

# Christian Life Communities NEWSLETTER

July 1987

## Editorial:

Dear CLC'ers,

Mary Model of Mission  
"Do Whatever He Tells You"

As we enter into this Marian Year we are reminded of the theme of last year's World Assembly and the realization of the powerful advocate we have in Mary our Model. May we renew our devotion to her in this year and pray for the grace to follow our vocation as CLC'ers with the freedom and courage she so completely demonstrated to us in her role as Mother of God.

We did not receive any submission for a name for our Newsletter, so we remain nameless again for this issue. Perhaps over the summer when activities lessen and the pace slows down, you will have an opportunity to exercise your creativity and come to the Assembly with some wonderful suggestions!

You will notice a new format this issue. Your Executive Committee has decided to test the wonders of our technological society and "go computerized"! Whether this will be the ongoing method or not will be determined later, but we would like to take this opportunity to thank Shirley Gatchens for her many hours of expert typing and creativity in producing the finished printed copy since *Our Lady of Lourdes* took on the task as editors.

Love, Peace and Prayers

Editors:  
Our Lady of Lourdes CLC, Waterloo

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## Message from Our Co-Presidents:

"I shall be coming to you after I have passed through Macedonia--and I am doing no more than pass through Macedonia--and I may be staying with you, perhaps even passing the winter, to make sure that it is you who send me on my way wherever my travels take me. As you see, I do not want to make it only a passing visit to you and I hope to spend some time with you, the Lord permitting. (I Corinthians, 16: 5-8)

On May 30th we attended a CLC get together at Ignatius College in Guelph. We liked conversing with those whom we had not met before. We realize that, on these occasions and especially at our annual Assembly, our hopes of initiating and sustaining sharing and serious conversation with others is difficult: there is never enough time. We also realize, as presidents of this Federation, that we must find opportunities to get to know you all better. May we visit you? Even if you cannot find time to issue an invitation we will try and invite ourselves to one of your regular CLC meetings. Please tell us of those concerns or hopes which you would like to share with us. See you soon!

Kuruvila and Lois Zachariah

## NOTES FROM THE CO-ORDINATORS DESK

Our community continues to grow. Welcome to our newest community-in-formation in Burlington, led by ELLARD McBANE. This community formed as a result of its members participation in the Market-Place Ministries week-ends held here at Loyola House. They have stuck together ever since.

Good news from Montreal SR. HELEN NORMANDEAU of the Ignatian Centre will be starting a new CLC group there. It will be the first in Anglophone Montreal. They will have an initial information night on June 19th. I met some of the possible new members when I was there last month. They are simply delicious people. Let's keep them in our prayers.

Greetings from FR. REMI POTVIN, SJ, Ecclesiastical Assistant for the CLC of French Speaking Canada and SERGE LEGAULT, CLC member and delegate to the last World Assembly in Spain. I had lunch with them and brought them news of the World ExCo meeting held in Rome in April. They will be offering a Guide's Course for the Francophone community in Montreal in September. Let's also keep this course and our French Canada brothers and sisters in our prayers.

P.S. Look in the January 1987 issue of *Progressio* for the best description of what it means to be a World Community written by Fr. Potvin. A must on your reading list. The article is called "From Federation to the Community."

Did you know that we have Vietnamese CLCs in Canada and the U.S. I met some of their leaders when in Montreal. One of them has come to Toronto to start a CLC of Vietnamese there. He is THAHN DAT TANG, Dat for short. If any of your Torontonians run into the Vietnamese community, be sure to say hello to Dat.

Painful news! NINA NEUMANN of St. Michael's CLC in Waterloo died of cancer in May. Many of us always remember her joyful and enthusiastic spirit and her commitment to the CLC way of life. Let us thank God for the witness of her life. Our condolences to her family and her CLC community.

Yes, it's true! FR. JOHN ENGLISH is back from his sabbatical after visiting CLCs across Asia. You'll be hearing about his adventures, no doubt! Welcome home, John.

Finally, but by no means least, BARBARA PELOSO, past co-president, and member of the Elora Ontario CLC has been appointed by our Executive to serve as a guide for the Executive community. After a long and prayerful discernment Barbara said, "Yes!" And a beautiful YES it was to hear. AS far as I know there is no other *ay* guide for an Executive anywhere else in the world. Thanks Barbara! We promise our support.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The executive Council has met twice since our last newsletter. The highlight of our last meeting was Barb Peloso's "yes" to being guide to the Ex. Co., as well as the presence of our Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. John English returned from his global "evangelizing."

You probably have received your letter by now--the result of the Ex.Co's effort at improving our finances. The task was ably carried out by Peter Peloso.

The Formation Team organized a successful "Gathering" on May 30th at Guelph. Just an afternoon of CLC'ers and families from the nearby area--Burlington, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo--getting together for an afternoon celebration, sharing and a short film with a powerful message on "Eucharist."

Plans for the theme and process for our National Assembly in September are our priorities now, along with, of course, nominations for a new President/Co-President.

**WORLD EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Our Co-Ordinator, Jack Milan, is on the International Executive Council. In April they met in Rome. Below is a picture of the group during an audience with His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Reports from this meeting will be found in a subsequent issue.



## COMMUNITY SHARING

In our last newsletter we had a reflection for World CLC Day. You were invited to share with us your reflections or way of celebrating this day.

### St Raphael's Burlington CLC

#### The Vocation and Mission of the Lally

Today was a beautiful day for me. We traveled from Burlington to Waterloo to have lunch with our daughter, son-in-law, and grandson, Christopher. Our grandson is a two year old angel (aren't they all!), and he is so full of life.

He is all those adjectives you have heard to define his love for life--happy, sincere, honest, pure and learning. He doesn't know the meaning of hatred, because nobody has ever exposed him to it. He doesn't know the meaning of rejection, because nobody has even rejected him. What Christopher does know is this, the world is a wonderful place to live. He simply loves life!

