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**Letter of communication between the Executive Council and the  
world Christian Life Community**



**World CLC ExCo meeting 2009**

**Dear Friends in Christ and CLC,**

Greetings and peace to you all and also your families and communities! We hope this issue of *Projects* finds you well, living and rejoicing very much in the spirit of Fatima with its energy, life and hope.

We bring you news following the first meeting of the current World Executive Council held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February in the peaceful surroundings of the Montecucco Retreat Centre, Rome. Being its first meeting, the Council met with hope and anticipation fresh with the inspiration and enlightenment of the recent CLC World Assembly in Fatima, Portugal. Once again, we thank the Portuguese CLC community for their competent management of that whole exercise leading to such inspirational processes and outcomes.

Each day of our first Council meeting was conducted within a framework beginning with prayer prepared by an ExCo person and ending with a Review of the Day and Eucharist. We spent the initial day getting to appreciate each other better, what special gifts we each brought to the task ahead, how we would work best as a team, how we would cooperate with Holy Spirit in the service of CLC and where we might consider need for further assistance

### **The Executive Council membership**

One of our initial tasks was to address the matter of ExCo membership, in particular, the appointment of a new Executive Secretary and also whether a need existed for the cooption of a further member. In relation to the first matter, we required a replacement for Guy Maginzi as Executive Secretary on the World Secretariat whose term was now coming to an end. Firstly, on behalf of the world CLC community, we thank Guy for his service over the last five years. His special gifts, dedication and commitment to CLC interests have served us well. Following an assessment of possibilities, we appointed Franklin Ibañez, from Lima, Peru as our new Executive Secretary. We thank

Franklin for his generosity in making himself available for consideration. He is to be married in May and joins us later in July with his new wife, Sophia. We congratulate both of them and look forward to their arrival.

Concerning the second matter of a possible cooption, it became apparent as the meeting progressed that we would benefit from the presence of a further person from Africa to widen its representation to cover both the English and French speaking elements of the country. In this last matter, we sought the cooption of the Jean-Paul Biruru, from Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo. We are grateful for his subsequent acceptance of our invitation and welcome him and the many abilities he will bring to our team.

### **The CLC global picture**

This exercise provided an inspiring insight into the active presence of CLC in a world with its increasingly pressing issues of human rights, ecology and material wellbeing. It also suggested areas for special attention. Following are some of the highlights:

In the *Middle East*, Lebanon continues to work, especially in formation outreach, thereby attracting some new members. Syria is planning a formation course for guides and Egypt is offering leadership formation. Assemblies are also planned for Syria and Egypt. Interfaith issues are of special importance in this region. All countries are engaged in various aspects of spirituality and, at a recent regional meeting, interest was expressed in bringing CLC to other parts of the Middle East.

In the *Asia/Pacific* region, national communities are progressing well with formation, leadership and apostolic engagement activities being planned or undertaken. Strengths seemed to lay in CLC engagement as follows: all nationalities have engaged in Formation activities and further planning in Leadership/Guide formation; most have scheduled or already conducted a National Assembly; almost all are involved in spirituality and outreach especially in collaboration with the Jesuits; some have strong engagement in collective apostolic works; and there is a wide and ongoing interest and practice in relation to 'Commitment'. We are indebted to the Philippines for its special assistance in the past in hosting Asia/Pacific meetings. There are further possibilities for CLC in other countries/places such as Singapore, Macao, Thailand and Vietnam. At the present time, the Asia/Pacific region is also clarifying its regional structures and working arrangements, including the possibilities of a Leadership training workshop in the near future.

In *North America/Canada*, while no formal regional arrangement is functioning at present, formation and Leadership work continues, and Assemblies are planned for English Canada and USA in April and July respectively. All three North American National Communities have hosted leadership courses.

Reports from *Africa* indicate that progress, with determination and imagination, and albeit under some difficulties (especially financially), is being made. It is intended to share travel costs, formation materials and the development of standards. Zambia is conducting discussion on the implications of 'Fatima'. The subject of Fatima will also be dealt with by Kenya in planning its forthcoming Assembly. The Democratic Republic of Congo (especially in the Kinshasa region) is focussing on applying the principles of DSSE and undertaking AIDS work. In the future, reforms are planned for Africa's regional structures and for conducting two regional Leadership courses, one for each of the two main language groups (English and French).

