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## Link between the Executive Council and the World Christian Life Community



**Dear Friends in the Lord,**

Greetings. Following is a report of the World Executive Council held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2014 at Casa di Nazareth, Rome. Although the venue was inner city, it was very good, the hospitality excellent and the weather cool yet comfortable.

After intense mail contact and several virtual encounters, this was the first live meeting of the new ExCo. It also included the presence of our later to be appointed Executive Secretary, Alwin Macalalad (CLC Philippines).

The Lebanon 2013 CLC World Assembly elected 7 people who hardly knew each other. This Assembly commissioned us, together with our ExSec team (Sofia and Franklin) and our vice-EA (Fr Luke), to form an Executive Council, i.e. a team in the service of the CLC World community.

With respect for the challenge, and fortified by the strength and trust granted to us by the World Assembly, we began as we have learned from the very beginning in our CLC journey: we shared God's blessings in our personal lives and the desire we felt in being called to serve the whole community. It was a joyful and peaceful experience. In doing so, we felt confirmed as a W-ExCo team, a group of friends in Lord, a true CLC community.

### **Initial short retreat – Exco community formation**

Being a new Exco, we devoted the first 1½ days to a reflective retreat under the theme “Being a Jubilee person” – a “Jubilee person” is one who is grateful for God's blessings and is eager to pass on these blessings to others. We then shared something of our personal life stories and the gifts

we might bring to Exco tasks during its 5 year term of office. It was a very good introduction to our forthcoming years together as Exco and quite instrumental in beginning to develop in us a sense of community on mission.

### **Visits to the Pontifical Council for the Laity and other organisations**

As in previous years, Exco visited the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the President, Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko was not available but a very useful time was spent with his Secretary, Mgr Josef Clemens and assistant Phillip Milligan. Discussions from our side revolved around the World Assembly in Lebanon, our 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our “frontiers”, and the CLC situation in various regions. From his side, Mgr Clemens raised the matters of CLC growth, CLC formation outreach and the faith in Europe - and the role of the laity there.

In addition to the above, some EXCO members took the opportunity while being in Rome to meet with some members of the Jesuit Curia and other Church organizations to facilitate the paths for future collaboration. A further very useful meeting was held with CLC Italy to discuss our presence at the Catholic Inspired Non-Government Organisation Forum (at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations). Here, CLC continues to engage in dialogue and advocacy strengthening Christian witness at the international level in the interests of fundamental human rights and basic human needs.

### **Meeting with Fr General Adolfo Nicolas SJ**

Once again, this meeting was an inspiring address within which Fr Nicolas picked up some themes he addressed in Lebanon and to which he gave special emphases. He especially referred to:

*The lessons to be learned from the “wisdom language” of Asia:* He stated that, to those outside our faith, we have nothing to say – ie, if we continue to use our traditional doctrinal language. We need “wisdom language”, the “wisdom of humanity” understood by all. He cited Pope Francis as an exemplar in this matter reaching out to more than just the institution of the Church.

*Engagement with the Church, in the world:* We join with the Church in engaging in all the major shifts and revolutions in the world, in a way that is prophetic ie revealing what is hidden, in a language that is understood, and equally tuned to humanity as well as God. He quoted the church’s role in the evolution of the institution of marriage as an example.

*Our themes and dispositions:* Following Pope Francis’ example, we emphasize mercy, forgiveness, love, friendship, and joy – and always staying close to reality, enlightened by Ignatian Spirituality.

*Future CLC directions:* Fr Nicolas encouraged us to use our organizational flexibility to adapt to the needs of the time, eg in developing stronger regional presences, capable of cross-national action, and prepared to think and act boldly.

Once again, we were grateful for the time Fr Nicolas spent with us. And we ask ourselves at all levels, “How can CLC participate in this ongoing renewal of the Church in the world?”

## **Activities and events over the coming 5 years**

In contemplating the next five years, we reviewed the Lebanon final document recapturing a sense of the spirit of the Assembly, its implied mandate, and the Assembly hopes for this term. In doing so, we were also conscious of the wider movements within the church and the role of our global community in this context. Against this background, Exco members offered reflections on more specific possibilities over the coming 5 years.

These possibilities, all largely deriving from the Lebanon document, were then expressed in terms of projects that were categorized under the two broad headings of “Frontiers” and “Our Lay, Ignatian Identity”. Under “Frontiers”, we included Family, Youth, Poverty and Globalization and Ecology. Under the category “Our Lay Ignatian Identity”, we included Clarity of Membership and Commitment, Formation, Leadership, Collaboration, Wisdom Language and Clarity of our vocation as Ignatian, Lay, and CLC. There were further categories of “World Community” which includes especially Regional Processes and a category of “CLC Office (Rome) Matters” which includes Finances, Structures and Communication. These are all dealt with in the subsequent sections of this report.

