would apply to every single case. Legislators in framing laws attend to what commonly happens: although if the law be applied to certain cases it will frustrate the equality of justice and be injurious to the common good, which the law has in view” Thus “It belongs to “epikeia” to moderate something, namely, the observance of the letter of the law” (Summa Theologica, II – II, q. 120, art. 1 y art. 2, ad 3). The problem lies in that “it frequently happens that complying with the law is beneficial for the common good in the generality of cases, while in an individual case it can be extremely harmful. But, since the Philosopher cannot take into account all the individual cases, he frames the law not for any private benefit, but for the common good of all the citizens. Consequently, if there arises a case in which this law is harmful for common good, it must not be complied with” (Summa Theologica, I – II, q. 96, art. 6). Also consult Summa Theologica, II – II, q. 60, art. 5, ad 2; II – II, q. 80, art. 1, ad 4 y 5.

⁵⁹ In relation to the topic of fidelity to the Church’s Magisterium, consult the interesting thoughts offered by Sabine Demel in “Libertad de expresión y obediencia cristiana: ¿la cuadratura del círculo?”, Selecciones de Teología 161 (2002) pgs. 59 – 68. The author holds that “the right to a prudent liberty of expression and the owed obligation must join in a games of centripetal and centrifugal tensions. This unity of tensions is guaranteed when the faithful, who may or may not be a specialist, when expressing his opinion, takes into account the following aspects: hierarchization of truths, degree of obligation of a doctrine, respect to the ecclesiastical magisterium, spiritual benefit of the ecclesiastical community” (pg. 68).

⁶⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, N° 365.

⁶¹ St. Ignatius of Loyola, “Rules to have sentiment with the Church” (To have the true sentiment which we ought to have in the church militant) in the Spiritual Exercises, N° 352 – 370. In Reglas para sentirse Iglesia, (Santiago: CEI, 2001), Fernando Montes SJ offers seven considerations to underline the spirit of these rules and reveal their relevance, improving their

with love. Because of this, feeling with the Church implies an option and an attitude previous to any formulation of judgment. This option constitutes a radical and emotional attitude that emanates from personal love towards the Church, founded in faith, that elicits a spontaneous response in a manner that defends and builds the ecclesiastic unity, the community of believers. In this way, *faith* and *love* are the founding pillars of this attitude of knowledge with love, because it is not about a rational conclusion, but is the result of a deep experience of faith. The presence of the hierarchical Church underlines the reality of the Incarnation; thus, for Ignatius, it is Christ's authentic spouse, the holy mother.

Fidelity to the Church's hierarchy is an expression of believing in the Church founded by Christ to extend His mission, encouraged by the presence of the Spirit. Only through faith does a person ever love the Church deeply, assuming an ecclesiastical mind.⁶²

The last General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1995) explains "the Ignatian obedience, in consonance with the tradition of Catholic theology, has always recognized that our first fidelity must be to God, to truth, and to a well formed conscience. (...) At the same time, the Ignatian obedience is an obedience of concrete fidelity to the real, visible and hierarchic Church, not to a certain abstract ideal. This Church is not something that is separate from ourselves: it is the community of believers of which we form part and in whose virtues and defects,

understanding: (a) the main attitude is *respect towards mystery* because the Church is not primarily a juridical institution; neither is it a simple human group but is, above all, a mystery; (b) Christian faith is essentially *ecclesiastic* and, because of this, St. Ignatius reminds us at the end of the Spiritual Exercises that faith cannot be lived alone; (c) the Church is a *hierarchic community*, this is, a differentiated body where different gifts and charisms exist; (d) believing implies *obeying* with maturity, liberty, initiative, creativity and humility, leaving – by loyalty and through faith – to the hierarchic Church the last word, as a sign of deep liberty and trust in God; (e) a *positive* attitude towards – and constructive with – the Church; (f) the search for a *healthy balance* between the different components of life, avoiding unilaterality in the relation between faith and reason, affectivity and rationality, faith and deeds, action and silence, the real and the ideal, sin and sanctity; and (g) the Rules are an ecclesiastical expression of the major service (*magis*) to give more and give oneself more.

⁶² Cf. M. Cowan CSJ and J.C. Futrell SJ, The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: a Handbook for Directors, (New York: La Jacq Publishing, 1982).

victories and tragedies, we participate. Once the discernment and the representations are done, our attitude will definitely be described by St. Ignatius in the Rules for the real sense we must have in the Church. (...) Rooted in the certainty that the Holy Spirit is who guides the Church, it leads us to search the *magis*, serenely trusting that *everything works together for the good of those who have been called according to his decree* (Rom 8, 28). Therefore, if there is a time to speak, there can also be a time for silence, chosen by discernment or imposed by obedience. Because if there is a time for representation, there also is a time for abnegation of our understanding and will that opens a new form of seeing, through the clouds of suffering and uncertainty, a truth and a higher wisdom, that of the Cross".⁶³

The affirmation of personal autonomy, as a result of the individualization process, is currently considered as a great conquest of modern times.⁶⁴ However, this social phenomenon appears in the context of a dissociated society and of a weak social sense in the individual. In other words, the greater conscience of exercising one's own autonomy in life is situated in the context of a fragmented society, in such a way that the consolidation of the *I* occurs in the setting of a weak and fragile *we*.

In consequence, the affirmation of autonomy, sometimes, is expressed in a disintegrated diversity, where the different individualities lack a common and shared project. At the same time, this phenomenon weakens the construction of the individual since one is a relational being, thus lacking a social referent that allows one to be an *I* in constant relation with an *us*. Only within an *us* can the *I* be defined. In this way, the individualization process sometimes tends to end in an individualism

⁶³ General Congregation XXXIV of the Society of Jesus (January 5 to March 22, 1995), Decree on "The real sense that we must have in the service of the Church", N^o 14 – 17.

⁶⁴ One of the most relevant features of current Latin American society is the individualization process. The individual takes distance from the inherited traditions and asserts the right to define on its own and at its own risk what it wants to do with one's life. This process may mean a reformulation of the social links, but it may also lead to an individualistic mentality. Individualization, as a social category, underlines the greater intentional self-building of the individual subject, the right to self-determination, to be a protagonic subject of one's personal biography, of being oneself. Therefore, this concept cannot be identified with selfishness (ethic category) nor with apathy (political category).

that is closed to all social referents. This lack of a social referent highlights liberty but denies obedience beforehand, because of self-reference as the person's only foundation.

In this cultural context⁶⁵, it becomes relevant and necessary, to question *the relationship between freedom and obedience* in the ethical subject.

In the meantime, the word *obedience* tends to currently provoke a visceral rejection because we are living in the time of the discovery of personal autonomy. But, are we not in danger of confusing *submission* with *obedience*? The submissive is the one that has no will or thought; the obedient is the one that freely trusts one's life in the hands of the other in which is recognized a legitimate ascendancy. The submissive is weak; the obedient is daring. The submissive is servile, the obedient is faithful. The submissive is passive; the obedient is enormously active. Submission belongs to the figure of slavery, while obedience implies filiation.

"No one takes life from me; I lay it down freely" (Jn 10,18)⁶⁶. Jesus' obedience emanates from an authentic and complete exercise of His liberty. Because of that, real obedience is only possible from the subject's *autonomy* and necessarily supposes the responsible exercise of *liberty*. This radical giving is only possible in an environment of love and intimacy. "The Father loves me for this: that I lay down my life to take it up again" (Jn 10, 17).

Thus, obedience *presupposes* liberty; even more, it is an expression of freedom towards one's own liberty, when the subject recognizes a superior referent that gives foundation to one's own existence (the human condition or being a creature), because only from this referent does one discover a sense to one's existence. Therefore, obedience does not deny liberty; on the contrary, it implies its responsible exercise.

⁶⁵ Culture is understood as the significant social construction of the reality.

⁶⁶ Also cf. Jn 12, 27 and Lk 23, 46.

In the field of *ethics*, this affirmation is central because there is no ethics without liberty.⁶⁷ An ethical act is only possible when it is the result of human liberty. Its ethical quality is defined by the responsibility or irresponsibility of this exercise of liberty. However, liberty is a dynamic concept, that is, life is a process where the individual learns to become free or, on the contrary, the bad decisions diminish progressively one's own exercise of liberty.