Because of this simple love, he is so capable of sharing it with others: a beautiful smile for the waitress at the restaurant, giving his mother a piece of his apple pie, but most of all, his continuing effort to please others.

Because he is so loving, he is so "easy" to love. He doesn't ask me to prove that I am a "worthy" grandfather. He really doesn't ask why I like blue colours better than red. He accepts me just the way I am.

And with this acceptance in me comes complete trust in me. What a fantastic feeling. And I used to wonder if any two year old was capable of loving!

*John 15: 13-17* is full of beautiful meditations. The last sentence reads, "This then is what I command you: love one another." Christopher was the one that Christ brought into my life today showing the example of loving one another. Just imagine the love of the "Ultimate Lover"!

Christ conveys a very simple message, love everyone. Yes, even those you don't think are "worthy." Even those who like red better than blue.

Therefore, the mission of the lally is so simple that I often miss it. I love you Christopher --and each and everyone of you!

Bill Bittner

### Hamilton (Mountain) C.L.C. Group-In-Formation

Dear C.L.C.'ers:

At a time of Easter Joy, our report contains a note of sadness for all C.L.C. members. Since early December, 1986, the Lord has called two of our beloved to be with him in Paradise. Cancer claimed Lloyd Michor on December 8th (the Feast of Our Lady) and Murray Britt on February 9th, 1987.

The courage and patience of Lloyd and Murray has been a real inspiration to our fledgling group. Since their call to sainthood, we have been deeply moved and uplifted

by the sharing the widows of these two members have given us. Particularly touching was the love that inspired these families to request donations to our Neighbour-to-Neighbour Centre in lieu of flowers at the funerals.

As a group we felt blessed in that we now have two members as saints in heaven to pray with and for us.

We would appreciate prayers from all C.L.C.'ers for Marie Michor and Irene Britt to help them adjust to their deep loss and to gain strength to continue with the business of life until the Lord calls them to again be with our beloved saint-members.

With Love from  
Hamilton Mountain C.L.C.  
Emma & Ernest Malek  
(Contact Couple)

### Our Lady of Lourdes CLC Waterloo, Ontario

Greetings from your Newsletter Editors:

Two years ago we took on the task of editing the CLC National Newsletter. We hope you enjoy it. Journalistic skills are new to us, but we have learned a lot, and are still learning. With your co-operation we hope that it will be a vital part of CLC in Canada.

We haven't shared our community life with you in a very long time, and, in the hope of encouraging you to share with us, we decided to use this space to update you on happenings and life at Lourdes, Waterloo.

We noted our ninth anniversary this spring --we planned to celebrate, but there were just too many things going on. So, we have delayed the festivities.

We were a bit sad this spring--after Easter we said farewell to four original members--Kay McDermott, Irwin and Rose Plomske and Marianne Schneider. Their post retirement change of life-style created a need for freedom to travel and spend more time with family and friends. Their presence in community always inspired us and we miss them, but we rejoice in their ability to enjoy their retirement so wholeheartedly.

We now have nine members instead of thirteen, namely, Rita Schnarr, Jean Floyd, Bert Ruetz, Marie and Ed Schnarr, Shirley and Bob Gatchens, and Helen and Lou Drago, probably a more realistic number for community.

We are still very busy with our families, our parishes and the CLC in Canada. We have a strong commitment to CLC and try to serve our EXCO where we can. Jean is our representative to EXCO and keeps us well informed of its decisions and activities as well as relaying our input. (Con't p.5)

(Our Lady of Lourdes, con't)

Jean and I are group guides for forming communities and three members are prayer guides for Annotation 19. Shirley and I still serve of the Formation Team with Fran Morrison and Jack Milan.

Bob Gatchene is treasurer for EXCO and shares his financial concerns with us. How we wish we could win a lottery and ease his burden.

Bert Ruetz is back with us after a two-month leave of absence because of his heavy commitment to his wife's parents during their illnesses.

On a lighter note, we have had some fine occasions to celebrate. In November, Rita and Cyril Schnarr celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary and Mair and Ed Schnarr celebrated their twenty-fifth in April. The Gatchenes' became first time grandparents to a beautiful little girl and the Dragos' added two fine grandsons to their growing family.

We are supporting Lou Drago and his team as they make arrangements for the Rosary to be said daily at the parish Masses during Marian Year. Members serve as Rosary Leaders and as team captains appointing Rosary Leaders.

As you have gathered by now, we are a busy community and life is never dull. We have been very aware that parenting doesn't end with the "empty nest". Many great and wonderful blessings have been bestowed on our families, but there are always concerns to share and pray.

The communal awareness continues to be our favoured community prayer. We feel that through the practice of this prayer we have grown in discernment personally and communally, but we are always aware of our need to be vigilant and focused so that we can read the signs of the times in our world, our community and in our own lives.

We pray for all our CLC communities in Canada when we meet every week. Please keep us in your prayers.

God bless, happy holidays 'till, God willing we meet at the Fall Assembly.

Helon Drago

#### CHUCKLE FOR THE DAY

A priest was lost in the woods. He kept walking and walking until suddenly he came face to face with a big black bear. Discouraged, realizing the end was near, he sat on a stump, bowed his head and began to pray. The bear sat down beside him and bowed his head also. Greatly surprised the priest said: "I didn't know that bears prayed." "You're right, we don't," said the bear. However, we always say grace before a meal."

#### St Anthony Daniel, Kilchener CLC-In-Formation

We prayed over General Principle #1 and individually responded to the following questions:

1. In what ways do I experience life and its circumstances as a gift?

When you wake up with a "Song of Joy" in your heart and the day unfolds with good things happening, it is easy to tie them altogether as precious gifts from God. Gifts such as these are nurturing and necessary and are usually easy to accept. But we also know that sufferings and trials are a part of our lives and if we can do an awareness, share the struggle with our Father, get in touch with the struggle and see how it is blocking our relationship to the Father, then that struggle to resolution can be a precious gift too. The tools or gifts are always there if we simply focus our life in God, through God and with God. He is always constant--it is us who freely decide to say "yes" or "no".

