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PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY
C.P. 6139-(Borgo S. Spirito 8)-00195 Rome-ITALY.
English-Spanish-French Editions
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EDITORIAL

With the last issue of *Progressio* you will have noticed that the layout has been improved. The preparatory work for this was the farewell gift of the outgoing editor, José Reyes.

We, the new team, hope very much that this improvement will encourage our subscribers not only to read but also to take a lively and active interest in *Progressio*.

In it we can see our ongoing history being written. It provides solid material for reflection on our lifestyle, on our mission and on the means of growth typical of our spirituality. That *Progressio* becomes more and more the communication medium of our Community — being *One World Community* — where we learn from each other's needs and sorrows, hopes and dreams, depends very much on *you*, our readers. As the Brazilian proverb goes:

When I dream alone
It remains only a dream.
When we dream together
Then it becomes reality.
... so please write to us.

"*Bringing the Gospel to Today's World*" was the theme of the World CLC Day celebrated this year on 25th March. We invite you to tell *Progressio* about your experience of this day in your community. Can you help in trying to formulate an answer to the following ?...

- * What are the most urgent needs to which we must respond as an integral part of our work of *evangelisation* ?
- * What can National CLC and the World Community do to renew our evangelising impact in today's world ?

We are hoping for your replies.

Progressio

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY: THE THRILL OF MY LIFE

The following is a testimony by Fr Nick Rieman SJ, former Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant — and much more — to World CLC, who died suddenly on 24th December last year, at the age of seventy-four. The text was sent to us by Fr Dominic Totaro SJ, former Eccl. Assistant to CLC-USA and a good friend of Fr Nick.

Getting to know CLC:

My first acquaintance with Christian Life Community began as a student at Creighton University in Omaha. Actually, CLC (then known as Sodality) at Creighton was rather weak, with infrequent meetings and almost no formation; but the dozen leaders of our Sodality Council met every week, and our meetings were a good fusion of the spiritual and the apostolic. Then, in my senior year, I was chosen “prefect” or president of the group, and that too made it more important in my life.

As a student, and later as a young Jesuit, I took part in many SSCAs (Summer Schools of Catholic Action), sponsored and staged in different U.S. cities by the national Sodality movement. They were alive to the best that was then stirring in the Church, and they helped me work toward an integrated life by their blend of courses on everything from the Trinity to interracial problems, from mental prayer to community process, from peace issues to parliamentary law.

Later, as a Jesuit scholastic teaching at Loyola Academy in Chicago, I helped Derm Rabaut, a Jesuit priest, work with the high school boys' Sodality. Derm was a “hard charger”, a man with no grays in his horizons; but he did take Sodality seriously; he challenged the students to try to do fifteen minutes' mental prayer a day, as the Sodality rules prescribed. When doing theology, I worked with five other Jesuits on a High School Probation Sodality Handbook. This book offered an

integrated and progressive program for the first year of Sodality formation for youth and was soon used rather widely.

By the time I was ordained a priest, I knew I wanted to work with Sodality. My Jesuit Provincial concurred, and after my year of tertianship in French-speaking Belgium, I was given five months to wander around Western Europe, visit Sodalities, see new forms of Catholic Action then surfacing, and get abreast of new developments in liturgy and the apostolate. It was a precious time, for it really stretched my brain; and ever since then, I've been unable to limit my vision of CLC possibilities to just what was happening on the U.S. scene.

Launching CLC in Cleveland and Detroit:

My Provincial said that I'd have to pursue my Sodality interest in conjunction with an assignment as assistant pastor in the Gesu Parish, Cleveland. Five weeks after I arrived there, I had gotten the names of prospects from Jesuits and key lay parishioners. I made about thirty-five phone calls, and soon we had underway a Gesu Men's Sodality, with seventeen members. Our weekly meetings blended prayer, scripture and apostolic action, and I had individual conferences with each of the men once a month. Soon the group initiated in the parish the "Dialog Mass", in which for the first time the congregation said the responses at Mass. The group also planned and carried out an Inquiry Class for prospective converts. I rejoiced to see the energy and competence with which these men took to the apostolic projects, meanwhile grounding themselves ever more deeply in gospel values. In my first two years at the parish, I spent a third of my time working with those seventeen Sodality members, but at the end of those two years, they were doing half the parish work that I'd been doing myself when I first came.

Daily meditation on the gospels was part of the Sodality "Way of Life", and most did it faithfully. Meetings drew heavily on such Ignatian themes as discernment, the consciousness examen, and the call of the kingdom. At the end of the first year, all the members made a closed four-day retreat, and a year later they began the practice of an annual eight-day, closed retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises. These men

forged a strong community, bonding through faith-sharing and through the various projects they worked on together. Sodality was becoming for them a vocation, the vocation of Ignatian Spirituality for lay people, parallel to my own vocation as a Jesuit.

The next year, I began the Gesù Women's Sodality along the same lines, and one year later we combined the men's and women's groups into one Sodality. The group gradually attracted members from other areas of Cleveland, and they renamed themselves the Leunis Sodality after John Leunis SJ, one of the movement's originators. Our Leunis membership, divided into eleven different sections, at one point numbered eighty-five. They were involved in a wide variety of apostolic efforts: Jewish and Protestant dialogue, founding a diocesan interracial council, initiating Pre-Cana Conferences (for engaged people), hosting foreign students, liturgical renewal, labor-management conferences, city-wide monthly Catholic lectures, etc. The group also helped the Toledo CLC get started. Today, over thirty years later, there are still five communities of that original group, with about fifty-five members, living the CLC vocation.

Later on, in Detroit, I worked closely with lay CLC leaders in initiating first the Colombiere CLC, later on the Anawim Christian Life Community, and in the 1980s the Shelby Disciples and Cluster CLCs. During much of this time I was also assigned by my Provincial as CLC Province Promotor, and I worked with various other communities, both adult and student (university and high school). I rejoiced to see the gradual development of a number of amazingly effective lay leaders in CLC, some of them as knowledgeable in Ignatian spirituality and as committed in living it out as the best Jesuits I knew. At the same time, there were many frustrations. Some quite promising groups did not last. And, in spite of earnest and continuing efforts, only a few Jesuits of my province came to appreciate what Christian Life Community really is and how marvelous an apostolate it is to collaborate with.

