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Borgo Santo Spirito, 4 - 00143 Rome - ITALY - web site: www.cvl-clc.net - e-mail: cvlclc@cvl-clc.net

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Editor Guy Mugenzi

Editorial Committee: Ana Maria Aguirre, Guy Mugenzi

The following persons collaborated to this publication: Antonio Lopez, Leah Michaud Proof

Readers; Marie Builoux, Theresa Cademartori, David Formosa, Patricia Kane, Maria Magdalena

Palencia Translators: Nguyen Thi Thu Van Lay-out

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Editorial

The current *Progressio Supplement* contains three reflections on important aspects of the present journey of our community. The first is concerned with authority and governance, the second bears on the dynamics of *discern, send, support and evaluate* (DSSE), and the last on the General Principles.

The text by Aurora Camps, Vice-President of CLC Spain, is enriched from the experience and contributions of several members of the national community. It reminds us of the foundations from which to connect and deepen governance in our community. So its interest does not lie so much in introducing techniques or mechanisms to improve our way of governance. These aspects, important as they are, only bear fruit insofar as we take them on and enrich them by our CLC vocation. As such, Aurora's reflections open us to a useful deepening of perspective.

The second article, written by Pedro Bolanos, explores the dynamics of DSSE. It was in Nairobi that, as a world community, we had formulated this process and received it as a grace from God as our way of being an apostolic body. But the content was not entirely new to us, even if we still have to clarify some aspects of it, and live them fully. We are invited, then, to find in our respective contexts practical methods for discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating our CLC way of proceeding. This is already in itself a way of living the process as a national or local community.

Finally, José Reyes offers us some reflections on our General Principles from an anthropological and Christological viewpoint; pertinent in this year in which we are celebrating forty years since our foundation document came into force, [confirming CLC] as a public international Association of the faithful, of Pontifical Right. This reflection of José's was given during the last session of the Magis Formation Program in Latin America.

Firmly rooted in our charism, these three texts fit perfectly into the dynamics of the Assembly at Fatima. By directing our intention towards our identity as an apostolic body¹, Fatima 2008 invites us, among other matters, to take on again our General Principles, and to deepen our experience of DSSE as well as its implications for the world, national and local levels. And doubtless one of its implications is our governance. Acknowledging this still unfinished identity as a gift from the Lord calls forth a response on our part. It is with Him that we dare to give this answer, for the good of our brothers and sisters in our human family and for His greater glory.

Guy Maginzi, World CLC Executive Secretary
Translated from French by Patricia Kane

¹ The theme of the World Assembly is: *'journeying as an apostolic body: our answer to this grace from God'*.

Authority and Management in the CLC Apostolic Body

Some Reflections and Pointers



1. Introduction

This article is an adaptation of a report that the Executive Committee of CLC Spain presented during the meeting held on the 23 September 2006 in Madrid, with the National Apostolic Teams (Youth Mission, Emigrants, Formation and Apostolic Commission), the Regional representatives and the ecclesiastical assistants. The report was developed from the reflections and fruit of the personal and group prayer of the 3rd meeting of CLC Spain members with a Permanent Commitment that was held in the city of Malaga in May 2006. During the three day long meeting, some 60 CLC members with a Permanent or Temporary Commitment came together in humility and joy to consider the theme, *'United listening to the Spirit'*. We relived the call, received by CLC during the General Assembly in Nairobi, to respond to the Lord as an apostolic community.

The Malaga meeting was an important event for CLC Spain for various reasons. It helped us to become more aware that we have been called to live our vocation to CLC in full; it helped us to experience that the Lord has invited us to work in His mission as an apostolic community which is Ignatian and lay. It helped us to reflect and pray about: what it means to be and to develop as an apostolic body of lay people, how to understand authority in CLC, what should be the way the community is managed and governed.

We experienced peace and joyful serenity during this meeting. There was mature attentive listening, the freedom and the respect for various interventions, calm joy, the gentleness with which all that was said percolated in all. The Lord was accompanying us in a special way during this meeting. Certain pointers for reflection emerged from all that was experienced, from what was contained in the communiqués and talks, the summaries of the plenary sessions, the fruits of the prayer, the written suggestions, and the final evaluation. The Executive Committee of CLC Spain has developed and presents afresh *what applies to the theme of authority and government in CLC* so that it can help to clarify the perspective revealed by the Nairobi Assembly.

2. Our Principle and Foundation

*"The love and well-being with which God endows us is the starting point of the CLC and this love, unconditional and eternal, is faithful forever and has been since the beginning of time"*²

Guided by the Spirit, CLC must live the mission with intensity and fidelity in a world which is marked by injustice and poverty

There may be no need repeating it, but it is important to say: all that we say or shall say about authority and way of governing CLC must reflect our mission. It must reflect our desire to help, and to establish the way to help the Christian Life Community respond with more faithfulness to Jesus, poor and humble. It is in service to the poor and marginalised that Christ living among us is

present. Guided by the Spirit, CLC must live the mission with intensity and fidelity in a world which is marked by injustice and poverty, where the needs are immense and the cries for help (both explicit and implicit) are innumerable. It must reflect the ardent wish to respond to Christ: united to work with Him and always open to the Spirit. As an apostolic lay Ignatian community filled with the discreet love that Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Pierre Favre modeled, we are called to be

² PG. I See *Deepening our understanding of the General Principles*. Progressio Supplement 38.39

inserted and folded into service to the world and the Church, alive and bristling with the Good News.

We are here because we have been sent on a mission. Now, we seek to pursue this search for His will for us, particularly on the 'how' rather than on the 'what'. We are here, in the presence of God, who never gives up on our humanity, even if we, at times, lose heart. But, through His grace, we keep trying to follow and be faithful because ultimately we, through CLC, are trying to be faithful to the plan of God. He chooses mysterious ways, some by chance, some caused by other events, to open new horizons. Our story, interwoven with mistakes and



tensions and, at times, with fears and uncertainties, contains, in our times, signs of joyful and unexpected resurrection. On our path of life, there are the seeds of God's actions and they will bring fruit. Yes, God acts and acts well indeed, gentle and strong, respecting our freedom and in tune with the great Paschal mystery where life passes through death.³

Today, more than ever, we seek to talk, reflect and pray on how we can help each other to follow Christ more faithfully. With His help to love and serve more, He will lead us to participate more fully in the mission of the Church.

We know more than ever that when the Lord calls, the power and the resources are not lacking. The Nairobi Assembly challenged CLC to move from being a community of apostles to an apostolic community and to serve the world and the Church as an apostolic body, remembering that God will always be at our side.

³ "God works like that" P. Paulussen, *Progressus Supplement N. 14* Prologue by Josée Gsell

We present today, with humility, this article. It is more a conversation than a report, which, without systematic process, extracts the most significant fruits of the 3rd meeting of CLC Spain's Permanently Committed members. Unravelling all that was lived, shared, prayed and reflected on, the options now need to materialise, and become life, experience and reality in our CLC. It is today a question of presenting a series of considerations which (hopefully) will help us to reflect and pray, thus enabling that which will help to develop and instigate an internal change that was initiated in Nairobi - a process of reform (similar to a re-foundation) of CLC.⁴

The Spirit is our guide⁵ "Go forward guided by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16)

We, in our search for the will
of God, walk with the
Ignatian tools of discernment
and deliberation in the
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faithful Grace

CLC situates itself where the Spirit of the Lord calls it to be. That does not mean that it cannot make mistakes or that, in our search, we cannot make mistakes. Rather, as we go on our journey it is important to emphasize, once more, that we are not acting according to a pre-set plan. Nor is our association

characterised by the leadership of a charismatic person who establishes the way and the mission, as is the case with other lay movements in the Church. We, in our search for the will of God, walk with the Ignatian tools of discernment and deliberation in the group, reading the signs of the times, with an attitude attuned to our history that reveals the presence of faithful Grace. This fidelity to God drives us forward and fills us with a capacity for searching and renewal.

⁴ I refer to the process of change towards an apostolic community (*Murguía: Report of the Committee, September 2005, Teo Gulache*)

⁵ See GP. 2

Therefore, our way of proceeding does not consist in hoping for answers from our leaders or from the office holders on the teams. Rather, in providing the Ignatian methods, reflecting on the situations in our daily lives, on the questions we have in respect to authority and leadership, the way we govern ourselves in order to produce more apostolic fruit⁶ - we want to turn once more to the original sources. We turn our eyes once more to Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, to the way they searched and found the will of God and to the way they let the Spirit lead them.

In this sense, we can understand the essence of the 3rd meeting for those with Permanent Commitment in CLC Spain. *'Recognizing and feeling that it is the Lord who invites us and calls us to articulate our mission as an apostolic community,'* was the constant reference to the way to proceed and what the apostolic body and authority meant for Saint Ignatius.

3. Responding to the Plan of God as an apostolic community⁷

CLC was called in Nairobi to answer to the basic and universal question of Saint Ignatius: *What must I do for Christ?* This question applies to all the Church and to each Christian, and is topical everywhere and always. The question is not new, and certainly has been present, explicitly or implicitly, throughout the history of CLC. The answer has developed gradually in line with the gifts of the Spirit: first as a 'federation of communities' (in the documents of the World Assembly of 1971, where it

⁶ '... the power of the Church comes from God and not from men. '...how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones God has chosen - those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything.' (1Cor1: 26-28). But God does not stop leading those whom he has confirmed on the foundations of faith, and in whom His grace is active, fragile vases of clay, to sanctify them in the truth." From the Homily of D. Julian Barrio, Archbishop of Santiago, St James the Apostle Day 2006.

⁷ See the speech of Alfonso Salgado, CLC 'El Compromiso Permanente: fundamento, llamada y vinculación al Cuerpo apostólico CVX' Third Meeting of those with Permanent Commitment to CLC, Malaga, May 2006

was referred to as 'our movement') later, in the World Assembly of 1990 (where reference was to 'our community') as a worldwide community (a 'community of communities' as some were apt to say). More recently, especially in Itaci and even more so since in Nairobi, God has shown us His plan in formulating the answer to becoming an apostolic community. We cannot ignore the fact that this answer raises new questions on how to articulate this apostolic community that is Ignatian, lay, and involved up to the neck in the world and called to its service.

What does it mean for CLC to be an apostolic community?



There is no friction between Community and Apostolic Body: it is a false dilemma. There is no contradiction between the two.⁸ It is not a question of borders. According to the Nairobi Assembly, God is inviting us to progressively extend our local and national boundaries. Since Nairobi, we are called to this body that has no borders: it breaks open and flies in the air. It is a different concept, a different dimension. As members of a body, we are the cells: parts of a whole that lacks the feeling of being broken. Our belonging and ties

are to the CLC universal body that is concretely expressed 'incarnated' in

⁸ "The local group to which one belongs at a given time is simply the concrete expression, quite specific, here and now, of this fraternity spread throughout the world. This is the community that is doing the formation work that is teaching each member the charism of the Body, at the time when he or she is being inducted into it. It is there that the candidate is filled with a universal vision, with a way of thinking of a worldwide community, because; in effect 'the CLC's universal dimension expresses itself visibly in a worldwide community. This universal dimension must be always present as a basic attitude of each and every member and local group, and must be rooted in our theology as an essential element of Ignatian spirituality' (*Nuestro Carisma* 153) ". Innocencio Martín sj, Ecclesiastical Assistant CLC Spain.

a local group. In it, the CLC members realize their CLC journey in the company of others, companions with the same vocation and mission. But, the local group is not an end in itself, but a *means*, as is the worldwide community. The intent is always the mission.

We are a lay apostolic body of men and women in the world, called together, dispersed in mission, and nurtured by Ignatian spirituality: more particularly on the full experience of the Exercises. It is a body to which a person is called by the Lord. It is a vocation that creates a link through CLC commitment to the whole Body, which is not just instrumental (or territorially local). It is not just a feeling but a vocational call. It is constitutive: a link that makes and forms the CLC person⁹. It is a vocation to bear fruit; it is an apostolic vocation that finds its fullness in universal communion with others who are called. This union of souls¹⁰ implies a unity in love and mission during the stage of Apostolic Life¹¹. It is there that DSSE (Discern, Send, Support and Evaluation) is the Ignatian tool used for the mission.

