



ENGLISH CANADA

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES

NEWS LETTER

Spring 1988

EDITORIAL:

Greetings!

As we write the snowplough is passing the house, leaving great mounds of snow at the end of the drive. It will take the strength of an Olympian athlete to remove it, and no medals are being awarded! Oh well, we'll keep writing and pray for a sudden Chinook to melt it.

Your editors apologize for the poor print of the last Newsletter. We hope that the good content compensated for the eye strain.

You will note that we have only three community sharings for this issue of our communicator. Shame! shame! Have you all flown south for the winter? Please let us hear your stories!

Thanks again to Jack Milan for the fine reflection on General Principle # included in this issue.

Also, please notice the guideline for WORLD CLC DAY, March 25, 1988--the Feast of the Annunciation. These excellent reflections were prepared by Tom Quinlan, S.J. Ecclesiastical Assistant for the World CLC, and we feel certain that our Canadian Community will benefit from them. Please consider sharing your thoughts with us, or how you chose to celebrate World CLC Day during this Marian Year.

Submissions for the Newsletter should be sent to:

Helen and Lou Drago,
28 Dietz Ave., S.,
WATERLOO, Ontario
N2L 2J6

Deadline date for submissions: MAY 31, 1988

Miracle of miracles!! A path has now been shovelled to our mail box....Please swamp us with mail and make our Olympian effort worthwhile
Peace, joy and "Gold Medals" to all!

Your Editors,
Our Lady Of Lourdes CLC,
Waterloo, Ontario.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all in this New Year of 1988. One which for me has brought words like wonder, awe, decisive agents, agents of love, on the one hand and on the other, words like desolation, homelessness, profit-oriented, refugees, destruction of the unborn, and so on.

Wonder and awe in ways like the dedication and commitment of our ExCo during a fruitful, but exhausting week-end of prayer and meetings striving to discern how to build our CLC Federation into a body of decisive agent to better build the kingdom. Again in the beautiful, steadfast faith of our Philippine brothers and sisters as they celebrated the return of the body of Nestor Dacara, our first CLC martyr--true agents of love! (see Philippine Follow-Up in this issue.)

Desolation at seeing the unjust structures that call for profit over low income housing, blatant materialism that weaves such a web around our young people, lack of respect for life as evidenced in the recent Supreme Court ruling on abortion, seemingly decline of family life, and so on.

Bishop Sherlock refers to it as, "traditional cultures are in full retreat before a new culture which has assigned religion to an unimportant private corner". (see "The Laity on the Cutting Edge" in this issue.)

I am reminded of the Two Standards. The Standard of the "traditional culture" and the Standard of the "culture in full retreat". We have been challenged to read the signs of the times and become decisive agents. We have been given the means through our vocation and the strength and nurturing support of our communities to choose the Standard of Christ.

As we look forward into the New Year, what qualities do we need to develop? What behaviours must we change in order to make God more present in the world? Mary is our model for discipleship. She trusted in the God of her "magnificat". She challenges us to be willing to take risks, to be courageous and faithful, to be compassionate and sensitive to the needs of others, to see what is needed and then to do something about it. Most of all she challenges us to know that we are loved by God, and to give that love to others.

Are we willing to take up this challenge?

Jean Floyd

The following article appeared in the *Prairie Messenger*, Muenster, Sask., Nov.16, 1987

More are recognizing God's presence: English

By Mary-Anne Jamin

SASKATOON -- More and more lay people are recognizing the religious experiences and the presence of God in their lives, according to Father John English, S.J. As a result they are being opened up to "a whole new understanding of the Christian life and their responsibility," he said.

English and Sister Frances MacDougall, CND, both on staff at the Guelph Centre of Spirituality, were in Saskatoon recently to conduct a workshop for spiritual directors.

The 20 people attending received help in directing people in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Specific attention was given to the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (19th Annotation).

The facilitators led the directors to a great theoretical and experiential understanding of the exercises themselves. Input by MacDougall or English was followed by individual meditation and prayer.

Participants gathered into small groups to articulate their experience and formulate questions for the larger group sharing. The smaller group sharing helped them understand how different people

experience the exercises in different ways.

English said he sees the exercises as a tremendous spiritual base for laity today. "The spirituality in the exercises is the finding of God in all things," he said.

"God is active and present in our universe and we need to be able to discern the interior movements in ourselves and to read the signs of the times in the making of good decisions and in being responsible Christians in our world."

"I sense all of that is present in the way we are presenting the exercises today. In that sense it is a very wholesome spirituality and opens laypeople up to a whole new understanding of Christian life and their responsibility."

According to English the exercises are an instrument to help people deeply religious experiences in their lives and to build on those experiences. The person becomes aware of God in all of life. Emphasis in the exercises is on developing an intimate knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus.

People who take part in the in the spiritual exercises in daily life, according to MacDougall, have usually been

through renewal program of some kind such as Cursillo or Marriage Encounter. These people continue to deepen their prayer life and often want more of a structure.

The resurgence of the spiritual exercises in the last 20 years reflects the movement after Vatican II to an emphasis on the God within. "It was not just the exercises that were previously presented as a preached retreat," said MacDougall. "But all retreats are preached."

The present format allows only brief instruction and guidance by the spiritual director with the emphasis on an hour of prayer by the participant for each section of the exercise. This, according to English, reflects the shift in spiritual direction from a presentation of doctrine to the significance of one's interior experience.

Use the talents you possess...

For the woods would be very silent,
If no birds sang,
Except the *best*.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

On January 15th to 17th, 1988 the ExCo spent a week-end at Holy Spirit Centre in Hamilton to pray, reflect and brainstorm ways in which to continue the forward movement of our CLC in Canada.