Reports were heard of continued strong and competent engagement by CLC in many *European* countries in formation, leadership and various apostolic works. Most are planning Assemblies in the coming 12 months. An issue shared by many relates to 'migration' where some, eg France, Spain, Luxembourg and Belgium, are especially involved including in collaboration with the Jesuit Refugee Service. While a few communities were struggling, others, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, were growing such as Hungary, Lithuania, Croatia, Latvia and Slovakia. At the end of May, the European communities will meet for their regional assembly in Alicante, Spain, where also a new Euroteam will be elected.

Concerning *Latin America*, we heard a report about a comprehensive analysis (involving 18 countries) of their strengths and opportunities for future CLC development and also about strong progress with the Magis Program (three completed) which is to be evaluated with a view to further programs. Most Latin American countries are engaged in formation, leadership and spirituality (the latter seen as essential to nourish and sustain apostolic work) with some very involved in apostolic works and advocacy. Assessment and engagement is being undertaken with those communities needing special assistance.

Where needed most, the *CLC World Executive* is considering the provision of some financial assistance to support regional efforts and also to conduct, where geographical convenience and costs permit, supporting visits and consultations usually in connection with such occasions as Assemblies or where special needs apply. During 2009, visits are foreseen e.g. to Syria, Central America as well as the Asia region.

### **Fatima matters**

Together, it was with some consolation that we reflected on the experience of Fatima, its final report, and our subsequent experiences working together on the matter. Although much of the more visible activity will be generated at the national level, World Exco desires to serve these efforts wherever possible. In this context, a list of issues/reflections emerged and was refined as follows:

- *Maintaining a level of awareness in relation to the Spirit of Fatima:*

We seek, as a global community, to remain faithful to the prompting of the Holy

Spirit at Fatima so that this spirit continues to grow and is generative. We seek to do this by continued reference to Fatima eg through “Projects’, World CLC Day 2009, the President’s 2009 Letter to National Communities and also by encouraging and supporting nationally based initiatives.

- ***Networking with the Society of Jesus at regional, national and global levels:*** We seek collaboration with the Society of Jesus (with the benefits of combined gifts/resources and economy of effort) in apostolic works, advocacy and formation - not just in their works but in new arrangements initiated by CLC.

- ***Becoming a lay apostolic body/prophetic community:*** We need to move towards these ideals as a community and not allow the words to become clichés. We seek, through immersion in and response to our immediate social realities, a continued active, personal and collective presence in the world.

- ***Providing Guides Formation:*** We acknowledge the central role of CLC Guides in the life of CLC. The Leadership initiative is a start. A further opportunity will arise with the immanent publication of the ‘Guidelines for CLC Formation’ document. The subject will also be a part of the 2009 Letter to National Communities.

- ***Inclusion of the ‘poor’ in our CLC communities:*** Our document “The CLC Charism - Revised” describes the profile of a CLC person. Is CLC membership fully representative of that profile, especially in relation to the ‘poor’? This will be a part of World CLC Day 2010 reflection.

- ***Supporting new and emerging communities:*** We seek to create a strategy to support development of new communities as part of our mission to bring Christ to the world. Possibilities include: Jordan, Singapore, Macao, Malaysia, Thailand, East Timor, Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique (Beira). CLC will work with Jesuits and our EA on this proposal.

- ***CLC God-Parenting and Twinning communities:*** The distinction between these two types of CLC community relationships and their respective characteristics were discussed. As part of a global community, we “build each other up”, we “give encouragement”. Experiences are to be gathered and the matter will be the subject of a Progressio article.

- ***EA Regional meetings:*** We take this opportunity to acknowledge the pivotal role of our EAs in CLC life and thank them. Recent regional EA meetings have been judged to have been very valuable and have resulted in a document on the subject. This has been posted on the CLC website.

- **Commitment:** It was agreed that this subject is an important part of the CLC journey. It is a natural outcome of the formation process and a part of our identity as an apostolic body. Diverging opinions in our community on the subject were noted. During our next World ExCo meeting, we will dedicate a special “study session” on that topic, also to clarify whether more input and clarification is needed at world level.