Because of this, the experience of the Spiritual Exercises is a process of growing in liberty in front of God and oneself, through *ridding itself of all the disordered tendencies in order to seek and find the Divine Will*⁶⁸. The *indifference* of the Principle and Foundation⁶⁹ is an expression of the liberty that is required in order to discern and choose according to the divine end of human condition.

In other words, it is necessary to discern because the individual is not authentically free. If we were free before God, with the consequent deep commitment towards others, we would know innately what we should do. But human liberty is conditioned and, therefore, it requires discernment. In this way, the ethical discernment seeks to exercise responsibly the liberty in obedience to the Father, in Jesus' style.⁷⁰ In the context of religious obedience, it is not the acceptance or rejection of God's plan which is discerned, but *what it is* in a determined situation and *how to put it in practice*.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, (1992): "God has created rational man conferring upon him the dignity of a person endowed with initiative and control of his actions. *When God, in the beginning, created man, he made him subject to his own free choice* (Sir 15, 14) *so that he seeks his Creator without coercion and, adhering to Him, reach freely the total and happy perfection* (GS 17)" (Nº 1730). In this way "by free judgement each one disposes of oneself" (Nº 1731), and "liberty makes man responsible of his acts" (Nº 1734). Therefore, "the right to the exercise of liberty is a demand that is inseparable from the dignity of the human person, specially in morals and religious matters (cf. DH 2)" (Nº 1738).

⁶⁸ *Spiritual Exercises*, Nº 1.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Spiritual Exercises*, Nº 23.

⁷⁰ St. Paul talks about the *obedient faith* (Rom 1, 5), exemplified by Him who *humbled himself obediently accepting even death* (Phil 2, 8), because He trusted the Father (cf. Lk 22, 42; Jn 6, 38; 8, 29; 14, 31).

⁷¹ In the desert, the temptations of Jesus were centered basically on how to complete the Father's work, not in relation to the mission but on *how* to achieve it (cf. Lk 4, 1 – 13).

In consequence, we need the *gift of counsel*⁷² that allows us to live conflicts and ambiguous situations with deep peace, that is, to live them with neither too much anguish nor anxiety, without paralyzing interior ruptures, but rather with humility and patience. The gift of counsel does not consist in an inexistent clarity in face of complex situations, but to face peacefully uncertain situations⁷³, without being paralyzed or surrendering to precipitation, but discerning responsibly and always open to revision.⁷⁴

In the horizon of Christian ethics, this discernment takes place within the context of fidelity to the Lord's Word (Holy Scripture), transmitted in the live Tradition and confirmed by the Church's Magisterium. So, liberty seeks to be faithful in order to be itself since only from Truth can authentic liberty be found.⁷⁵ At the same time, fidelity demands liberty as a condition of possibility and as a responsibly creative exercise.

This means the necessary distinction between opinion and doctrine, in order not to fall in a kind of idolizing the episcopal word and, on the other hand, to know how to maintain a deep respect when the ecclesiastical authority exercises the magisterium. In this respect, it is convenient to remember that the Ignatian accent of religious obedience is not so much in the content of what is sustained by the magisterium, but in the conviction that the obedience to what has been affirmed corresponds to divine will, since *our holy mother the church hierarchical is the true spouse of Christ our Lord*.⁷⁶ Religious obedience is an internal disposition that is previous to any content because the Church, as a hierarchical community, is accepted as the authentic spouse of Christ, where the presence of His Spirit abounds. It is obedience in front of the mystery that is founded in the trust in God.⁷⁷

⁷² Psalm 73 prays "With your counsel You guide me and in the end You will receive me in glory" (24).

⁷³ Cf. Wis 9,13 – 17.

⁷⁴ Cf. the separate writing on the gift of counsel in Carlo Martini SJ, *Hombres y mujeres del Espíritu: meditaciones sobre los dones del Espíritu Santo*, (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1998).

⁷⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, (August 6, 1993), N^{os} 1, 2, 88, 99.

⁷⁶ *Spiritual Exercises*, N^o 353.

⁷⁷ In the *General Principles of the Christian Life Community* (1990) it is stated that "the union with Christ leads us to the union with the Church, in which Christ continues here and now His saving mission" (N^o 6).

3.3. *An ethics of discernment*

These ethical notes of a spirituality that is summarized in a mystique of action and of the contemplative in action⁷⁸, configure a morals in terms of *discernment*, since it understands human action as an answer to the divine invitation, as a result of a search for God's will from one's own liberty.⁷⁹

Oscar Cullmann sustains that "the action of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the first place in the *dokimázein*, that is, in the capacity to take, in all given situations, the moral decision in accordance with the Scriptures", which means "this *dokimázein* is the key to all new testamentary morals"⁸⁰.

The search for certainty, particularly in the context of insecurity in the midst of a pluralist society and deep cultural change, may feed the regimen of the law as a saving place for those who seek security and assurance.

On the one hand, the law cannot encode and cover *all* possible situations. On the other hand, the *necessity* of the norm as a first stage in every person's growth is evident because, in psycho-sociological terms, the principle of reality puts limits to the individual in favor of the cohabitation and against the simple principle of pleasure or whim.

In addition, one cannot deny the *danger* of self-delusion in a *subjectivism* that matches God's will with one's own, seeking, in the end

⁷⁸ This expression does not belong to Ignatius but to Jerónimo Nadal SJ, one of his first interpreters, to highlight the union, in life, between prayer and apostolic action.

⁷⁹ An ethics of discernment is clearly reflected in the *General Principles of the Christian Life Community* (1990). "The spirituality of our Community is centered in Christ and in the participation in the Paschal Mystery. It emanates from the Holy Script, of the liturgy, of the Church's doctrinal development, of the revelation of God's will through our time's events. In the context of these universal sources, we consider St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which owns us and readies us to any of God's wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life. In particular we recognize the necessity for prayer and discernment – personal and in community – of the daily conscience exam and the spiritual company as important means to seek and find God in all things" (Nº 5). Also consult *Our CLC Charisma* (1998), Nºs 19, 61 – 70, 109 – 124.

⁸⁰ O. Cullmann, *Cristo y el tiempo*, (Barcelona: Estela, 1968), pg. 202.

– and maybe unconsciously – the satisfaction of one's own interests. But the opposite danger, just as ominous, cannot be *forgotten*: the *legalism* that places one's own security and self-justification in the scrupulous compliance of the law, forgetting that salvation is a divine gift.⁸¹

Therefore, the exercise of discernment has a *decisive* importance in ethical life, but it is also indispensable to have a *correct* understanding of it.

The *object* and the objective of ethical discernment is God's will⁸², through the search of what is good, pleasant and perfect,⁸³ to do always the best⁸⁴.⁸⁵ Discernment forms part of the *ethical structure of the subject*, because it is related to responsibility, it is situated in the context of the fundamental option, and constitutes the exercise of conscience. The *ethical decision* is the result of the discernment process.

Discernment is the key to understand Ignatian spirituality. The *manner of proceeding* of St. Ignatius of Loyola in order to reach a discernment of God's will, implemented in the deliberation of the first Fathers in the foundational stage of the Society of Jesus, takes place in five stages.⁸⁶

1. The *information* phase: the person in charge and his ordinary counselors learn the historical record of the matter, prepared previously in the most complete possible way. This historical record may still be clarified by consulting competent persons.
2. The *deliberation* phase: an examination of the advantages and inconveniences in the adoption or rejection of the project.

⁸¹ Consult the episode of the Pharisee and the Publican in Lk 18,9. The Pharisee self-justifies himself and, in consequence, demands salvation: "I am not like the rest of men, rapacious, unfair, adulterous, nor either like this publican. I fast twice a week, I give ten percent of all my earnings". On the contrary, the publican is conscious of his weaknesses, so he keeps "at a distance, he didn't even dare to raise his eyes to heaven" and, on hitting his chest, he begs: "Take compassion of me, who am a sinner". Jesus' judgment is emphatic: "Who exalts himself will be humbled; and who humbles himself, will be exalted".

⁸² Cf. Rom 12, 2.

⁸³ Cf. Rom 12, 2.

⁸⁴ Cf. Flp 1, 10.

⁸⁵ Cf. M. Vidal, *Diccionario de ética teológica*, (Estella: Verbo Divino, 1991), p. 166.

⁸⁶ Cf. André Ravier, *Ignacio de Loyola: fundador de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1991), pp. 374 – 375.