After first looking at our history and the subsequent significance of each event, we spent the rest of the week-end breaking down activities into the following categories:

Forward Movements
Truncated Movments
Need To's
Long Term Integrated Plan (Willed Future)
Prioritizing Needs
Problem Areas

We found that one flowed into the other and ended with a clear direction of priority. Hans Van Leeuwen volunteered to provide us with a strategic plan for the Willed Future to 1998. Using a Transformation Chart Technique he will provide a chart of *Existing Realities, Willed Future, and Strategies*. This will be studied at our next ExCo on March 5th.

In another recommendation, the Constitution Committee will provide ExCo with a draft on "what constitutes membership", also for discussion at the March 5th ExCo meeting. This came as a result of a concern that there was some confusion about the definition of membership and this may have to be amended in the Constitution.

While all left this week-end thoroughly exhausted, it was with a great sense of the Spirit truly being present carrying us forward and a confirmation of our chosen vocation!

Soul of Christ"

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me;
Within thy wounds hide me;
Suffer me not to be separated from thee;
From the malignant enemy defend me;
In the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to thee,

Communities: An Ignatian way of life

In a culture where people are becoming more and more alienated, it should come as no surprise that many across this land are expressing a greater desire for Christian community.

Parishes have responded in a variety of ways to meet this desire. "Renew" has been brought into parishes with the hope of generating new life; the R.C.I.A. has helped bond parishioners together as they journey with catechumens. These are only two of the many wonderful works of the Spirit which help to revitalize our Christian faith. After a parish has completed such intense programs, however, liturgists, catechists and other parish team members are left with the question, "Where do we go from here?"

One possible answer is the "Christian Life Community" (CLC) movement

There are approximately 200 CLCers in English speaking Canada belonging to one of the 24 smaller groups. The majority are lay people who desire Christian community, finding it a source of strength, a way of the cross and a source of new life. Although there is a formation program, the CLC movement is a way of life whose spirituality centres upon Christ and participa-

tion in his Paschal Mystery. We hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola as a specific source and as the main instrument of our spirituality. The exercises enable us to participate more fully in Christ's saving mystery. The tools of the Spiritual Exercises--social analysis, the awareness examen and the four-column discernment--assist us in discerning where the Spirit is directing our community.

Our small groups, or base communities, meet on a regular basis (weekly, biweekly, or according to the needs of the individual community) in the home of one of the members. Here, an intimate sharing of our personal and spiritual lives allows for growth in our Christian faith and commitment to serving the Church in every area of life: family, work, civil life and ecclesial life.

As with any community, we have our share of peaks and valleys. Through eyes of faith, these experiences can be transformed, allowing members to take another step forward entering Christ's own death and resurrection. It is through our individual and communal experiences, reflection and discernment

that we are able to give rebirth to Christ in our daily existence. CLCers seek to develop and sustain men and women, adults and youth in their commitment to build God's kingdom.

My wife, Teresa, and I have found that CLC enables us to set aside time for prayer and discernment even with the busy-ness of family life. The experience of ministering with each other and our community members over the past six years has led us to a deeper commitment to Christ and to the mission of his church.

CLC has become for us a way of life. Those who find themselves yearning for Christian community may wish to look at this way of life by contacting Fr. John English, S.J. or Jack Milani at Ignatius College P.O. Box 1238, Guelph, Ontario N1H 6N6

Paul Tratnyek

Paul Tratnyek works as chaplain at St. Benedict's High School, Cambridge Ont.

Love is like the five loaves
And two fishes.
It doesn't start to multiply
Until you give it away.

COMMUNITY SHARING

St Anthony Daniel
CLC in Formation,
Kitchener, Ontario

In November our CLC in formation experienced a week-end living in community at the Loyola Retreat House in Guelph. We were given this picture to ponder and I would like to share a reflection from our exercise on that week-end.



We are beginning the next saga of our journey together. This time our pathway is narrowed, and we clutch each other through the dark passageway. We have the key to open the final door, but the key is heavy and we have to take turns carrying it. Of necessity we have to remove some of our heavy belongings much like the camel does in order to enter the narrow gates of Jerusalem. The passageway is dark, scary and musky. We are afraid as going into a dark cave, and we have to hold each other's hand lest we slip and fall.

At the end of the passageway we will come into the light--the light that is Jesus. He will welcome us--and tell us that He was carrying our yoke all through the journey.

UPPER ROOM PRAYER GROUP
Fergus, Ontario

Our little group started in February 1979. At that time our meetings were held in St Joseph's School. The Spiritual director for our group was Father Tony Van Hee. Throughout our nine year existence membership has increased and decreased. Presently we have eight members and are meeting in each other's homes on Monday evenings.

Some of the courses we have taken as a group are: *Followers of Jesus, Growing together in Christ, CLC Phase 1, Sadhana Spiritual Exercises* (taken individually), and *Healing Life's Hurts*. Some of the courses we have taken individually are: *Genesis, Romans 8, Journey 1&2, Cursillio, Focusing and Marketplace Ministry*.

Each meeting consists of hymns of praise, quiet reflection, sharing of personal experiences, different tapes, videos or course studies and a closing with intercessory prayer. Our group has been enriched by all of our experiences as we continue on our spiritual journey.

We hope to begin CLC Phase 2 in the future.

Daily Prayer

I said a prayer for you today
And Know God must have heard--
I felt the answer in my heart
Although He spoke no word!
I didn't ask for wealth or fame
(I knew you wouldn't mind)
I asked Him to send treasures
Of a far more lasting kind!
I asked that He'd be near you
At the start of each new day
To grant you health and blessings
And friends to share your way!
I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small--
But it was for His loving care
I prayed the most of all!

REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ's Paschal Mystery; it draws from the Sacred Scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, and God's self-revelation in the needs of our time. We hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily existence. We recognize that we belong to a pilgrim people moving uncertainly forward. We recognize especially the necessity of spiritual discernment as the fruit of personal prayer and the place of spiritual direction as indispensable for seeking and finding God.

This paragraph, first of all, traces in broad strokes Christian spirituality in general, and its main sources. Next, it specifies what is specific about the spirituality of CLC. Finally, it describes some of the main themes of CLC spirituality.

At the centre is the Paschal Mystery, present on our lives, in which, in fidelity to the Spirit, we are asked to participate. This spirituality has its roots in Scripture, liturgy, the doctrinal developments of the Church, the existential word of God as it comes to us through the events and needs of today.

This single Christian faith is lived out in different vocations, in diverse spiritualities. The Ignatian charism represents one of these spiritualities. It constitutes one way of life, among many. But this is our way of life, the one that makes specific our vocation.

This vocation is best summed up and expressed in the attitude of *discreta caritas* which means discerning love. We can describe it by singling out six essential elements:

1. Indifference or positive freedom, which includes an openness to all possibilities.
2. love of Jesus, a personal love which goes beyond the merely rational (cf. The third degree of humility in the Exercises).
3. continual prayer
4. mission, being sent by and with Christ, which includes the sense of the Church
5. a constant attention to what goes on through me, around me, and above all within me.
6. a humble openness to a spiritual guide.

It is through these elements and their integration that spiritual discernment is exercised, and this spiritual discernment is at the roots of all that CLC members live and undertake.

The experience of the Spiritual Exercises is the basis of the Ignatian charism and is the foundation on which rests the life and activity of the CLC. Our way of life could not be understood, much less lived, without this experience made in depth during a time of retreat and periodically renewed.

(Continued on next page)

To make the Spiritual Exercises requires a certain readiness which is achieved through the CLC formation journey in the context of the local group.

The Exercises are at one and the same time a school of liberation, of prayer, of personal growth, of discernment, and of apostolic decision. In other words, they prepare the soul so that the grace of God will find in a person a willing home and a channel for the communication of this same grace to the world in a life of loving service. The gift of life which God makes to us is to be shared with the human family by taking part in the mission of Christ in the world of today. This is an apostolic mission which includes everything, from the smallest to the greatest, from the nearest to the farthest, from the most particular to the most universal, on the pilgrim road of return to the Father.

CLC, is it, or is it not, the vocation to which I am called? This is the question each one of its members must one day answer before committing themselves definitively to this path. But the answer is in no way the fruit of simple reflection. A positive response springs up naturally during the journey of CLC formation as one learns to integrate spirituality of the Exercises into daily life. The positive response is experienced as a harmony between this spirituality and the call and expectations that each one carries within.

On the other hand, if this process awakens no interior resonance and is not identified with that call, one will regard this as a sign that one should look for a different spiritual path. The various means made available during the stages of personal and communal growth are designed to assist each one discover her/his unique vocation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How would I describe my life as centered on Christ? In what ways am I helped to understand and live out the paschal mystery by--liturgy?--by Scripture? --by Church teaching? --the events and needs of our time?
2. Do I think of CLC as a specific vocation whose spirituality has its "source" in the Spiritual Exercises?
3. How deeply have I experienced the Spiritual Exercises? How is my life shaped by them? What opportunities are available to me to periodically renew my experience of the Exercises?

(Adapted from: DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES, CLC Formation Document No.3, World Federation of Christian Life Communities, Rome, Italy)

Philippines Follow-Up

"A WITNESS OF FAITH"

Christian Life Community of the Philippines,
2215 Pedro Gil Street,
Sta. Ana, Manila
CHRISTMAS 1987

Dear Friends,

May the PRINCE OF PEACE give you the
PEACE OF THE HEART!

Last October, as Rome experienced the warmth of the thousands who assembled for the canonization of Saint Lorenzo Ruiz and companions, the Philippine CLC was experiencing the feverish height of the search for the body of Nestor Dacara, A Bicol CLC guide, a catechist, a layman killed in the hands of his brother Filipinos.

THE END OF THE SEARCH

Through the concerted efforts of the barrio officials, the priests, the CLC units and the higher command of the rebels themselves, the search slowly became a community concern. People were brought together, working under two guidelines: the *POWER of TRUTH* and the *STRENGTH of LOVE*. Our key messages to those whom we believed had killed him were these:

...we need Nestor's body to prove his death.

...the proof of his death was necessary to provide Nestor's parents access to the insurance benefits Nestor had allotted for his family.

...we denounce the violence inflicted on him and appeal to their sense of justice to stop the senseless killings of brother Filipinos

...we forgive those, who in a moment of darkness, lost their respect for Nestor's life and took it.

During all these months the CLC members came together for daily Mass at the Social Action Center, stopped area operations, and focused their attention on the search and in reaching out to Nestor's family.

In their great devotion to Mary, the SAC ladies, individually and unknown to one another, stormed the Blessed Mother with their pleas and gave her a "deadline" for the return of Nestor's body: Oct. 13. They were confident that Mary was going to perform a miracle very soon: and a miracle she did perform.

THE LIBERATION FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM

October 12, the feast of Our Lady of the Pillars, was the annual town fiesta in Libmanan (the barrio where Nestor was taken by the rebels).