The National Community:

My involvement with Christian Life Community was by no means limited to the area of my own Jesuit province. I took part in, and often

led, workshops at all but one of the biennial CLC national conventions over those years. One of those conventions, San Francisco '79, made commitment to justice and solidarity with the poor part of the mainstream of US CLC life. I was heavily involved in the two national CLC deliberations of the 1970s at St Louis, both of which had a strong emphasis on mission. I also gave the Spiritual Exercises to CLC members and other lay leaders in closed retreats of eight or thirty days, and through 6-10 month Exercises-in-Daily-Life retreats. All the retreats I guided in the last twenty-five years have been individually directed, and it has been a real privilege to see God at work in the retreatants as they made these Ignatian Exercises.

Along with Barbara Bedolla, Marie Schimelfening and others, I was deeply involved in working to form more effective CLC Guides. As a team we planned and conducted courses for guides for the formation of communities. Later on, this same trio formed the National Formation Facilitating Team. Working with them and others like them for the growth of CLC is hard work but also a great joy, because all of us have the same vision of CLC and the same commitment to it as God's gift of Ignatian spirituality for laypeople.

The World Christian Life Community:

In 1971 I was designated by the World CLC Executive Council to serve as the Jesuit Vice-Ecclesial Assistant for the World CLC. For the next six years I was based in Rome. Here I found both more frustrations and more opportunities to serve the Christian Life Community I had grown to love with a more splendid love. During this time, I worked closely with José Gsell, the Executive Secretary. With her strong Ignatian background, her intellectual and practical gifts, and her boundless energy, José gradually grew to be a powerful force in CLC renewal. Together we helped CLC's World Executive Council become a true Ignatian community and so equip itself to guide the swiftly deepening world movement. Just before the World Assembly of 1973, we offered at Rome the first International CLC Formation Course, consisting of eight days' individually directed Exercises followed by a full week of deep community exchanges on our CLC charism. We were

overwhelmed when one hundred and five CLC leaders from thirty countries signed up for it. This was a giant step forward in more solid Ignatian formation.

At that time José and I, with others, helped to plan the world assemblies so that they focused ever more strongly on justice and solidarity with the poor. This is illustrated in their themes: Augsburg, Germany '73: *CLC, A Community at the Service of the Liberation of All People*; Manila '76: *Poor with Christ for a Better Service* (This included an immersion experience in the slums of Manila, followed by the eight-day, individually directed Exercises); and Rome '79: *Towards a World Community at the Service of One World*.

The annual 6-9 week trips that José and I, sometimes with a third CLC leader, made to Asia, Africa and Latin America were wearing — I always lost at least ten pound on such trips — but wonderfully invigorating; they did much to deepen our conviction of the absolute necessity of integrating spirituality and justice. I was amazed at the Ignatian spirit at work within CLC leaders in many countries, and this has continually reinforced my sense that working with and for Christian Life Communities was by far the most effective way that I could share the Ignatian spirituality God had given me with lay people.

Since returning to the United States in 1977, I have continued to serve the World CLC in a variety of ways, especially by chairing two successive commissions on revising the General Principles and Statutes. These commissions involved close collaboration with CLC leaders from France, Hong Kong, the United States, Chile, Japan, Italy and Australia. We completed this revision at Rome in August 1989; it has been accepted by the World Executive Council and approved by the World Assembly in 1990 at Guadalajara, Mexico. My work on this commission has again shown me that both Jesuits and CLC members take their vocation seriously and know and live Ignatian spirituality fully.

At our 1979 US CLC Convention in San Francisco, Father Edward Farrell, a diocesan priest and nationally known writer on spirituality, himself not involved with CLC, said that in his view Christian Life Community was "infinitely capacitated for the future". I, too, feel that

CLC with its solid grounding in the Spiritual Exercises, its long formation, its practice of personal and community discernment, and its insistence on a faith that does justice, offers a vocation to lay people that is unique, precious and wonderfully adapted to our world today.

The reader can see that I love CLC very much and am deeply committed to it, with a commitment that has grown ever since the day when I first made my commitment as a university student. I will do absolutely anything I can for Christian Life Community. That is why I entitle this short account "CLC — The Thrill of My Life." I am not at all an emotional person. I practically never use the word "thrill" and certainly cannot think of any other area of my life in which I would use that word. But I am simply stating a fact when I say that it has been, and is, the thrill of my life to be part of, and to serve, Christian Life Community and all those who follow its vocation.

Fr Nick Rieman SJ

THE NEW EVANGELISATION — THIS MEANS YOU !

The Pope has for some years been urging us, in speeches and various writings, to a New Evangelisation, one which calls for us to open our hearts to the world, to see it as God sees it, and to take onboard our responsibility for it. The Pope calls us to become aware of the changes which are taking place in so many ways, of the crises, violence and injustice which dehumanise us, which mean we need to be deeply infused by the vital energy that comes from God.

Before a changing world, the Church calls together all the faithful, men and women, to enrich with the power of the Gospel the birth of the world to come. She throws down the challenge of working for a future which will be really *new*, rich with the eternal youthfulness of God which has been brought to us in Jesus Christ.

It is this new missionary zeal which the Pope has dubbed “the New Evangelisation”, an evangelisation which must be “new in its zeal, new in its methods and new in its expressions”, since this is the only possible way of faithfully bringing the essence of evangelisation to humankind in today’s world. It is only in this way that this Good News can be incarnated in a new culture, more responsible and more human.

What does evangelise mean ?

— In the pagan world: *Euangelion* was a Greek word which meant “good news”. It meant good news announcing victory in battle and the imminent return of the victorious king, celebrating his victory and establishing his justice: rewarding those loyal to him and punishing his opponents.

— In the Old Testament: the term *euangelion* was used to announce the coming of God’s salvation (Isaiah 52:7), which was understood to mean victory over enemies, relief for the oppressed and justice for the weak,

pardon for sins and the return to the promised land. The Good News in the Old Testament is divine power in action which must be proclaimed, and which announces the true reign of God and the coming of God's justice.