3. The phase of *consulting God through prayer*: the person in charge and each one of his counselors pray again and make efforts to perceive, with complete interior purity and personal disinterest, towards where they are inclined by the Holy Spirit.
4. The phase of *decision*: the counselors give their opinion. The person that is responsible hears them, confronts their opinions with his own, hefts them in presence of God and, whatever may be the decision of the majority of the counselors, makes a decision before God and his conscience.
5. Once more, the person who has made the decision *offers it to God* in prayer and, be it because of his interior motions, or simply through the peace it gives to his conscience to have searched for God's will to the best of his abilities, he knows that God approves this decision.

Throughout the whole deliberation there exists a *complementarity* between rationality and affectivity. St. Ignatius insists and highlights the importance of the *motions* (consolation and desolation) and the *sentiments* (positive: happiness, peace, hope, dynamism, desire to serve, etc. // negative: sadness, dispiritedness, fears, absorption in oneself, etc.) during this deliberation process, through the discernment of spirits. The same choice is confirmed by emotional motions of peace, trust, apostolic dynamism.⁸⁷

Therefore, it is evident that discernment constitutes *a process*, more than a specific moment, endorsed by a lifestyle laid down in a live profession of faith in the Person of Jesus as the Christ.

Ethical discernment is about the *means* that lead to an end⁸⁸. The objective is not discerned (the horizon of values) but one asks about the means that lead to that end (the historic realization of the value) in a concrete and determined situation. In other words, ethical discernment is related to the *situated objective*, the realization of the purpose in a historical context.

⁸⁷ Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N^{os} 169 – 189 (*choice*) and 314 – 336 (*rules for the discernment of spirits corresponding to the first and second week*).

⁸⁸ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II - II, q. 47, art. 1, ad 2, y art. 7.

Inspired in the dynamic that is present in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Bernard Lonergan SJ proposes an epistemological method of **knowledge** of reality in view of its **transformation**, that is, he describes the knowledge process in function of the **action**, through a self-appropriation of a non-conscious dynamic (to make conscious a process that is present in a non-conscious way – the search of a conscious intentionality).⁸⁹

This self-transcendence process, the search for authenticity in the action with one's own identity, consists in four levels (successive and related, but qualitatively different): experience, understanding, judgment and decision.

- The **experience** (*empirical* moment – perceive, imagine, feel, talk, move). To make conscious the experience of the process of one's own experience, understanding, judgment and decision
- The **understanding** (*cognitive* moment – the intellectual level that inquires about the what, the why, the how, the purpose). The understanding and the expression of the undertaken experience. The recollected information and the previously clarified feelings come to form an intelligible totality (the information is transformed into facts when their meaning is determined).
- The **judgment** (*cognitive* moment – the rational level that looks for objectivity, that is, independent from the subject). The formation of the judgments of *facts* emanating from reflection, the search for evidences, the evaluation in terms of truth/falsehood and certainty/probability of the statements (it affirms the reality of the experience and of the understanding).
- The **decision** (*moral* moment – the level responsible for living in accordance to the objective values). The formation of *value* judgments through the self-clarification of one's own objectives, the deliberation over possible actions, and the decision to act in consequence after the evaluation of alternatives (there is a decision to act in relation to the past process of experience, understanding and judgment).

⁸⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Therefore, the process of a conscious intentionality is made through (a) the attention paid to the *information* of the senses and the conscience; (b) the search and the *understanding* that allow to understand the hypothetic world mediatized by the meanings; (c) the reflection and the *judgment* reach an absolute (that which is independent from one and one's thoughts); and (d) the *deliberation* allows to know and do what is really good (is worth doing) and not that which simply pleases.

The application of the Lonerganian proposal to ethical discernment process may be translated into the following stages:

- Empirical instance: a thematic clarification (information and feelings)
- Interdisciplinary instance: understanding the topic, considering its implications and consequences
- Theological/ethical instance: the search for values implied in the theme
- Praxical Instance: the establishment of the axiological priority in light of the concrete action.

Ethical discernment process is done through the clarification of the specific fact; its maximum understanding in a most ample context; the reflection on the implied values; proceeding to a concrete decision that is capable of better translating a prime value in the concrete situation.

This process is *communitarian* because faith, founding origin of the discernment, is communitarian. Therefore, it is only possible to discern within the community of disciples. Thus, it is not possible to discern against – or in the margin of – the Church, but from – and with – it.⁹⁰

4. In all to love and serve

The *convergence* between spirituality and Christian ethics may be expressed in the Ignatian phrase of a lifestyle guided by the horizon of *in*

⁹⁰ In Nuestro Carisma CVX (1998) it is stated: "We don't live our vocation and mission as isolated individuals. We live them in community and facing this community of friends and companions in the Lord, we proclaim that we feel in and with the Church (Nº 170).

*all to love and serve*⁹¹. It is faith that becomes charity;⁹² it is charity that nurtures itself from faith.

The ethical *thinking* and *acting* are *motivated* by the spiritual *experience* of the founding *encounter* with the God of Jesus. Recovering the *meaning* of life (the spiritual experience) leads to a life in *mission* (the ethical commitment). This integration between spirituality and ethics gives a clear *identity* to Christian morals; an identity that is born from its own dynamic of coherence and of consequence: the experience becomes mission, and identity for the mission.

This identity creates, on the one hand, community (element of adhesion) and, on the other hand, it proposes alternatives (elements of constructive protest) to society. Because of that, it is an identity in constant *dialogue* with society.

Christian ethics, in its very identity, cannot fall in the pharisaical fallacy of holding others in contempt⁹³, because in all times "every good Christian is to be more ready to save his neighbors proposition than to condemn it".⁹⁴ Moreover, the Christian has to be always very respectful of the presence of the seeds of the Logos⁹⁵ in history and in society as well as constantly scrutinizing the signs of the times⁹⁶. But, on the other hand, the authentic dialogue only takes place *from* one's own identity. It is also essential to open up to the conversion process that identifies one as Christian, avoiding the danger of an ethical relativism in which everything is the same.

An ethics of Christian identity, in a spirit of dialogue,⁹⁷ desires to answer the call to be *salt of the earth and light of the world* so that good

⁹¹ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 233.

⁹² Cf. Gal 5, 6; 1 Cor 13, 3; Jas 2, 14.

⁹³ Cf. Lk 18, 9.

⁹⁴ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, N° 22.

⁹⁵ Cf. II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, (December 7, 1965), N° 57.

⁹⁶ Cf. II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, (December 7, 1965), N° 4.

⁹⁷ "It is the task of the entire People of God, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the many voices of our age,

deeds witness the Father⁹⁸, through a life of coherence and consequence, trusting in the force that accompanies truth and recurring to the art of persuasion over imposition, in the sincere wish to build, among everyone in society, a culture ever more humane and fair where everyone, without exception, is recognized in his rights and responsibilities.

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and to judge them in the light of the Divine Word. In this way, revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and set forth to greater advantage" (II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965, N° 44).

⁹⁸ Cf. Mt 5, 13 – 16.

Themes of the CLC General Assemblies

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

Homily for the Visitors' Day Eucharist

The Bread of God

We are used to pray for our daily bread in the Prayer of our Lord. But what is this bread we ask for daily? Locally here, when we talk of bread we mean several things: the loaf of bread we can buy from the baker's shop. Or we could also mean the special bread for liturgical services. Often, in ordinary conversations bread connotes food in general and in a more poetic and generic way, we mean the reward of our daily labours. Or simply what sustains our physical lives here on earth. The readings of today go deeper than these meanings. They link us in the most profound way with the action of a personable, loving and caring God, who sustains us, and who is ultimately behind our community and personal salvation history.

In the first reading when the exodus generation was extremely needy, they complained to Moses and Aaron. Yahweh heard their cry and intimated to Moses: "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Say this to them, 'Between the two evenings you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have bread for your hearts content. Then you will learn that I, the Lord, am your God'." (Ex. 16:12) Moses and Aaron understood very well that God is the one labouring for this difficult people. That Yahweh is as active to his people as a good teacher is to his students, intervenes at the right time, tests them to make them strong, teaches by great deeds of love and generosity, committed to free his people from bondage and ignorance, come what may. "Now I will rain down bread for you from the heavens." And Moses intimated God's loving gift to the people. "That" said Moses to them, "is the bread the Lord gives you to eat." Food for the journey, for a people destined for the Holy Land.