At dawn, along the highway, a mini-bus stopped,

a man got off, left an old milk cartonbox on the roadside, boarded the bus again and continued his journey.

Soon the whispers spread like wildfire. Fr. Jun Besinio, leaving his fiesta guests, rushed to the site and found a note on the box, "*Ikinagagalak naming ibala ang natitira katawan ni Nestor*". (We are happy to return what is left of Nestor's body).

The local health officer who wrote up the death certificate described the possible cause of death. He reported a broken skull, broken ribs, and dentures shattered beyond recognition. The rest was just an unidentifiable mass of decaying flesh. A T-shirt darkened with blood was the only clue to his real identity.

Someone who, perhaps desiring to ease his conscience but wishing to remain incognito, shared: "Nestor, while being tortured kept crying: 'God, my God, help me!' And his torturers answered him back, 'Call on your God and see if He can help you now!'"

On Oct. 13th, the feast of our Lady of Fatima, the miracle the SAC ladies prayed for happened. Nestor was finally home.

After the funeral Mass at which 35 priests celebrated Nestor was finally laid to rest in his own home town.

The lives of San Lorenzo Ruiz and Nestor Dacara span a time distance of more than three centuries. Yet their responses to the situations of their times gives us the vision and the strength to respond without fear to the call of the Gospel. Fr. Jun Besinio puts into words the impact of Nestor's death on his life:

I am so ashamed of myself. Many times I was afraid to go to the barrios because of the presence of rebels. But if Nestor who was a layman gave his life, then I must not be afraid. My vision of my ministry has changed because of him.

In this season of joy then, please accept the gift of the Philippine CLC to the World Community: the story above which brought to life the Scriptures:

We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his decree. Those whom he foreknew He predestined to share the image of his Son, that the Son might be the first-born of many brothers. Those He predestined He likewise called; those He called He also justified; and those He justified He in turn glorified. (Rom 8: 28-30)

LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

Remembering the Star and the Cross,

Jean

C.C.C.L.A. URGENT APPEAL

Editor's Note: The following is a letter from Molly Boucher, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Lay Associations (C.C.C.L.A.). Our English Canada CLC is a member of this Association. Please read and act quickly to the outlined strategy for protest to the recent Supreme Court decision in the Morgentaler Case. In response to the 5th paragraph we would appreciate your advising us of your response so that we may send a tally to Molly Boucher.

Dear Member Organizations:

In the light of the recent Supreme Court decision in the Morgentaler case, it is extremely urgent that we all participate in a combined national effort to put pressure on the Federal Government to enact new legislation to protect the unborn. Many of you will develop additional programs and campaigns, but we do ask you to show national solidarity by taking an active part in the following strategy which was formulated at the CCCLA Executive Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 30, 1988.

It is the practice in the House of Commons for Members of Parliament who receive petitions from groups within their riding to read them into the permanent record of Parliament when they are received. We believe, therefore, that an effective strategy to impress on our legislators the urgency of this situation would be to have petitions sent to the individual Members of Parliament, rather than to initiate letter-writing to the Minister of Justice or the Prime Minister alone. Of course, they too will receive petitions from groups in their own ridings.

What we ask of you is that you give immediate top priority to organizing your own members to stimulate the signing of petitions to the Members of Parliament in all ridings where your members live. Don't wait until you have a tremendous

number of signatures--send in several petitions at various times instead. Ideally we would like to have petitions arriving in Ottawa every day from various parts of Canada so that these will be read into the Parliamentary record in a daily litany of concern for the unborn.

I am enclosing a copy of the news release we sent out to the media and also one sent out by the Bishops of Canada. From this material and your own resources, you can word the heading of a petition from your own group. It will be more effective to have a variety of points with the same basic message than to use one set formula. However, all should stress URGENCY in providing new legislation to protect the unborn.

For purposes of gathering a tally of the total number of signatures sent to parliament, we ask you to keep track of the totals from your organization and report this to the CCCLA so that we can use this information to put further pressure on the government.

You may find it useful to get in touch with other Catholic lay groups in your area, whether they are CCCLA members or not, to encourage their participation in the combined national effort outlined above. Over and above this effort, you can exchange ideas and co-operate in other programs being organized to remedy the situation created by the Supreme Court decision. But please, we urge you for the sake of the unborn, to participate to the fullest possible degree in the CCCLA strategy and to do it immediately.

Sincerely,
Molly Boucher
President, CCCLA

R.R.#1, V-23
Bowen Island, B.C.
V0N 1G0
(604) 947-9514

**CCCB PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON SUPREME COURT DECISION
OF JANUARY 28, 1988 REGARDING ABORTION LAWS**

CCCB (Ottawa) Archbishop James Hayes, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the following statement today (January 28, 1988).

"The Supreme Court decision striking down the abortion law is a dramatic challenge to all lay members of the Church and to all of us, their pastors."

"The need for responsible political action was never more urgent. For, God's law condemning abortion is not changed by the Supreme Court decision."

"In the process of writing a new law that protects human life from conception, lay Christians as voters and legislators have the first responsibility."

"The situation of 'abortion on demand' that follows from the Court's decision must be corrected legislatively as soon as possible. This is our common task now, and the future of our human society depends on how soon and how well it is done."

"In the process of working for new legislation, all Christians must also apply themselves to the continuing pastoral work of evangelizing modern culture regarding the God-given values and rights of every human life, and the need to safeguard and respect that life in all circumstances."

"Abortion is the destruction of human life. The challenge is to change our society's attitude toward life and to channel the energies and strong emotions involved in this debate toward correcting mentalities and situations that lead to abortion. We need to create a society that supports life and enables children to be raised with dignity; a society that puts other people's rights and needs ahead of personal comfort and gain; a society that respects human life at every stage of its development."