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We are an apostolic body, with a common mission, dispersed, with distinct tasks. A good example is that of the Spanish team in the last World Basketball Championship. That was a united team, not a group of individual stars; a group of players that were so united that when one of the key players was injured in the important final game, the team continued to feel and play as one. The shirt with the words 'Pau Gasol is playing too' touched us all and made me think: I believe it would be good if this shirt was raised symbolically by some of our apostolic groups but carrying the name of those who today could not be here: 'Belen is playing too!' and Cecilia and Mrs del Mar and Jose and Mrs ... each one of them,

⁹ See the speech of Alfonso Salgado, CLC 'El Compromiso Permanente: fundamento, llamada y vinculación al Cuerpo apostólico CVX' Third Meeting of those with Permanent Commitment to CLC, Málaga, May 2006

¹⁰ Philippians 2: 2-4 'I want you to think the same, have the same love, and be of one mind, with just a single thought'

¹¹ See 'Plan de formación CVX-España', by the Formation team.

who could not be here, is also serving the apostolic community of CLC Spain albeit in different roles, but in the same mission.

How can the apostolic community express this? How can it live the mission in this way and become more effective and bear more fruit? In the document he produced about CLC Identity, Innocencio Martin SJ, our Ecclesiastical Assistant (Chaplain) for CLC Spain, told us : *'It is clear: for a body to function it is necessary that all the parts are in place, a*



disjointed body is chaos; a non-co-ordinated body cannot work properly. It must be organized: each one with his or her role. There is one role that I want to highlight; that of authority. In religious life this expression is very strongly expressed in the vow of obedience. This is not our model; nevertheless it needs to be articulated. We need to strengthen the mysticism of community and, within it, the service of authority, unless we want to fall into a vacuum of authority that does not resolve the group governance, but instead complicates it and makes the community hurtle down into ineffectiveness, without any brakes! An

authority conceived as service, like a motor that must work as a subsidiary power for the rest of the motors of the Community, one that will make the others grow and which, in this manner, confirms and sends, always in a communitarian manner'.

If we refer back to the form and the process of decision-making among the first companions, we see that they, without knowing where the Lord was calling them, raised these questions about how to make their mission more effective. We know that all the first companions undertook the month long Spiritual Exercises, which was the experience that formed the

group. And we are aware that, in CLC, we have a serious gap because, if we do not have the complete¹² experience, we shall find it very difficult to keep the charism of this apostolic community alive. We see that we have the same purpose: the mission within the Church. Also we can observe the diversity and various opinions among us, something that enriches and forms part of the diversity of the community. We also note that, because in our life as lay people we are scattered and inserted in the world wherever CLC is spread; our availability in CLC is lived and expressed in quite a different way than that of the Society of Jesus.

As a result of the deliberation in 1539, the first companions, by making a decision to form community, wanted to be in communion even while scattered (the first companions had different missions). We, CLC members, are dispersed in mission and, tied as we are to our commitments (family, work ...), have the same radical availability that the first companions espoused. As laity, we have these commitments that are our special place of mission, even though we might not have the mobility of the Jesuits. One should not confuse availability, which is an internal attitude, with physical mobility.

So, those men of God, formed as discerning individuals in the Spiritual Exercises with their attitude for searching, their disposition for deliberation, are inspiring pointers for CLC today (they were laymen after all!) and in effect, are guiding lights for the whole Church¹³.

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¹² That is to say, the complete experience so that one can incorporate the method of the Spiritual Exercise into the everyday. It creates people who can discern and enables and disposes them to live in mission with, of course, the contemplation to gain love ...

¹³ Phil 1: 9-10 "And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more in knowledge and in all insight, that you may test out the things that are superior, that you may be pure and blameless for Christ's day"

4. Imitating Authority as practise by St Ignatius of Loyola¹⁴



Between obedience and authority, according to St Ignatius, obedience (derived from the Latin 'ob-audire' to listen attentively) comes before authority (from the Greek 'auxano', which in Latin is 'augere' and means making grow). If one is not able to listen without prejudices and with humility, one cannot undertake any authority or responsibility for governing anything. According to St Ignatius, an apostolic community must be structured and, in this structure, one needs an authority, someone in charge, who guarantees the common

good. As Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, authority is culled to serve not to manipulate (Mt. 20: 25-28).

St Ignatius exercised authority to enable the growth of the apostolic community of the Company in the pursuit of the universal greater good. To show how he exercised authority, we shall refer to a quote from Ribadeneira¹⁵: 'Firstly to humble oneself, secondly to ask for help, thirdly to ponder, fourthly to be present to God. These four steps, without changing their order, recognize this task of listening (obedience) which precedes authority. Curiously, we are used to placing prayer first, while for St Ignatius it is the last step.'

¹⁴ The first of this sub-section, in italics, is a summary of the second talk of Adolfo Chircoles SJ 'La Autoridad y el modo de gobierno en S. Ignacio' given during the third meeting for those with a Permanent Commitment in C.I.C. Spain, Malaga, 2006.

¹⁵ In 1540 Pedro de Ribadeneira knew St Ignatius when he first entered the Society, as in fact it was the saint himself who directed all his formation. In 1572 he wrote the first biography of St Ignatius: 'Sayings and Actions of our Father St Ignatius'; the quote comes from this text and can be found in *Fontes Narrativi (FN) II*, I, 12.

Let us see how these four steps develop:

1st LISTEN TO THE TRUTH (TO EMPTY ONESELF) *The First step, to humble oneself, corresponds to the attitude of obedience. If one assumes that all is already clear, it is difficult to see how one can listen.*

- **Fact finding: a key point for any responsible authority**

This listening, which is the humbling of oneself before the truth and to assume the challenge of the mission, must carry with it the need for facts. Knowing the facts is crucial to a responsible authority. Maybe one of the aspects of self-emptying must consist in collecting all the facts.

- **To humble oneself before the persons one is to lead (the subjects).**

In emptying of self before the other, in order to highlight the best of the other, we are reminded of a statement made by da Camara¹⁶ in the Memorial: "Our father once said the following words: 'I desire in all a general indifference.' Indifference is the opposite of fixed opinion. If a person considers he knows and is certain in everything, he does not have the means to exercise properly authority."

- **The foundation of authority is born from the trust in the potential of the individuals concerned and to follow their inclinations and qualities.**

Saint Ignatius formed men in whom he could trust absolutely and to whom he entrusted total initiative, absolutely. Camara, in his Memorial, often remarks on how the love that Ignatius had for all his brothers was so fundamental. From this love there arose the trust in the potential of those people and his

From the love that Ignatius had for all his brothers, there arose the trust in the potential of those people and his tendency to follow their inclinations and qualities

¹⁶ In May 1553, the Portuguese Jesuit Fr Luis Goncalves da Camara was sent to the House in Rome and was there for 2 years as Father Minister. At the instigation of Fr Nadal, St Ignatius related to Camara what we now call the Autobiography. The text of da Camara ends with the Memorial, where he sets out and comments on the daily life of Ignatius in the house in Rome: his manner, activities and sayings.

tendency to follow their inclinations and qualities, that they may give the best of themselves to the mission that he sent them on. One must address these inclinations of the person considering them as real possibilities that one must take into account so that each person can give of their best.

2nd LISTENING TO OTHERS (TO ASK FOR HELP) The second step mentioned by Ribadeneira was to ask for help. We note that one asks for help when he (she) can't. If having been given a responsibility, I believe that I can solve all by acting on my own, the last thing I would do is ask for help.

- **Ignatius of Loyola did not leave the one in charge alone and isolated: an authority listened and assisted**

St Ignatius did not leave the one in charge on his own. Naturally, if help is offered but is not used, it would be as if it had not been made available. Authority is not auto-sufficient. To provide help and assistance to authority does not mean that one is trying to protect authority: Ignatius never bullet-proofed authority.

3rd LISTENING TO YOUR OWN INTELLIGENCE (TO CONSIDER) The third step, to consider, is to say that the authority assumes responsibility; that it takes stock of what needs to be decided. That is to say, that all in charge, if they want to assume authority, must understand what is to be decided.

1. **How can authority empower an apostolic community?**

According to Ignatius, the one in charge is called to animate the community and to open to the universal. This is what he says in more detail:

- **Authority does not have a juridical or legal basis: I do not impose laws and regulations.**

St Ignatius did not conceive the governance of an apostolic community as the application of pre-established rules, without taking into account the circumstantial reality of a given situation: it is not good management to ignore the specific details. For Ignatius all legalism was an attack on freedom. The Ignatian idea of authority is just the opposite to a legalist approach and, in this sense, it is clear that not everyone could exercise this type of authority, especially if it is someone who needs a strong regulatory structure to feel secure.

What concerned Ignatius was not the idea or the regulatory, but a reality that needs transformation. This made him immerse himself in the facts, taking full account of reality, so that the solution was not hopelessly impractical. And the only way to make this possible was to substitute the rigid legal structure with an authority strongly founded on responsibility and openness that was based on the principle of subsidiarity, as we shall see later on. For Ignatius, authority must not exclude anything but brought into play all the other's skills. It included trusting others completely, even to the extent of giving them a blank cheque.



- **Principle of subsidiarity: delegating to whoever is at the coalface**
It is called the 'principle of subsidiarity' and it is no more than sharing responsibility. If we want the community to function properly, then it cannot be the job of just one person. Here we refer to an important letter Ignatius wrote to Fr Diego Mfrion¹⁷ which we highly recommend that you read. We quote a part that summarises Ignatius' understanding: 'like a universal engine that surrounds and moves the individual engines'. A person who is in charge does not have to do everything; it is much better to delegate even while one must stay informed of everything to be able to lead.

Ignatius did not beatify authority precisely because he held that to interpret the will of God is not something abstract. It is something planted in the various circumstances of people's lives, in specific times and places. Every possible attention must be made to be in touch with the changing reality. This is what the phrase 'I refer' or 'our Father refers' that appears so many times in Ignatius' letters (in 67 from all periods) means: he placed the final decision in the hands and good

¹⁷ 'Letters and Instructions', No 82, B.A.C. 6th edition, 1997: page 925

judgement of the person who was at the heart of the apostolic activity. This is well explained in many of his letters: 'You who are at the heart of the endeavour, you can see better what needs to be done'.

- ♦ **For authority to be service, power and knowledge need to come together**

For Ignatius, management is not something sacred and abstract, but the combination of two dimensions that cannot be separated: power and knowledge. This is the only way it will be good management. Only thus will authority be service and not manipulation or imposition. Ultimately, for Ignatius, the process of authority and obedience is, above all, a service. For it to be true service, it cannot be exercised in a world of universal laws, rather in the concrete of the contours of space and time (according to the circumstances and place, time and persons concerned).

- ♦ **For Ignatius the purpose of authority is to open to the universal and to make the apostolic community grow**

For Ignatius, authority understood as a service is not an abstract and arbitrary power, without taking into account the actual context. It is serving God (Principle and Foundation – Sp. Ex. 23) in accordance

with a standard where 'more concern to the universal rather than the individual good' is given. In the Constitutions No. 622, Ignatius formulates this principle: 'the more universal the good is, the more it is divine'. So the aim of authority is to open up the governed, the CLC member, to the universal, tearing him/her away from narrow individualism (my life, my local group ...): 'For everyone must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interests.' (Sp. Ex. 189) and thus enable the development of CLC as an apostolic community.



2. Qualities and role of the one in charge, the one who exercises authority

All these attitudes and inclinations are indispensable if the authority is to be rooted in an individual. What did St Ignatius say about this? For this we suggest reference be made to the Constitutions, No. 719, 723, 725, 666 and especially, 667, declaration G.