— In the New Testament:

Jesus called himself "messenger of the good news" (Mat 11:4 ff, Luke 4:16-21) and his essential message is "The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News" (Mark 1:15). Jesus announces that the Kingdom of the Father has arrived with him, he calls his disciples to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's justice, and promises that everything else will follow. In Jesus, the messenger becomes the very centre of the Good News, Jesus *brings* and *is* the Good News of the love of the Father for the world and for humanity. *In Him* is God who comes to save by establishing his kingdom as a father among his children, who are beginning to think and act like brothers and sisters. Jesus *is* the Good News, *God with us*, who entrusts this Good News to us.

The disciples: Jesus, resurrected from the cross, comes upon his disciples, and fills them with joy. He strengthens and enlightens them and tells them "go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News," to all creation, sealing this news with God's saving power in baptism, which transforms the disciples into people redeemed and marked by Christ in the depths of their being. The power of the encounter with the resurrected Jesus enables the apostles to bear the Good News which fills their hearts and changes their lives. They have discovered that in Jesus raised from the dead, God saves the world, and that by the power of the Holy Spirit, God is establishing among us the kingdom of justice and love. Their experience shows them that life holds nothing more important than this and, for this reason, they go out to proclaim the Good News which has revolutionised their value system, and which makes them realise that what is at stake is nothing other than the salvation of the world. For Paul, evangelisation is the power of God in action, which must be proclaimed so that all things may be renewed. He goes as far as to say "How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16)

— As women and men of today, how can we bear Good News which is really *good* and *new* to our society and to our history ? The news we proclaim must be both good and powerful if we are to transform and renew our world. How do we do this ? — only if and when we have a personal experience of God and of the Risen Christ; if we have “fallen in love” with Him and are convinced that He is the Lord of the world and of history; only if we have heard the call to “be with Him” and to “work with Him” for the coming of the Father’s Kingdom. In the Father’s Kingdom every one of the baptised contributes their life and their work in the service of our world to make it more human. It is only when the call has brought us to a deep relationship with Jesus, that we can be messengers of powerful good news which revitalises society and its structures.

The New Evangelisation

New Evangelisation is what we call the missionary effort to which the Pope calls the whole Church and all the baptised nearly two thousand years after the Incarnation of the Son of God. It is a mission which urges us to renew humanity by the divine power of the message of salvation, to evangelise all cultures with the Good News of Jesus Christ. This leads us to “convert people’s awareness — both personal and collective, the activities they engage in, and their way of life.” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* no.18, our translation) The goal of our mission is to transform with the power of the Gospel, which is the risen Jesus Christ, humankind’s “criteria of judgement, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* no.19)

Since the Church is convinced that the Gospel can permeate and revitalise all cultures without being subject to any, she calls us to overcome the division between Gospel and culture which has been a strong feature of our times. John Paul II tells us that “a faith that doesn’t become culture is a faith that has not been fully welcomed, nor entirely thought through, nor faithfully lived out.” The inculturation of Gospel values has the power progressively to transform people and their

cultures. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, we are reminded that the Second Vatican Council called us all together, laity and priests, the communion of the baptised, to work in the Lord's vineyard, and that "the vineyard is the whole world which must be transformed according to the divine plan for the final coming of the Kingdom of God." The task is great, and fascinating !

Contemplatives in action

For Christians there is no way to commit ourselves other than the way followed in God's commitment to humanity: the way of Incarnation. Saint Ignatius, in the Spiritual Exercises, asks us to be witnesses of the way in which the Holy Trinity sees the world where human beings destroy themselves and each other in hatred and war. And what is the divine answer to this? "Let us work the redemption of the human race," ...and how do they do it? The Father sends the Son who accepts being placed into this shocking reality and, by the action of the Holy Spirit, the Son becomes flesh in the womb of a virgin, a simple and humble young woman, and so shares in human life, to the bitter end....and all this for the sake of reconciling human beings with God and with one another.

I think this way of Incarnation followed by all the saints in history, is the way that we too must follow, we who, by Baptism are called to holiness through love, who as a Christian Life Community are committed to closely following the way of Jesus. This way enables us to release around us the saving power of the Gospel. It enables us to proclaim the Good News within our families, in our work and to those around us. This is the way of inculturating the Gospel, and it has different stages, as described by Ignatius in the contemplation of the Incarnation:

Looking at the world through God's eyes: we look at our lives at home, in the workplace, at our commitment to the strengthening of democracy. We look at the world we live in, the different events, people, situations, crises, asking Jesus for the capacity to look at it all with love, with an awareness that it is the Father's world, and

that the creatures who live in it are God's children. Here, a meditative reading of a Gospel passage can be very helpful. So doing, we will become more like Jesus and come to see others as he does.

Discerning the forces of life and death in what we experience in all the different spheres of our life with the help of prayer, the Church's teaching and social doctrine, and the support of a community that is seeking the Lord. Thus the world and its history will become the sacred ground where our fidelity to God and the coming of God's kingdom are borne out.

Risking everything in backing the side of life and reconciliation as we see it entwined within all situations and events; consecrating ourselves to the evangelisation of culture, with all our strength, and — like Jesus — regardless of the price we might have to pay. This is the gift we bring to the Eucharistic celebration in order to come away enriched with the holiness God gives us through it.

It is by following this path that we become *contemplatives in action*, finding God in all things and opening ourselves to meet the risen Jesus. This meeting will stir, in our tired and disillusioned hearts, a new fervour to be witnesses of life in all we do. It will revive our creativity to find out *new ways of evangelisation*. It will reveal to us the *new expressions* we need to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ with which the New Evangelisation has to transform and revitalise the world.

Josefina Errázuriz

A COMMUNITY CALLED TO SERVE

The following is a translation of the talk given to the National Congress of CLC-France by the Provincial of the French Jesuits, Fr Jacques Orgebin SJ. We thought it would also be of interest and benefit to the World Community. In addressing the Congress, Fr Orgebin sought simply to share his reflections on the title of their assembly — “a community called to serve”....

Being with Him

Although the call to serve re-echoes all over the Gospel, it must be pointed out first of all that Jesus did not start by entrusting his disciples with a task, with a programme of action to be carried out. He didn't tell them “Here's my plan. You're going to come with me, we'll start by preaching the Kingdom in Galilee, then in Judea. From time to time I'll send you off on mission, two by two, to cast out devils and heal the sick. Later on, when I am gone you will leave Jerusalem and set up communities in my name all over Palestine, and as far as Athens and Rome. That's the agreement. If you're happy with it, then sign!”