"The vision and hope that lead us forward flow from our God-given belief that every human life is sacred. Today's Supreme Court decision leaves us in a situation where the sacredness of life is being violated. We must urgently work together with all Canadians for legislation that will indeed safeguard the life, liberty and security of every person including the unborn."

The Laity: On the Cutting Edge

Traditional cultures "are in full retreat before a new culture which has assigned religion to an unimportant private corner," Bishop John Sherlock of London, Ontario, told the Synod of Bishops Oct. 10. The church has not yet been able to penetrate this new culture, which is global, uses modern media, promotes consumerism and tempts youth, he said, speaking on behalf of the Canadian bishop's conference. Lay people are the "decisive agents" of the encounter between faith and this "civilization born of science and technology," he said, for it is they who "discern the seeds of life and the seeds of death in the modern world." Discernment is not theoretical, he said, but necessarily linked to action in the world and requires Christians to act in solidarity with others, whether or not they are believers. "It is in such a process of involvement, discernment and negotiation that Catholic social teaching must be forged. Its formulation requires not just a statement of church principles, but the contribution of all charisms, experiences and skills," he concluded. His text follows.

1. I wish to address myself in the name of the Canadian bishops to the issue of faith and culture,

and the role of lay people and their pastors in the evangelization of culture and of cultures today.

Split Between Faith and Culture

2. Others have recalled that the split between culture and the Gospel is the drama of our time. The bishop of Lucknow pointed out that religious of Asia are under relentless attack from the imported materialism. Many bishops here present could describe with local and historical differences a pattern which is now worldwide, the traditional cultures which have been organized with the symbols of religion as their central symbols are in full retreat before a new culture which has assigned religion to an unimportant private corner. A recent film vividly portrayed the utterly disruptive nature of an empty Coca Cola bottle falling from the sky into the camp of a nomadic tribe. The leaders' fruitless effort to cast it into the abyss outside their world revealed the inexorable encroachment of modern culture into that world.

Molding Power of New Global Culture

3. That image symbolizes the emergence of a sort of global culture, which in the service of profit and by the power of modern media of communication seeks to

impose itself on all the traditional cultures of the world. Entrenched in its control of the marketplace internationally, this culture advertises. It uses television and film and music and entertainment to project a certain image of the good life of the successful person. Typically, this image gives priority to having more, to self-gratification rather than to serving.

4. The socio-economic process that projects this image is thoroughly human one made up of definite human decisions and serving the interests of identifiable dominant groups. We tremble, for example, at its power to form our youth. Even young people who are well-catechized, if they are not given the tools and the critical consciousness to work at changing this culture, will be changed by it. Catholic schools are discovering that they need great vigilance and creativity to avoid being accomplices in promoting the same standards of successful living as the consumer society.

5. Forty years ago Cardinal Suhard of Paris foresaw a universal civilization born of technology and science. What he foresaw is the world in which we now live. It is the only world we have. It is the world in which God invites us to

discover and to love him. Cardinal Suhard asked the question who will infuse the soul into this sudden unity, which has come about quicker than our thought, into this planetary humanism, for which we are not prepared. His answer was the church will infuse a soul. But he recognized that Catholics would be tempted either to cry unclean and to flee this world out of nostalgia for past securities or to capitulate to modern values that are alien to the Gospel. Both are temptations to despair. They deny the possibility of the evangelization of culture.

6. The church has not yet been able to infuse a soul into this new culture. Therefore recent popes continue to insist on confronting the unfinished task. It is becoming clearer, however, that it will be a long and difficult task. Pope John Paul II, speaking in 1982, remarked that the synthesis between faith and culture is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith....A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out

Lay Christians Decisive

Agents

7. Lay Christians are the decisive agents of the church's mission in this vast field of the Gospel and culture today. What are the spiritual gifts and the specific practical wisdoms that will help modern Catholics resist the twin despairs of flight or capitulation and create room in this culture for God's reign.

D i s c e r n m e n t s , Involvement Through Coalitions and Negotiation.

8. One such gift is what Pope John XXIII called reading the signs of the times. *Gaudium et Spes* says this: "The people of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the whole earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to discern authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with other people of our age" (No.11). Yes, it is part of our faith that the Spirit of God fills the earth. Here and now.

9. Lay Christians live their lives and do their work at all the crucial points where they can discover the God who renews the face of the earth. God's Spirit helps them discern the seeds of

life and the seeds of death in the modern world. Social processes are ambiguous and complex, and they often wear masks. Sometimes it is only the suffering of the poor and powerless that can unmask for us the evil inherent in a particular use of human power. Their voice carries to our ears the cry of Jesus pleading with the church not to abandon the world, but to meet him in it.

10. Discernment is not theoretical knowledge. It is illumined by faith and ordered to action. The inspired prudence it gives is necessarily linked to action in the world. To act in the world for justice and truth. Christians must necessarily act with other people, whether they are believers or not. We must act in solidarity with the despised or deprived people who are the victims of power. And we must act in coalitions with fellow citizens who are with us shapers of culture, We struggle in Canada to work through such coalitions.

11. An example of such action in solidarity and in coalitions is the long struggle in Canada for public justice for aboriginal peoples. The recent visit of the Holy Father to Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories

illustrates some of the characteristics of that kind of work for cultural transformation.