2. How is my work, family life, civic life the means of service for the human family?

Only God knows who we really are and what we are capable of. Often he doesn't ask us to go forth. He simply sends the needs to our doorsteps for us to serve or be served. Once we fully realize how much God loves us, how He breathes life and strength into us, and we are ready to respond to that love, then we must go forth for it is *only* by knowing God and our very selves that we can find God *in* others. The only way to find God is *through* others. The only way to find God is *with* others. Community is vital.

3. How does my CLC assist me to a life of grateful response?

Through our sharings we can see how God is working in other people's lives and it can awaken us to be grateful to God because He is so visibly present in our everyday lives. Within the community a strong foundation of trust is built where we do not feel threatened or unaccepted because of how we feel of what we say. This allows an openness, which in turn allows us to respond to one another's needs. It is also a reflection of how we should be open and responsive to God's will for us. By responding to the needs of our CLC members, our families and friends and all those with whom we interact on any given day, in a caring Christian way, we get to know and love our God, and humbly thank Him for all his blessings. God's love is so constant. To show our appreciation we must be faithful to our prayers (continued next page)

(St. Anthony Daniel con't)

and examen so that we can truly find Him in all aspects of our life. When we are constantly aware of His love we cannot help but be grateful and respond to the needs of others.

#### THE NAMELESS CLC, WEST PRINCE, P.E.I.

Gilles Michaud composed the following history of Culture Crafts Co-Op for our parish bulletin. Its purpose was to give a clearer understanding of the Co-Op to the local people and we are happy to share it with the members of CLC.

##### Culture Crafts Co-Op

When the Canadian Catholic Bishops issued their "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis" in 1983 a group of people in the Charlottetown area along with the Social Action Commission of the Diocese of Charlottetown set about to determine how it could help a few Islanders find meaningful employment.

This group, which was first known as the "Employment Project", began by first developing their goals and objectives which would be applicable to a small Community based industry. They are as follows:

1. For the purpose of becoming a worker owned co-operative to provide long term, fulfilling work for unemployed persons through the production of wood and wool crafts using appropriate technology.
2. To be especially suitable for persons who are unable to enter the work force due to family responsibilities or long distances from work through a decentralized model which provides an alternative to a conventional job.
3. To give individuals the personal human benefits--which crafts co-operative offers--a common project, self management, self respect to those who feel helpless and defeated, companionship through work with people of similar interests, the furthering of interest and energy, and the development of creative appreciation and enjoyment.
4. To promote the general welfare of P.E.I. by lending itself to rural work and, therefore, preservation of our rural heritage, increasing the variety of handcraft production, encouraging the creative use of natural and salvage materials and strengthening community understanding by bringing together persons to create alternatives through the worker-owned co-operative model.
5. To promote and define craft as a trade or occupation of the sort requiring skill and training combined with a knowledge of the principles of the

art.

6. To educate the general public on the principles and philosophies of co-operative associations.

What followed was a year of organizing, researching and evolving the potential for a worker-owned wool and wood craft venture. Funding during this period came from the P.L.U.R.A. (an inter-denominational church group) and the Diocese of Charlottetown (Social Action Commission and the Most Rev. James Mac Donald.

Despite strong letters of recommendations and a market study confirming feasibility of our project C.E.I.C. refused funding. Therefore a new approach had to be taken, forcing us to drastically modify our project and to only produce wood crafts.

In Feb. 1986, the Job Development Program under C.E.I.C. granted us funding for a five month training program. By now, we were incorporated into a worker-owned co-op with a Board of Directors, which consisted of four (4) worker members and four (4) non-worker members. At this point we needed a building to work from, a requirement by the project funding. Since the workers came from the west of the island and also that two (2) of our members were from the Immaculate Conception Parish we approached the pastor, Fr. Raymond Gallant, and requested the use of the old parish hall. The agreement was that we could use it but with the understanding that all costs such as renovations, electricity and heat would be paid by the Culture Crafts Co-Op.

After completing the five month training program and with no further funding available it was impossible to continue paying wages to the workers. Therefore a decision was made to continue working on a volunteer basis in order to establish validity of our market study. This meant sharing the building with the clothing depot and thus renovating our portion of the hall into a craft shop. Several other craft people from the surrounding district were invited to display their crafts so that they could be sold on consignment throughout the summer.

The result is, after our first session of producing and selling crafts, we are assured that our market study is accurate. This study had shown a modest return at the beginning of the project and a greater potential for growth in the following years as the demand for our products increased. In P.E.I. there is approximately \$4 million of crafts sold yearly. Only \$2.5 million is made locally. Every year the demand for quality crafts is increasing. We have the potential and the skills necessary to meet these demands. Therefore, our project is not only intended to organize and provide meaningful work but also to expand and employ more people in this region to meet this growing demand of culturally related crafts. (con't p. 7

The success of our small worker co-op will inevitably depend on how well our crafts are sold in the market place. Other factors come into play as we continue to establish ourselves in the market place. We do need the continued support of the parish as a whole and the community at large if we are to succeed as a community based industry.

We are thankful for the generosity of the Immaculate Conception parishioners in allowing us to use the parish hall as we continue to establish ourselves as a self-sufficient business. Naturally we intend to continue to pay the operating costs of the building as we have in the past so that no financial burden will fall upon the parish itself.

Truly this is a living example of how we, as a Christian community, are responding to our church's challenge "to become actively involved in finding solutions to the moral disorder of our society 'unemployment.'" Pope Jon Paul II has stated that, "human work is a key, probably the essential key to the whole social question."

As we continue in this coming year to work toward a more just and peaceful society, we ask for your continued prayers and support.