For a start, St Ignatius was convinced that not everyone could be a superior to serve in authority. Even for those he considered suitable, he gave them help and consolation. Moreover, it was more likely that those whom he considered valuable, he kept them apart to become his

companions, rather than appoint them as superiors. One must uncover the gift of each individual. Not everyone is gifted to be in a position of responsibility, even if they are endowed with a lot of knowledge. He was clear on this. You can have a person who is very intelligent but cannot handle authority, and is better suited as a counsellor. For an apostolic community to grow, one needs to discover the gift of each of its members.

So applying this to our CLC context, not all the members have the qualities to lead. It is very important that CLC learns to elect and commission people who are able and suitable to exercise authority and handle the governance of CLC as an Apostolic Body.

4th LISTENING TO GOD (GOING AND PRESENTING TO GOD)

Finally, we consider the fourth step: to go and present to God. Having gone through the process of humbling oneself to be able to listen (emptying), of supplementing one's limitations (asking for help) and of personal consideration (to think), the person or persons exercising authority present everything to God to seek God's confirmation. Having made use of all the means that would ensure success in the exercise of authority; he or she needs to turn to God to seek confirmation of the

One must uncover the gift of each individual. Not everyone is gifted to be in a position of responsibility, even if they are endowed with a lot of knowledge

decision, so that it is accepted. In the Constitutions [723], St Ignatius says the superior 'must be very close to God our Lord' and 'one of the family' in his prayer and all other actions'. Care must be taken to avoid turning a position of responsibility into one of self-sufficiency.

All CLC members must hold firmly, as a crucial tool, the completion of the full Spiritual Exercises, whose aim is to prepare and dispose

In 162 of the Memorial, Camara points out: 'Father says that it does not achieve anything to hurry, even if one has taken into account all the factors, without referring to God'. In the same way, it has become a proverbial St Ignatius' saying: 'it is necessary to sleep over it'... a saying he used frequently when he wanted to say that prayers were needed for anything important.

Nevertheless, how did he teach us? Normally, we start by going to pray. St Ignatius suggests: 'End with prayer, but after having seriously faced that which is in front of you'. It is to consider the facts and then find a solution but only after listening to God. It is not a managing authority that limits itself to applying the law (juridical), that makes sure the law is adhered to, but an authority that finds a solution by listening (obedience), offering in this way an alternative to a strict juridical approach.

One last note: All CLC members must hold firmly, as a crucial tool, the completion of the full Spiritual Exercises, whose aim is to prepare and dispose. A person, who has absorbed the method of the Exercises, will be prepared to take responsibility to build an apostolic body, the Apostolic Body that is the Christian Life Community (CLC).

At this point, it is worth pausing to make one or two points clear so that we do not get confused with the language and words used. When, within the CLC context, we speak of obedience, we are never referring to the vow of obedience. When we are using the term, we are either using it in the sense of St. Paul's 'Obedience of Faith', or we are talking about a virtue in the sense of the attitude and disposition inherent in the Ignatian understanding of obedience, as described above. This has nothing to do with the vow of obedience, which is reserved to a religious way of life. I

do not believe that it hurts to underline once more the radical (belonging to the roots) lay nature of CLC and that its charism does not have anything to do with religious life. For CLC, the vow of obedience is neither the vertebral column nor the kernel of the apostolic body (such as with the Jesuits) in the way that the call and the accomplishment of the will of God according to the specific Ignatian charism and the union of souls is. The vow of obedience is a means, important and central, but a specific medium of the charism of religious (consecrated) life.

It is important, although it should be obvious, to make clear the following: Jesus sent his disciples on mission through the authority that he had as a messenger of the Father and from the urgency to proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom of God¹⁸; Paul and Barnabas sought the confirmation of the apostolic authority that authenticated the mission they had received¹⁹; The apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John²⁰; the Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch²¹; the same Paul aware that he too was an apostle²² sent others on mission²³. In this way, therefore, mission was rooted in the apostolic authority which will give form and shape to the early Christian communities. Although at this point we are still very removed from the later ecclesial structures and specifically, from that which will be the filial obedience



¹⁸ Jn 17:18; Mt 10:5; Mk 3:3; Lk 9:2; 10:1 s

¹⁹ Acts 15: 2, 22a

²⁰ Acts 8:14

²¹ Acts 11:22

²² Rom 1:1; Gal 1:11s

²³ Acts 19: 21-22

for the father (to *abad*) (a theme originally very close to spiritual discernment) and from what will develop as the vow of obedience in various religious families, or the promise of obedience of the priests to their bishop (a key factor in the structuring of the clerical church). In this way, arising from the newness of a Church with very low dependency on structures, the ecclesia developed as a living body with only the Risen Lord at its head²⁴. During the first three and a half centuries, the Church was not structured in two classes: the clerical and the lay. It is not until the fourth century that the first initial sign of the monastic community emerges (around the figure of the Abbott). It is much later still before it is defined as 'consecrated life' with its vow of obedience to a superior. Therefore, when we, as lay people, develop our desire to respond to the call we receive from the Church to serve as an apostolic body, we should reflect on the origins of ecclesial communities to avoid a possible assumption that the 'vow of obedience'²⁵ is the one and only key to the construction of an apostolic body, preventing us from opening new horizons in the building of the sort of body that we all desire to become.

What are the characteristics of an Ignatian apostolic body? *The shared Ignatian paradigm of clear, effective and practical search, to find and carry out the will of God (this is common to SJ and CLC), with its Ignatian tools of discernment and communal decision-making*²⁶.

The Society of Jesus has its tools while CLC, on the other hand, are presented with the challenge to search for ours. That will definitely never

²⁴ Rom. 7:14; 12:4-5; Col 1:18; Eph 1:23

²⁵ The vow of obedience is not what gives rise to the reality of an apostolic body, but a specific tool of the religious life that has much to do with the same possibility that a particular congregation or religious order sees in becoming an apostolic body.

²⁶ Discernment, to the extent that it searches that 'which is pleasing to God', is a spiritual attitude specific to all Christian life; however, it holds a 'central' place in Ignatian spirituality. When we now speak of these Ignatian tools as being central for the 'DMSE' we do not limit ourselves to 'discernment of the spirit' for which St Ignatius proposes a series of rules in the Sp. Ex., but we include everything that he specified when he spoke of the process of 'election', which, for the rest, coincides with the same aim of the Spiritual Exercises defined in No. 1 of the book "To search and to find the will of God". See PHK Kolvenbach, "Regarding group apostolic discernment", Papers and Instructions, of 5 November 1986 (For this we refer of the complete experience of the Sp. Ex., as a 'whole' that enables and disposes 'the discerning subjects').

include the vow of obedience which is specific and exclusive to religious life. What must we do then? Where do we search? We suggest that we need to find our own tools from the discernment process and the confirmation of the mission, searching and selecting the experiences of mission and commission (already begun and experienced in our apostolic teams, in the reorganization of the Regional Co-ordinators, etc). It will help us to recover, from the day to day apostolic journey, the practical expressions and ways to proceed which are specific to our lay state and which, after evaluating the said mission in the sense of DSSE, will confirm us in our way.

5. Authority in CLC: a way of providing service to the apostolic body through Mission

In fact, the Nairobi Assembly did not speak of authority but rather of leadership. We believe that a deep reflection on the meaning of authority is needed and will later help us to understand leadership better. We can review quickly what we said last year, in the report of the Committee for CLC Spain²⁷ on the subject.

The way leadership is exercised should neither be authoritarian nor personalised, rather a leadership of service

This was a new question in CLC, opened at the Nairobi General Assembly, and which CLC Spain made its own since the Murguia National Assembly '04.

Authority in CLC has only a meaning [NC 145, 146 and 147]:

"'An order to accomplish the mission' and, as a consequence, to facilitate 'the group discernment to commission'"

In the National Assembly of Murguia '04 it was affirmed:

- *The way leadership is exercised should neither be authoritarian nor personalised, rather a leadership of service. We have the best*

²⁷ Paper of the CLC-Spain Committee, September 2003. Teodoru Galache

example when we contemplate, in silence, Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (Jn 13:1-17).

- It must be borne in mind that if this piece of the Body, the authority, does not fit naturally and with conviction, the Body will collapse... there will be no Body.

**In CLC, we have to have
leaders that are accepted
by the community, and
who are not only
motivators or multipliers
or experts but, above all,
are people that are fully
living our specific apostolic
calling in the Church**

*What type of leadership
and authority is needed in
CLC to express itself as a
lay Ignatian Apostolic
Body?*

*Nairobi linked leadership
with the experience of the
Sp. Ex.²⁶; St Ignatius
speaks to us of people able
and suited to help others,
of enabling through the
Spiritual Exercises²⁰. Our
National Ecclesiastical
Assistant, Innocento Marnin*

*S.J., states that it is desirable for leadership and authority to be exercised
by CLC members who have made a Permanent Commitment and, as such,
have made the complete Spiritual Exercises³⁰.*

*How do we as CLC exercise authority? We are a discerning community.
Through DSSE, we discern, we deliberate, and we choose people with*

²¹ "Our community continues to needs leaders who facilitate the communities, processes of discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating our personal and communal mission. The capacities we seek in them include: (...) spiritual growth through grounding in the Spiritual Exercises, (...)" [Final Nairobi Document "03]

²² *Obras Completas de S. Ignacio*, B.A.C. 86 (6^a Edition, 1997) page 1100 (Letter no 178)

³¹ "(...) If we seek to become an Apostolic Body and act as one, this will not be possible without a large injection of availability and generosity; but also with leaders who prefer to prove themselves on the basis of 'helping others to grow' and on evangelical service: 'Here am I amongst you as one who serves' (Lk 22.27). The same is for authority. (...) A leader with these characteristics is likely to be found among those who have made a Permanent Commitment."

authority to enable others to grow, to help them respond, to the mission. Because of this, in CLC, we have to have leaders that are accepted by the community, and who are not only motivators or multipliers or experts but, above all, are people that are fully living our specific apostolic calling in the Church.

Leading to apostolic fullness is the Contemplation to Attain Love (in all love and serve) and which expresses itself in a Permanent Commitment³¹.

When we speak of authority in CLC, this has nothing to do with the systems of power and authority in the world³². We definitely do not talk of it as a position that one occupies or the carrying out of a task. We do not pretend to talk or debate on who should commission or much less to talk of managing directors. At this point, it is clear that this is not the purpose of this presentation but, rather, to try and see how an apostolic body is built up. How we can help to create this profound sense of apostolic mission and to take up our responsibility, as service teams and groups of the community in Spain?

Whether we like it or not, whether we are comfortable with it or not - to help and to ensure the means to grow as an apostolic community within CLC Spain is now our responsibility. Each and



³¹ Of course, we are not talking of 'super-men' or 'super-women', people who 'know all and can do everything', rather of ones who seek help and surround themselves with those who are competent in whatever the community needs at a given time.

³² We are not called to be leaders according to the way of the world, we are not called to follow manuals, or be leaders of the manual. Nor is it a question of carrying out a strategy. Our style is that teaches us ...

everyone of us here, in different ways and with all the limitations that we wish to present, we are the authority in CLC Spain. That's how it is!

Although, perhaps, there are some who feel uncomfortable with being faced with the questions and queries raised by authority in a lay apostolic body, they are our questions and queries. They wait for our attention. Though it may sound rather harsh and counter-cultural in our time of individuals and individuality (so much is made of independence but paradoxically not freedom). I want to emphasize that these things are relevant today. Often, many of us have asked why so many CLC members provide such generous service in their daily lives (apostles), while CLC itself does not seem to hold the same drive as an apostolic community.

Why so many CLC members provide such generous service in their daily lives (apostles), while CLC itself does not seem to hold the same drive as an apostolic community?

Are our structures flexible and adapted to fostering mission? Is CLC prepared for an examination of our way of operating and governing? Can an apostolic body function with federal structures?