Yahweh would like us to be like him or rather to keep his image intact, as we are created in his image. He would like us to imbibe his spirit, to be caring, generous, loving; to be truly free persons through these different "exodus experiences." As the second reading says: "...our mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the

new self that has been created in God's way in the goodness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:24)

The Gospel goes even deeper as to invites us to work for food that endures to eternal life, a different type of bread as it were. And that work is to believe in the one God has sent. And that is, believing in Jesus, the one sent by God. The one who said, "I am the bread of life"; the one not only filling the stomach but the bread that can fill the emptiness in human hearts and lives. The bread that God the Father continues to give is much larger than the type of manna and quails given in the desert. "Those who eat me will hunger for more" (Sirach 24:21), says the good book about wisdom. In Jesus there is something greater than conventional wisdom. The ultimate meaning Jesus had wished to reveal in the sign of the multiplied bread. We should not be content to look to Jesus for food and drink that cannot last or even for worldly wisdom. He is central to our life now and in the future. We must go to him not only for the temporal and perishables but for the eternal and imperishable. As he is the bread of God, from God, the veritable Son of God, who continues to be that miraculous provision for the total welfare of his people. The caring loving God who continues to give "... the bread of God which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world". (John 6:33)

Jesus is himself the life-giving bread. And paradoxically this bread has to be broken in order to be effective. This broken-ness is seen everywhere in the world today - broken persons, families, communities, countries: a world broken by economic inequalities, disordered interests, insecurity, fears, wars and diseases. Yet the final message is, it is the broken body of Christ; and behind it, is a God whose love and care for us is total and we entirely depend on him.

I welcome the CLC General Assembly and all your visitors to the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus as you move from 'being well formed apostles to being a tightly knit apostolic body': To reflect as "partners in mission" on this broken-bread and on how it can be effective in the lives of those moving to the promised land - holy land. I believe this reflection will end with a pastoral plan suited to our pastoral context. As we are living in the Third Millennium, I would like to remind you of an important desire, with the words of the Holy Father: "First of all I have

no hesitation in saying that all Pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness"⁹⁹ "It is not enough to update pastoral techniques, organize and coordinate ecclesial resources, or delve deeply into the biblical and theological foundations of faith. What is needed is the encouragement of a new 'ardour for holiness' among missionaries and throughout the Christian community."¹⁰⁰ These are again the words of the Holy Father to all the sons and daughters of Africa. **"Holiness remains more than ever urgent pastoral task."**¹⁰¹

CLC's mission is to bring the bits of the broken bread of life to the people. This means bringing Jesus - his being, his mind, his values, his spirit to the world. This is surely not an easy task. It means bringing the means to sustain normal life, holy life in the world; promoting a culture of courage and life as opposed to a culture of fear and death. Giving life to the people of God in a holistic way... As said in your writings: "The desire to follow Jesus Christ, sharing his lifestyle and mission moves me to participate in the Christian Life Community as my particular vocation within the Church." (GP 4)

And yet in reality this desire is lived in "unity and at the same time in diversity". "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). As you reflect on this paradox, of the one bread and its many pieces, use a refrain from a popular hymn in the churches around here, which, says, "All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you". For his love and grace, as seen by Ignatius of Loyola, are sufficient for us.

Fratern Masawe S.J.

Provincial Superior of the Eastern Africa Province

⁹⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE [NMI] (2000) n. 30

¹⁰⁰ John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, ECCLESIA IN AFRICA, (1995) n.136.

¹⁰¹ NMI n. 30.

Report about Jesuit Ecclesiastical Assistants

In December 2002, Fr. P-H. Kolvenbach sent a letter to the Jesuit CLC assistants informing them of his participation in the next General Assembly as a member of the CLC Executive Council. He offered a brief history of CLC since it began in 1968, as a renewal of the Marian Congregations, up to the present situation. He ended with three groups of questions, which he requested the CLC assistants to answer. The letter was answered by 143 Jesuits working in the ten Assistancies of the Society of Jesus. What follows is a brief summary of their answers.

- A. *The first questions were about the Jesuit's personal experience with CLC groups: What has been your experience with CLC groups: Director? Guide? Spiritual father? Animator? A friendly presence? How would you appraise that experience and what expectations do you have regarding CLC?*

When answering nobody describes the ideal role as a "director". Those who mention their experience as "directors" use the past tense, and about 25% say they initially had a more "directive style". Theoretically, as many point out, the role played by Jesuits in CLC depends on the situation of the group or community (its age, history, formation, commitment and/or maturity). But, in practice, it is the personal style of the Jesuit that frequently prevails.

Working with CLC has been a positive experience for all, in one-way or another; many add that the experience has been encouraging, energizing, edifying; a few speak of their appreciation and gratitude to CLC.

The mainstream is hopeful, having had a positive experience; they have high expectations. The majority links these expectations to a change of attitude of the Society of Jesus in its relation to CLC.

- B. *The second group of questions invited a look at CLC: What signs of maturation do you perceive in the CLC? Can it be seen as an apostolic community? How are the members moving toward shared and collaborative leadership?*

The growing practice of the Spiritual Exercises and the better quality of the lay leadership are mentioned by a great majority as signs of the maturation of CLC. And in fact, where one or both are low CLC is not developing. A few comment that the community requires the complete Spiritual Exercises offered by competent guides.

Nearly all responses say that there is a greater emphasis given to formation than to apostolic commitment.

Approximately two thirds of the responses refer to CLC as a community of apostles, where the norm is that every member has a personal apostolate. But there are different ways of understanding what a personal apostolic commitment is. Several give reasons for explaining the lack of apostolic commitments: the family duties of lay persons are frequently mentioned, and others refer to their secularized country, or to the non-Christian culture they live in. Only a few say that CLC is moving towards being an apostolic community.

All mention, in some way, the importance of initial and continuous formation. A few say that CLC should indicate the stages and procedures of the formation process. A few add that they perceive a low capacity for incorporating new members.

Approximately one third of the responses speak about the importance of group guides and their role. Only very few mention their formation and support, and it is not clear whether they are speaking of lay persons, Jesuit priests, Jesuit scholastics, or religious from other congregations.

C. *The last group of questions presented by Fr. Kolvenbach focused on the relation with CLC: What changes have you noticed through the years in the relationship between the Jesuits and the CLC? Do you think that in your country they can have an apostolic work together? What attitudes in both would encourage this collaboration?*

Jesuits unanimously wish to see well formed laity collaborating in Jesuit works. Normally a competent lay person is invited directly to collaborate, and if that person belongs or not to CLC seems less important.

Only very few say that Jesuits in their Province are not interested in collaborating with CLC.

The greater part simply say that collaboration is growing, but that the Society of Jesus and CLC still must learn how to do it. Some add that a greater mutual trust and a shared apostolic discernment are prerequisites for improving the collaboration.

Besides this, a majority sees that the relation with CLC is a challenge for the Society of Jesus. We must know more about CLC vocation and accept it as such. We must be open to collaborate in CLC works – however few they are at this point – and not only have them collaborate in our works.

Conclusions

The answers given to Fr. Kolvenbach's letter show that personal relations with CLC members are quite positive and well appreciated by Jesuits.

Whatever limitations we perceive in the relationship cannot be overcome only with personal efforts. The Christian Life Community is aware of this and is proceeding to implement structural changes, mainly referring to leadership.

Jesuit participation in this process is expected, respecting the lay rhythm and moving ahead with them. We wish to offer what we are and have received: our spiritual and apostolic inheritance, our educational resources and our friendship. We cannot forget that we also have much to learn from CLC members, since they are living Ignatian spirituality in a different context.

The regional coordinating teams initiated by CLC, are mainly oriented towards mission services and formation. The participation of an assistant in each team – suggested by the ExCo – can be extremely fruitful for each region. It also will be a great help for a greater collaboration, between the world CLC and the Society of Jesus. Those Jesuits participating as assistants in the regional CLC teams, coordinated by the Ecclesiastical Vice-Assistant of CLC, can offer a better response to most of

the requests presented by both Communities. Together they can prepare and offer formation plans adapted to each region, including the much needed practice of the Spiritual Exercises.