12. The pope came to that remote place before the eyes of all the world. Millions watched on television as he listened intently to the demands which the native communities are now placing before the conscience of my country. Then millions heard the pope speak publicly; he delivered a powerful cry for the human rights of the aboriginal peoples. In his speech he used at times the very phrases which those peoples have chosen and honed to express their own vision, needs and rights. In celebrating the eucharist with those peoples, he named Jesus and proclaimed to the world that in his body living today Jesus Christ is himself an aboriginal.

13. At least 25 years of patient, painful, collective work had prepared for that moment. Most the work was done by laypeople, both believers and non-believers. First of all, it was done by the native communities themselves; but it was shared by political and legal and economic experts, by lobby groups of ordinary citizens and by missionaries,

religious sisters and lay church workers together. Nor is the work finished yet. We still do not know the final outcome of all this effort. But we do know that a kind of conversion is in process. We do know that year by year aboriginal communities are gaining in hope and political power, and the dominant culture is being purged of its racism. We now believe that it is in such a process of involvement, discernment and negotiation that Catholic social teaching must be forged. Its formulation requires not just a statement of church principles, but the contribution of all charisms, experiences and skills (Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 72, nature of the social doctrine of the church).

"What are the spiritual gifts and the specific practical wisdoms that will help modern Catholics resist the twin despairs of flight or capitulation and create room in this culture for God's reign?"

Requests to the Synod

14. I would ask the synod to foster this way of practical discernment through action in the world as a common way of Christian formation

15. I would also ask that this way of developing Catholic social teaching become normative at all levels of church life.

Transforming Culture Passes by Way of the Cross

16. Many voices already in this synod have been urging lay Catholics to embrace their call to live fully in the world. To live this call as a mission which passes by way of the cross. The work of breathing spirit into the world is not a power game. May the church today be far from the temptation to try to impose the Gospel. The work of transforming the human world is a work of suffering, sometimes of helplessness, like that of Jesus crucified. It will identify those who dare to try it with his self-giving. The least we can do is to offer those brothers and sisters our own lives as pastors. And the first gift we can offer is our willingness to listen and to learn.

Share Lent ACTION

Support Development and Peace's third world projects through SHARELENT and urge the government to use Canada's food aid effectively: that's the message Development and Peace is putting to Catholics in parishes across Canada this Lent.

The ACTION, called "the Earth Can Feed All," focusses on the causes of hunger in the third world.

For three years now, Development and Peace has been speaking out about the causes of world hunger, looked at possible solutions, and supported small farmers in Brazil, Senegal and the Philippines.

Development and Peace agrees with the special parliamentary committee that recommends Canada's food aid policies be improved.

So Development and Peace this Lent is calling on Catholics to express their support and concern for people in the third world by continuing to support D&P projects overseas and to send postcards to our elected officials to:

First, ask for a reduction of food aid as part of Canada's development program-- too much "aid" is just as bad as too little.

Second, recommend that Canadian aid money be used to support local farmers and small agricultural products in third world countries.

If you want to help small farmers feed their families today ...and tomorrow, be a part of Development and Peace's ACTION this Lent during SHARELENT. Contact your Diocesan Council Chairperson, or a D&P Animator.

Canada's aid program can be a major factor to improve third world nation's ability to feed themselves, or continue to add to the cause of hunger.

Canada needs to see to it that its aid reaches the people who need it the most, says Development and Peace, and doesn't hurt small farmers who are producing enough food.

The importance of supporting Development and Peace-sponsored Third World projects is as great as ever.

Small scale agricultural projects are a

THE

EARTH

CAN FEED

ALL

priority for Development and Peace which supported them with some \$6 million.

Small farmers in the third world produce eight times more per hectare than large landowners.

Yet, land reform is badly needed so that people who work the land actually own it. What's more, small farmers must have a say in farm policies that affect them. The policies must meet local needs rather than the demands of rich countries.

But how can Canada's food aid make a difference? For Canada's food aid to be effective, it must reach those who need it --small farmers, cooperatives, villages and particularly women. Third world women are the first ones concerned about feeding their family and usually do most of the farm work.

Canada's food aid shouldn't hurt productive third world farmers nor compete with locally grown food. A glut of cheap grain dumped on a small country, for example, can wipe out many small farmers.

Donor countries like Canada reap a profit from such "food aid" sales to hungry countries, because it's surplus that would otherwise go unsold.

When food is needed, money should first be used to buy food in a neighboring food surplus country, rather than Canada's surplus.

So Canada's food aid which is meant to feed hungry people, can become one of the forces pushing people off their land and into the cities, creating more hungry people.

You can give without loving...

But you can never love without giving.

1988 WORLD CLC DAY

CELEBRATION OF THE MARIAN YEAR

During his homily in St Peter's Basilica on the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary 1st Jan. 1987, the Holy Father announced the Marian Year. It seems very appropriate to the CLC ExCo to dedicate our World CLC day to this theme. In paragraph n.7 the Pope had this to say, addressing our Lady:

"Blessed are you who believed!

The Evangelist says of you : "Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart" (Lk, 2,19) You are the Church's memory! The Church learns from you, O Mary, that to be a mother means to be a living Memory, means to treasure and reflect in the heart on all of the events of men and women and peoples - the joyous events as well as the sad ones.

Among the many events in 1987 we desire to recall to the Church's memory the six hundredth anniversary of the 'Baptism' of Lithuania, drawing near in prayer to our brothers and sisters who have persevered for so many centuries united to Christ in the faith of the Church. Yet, how many other events, how many hopes, yet how many threats, how many joys, yet how many sufferings... what great sufferings! We must all, as a Church, treasure and meditate on these events in our hearts, just like the Mother. We must ever learn more from you, O Mary, how to be Church in this passing of the millenium."

How to use these guidelines for World CLC Day.