If we are in the process of transforming into an apostolic body, how can we grow and help the local groups that still exist side by side but as

separate groups which are limited and enclosed within their own perimeter? Are we, institutionally, prepared to work together with the Society of Jesus sharing apostolic works and experiences of mission? If CLC desires to proceed as a lay Ignatian Apostolic Body, who, in principle, are the people most able and suitable to exercise leadership and authority, to enable others to grow? In the decisions made at the World or National Assemblies, or by Executive Committees or Co-ordinators - do we recognise them as something more akin to suggestions that one could choose or not choose to follow but not seen as a duty of conscience? When someone decides to make a provisional or a permanent commitment, is the decision made and expressed alone, promising alone? Who formally accepts it? Who may defer it or who could turn it down? If someone decides to leave the community, including those who have made

a permanent commitment, does he or she need to ask the community to be freed from it or does information of his/her decision suffice?³³

I dare to raise these questions in the knowledge that they are provocative, with the express intention to provoke: to provoke reflection. Naturally, they are not meant to be answered here, now or all at once! Clearly, some need to be answered before others! However, I believe that we cannot ignore them or turn our eyes away; they are our business and present us with a variety of challenges and consequences.

We are in a period of searching for answers at a global level, and for now we do not have other than ideas and pointers. On the other hand, with the help of God's grace, I believe sincerely that CLC is mature enough and has travelled far enough to pose them clearly and prepare the way to start responding to them with certainty and lucidity using Ignatian tools.

Authority in CLC is not just a matter of the head of the body. It is also a matter of the heart, since it is an authority that will only be a builder by developing the mission, effectively and loyally: and as our mission is a common one - as an apostolic body. Authority in CLC must in particular look after and watch over the communion and union of souls.



³³ Some of these questions appeared in the Article "Obediencia y Carisma Ignaciano" by A. Luis Fenoll sj, Revista CVX-E

The mission is, in many respects, the concrete expression of love. The mission aims to transmit the love of God: *"the mission is always the filtration of the love of God that comes to our neighbour through the person who has been sent"*¹⁴.

The mission is always
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been sent

There are two verses in the Gospel of St John that differ in just one word. In John 20: 21, we read: *"As the Father sent me, so I am sending you"*. In 15:9, we read: *"As the Father has loved me, so I love you"*. It is clear that words love and mission are interchangeable. It is clear that mission is a matter of love. Therefore, the mission, a matter of the heart of the person (of the CLC

heart), is a mission of love, deriving from Love and making present this love of God. The mission is the object of the service of authority, as it should be in the whole Church. This is even more so in an apostolic body which is and expresses itself as one at the service of the mission.

6. Governing our common mission through 'directing', according to God.

The way to manage an apostolic body must be focused. Directing our common mission in response to God's call is at the same time very diverse, scattered as well as a universal vocation. This lay, widely spread and multiple activity should not obstruct us; it is *a great richness endowing apostolic life*. This is the way it is. We must appreciate it as it is as, without doubt, God wanted it this way. The caution is not to fall to the temptation to direct according to our desire to standardize.

If we look at the global CLC, we should value and present to God *the apostolic potential that we have*. Daniela Frank, our World CLC President, present with us, can vouch and witness to this. We have the whole journey ahead of us and in this space we need to proceed little by

¹⁴ P. Van Bremen *Transparenceur la gloria de Dios Sal Terrae* 1995

little, going forward with prudence and wisdom, towards the development of a better service. Now we can take some steps in the direction of helping to empower and prepare our understanding/structure of authority in CLC Spain for reflection and deliberation by:

**The National Assembly
Forum of Local Presidents**

For, here and now, it is important to have your prayer and reflection. It is important to gather the fruits of all: fruit that will unite and help to light up the path we are going to follow.

7. Preparing for the journey... Building on rock

In CLC, apart from the Ignatian tools, we have two essential means at our disposal.

The Spiritual Exercises are fundamental.³⁵ They are the heart of all the cells of the whole apostolic body. The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius are a *sine qua non* for CLC. You cannot have a true CLC without the full experience of the Exercises. It is perhaps necessary to always make sure that we explain what the Exercises *are* and *are not*. For example, it is not just a question of a retreat, a day of silence and reflection, or pious days of prayer and recollection. I suggest that we must be able to talk about these without devaluing it but also to say that it is one thing to have experiences (no doubt important in themselves) of introduction to the full experience of a retreat attuned to the Exercises (five or eight day retreats) and quite another thing to live the full experience. We have to be clear about this, and we ask the Society of Jesus, especially the ecclesiastical assistants/chaplains, that they speak plainly and consistently to help everyone to distinguish between the various experiences (all valuable, no doubt) of a retreat and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. It is

³⁵ 'CLC and the Jesuits are very aware how the Spiritual Exercises must enrich their communities with an undeniable spiritual force and with the gift of discernment in prayer, to be able to respond, ever in a new way, to the questions that Ignatius proposes: 'What have I done for the Lord?' 'What am I doing for the Lord?' 'What must I do for the Lord?' Letter of Fr Kuivenbach to CLC, 4 November, 2005.

necessary to re-enforce that the foundations of CLC must be build on rock rather than on sand.

The DSSE is a key instrument of the Christian Life Community as an essential instrument of a community in mission. This apostolic polynomial is the treasure, the basic resource for the journey in the daily lives of our local groups. It is not the aim of this presentation to amplify what DSSE means and involves as a gift for CLC. It will be the main formation task of the Apostolic Commission that will meet the local groups to help them go forward in their journey and apostolic projects.

We bring everything in our prayer, offering it to the Lord so that He may accompany us on this journey and help us to face these challenges. May CLC be more and more open and ready to do His will and may it proceed in everything with Love and in Service.

*On behalf of the CLC Spain Committee
Aurora Camps, Vice-President
Translated from Spanish by David Formoso*



The Foundations of Discern, Send, Support and Evaluate (DSSE)³⁶



In June of 2002, the ExCo invited the whole world community of CLC to begin preparations for the assembly of Nairobi 2003. In Projects no.120 it offered an important reflection that, in the end, significantly influenced the final options of the assembly. It was at this time when DSSE appeared for the first time as a formula we now know. However, and in spite of their apparent "novelty," the functions³⁷ and dynamics of these initials were already very familiar.

The objective of these lines is simply to investigate the causes of this familiarity, because as we will see, the essence of the DSSE already was present in our spiritual patrimony. Our search has centered intentionally on their appearance in various episodes of the Sacred Scriptures, of the magisterium of the Church, of theology, and of traditional Ignatian spirituality (Part 1) and our CLC tradition (part 2). We have tried to put together something that will be complete and adapted to each particular situation. In these sources, we find references that support us and provide the setting for, illuminate and sustain the richness, validity and influence of DSSE.

³⁶ Initials of the expressions Discern, Send, Support and Evaluate.

³⁷ "These are not four successive steps that should occur in each meeting of community. Neither are they four words of vague contents that we can abandon in the name of spontaneity. They are four functions that complete the community in its different levels, so it can be really an apostolic body," Reyes, José: *The Apostolic Polynomial of the CLC*, published in supplement no. 59 of *Progressio*, December 2004.

1.1 Biblical foundations

Scene 1: Our starting point, the sending

"On the evening of the first day of the week, even though the disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood before them: 'Peace be with you' he said. When he had said this he showed them his hands and the side. At the sight of the Lord the disciples rejoiced. Jesus said again: 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so also I send you.' Then he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (Jn 20, 19-22)



In this scene of the resurrection reported by John the evangelist, Jesus comes amid them. He brings them peace; he identifies himself by showing them his wounds and, after offering them peace again he tells them: *"As the Father has sent me, so also I send you."*

Until now, the reading of this text translated the adverb "as" more in the consequential sense, that Jesus transfers, transmits, and passes on the mission from the Father to the disciples: Jesus feels sent by the Father, and he wants the disciples also to feel sent by him. But if we approach this passage from a more Trinitarian perspective of God, that is, seeing that **God is Community**, we can also understand "as" as referring to the way in which that mission was "engendered." The mystery of the incarnation, so beautifully described in

the Sp.Ex. and in the GP no. 1, informs us of the "way of proceeding" of the Trinity *"The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains."*

Out of love the Word was incarnated...³⁸ Trinity God, God Community, contemplating the destiny of humanity, sends the Son to show the way to salvation. It is a communal determination for which the whole community is responsible: The Word has the first responsibility for the mission, he is in himself Mission, but the other two persons will accompany him in its whole unfolding, each one in their uniqueness.

Returning to the evangelical passage mentioned, once he accomplished his mission and gave it to his disciples, a gesture expressed in words which reproduce the act in which God gives life to man, Jesus confides them to the Holy Spirit³⁹. With this act the Church is born, the union of the disciples under the guide of

Jesus reveals to us that God is Trinity, and that God, One and Triune, is the one who has been present in the whole history of salvation, the one who called Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David

the Spirit. "The mission of the Son culminates in the sending of the Spirit: He makes it possible for Christ to ascend to the Father. Just as the Father through the Son comes to man in the Spirit, thus man in the Spirit through the Son can now reach the Father: the movement of going down permits a movement of going up in a circle of unity whose eternal phase is the Trinity and whose temporary phase is the Church."⁴⁰

From this Trinitarian key, this communal optic, all God's calls in the Old Testament could be reread in a new manner: Jesus reveals to us that God is Trinity, and that God, One and Triune, is the one who has been present in the whole history of salvation, the one who called Abraham⁴¹,

³⁸ G.P. no. 1

³⁹ cf. Gen 2.7. This parallelism of language is not casual, since it is the transmission of the encouragement of God who gives life to inert matter, and it will be the Spirit who gives life to the Church. (spirit, in the biblical sense is also breath). cf. Voise, "Spirit" of León-Dufour, Xavier "Dictionary of Biblical Theology" Ed. Herder, Barcelona, 1973.

⁴⁰ Forte, Bruno. "The Church Icon of the Trinity." Ed. Sigüenza, Salamanca 1997, Page 27

⁴¹ Abram. cf.. Gen. 12

Moses⁴², Samuel⁴³ and David⁴⁴. Using this key of interpretation, we can also recognize in these episodes the fundamentals, the foundations of the dynamics of the DSSE that we are defining.

Scene 2: discerning, sending and supporting

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead I have called you friends, for everything that I have learned from my Father, I have made known to you..." (Jn 15,15)

The public life of Jesus is a period in which the master teaches his disciples. He makes known to them the will of the Father and his project for humanity. That period arrives at its culmination in the Paschal Experience: Jesus, the faithful Son of the Father right until his death on the cross, is raised from the dead. That resurrected Jesus returns in order to say goodbye to his disciples and to announce to them a new era, one that will be accompanied by the presence of the Spirit. The real presence⁴⁵ of the Master will be substituted by the presence of the Spirit that pours forth from the community. *"Jesus, upon returning to the Father, remains present in human history by means of the sending of the Spirit."*⁴⁶

⁴² Moses, educated like a prince of Egypt, had to flee because his life became complicated after he intervened in defense of a Hebrew who was being abused by an Egyptian. It was a spontaneous impulse that destroyed his status and sent him into exile. He escaped from Egypt and took refuge in Horeb. Shepherding the livestock of his father-in-law, he met God who goes out to meet him and in that dialogue, Yahweh communicates to Moses that he has heard the cry of his people, and has decided to liberate them and intends to send Moses with that mission. In the face of the difficulties of Moses, God says: "I will be with you." The event that gives origin to the mission of Moses was already present when he had to flee, but it is God who converts it into a mission, and who supports Moses with what is necessary to be able to carry it out so as to respond to the difficulties that this brings. (cf., Chap. 3-4 of the Book of Exodus).

⁴³ Samuel, at the service of Eli, is called by God. He doesn't know how to react. He believes it is Eli who is calling and goes willing. After several times, it is Eli who realizes that it is Yahweh who is calling. This gives the rules of for our reactions. In the end, Eli helps to interpret the call, to confirm it as a call from God. (cf., 1 Samuel 3). cf. Another mission of Samuel in 1 Samuel 16.

⁴⁴ 1 Samuel 16,1 ff.

⁴⁵ The real presence here should be understood as a sensible presence, perceptible to the senses.