*Presented by Fernando Salas S.J.
Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant*

Presentation by World CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant

August 4, 2003 – Nairobi

Thank you for your invitation to join you at this meeting of CLC. In this talk, I want to comment on what Saint Ignatius understood by “the genuine attitude which we ought to maintain in the militant Church.” (352) This group of rules seems to be simply an addition to the Spiritual Exercises, which we tend to ignore, since they refer to a militant Church that seems to be no longer of our time. They appear to propose an attitude toward the Church that is not consonant with the teachings of the second Vatican Council. Some directors of the Exercises look on these rules of Saint Ignatius as so out-dated and embarrassing that they ignore them and do not refer their retreatants to them.

We should remember, however, that in the fourth week Saint Ignatius invites us to share in the Church’s beginnings through encounters with the resurrected Christ. We should note also that he places these rules to think, judge and feel with the Church (*sentire cum ecclesia*) after his rules on the discernment of the spirits, reminding us that only the Spirit can give the true sense of the Church obtained through a prayerful discernment. To learn from Saint Ignatius how to grow in union with the Church, we go to the Spiritual Exercises which convey his perception of the Church that some have called “dramatic”.

Since Vatican II Council, the Church has been engaged in a tension between tradition and progress, between continuity and change. The world is now mission territory and the Church seeks to respond to the call for a new evangelization that is ever old and yet ever new. It is sufficient to read the newspapers or to watch television for knowing about the tensions in the liturgical field, or about real conflicts in ethics, different approaches to the necessary inculturation of our faith.

As such this situation is normal. After a prophetic event like a Council, where the Spirit of the Lord is speaking to us, there was always a lengthy process of reform and renewal, which did not reach a lived consensus for centuries. Especially Vatican II, which has helped us to rediscover the Church as a “*koinonia*” of local churches under the entire

college of bishops, of which the Bishop of Rome is the head. This, in turn, has renewed the distinctive role of the laity in the life of the Church. It has deepened the sense of the co-responsibility of all God's people for the whole life of the Church, leading to the formation of numerous ecclesial movements and to hear more voices speaking in the Church. This is a source of life, creativity and vitality, but also of creative and less creative tensions, because not all voices are saying the same thing. Sometimes we are dragged into conflictual, even explosive ecclesiastical situations.

Ignatian obedience is one of concrete fidelity to the real, visible hierarchy of the Church, not to some abstract ideal. We belong to the Church and we share its joys and pains, its martyrs and its scandals, because the Church is and always will be a communion of saints and sinners, of triumphs and tragedies, which we share.

The ecclesial context in which Ignatius lived is quite different from that of today. But there is a profound mystical bond that transcends the particularities of his sixteenth century. Rooted in the faith that the Spirit is guiding the Church, that bond drives us to seek out of love to grow in oneness with the Church, because the Lord loves the Church, our Church, as a bride, as his spouse.

If we only look at the Church with the eyes of a member of a multinational NGO, we will never grasp its mystery. This does not mean that we are to deny the reality of the Church, but to look at it with new eyes. The picture is not complete as long as we do not see the powerful Spirit and the weak human hand working at the same time in the Lord's Church. And if our love of Christ, inseparable from our love for his spouse the Church, impels us to seek the will of God in each situation, it can also oblige us to engage in constructive and loving criticism based on a powerful discernment, which could also lead us to remain silent for the moment. But it cannot justify a lack of solidarity with the Church, from which we are never nor in any way distinct or apart.

In a certain way, Saint Ignatius lived the experience of Christian Life communities in the Church. He was a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit that can rightly be seen as a precursor of the CLC.

Long before the establishment of the Marian Congregations in 1563, ecclesial life found expression in the confraternities. As the word suggests, they were an initiative of the laity in the Church. While organising themselves in guilds, according to their professions, as artists, workers, merchants, they sought to model themselves on the first Christian communities whose members, believers in the resurrected Christ, put everything they owned in common, selling their properties and their goods and distributing the proceeds to each according to his need. Each day they gathered to pray and to share a common meal in joy and simplicity of heart.

The description of the Church of the Apostles and first disciples (Acts 2: 44-46) is no doubt somewhat idealistic, but it inspired the confraternities as it does today the base communities and other new movements in the Church. At the moment of death, everyone wanted to be supported by the paschal faith and prayers of their brothers and sisters in the Lord. But they were not concerned only with death. They also wanted to grow and share in the life itself of the Church, going beyond a simple formal adherence. The clergy concerned itself with spiritual matters. The laity, by their membership in the confraternities, took on the mission of manifesting concretely the Lord's compassion by visiting prisoners, feeding the hungry, helping the poor and the sick. The numerous confraternities practised various forms of charity, but all drew nourishment from the same sacraments.

Then as today, it was a lay movement, arising from below so to speak and inspired by the same faith. Not in any way was it a church in opposition to or independent of the hierarchical Church. The members were autonomous but they chose a priest to assist them and who served as a link to the Church. They were attentive to the Spirit. Saint Ignatius spoke from experience when he wrote, "...we believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Spouse, there is the one same Spirit who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls." (365)

It is this spirit of creative fidelity and respect for diversity moved by the same one Spirit that inspired the Jesuit Jean Leunis in his establishment of the first Marian congregation, so called because its members met in the

little Roman chapel of the Annunciation. In the tradition of the confraternities, there were congregations made up of specific groups with a focus on young students wanting to come together for prayer. The change of name was deliberate. The confraternities were mainly spontaneous gatherings of lay people. The rules were decided on by the members themselves. As we said, a priest was invited to accompany them.

By using the word 'congregation' which means 'gathering', Father Leunis changed the ecclesial perspective. He chose the members himself and presented them with a set of rules that he laid down in the name of the Church. On one hand, there was continuity with the confraternities in that membership in a congregation was made up of people from the same background or interest. The congregation of nobles still exists in Rome, and that of workers in Beirut. On the other hand, the congregations were more regulated and less democratically governed than the confraternities. The Jesuits, as true sons of Ignatius, placed the congregations firmly under the authority of the Holy See, as is evidenced by the numerous papal letters beginning with that of December 5, 1584, which gave detailed instruction on the life of a congregation. Another example is the papal intervention of September 8, 1754, which allowed feminine membership in the congregations.

Father Louis Paulussen, who years later would make the transition from congregation to CLC, addressed the congregation members in 1954. As if summing up a long history, he said: "The congregations were established by the Church, they are directed by the Church, they are totally dependent on the Church, their aim is to foster the growth of the Church, to serve and to defend it. They seek in all things to adopt the thought of the Church. Their ultimate goal is to love the Church as their mother." These words were inspired by Ignatian spirituality. Saint Ignatius would have made them his own.

From the very beginning of the Church, a group always has the tendency to become a kingdom apart, endangering the communion in the Spirit distinctive of the Church. Thus, in the same year of Father Paulussen's statement of position, Pius XII warned against the danger of isolation and of claiming for oneself certain apostolates. "Be always ready," he said, "to go wherever the hierarchy wants to send you. The Church is not to be perceived as a foreign power, nor as a family grouping,

but as the spouse of Christ, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. Its interests are those of Jesus." These words reflect a concern that the Church militant, in the words of Ignatius, might lose the powerful arm of the Marian Congregations. They are echoed in a conference of Mgr J. Felix Gawlina, at the time director of the world federation of the Marian Congregations, in which he warned the members against becoming freelancers seeking personal fulfilment. They should endeavor to remain a disciplined army (*acies ordinata* - in the words of the Song of Songs) ranged in battle order.

The same energetic language, though less military in tone, is found in the document of May 31, 1971 when, with the approbation of the Church, the name change became official: from 'Congregation' to 'Christian Life Community'. There was a certain return to the spontaneity of the confraternities and to the exercise of lay responsibility in and for the Church. There is also a break with the tradition in the Marian congregations of having Jesuit directors. But this is done while remaining rooted in Ignatian spirituality, profoundly ecclesial because it is Christocentric.

The General Principles place a strong emphasis on the communitarian aspect at all levels, from local to international, so that is maintained the 'Koinonia' of the Church that the Lord wanted: a communion of saints, a community of faith that unites in the eucharistic celebration the Christians with Christ and with each other. The CLC live the communion of saints as people of God and members of the Church. They are held in union by the Holy Spirit, nourished by the sacraments, praying and working in charity for each other so that the Kingdom may come. These are the perspectives of Vatican II that are expressed in the General Principles of the CLC which stress the missionary vocation of the people of God working with those who hold an apostolic responsibility in the Church. A CLC is not turned in on itself, nor does it restrict itself to any particular activity. It shares with the whole Church a common yearning for the coming of God's kingdom on earth. It exercises a continued discernment to discover what the master of the harvest wants of it. It strives to develop in a creative way a generous apostolic disponibility for the mission in whatever concrete way it may be served.