The material is divided into two parts. It constitutes Parts I and II of the Encyclical Redemptoris Mater of our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. I have quoted from a number of paragraphs, but suggest that those leading the prayer take time to read the two sections of the Encyclical, i.e. Paragraphs 7-24 and 25-37. While leaving a specific timetable to the people organising locally, I am suggesting that the first part of the material be used in the morning and the second during the afternoon. The material is not easily broken up and that is the nature of our reality. The titles of the two sections given in the Encyclical are :

- A. Mary in the Mystery of Christ
- B. The Mother of God at the Centre of the Pilgrim Church

One way of summing up and distinguishing these two sections could be the words of Henri Nouwen: "To contemplate is to see. To minister is to make visible what we see". So the aim of the World Day is to deepen our awareness of the Holy Spirit in our lives and to reflect on the practical expression of this same Spirit of Jesus in our lives for one another, especially for those of us who are marginalized in our countries.

In our celebration of the Marian Year, we take time to ponder the way that Mary, Our Blessed Mother, lived intimately with Jesus Her Son and lived out that reality among her neighbours.

So I suggest that we read the material quietly and reflectively and use that particular part of it, which really touches our hearts, for a period of prayer. After this time, take some time to review what happened during our prayer. Then move into small groups and share our reflections and benefit from the sharing of other people in our group.

A. Mary in the Mystery of Christ:

"Only in the mystery of Christ is her mystery fully made clear" (Parag. 4)

"The Second Vatican Council, by presenting Mary in the mystery of Christ, also finds the path to a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Church. Mary, as the Mother of Christ, is in a particular way united with the Church, 'which the Lord established as his own body' (L.G. n.52)" (Parag. 5) Mary listened and personally received the Word into her heart and then into her womb. The gift was fully from God. In Mary's case it began with her own conception. We believe in faith that, from the first moment of her conception, she was preserved from sin. Her response was fully hers. We celebrate this in the mystery of the Incarnation and see it fully unfolding throughout her life.

The Holy Father puts it this way: "The blessing uttered by Elizabeth at the Visitation: 'Blessed is she who believed'" reaches its full meaning when Mary stands beneath the Cross of her Son (Jn 19,25). Mary 'faithfully preserved her union with her Son even to the Cross'. It is a union through faith - the same faith with which she had received the angel's revelation at the Annunciation. At that moment she had also heard the words: "He will be great... and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end". (Lk 1, 32-33)

And now, standing at the foot of the Cross, Mary is the witness, humanly speaking, of the complete negation of these words" (Par. 18)

This brings out the meaning very graphically of the words in the previous paragraph:

"Jesus was aware that 'no one knows the Son except the Father' (Mt 11,27); thus even his Mother, to whom had been revealed most completely the mystery of his divine sonship, lived in intimacy with mystery only through faith. Living side by side with her Son under the same roof, and faithfully persevering 'in her union with her Son', she 'advanced in her pilgrimage of faith', as the Council emphasizes." (Par. 17)

"Blessed are you who believed!" "The Virgin Mary advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in her union with her Son into the Cross" (Par.2, quote LG 58) In that Spirit, Mary could echo in her heart the words of Jesus on the Cross: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." (Lk 23,34)

This is why the Holy Father can say: "Only in the mystery of Christ is her mystery made clear". It is the same for us too and is magnificently expressed in the words of a Russian bishop. He wrote the following words as he went to his death in one of Stalin's purges:

"There will come a day when the martyr will be able to stand before the throne of God in defence of his persecutors and say, 'Lord, I have forgiven in thy name and by thy example. Thou hast no claim against them any more".

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The gift, par excellence, became a reality for all of us. We are the Body of the resurrected Lord. We live in "the fulness of time".

Mary pondered all these things in her heart. Let me ponder my life and count my blessings. Though I might not find a blessing in all the events of my life, let me look to the faith of Mary who found in the Mystery of Jesus the way to find a blessing coming from God even in those experiences where the world does not expect a blessing. She was poor, she was exiled - a refugee, she lost her husband, she witnessed the violent death of her only Son. She always kept in touch with the Spirit of Our Father, which is offered to all of us. In this way she could be faithful and loving to her husband, her relatives and neighbours. In times of pain and isolation she could live in the Spirit of Hope. Throughout her life she could rejoice.

Some suggestions to focus our reflections:

1. The Holy Father says to Mary, Our Lady: "You are the Church's memory!" I am called to share in that remembering. So I might go to Mary and ask her what it was that she remembered.
2. We often hear and use the phrase: "To Jesus through Mary". In his Encyclical, the Holy Father complements the truth of this so that we can say: "To Mary through Jesus". (cf. Par. n. 26). Let me reflect on this.
3. We might ponder the opening verses of the Magnificat:

"And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.'" (Lk 1, 46-48)

In what way do I proclaim the greatness of the Lord in my life?

B. The Mother of God at the Centre of the Pilgrim Church:

During our pilgrimage through life we are always sustained and loved by God. God Our Loving Father is always present to us in Jesus Our Lord through His Spirit who is the Spirit of Jesus. The first person to bear witness to this life within us is Mary the Mother of Jesus and therefore Mother of God.