Culture Crafts Co-Op  
Worker Members

Since Gilles wrote this letter in 1986 I'll add a few further events that have occurred. First our Parish Finance Committee insisted that we pay rent or move out; secondly we found out that while on unemployment we were only allowed to work volunteer to what would add up to 25% in wages (even if no dollars are involved) anything volunteer beyond that was deducted from our unemployment; thirdly, the project funding we were assured we were receiving was cancelled because of technicalities. Needless to say we experienced man discouragements and at times wondered if it was worth it. At times like this the conviction of "building the kingdom" in the lives of those involved brought about the courage and determination to go on. Christ asked us to take that step and trust. Plura provided us with more funding, that along with the sale of our crafts put some of us back to work. We also got part funding for an artist and funds for training. We also received a grant for part of our rent and the other part we pay through labour and renovation.

At present we are working hard and long hours to make crafts for our own craft shop and others. All of us still are optimistic toward our co-op but we ask for your prayer support.

I must add that my heart just bounces at the

thought of seeing you all this year. This would be meaningful to me but it would be even more meaningful to have another of our OLC to go and be with you--just to have that experience. Pray that someone from our group will make it up this year and yes may the faith that binds us together grow and sustain us in the love of Jesus and Mary, his mother.

In closing I'll end with the Lord's words: "Just as the Father sent me so I am sending you out to be my witnesses."

With Prayer & Love,  
Anne McIsaac

## PERSONAL SHARING

When Jean asked me to consider putting this article in the Newsletter, my immediate response was "sure." But as I thought of what to say and how to convey a sense of the process that took place within me, I wasn't so sure. I hope that I can articulate how the Lord lead me and my experience.

At the OLC Executive meeting in March we discussed our need, as an executive community, for a group guide. Within this discussion Lois and Zack proposed that I should be that person. My immediate response was "no, I could never do that." But I know that the Lord often has surprises and works in ways we often don't expect, so I agreed to enter into discernment and decision-making about whether I should or should not accept being the group guide.

Our Elora community made its annual retreat the first weekend in April and I decided to make this decision the focus of the weekend, --nothing really clear emerged. However during my last prayer time in retreat Jesus made it clear that He wanted me to use the gifts I had been given. I left retreat with this sense and also with the question "what really are my gifts?" I came back to our April executive meeting with no clear answer and all agreed they would pray for me for clarity. During the following month God made Himself present to me very tangibly through others and I began to see that one of the gifts God had given to me was that of listening and discerning. Once again I met Jesus in prayer and He again told me that the greatest love I could show Him was to use the gifts I had been given. So at the May executive meeting I agreed to become the group guide for our OLC executive.

As a community we are embarking on something new for all of us. So we shall learn as we go, I am sure.

Please keep us in your prayers. Pray for me also that I can clearly perceive God's presence with us and guide well.

Peace always,  
Barbara Palano

*Because our movement is a way of Christian life, and not a rigid organization, these principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text but rather by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love. This law, which the Spirit inscribes on our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life. It respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God. It challenges us to see the serious responsibility we have as Christians: it inspires us to labour unceasingly for the solutions to the problems of our times; and it impells us to work generously with all people of good will for peace and progress, charity and justice, liberty and dignity for all.*

(General Principle #2)

A common misunderstanding of the CLC is that it is an organization which one "joins" and the General Principles (G.P.s) are the rules. The CLC is, consequently, liken to other organizations and structures of our society with a hierarchy of authority, specialized roles and functions, and rules. We often experience a sense of alienation in these organizational settings because we are asked to conform ourselves to their external demands. We feel that we cannot "be ourselves." We are encouraged to live from the outside-in, so to speak. The external structure prescribes the proper behaviour in the form of rules, policies, and procedures, applied from *outside*.

In contrast, one does not "join" CLC or submit to its "rules." Rather, through the CLC way of life, one learns to live from the prompting of the heart--living from the inside-out. We come to recognize that God is *within* present in our hearts. That is where we will find the spirit of Jesus, the Law of Love. "This law...the Spirit inscribes on our hearts..." As we grow in our ability to live according to this *interior* law of love, we become freer from the "rules" which are imposed from the outside. In this sense, we can truly "be ourselves."

St Paul expresses this same idea in his letter to the Ephesians when he prays. "I ask God to give you the power through His Spirit to be strong in your *inner* selves, and I pray that Christ may make his home in your hearts through faith...so that you...may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love" (4:16-18).

So the glue which holds the CLC together is not to be found in rules or structures, but at the deepest level of each heart, a *shared* experience of the love of Christ. In short, Jesus and His Spirit of Love is the glue, rule and structure of CLC. The G.P.s and our community life are geared to aid us to live according to the Spirit of Love in our hearts, that is from the inside-out.

G.P. #2 also outlines some of the characteristics of this interior living. First, love is always respectful of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. In the CLC, differences are celebrated

and each person is encouraged to discover his/her unique call and vocation in life.

Secondly, Love is always inclusive. It excludes nothing from its embrace. This Interior Law of Love, therefore, wants to operate in *all* the aspects of our lives--work, family, leisure. That is what we mean when we say that CLC spirituality is an "integrated" one. Love lays claim to every dimension of life.

Thirdly, a loving heart is free and open. It is available to discover God *wherever* He may choose to be and to respond to His call *whatever* that may be. In fact, you might say that the CLC'er (and the whole community, as well) has no agenda, no plan, no favourite option save that of discovering the God who calls to us from the world in which we live.

Finally, the love of Christ will impel us (2Cor. 5:14) with its compassion for all the concerns of the human family to labour with Him in making real in our day the Father's Kingdom of peace, justice and love.