No, Christ didn't talk in these terms. He didn't begin by calling them to a task, however noble. First of all he called them to Him, to *his person*, without their knowing beforehand just where this might lead them. Those amongst you who have made the Exercises know how much they emphasise the personal relationship with Jesus, who is the foundation of everything. Mark's Gospel expresses this in a way, describing in Chapter Three a scene where Jesus is seen climbing the mountain. A crowd of people gather on the mountainside, men and women wounded by life and ravaged by illness, who are desperately seeking a saviour. One could imagine how, in the face of such suffering humanity, Jesus's first reaction would be to say to his disciples “do something for all these people, don't leave them like this.” But in fact this was not His way of doing things. Before sending people to others, he called them to Himself.

Jesus, according to the text, "*summoned those he wanted. So they came to him, and he appointed twelve*"... not to be sent straight into action, but to be his companions. So, before anything else, Jesus calls people to enter into familiarity with Him, to live in and from His presence. Only on this basis could the disciples be sent to announce the One whose life they share in, and put themselves at the service of his liberating work.

With Him and with each other

It seems to me that today more than ever we must hear the word of Jesus, asking his disciples to come close to him and stay with him, *together*. I insist on the word "together" because Christian existence is never a solo venture. We move towards Christ with one another, by means of one another. We always need others with whom we keep learning how to grow and to be partners in Christ's mission in this world.

No doubt, the call of Jesus is always addressed to an individual, and not to vague or anonymous groups. Like the "follow me" of the Gospel it seeks from each disciple a free response. But to follow Christ's path and be with Him always means joining with those who have heard the same call. The Church of Christ, in the etymological sense, means "the community of the called".

In this sense, this congress expresses symbolically the common wish of its members to support each other mutually and to encourage each other to respond together to the call of Jesus. I am using the word "symbolic" here in a sense that tends to be lost in current usage. If we call an action symbolic we often mean it is almost insignificant, but in fact, in all their richness, symbols are the reality which the human being cannot do without if s/he wishes to express and affirm the desires of the heart. A love or friendship that is never manifested in tangible, concrete signs, ordinary though they may be, will always fizzle out in the end.

In the same way, any Christian group will end in break-up if its members don't really work together, reflecting a shared desire to

respond to their Saviour's call. Your meeting in this place witnesses to your wish to make this gathering a community of men and women committed to the same mission in the name of Christ who calls us to serve *together*, as co-workers in His mission.

At the service of the mission

It is exactly this mission that I'd like to talk about now, by reference to a text from the recent Synod dedicated to the vocation of the laity in the world.¹

"Although it be one," says this text, "the mission of the People of God in the world carries two dimensions : the witness given to the risen Christ, and activity aimed directly at renewing the temporal order to bring about greater union, justice and charity between people."

Witnessing to the resurrected Christ

One way of describing the first kind of witness the Synod talks of would be the humble spreading of the presence of the risen Christ and the power of his Spirit, in the ordinariness and reality of our daily lives.

We know from experience that our lives are made up of a lot of decisions, some big, some little, which give each person's history its own shape. You reveal yourself — both to yourself and to others — by the choices you make, or those you avoid. In this perspective, Christian existence becomes human existence, and no more, but with the one added condition that it be directed by choices in harmony with the Spirit of Christ. So for Christians, the first kind of evangelisation of the world is the evangelisation of their own decision-making.

We in the Ignatian tradition know that it is not possible to split your life into two parts as if there were one part for things connected

¹ Synod of 1987 on "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council".

with God — Mass, prayer and reading the scriptures — and the other part for things connected with ourselves and others, that God has nothing to do with.

It is our total existence that is called to become Christian, that is, animated by a certain spirit — the Spirit of Christ. To live in the Spirit is to allow the Spirit into all the dimensions of our lives, our relationships, our family life, our work. The Faith is not split into sectors. The point of it is to guide our actions in all their aspects and to enlighten all our decisions — wherein we weave the fabric of our daily lives.

To put it in yet another way, an existence lived in a certain spirit, that of Jesus himself, radiates this presence. It constitutes the first form of witness given to Christ. Such a testimony isn't always expressed in words, and even when words play their part, they aren't necessarily words about religion, since there is a spiritual way of talking about everything.

It remains to be said that our way of being, acting and talking isn't the only kind of witness expected of Jesus's disciples. It's also about expressing the faith, and being its servants. This service can be accomplished in many different ways and in particular by Christians' cooperating in the spiritual enlivening of the church community. Saying this, I am not just thinking of all the initiatives you take within the Christian Life Community. I also have in mind all that you do, and all that you could do, to contribute to the Church's pastoral activity in all its fields of action: youth catechesis, student chaplaincy, spiritual companionship for people or groups outside CLC. The list of needs and possibilities is considerable, and you know it as well as I do. I am not at all arguing that Christians must put all their efforts into the internal servicing of the church community. The Church does not have as its sole aim the well-being of the faithful. She operates in the world and for the world. The message of the Gospel is not a hidden treasure to be shared with a precious few believers within their church. The Good News of Jesus has to be spread throughout the world, not only in words but in the deeds which it motivates.

Humanising the world

The second dimension of the mission of the people of God, which the Synod talked of, must therefore not be overlooked. Christians are called to contribute to the *"renewing of the temporal order to bring about greater union, justice and charity between people"*. So, there is an unbreakable link between the service of faith and the renewal of the temporal order. The Gospel also reaffirms this many times, and particularly in the well-known parable of the sower.

Christ talks of a seed thrown on the ground which produces thirty, sixty or a hundred-fold according to the quality of the soil. The seed is the word of God, but it's also the witness of disciples, whose way of living, acting, and talking makes the presence of the Lord and the power of the Spirit manifest in the world.

Now, Christ tells us this seed is sure to bear fruit so long as it falls on ground that is well-prepared. So, our Christian mission cannot simply consist in personally leading a life which bears witness to Christ; nor can it be limited to proclaiming the Good News in words; it also implies creating the appropriate conditions for its welcome. The Christian must not despair of any of the kinds of ground the Gospel talks about.

— there is the ground at the edge of the road, in other words the lives of the downtrodden, those trampled underfoot after undergoing trials or being treated with contempt.

— there is the stony ground, in other words lives with no soil, without depth, without roots; those who fall slavishly for every attraction, vulnerable to all the hurts that are a part of existence and constantly in danger of withering away.