Let us ponder the words of the Holy Father:

"The Mother of that Son, therefore, mindful of what has been told her at the Annunciation and in subsequent events, bears within herself the radical 'newness' of faith: the beginning of the New Covenant. This is the beginning of the Gospel, the joyful Good News. However, it is not difficult to see in that beginning a particular heaviness of heart, linked with a sort of 'night of faith' - to use the words of St John of the Cross - a kind of 'veil' through which one has to draw near to the Invisible One and to live in intimacy with the mystery. And this is the way that Mary, for many years, lived in intimacy with the mystery of her Son, and went forward in her 'pilgrimage of faith', while Jesus 'increased in wisdom... and in favour with God and man' (Lk 2,52). God's predilection for him was

manifested ever more clearly to people's eyes. The first human creature thus permitted to discover Christ was Mary, who lived with Joseph in the same house at Nazareth." (Redemptoris Mater, Par. 17)

15

Her faith, her listening to God's Spirit in her heart, made her utterly open to the mission of Her Son. Consequently, in the words of the Fathers of the Church, her faith made her "mother of the living" (cf. Lumen Gentium, par. 56). We can ponder her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, the flight into Egypt, her anxiety and search for Jesus when he was lost and found in the Temple, her presence at Calvary and in the Upper Room when the disciples were waiting for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. She continues to reach out in comfort and love to those in need. What sustains her is her deep awareness of the Spirit of the Father and her Son Who calls her continually in faith, hope and love. Her living in faith and loving others become one. "Love one another as I have Loved you". She was free for others. In her faith we find support for our own.

Listen again to the words of the Encyclical:

"In the expression 'Blessed is she who believed', we can therefore rightly find a kind of 'key' which unlocks for us the innermost reality of Mary, whom the angel hailed as 'full of grace'. If as 'full of grace' she has been eternally present in the mystery of Christ, through faith she became a sharer in that mystery in every extension of her earthly journey. She 'advanced in her pilgrimage of faith' and at the same time, in a discreet yet direct and effective way, she made present to humanity the mystery of Christ, and she still continues to do so. Through the mystery of Christ, she too is present within mankind. Thus through the mystery of the Son the mystery of the Mother is also made clear. (Redemptoris Mater, P. 19)

The Holy Father reminds us of an important message from the Vatican Council II, which puts well the constant need to remember like Mary did:

"Moving forward through trial and tribulation, the Church is strengthened by the power of God's grace promised to her by the Lord, so that in weakness of the flesh she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain a bride worthy of her Lord; that moved by the Holy Spirit she may never cease to renew herself, until through the Cross she arrives at the light which knows no setting." (Lumen Gentium, par. 9)

Mary's constant place within the Church is expressed through the Magnificat:

"Mary truly, proclaims the coming of the 'Messiah of the poor' (cf. Is 11,4; 61,1). Drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith expressed in the words of the Magnificat, the Church renews ever more effectively in herself the awareness that the truth about God who saves, the truth about God who is the source of every gift, cannot be separated from the manifestation of his love of preference for the poor and humble, that love which, celebrated in the Magnificat, is later expressed in the words and works of Jesus.

The Church is thus aware - and at the present time this awareness is particularly vivid - not only that these two elements of the message contained in the Magnificat cannot be separated, but also that there is a duty to safeguard carefully the importance of 'the poor' and

of 'the option in favour of the poor' in the word of the living God. These are matters and questions intimately connected with the Christian meaning of freedom and liberation. 'Mary is totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him, and, at the side of her Son, she is the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe. It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission'. (Redemptoris Mater, Par. 37)

Some suggestions to focus our reflections:

1. I might ponder the way that Mary grew in her understanding of mission by her closeness to Jesus. In 1980 the Holy Father spoke to a group of handicapped people. He said: "The only proper answer to God's call of the Blessed Virgin was: "Let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1,38). Only your prompt 'Yes' to God's will, which is often beyond our human comprehension, can make you blessed and bestow on you, even now, a deep joy that cannot be destroyed from outside by any misery".

Let me pray through Mary for the desire to enter into the mystery of God's love. Maybe I am afraid to speak the truth, maybe I don't want to forgive somebody who has wronged me, maybe I am attached to something or somebody which makes me sad and unhappy.

2. I might recall the theme of the World CLC Assembly at Loyola: Mary Model of our Mission - "Do whatever He tells you" (Jn 2,5). Her response, in unison with the Holy Spirit, is an encouragement for me. Somebody who is united with the Spirit of Jesus will know the gifts of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control". (Gal 5,22)

As I ponder the great issues of our day, e.g. arms control and development of peoples, drug and alcohol dependency, the Aids epidemic, etc., do I experience Hope over against despair, Love over hate and fear? Let me face this in my prayer.

Tim Quinlan s.j.

LABYRINTH OF LIFE

*Although the trials of life thus change,
 As time endures this endless range,
 Through all the things we learn and know,
 We find no end; this timeless show.
 For tomorrow comes; Today must go;
 To forge ahead each day we grow.
 We see so clear of yesterday,
 Hence learn new lessons day by day.
 To prosper most within, not out,
 Thus understand what life's about.*

*To gaze in awe, this timeless door,
 And yet go on through so much more.
 Through all the perils along the way,
 We overcame to make today,
 A lesson learned is what we gained,
 With new insights; So don't distain.
 We look for answers never found,
 Thus leave our minds spin round and round.
 At times we feel there's nothing more;
 Life seems the same; an endless bore.*

*But soon we see another light;
 To give us strength; We stand and fight.
 For today's what counts; The past is gone;
 Each day brings forth another dawn
 To give up hope we lose our will;
 We cannot bear this topless hill.
 But when we see life's not all rain,
 How so much more we have to gain.
 The journey's far; Our weight's a ton;
 But at the end our job is done.*

*Though done it seems, how can we know,
 We may have yet so far to go.
 Though done it seems, We must agree;
 There may be yet so much to see.
 And so we quest to find the light,
 Of answers held in unknowing plight.
 And though hard we search, Our searches wane
 For all we do is search in vain.*