

PROJECTS: World CLC Day 2016—Breathing Space

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in CLC,

Peace be with you!

Two thousand fifteen was a busy year for the Church. We bore witness to Pope Francis as he addressed humanity in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*. We saw the conclusion of the Synod on the Family. Vatican II turned 50 years! (And so will CLC, in 2017, as its renewal follows the conclusion of the council!). And then, a Jubilee year of mercy was inaugurated.

Everywhere we look, there seems to be a stimulus that demands—compels—us to act. More and more, as CLC, we will often find ourselves in the midst of these zones. Maybe the frontiers are really this way. Maybe the frontiers are dimensions of our world, and our lives, where the different faces of Christ need to be confronted. Where grace and grey areas meet. Where wisdom emerges. Where walls are soft and the Universal Church is constantly being born.

It is in this light that this Projects 163's invitations come in. This letter is not a rally cry for further activism; not a request for further action. Still, whether taken in an individual or communal apostolic sense, we find it important to give it space for consideration. It is an invitation to re-enter a sanctuary—**a breathing space**. Let this space be akin to that moment in our history when everything stood still—that instant prior to the re-creation that was to be our salvation: Mother Mary's *fiat*. Our invitation is for you to be with us, and **Find Pause, Breathe In**, and then, **Exhale**, as we relish this Marian moment in our history.

Identifying the four frontiers during Lebanon was not the beginning of CLC's apostolic inclinations. Prior to this, communities were already engaged in these frontiers. Going back further into our history, with each World Assembly, we were being shaped deeper into the mystery of being a lay apostolic body. However, it was during our 2013 World Assembly that we have been most explicit about our involvement in these peripheries. It was a call intimately linked to bringing our lives and vocations to bloom within the frontiers, as an incarnation of our CLC mission.

As World ExCo, we are recipient to some of your stories. They are of hope, of despair. Of apostolic zeal and apostolic haste. Of hesitations and immersions. Of movement. And at this point, we invite you for a momentary pause.

But why, and what for? Well, imagine yourself and your community on a path. It's been a long road, and you've been in a hurry to get to where you need to go. Exigency demanded it. But your finite body is attached to finite legs. The trek is taking its toll. Imagine the parched world before incarnation—a longing for mercy, and the freedom begotten from rest.

Find Pause

Let this be a beckoning for deeper care, in the midst of our apostolic activity. It bears reminding that in this context, *'cura personalis'* will need to refer to the care directed to our communities, even before the recipients of our help. As we accompany each other in mission, our apostolic way of proceeding of DSSE reflects our *'cura personalis'*, similar to how a director of the Spiritual Exercises helps the exercitant to enter the disposition for giving a freer response to God's love, while interfacing with our social/planetary reality. Relentless action in a fast changing world, without rest, can bring one to emptiness. So rest, especially if mission brings you to a burdensome place. Rest, and rest together.

Apostolic pause (if there is indeed such a thing), also draws one to an important element of our way of proceeding: Evaluation. Results are important, because this is one of the ways we concretely see reality (e.g. 1.5°C, 4% GDP assigned to education, 100 boats for rehabilitating coastal communities²). There is relevance in being able to recognize and communicate measurable results with others. This is an initial and indispensable step, albeit not the final one. In our evaluation we pray for the grace of seeing how Christ is present in our apostolic enterprise, mysteriously always a step beyond recognition in the world after the resurrection³.

Breathe in

Often, breathing is something that is not paid attention to. And yet, breathing is something so vital to human existence! Our prayers will usually begin with this awareness: that we are breathing, that we are alive. It is an immediate stimulus for gratitude. The moment after Mother Mary's "yes" is a moment of welcoming life. It was a moment so imperceptible, even if it was the moment of the incarnation.

On the level of a world community, let this be a moment of relishing life too, as we celebrate World CLC Day, halfway through our stride onwards to the next World Assembly. We cherish what gives life to our apostolic body: our lay Ignatian identity. It is our Charism that has brought us to the frontiers. And, it is our Charism that we bring into the peripheries. It is in being true to, and in touch with, this source, will we survive the frontiers intact. It was never pure activity, pure action. It was always about responding to a call. In the need for urgency and haste, we hope that our sources of life are not forgotten: the Spiritual Exercises, the daily examen, and the community that sustains us.