The vision of the second Vatican Council that inspires so strongly the CLC was not exactly that held by Ignatius. It comes as no surprise that he could not perceive the Church as 'democratic'. For Ignatius, authority in the Church was predominant and he avoided any form of opposition to it. The distinction between the Church as a social body and as spiritually founded did not exist for him. Ignatius' view of the Church was realistic, but that view, which embraced its lights and shadows, was a spiritual one. For him, the Church is an institution, a hierarchical body which is always, and this is crucial, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not possible to speak of the Church other than in the language of the Song of Songs, a language of love. "We believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom and the Church, his Spouse, there is the Spirit (of love) who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls." (365) As always, Ignatius expresses his faith without accompanying explanation or commentary. It is the loving revelation of a life in the Church which is also the spouse of Christ, as we read in the Song of Songs: "You are wholly beautiful, my love, and without a blemish (4, 7), "black but lovely. Take no notice of my swarthy skin, it is the sun that has burnt me." (1, 5)

The late Cardinal Villot (06-08-76), exhorting the CLC to live with Ignatius the spiritual reality of Church-communion, spoke the following words: "Remain men and women of the Church. Keep the spirit of the Church, sharing in its sufferings and joys. Listen to the Church but especially love it, for it needs your love, and teach others to love it."

One can ask whether Ignatius is not somewhat unrealistic in his perception of the Church. He could not have ignored the sad contemporary state of the Church of his time, so dismal that it provoked reforms and schisms. For us, the Church for which we are willing to suffer is also the Church that causes us suffering. In the Church-Spouse, along with fidelity, we see so much throughout its long history that it should have done and did not, so much that it should be today and is not. Assuredly, there is much criticism of the Church that is neither just, nor justified. Yet we should not be surprised that an authentic but disillusioned love expresses itself occasionally in strong complaint.

This should not lead us to abandon our hopes and efforts. It did not deter Ignatius from action. In September 1539, he had set down the broad

outline of his spirituality and of his apostolic aims, such as the CLC and the Jesuits live by today. He did not jealously keep this spiritual treasure to himself or share it only with his immediate companions. As later he would renounce the copyright of the Spiritual Exercises, offering them as a gift to the Holy Father, so now he sent his plans and papers to Pope Paul III, as a concrete expression of his prayer "Take, Lord, and receive". For Ignatius, his apostolic hopes, his mission, had no value in themselves. He sought only God's greater glory and their confirmation by the Pope, Vicar of Christ on earth. Ignatius placed the results of his discernment before Paul III, so as to avoid taking the wrong road, as he said himself. The Pope listened to the expression of Ignatius' vision as it was read to him by Cardinal Contarini, interrupting every now and then to say, "Truly, the Spirit of God is here; here is the finger of God".

Let us now take a moment to look at the person of Paul III, so that we can better appreciate the faith present in Ignatius' action. We are so accustomed nowadays to God's gift of Popes of high moral integrity that we have difficulty imagining anything different. During the 25 years of John-Paul the second's pontificate, the press has at times been critical of his teaching, but no one has ever put in doubt the sincerity of his religious stance. Pope Paul III, however, in whom Ignatius saw the hand of God, led a less than exemplary life. He had four children and, as pope, he favoured his family, not hesitating to name two of his descendants cardinals at the age of 14 and 17. It is true that as he grew older he became more aware of the deplorable state of the Church, of the scandalous conduct of the Roman curia. He started working toward the reform of the Church. But it is still to this person, in whom Ignatius saw the Vicar of Christ that he turned for approval of his spirituality and of his apostolic goals.

In Ignatius' mind, the Church militant, become later the Lord's vine, is a Church made up of sinners. It was symbolized by the moon, an image that is not of Ignatius' invention: a moon of rock and sand, which yet sheds light into our nights, a light that it itself receives from the sun. Ignatius saw God in all things. He discerned his presence even in the darker moments of the Church's life. He could read the signs of God's presence. These signs are still with us; all that is lacking is our ability to recognize them. As in the past, congregations and CLC must live in faith

painful social and ecclesial situations of persecution and oppression, of tension and conflict, of misunderstanding and suspicion. This is not to say that there are no positive signs if we pay attention to them: Gospel sharing, liturgical celebrations, the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church, a yearning for a deeper inner life, the preferential option for the poor, the rediscovery of the rosary, the concern of the Holy Father for the problems of the world. The inevitable negative aspects should not blind us to the positive signs of our time and prevent us from proclaiming God's love and the true sense of the Church, in the spirit of Ignatius. May his example strengthen us.

We have seen how Ignatius wished to receive his mission from the Vicar of Christ as confirmation of his decision. This attention to the Church's teaching must be accompanied by a prayerful discernment within the communities in search of what the Lord expects from the CLC in the service of his Spouse, the Church. The Spirit has spoken to us through the documents of the second Vatican Council. John-Paul II is unceasing in making known his thought and apostolic hopes. He seeks our cooperation in their realization, for the Lord who speaks through his Vicar seeks our help. The bishops also draw our attention to the spiritual and material needs of the people. Prophetic voices are heard from among the people. Often the members of the CLC simply have to look at their families and their areas of work to discover a mission to which the Lord is calling them, individually and as a community. The universal, apostolic body of the CLC may discover a call to use its enormous potentiality in some concrete apostolate. The CLC assistants can be of great help by providing accompaniment, information, suggestions or advice on specific forms of service. But always, like Ignatius, we must turn for confirmation from the Church at the local, parochial, diocesan and universal levels in order to avoid error.

Does the effort to live as an apostolic community in close union with the Church that missions risk depriving the CLC of its specific charism and autonomy? What if our efforts are not well received by the local church? Should we not follow our own way to avoid eventual tensions and conflicts? We can find answers to these questions in Ignatius' own experience. His apostolic orientations and intentions for the service of the Church occasionally met with rejection and attacks from the ecclesial authority.

Following on a prayerful, deep and prolonged discernment, Ignatius set out on a pilgrimage in September 1523 to the Holy Land to work for the conversion of the Muslims in Palestine as a continuation of the Lord's mission. Ignatius believed that he was headed for martyrdom, but he was so convinced of the correctness of his discernment that nothing could prevent him from taking up residence in Jerusalem. Well, almost nothing! The Church authorities were not eager to have vagabonds wandering around the Holy Land. When the Franciscan custodian showed him an order of the Church to abandon his plan under pain of excommunication, Ignatius obeyed and took the road back. It is obvious to us now that without this intervention of the Church, Ignatius would have stayed in the Holy Land with the likelihood that neither the Jesuits nor the CLC would have come into existence.

From this experience and others, Ignatius put down two rules in the Spiritual Exercises to help in making correct decisions. The first goes like this: "What seems to me to be white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it." We should not make Ignatius say what he doesn't. If something is objectively white, no ecclesial authority can declare it to be black. Ignatius is speaking subjectively. I can see something in a certain way and be certain of my viewpoint, when in fact it can be wrong. Thus Ignatius was convinced that his discernment was correct and it took the Church to point him in the right direction. To effect a proper discernment, we must obviously include prayer, reflection, consultation. Reasoning also has its place. But we must also heed the voice of the Church, which goes counter to the view of some that all authority is repressive. It is sometimes easier to believe in God, who is invisible; or to believe in Jesus, who is no longer humanly visible. It is more difficult to believe in the mystery of the Church, for it is very much present and visible, speaking loudly and clearly but in a human way. What is needed is a faith strong enough to allow us to leap forward into the unknown that finally leads to light, a faith that makes us trust in the invisible presence of the Holy and Living Trinity that guides the Church.