- **Leadership:** The Council noted the increasingly wide introduction of Leadership throughout CLC Communities ie leadership in fullest sense as ‘quality of presence’ or witness, as service, as fulfillment of special role, as mentor etc and that in some places this was directed especially at Guides. Current immediate considerations for further courses at the regional level include Africa, Asia/Pacific and Europe.

## **Apostolic Networking**

This subject was introduced by a discussion with our EA, *Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ*. He asked about how CLC is responding to Fatima in our home countries, particularly in relation to apostolic activity. He discussed aspects of Section 6 of the recent General Congregation Report (on collaboration of the Jesuits with the laity) and urged CLC movement towards a more independent lay centred engagement. In this context, he offered the insight (based on his own experience in the Society of Jesus) that this may require some communities to move from living in the consolations of the ‘first’ week of the Spiritual Exercises to accepting and acting out of the challenges of the ‘third week’ – with the more practical, everyday life theology this entailed.

The subject of international *advocacy* was also discussed and we were joined in subsequent stages of the discussion by Fr Fernando Franco SJ, of the Jesuit Social Justice Secretariat. He stressed the increasing importance, in our more globalised world, of working collaboratively to engage with the poor and oppressed at the point where the decisions were being made. Consistent with the Fatima mandate, CLC is to increase its commitment (financially) to advocacy both collaboratively with Ignatian (and other) organisations and in our own right. CLC is also to continue its specific commitment to the issues of ecology (water rights) and migration.

To enhance the ability of CLC representatives in UN related advocacy roles to respond quickly to requirements for signatures endorsing statements and resolutions consistent with our CLC Charism, some simple, clear directions will be provided.

It was also decided to support the proposal to create a position for a period of 12 months of *Coordinator for Advocacy and Apostolic Initiatives* appreciating the close connection between these two equally important areas of activity. Action is being taken to fill the position as soon as possible.

## **Further World Exco visits/discussions**

- We visited Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and gave him a copy of the CLC General Principles with the changes made in Fatima - formal approval is expected soon. Cardinal Rylko then discussed the 20th anniversary of "Christifideles laici" and its importance. In this context, he affirmed the place of CLC in the Church today, especially with its emphasis on formation and apostolic works.
- We also met with Fr Claudio Barriga SJ, Director of the Apostleship of Prayer. In particular, we discussed the spirit and practice of the Apostleship of Prayer, its Ignatian character, its identification with the mission and intentions of the Church and its complementary character to the CLC way of life.

## **Finances**

A review was undertaken of the financial situation of CLC following Fatima. Our situation remains tight and has been kept solvent through some unexpected generous donations. Some funds will be put aside for 'solidarity' assistance for the next Assembly. A further step is being taken to establish an Apostolic Initiatives Fund for national communities. The finance team is being asked to prepare a proposal for consideration at the next world Executive meeting. Further reviews are also being undertaken of the 'Dues Formula' and the "Request for Funds" template used by national communities to seek funding for various regional/national projects. Finally, the budget proposed for 2009 was approved. Some useful discussion took place about the matter of fund raising, the belief being that we first address the matter of where, in accordance with the spirit of Fatima, we feel we are being drawn as a community - and then address the issue of funding (ie finding money, 'tainted as it is').

## **World CLC Communications**

CLC communications practice was briefly reviewed and a schedule for publication for Projects, Letters to National Communities, Progressio and updating of our Website was decided upon. Although only briefly reported upon here, we acknowledge the central role of this function in informing and building "one community" around the world. One document in progress to come out in due course is "The history of CLC".

## **Conclusion**

The first World ExCo meeting of this current term concluded with strong sentiments of joy at working together with the Fatima mandate and also with hope for the future.

In conclusion, we thank God for our gift of CLC. We join Christ in His mission and seek to respond as fully as possible to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in all these matters. We ask for the intercession of Mary in our task. We rejoice in our diversity of gifts, nationally and personally, and seek full engagement in the world as “one community”.

Please continue to pray and work with us as we embark upon the next Post Fatima stage of the CLC journey.

United in prayers and service,

**Daniela Frank**  
**President**

**Chris Hogan**  
**Consultor**