⁴⁶ Mifsud, Tony "Ethical Mood of Ignatian Spirituality" in *Progresio* supplement no. 58. Page 43

The dynamics of the experience of Christ's ministry captivated Ignatius of Loyola. *"He is the Lord, the eternally known, the one who is loved and followed, who by his 'convocation' plants the Church in each heart filially configured by his Spirit. By the same Christocentric dynamic of the Exercises, the retreatant discovers in Him the center of his life. Through the power of his Resurrection, in which the retreatant participates during the Fourth Week, He leads him to the Church as he did his first disciples."*

Jesus saves and then calls. The answer leads the retreatant, through the Second, Third and Fourth weeks to a progressive identification with him, until a dying and rising with him, a necessary condition in order to be one of his.⁴⁷ (...) It would not make sense to permit the retreatant in the Fourth week to relate to an exclusively pre paschal Jesus. Certainly this kind of relationship would not lead to the Church. *Jesus no longer being visible, it is necessary to find him in his "ecclesial" visibility and at the same time "in the Spirit."* Paul⁴⁸ warns us that we cannot continue to know Jesus according to the flesh, but in his new state as reconciliator and creator of the new humanity.⁴⁹



⁴⁷ This identification is the absolute value of the Exercises, the culmination of the whole process. For this reason, what should not happen in the Exercises is to ignore the bringing about of that identification with Jesus, the foundation of the retreatant's new life become Church as the place of encounter of those identified with Jesus. This development of the Church's Christology is revealed much more in the Second Vatican Council: cf. For example, the beginning of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Chapter 1 of *Lumen Gentium*.

⁴⁸ 2 Corinthians 5,16.

⁴⁹ Cereña Jéss, "Sensing the Church" p. 85. Ed. Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Collection Manresa, no. 15, Bilbao-Santander 1996.

This presence needs a new tool that permits the community of his disciples to discover the will of God, a tool that is none other than Discernment. God-Community by means of the Spirit gives rise to the Church and empowers it to be receiver of the Mission of Jesus. *Now the subject of the discernment of the mission received will be the community, and all its members together will be responsible for it.*⁵⁰ If we observe the life of the Church described in the Acts of the Apostles⁵¹, we discover how this tool will have a permanent presence in the life of the community.⁵²

Scene 3: The evaluation

After the death of Jesus, the disciples remained confused and disappointed. This remains obvious in diverse episodes of the gospels: let's look especially at the disciples of Emmaus.⁵³

Luke tells us that two disciples on their way to Emmaus were conversing about everything that had happened; *they discussed and they questioned*. They were remembering Jesus when he lived, sharing with each other their information and experience; for that reason, they asked questions.

We were
hoping that he
was the one to
set Israel free

Then *'Jesus approached and began to walk with them. But they were kept from recognizing him.'* They were kept from recognizing him. Their conversation could not have been very illuminating since recognition did not follow. The appearance of *Jesus enters into the dynamics in order to transform it*. He asks them about their con-

⁵⁰ At times a certain conflict has arisen about whether discernment could be exercised communally. In our opinion this debate arises because it is incorrectly expressed. Although it is true that the subject of the vocational discernment is always the individual, in the Church as Vatican II says in *Gaudium et Spes* no. 11, the subject of apostolic discernment should always be communal.

⁵¹ There are various episodes of the first disciples in which the community has to confront the mission giving the answers adapted to each of the concrete situations. Among them, we can mention the election of Matthias (Acts 1,14), the election of the seven (Acts 6) or the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).

⁵² The article of José Reyes published in the CLC periodical no. 64 is very instructive on these episodes of the first disciples. (www.cvx-e.org/revista/64/D64CVXMUNDIALReyes.pdf).

⁵³ Luke 24,13ff.

versation to which one of them responds with astonishment at his apparent ignorance about what had happened. Their answer transmits a certain conviction about the event and its meaning. It is this certainty that has left them so saddened. That remains obvious in the history of the events that they relate to Jesus: *"We were hoping that he was the one to set Israel free... Besides all this..."* It is the telling of the "historical" story of the events as seen through the eyes of men.

But depending on the same events, *Jesus situates them within the History of Salvation*; he looks at them and interprets them with the eyes of God: *"Beginning then with Moses*



and all the prophets, he interpreted for them every passage of Scripture which referred to him." In that structure, these events acquire their full sense. It is in the breaking of the bread that *"their eyes were opened and they recognized him."* After Jesus disappears, they remember the experience just lived and they wonder *"weren't our hearts burning within us as he talked to us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"* The zeal produces the "theological" reading of the Scriptures and events, and the gesture of the bread blessed and shared is what opens the *"eyes of their understanding."* When they are conscious of what has happened, immediately they run to share the news. They arise quickly returning on the road they had travelled, not concerned that *"it is nearly evening and the day is almost over,"* and that they need to take refuge.

In my judgement, this beautiful episode explains what an evaluation is. An evaluation helps us to look at what we have lived through the eyes of God in order to return with new strength to the mission. That look, necessarily begins with the "historical" look, with our human and limited eyes. But recalling the presence of the Lord among us helps us to see our experience in another way, to situate it in the general and particular

"History of Salvation" of each of us, of each community. To pray about it and be grateful for it; to celebrate it in the sharing of the bread, and to offer it so that it can bear fruit for the mission, in spite of the difficulties that before were insuperable impediments.⁵⁴

1.2 Foundations of the tradition and magisterium of the Church

One of the most significant contributions of the Second Vatican Council was the statement on the universal dignity of all the faithful.⁵⁵ According to this, *each and every Christian is a co-participant of the Church's mission*,⁵⁶ which is none other than to institute the universal fraternity that responds to the vocation of man. *"The Church is not motivated by an earthly ambition but is interested in one thing only -- to carry on the work of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for he came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served."*⁵⁷ For this *"he established after his death and resurrection, a new brotherly communion among all who received him in faith and love; this is the communion of his own Body, that is the Church, in which everyone as members one of the other, would render mutual service in the measure of the diverse gift bestowed on each."*⁵⁸

⁵⁴ We would have liked to include the complete passage, but lack of space makes it impossible. We encourage you to read Luke 24, 13-35 anew from this perspective.

⁵⁵ An example of this statement is in Lumen Gentium no. 7: "all are made members of his Body and members one of another"

⁵⁶ Prefixing the chapter "Of the people of God" with those of the hierarchy and of the laity in the course of the council works was a true "Copernican revolution." It restored in the ontology of grace its just primary: it was given above all to the Church in its entirety according to that which is common to all the faithful. In this way the topic of the laity remained placed opportunely in the environment of the total ecclesiology, where the unit that proceeds from the Father through Christ in the Spirit comes before the distinction, without annulling it for that reason, but vivifying it in the dialectic of communion and service. All the baptized are Church, participants of the richness and of the responsibilities that arise from the baptismal consecration, always in the variety and ministries." Forte, Bruno "Laicado and Laity." Ed. Sigueme, Salamanca 1987 p. 45.

⁵⁷ Gaudium et spes, no. 3.

⁵⁸ Gaudium et spes, no. 32

"At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel if it is to carry out its task. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the recurring questions which men ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live."³⁹

"The people of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the whole world. Moved by that faith, it tries to discern in the events, needs and the longings which it shares with others of our time, what may be genuine signs of the presence or the purpose of God. For faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind toward solutions that are fully human."⁴⁰

Individually or in association with others, the baptized participate in the Church's mission, according to the variety of the charisms and ministries that the Spirit has given them

The Council challenges us to get involved in scrutinizing the signs of the times. The Church's reflection on itself is especially opportune for our situation. As a cell of the universal Church, our community should work with the same fundamental parameters since such a small community formed entirely of believers are called to be Church. As happens in organic cells, each one of them encloses in their DNA the same fundamental elements, the same essence of the body as a whole.

"The baptismal unction and the gift which the Spirit grants without measure demands that each one be committed to the building of the Church and the salvation of the world. Individually or in association with others, the baptized participate in the Church's mission, according to the variety of the charisms and ministries that the Spirit has given them. All this requires a continuous dialogue within the community, which enables each to be valued according to the gifts he or she has received,

³⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 4

⁴⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 11

with the certainty that an authentic charism comes from the unique Spirit and thus must bring about unity. Nobody in the Church possesses all the richness of the Spirit; each participates in him according to the diversity of the ministries and charisms and therefore must humbly recognize the need for the others. The charism of knowing that one is part of the whole is indispensable so that each one, according to their own gift may cooperate in the growth of the body of Christ.⁶¹

The Church is the Depository of the Good News to be proclaimed.

Having been sent and
evangelized, the Church
herself sends out
evangelizers

Paul VI stated this again in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* when he said that "those who sincerely accept the Good News through the power of this acceptance and of shared faith, therefore gather together in the name of Jesus in order to seek the Kingdom together, build it up and live it. They make up a community which is in its turn evangelizing. The command to

the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good New is also valid for all Christians though in a different way⁶²."

Later on, in this same document, Paul VI points out a synthesis on the identity and mission of the Church that we find especially interesting to our study.

- The Church is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve.
- Having been born consequently out of being sent, the Church in her turn is sent by Jesus.
- The Church is an evangelizer but she begins by being evangelized herself. ...She needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love.
- The Church is the Depository of the Good News to be proclaimed.
- Having been sent and evangelized, the Church herself sends out evangelizers.⁶³

⁶¹ Forte, Bruno, "Laicado and Laity" p. 60. Ed. Signeme. Salamanca 1987

⁶² Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 13, 1975

⁶³ Ibid. No. 15, 1975

*The effort should move in a clear direction which integrates the faith that we profess with our daily life. "The Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of both cities, to perform their duties faithfully in the Spirit of the Gospel. It is a mistake to think that because we have here no lasting city but seek the city which is above, we are entitled to shirk our earthly responsibilities. This is to forget that by our faith we are bound all the more to fulfil these responsibilities according to the vocation of each one. But it is no less mistaken to think that we may immerse ourselves in earthly activities as if these latter were utterly foreign to religion and religion was nothing more than the fulfilment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations. One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. (...) Let there then be no such pernicious opposition between professional and social activity on the one hand and religious life on the other."*⁶⁴

The ethical life⁶⁵ of the Christian begins with the humble but confident prayer: "Show me Lord, your way, guide me on the right path," because for the Christian, life consists in the search for the face of God in our daily existence. Only then will the horizon of ethics recover a decisive importance



in action and in thought, as a joyful answer to the divine call, as a gesture of freedom in love, as a simple expression of charity.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Claudian et spes*, no. 43

⁶⁵ We refer here to Ethics as described by Tony Mifsud in the mentioned article, Mifsud, Tony O.C. p. 53

⁶⁶ We obviously see the foundations of Ignatian spirituality in the DSSE, but it is still interesting to point them out, at least schematically.

1.3 Foundations from tradition and Ignatian spirituality.⁶⁷

The first experiences

Undoubtedly, the most significant feature of Ignatian spirituality is Discernment. This topic is thoroughly developed in the bibliography and we won't seek to insist on it here. But from this stage of the DSSE, we will consider basically the subject of apostolic discernment. The experience of the Deliberation of the first Fathers is without a doubt a fundamental source of Discernment in common.⁶⁸

For the Christian,
life consists in the
search for the face of
God in our daily
existence

As Jesús Corella likes to point out, "Thanks to them [to the rules of ecclesial discernment of the Sp.Fx] we know that for Ignatius, the problem of the discernment goes through the Church. It is never a purely personal question, and still less a private matter. If discernment was only this, it would always hold

the doors open to Illuminism and to subjectivism. The personal element is indispensable, but it should be balanced with a social component of discernment in the community of the Church."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ "The text of the Exercises, that come to be an integral, privileged and constituent part of the experience and of the magisterial pedagogy of Ignatius, is fruit of the personal experience of the Pilgrim guided and inspired by God. An experience subjected to a continuous discernment, that is consequently and simply converted, in a means, a text, in order to help others to experience in a similar way, although original and personal, a deep experience of discernment and of an encounter with the will of God." Pieri, Fabrizio: "Paul and Ignatius, Witnesses and teachers of spiritual discernment" Sal Terrae, Santander 2005

⁶⁸ Also the materials of the Third Encounter of the Permanent Commitment of C.I.C.E. which devoted special attention to the Deliberation of 1539, in which the first companions decide to form the Society of Jesus. Likewise, the reading of the book of Jean Claude Dhothel, *Discern Together*, Sal Terrae is recommended. It is a simple book to read in which there are enough keys of analysis of the process which are perfectly applicable to our reality.

