

"UPDATE" APRIL 1997

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES NEWS UPDATE

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GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council met again in Guelph on the weekend of March 21-23/97. It was truly a meeting led by the Spirit, which we can attribute to all the prayer support that surrounds our meetings. Thanks for your support!

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

We welcome Ray Comeault from Winnipeg as our new Youth Rep. on the General Council. It's good to have Ray working with us.

NATIONAL & REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

There will be two Regional Assemblies this year; one in the Atlantic Region, Aug. 15-17/97 in Fredericton, and the other in Central Region Oct. 3-5/97. Mark these dates at your calendar. It was also approved by General Council that the **1999 National Assembly** will be held in the Central Region, more information around the National Assembly to follow. There is much positive energy around the planning of all of these events - we ask that you keep those involved in the planning at all levels in your prayers.

STEERING COMMITTEE/REGIONAL REPS

The Steering Committee in collaboration with the Regional Reps continue to proceed in carrying out their mandate of listening and gathering information for the General Council around the issue of Regional Structure. A report was submitted by Pam Meier the contact person for the Steering Committee and we thank Pam for this. All regions are gradually moving forward in this area, and we thank all of our communities for their cooperation.

THUNDER BAY

After prayerful consideration and discernment, it was decided by Thunder Bay CLC'ers that they would be part of the Central Region. Central Region officially welcomes Thunder Bay aboard!

NATIONAL COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

After many years of dedication and hard work, Jean Floyd has decided to retire from the position of National Community Coordinator for CLC. This replacement will become effective at the 1999 National Assembly. At this time we ask you to pray about whether you might be called to this position. There will be more detailed information sent out at a later date.

CLC LEADERSHIP FORMATION WORKING GROUP

As a result of the National Formation Survey, and the various needs expressed by our communities, a unified National Leadership Formation Program consisting of 3 levels - Initial, Advanced and Experienced will be developed for the purpose of training CLC leaders. Following the initial introduction of this program, it will be made available in the regions for future ongoing leadership training by regional leadership. It is also the intent that this program be in harmony with the World Leadership Formation Program. The Working Group is made up of Barbara Peloso, Elora; Fran Morrison, Waterloo; Mary Pat MacDonald, Thunder Bay; Gilles Michaud, P.E.I.; & Shirley Gatchene, Kitchener. Their mandate is 1 year.

CLC IS A WAY OF LIFE

THE CLC NEWS "UPDATE"

This new CLC "Update" hopefully will become a regular means by which we will communicate current and upcoming events happening in CLC on an ongoing basis. The plan is to send out an "UPDATE" monthly. But to make this happen we need your help! Some of the information you might find included in the Update would be:

- prayer requests
- individual or community events
- events/activities happening in your area that might be of interest to other CLC'ers
- special occasions in the lives of our CLC members
- names of good reading material
- etc.

any current or upcoming information that you might like communicated to our members.

The CLC "UPDATE" is not meant to be a replacement for "FIRE", which provides us with excellent resource material and more detailed information, not only related to CLC Canada, but also at a World level.

Please submit any information you would like inserted in UPDATE to our National CLC Office, either by telephone, fax or email in time for it to be effective the following month.

THANK YOU!

We want to say thanks to Ann Benson who has just completed her term on General Council at the last meeting of March 21/97. Ann's generous service on the General Council was appreciated by all. We wish Ann the best as she continues to serve CLC in the Atlantic Region. The Atlantic Region will now begin the process of electing a new representative for our General Council, effective at the next meeting of Nov. 14/97.

CLC "GATHERING"

A big thank you goes out to Fidelis CLC Community in Waterloo for their great generosity in organizing and so graciously carrying out a social gathering which took place in Kitchener, on Saturday evening following our General Council Meeting of March 21-23/97. We had members gather from Kitchener, Waterloo, Elora and Guelph areas to join our General Council for supper, conversation and much, much fun. It was also great to hear the Regional Reps report on news from across Canada. A super evening was had by all!