Does this inside-out living feel like a tall order? St. Paul might have been addressing the same feeling among the Ephesians when he wrote,

To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for or even think of: to God be the glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen

#### Questions for Reflection and Sharing

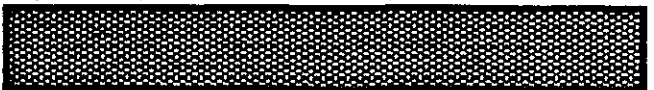
Recall personal experiences of living from the outside-in. How are they different? How are they similar?

How have you encouraged each other in your CLC to this inside-out way of life?

Have there been moments in the life of your CLC when you sensed a *shared* experience of the Love of Christ? Describe that (those) moment(s)

Pray with Ephesians 4:14-21. Share your experience of prayer with your community.

Pray with "The Contemplation to Attain the Love of God" in the Spiritual Exercises [230-237]. Does it say anything to you about the CLC way of life?





## FEATURES

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF CLC SPIRITUALITY...

#### A way of life

1. Ignatian spirituality is an integrated spirituality--i.e. a 'process' which brings together our faith and daily living, so that we may become more aware of the Lord present in our life and respond to His invitations, in an on-going way, to carry on the mission of Christ in our world today.

2. This process is based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius-

a. as a retreat experience

b. as a way of life on the personal and community level.

3. As a retreat experience, the spiritual exercises 'speak' (if experienced) for themselves. However, the process is explained in the pages that follow.\*

4. The experience of the spiritual exercises is continued on the personal level in two ways (of course, these two ways are not exhaustive):

a. Through the sort of prayer that *begins* by surrendering to the Father and revealing every aspect of our lives to Him. We surrender to the Lord and begin by telling Him how we feel--we tell Him what is on our mind or in our heart. This may take all the time for prayer, or only a part of it...but it is where we begin. We only grow in intimacy with a person to the extent that we reveal ourselves to that person and let him/her reveal himself/herself to us. This sort of prayer makes for the integration of our faith and daily living, and is a growing experience of 'conversion'--we begin to see Life, and turn to it where before we say nothing, or only something negative.

b. Through the daily examen of consciousness. There are various models for this--perhaps one of the best known in CLC is the model proposed by Fr. George Aschenbrenner S.J.. The aim of

this exercise is, through a growing attentiveness to our inner 'movements'--e.g. our feelings, our motives, our inspirations--to come to know the well springs of our actions, and the patterns of our behaviour, so that we may be attuned to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and more alert to the promptings of the forces of evil.

5. On the community level: the usual CLC process in a group reinforces the movement of integrating our faith and daily living.

a. There is a time for quiet prayer, from a passage of scripture. (Sometimes this leads into shared prayer, depending on the group).

b. There is an exchange, on the level of experience, of some aspect of daily life (decided in advance).

Other 'activities' may follow, but these two 'moments' are essential. For what they do is to bring the light of faith, in a community context, to the different concerns of our life. Moreover, these two moments further reinforce the movement of integration because they bring together prayer and listening. Prayer, basically, is surrender to the Father--to let God be God in my life. Listening is 'surrendering' to the other--to let the other freely be himself/herself. We know how real our prayer is by looking at the quality of our listening.

#### ...which is missionary:

1. Mission is not so much something we do as the whole quality of presence we bring to the world in which we live.

2. Our mission is to carry on the mission of Christ, to be Christ-bearers, like Mary.

Christ's mission was not just what He did, but what He was, His whole life. And His whole life, in human terms, was the full revelation of the Father's love.

3. His Dying reveals that the Father's love is unconditional and completely 'vulnerable' to His creation, in the sense that when His love is fully revealed, what we see is a Man with a broken Heart. And Christ's rising reveals that the Father's love is undying and unconquerable.

4. So, our mission is to carry on Christ's mission, as being people who reveal the Father's love

5. We not only do this but are this--i.e. a revelation of the Father's love--through seeking to build the sort of world in which people can live as brother and sisters, children of the Father.

6. That is the CLC mission; and it is further specified by our experience as members of the Church; in the world today, we cannot be--live as--brothers and sisters:

a. Unless we have a simple life-style--poor with Christ poor, for a better service.

b. And unless we carry the spirit of evangelization i.e. a concern for the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

7. So--that is the CLC mission in the world today--to live as brothers and sisters that we reveal the Father's love, and that the people around us may also come to believe that the Kingdom of the Father is both possible and true...a Kingdom of Justice, Peace and Love.

PATRICK O'SULLIVAN S.J.

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\* This summary, published here as an article in itself, was originally written as a foreword for the 2nd edition of the Progressio supplement 'Ignatian Spirituality and CLC formation.

# THE CALL TO COMMUNITY

Depending On God's Grace

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AN INTERVIEW WITH GORDON COSBY.

Gordon Cosby is the founder and pastor of Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., and a *Sojourners* contributing editor. The following interview, conducted by Jim Wallis in May 1986, is the second in a series of interviews with Cosby. The first, which began our summer spirituality series, "The Life of Faith," appeared in the June 1986 issue; part three will appear in August/September.

—The Editors



**Jim Wallis:** In this spirituality series, "The Life of Faith," we began by talking about conversion and faith. I'd also like to hear your thoughts about community. How is community an expression of faith, and how does community nurture faith?

**Gordon Cosby:** The conversion experience brings one into a conscious relationship with Jesus, but at the same time it brings one into a conscious relationship with other people. When the conversion experience is a whole conversion experience, one is brought into a corporate reality and therefore, in some genuine, authentic sense, into community. If conversion to the gospel begins with individual praying, it becomes a matter of the person moving from that individualism into being part of a corporate entity. It's a long journey from individualism to being a "corporate" person, but a necessary one.

**So you're saying that part of the call of the gospel itself is a call to a new community as well as to Christ.**

That's right. You can't have one without the other. All of the images in the scriptures having to do with the church are corporate images—the people of God, the body of Christ. The person who says, "I want to belong to Jesus, but I don't want to belong to community," is saying that which is impossible from a biblical understanding of the church.