— there is the ground covered in thorns, in other words lives cluttered with the unimportant, people led astray by all the trappings of success, seduced by things that merely alienate and enslave.

All these types of ground, all these lives, are part of the mission ground entrusted to Jesus's disciples. It won't do for them just to be

rich soil themselves, or to work on soil that is rich and well-disposed to welcome the good seed. They have to work the ground of this world such as it is, so that from it may spring the harvest of the Kingdom. They have to work to humanise humanity so that Christ, acting by the power of his Spirit, may make it divine.

Accomplishing such a mission involves the personal action of every Christian within their own situation, but it also requires us to consider broader questions which have a bearing on how our collective life is structured, on the running of the economy, the educational system, cultural activity, etc. In all these fields, where the future of our society is at stake, Christians are not the only ones expressing their point of view, suggesting solutions and contributing to their being put into practice, but their faith in Christ doesn't allow them to take a back seat. All the way through the Gospel, Jesus who announces the Good News in words also heals the body. Following his example, Christians have a mission to help heal the body of society from its ills.

It's not up to me to say what concrete form the putting into practice of this Gospel message might take for the Christian Life Community. The only thing I would like to say is that the Society of Jesus — whom the Father General has urged many times to bring together the service of faith and the promotion of justice — needs partners to respond to what is asked of it. On the face of it, you are well qualified to be these partners. The spirituality which is common to us, which would have to guide our way, invites each and every one of us to look at the world as Ignatius did in the meditation of the Incarnation in the Exercises, that is with the compassion that the three persons of the Trinity have for the whole of humanity. Compassion means "suffering with" by being placed side by side with those life has not blessed, side by side with the victims of every sort of misfortune, injustice and violence. Compassion also means caring not only about those in pain, but also about those who are the most vulnerable to the wounds that life can inflict, the young, the weak, those left out by education, more threatened than others by social change and the upheavals of history. In a word, compassion means bothering about those who haven't got much to look after themselves with, who need to be strengthened in human and spiritual terms so they can stand and face the future.

— An immense task, certainly, the prospect of which might sometimes leave us with a sense of powerlessness and despair. I am sure that the apostles who went before us were familiar with this testing experience. So to finish, I'd like to remind you of a Gospel passage where Christ gives hope to his discouraged disciples.

Our Hope

The scene retold in John 4:35 happens around March, beside a sown field where no shoots have yet appeared. Jesus addresses his disciples, looking at the ground, *"Haven't you got a saying: four months and then the harvest? Well, I tell you, look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest!"*

— A puzzling thing to say. But Jesus isn't trying to give us an agriculture lesson here. He has something else in mind. "You see," he is saying, "that in this sown field there isn't a single shoot to be seen. But you know that if you look again in four months, there'll be corn there. Well then, just as you have no doubt about the harvest coming from this earth, believe too that in humanity, where my word and yours have been planted, the harvest of the kingdom will come." But to believe this, we need to accept the task of sowing without reaping, just as we reap what others have sown before us. "One sows, another reaps", as Jesus goes on, "I sent you to reap a harvest you had not worked for, and you will come into the rewards of their trouble. But the day will come when other harvesters reap what you have sown, and you will rejoice with them."

So, there can be a long time between the planting of the seed of which Christ talks (the time of witnessing) and the reaping of its fruits. Christ invites us to sow, with hope, fields which are not yet flush with the harvest, to prepare a future whose fruits we may never see.

Perhaps, at times, we may have doubts about the fruitfulness of our mission. It is here that we need a little of the patience of God, which does not ask us to put off until later what needs doing today, but teaches us not to sit anxiously waiting for the Church's mission — or the

Christian mission, or CLC's — to succeed. Thus, we must lift from our hearts that worry which makes us think we must do everything ourselves as if everything began and ended with us.

We always enter into the same work that others have done before us. We reap the heritage of our predecessors and we prepare the way for those yet to follow. Only one thing matters: believing that God is there, hidden in the heart of the unknowable future, to bring to fruition our patient labour, on ground that is bare and dry, which the Lord tells us will flourish: This is our hope.

Jacques Orgebin SJ

HELPING SOULS: THE APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY OF SAINT IGNATIUS

The series of talks given by Father Ochagavía over the month of April 1991 represents the fruit of many years of theological and pastoral reflection. Each one takes a fresh look at spirituality — apostolic and Ignatian — and could be used as a basis for personal prayer or group reflection. In coming issues we will be printing the four talks with most relevance for us in CLC.

PART ONE: The Touch of God Makes Ignatius an Apostle.

1. Introduction:

In these articles I am going to talk about the apostolic spirituality of Saint Ignatius. This first part is concerned with the origin and characteristics of the apostolic spirituality we inherit from him, whilst the second part will attempt to show the image of Christ which forms the basis of his spiritual experience. I shall follow by talking about what kind of concrete form Ignatian Spirituality took within the Society of Jesus and in groups of laypeople set up by Ignatius and his first companions. Finally, we will see how Ignatius presents us with modern challenges that face apostolic spirituality for religious and laypeople alike.

The problems and difficulties religious life comes up against are not that far away from those of laypeople who devote themselves actively to their apostolate. To take a concrete example, let's look back and consider the theological/spiritual conflict which arose between different tendencies in the Latin American Church. The mutual mistrust between these tendencies boils down in the end to this: one side is afraid that Latin America's religious are becoming too horizontalist in their options for the poor, neglecting the relationship with God and the link with the Church Hierarchy. For their part, those on the other side believe they cannot do enough for the people of the Latin American continent, particularly for the

poor. They admit that their members' life in the Spirit may be lacking in some ways, but they don't believe the solution lies in reducing their social involvement nor their presence among the poorest people.

I am fully aware that by saying this I have not dealt with the full complexity or the full implications of this problem. But limiting myself to the essential outline has the advantage of making the point at issue more clearly understood. In my opinion, we in the Church have a number of different models, different ways of understanding apostolic spirituality and apostolic religious life. There are those, and not a few, for whom monastic life will always remain the one valid model — not just in theory but there in the reality of their gut feelings. The fact that apostolic religious life has not yet settled into its place in the Church need not be attributed to some ill will, nor to the limitations of other religious or of bishops. The reason for it is that apostolic spirituality, and consequently apostolic religious life, are relatively recent phenomena which have still got some integrating to do into the whole of spirituality and theology. This is due to a number of factors — the legacy of Greek thinking, legitimate concern in the face of many forms of materialism, etc — which we can't very well deal with here.