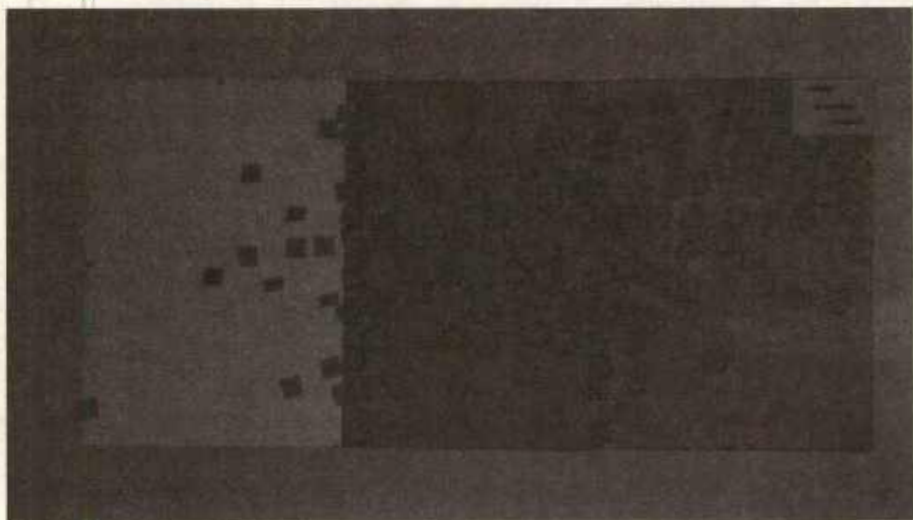
This brings us to Ignatius' second conclusion: that our mission must be accomplished in communion with the Church. For always it is "the same Spirit that governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls". It is the Spirit that leads to a true understanding of the role and

place of the Church in human lives, whether it brings Ignatius to bow before a decision of the ecclesial authority, or helps him with a few companions to solve a problem of service in a church, or points him in the direction of a new apostolate. It is also this Spirit which will keep before you during this meeting in Nairobi the ecclesial dimension in your Ignatian discernment, out of love for the Spouse of the Lord.

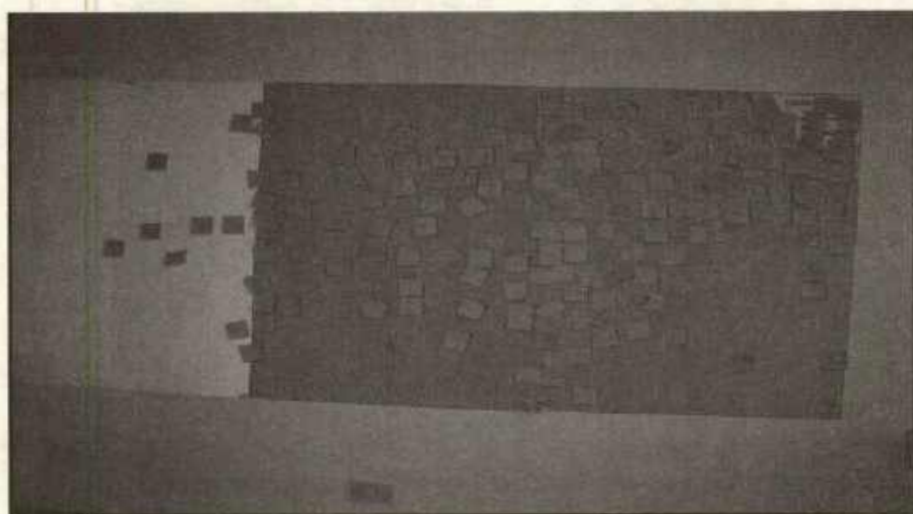
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J.
Ecclesiastical Assistant of World CLC
(1984 -)

The Rainbow of Responses

Do we feel called to be an Apostolic Body



**Do we receive the call to be an Apostolic Body that shares
responsibility for mission?**



Nairobi Assembly

Documents

RECOMMENDATIONS

**from the Nairobi General Assembly
to Christian Life Community**

“Sent by Christ, Members of One Body”

Preamble

We, the delegates of the General Assembly of the World Christian Life Community gathered here in Nairobi, Kenya 2003 felt confirmed in our call to become a lay apostolic body that shares responsibility for mission in the Church. We acknowledge the different stages in our CLC experience among our many diverse and rich communities. In this diversity, we as a world community choose to walk together supporting each other in our weaknesses and calling forth each other's strengths.

We wish to acknowledge, with thanks and gratitude, the felt presence of the Lord in our midst during our journey. As we move forward toward becoming one apostolic body we notice, with humility, our total dependency on God and our personal and collective need for continued conversion in the Lord.

While the current structures and processes in our Community have been important for our life and journey, we realize that they may need to be re-visited so as to better respond to our call to become a more apostolic body. Any changes must respect the various stages of community life that our National Communities are currently experiencing.

In this document, which we address to our world and national leaderships and to the world CLC, we wish to encompass and describe our work done at this Assembly and the journey traveled.

We have identified strong formation and leadership, at all levels in our World Community, as essential requirements in a move towards a more apostolic body.

In Formation

The General Assembly reminds the National Communities and the World Executive Council (ExCo) of the Christian Life Community (CLC) of their responsibility to:

1. Encourage and support all its members to engage with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius;
2. Impart the fact that the CLC way of life is a lived lay expression of the Spiritual Exercises;
3. Use the tools available to CLC, such as "The CLC Charism" (*Progressio Supplement* N.56, December 2001), when formulating or updating its formation programs;
4. Deepen the understanding of the second part of "The CLC Charism" (*Progressio Supplement* N. 45-46, December 1996);
5. Orient our formation programs towards becoming an outreaching lay apostolic body at all levels.

In Leadership

Our Community continues to need leaders who facilitate the communities' processes of discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating our personal and communal mission. The capacities we seek in them include:

- ◆ Leadership skills (both as individuals and when working in a team);
- ◆ Spiritual growth through grounding in the Spiritual Exercises;
- ◆ An awareness of their own limitations and gifts as human beings;
- ◆ A willingness and ability to work collaboratively.

The above implies that the people chosen to fulfill these roles will be able and willing to "order their lives" (Spiritual Exercises #21) so that they may be able to offer quality time to the community, irrespective of the level at which they serve.

CLC's movement toward becoming an apostolic body calls for some specific priorities for the World ExCo and developing structures to support the world community at all levels.

Our World Dimension

The World ExCo

1. We ask that the World ExCo proceed purposefully in its leadership of service to our apostolic body.

- a. It is important that the World ExCo has regular contact with National ExCos offering them their support and inspiration in their discernments, according to the decisions of the Assembly
- b. To facilitate contact with the National ExCos, we invite each member to serve as a link with a region (ExCo link), ideally with the one in which he/she lives.
- c. In order to lead the whole community, the World ExCo will not only be present to CLC, but will also promote regular contact with the Church Hierarchy and with movements, organizations and congregations, especially those who share Ignatian Spirituality.
- d. As expressed in the appendix to this mandate, entitled "*CLC – Society of Jesus Collaboration*", the World ExCo will look for ways to deepen our relationship and enhance apostolic collaboration with the Society of Jesus.

World CLC administration

2. The CLC Secretariat renders an important service to the whole community. The World ExCo members will clarify and, as necessary, reformulate the roles and responsibilities of the executive secretary. Care must be taken to fairly provide for the needs of adequate living conditions in Rome.

Moving toward the experience of one world community

3. The World ExCo will request a short annual report from each National ExCo on the situation in its community. A brief summary of all this information together with a report on the work of the ExCo will be sent back to the National Communities.
4. The World ExCo will encourage and support national communities to twin with communities in other regions to foster the experience of world community.

Identity and formation

5. The World ExCo will recommend to CLC at all levels a deepening of the knowledge and implementation of "The CLC Charism" (*Progressio Supplement* Dec. 2001) as one of the most appropriate ways of developing and strengthening our identity.

6. The World ExCo will recommend the second part of the initial version of "The CLC Charism" (*Progressio Supplement* Dec. 1996) as an important instrument to define common guidelines for national plans of formation. It will also encourage National Communities to evaluate and develop this document and send the results of this evaluation to the World ExCo for consideration at the next World Assembly.

Social responsibility of the CLC

7. The World ExCo will support initiatives in the field of advocacy for social responsibility as effective means to promote social justice. The NGO status of CLC at the UN is an important vehicle for this work. These initiatives will also contribute to the public visibility of CLC.

