

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the spirit of renewal, Sodalists all over the world met in Rome in 1967 to formulate a new set of General Principles to replace the obsolete Rules of 1910. What was remarkable in that congress was the fact that laymen, not priests, took an active role in the deliberation and formulation of the guidelines of a Sodalist's life, based on the teachings of Vatican II. With the constitution of the General Principles was the general agreement that the name **Christian Life Communities** be adopted as the official world title of the organization.

Pope Paul VI gave a temporary approval of the laymen-inspired General Principles, giving it three years' implementation, ad experimentum, by the various CLC's all over the world. In compliance with the order of the Holy See, the World Federation of CLC met again after three years to evaluate the effectiveness of the General Principles. The Philippines, having been represented in Rome and having successfully established the CLC, sent three delegates headed by the Assistant National Promoter with members chosen by him and the Executive Council of the National Federation in Manila.

I was the youngest delegate and one of only three students, the others being Bosco Lee of Taiwan (taking his master's degree in the States) and Joseph Tatsumi of Japan. The rest of the delegates were businessmen and established professionals, save that of the Latin American delegation which consisted of some very young members who somehow acted as observers.



# REPORT ON

After the evaluation and amendments, the General Principles will again be presented to the Holy Father by Bishop Rene Audet, the CLC Papal representative, for permanent approval and implementation. The Rules of 1910 have been abrogated.

## THE SESSIONS

The sessions formally began on August 11 at 9:00 in the morning with the opening speech of Eric Mathias, the outgoing president of the World Federation. He touched on a point brought up during the informal gathering of delegates the night before. Dr. Raymond Zambito and Mr. John Parsons, of US and England respectively, questioned the president's imposition of overnight silence as obstructing the realization of one of the congress' main objectives: more interpersonal relationship among delegates so as to understand each other better. Mathias countered that silence was the best atmosphere within which a deeper degree of spirituality may be attained through prayer and meditation. He further stressed that every member should aspire this in order that the consequent deliberations

would be closely in accordance to the movements of the Holy Spirit. However, due to numerous objections from the floor, the president was impelled to make his imposition optional – which eventually made it null.

Mr. Mathias later presented before the assembly a telegram he intended to send to the Holy Father, informing the latter of the official opening of our world Congress. Vehement objections were heard from the Latin American bloc. Their main argument was that the CLC was supposed to be a lay organization so that it is not obliged to wire the Holy See on any activity it undertakes. This time, a majority of the delegates supported the president because the CLC is still under the Pope and due respects should be given him. The wire was sent.

As business sessions were about to begin, the Latin Americans requested for a change of schedule, suggesting for the assembly to break into small groups for more intimate talks and discussions. They emphasized a more existential approach to the problems confronting the CLC's all over the world. The executive council made an unprecedented move by



*The official delegates to the CLC World Congress in Sto. Domingo, Dominican Republic. Miss Angbetic (center) is beside Mr. Eric Mathias of India, the outgoing president of the World Federation. Beside Mr. Mathias is Mr. Roland Calcat of France, the incumbent president.*

# STO. DOMINGO

by Marilinda Roa Angbetic  
Ph. B. 3

suspending the painstakingly prepared agenda to accommodate the request. Seventy delegates from 23 countries in Europe, Asia, North, South, and Latin America were evenly distributed in smaller discussion groups. A moderator, elected by the assembly, informally presided over the delegates as the executive council temporarily gave up their posts for one and a half day's duration. Fr. Alonís Klein S.J., National Promoter of the German Federation of CLC's was elected moderator and had the task of giving a synthesis at the end of the existential deliberation.

I belonged to a group of one Chinese (Bosco Lee, Taiwan), 2 Indians (Coral D'Souza and Fr. Benac, S.J., Bombay), one Dominican (Dr. Teofilo Gautier, Sto. Domingo), one Englishman (John Parsons, Farnborough), 4 Americans (Mary Di Fonso, Dr. Raymond Zambito, Eileen Molyneux and Fr. Joseph Egan, S.J.) and one Indonesian (Fr. Adolf Heuken, S.J.). The exchange of ideas was spontaneous and made interesting by the presence of persons advocating opposite poles of opinion.

## THE LATIN AMERICANS

The delegates from the West tended to emphasize structure: parliamentary procedures, business of the day, the vested authority of the executive council, etc. On the other hand, the Latin Americans tried to bring into focus the importance of lived experience out of which rules and order would come, later on. All the misunderstanding could boil down to this disparity of values.

A week before the world congress, the Latin American federation held a week-long congress of their own, during which they claimed to have attained a certain charisma. Most of the members were young and had the tendency to be overly emotional. They unsuccessfully tried to convey to us what they have experienced.

There were so many factors for their failure, greatest of which was the language barrier. It was bad enough that they found it difficult to verbalize their lived experience. It was worse translating their expressions into three other languages. We even found out later that there was selective translation. Another factor was their youth which, this time, proved to be a disadvantage. The members ranged

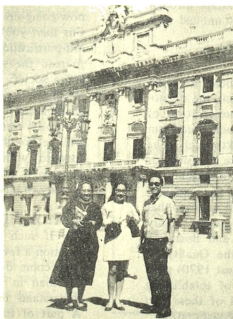
from 15 to about 37 years old. They had just come from an intense emotional experience so that they were somewhat up in the clouds. They had in a sense, mewed themselves up from the group and, handicapped by a difficulty in communication, they projected an image of "we - have - something - which - you - don't have." This made things worse and made the western group impatient. They had tried their best to be open-minded and said they had wasted enough time.