This statement is confirmed by the fact that the laity themselves suffer from the same problem, knowing the difficulty of finding the right balance between action and prayer-life, between their role as citizens of the Earth and the obligations born of their Christian identity. The Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, referring to the Second Vatican Council, strongly denounces this lack of integration: "There cannot be two parallel lives in their existence: on the one hand, the so-called "spiritual" life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called "secular" life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and in culture.... They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities; for they are forgetting that by faith itself they are more obliged to measure up to these duties, each according to one's vocation. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age." (CL 59, cf *Gaudium et Spes* 43)

The laity are often victims of this lack of integration between faith and day-to-day life. Let us think, for example, of how much suffering is caused in the home when a husband or wife will not accept that their partner devotes some time and effort, in the name of the faith, to apostolic duties

beyond their normal daily work: "How long are you going to play at curates?", she says; "I didn't marry a nun!", says he. So much suffering within families, so many rows, and what a waste of energy!

There is a worrying tendency in today's Church towards this split between faith and life. Whilst the Pope, on his travels, calls every one of us to labour tirelessly for the spreading of the Gospel, and to work for the eradication of human misery and injustice, we are witnessing the appearance here and there of groups which are pulling in the opposite direction. These are movements which don't believe in Christian involvement in the world, accusing social-minded Catholics of being materialists, of having forgotten the value of transcendence ... they take no interest in earthly development, nor in the disasters which burden human society. To their way of thinking, God is not to be found there. God is up there in heaven. They set up places where they can find refuge in prayer, having a strong preference for some spot far from the "hue and cry" of the world — today's version of the old medieval spirituality of "fuga mundi" (flight from the world). Some would go even further, favouring and teaching a kind of prayer which is nothing more than an escape, connected with the error of quietism.

But it is also true that you can find examples in today's Church of an error which is the opposite of quietism, that is "activism". This however, it seems to me, can be seen more as an expression of human weakness than as a spiritual current, organised and active. There are people — religious, priests, laity — full of an admirable zeal, always active, always on the move. But their behaviour is obsessive, they do nothing but work, taking no time to communicate with God, justifying it by saying the needs of the Kingdom don't allow them such luxury. Their prayer life is impoverished and limited, empty of any real desire to be with God and to let themselves be led by God.

In the face of this situation in the Church, recourse to Ignatius of Loyola takes on a profound meaning. He didn't invent apostolic spirituality, nor apostolic religious life. It was not him, but Christ who originated them at the moment when, touched by the Spirit, he decided to leave Nazareth and to proclaim and bring about the signs of the Kingdom. In the long centuries before Ignatius, the Spirit of the Risen Lord led many others to leave their Nazareths to go and join the search, always with Christ, for the lost sheep of Israel. Ignatius would be the first to object if we were to give *him* the credit for inventing apostolic spirituality and religious life. It is true, none the less, that Ignatius deserves particular recognition in this

field. The fact is he lived the charism of following Christ with great clarity and made of it all a life experience and a learning process — the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus — to teach it and to convey it to others. Ignatius had the gift of knowing how to go for the essential, combining — in the right measure — thought and action, adapting theory to practice, words to actions and love to service. Because of all this, referring to Saint Ignatius can be most enlightening and useful in the situations we find ourselves in in the Church of today.

There remains a minor point of terminology for me to outline, which none the less is important. In current language we talk of “apostolic spirituality” and “apostolic religious life”. I have to acknowledge that I don’t feel comfortable with this way of speaking, since even monastic spirituality is apostolic, and even the most active life should be one of contemplation. The encyclical *Christifideles Laici* says of all Christians that they should be apostles. The Church communion is essentially a missionary communion. “communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.” (CL 32) In this perspective, to declare that the word “apostolic” be reserved for one certain type of spirituality or religious life makes little sense, given that in reality the whole Church and each one of its members is called to the apostolate. Ignatian specialists confirm that Ignatius never talks of “apostolic religious life” or “apostolic spirituality” in the sense we have become used to. He was much more specific, which is why he preferred the simple expressions “following Christ” and “helping souls”. We will see in our study how Ignatius can help us in finding a terminology that does not discriminate, which expresses better the affinity between all Christians, yet all the time respecting their specific identities.

2. Origin and Characteristics:

The son of Don Beltrán of Loyola, page at the court of the King of Spain and trustee of the Viceroy of Navarra learned in his youth how to put himself at the service of others: a king, one of his ministers, a viceroy, ... and always a woman !

As recent studies show, it would not do justice to Ignatius to believe only what he himself said of his life up to the age of twenty-six, that he was “subject to the vanities of the world” (Autobiography 1). That this was his dominant inclination we have no reason to doubt, but this portrait is not complete without the work he did at the service of the King over eleven

years in Castilla, under the direction of his protector, Velásquez de Cuéllar. The Ignatius who acknowledged having been "a very good calligrapher" (Aut. 11) acquired, under the wing of his protector, a whole legal and administrative education which was his way of serving the King and which — providentially — was to serve him well for managing the Society of Jesus. (cf Rogelio García Mateo, "Ignatius of Loyola's Administrative Education in Castilla and His Personality", in Fr de Leturia's "Ignatius of Loyola in Castilla", Valladolid 1989, 129-141).