**How is the community a crucible of conversion? How does continuing conversion occur in the context of community?**

It seems to me that individualism is so strong in each one of us that we have to be converted step by step to get to the place where we really are corporate people. A community has to have different stages for that continuing conversion to occur. So you have exploratory steps, such as intern or novice membership.

Becoming a corporate person has to happen step by step because community is very, very frightening and extremely difficult. It is much more difficult than that new person realizes. Community is hell for many, many people—or an experience to be tolerated.

**Why is that so?**

I think that's because we are so individualistic. We have our own ego needs, and every new step of community is a threat to the false self. We hope that the false self will die and the true self will come into its fullness and completion. That is the self which is the corporate self and which is concerned with the common good, not only within the life of the community but for

the larger common good. But the process of that false self dying so that the true self may be actualized is a very, very painful process. We resist that death even though community insists on it.

The dying of the false self is not a conceptual death. It's an actual death in the context of other selves that each of us comes up against in community—and they are wounded, fractured, and broken individuals, just as we are fractured and broken and wounded. With all that woundedness rubbing up against the woundedness of one another, it's a difficult phase. But that's the context for the movement away from the false self, the inauthentic self, to begin.

**The person who says, "I want to belong to Jesus, but I don't want to belong to community," is saying that which is impossible from a biblical understanding of the church.**

**I'm intrigued by your description of this movement from being a person who is individualistically preoccupied to one who has a corporate sense of self and vision. How would you describe those two kinds of people? What happens to people as they enter community as "individual" persons and become more and more corporate persons?**

I think the average person who comes into a Christian community wants support for his or her life, but feels that they must make fundamental decisions themselves. They want to be associated with community for comfort's sake, for a sense of support with other people. They want to be associated with a group of people that is doing significant things and is on the right side of the issues. (But they are not at all ready to surrender any part of their sovereignty to a larger call.)

What I'm talking about is the sort of thing that happens between two individuals in marriage. You can have two individuals who have a very close, wonderful friendship with one another. They are associated with one another, and they give one another support. But that's different from a union in which those two give up

some sovereignty and the two become one.

I think that's something like the process that happens when a person genuinely enters into community. We are not only associated with one another and giving one another support. Something happens, and we begin to conceive of ourselves as part of a larger entity, as members of a body, not existing except as members of that body. Our deep, authentic existence is drawn from a body to which we belong and from playing a part in its life.

I think this movement is a gradual process. The average person, even after having been in community for quite a long time, will still be making basic individual decisions and then may announce to the community that they have decided to leave it. They will have done it on their own, not as a part of a process. They haven't considered that they really were a part of the body, nor said, "I need your discernment. I need your help on this."

It's very important for me to play my part as a member of a body and not just work for my individual fulfillment. And the same principle applies to how we belong to the totality of the body of Christ, so that we transcend the local community of which we are a part.

**I'm struck by how you differentiate association from union. A lot of people think they want community. But what they really want is an association with others that will enhance their own individual capacities and fulfillment. They are not really seeking union with other people that entails, as you say, a surrender of sovereignty.**

I think this is the heartbeat of the issue. For a community to be maintained and its life deepened over a period of time, there must be a "critical mass" of people who understand just what the community is about. It is this critical mass of people that is seriously in union with the community and is not seeking personal enhancement in and through the community, or making demands of ego on the community.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer called these personal ego demands "wish-dreams." Bonhoeffer said they are imposed on the community, which then tends to destroy the community. But if you've got that critical mass who really understands the community, then it can deal with the people who come in expecting the community to enhance their egos and their own fulfillment. In one sense, it is very desirable that certain of their dimensions be enhanced; but the death process has to take place so that that which has been enhanced is now serving the community, rather than enhancing and serving the ego needs of the person.

Every community has to be aware of and see whether it has that critical mass. And it needs to sustain that critical mass and

not give itself in so many different types of outreach or mission that it doesn't nurture this inner core of its life. It's not an easy thing to see. You can't say, well this person has really made this transition and this person over here has not. It's very subtle. But if I know that it is going on, I've got a better chance of being aware of what the community needs and how to nurture it.

**A few months ago, when you were sharing an evening with Sojourners Community, we learned about the breakup of a community that has been very close to us for a decade. You instinctively responded about the fragility of community and how forces, particularly the forces of evil around us, want to break up community. Can you say more about what nurtures and sustains a community for the long haul?**

First of all, I think that it's very right for some communities to go out of existence. It's not always a tragedy, because the Spirit can call people together for a period of time. Sometimes it's appropriate for that time to end and for the Spirit then to call those people, and other people, to new combinations of life. That's important to recognize, because sometimes we assume that anything that is good ought to go on forever, and I just don't believe that.

So if there's that sort of call into being and out of being, I rejoice in it. But I think a lot of communities are not really called out of being, but instead they are destroyed by the forces of our society and the demonic working through the forces of our society. I think that's what you were talking about, and we need to be aware of it.

Then how do we sustain it? One of the important things is the process through which people come into membership in any community. That is where the battle is lost for most of us. We don't have people who are discerning enough to be able to detect some of the inauthentic motivations and deal with them ahead of time.

Now the minute a new person comes into membership, that person has ultimate power to determine the direction and the destiny of the community. That's really what membership means. But all of the members of a community are not members on the same basis and understanding of Christian community.

If a community is going to have a life which is an alternative life to the dominant culture and the dominant consciousness, then it must clearly define what its corporate life is and is not about. It must clearly prepare people who want to explore that life and who are making the transition from non-community to community life. A fundamental difference exists between what the new person has lived through within the dominant society and what they aspire to in this alternative community

which is the church. It's in that initial period of spiritual formation that the person really enters into the community. That is where I feel we can lose the battle.

Sometimes it comes to be a power struggle between the people who see community at a deeper level and the people who were attracted to the excitement and the vitality and the works of the Holy



Spirit in the community. This latter group finds that the price is too high for them to pay; they do not really want this death and resurrection, and the next death and resurrection, and the next death and resurrection. Then you've got a battle going on within the membership.