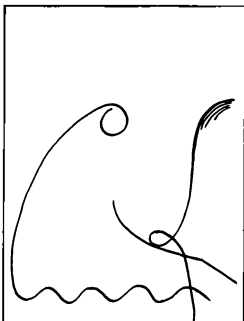
On the third day, the small group discussions ceased and the synthesis was given by Fr. Klein on the following points: (1) is there a CLC vocation - a special CLC charisma? (2) what is the nature of CLC? (3) agreed upon by all submitted reports to be common problems - (a) question of the Spiritual Exercises as a means to live the mystery of the gospel (b) the ability and the availability in which we can place ourselves to listen to God's word (c) how to live as a community (d) discernment, with regard to an individual and that of the community (e) the role of the Eucharist in the community deliberation (f) commitment through service for and with others (g) the compatibility of the CLC vocation and another vocation; specific problems - (a) difficulties of Church as a pilgrim, in evolution (b) liberty of development for a CLC within the structure of the GP (c) problems that must confront the CLC today - that of justice, liberty, faith, etc. (d) the problem of the person who presides over the Eucharist in the CLC Mass (e) the problems of apostolic service in relation to CLC.

The points of conflicting vocations and the celebrant of the Mass were brought up by the Latin Americans. Because of the situation in their countries - the hierarchy are pressing them so much - they've come to the conclusion that in order to be fully committed to the CLC vocation, one should not have any other vocation which would hinder him to be a real CLC'er. One must be free from any other commitments. Also, they claim that they have progressed, spiritually, so much more than the CLC so that they are contemplating on having any one of the members say the Mass for the group - "limited priesthood" - because they believe the priest to be just like any other member of the community. This lay person will have the "power" to consecrate the bread and wine and the "Mass" will be valid to the group

(Continued on page 34)

*The Philippine delegation before the grand Palacio Real of Madrid (L to R): Sr. Mary Soledad, R.G.S., moderator of the Batangas Federation; Marilinda R. Angbetic, president of the Cebu archdiocesan federation; and Fr. Benjamin Sim, S.J., assistant national promoter.*





*i wonder how i shall live  
longing for your love*

*hot sand on my wet  
palm drying the flesh  
cold and soft,  
a warmth long  
denied  
makes my wet  
palm wet no more  
; makes my cold  
flesh cold no more.*

*hot sand growing  
hotter, the sun  
high above the sea,  
burns the tender flesh  
beneath,  
crush the warmth with  
fingers so desirous, so  
unsatisfied, warm  
sand trickles  
down  
and gone  
among no-  
sand sand on  
my longing  
flesh.  
- slm*

At one point, as Mr. "Toots" Santiago and his companions continued their series of interviews of the sugar-plantation laborers, one car of Insular Police agents surrounded them, and one person, obviously the head of the Police group, told the students: . . . "You, people, better behave . . ." One student in the group said that the guns of these agents were already cocked. Then the Insular Police shoved the laborers away from the students and shouted at them in the vernacular . . . "Hoy, nag-unsang man mo diri, hala balik sa trabaho!" Then a moment later one owner of the hacienda came to intervene. He told the students that if ever they would have questions regarding the hacienda and the laborers they should come to them (haciennderos). But what the hacienndero neglected was that the students were interested in the actual and direct testimonies of the laborers themselves.

So, as the students continued their interviews, the Insular Police agents trailed them. The laborers who knew already who were these Insular Police agents were reluctant to subject themselves to interview. The students had no other recourse except to return to the city.

Writer's Note: Very probably, it needs a true hero to die with a true and just cause. But the NUSP fact-finding team was not prepared and did not intend to do heroism since we were not and did not want to appear as heroes. We just wanted to give a little help to our brother Filipinos oppressed by their landlords and acted upon the order of the NUSP. As a result some haciennderos right now are facing charges which are now under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Labor.

#### REPORT ON . . .

*(continued from page 9)*

with or without permission from the hierarchy.

#### FORMAL MEETING

In the morning of the third day, just as the business sessions were about to begin, the Latin American bloc staged a mass walk-out, much to the anguish of the rest of the assembly. The Executive Council, took over, organized the Nominating Committee headed by Helmut Reiner (the vice president of the world federation) and the Committee on Amend-

ments headed by Edythe Westenhewer (the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat in Rome).

On August 14, at 9:00 in the morning, election of officers took place. A motion was put on the floor that other more eligible candidates may be nominated aside from the ones already presented to the Holy See months ahead. With the permission of Msgr. Audet, Papal representative, the motion was granted.

Roland Calcat (France), President; Fred Leone, Vice President; Hildegard Ehartmann (Germany), Secretary; John Parsons (England), Treasurer; Jose Luis Velasco (Spain), Consultant; Aurelio Serrano (Brazil), Consultant.

Fr. Benjamin Sim, S.J. (Philippines) and Coral D'Souza (India) was Appointed Consultants by the New Executive Council.

After the elections, deliberations on proposed amendments were made as quickly as possible because time was running out. Only two amendments belonging to Group A and B were carried: changing the term "Ecclesiastical Assistant" to "Assistant of the group" (Part II Art. 14 Paragraph 2) and that "Special bond with the Hierarchy" be changed to "1) appointment of the Assistant of the group 2) organization of the World Federation 3) approval of the GP be subject to the approval of a group or federation . . ." (Art. 17 Part II)

Lastly, it was generally agreed that the CLC draw from the Eucharist and the Ignatian Exercises the spirituality it needs, as a religio-apostolic lay organization. The members came to conclude that with the distributing signs of the times, each must not remain passive but be fully involved in the situation that he is in. The trouble within the church had been directly and too deeply felt by the assembly in the schism of the Latin American group. In a sense, they have regarded the incident as prompted by the Holy Spirit so that discussions will be too theoretical but would be given an element of lived experience by making the members feel the anguish of a divided church.