When the cavalier, greedy for honour, who resisted to the point of recklessness the French assault on Pamplona, was besieged by God whilst reading the *Life of Christ* and the lives of the saints, a single goal became clear: to rival the saints in knowing and loving Jesus Christ. Thus was born in him the desire to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and to retreat into a monastery for the rest of his days, devoting himself to prayer and penitence (Aut. 8, 12). It is clear how much his thoughts at this time were influenced by Carthusianus, the author he was reading, with his passionate love for Christ and his extolling of the virtue of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Ignatius felt moved to make a lone pilgrimage and to embrace the monastic life. There was not yet the slightest trace of a desire to be a preaching apostle. In the castle at Loyola he talked only of the "things of God, with which he helped their souls" (Aut.11)

It is from his time at Manresa that the first signs of Ignatius's interest in "helping souls" appeared (Aut.26), but it was more a case of an occasional bit of help to people who "came seeking it" — not yet the principal objective of his life. The same is true of the twin goals of his journey to Jerusalem, the prime motive being his devotion to going to places where Jesus lived, to which he added the desire "to help souls" (Aut.45). The constant desire to help souls grew in him when he felt that it was God's will that he abandon the idea of going to Jerusalem. Thinking about what else he could do, he eventually decided to begin studies to "enable him to help souls" (Aut.50). So he took himself off to Barcelona, where he undertook a course of studies in Grammar, and sought companions with this same ideal of helping those around them. From this moment on, the "helping of souls" — helping them by means of the Spiritual Exercises to be guided by God and to work with Christ for the Kingdom of his Father — would be his guiding light, leading him wherever he went — to Alcala, Salamanca, Paris, Venice, Rome... to the end of his days. It is rightly said that the "helping of souls" as a loving response to the call of Christ, is the basic charism, the fundamental grace of Ignatius and of the Society.

We should not, however, be satisfied with this somewhat superficial look at the origin of Ignatius's ambition to "help souls". The mystery of the Trinity lets us delve a bit more deeply into the matter. From the start, when God "treated him in the same way as a schoolteacher treats a child, teaching him" (Aut.27), Ignatius's spiritual experience bore the mark of the Trinity. He spoke of having at that time "a great devotion to the Holy Trinity, and praying every day to each of the Three Persons". Then, one day, as he was praying to Our Lady, his understanding became so elevated that he saw "the Holy Trinity in the form of three piano keys". This image of a sonorous chord came to him "amid many tears and sobs, and with much joy and consolation". Talking of it thirty years later, Ignatius said it was so strong that he "could not control himself", nor afterwards "stop himself from talking of nothing but the Holy Trinity, using many comparisons in great variety, and with great joy and consolation". He concludes by saying that "the effect has remained with him all his life, of experiencing great devotion whilst praying to the Holy Trinity." (Aut.28)

Ignatius talked of God with a joyful love, rich in comparisons, which charmed those who listened to his conversation, his preaching and his teaching — and there is an abundance of testimony to this, which shows what grace God must have given him in the name of the Trinity. The *Spiritual Journal*, recording the enlightenment and graces received during the year 1544 and the beginning of 1545, provides impressive further evidence. There is a great continuity between the experiences of the Trinity at Manresa and those in the *Journal* of 1544. A telling example is the entry for the 19th February: "that same day, even when I was walking in the city, with great interior joy, I was reminded of the Holy Trinity whenever I saw three people, or three animals, or three of anything (*Journal* 55). It is with the same ease that, twenty-two years before, he experienced the Trinity "with many comparisons" ! This Trinitarian mysticism accompanies Ignatius right the way from his conversion to his death, and gives his spirituality and his work that unique character — so strong and yet, at the same time, so refined.

God was present during the convalescence in Loyola and taught him "as a schoolteacher treats a child" (Aut.27). Of the things God taught him, Ignatius mentions first of all the Holy Trinity, then the Creation of the World, the Humanity of Christ and his presence in the Eucharist, and Our Lady and her maternal and intercessory role (Aut.28,29). The culmination of God's teaching to him was the spiritual experience at the River Cardoner where he acquired a great understanding of many elements of spirituality,

faith and knowledge and received the great gift of the discernment of spirits. There he attained "a great clarity of understanding... an enlightenment so great that all things seemed new". With his usual gift of self-analysis, he reckoned this grace to be the greatest he had ever received, "greater than all the others put together." (Aut.30)

But what has this Trinitarian experience of Ignatius got to do with "helping souls"? To have a better grasp of this, we need to see the graces of the Manresa experience in the light of the vision at La Storta. Let us take a close look, then, at the historic moment he and his companions reached when God touched him through this apparition.

In June 1537 the companions were ordained to the priesthood in Venice. Since it was impossible to get to Jerusalem they spent until the end of October making their way towards Rome, to put themselves at the service of the Pope. Ignatius went on foot along the Via Cassia with Fabro and Láinez. He put off the celebration of his first Mass, with the aim of being able to celebrate it on Christmas Day in the Basilica of *Santa Maria Maggiore*. Over the past months he had received numerous graces and spiritual consolations of the kind he had been "used to receiving in Manresa", and he prayed to the Virgin Mary "that she would wish him to be with her son". It was then, arriving at a place called La Storta, and entering a small chapel, that he felt deep in his soul a call from God, "and saw clearly that God the Father had placed him with Christ, his Son" (Aut 95,96).

The rather puzzling expression "placed with his Son" is explained by Father Láinez thus: *Ignatius had the impression of seeing Christ with the cross on his shoulders and, at his side, the Father saying to him "I want you to take this man as your servant". So Jesus took him, with the words "I want you to serve us". This is why Ignatius, having great devotion to the Holy Name, wanted his congregation to be called the Society of Jesus.*¹

The apparition at La Storta is at one in the same time an acceptance, an affirmation and a commission, not just for Ignatius as an individual, but for that whole group of companions in the Lord, and for the Society he was in the process of forming. In asking to be "placed with her son" Ignatius was praying to Our Lady for all his companions. Jesus and the Father address Ignatius, and by means of him, all his companions. This is the

¹ Láinez. *Fontes Narrativi de Sancto Ignatio*. Vol II., p. 133.

acceptance of the offering made in Paris, which now has led them to the very gates of Rome. It is confirmed too, as they are encouraged in their aim of being servants of Christ for the sake of the Gospel. It is, at last, their commission: to follow Christ, taking up his cross and serving their neighbour in poverty, wherever the Vicar of Christ might wish to send them. Another three years were to pass before the graces of La Storta saw their embodiment in the birth of the Society of Jesus. Over eighteen years, the transforming action of the Holy Trinity had been slow — but effective !

With Ignatius there began in the Church a new style of religious life — apostolic life whose spirit flows from a Trinitarian mysticism, of love in service. All mysticism is an experience of love, love planted deep in the being of each one of God's creatures at every touch of their Maker, who overflows with it. But love comes in different levels of intensity, in different forms: Ecstatic love, the love of husband and wife, contemplative love... What predominated in Ignatius was the mysticism of loving service, working together in active love, with the Three Divine Persons, to "work the redemption of humankind" (SpEx 107). For him it was about "better following and imitating our Lord" (SpEx 109) in his work for the Father's Kingdom. The key word at La Storta was "I want you to *serve* us". God's grace cultivates in Ignatius a naturally generous spirit which also brings with it a fierce desire to serve a great king and a great lady.