Regional Presence

National Communities in active relationships with other National Communities in their region have expressed the desire to shape their relationship based on mutual support and particular organizational needs. This regional co-operation should help the National Communities grow into the sense of being part of one world community and help them move toward becoming an apostolic body sharing mission. The practical expression of this relationship is left to each region. As a minimum it would include:

- ◆ A means of communication and co-operation among themselves;
- ◆ A means of communication with the World ExCo;
- ◆ A means of communication between the national Ecclesiastical Assistants (EA) and the World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant.

This relationship may develop over time into regional teams at the service of both the National Communities and the World ExCo. National Communities are encouraged to discern, experiment and carefully evaluate their process of regional collaboration.

Our National Dimension

1. To achieve the task of fostering an apostolic body, all members need a formation that empowers them for mission and active participation

in community life. Each National ExCo can facilitate this process through its own formation team or by co-operating with other communities to prepare a formation plan adapted to their reality. Such a plan will also be a fruitful instrument for local group guides.

2. The local group meetings may need to be refocused to better live out the call to be members of an apostolic body who practice personal and communal discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating.
3. The National ExCos are called to promote and develop CLC apostolic projects as discerned by the community.
4. At all stages of personal and group development, formation should prepare them for an active membership in a world apostolic community grounded in the Spiritual Exercises and committed to CLC as a way of life.
5. The National ExCo may receive valuable support by contact with communities in neighboring countries. This might include collaborating in service projects and in the preparation of formation plans.
6. We wish to recall that financial co-responsibility is a sign of mature commitment of the community and with the community, which, basically, can only offer what its members have financed. We suggest that this topic be addressed in the discernment at all levels of the national community.
7. It is beneficial for each National Community to have regular contact with the world CLC Secretariat, so as to increase the communication between the different members of the apostolic body.
8. In order to better serve the mission of the Church, the National ExCo promotes stable relationships with the Hierarchy, and with congregations, organizations and movements in the local church especially those who share Ignatian Spirituality.
9. To facilitate growing collaboration with the Society of Jesus, we

suggest more regular contact between members of the National ExCo with the Jesuit Provincial and his team. This can promote the implementation of formation programmes and shared apostolic projects.

10. The National ExCo will support initiatives in the field of advocacy for social responsibility as effective means to promote social justice.

In conclusion, we, the General Assembly of Christian Life Community, desire that these recommendations will inspire CLC members, groups, and national and world leadership to a deeper capacity to know the will of God and respond to it completely in love and humility. We trust that our efforts on this journey will move us closer to the vision of lay apostolic community.

APPENDIX

CLC – Society of Jesus Collaboration

We the General Assembly of Christian Life Community, gathered in Nairobi, Kenya wish to respond to a request received many times from different levels of governance in the Society of Jesus and from individual Jesuits: *“What do we the Christian Life Community expect from Jesuits and the Society of Jesus?”*

First we want to express our gratitude for all the gifts received over the many years of our journey. We are grateful for the gift of Ignatian Spirituality, which you have generously shared with us following the example of Ignatius. We acknowledge the critical Jesuit presence and leadership during the rediscovery of the lay expression of Ignatius Spirituality as we moved from the Marian Congregations to CLC. This formative work made possible the establishment and strengthening of CLC in many countries all over the world.

It continues today as CLC grows towards becoming an apostolic body. CLC would not be what it is today without the help and collaboration of the Society of Jesus. We want to continue and deepen this relationship until it fully matures as collaboration of two apostolic bodies in service to the Church's mission.

In places where CLC is not yet present we hope for your support in initiating beginning communities.

In areas where CLC is in its early stages of development, we hope for your continued presence as catalysts of new community formation, together with our lay members. This would include:

- the availability of an Ecclesiastical Assistant who is open to the direction and spirit of the world community
- introduction to the Spiritual Exercises
- being spiritual companions
- guiding groups towards becoming apostolic communities sharing responsibility in mission

- forming lay leaders to assume responsibility for mature communities.

In National Communities more advanced in the process of becoming an apostolic body, where the above work has left its fruits, lay people are assuming responsibility for formation and ongoing CLC development. Here too, we would like you to continue the above forms of cooperation and explore new ways of collaborating.

- We desire your continued partnership in formative work;
- We want to develop ways of collaborating between our respective apostolic bodies, and be mutually open to shared apostolic work;
- We propose more promotion of each others' activities in our respective publications;
- We want to establish more institutional relationships between the Society of Jesus and Christian Life Community (e.g. periodic meetings between the National ExCos and Provincials and their teams; building consensus for the appointment of an Ecclesiastical Assistant; planning, supporting and evaluating common apostolic work).
- We want a relationship that will allow a shared apostolic discernment capable of widening the fields of common apostolic mission to include areas such as spirituality, social action, family, youth, political and professional involvement.
- We wish the on-going contribution from the Society of Jesus in deepening the understanding and appreciation of the lay vocation in the church:
- We wish a relationship that respects and values the differences in our vocations. This will help both CLC and the Society of Jesus together to support vocation discernments especially of young people.

In the spirit of improving and deepening our relationship and collaboration, we invite Jesuits, especially those in formation to participate in the life of CLC through:

- Formation events and seminars;
- National and Regional gatherings;
- Regular participation in local communities;
- Joint involvement in apostolic works;
- Making the Spiritual Exercises together with CLC members;
- Knowledge of basic CLC documents.

To support the work of the World Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant and the National Ecclesiastical Assistants, we respectfully suggest the introduction of structures for communication and mutual support at relevant regional levels (e.g. a Eurogroup within the Conference of European Provincials).

Finally, we would like to stress the over-riding importance of a more clear definition of the Ecclesiastical Assistant role in CLC. This should be developed by CLC working together with the Society of Jesus and especially current Ecclesiastical Assistants. This has been consistently called for by both the Society of Jesus and CLC and will support the ongoing work and evaluation of the Ecclesiastical Assistant.

Amendments to the General Norms

Confirmed at the Nairobi 2003 General Assembly

1. JUSTIFICATION (*proposed by ExCo*): At the 1998 General Assembly in Itaici, the Assembly mandated the ExCo to ascertain the most appropriate means to deal with the finances of the world community. Experience has shown that the establishment of a committee of competent professional financial specialists is the most profitable approach.

Voted and approved that:

GENERAL NORM 21a)

*The elected members of the Executive Council are: **the president, the vice-president, the secretary and four consultants**, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. They may be re-elected only once.*

Replacing:

*The elected members of the Executive Council are: **the president, the vice-president, the secretary, the treasurer, and three consultants**, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. They may be re-elected only once.*

2. JUSTIFICATION (*proposed by ExCo*): The following modifications were necessary as a result of organizational changes in the Curia for the Society of Jesus.

Voted and approved that:

GENERAL NORM 43)

*The World Christian Life Community accepts as its Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant the Jesuit who, after consultation with the World Executive Council, is appointed by **the Superior General of the Society of Jesus as the Secretary of the Society of Jesus for CLC.***

Replacing:

*The World Christian Life Community accepts as its Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant the Jesuit who, after consultation with the World Executive Council, is appointed by **Father General of the Society of Jesus as head of the Jesuit Secretariat for CLC in Rome.***

3. JUSTIFICATION (*proposed by ExCo*): As a result of the change in General Norm 43), an amendment was needed for General Norm 21b)

Voted and approved:

GENERAL NORM 21b)

*The appointed members of the Executive Council are the ecclesiastical assistant, **the vice-ecclesiastical assistant and the executive secretary.***

Replacing:

*The appointed members of the Executive Council are the ecclesiastical assistant; **the vice-ecclesiastical assistant, who is the head of the Jesuit Central Secretariat for CLC in Rome; and the executive secretary.***

The Executive Council of the World CLC (2003 – 2008)

The members elected to the Executive Council are the following:

<i>President</i>	<i>Daniela Frank (Germany)</i>
<i>Vice-President</i>	<i>José Reyes (Chile)</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Leah Michaud (Canada)</i>
<i>Consultors</i>	<i>Lois Campbell (USA)</i>
	<i>Rita El Ramy (Lebanon)</i>
	<i>Levi Matseshe (Kenya)</i>
	<i>Christopher Micallef (Malta)</i>

The following persons are appointed members of the Executive Council:

<i>Ecclesiastical Assistant</i>	<i>Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J.</i>
<i>Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant</i>	<i>Fernando Salas S.J.</i>
<i>Executive Secretary</i>	<i>Guy Maginzi</i>