⁶⁹ Corella, Jesús "Sensing the Church," Págs. 57. Mensajero-Sal Terrae. Manceba collection. Nº 15

The feature of apostolic companionship is certainly a constitutive element of Ignatian spirituality. *"The itinerary characteristic of Ignatius and his companions, far beyond the Exercises, led them to 'form a body' at the service of the militant Church."* (...) ⁷⁰ If this is so, then apostolic companionship is part of Ignatian spirituality; to know its fundamental features could be essential for us, taking care to define the leading role of the community in the process of the DSSE. What is the basis of Ignatius companionship?



- *In first place, there is the perception of a common way of "feeling" the spiritual life, based on the view of the "descent of love" from the divine Persons to the heart of the creatures.* This vision of things is in accord with the mystery of the Incarnation and invites our companions to consider Christ as a companion on their journey there where they are sent to continue their mission. That same consideration will impel them to create some institutional structures to "form a body," but a body especially linked to the visible Church of Christ, just as they will make an effort, in the midst of the world, to see and seek God "in all the things."
- *It is a project of common life that embodies in its concrete existence what they have perceived in contemplation. This project was conceived and specified during numerous deliberations.* Indeed, all communities are motivated to prepare a project that is expressed, for example in the case of religious Institutes, in a Rule of life and in some Constitutions. In the case of lay associations in a "foundational letter," and in some, statutes, etc. The project of life of

⁷⁰ Dhothel, Jean Claude: "The Ignatian Spirituality. Keys of Reference" Sal Terrae. This document is available in [www.sjwebinfo/education/documents/pedagogy_sp.doc]

the companions of Ignatius is summarized in two expressions: following Christ as closely as possible in a poor and humble life, a life similar to that of Jesus in accordance with the conditions of life of each one. In the second place, to "help souls," that is, to also share the mission of Christ, after each has felt called to it according to their possibilities.

Following Christ as closely as possible in a poor and humble life and share the mission of Christ, after each has felt called to it according to their possibilities

pronounced before other members of the group who receive the person that is joining them. "I count on you as you can count on me. We are linked together in the Lord."

- *To be sure that the project is not of purely human origin we refer it to the One who is its origin, and make an act of commitment after a trial period. After this, a formula is pronounced before God as an act of delivery of our yes. "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty." It is also*

Some will ask: and friendship? *Friendship like everything else is gratuitous, an extra.* It is not a priority because these people have not met for sensitive, cultural or any other type of affinity. *They have not chosen each other, but rather all have been chosen.* This comes only much later, after not a few discussions in which they showed the logical disagreements between people who are so different because of age, nationality and character. Ignatius will talk about them as "friends in the Lord." But on this foundation friendships among them will become strong, demanding and warm, and there will be in it a place for fondness. Physical estrangement won't be able to break those bonds of love, as the letters of Francis Xavier bear witness. *Friendship won't be shown by means of sentimental gushing, but by the mutual exchange of the word and service. It will be a mutual help to better discern together what undertaking is suitable "for the glory of God and help of souls."* *Companions have not been gathered to remain together, protecting one another but in order to be sent "to all the parts of the world."*

Apostolic Polynomial versus Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

In 1993, the International Council of Education of the Society of Jesus published the document "*Ignatian Pedagogy. A practical approach*"⁷¹ as the fruit of the work of an international team made up of Jesuits and laity in the educational world linked to the society. This magnificent document drew up in a new language the essential keys of the educational formulation of the society along their extensive pedagogical tradition.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (I.P.P.), *Experience, Reflection, Action*, is born from an *application of the dynamics of the Sp.Ex., the process teaching-learning*.⁷² The triad Experience, Reflection, Action, which emanate from the dynamics of the Exercises in their application to reality, demand to be completed by two new elements, whose objective is to situate this dynamic appropriately: it must start by situating the Context, because we live in a reality that is concrete and specific for each case. It should be completed by the Evaluation, that permits us to bring back the dynamism of the paradigm in a continuous and recurrent way. Therefore, the I.P.P. consists of five steps, all indispensable: *Context*⁷³, *Experience, Reflection, Action, Evaluation*⁷⁴.

If we put the two processes in parallel, we see the correspondences: Context, Experience, Reflection, (DISCERN), Action (SEND and SUPPORT), Evaluation (EVALUATE). In our judgement, both formulations reflect the same process and explain one another. Discernment starts with the context, draws from experience and passes through reflection (and prayer); Action becomes concrete in the sending and in the responsible and shared support, and Evaluation gathers the lived experience and launches us from the starting point, because what

⁷¹ cf. N° 23 and following of the Document "*Ignatian Pedagogy A Practical approach*"

⁷² For the Ignatian process the Incarnation is a key element. For this reason, we understand perfectly that the dynamics of the IPP start by placing one's feet on the earth.

⁷³ Ibid. nos. 32-64

⁷⁴ cf. José Reyes, O.C.

has been lived is already an experience that will feed future discernments⁷⁵.

Procedures for personal work and for dialogue

1. *What do you find innovative?*
2. *What do you find more stimulating?*
3. *What makes you more apprehensive?*
4. *What examples of this do we see in our CLC and where do you believe that we should move forward?*
5. *What personal motions does this bring about in you? ...*

Pedro J. Bolaños Armas.

Apostolic commission of CLC E

Translated from Spanish by Theresa Cademartini



⁷⁵ The Apostolic Commission of CLC formed of José María Riera, (CLC-La Vinya, Barcelona), Alfonso Salgado, (CLC-Salamanca), Silvia Villalba (CLC-Seville) and Pedro Bolaños (CLC-Grand Canary) in connection with the Executive Committee of CLC-E. This commission arose in answer to the recommendations of the Assembly of Merguía as a way of helping move forward the apostolic life of CLC and its members.

Anthropology and Christology in the General Principles



Introduction

As on other occasions, I am writing this article from a title that has been given to me, and that I need to interpret in order to develop it and provide content with meaning for those who wish to tackle the text of the GPs of CLC.

I propose to treat the subject in 3 parts:

1st part: The Text

In this part I will try to present the actual text which interests us, its context, its worth and its actual scope. I will endeavour to describe it as a constituent text, written through experience lived by a universal Community.

2nd part: Anthropology

[Here] I will try to introduce the socio-cultural and relational assumptions of the text, both implicit and explicit. I will try also to reflect on the human problems – on the personal and communal level – referred to in some way in the text.

3rd part: Christology

Finally, I will present the Christ of the General Principles, the One found in the text and its sources, the One who calls the Christian Life Community together.

For other sessions, following the schema of this three years' course, there remains the themes of Ecclesiology and Ethics, although some references to these topics may be unavoidable during this presentation.

1st Part: The Text

When we come face to face with a fundamental text, it is a great help to answer some preliminary questions. This is what I will try to do in the next paragraphs.

A first series of questions might be: who is the author of the text? Whom is it written for, and with what intention? When and in what context was it written? In which language? These questions send us back to an historic and fruitful process, lived by a real Community.



The author

So far as the actual text is concerned, the one we have in our folders, we can say without any doubt that the World Christian Life Community⁷⁶ is the author. That is, it concerns a collective author: there are many minds, many scripts, many cultures,

many churches and special communities influencing the same text. The author is a Christian, ecclesial, praying, discerning community...in which the action of the Holy Spirit⁷⁷ is present, without a shadow of doubt, as well as the guidance of the Mother and Mistress Church, the People of God⁷⁸. It is obvious that for the successive versions, there was an editorial committee, and

⁷⁶ GP1: 'we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles...'

⁷⁷ GP1: '...through the influence of the Holy Spirit...'. GP2: '...This law, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts...'

⁷⁸ GP2: '...with the entire People of God and all those of good will...'

at the end, one person who collated the contributions and put together the definitive text. But, in this type of constituent text, it is not important to identify these individuals. In the end, the author is the Community.

Recipients and intentions

The essential intention of the Community is set out at the beginning in a very transparent and explicit manner: 'we have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the options of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever.' (GP 1). That is, the text has a purpose that is chiefly apostolic. By saying 'to aid us' indicates that the destination is the Community itself and its members.

Towards the end, another important intention is expressed: 'The General Principles express the fundamental identity and charism of the Christian Life Community and therefore its covenant with the Church' (GP 16). By this phrase, but also by the entire text, the audience becomes the whole Church.

We can say that the text is written from a clear awareness of being an ancient tradition in constant renewal and continuous growth in a dynamic process, as well as being in never ending rebirth among new members. So it is directed at new and older generations, at leaders and members who wish to deepen their vocation and put names and meanings to the process they are experiencing. It is also aimed at those in the Church, who are seeking a way of formation and growth in the Spirit, by putting at their disposal a planned text. Beyond the frontiers of the Church, it is 'a covenant with God, with the Church and with all people'⁷⁹.

The General Principles
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It is not a question of a text intended to be read from start to finish, but of a text written to be read on several occasions, in various circumstances, in small bites, with differing intentions, levels of maturity and formation⁸⁰.

⁷⁹ Foreword to the Supplement N. 36 to Progressio, January, 1991

⁸⁰ See the Annex to Supplement N. 36: 'Help for reading the General Principles.'

The Period

As for the period in which the text we are looking at was written, it was approved by the General Assembly in 1990, after a preparatory process that began in 1982, as a result of the General Assembly in Providence⁸¹. But we must not say that the text was written in 1990. In fact, this year [2007] we have been called to celebrate 40 years of the General Principles, which sends us back to 1967 and not to 1990. Moreover, the 1967 text was practically ready in 1964. So, we can say that the period when the GPs were written is that of Vatican II – the pre Council, the Council (text of 1967) and the post-Council (revision of 1990).

We must also emphasise that there were earlier inputs, from a process begun in 1953 with the creation of the World Federation of Marian Congregations at that time, which had been, in its turn, a marker in a dedicated process of renewal initiated by the Father General of the Jesuits in 1928. Still more, the text acknowledges being in harmony and communion both with the century-old tradition and community life since 1540⁸² and with the important texts of the Church hierarchy.⁸³ We can say then that the text contains very old expressions and phrases, from the first 'Common Rules' and their successive modifications, as well as others coming from the restless years of Vatican II, and still others contributed during the first process of revision in 1990. In other words, the text we have today has been composed over centuries, and an exegesis may identify, sometimes easily, the chronological origin of some paragraphs or expressions. We will return to this later on when we discuss sources and context.

The Language

In what concerns the language, the original text of 1967 was in French, while the original in 1990 was in English. This is important if we wish to

⁸¹ In 1982 the General Assembly became 'one World Community', going beyond the federative structure which characterised it until then. This gave birth, among other matters, to a commission entrusted with the revision of the fundamental text, starting from this new option, but also from the life of the Church, the development of Theology and the experience of our CLC. The commission, chaired by Father Nicholas Rieman (U.S.A.), worked continuously until 1990.

⁸² GP3: 'we see our origin in those groups of lay people that developed after 1540 in different parts of the world through the initiative of Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions.'

⁸³ Decree of Papal Approval: 'In appreciation of a venerable association erected by the Bull *Omnipotentis Dei* of His Holiness Gregory XIII (5 December 1584), sustained and encouraged subsequently by numerous pontifical documents, particularly by the Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari* (1948)...'

understand particular shades of meaning and cultural changes, but also for its legal effect³⁴. But we must also remember that the 'little papers' circulating during the years of preparation were written in many languages, the suggested corrections were received in different ways, and afterwards the preparatory texts circulated in the three official languages: English, French and Spanish. That is why the English original (1990) is not a pure or perfect English, it is an international English, the most accessible language for an international Community, the author of the text. Latin was missed by some older individuals, but that was no longer possible. I will return to this when I mention particular anthropological themes.