Formation is still a key area that every CLC community places emphasis on because it forms the core of the Ignatian identity that urges us on to live as communities in mission. Even from the Lebanon

¹ Fr. Kolvenbach makes a clear exposition of what *cura personalis* means in the context of accompaniment (Kolvenbach, P. *Cura Personalis*. Review of Ignatian Spirituality. N114. XXXVIII, 1/2007). Because our Charism calls us to live out Ignatian Spirituality as an apostolic body, we practice this on a communal level, through DSSE.

² These are examples of actual concrete outcomes that certain apostolic projects and advocacies have targeted: 1) Our involvement in the Global Catholic Climate Movement allowed us to participate in advocating for a 1.5°C increase from pre-industrial levels in COP21, 2) the world community's support for the CVX Dominican Republic initiative to assign 4% of GDP for education in 2011, 3) the number of boats that CLC Philippines helped donate to fisherfolk after typhoon Haiyan. The list can continue—what we wish to emphasize is the concrete impact that we wish to make so we can have a starting point for evaluation.

³ Bolaños Armas, P.J. *The Foundations of Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate (DSSE)*. Progressio Supplement n.62.



Assembly there was a desire expressed by some delegates to share some of their formation materials, while others intuited a need for more variety of such materials. Being one world community, these formation materials will only have a greater impact if we share them—this is an ongoing invitation too, as we share what gives us life, and growth⁴.

Exhale



There is a moment in a breath when our lungs get filled with air, and the nourishment it brings us suffuses through our body. It fills it with energy, strength, and renewal. There was a brief question raised by Mary in the annunciation narrative: "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" (Lk 1:34). But even with an assurance that "...nothing will be impossible for God." (Lk 1:37), it was ultimately faith, this fullness of grace, that propels her. And so it is with us, in CLC. This is a moment that we cannot hold for long—we need to breathe it all out—exhale!



These past months in the ExCo, we have had our own struggles—with the need for accomplishment and action, with the efforts for clarity and purpose. In our limited capacities, we have been trying to feel the movements in the different communities that compose our apostolic body. At the same time, we ask ourselves how CLC is being called as it moves beyond its first 50 years of renewal (that we will celebrate in



2017!). We have been setting up commissions because the Lebanon Mandate is a challenge. Slowly too, we have been receiving responses from the survey on the frontiers. Still, we feel the need for more connection, and more sharing between member communities.

When we were drawn to the image of the flower/pinwheel (to represent the ExCo mandate, and our world community's priority areas), we made an exercise of trying to rotate the petals by blowing into it (in front, at the sides; softly, strongly). It was tiring, we lost our breath. Outdoors, after our meeting with Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, our World EA, we discovered how to make it

⁴ If you wish to share formation materials, you may send them to the World Secretariat for cataloguing. In the near future, we can have a platform or network for materials sharing that the larger community can access. Please send them to exsec@cvx-clc.net, Subject: Formation Materials [Community]

spin. We saw our EA playing with the pinwheel, and with the littlest effort, held it against the wind. And it spun, with all of its colors blurring into each other. It was a single body in a single movement! How it brought childlike life in us!

It was a reminder of letting God take the helm. Our efforts only have meaning, placed in the face of the breath of the Spirit. Like Mary, it is an invitation that cannot be held without response. One simply cannot hold this breath of life! Like Mary, our mother, we cry- “May it be done to me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38).

World CLC Day 2016 is a midpoint between World Assemblies, and the eve of the 50th year since our renewal. What we’ve shared with you now is also what we share amongst ourselves: an invitation to create a **breathing space**, an invitation to re-tune ourselves to the rhythm of the Spirit, an invitation for greater faith and hope.

In the coming months, we encourage all to ponder the substance of Projects 163. **Find pause**—get genuine rest and give care to communities, and to afford time for the E of DSSE. **Breathe in**—relish, cherish our lay Ignatian identity; renew emphasis on our CLC Formation. **Exhale**— allow the Spirit to lead us, renew our own fiat, and in the fruit of this relief and rest—propel ourselves together into a future with joy!

United in mission,

Alwin, Josephine and Mauricio

With and on behalf of the World ExCo

A Joyous PostScript:



Let us take this moment to express our deep gratitude and happiness to the Society of Jesus and our EA, Fr. Nicolás, for being companions in mission, especially after officially naming Fr. Herminio Rico SJ, as the next Vice EA for the Christian Life Community. Fr. Herminio officially takes the post in the last quarter of 2016. Let us offer special prayers in the coming months, and on World CLC Day for both Fr. Luke Rodrigues SJ who has so blessed us with his accompaniment, and for Fr. Herminio. In these movements, we too, feel the Spirit blow ☺