A community that was at one time called into being can move into a period when the Spirit departs and it does not have that critical mass. This is what I mean by the fragility of community. Without people who have the gift of discernment, you may not know until several years have gone by that the Spirit has really been lost. The community can start operating on its natural power, on the basis of sound, rational planning and efficiency—all of the things that the world operates on. And people who are gifted can do a lot of good things even when the community has shifted. It may have shifted slowly and without members discerning it.

Another reason why community is fragile is that sometimes a community is held together not only by a certain combination of persons but by one person who is crucial to that combination, and when that one person is lost, the community is gone. Nobody can pull it back, because this is the person who had the spiritual authority within the life of the community to keep reminding the community or bringing it back to where it should be.

**What are the temptations that threaten a community after it has been formed and existed for several years, after it has become more or less successful?**

Any community in good, strong shape is existing by God's grace. Yet, the stronger and more powerful it is, the more vulnerable a community is, because it has to deal with power and success. It has to deal with its fame and with the way other people and the society perceive it. It has all of the temptations that Jesus had in the wilderness. The community, therefore, faces new temptations because of its effectiveness.

Another way to describe this is through what is called the "monastic cycle." The cycle is that devotion produces discipline, discipline produces abundance, and abundance destroys discipline. The cycle happens both individually and corporately. Through the devotion that comes in knowing Christ, meeting Christ, and being overcome by the grace which we have been given, our sins are forgiven. We then want to be open to the disciplines whereby the grace can be enhanced in our lives. The disciplines are an opening to grace that can fill our lives. So we do that, and grace pours in to us individually; it pours into us as a community. In terms of the gospel image, we are faithful with one city, with its human intensities, opportunities, and responsibilities, and so we are asked to be faithful with 10 cities, or a hundred cities.

But at this point the temptation, it seems to me, always is to believe that we have done the work rather than accepting that we were the channels, or instruments, of God. It's almost impossible for those things not to slip in at that point, because we think we've got the key to this thing, we know how to go about it, and we've gotten sophisticated enough to make our way around the world. People ask us how to deal with things, and they treat us as authorities.

The critical question then becomes: Can a community stand the pressures of abundance? It takes a deeper level of faith for a community to rejoice in its abundance and to know that abundance is the result of grace rather than its own capabilities and maturity. So it's an issue of whether or not the community can sufficiently deepen its faith.

In the early days, all of us had to depend upon grace, through whatever resources came to us, to survive a week. Now, most of us have a financial basis that can survive a longer time. So we're not as dependent. At the same time, we declare that we are depending upon God's grace. We don't have to depend on it in the way we did earlier, so it's important to learn how we can be dependent in our own hearts and spirits for the Spirit to be with us every day now, as when we were literally dependent on it each day. I just think it takes more faith to do that.

**Are there essential elements of community? Are there secrets, perfect models, key structures, or unchanging institutions that make community work? Are there other**

elements. In addition to a critical mass, that really need to be present for the core community to begin, to endure, and to sustain itself?

I think you've got to have one or two people who somehow have been so touched by God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, that they can call the community into being.

**Do you mean a founder or founders?**

I mean a founder who soon has founders, but I think it usually starts with a founder. You may have a couple of other people who are exploring and saying we need to do something. Often, out of that group, you have one person who says, "I am going to do it." Then some of those other people who are exploring say, "Well, I'd like to go with you." But often it's that one person who simply starts trying to create community, without having done much of this intellectual work regarding models. I think it usually starts at a deeper level.

Those who gather around that leader have to work with what they perceive to be the fundamental dimensions of the community that they are bringing into being. They have to get down to very clear specifics of what are the marks of community for them. Everybody's got to get down to the hard work of saying that my call is a call to be a part, to bring into being, to be evolving with the community, and these are the necessary minimums to make it worthwhile for me to lay down my life.

These minimums vary, because mine will be different from yours. But if certain things that are fundamental for me no longer exist here, then I'm going to start over again. While they are not to be absolutized, the minimums have to be made specific, because otherwise the community is lost very, very quickly.

**Can you give some examples of what some of those specifics might be, even though they may vary from place to place?**

I think that the people who come in to the community must be committed to the deepening of the inner life, which means moving toward the death of the inauthentic self, whether you call it the "inward journey" or another name. Then you have to work with the structures whereby that takes place so you don't separate the concept from the structures through which it will happen.

The second thing is that commitment to community must issue in some relief of the suffering of humankind—locally or around the world—since God is calling us to connect with that suffering. At some point we've got to suffer to relieve it, to bring about liberation and to bring about freedom. That will become very specific for every community.

The community also will have to decide the frequency of its gathering together and celebrating common life in worship. I feel that for the deepening of the inner life, some clear, personal discipline of prayer and working with the scriptures is essential, in addition to the work that goes on corporately. If a person coming in says they are not going to have time for that, or they

**It takes a deeper level of faith for a community to know that abundance is the result of grace rather than its own capabilities and maturity.**

can't get into that dimension, then you simply say they have to wait a little while, because this is essential to community for us.

I think one of the most important disciplines for anybody coming in is a discipline of money. Money, and what it represents, is an idol for almost all of us, and, therefore, to think that one is going to have genuine community without giving up money is an illusion. Oftentimes that's been a more healthy discipline for us than prayer, because you can fudge on prayer and make everybody think you are doing it. If you have a money discipline, it's clear whether you are or are not following it. We've had more people who have not come into the community because they couldn't deal with the money discipline than because of any other discipline.

One very basic element of community has to do with the authority and obedience issue, which centers around gift-evoking. Whatever the gifts within the life of the community, the person who exercises a gift must exercise authority when offering the gift; and the people who are responding to that gift are thereby being obedient to it. So the issue of authority and obedience comes into play around identified gifts, or functions, within the life of the community. This means a community is not operating as a democracy. A community operates around the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which have been identified and which are being exercised. And where you exercise a gift, there is authority.