The Spiritual Journal confirms this very point. Ignatius prays that God show him how apostolic poverty should be lived in the churches of the Society. The Trinity grants him the gift of a sublime intelligence, which gives him great warmth and consolation. These are inspired by Gospel passages about mission, and have mission as their goal. He recalls "how the son first sent the apostles to preach in poverty; and then how the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues confirmed them; and how thus, when the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, all three Persons confirmed that mission" (11th February 1544). The embarking on mission, the departure with Christ to serve all people, is the dominant feature of his mysticism. To serve in mission means to spread, actively, the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This demands a certain detachment, a patient waiting for enlightenment from God, and the careful discernment of spirits.

Whilst all along holding to the mysticism of mission, we should at the same time insist on the fact that it is about service, and nothing other than a service of love. It comes from love, it serves through love, and it is in the service itself that love grows. "To love and serve in all things" (SpEx 233) is

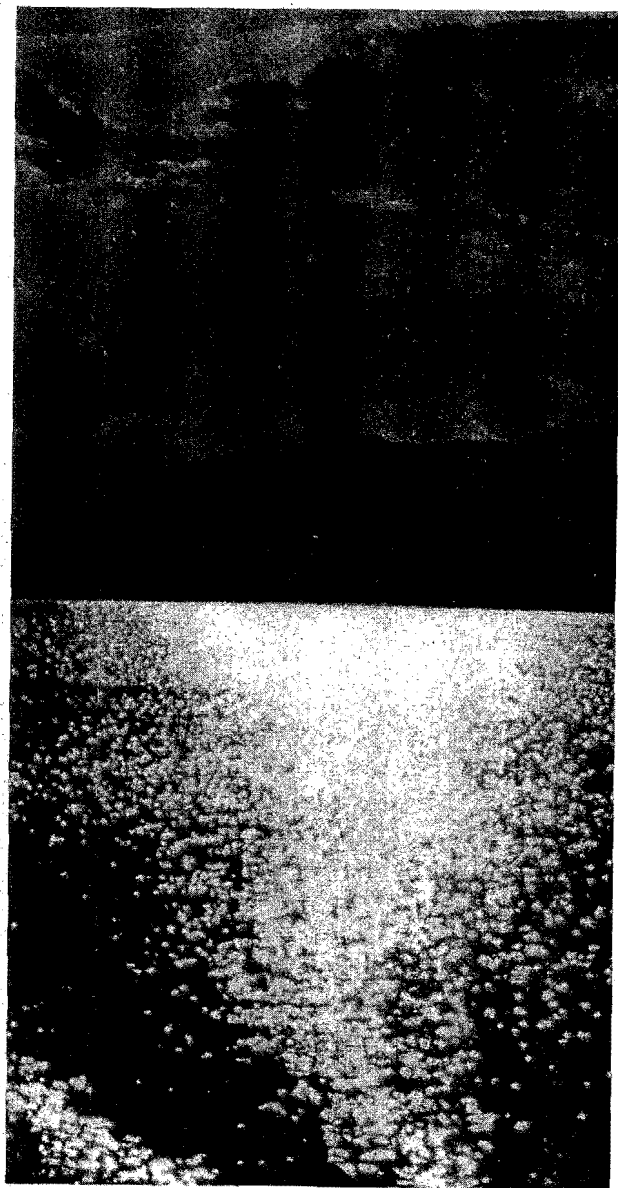
the joyful expression of this Trinitarian mysticism. The pages of the Journal — which record the graces received over a year of intense daily prayer — eloquently show how for Ignatius, to embrace unity with Christ is to be sent to serve.

Ignatius felt that God was teaching him just as a schoolteacher teaches a child (Aut.27). This God is for him the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Three Persons of the Trinity. In the Exercises, the masterpiece of his spiritual teaching, he also intends those doing them to feel themselves led by the Trinity. Annotation 15 — where Ignatius encourages those who give the Exercises to “let the Creator deal directly with their creature, and the creature with their Creator and Lord” — is a reminder of his experience in Manresa, which remained with him at La Storta and for the whole of his life, a way that is “more appropriate and much more valuable” (SpEx 15).

Juan Ochagavía SJ

ECUADOR: Good news reaches us from *CLC-Ecuador* who, not content with being deeply rooted in spirituality, are very much committed to service. They are involved in improving the conditions around two big rubbish dumps in Quito where more than three hundred "miners" live amid the rubbish. There is also a team working among the people of the rural village of Independencia. *Progressio* (July 1985) published a report by the health group *ASMED-CX*. A team of six doctors had chosen to serve in the rural areas, living in community. In 1985 they already had two dispensaries (in San Domingo) and a small hospital (in Independencia). Seven years on, the hospital has been modernised with a laboratory and radiography and other equipment. The community numbers more than fourteen, some married and some single. Income is held in common, such that the single people contribute their full wage to be redistributed according to need, and those who are married keep back an amount for their children (at least 30%). The hospital employees are paid at 20% more than the minimum wage, plus bonuses, with an extra 20% for each child. They tell us how, especially when they make a renewal of their commitment, there is a spirit of peace, love and hope amongst them.

ITALY: Fr Julian Elizalde SJ, and Fr Enrico Deidda SJ, Italian CLC's Eccl.Assistant, visited the *Schuster Sports Centre, Milan* which has a thirty-eight year history of fruitful service to young people. In a city wrecked by war, with thousands of young people lacking purpose and roots, this centre was just what was needed — and is every bit as valuable in the Milan of today. Founded by the Jesuits, the centre offers sports facilities, coaching and inspiration to the youth of the city, regardless of their creed. From the start, CLC (initially as the MC) has been the main supporter of the centre. Under its new statutes, it could become the joint responsibility of CLC and the Society of Jesus, or even that of CLC alone under certain conditions. This would not be Italian CLC's first apostolic enterprise. They already run two retreat houses, a school of politics, a residence for paraplegics and a number of centres for the homeless.



CHRIST
has died,

CHRIST
has risen,

CHRIST
will come again.