DATES FOR NEXT EXCO AND GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Executive Council Meeting (EXCO) - APRIL 9/97.

General Council Meeting - NOVEMBER 14-17/97.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR ALL OUR CLC LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH!

Life need not be easy to be joyful. Joy is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ.

CLC IS A WAY OF LIFE

Ignatian spirituality sees God in all things

By Theresa Seraphim

ST. BONIFACE — Ignatius of Loyola "believed there was more to life than meets the eye and yet it's in the everyday life that God is present. We will be able to see God in all things."

Thus can Ignatian spirituality be summarized, said Tom Lussier, teacher at St. Paul's high school and facilitator of a session on Ignatian Spirituality comprising part of the Smorgasbord of Spirituality series.

That spirituality had its birth in 1521 in Spain with 30-year-old Ignatius, youngest child of a noble family. He experienced an "overwhelming sense of God filling him" with his presence, love and mercy for past sins. "The Spiritual Exercises," said Lussier, "are his attempt to share these experiences with other people."

Ignatian spirituality, said Lussier,

places an emphasis on service and the church as the People of God."

Thus it is well-suited for laypeople, "because (the world is) where we live," he said, and since Vatican II there is a realization that "the world not only needs the church, but the church needs the world."

The first of the four "weeks" (actually, phases) of the exercises calls retreatants "to intimacy with ourselves," said Lussier.

The emphasis in this week is on "freedom from anything preventing us from being who God calls us to be." The condition of "knowing that you are always going to be a sinner," and also loved unconditionally by God, is stressed.

In week two, the focus is on "contemplating the humanity of Christ," said Lussier. "You measure prayer with what's going on in your life" and will find both equally important, as the Scripture meditations give guidance for living and

as one comes to see God's presence and work in one's life.

Here, too, there is a "movement toward communal experience," as Ignatius believed that sharing individual experiences with others promotes a common bond and ensures that "we don't just go off and do our own thing."

In stages three and four, retreatants go from intimacy with self to intimacy with the Creator. Retreatants reflect on the passion of Christ (to become "compassionate and willing to suffer with Christ," said Lussier) and then rejoice in the discipleship the resurrection calls for.

Through all this runs three cornerstones of Ignatius' spirituality: a profound trust of, and respect for, each person's religious experience; a view of the world as Christ-centred when seen through the eyes of faith, and a contemplative aspect to prayer.

The exercises have often been used for decision making, and the idea behind that, said Lussier, is to enable retreatants to ponder life choices in "a right spirit" and from a viewpoint of personal liberty, which is "the only way we can make decisions" that are loving and in accordance with God's will.

Thus "the exercises are a launch pad" for living life, not just a spiritual boost, said Lussier. The "two hinges of living in the Ignatian way" are the call, which involves a daily examen of one's life to see what needs changing, and to be aware of how God has been present and working.

"For Ignatius, here and now is an encounter with God," said Lussier. "God has already found us," and the exercises can be a way for all people to find him.

Reach out to those in need

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Da Silva spoke again of the popular movements being organized by the Land Reform Movement. The church has joined the support of the displaced landowners with the Pastoral Land Commission, which protects lands occupied by squatters and small landowners.

If these people are expelled from land, da Silva explained, they have no place to live and gravitate to the cities, where, with no resources at all to support them, they are forced to live in shacks in the least advantageous places — near sewers, on steep hills, etc.

Through the *movimento*, some building projects have been started.

As well, fruit trees and trees that will serve as food for their animals in times of drought are being planted in an attempt to reforest the denuded land.

Archbishop Antoine Hacault spoke, praising the "down to earth, very direct" presentations and encouraging those present to "be persons who have questions. Perhaps then we can do something. We must reach out to those in need."

The presentations ended with the words of Bishop Oscar Romero: "We are the prophets of a future not our own."

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Prairie Messenger