**You say community is not a democracy but operates by the exercise of the gifts of the**

**Spirit. How does this relate to the difficult questions about consensus vs. hierarchical forms of decision making and leadership?**

Normally, the way we think about organizations is that we all have an equal vote and that the majority rules and will make a decision about the issues before that group. But the church functions under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, which transcends human power. I don't feel there is a prayer of a chance in the world of any of our missions being effective unless they use the pentecostal power, the power of the Holy Spirit, which is formed through us.

It seems to me that the whole book of Acts has to do not with majority rule in the first days of the church but with the gifts of the Spirit. In Acts 8 Philip goes up to Samaria under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There he gets the guidance to go down to the Gaza road. Down at the Gaza road, he gets the guidance to join the chariot and talk to the Ethiopian official who is reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and wondering what it is about. Phillip says, "I can help you with your problem." And so the gospel gets to Ethiopia, without a committee and without a budget.

In Acts 16 Paul is wandering around, not allowed to go into Bithynia or Asia. The scripture says that the Spirit of Jesus did not allow it. He goes to Troas and gets a vision: "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Now, that's guidance, that's the Spirit, and so the gospel begins to travel west.

That sort of movement of the Spirit within the life of our communities is what we've got to depend on. Who are the ones who have the call and the gift, which have been identified and have emerged from within the life of the community? Whatever your gift within the life of the community, which the community has identified, it has to be trusted in those areas. Whatever the gifts of the other people in the community—the gift of pastoring, or the gift of publishing, or the gift of administration—they must be recognized and respected as gifts of the Spirit through that person.

This doesn't mean that the judgment of that person is never questioned. To have all of these gifts functioning in concert under the orchestration of the Spirit is the way the community is to operate, rather than to say these are the things we need to work with and devise some strategy. It is not that we don't have to do that, but that's not the primary emphasis.

If we can function under call and under gifts, then people can support, encourage, and be a part of us as we are faithful to that call and the gifts that are evoked in the service of that call. But that is an entirely different way of functioning than saying we've all got an equal voice in this thing, and we are going to work for the majority vote. It is a process which is constantly working itself out if we are committed to it. □

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

*A Listening Heart* by David Steindl-Rast

*A Listening Heart* is a small collection of essays harvested from the life of a man of paradox. Brother David Steindl-Rast is a professed monk of St. Benedict. He is dedicated to togetherness in the space/time community of Mount Saviour Monastery. Yet he is also a hermit of the Benedictine Grange. He is a perennial person who gives present witness to the ancient tradition of contemplative Christianity. But he lives in the depths of modernity. He is a man of silence. Yet he is a pioneer of East-West dialogue. Most of all, he is joyful. For he recognizes that "It is not happiness that makes gratefulness, but gratefulness that makes happiness." These essays are not words about prayer but a graced act of prayer. This is a man whose wisdom comes from doing the truth of the heart rather than merely analyzing it.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Sept. 25 - Sept. 27

## LOYOLA HOUSE

Guelph, Ontario

Registration will be forthcoming

We are attempting to make  
arrangements to meet flights,  
trains, busses into Toronto

## DEADLINE

for  
Submissions

for

Next

NEWSLETTER  
National Assembly

Sept. 25 - 27

## IN MEMORIAM

Nina Neumann  
 May 11, 1926 - May 17, 1987  
 Member of St. Michael's CLC  
 Waterloo, Ontario.

Nina will be affectionately remembered by many people for her will to live and her capacity to enjoy life, even while enduring intense suffering.

A fortune teller once told her that she would die a rich woman, and indeed she felt rich in friends, especially those gained through her conversion from the Baptist faith to Roman Catholicism, and those who supported that conversion in 1979.

She took the responsibility to grow in her faith seriously. She was rewarded not only with the conversion of her husband, Erwin, but also her daughter, Yvette.

Above all, Nina was an enthusiastic CLC'er--outspoken and practically minded, often challenging us in sharing our interior lives more trustingly with each other and in the area of mission.

In 1985 she was diagnosed as having Hodgkin's disease. Nina's amazing capacity to hold on to life until everyone she loved was reasonably safe and secure, nevertheless meant that much of her purgatory must have been suffered here.

She managed to attend Yvette's wedding, to see that she would be cared for by a fine Catholic husband and family, but especially to hold Yvette's first-born son in her arms. How proud Nina was to do this for her grandson--and justly so.

Her strength of determination to become Simeon like this came from a life-time of suffering--congenital hearing impairment, economic depression, poverty, escape from Germany and Poland, war time terrors, rebuilding her life in Canada, loss of her son, etc.

She acquired a special love for the Liturgy of the Hours and it lasted until death, for the time we have is holy and precious because there is so much good that still needs to be accomplished.

I told her it was a blessing to die in the Easter season and a sign from God of the fullness of life for which she longed. She lived until May 17th, Yvette's first wedding anniversary.

Her funeral mass was celebrated by Rev. Robert Liddy, CR (chaplain of St Michael's CLC), Fr. Alex MacCaulley, CR, who married Yvette and John, and Fr. Norman Choate, CR. The funeral Mass was characterized by a peaceful and joyful simplicity because of the faithfulness with which she was cared for by her husband and family members.

Lovingly prepared by her  
 dear friend Ruth Bicknell

*These Three Abide  
 Inviting Spirit, Gracious Host,  
 Integrity we seek,  
 Like our lives, as Wisdom know'st  
 Fidelity is weak.*

*Anointing Spirit, Gracious Guest,  
 In whom we long to live,  
 We'll find in thee eternal rest,  
 What strength this hope can give.*

*Indwelling Spirit, Comforter,  
 Instill tranquility  
 With Pentecostal awe confer,  
 Devoted charity*

Ruth Bicknell