The Sources

We have already said that the text of 1990 that we have now has been developed from previous successive texts. These earlier documents represent the principal written source of the actual text: the first "Common Rules", the Rules of 1910, the GPs of 1967. There are other obvious sources:

the Sacred Scriptures, the Documents of the Church, the Documents of the CLC, and the Text of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. Among the documents of the Church, the



Documents of the second Vatican Council, the declarations of the Hierarchy on the CLC and the new Code of Canon Law (1983) assume a special importance. Among the CLC documents, the historical accounts, the reports or the conclusions of the different General Assemblies, the educational texts or those referring to the process are the most essential. These written sources may be identified in the text of the GPs, but it is not a question of the exact words. Although we are discussing a text both inspirational and constituent, it does not contain quotations or footnotes.

³⁴ The Decree of Papal Approval 'APPROVES its "General Principles" presented in their original form (i.e. the text in English) and deposited in the Archives of this Dicastery.'

It is important to add that independently of these written sources, the principal origin of the text is the experience of the Community. The underlying question during the General Assembly of 1990 was always the following: *'Does this text reflect our lived experience and/or our desire to grow...?'* An exercise that we repeated several times in the 'Community reading groups', structured around the selection of a short piece of the proposed text, that a delegate read aloud to the group and then stated something along these lines: *'I bring this text to the group because it speaks to me of an experience (or a desire) of our Community...'*

The Marian
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the Spiritual Exercises of
Saint Ignatius

Context and innovation

We know that the Marian Congregations were an active movement in Europe, having a great effect on the life of the Church and even an important presence during the turbulent social events of the XXth century. Even so, the dominant model for lay people in the Church for many years was that of 'Catholic Action', deemed to be a grouping of local associations constituting an 'extension' of the Church hierarchy, who controlled

and exercised mission and discernment. Some individuals in the Church questioned the very existence of other associations, like the Marian Congregations, which ought to become associated with Catholic Action under the close supervision of the Hierarchy and the local bishops. Pope Pius XII resolved the situation, thanks to his Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari* (1948), by stating simply that the Marian Congregations constituted a privileged form of Catholic Action as the reason that they need not be reconverted to that model, but persevere in fidelity to their source: the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. This led to the deepening of the international dimension of the Association, culminating in the high point of the formation of the World Federation of Marian Congregations in 1953. It was in this Federation that we began to live an important lay participation, no longer as 'receivers' or 'extensions' but as protagonists

in communion and church mission. It was a matter of the pre-conciliar winds which required, among other things, an adult laity. In this context, the Community began to prepare its *'General Principles'*, destined to replace the Common Rules, which the Marian Congregations had *'received'* from the Father General of the Society of Jesus. The text of 1967 was the first text written and approved by the Community, and afterwards submitted for ecclesial approval. This approval was obtained *'ad-experimentum'* in 1967 and definitively in 1971. That is the reason we are celebrating 40 years of the GPs today, in reference to the process which coincided with Vatican II, and constituted a kind of new foundation, including the change of name and the renewed idea of the CLC as a lay association.



The first revision

The process launched after the GPs of 1967 has been intense and fruitful. The Community assembled around the GPs has considered the great themes in succession, linking them to experience, finding the best means, facing the difficulties. On the other hand, society and the Church continued to evolve to a rhythm much faster than we have been used to. The Council continued until the promulgation of the revised Code of Canon Law (1983), which, for many people, ended the conciliar process, at least formally, in the sense that it tried to integrate Council teachings into the organic structure of the Church. With this background, the CLC began to feel the need to bring up to date our foundational text, finally ending in the revised text of 1990. It was a development of the preceding text, so was not a new text or a type of re-foundation, as was the case with the 1967 text. The great themes of this text are the same as those of the preceding one. The changes affect the emphases, the style, the nuances, the expression of the process. In order to understand these changes and

their origins, I refer you to 'Help for reading the General Principles', published with the actual text by the CLC⁸⁵.

Structure and Content

The actual text is divided into two long sections: General Principles and General Norms. The first section is composed to last, and any modification requires not only the approval of the General Assembly, but also that of the Holy See. The second section, on the other hand, is more linked to practice and form, and may be modified more often, needing only the approval of the General Assembly.

Without a deep understanding of the Preamble, it is very difficult to understand all that follows, and could even lead to pedagogical or theological errors

The first section, that is the General Principles strictly speaking, comprises 17 numbers, organised in a Preamble (1 to 3) and three parts: Our Charism (4 to 9), Life and Organization [of the Community] (10 to 15), Acceptance of General Principles (16 to 17). The Preamble already contains the great themes, and its three paragraphs define the spirit and the style of the text, strongly recommended for meditation and prayer. Without a

deep understanding of the Preamble, it is very difficult to understand all that follows, and could even lead to pedagogical or theological errors. The First Part is also rich in spiritual and theological content, useful for prayer and study, and is indispensable in its integrity for understanding the identity of the CLC as an association of the faithful as much as a vocation and way of life. The Second Part provides a bridge between the vocational-identity domain and the legal-organisational one. The Third Part aims to preserve among the CLC a true sense of belonging to the Church.

The second section contains 49 norms organised in 3 chapters, similar to the three parts of the GPs: I Membership, II Way of Life, III Life and Government of the Community. These 'General Norms' are an integral part of the text, and can only be understood in relation to the first section. But they have remained more flexible, as planned, to place them always in contrast with life,

⁸⁵ Supplement N. 36, to *Progressio*, January 1991. Pp 25 ff.

experience, its difficulties, new challenges and opportunities. The GPs have a pedagogic aspect, and must be read in that way.

2nd Part: Anthropology

The GPs are permeated with proposals and reflections, both human and cultural, because they originate from a real intercultural community that has chosen options which are not always easy. This is seen in the tensions and difficulties of the process guiding us, and present in a way in the text itself. More to come on some of these themes.

A universal fellowship

The GPs represent a proposal that aims to surpass individualism and build a common plan. They believe in the possibility and worth of the Community, at every level, right up to a universal, world Community. They aspire to surpass individualism or narrow visions, encouraging a cooperative mindset and action, support for a project that transcends time, space and (even) individual leaders, although valuing them for everything that they represent. This is a text written by and for an international Community, which is, as a consequence, exposed to the difficulties and opportunities pertaining to geographic distances, to political frontiers, to cultural diversity, to multiplicity of languages, to socio-political and economic differences, to a variety of ethnicities and nationalities, etc...

By taking on this international and multicultural aspect, we offer the GPs as a text that calls on all this diversity and succeeds in being ratified with an almost unanimous consensus when it was approved, and unanimous in the subsequent stages. Among all the possible models for an international life, the GPs are defined as 'a unique world community at the service of a unique world'. That is, they do not take on a federative model, where each group joins a superior structure for convenience, but opt for a model that emphasises the steadfast and unconditional membership of individuals to a universal Community, that contemplates a world made up of all men and women and needs all of us (GP 1). We are committed to a vocation and mission that we share, that is, we are not linked by a simple voluntary affiliation or by legal ties, but by an authentic fellowship that flows from the fact that we know we are all companions on a journey that provides the means and process to follow a unique common purpose. Such a desire for universal fellowship, language, shared means have shown the ability to adapt to the diversity of the international life, and all

engender a way of being in the world that builds us as community, beyond special interests and without exempting us from necessary local participation.

Personal Process and Communal experience

The anxiety persists still that we may obstruct others by keeping the discussion too overwhelmingly global or universal. Such a danger is real if



we build the community solely on a legal-organisational basis, and not on a vocational one. The GPs invite us to a dynamic of concentric circles, as much at the educational process level as that of membership. As we deepen our process of

discovery of our vocation and personal commitment, we broaden our vision and sense of fellowship and membership. The periods of initiation, exploration and initial formation are usually linked to a membership more limited to what is local or close by. The steadfast and mature vocation, that is, the commitment to a way of life and mission, is usually associated with a sense of belonging to a universal community. By these acts, the members of the World Universal Community act as individuals, but they can only reach this goal by way of local communities. (cf. GP 7, GN 1, 2).

Integration and segregation

Our contemporary societies, especially in Latin America, have developed more and more towards segregation and exclusion, associated with differences, socio-economic, cultural, even ethnic, or of that kind. There is also a tendency to underline specific differences, with fine distinctions, in order to construct watertight compartments, sometimes without communication and including even antagonism. Aware of these tendencies, the text of the GPs states explicitly that it is addressed to '*men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions*' (GP 4). The GPs do not wish to exclude, but to propose a road to an enormous and diverse public, in accordance with age, culture and other specific characteristics. The invitation is offered to take into account the danger of describing

ourselves in terms so refined that we will end by being very exclusive and excluding. This is why, 'the National Communities must develop formation programmes, diversified if necessary for various groupings of members, and the various exceptional circumstances which may arise for individual members' (GN 6). From this viewpoint, it is helpful to read also the GNs 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12.

Membership and commitment

Do we link up or not? It is a question that occupies men and women today. Adolescents do not know if they want to be confirmed or not, couples do not know if they want to marry or not,



relationships halfway between tend to lose importance, citizens do not decide to vote, etc... The question contains positive and negative aspects. On one side, there is the reasonable rejection of automatic responses and shallow forms of bonding, which can kill more spontaneous and creative life. There is also experience and feeling, no less reasonable, in this sense that formal bonds do not guarantee success in the process: marriage does not guarantee love, and may come to hide selfish relationships. On the other hand, love may be more intense and remain so without formal bonds. On the other side, an inferior idea of liberty with more negative connotations sometimes appears, including neither choice nor sacrifice, nor being fulfilled through actions, but tending to self-protection and self-preservation by being little used, rather like those expensive machines kept hidden away in high schools so as not to get damaged. The present day is what counts, and that has many good aspects, but it is difficult to see anything that endures. The option of the GPs is to stimulate liberty and turn it towards choice, analogous to the process of the SpEx, respecting personal timetables and cultural differences. In this regard, consult GP 7 and GNs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

An adult laity

In a society like the Church, a vertical model of hierarchical authority has prevailed for many centuries. This same hierarchical Church has acknowledged this, and has made positive progressive changes and basic alterations to give up the monarchic models, and take on one of the signs of our times: democracy and participation, a shared authority. The basic process is no longer a verdict [handed down] and obedience, but discernment and commitment. This is the option of the GPs, which affirms the authority of the community itself (GN 32), the value of discernment (GP 5 last sentence, GNs 9 and 19), participatory structures (GP 13), shared responsibility (GP 7 last sentence, GPs 8b, 12c). At the same time, they acknowledge a suitable legal relationship, but above all, value advice, listening, good will, and availability towards the Church hierarchy (GPs 6, 3, last sentence, GPs 14, 16). Behind these themes, there was the novelty of a laity wishing to take on adult maturity in the faith, with access to formation, to sources, to the Scriptures. It is a question of a laity actively seeking to live the faith, make it its own, test it and develop it with maturity.

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It is a question of a laity even capable of producing theology⁶⁶, in dialogue with other sciences and with the lived experience of family, of society, of the economy and politics, capable of entering into a transforming act. In order to reach this laity, and so that this laity may really become adult in the Church, it is necessary [to provide] proposals for the long term for formation, association, community and ecclesial life.

Is neutrality possible?

Well before we consider the Gospel as our principal source, we must ask ourselves now whether neutrality is possible in the matter of values and

⁶⁶ Cf.: Trigo, Pedro S J. In Spanish: *Teólogos No Profesionales Laicos*. In *Teología y Vida* 2006 N.ºXXIX.

choices, as we might sometimes have wished. It would seem the answer is no, it is not possible to remain impassive, and even before we come together in the faith, there exists a rational basis for the choice of values that we can share with non-believers as well as people of other religions: 'to bring about unity within our human family' (GP1), 'to work...for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people' (GP 2), 'the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation' (GP 4), 'to work for justice...' (GP 4). The option in the GPs is neither neutral nor egotistic, does not make of us a sect or an impregnable fundamentalist religious group, suspicious of anything not explicitly Christian. Rather, it encourages us to dialogue, to work with those who are different, united by a rational non-neutral basis that we can enrich through our faith, without fundamentalism.