## **Frontiers and Lay Ignatian Identity - Process**

The Exco broke into two teams to address these two broad categories. We then took time to address each of these categories and the projects contained within them as follows:

- Person responsible – generally, an Exco person
- Objectives – addressing the purpose of and hopes for the Project
- Time frames – these were worked out based on urgency and the availability of the 5 year term
- Other factors – teams also looked at tasks, resources, and special competencies needed etc.
- Other persons involved – in addressing these matters, Exco acknowledges the depth of experience, faith and commitment of its members world-wide, so apparent at the recent world Assembly, and seeks to include their contributions where possible in these projects.

Overall, this process was the central item on the Exco agenda. In undertaking this work, Exco sought to be as faithful as possible to the World Assembly mandate, not overambitious, yet comprehensive and producing a worthwhile result.

## **World Community - Regional reflections**

Opening discussion on this topic emphasised the importance of CLC Regional arrangements and their integration into wider CLC structures and processes. At the same time, we respect CLC Region’s proactivity and that they are well placed to encourage formation and mission in their part of the world. In all this, we collectively also seek to keep the spirit of the World Assembly growing and supporting each other in whatever ways possible.

Exco members then shared reflections on the various CLC Regions. While the significant variation in structures and processes was noted, it was agreed that such diversity was helpful in accommodating growth and best meeting regional needs. Some observations:

- Some Regions emphasized the importance of quarterly on-line virtual meetings. These had proved successful in the past, eg in Latin America, and recently in the Middle East, and were relatively easily established. They built community, opened up discussion on a wide range of issues, the sharing of good ideas – and it doesn't cost very much.
- Strong support was given to regionally based formation programs. These would need to arise from within the regions according to their needs.
- In some regions, more emphasis would need to be given to the transmission of Ignatian spirituality, support for younger communities and formation for mission.
- Some regions are still struggling to establish themselves. A common interest exists in developing communications and sharing resources eg in formation, training of guides, creating immersion experiences. There is much to be gained from trans-national cooperation and collaboration

Efforts will continue to support CLC Regional development especially in the light of their emerging role in CLC life.

## **CLC Office (Rome) Matters**

### **1. Change of Executive Secretary and World Vice-EA**

Over the period of this Exco's term, we will see changes in the existing appointments in the CLC (Rome) Secretariat. Firstly, the term of office for Franklin Ibanez and Sofia Montañez (Executive Secretariat team) comes to an end around October this year. We thank Franklin and Sofia for their very significant contribution to CLC life over the last 4-5 years. At about the same time, we welcome their replacements, Alwin and Rojean Macalalad from CLC (Philippines). In addition, late this year, we will commence the process for the replacement in February 2016 of our World Vice-EA, Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ.

### **2. Finances**

Exco received various inter-related financial information reports ie, on the World Assembly, the World Community Operating Budget (2014-2018), communities' dues, and membership figures. There are many issues associated with the management of these accounts but, overall, the situation is steady. We still, of course, remain dependent upon all national communities meeting their dues obligations (and on time) and also assisting with our "donations" arrangement to smooth out long term adjustment to various national community obligations (this is due to right itself in 2017). A full financial report to national communities will be sent out in April.

CLC also has two other small accounts for Apostolic Works and Formation. These limited funds are available and have been used to support modest projects in different parts of the world.

### 3. Communications

Let us begin with our CLC official website ([www.cvx-clc.net](http://www.cvx-clc.net)). Have you seen it recently? It is full of up to date information of CLC community life. Uploads are regular and reveal the richness of CLC life around the world. The material is not just informative but educative. It speaks to us about our community, our vocation and our works. The site also includes a very useful research capability in our Progressio Archives. Finally, further linkages will be activated soon. For example, we will be exploring more interactive communications possibilities such as Facebook, blogs etc.

Complementing this is our publication program. A Progressio Supplement will be out soon being a special issue (Part 2) on our World Assembly. Regular issues of Progressio and Projects will follow as usual this year, with the Progressio magazine going on-line in 2014 thereby making it more accessible to our whole community. Future issues of Projects will address such “frontier” subjects as “wisdom language” and “family”.

A more recent CLC initiative has been our decision to join “Jesuit Networking” so as to be part of a global Ignatian network collaborating in research and mission – see <http://jesuitnetworking.org/>.

**Concluding remarks:** Before our Exco meeting, we read “Evangelii Gaudium”. We were deeply encouraged by its wisdom and its message of mercy, love and joy as found in the Gospels, in the personal encounter with Jesus and to be found in the world, especially the poor. If you have not already done so, we strongly recommend careful reflection on this great exhortation.

In contemplating our living out and acting on the spirit of our recent World Assembly, we hear Pope Francis’ comment and make it our own when he says *“I hope that all communities [incl CLC] will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are” (EG 25).*

We wish you a happy Easter.

United in prayer and service,

Chris Hogan  
Consultor

Najat Sayegh  
Secretary

**With and on behalf of CLC W-Executive Council**