The perspective of gender in the text

These days, the theme of gender appears in almost every discussion, with its contributions and hyperbole. In 1990, when the text of the GPs had been revised and English adopted as the working language, the need to use gender inclusive language became necessary. This concern is present in the whole text in English, and even in the Castilian translation, as far as possible (today we would do it better). The fact is that this concern for inclusive language has made the way easier towards expressions richer in content, not only from the viewpoint of gender. I am now going to write down something that I am always talking about. The 1967 text (the theme of gender was not so pressing at the time) opened with the word 'God', followed soon after by the possessive, 'his'. From the point of view that concerns us here, that makes us think of a God strictly masculine, although this was not the case in the Spanish translation, because the possessive 'su' is gender neutral. The discussion was complicated from the opening sentence for the international group responsible for the 1990 revision. We realised that language is an expression of culture, that it was not right to impose the English language. It was at this point that someone suggested using a 'dead' language, Latin, so that afterwards translations could be made into 'living' languages, with all their cultural nuances. But, this person was the only one in the group to know Latin, and, besides, Latin, dead though it may be, contains a culture too. So we chose to continue working in English. We changed 'God' to 'The Trinity' (la Trinité), but the English speakers wanted to use 'their' the possessive pronoun (3rd person plural, adapted for collective nouns, and gender neutral in English). But, then, we, the Spanish speakers, protested that the

term '*la Trinité*' is singular...and feminine... And again we were thrown into a state of confusion, until someone, whose language I cannot now recall, suggested using the expression '*the three divine Persons*', which was acceptable in all three languages. And moreover, it was at that exact moment that we realised it was the expression that Ignatius of Loyola used 400 years before in the Contemplation on the Annunciation-Incarnation, which is at the origin of the CLC (cf. SpEx 102). Please refer now to the beginning of the text of the GPs.

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Inclination to action

The GPs extend an ardent invitation to transforming action. Our communal experience '*is a concrete experience of unity in love and action*' (GP 7). Apostolic action, as it is called in Christian language, that transforms death into life, chooses life, works even on Saturdays or sometimes in the face of all logic. But, there is an anthropological root in all of this. We are in the world to

transform it, we are programmed for action. Action is unavoidable, and through it, we fulfil ourselves as intelligent, creative people, capable of modifying our environment, our society, our life. GP 8 may be read from this perspective. In the same way, we can consider the appeal demanding from us all '*a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses*' (GP 12b). Or, more concretely still, the proposal in GN 10: '*the Christian Life Community ...promotes the participation of its members in joint projects to respond to various and changing needs*'.

3rd part: Christology

Although references to some themes have already been made in preceding chapters, it is time now to analyse more specifically the Christology found in the text of the General Principles. In broad outline, we can

simply say the Christology in the General Principles is that of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, given that these last are 'the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our {CLC} spirituality' (GP 5). Starting from this fundamental affirmation and some characteristics of the text, I put forward the following points for consideration

The General Principles take root in the Contemplation on the Incarnation

The GPs do not start with a declaration of our intentions as members of the CLC. They begin with the three divine Persons in contemplation and deliberation (SpEx 102), that is, they begin by emphasising that it is God's initiative. The Trinity decide to give themselves to us, even by tearing apart their harmony to some degree, in order to take on our condition. Jesus Christ is the Word Incarnate, Son of God born by the decision of the Trinity, and Son of



man born of Mary of Nazareth. In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ is the visible expression of 'God's promise of faithfulness forever. (GP1). We must add that the Trinity's contemplation is not impassive: the three Persons see 'the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions' (GP 1), or, what is the same thing, all the people 'going down into hell' (SpEx 102). In this fall, this sin, God adopts us unconditionally by becoming one of us. The aim of the Incarnation is to save the human race (SpEx 102), or according to the words of the GPs, 'liberate them from all their chains' (GP 1), these yokes to which the evil leader subjects us, which has to do with temptations to covet riches, vain honour from the world and surging

pride (SpEx 142 – the 2 Standards). The Incarnation therefore is biased [in our favour]. This is why Jesus is with the poor and shares their condition, and it is from this viewpoint that he invites us all to work with him (GP 1). This is the sermon and the sending out that we hear in the Two Standards and the Call of the King, as we will see in depth later on.

God not only becomes man in Jesus; He becomes poor. That is why the option for the poor is the constitutive part of the dynamic of the Incarnation, Jesus' mission, and not incidental or optional. GP 8 reminds us *'we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses...becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free...'* GP 4 reminds us also; *'we are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them'*. The final sentence of GP 8 summarises this again: *'Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ'*.

The Incarnation is not a moment in time but a dynamic process

After what has been said already, it is now clear that God's initiative in the Incarnation is a dynamic, life-giving process, which Jesus fulfilled by his mission, and to which we are called as collaborators to accomplish in our own lives. According to GP 1, it is a matter of a *'gift of God to us and our response continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances'*. It is a matter of *'making our own the options of Jesus Christ'*, of participating through Him, with Him and in Him in the dynamics of this incarnation. Within this framework, the many statements of the GPs along these lines have great importance: *'particular circumstances'* (GP 1), *'each situation of daily life'* (GP 2), *'the needs of our times'* (GP 2), *'within the world in which we live'* (GP 4), *'the events of our times'* (GP 5), *'each concrete situation of our daily life'* (GP 5), *'in all things'* (GP 5), *'here and now'* (GP 6), *'the signs of the times'* (GP 6), *'our surroundings'* (GP 8a), *'among the great diversity of persons, places and situations'* (GP 8a), *'even the most humble realities of daily life'* (GP 8c), *'in the world today'* (GP 9).

For us, it is a matter of a process of participation in Jesus' mission. The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius represent our essential instrument, but even more the *'dynamics of life engendered by the Spiritual*

Exercises' (GN 39a). It is not only a matter of making or promoting the experience of the Exercises, but of living a communal continuation of them, with the 'type of prayer and relationships which foster a process of integration of faith and life' (GN 39a).

Jesus in dialogue with his Father, moved by the Spirit

Ignatius invites us to contemplate Jesus from his birth to his baptism in the Jordan, and from this baptism to his Ascension. These are like two great chapters; in the first, Jesus is born poor and grows up in the heartbreak of exile, persecution, misunderstanding...but also within a tradition, a family, a people. Contemplating the hidden life helps us find ourselves with Jesus during his formation, reading the Psalms, the Scriptures, praying and discerning his mission, right up until he comes to accept that he is the Messiah, in a messianic style which must have matured in him: that of servant. This contemplation also helps us to understand and take care of Jesus' plan, which, even in our times, grows slowly and is not free of threats. The baptism in the Jordan is a high point of discernment, we could even say it

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is confirmation of the discernment, in which the same Trinity that we have seen in the contemplation on the Incarnation, appears now continuing the redemptive work of the mature Jesus. This theme of discernment of mission and our way of doing it is very present in the General Principles: we are guided by the Spirit, GP 2 tells us that He inscribes in our hearts 'the interior law of love...expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life'. As Jesus does, we want to grow in our vocation and become always more 'open and free, always at the disposal of God'. This is very far from the rigid interpretation of the GPs that is sometimes made, the dazzling, politicised messianic idea that tempts us so often, in the same way that Jesus was tempted.

Jesus calls his apostles to transform the world

In the second part, after having contemplated Jesus maturing, growing and discerning his mission, Ignatius invites us to look at Jesus acting out of the radical love that God has for us, which leads him to accept death. This is the same love which delivers him and resurrects him from death.

While contemplating Jesus in action, we want to know him intimately, learn from him, take on his options (GP 1), enter into a deep 'union with Christ...[who] here and now continues his mission of salvation' (GP 6), makes us 'able to encounter Christ in all persons and all situations' (GP 6). The invitation is 'to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom' (GP 4). We are now at the heart of the CLC vocation which then dwells on the apostolic life extensively in GP 8. Our apostolic action is Christ-centred: 'we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses...becoming identified with his mission...extending the Gospel...proclaiming the Word of God...finds...inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ'.



Marian dimension

In a long tradition with a great Marian content, often distorted, the GPs lead us to a renewed relationship with Mary. The portrayal of Mary is present from the beginning, as we note in GP 1 and in the Contemplation on the Annunciation-Incarnation. By the way, we are told in the CLC that the large fresco before which the first Marian Congregation was born portrayed the Contemplation on the

Annunciation-Incarnation, as it was described by Ignatius in the Exercises. But a fire destroyed the fresco and the face of Mary is all that remains of it. Something similar has happened over time to Marian devotion, and that is why the GPs state that 'our spirituality is centered on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ' (GP 9). Mary is present in the whole framework of the GPs and our vocation, as a 'model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission' and 'inspiration for our action for justice in the world today' (GP 9). We seek to make our own her 'yes' to God, and also her 'effective service' (Visitation), 'her solidarity with the poor' (Magnificat), and her 'cooperation in her Son's mission continued all through her life' (GP 9).

The Mystical Body and the People of God

The General Principles invite us to understand that Christ is Community. Some say that Jesus died as an individual and is risen as Community. Already in the Preamble, the GPs invite us *'to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will'* (GP 2), *'to bring about unity within our human family'* (GP 1). After these far-reaching expressions, which certainly encompass the Church but go beyond her, the Preamble speaks more explicitly of the Church in her hierarchical dimension and *'in joyful communion'* (GP 3), and asks us to join together *'in love and prayer...[with] those many men and women of our spiritual tradition who have been proposed to us...as friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfil our mission'* (GP 3). GP 4 reminds us that our vocation is a *'particular vocation within the Church'*, and then GP 5 recalls the source of our spirituality centered on Christ: the participation in the Paschal Mystery, the Sacred Scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, the

The GPs invite us 'to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will', 'to bring about unity within our human family'

events of our times. So, we arrive at GP 6, which invites us *'to share the richness of membership of the Church'*, by living and spreading the sources already mentioned. It also invites us to *'work together with the hierarchy and other ecclesial leaders'* and directs us so that our motivation is not egocentric, nor centred on the Church nor ecclesiastical, but rather centred on Christ and ecclesial: *'motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people'*, in a *'creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand'* (GP 6). And it is obvious that the Church has need of our presence in her, and on her frontiers and beyond. For example she needs *'involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts'* (GP 8b), in view of that *'unity within our human family'* (GP 1) of which we have already spoken. *'We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians'* (GP 8d). In this way, we show ourselves as *'members of the pilgrim People of God'* (GP 8), and

acknowledge that *'each of our communities is a gathering of people in Christ, a cell of his Mystical Body'* (GP 7). As such, we celebrate the Eucharist as the centre of this *'concrete experience of unity in love and action'* (GP 7) which is the Christian community.

Christ present in our times

Christ becomes present to us in many ways: in our brothers and sisters, especially among the poorest, in the Eucharist, in the Word, in the transforming action that expresses the Pascal Mystery now and forever, in the community and its processes, in the Church, in the example shown by so many men and women who may not necessarily be *'ours'*, etc. All these themes are presented in the General Principles, which are, as we have said already, centred on Christ.

But, there is another aspect, which, although I have already touched on it, I think is useful to mention again at the end of this article. Christ is present in *'the events of our times'*, a theme of particular importance for lay Christians¹⁷. It is this *'world of society'* which I spoke of before while reflecting on the dynamics of the Incarnation, from our daily life through to social and political analysis, *'the interior law of love... respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation, and challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times...'* (GP 2). In this way, the importance of formation, of discernment arises (GP 5) to answer this *'more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith'* (GP 4) and *'seeking and finding God in all things'* (GP 5). This is about the call to *'contribute to the evangelization of cultures from within [and to] work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sort of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor'* (GP 8d). Christ, in the end, is the centre of our GPs and of our vocation, the Christ who died for the victims and is risen with them.

José Reyes

World CLC Vice-President

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Translated from Spanish by Patricia Kane

¹⁷ Cf.: Custodio Jorge, Silva Eduardo. In Spanish: "Interpretación teológica del presente" In *Teología y Vida*, N. xx, 2006

